

**AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO THE  
POOR PERFORMANCE OF GRADE 12 (COSC) LEARNERS IN  
LESOTHO**

**by**

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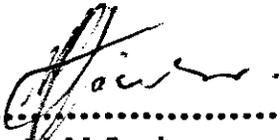
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**Kwadlangezwa**

**October 2009**

## DECLARATION

I declare that this dissertation "*An investigation into the factors contributing to the poor performance of Grade 12 in Lesotho*" represents my own work and that all sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.



.....  
Mrs. M M Jackson  
Kwadlangezwa

October 2009.

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- All the high school educators who sacrificed their time in the completion of the questionnaire.

## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to my late father, Sylvanus Cartwright Selomo for his motivation, encouragement and love for education.

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## CHAPTER 1

### ORIENTATION

#### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

The performance of learners in national tests and examinations is broadly used as an indicator of the effectiveness of the school (Naidu, Joubert, Mestry, Mosoge & Ngcobo, 2008:39). According to Bernard (1999:28) learners test results have become such an accepted indicator of school performance that for many, a school with high test scores is per force a good school. Often, academic results constitute the only criterion by which the success of a school is measured even to the extent that solely on this basis schools are labelled as effective or ineffective, resulting in unpleasant outcomes for the school regarded as 'failing' schools (Naidu *et al.*, 2008:39). This trend is manifested in Lesotho in the uproar generated by publication of COSC (Grade 12) examination results (Setoi, 1999:2).

The widely published poor academic performance of Grade 12 learners at a large numbers of high schools in Lesotho, indicate decline in the education system (Setoi, 1999:2). Possible factors contributing to the poor performance of Grade 12 learners are:

- Poor leadership and management. Many schools especially in the rural schools perform poorly and fail to provide quality education due to management incompetence and emerging trends such as qualified educators leaving to urban schools (Naidu *et al.*, 2008:2).
- Parents socio-economic status. Home environment is a very important determinant of the learners educational success, for example, children who live in poverty are more likely to underachieve in school and have the highest probability of dropping out of school (Feinstein, Duckworth & Sabates, 2008:12).
- Lack of facilities. Unavailability of the school facilities including classrooms, libraries and recreational activities at school are likely to limit learner's readiness and achievement (Feinstein, Duckworth & Sabates, 2008:130).

Poor performance of learners in high school has a negative impact on their educational career (Setoi, 1999:67). Notable results of the poor performance include dropping out of school before completion of high school education, thereby disadvantaging learners to further their studies at tertiary institutions. Due to these problems, learners are exploited by capitalistic entrepreneurs as they settle for low paying jobs such as working in the Chinese factories and shops. Furthermore, learners due to stress of the poor performance, engage in antisocial behaviour resulting in them being feeling inferior and being rejected by society, and in extreme cases being isolated from society (Jaffe, 1998:345).

Putwin (2008:161) argues that the primary objective of education should be the cultivation of the rational powers of the learners. The assumption is that the rational powers are the hub around which all the qualities of human dignity and spirit revolve. This therefore implies that schools must make the development of the rational powers of the learner the central purpose of education in order to improve poor performance and reduce inequities.

## **1.2 ANALYSIS OF THE PROBLEM**

Research has shown that in developing countries, like Lesotho, dropout rates appear to be the most common among students from low socio-economic backgrounds (Lockhead & Verspoor, 2001:86). In Lesotho learners from a low socio-economic background attend public schools which are often characterised by inadequately trained educators, lack of textbooks and overcrowded classrooms, which are, factors contributing to learners' poor performance in schools. Poor performance in Cambridge Overseas School Certificate (COSC) in Lesotho has been an ongoing problem. The majority of learners obtain a General Certificate in Education (G.C.E.), but this does not ensure learners a successful, comfortable life. Life often becomes meaningless, boring and without purpose (Seotsanyane, 2000:55). In countries like Lesotho causes of high wastage and poor learner performance include poverty, malnutrition, absenteeism, inappropriate curriculum and examination (Sebatane, 1998:21).

For the past number of years the Grade 12 results also known as Cambridge Overseas School Certificate (COSC) in Lesotho shows a decline in the pass rate in the public

examination in Lesotho. This is evident from a report published by the examination Council of Lesotho on the pass rate for the last 3 years prior to 2007(cf. MoE, 2007:2).

**Table1: Pass rate in Grade 12 (COSC) in Lesotho**

| <b>Year</b> | <b>Percentage Pass Rate in Grade 12 (COSC)</b> |
|-------------|--|
| 2005        | 59,0%  |
| 2006        | 51.6%  |
| 2007        | 49.0%  |
| 2008        | 48.1%  |

Table 1 shows a decline of 10% in the Grade12 (COSC) pass rate in Lesotho schools over a period of four years. According to Wiseman (1997: 115) the quality of education in a school is reflected by increased instances of class repetition and higher dropout rates of learners and performance of a school's Grade12 learners is perceived as a reflection of the effectiveness of the education at the school. The finding that more than half (51%) of Grade 12 learners performed poorly in the national examinations in Lesotho (cf. Table 1) would be of concern to all major stakeholders, learners, educators, parents, employers and the Ministry of Education.

Being both classified as developing countries, South Africa and Lesotho would be faced with the same problems in their education system which include poor learner performance in Grade 12. In Lesotho very little research has addressed the factors influencing learner performance and therefore the researcher has decided to review South Africa research studies relating to the causes of poor performance in Grade12 because of the similarities between the countries.

From the literature reviewed the poor performance in Grade12 (COSC) in Lesotho can be, *inter alia*, attributed to the following:

- An inappropriate curriculum. Schools follow an irrelevant colonial style curriculum (previous British colony) that does not meet the needs of the majority of learners in a developing country (Seotsanyane, 2000:52).
- Lack of resources. Shortage of physical facilities (e.g. adequate classroom, libraries, laboratories), inadequate textbooks, shortage of learning and teaching aids (MoE, 2007:31; Hanushek, 1999:151).
- Shortage of relevant and qualified educators. In some learning areas such as Mathematics and Physical Science there is a high shortage of experienced and effective educators (Ntoi & Lefoka, 2002:2; Lesotho Review, 2000:102).
- Lack of discipline. Some learners are ill disciplined, uncontrollable and difficult to work with in class. Such learners deliberately ignore instructions from educators, leave the class during lessons, come to school late or disappear before school closes (Legotto, Maaga & Sebego, 2002:116).
- Problems in implementing school policies. In an attempt to reform the education system the government enacted new laws and adopted some new policies. However, not all policies are always to implement and often policies are ineffective (Sebatane, 1998:38).
- Lack of educator discipline, commitment and morale. The high rate of absenteeism and truancy amongst educators are proof of their low morale and lack of commitment. According to Ntoi and Lefoka (2002:3) causes for the latter are, *inter alia*, poor working conditions, unclear and confusing government policies and over crowded classrooms.
- Medium of instruction. The language policy in Lesotho prescribes English as medium of instruction in schools. The policy does not make provision for any special support or preparation to assist learners in meeting the challenges that English, as second language and medium of instruction presents to COSC learners (Setoi, 1999:63).
- Inadequate parental involvement. The majority of parents are not actively involved in their children's formal schooling. Lack of an accountable parental involvement mean there is not sufficient participation of parents in decision making, school activities, and problem solving, providing assistance and offering services to a school (Jaffe, 1998:465).

If learners fail to complete their high school education within the minimum time, the social cost of secondary education increases without necessarily increasing the social benefits (Legotlo, Maaga & Sebego, 2002:113). Education is needed to secure a good job.

### **1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The problem that will be investigated in the study pertains to an investigation into factors contributing to the poor performance of Grade 12(COSC) learners in Lesotho. In this regard the following research questions need to be answered:

- What are the factors that contribute to the poor performance of Grade 12 (COSC) learners in Lesotho?
- What effect does this poor performance in the final school year have on the learners?
- What strategies can be implemented to assist schools to develop and implement programmes to increase the Grade 12 (COSC) learner's performance in the public examination?

### **1.4 Definition of concepts**

This study of the factors contributing to the poor performance of Grade 12 learners in Lesotho will cover a wide spectrum of concepts. To ensure a clear understanding of the problem to be investigated it is deemed necessary to explain certain concepts.

#### **1.4.1 The gender issue**

In this study references to any gender include references to the other gender.

### **1.4.2 Academic performance**

According to Lemmer (2002:84) *academic performance refers to scores on standardized achievement tests. Tests which are constructed, administered, scored, reported and interpreted in consistent fashion to provide for the measurement of individual differences in as unambiguous a way as possible. Pearsall (1999:460) sees performance as a process, act or art of performing. The primary objective of achievement is to display one's competences, efficiency and intelligences that can be assessed by comparison with agreed standards or targets.*

In this study academic performance will be used as a measure to assess learner's *competencies and abilities to pass Grade 12 (COSC).*

### **1.4.3 Education**

The word "education" is derived from a Latin root "educare" which means "to draw forth or within" (Smith & Laslett, 1993:13). Formal education is the process of teaching and learning usually taking place at school, college or university. Du Toit and Kruger (1991:5) define education as the conscious, purposive and normative intervention by an adult in the life of a child. Education thus refers to the help and support which the learner which the learner receives from an educator with a view of *attaining responsible adulthood. Education designed to liberate people, helping them to become critical, creative, active and responsible members of society (Jaffe, 1998:29).*

### **1.4.4 Educator**

According to Deventer and Kruger (2003:36) an educator is any person that teaches, educates, or trains other persons or who provides therapy and educational psychological services at a school. Educators also provide instructional materials that are meaningful and stimulating to learners. Jaffe (1998:133) maintains that training of skills in the presentation

of course content gives learners hand on experience with real problems, value critical and encourage meaningful discourse with other learners in class.

In this study the term educator will be used in the sense of generating a learning situation characterised by appropriate activities which culminate in educative outcomes. The educator with the aim to enrich the learner's experience creates these activities.

#### **1.4.5 Failure rate**

The concept "failure rate" means the number of times unsuccessful results happen (Pearsall, 1999:670). In this study failure rate will refer to the Grade 12 (COSC) learners in Lesotho that fail the public examination they write in their final school year.

#### **1.4.6 Grade 12 learner**

Grade 12 learners are learners in their final year of study at high school level. At this stage learners prepare transition to college or university which is done through written public examination (Jaffe, 1998:480).

#### **1.4.7 Learning**

According to Van Rensburg, Landman and Bodenstein (1994:433) the term "learning" means to learn to know and be able to do, therefore, to progress through learning implies, amongst others, to internalize or make particular contents one's own, to master valuable conduct, experiences, and acts of volition and competency in certain skills. Learning implies:

- The acquisition of significant content;
- The realization of meaningful conduct, experience and acts of volition: and
- The revealing of meaningfully being able (to do) and skills.

Learning may be defined as a significant change in those relationships to reality which is known as behaving, experiencing, willing and knowing. Learning involves a change of behaviour as a result of what one has experienced and this may be shown in the way person thinks (cognitive) and feels (affective).

Mwamwenda (1995:120) sees learning as a continuous process lasting from the moment a person is born to the end of his life. It occurs not only at school through educator's conscious effort to transmit information but also at home and everywhere in society.

#### **1.4 .8 Cambridge Overseas School Certificate (COSC)**

Lesotho was a British protectorate and gained independence in 1996. Therefore until independence the schools in Lesotho were functioning according to British school system. Grade12 examinations were administered by the British Department of Education and therefore named Cambridge Overseas School Certificate (COSC) (Seotsanyane, 2000:2). The final examinations papers (COSC) were set and marked in Britain. Although the final school year examinations are at present administered by the Ministry of Education it is still known as COSC.

#### **1.5 Aims of the study**

The aims of this study are:

- To establish the factors which contribute to the poor performance of Grade 12 (COSC) learners in Lesotho.
- The main focus of the investigation is to identify and examine factors that cause poor performance in Grade 12 public examinations.

- To determine, in the light of the findings obtained, certain guidelines which can assist principals, educators, parents and learners on how to plan and what actions to take in order to improve the pass rate in Grade 12 (COSC) in Lesotho.
- To make certain recommendations that may serve as guidelines for the establishment of support programmes to assist schools, educators and learners to increase the Grade 12 pass rate.

## **1.6 METHOD OF RESEARCH**

Research with regard to this study will be conducted as follows:

- A literature study of available relevant literature.
- An empirical survey comprising a self-structured questionnaire to be completed by educators.

## **1.7 FURTHER COURSE OF THE STUDY**

Chapter two will be a literature review of the factors contributing to the poor performance of grade 12 (COSC).

In Chapter three the planning of the empirical research will be explained.

A presentation and analysis of the research data will be given in Chapter four.

A summary of the study, certain findings and recommendations will be offered in Chapter five.

## **1.8 SUMMARY**

An explanation of the problem, statement of the problem and the aims of the study were given in this chapter. The method of research was explained and certain relevant concepts were defined. Finally the further course of the study was set out.

In the next chapter a literature review of the factors contributing to poor performance of Grade 12 learners in Lesotho will be given.

## **CHAPTER 2**

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## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

In every society the concept failure causes shame, guilt and despair that can be overwhelming. It is difficult for any person to accept failure and when a learner fails in school he often feels (Tracy, 2002:14):

- that he has let himself down;
- he has let everyone else down;
- there is something wrong with him, e.g. he is stupid or jinxed; and
- because he fails in school he is a failure in life.

Poor academic performance is problematic in schools. It is not an objective 'given' but an agreed social category label that serves the vested interest of dominant, powerful groups in the society. Wearmouth, Glynn and Berryman (2005:113) argue that poor performance can be attributed to acquiring the label being treated as less-able, is likely to be the result of complex social, economic and political judgements and considerations.

Poor performance has caused many learners to lose faith in educators (Tracy, 2002:14). They feel that their educators are prejudiced against them and care very little either about the individual learner or their teaching. Much of the problem, according to (Calitz, Fuglestad & Lillejord, 2002: 41) derives from the treatment the learners receive from the educators and unintended consequences of school organisation and practice. The situation emphasizes poor performance in Lesotho high schools. This is evident from the report published by the Examination Council of Lesotho on the pass rate for the four years prior to 2007 that shows a decline of 10% in Grade 12 (COSC) (MoE, 2007:2). The problem of poor performance at school has caused disadvantaged learners to believe that the existing education system only affords learners from affluent homes to master some useful

concepts and skills to succeed in their external examination as they are able to afford the expensive private schools where educators and school management dedicate themselves to produce the best and desirable results (Setoi, 1999: 65).

However, many governments, including Lesotho are admitting that schools on their own may not provide sufficient response to learning and behavioural needs of learners from increasingly diverse cultural and community groups. They envisage a role for parents in liaising with schools to prevent social exclusion and reintegrating those already socially excluded into mainstream (Tett, Blair, Kay, Martin & Ranson, 2001:4). This liaison is driven by the Lesotho ministry of education with the aim to reduce the number of school drop-outs and the poor performance which are mostly observable in public schools in rural areas in Lesotho. This endeavour is expressed in key education policy documents such as the *National Administration Guidelines (NAG)* (Ministry of Education, 1999:47). The government in consultation with the schools has developed policies, plans and targets for improving the achievement of learners in general but Grade 12(COSC) learners still experience poor performance in schools.

*The aim of this chapter is to discuss the factors in the learners' family, home environment, and the factors pertaining to the school that are possible causes for the poor performance in Grade 12 in Lesotho.*

## **2.2 HOME BACKGROUND OF GRADE 12 LEARNERS**

The home background of the child has a significant bearing on his education (Deventer & Kruger, 2005: 34). It is not what a learner learns, but rather the circumstances from which a learner comes which affect his academic performance. The progress of the learner is significantly related to the level of contact parents have with the school and how enthusiastic parents are about their children's school attendance, and as actively supportive as they can be of their school work.

Despite the fact that parents are the primary role models of children, many learners do not have both parents caring for them. These children live in communities that, apart from socio-economic restrictions, are plagued by the difficulties that come with single parents, children without adults in the household and problems brought by the Aids pandemic (Naidu, Joubert, Mestry, Msogo & Ngobo, 2008:132). This means that many children come to school with a baggage of social, physical and emotional problems that prevent them from achieving success in the school. In addition, social problems in communities such as broken homes, substance and child abuse and many other criminal acts impact negatively on school operations to educate and promote learning (Naidu *et al.*, 2008:133).

### 2.2.1 Family structure

According to Thomlison (2007:33) a family traditionally consists of people who have a common history, experience a degree of emotional bonding and share goals and activities. Gubrium and Holstein (1990:4) say that families are persons living together and related by blood, marriage or adoption. According to Watkins (2000:254) family issues and concerns includes physical survival, social protection, education and development. These may involve acceptance, approval, belonging, identity, support and growth of individuals. This sense of belonging shapes both attitudes and behaviour of individual outcomes, as a result of quality parenting and family care.

There are five types of basic families according to (Groll, 1994:163), these are:

- **Nuclear family.** This type of family consists of husband wife and children.
- **Extended family.** This kind of family consists of a nuclear family and additional households that include two basic categories of people; those related in nature by blood and those related in law (by marriage or adoption).
- **Compound family.** In this family the father marries more than one wife (sethepu) and they live together as one big family. In Lesotho, this family is

legally accepted as a traditional practice. Its disadvantage is that, there are too many children in the family, for example, there may be twenty children in one family. In such a family it becomes difficult for the father to maintain their education as school fees are too high.

- **Single parent family.** This family is headed by a single never married, separated, deserted, divorced or widowed mother. This kind of family is currently the most prevalent in many societies, including Lesotho.

Single parent families are often among the poorest families today (Thomlison, 2007:43). Internal and external stressors often accompany these families resulting in irresponsible parents and creating antisocial behaviour in children. These kinds of families have a negative impact on the academic achievement of learners as they affect learners psychologically and emotionally, resulting in inattentive learners.

- **Child headed families.** Due to various circumstances, such as the Aids epidemic, elder children in families have turned to be parents of their younger siblings while on the other hand they are learners. These learners are facing a great challenge because it is not easy to act as both a parent and a learner. According to Thomlison (2007:47) this situation contributes to poor performance in schools because she indicates that such learners do not have enough time for their study.

### 2.2.2 Socio-economic status

According to Kyriakides (2004:281) researchers use the term socio-economic status to refer to the relative position of a family or individual on the hierarchical social structure based on their access to or control over wealth (family income), prestige (parental educational level and occupation), and power (social status in the community such as contacts within the community, group associations, and the community's perception of the family). In their research, Ballantine and Spade (2001:198) have found that the most important influence on learners' performance in school is the socio-economic status of learners, which is an

essential feature of their educational attainment. When the learner comes from an affluent background, he is likely to perform better in school. In other words, learners do not enter school on an equal footing but in a state of relative advantage or disadvantage.

According to Ho Sui-chu and Willms (1987:1) parents of higher socio-economic status are more involved in their children's education than parents of lower socio-economic status. This greater involvement fosters a more positive attitude toward school, improves homework habits, reduces absenteeism and dropping out of school and enhances academic performance. This means that learners from families with high socio-economic status often have more success and evince higher levels of academic achievement than learners from lower socio economic levels, and further attain higher educational degrees. As a result of this higher achievement and attainment, they obtain better jobs. Willms (1992:50) argues that the school's social environment has the ability to influence achievement above and beyond the socio- economic status of learners.

Across all socio-economic groups, parents face major challenges when it comes to providing optimal care and education for their children (Lemmer, 2003:87). For families in poverty, children are engulfed with inadequate housing, crowding, lack of privacy, and poor nutrition. Their families have low education attainment and earn less when employed which leads to unavoidable to payment of school fees, books, uniform and transport. Children travel long distances to attend school. The transport is often costly and time consuming, if a child misses a bus, it means he is late or misses lessons for the day. Learners from families with low socio economic status are at greater risk of attaining poor academic performance resulting in failure, dropping out of school or attaining lower educational qualifications than their peers from families with medium or higher socio-economic status.

### **2.2.3 Home environment**

For a learner to do his school work including homework, he must have a suitable place in which to operate. According to Mc Call, Evahn and Kratzer (1992: 45) the inadequate study facilities at a learner's home are a contributory factor to poor performance in school. These include a shared seat on a convertible couch in a crowded living room next to a noisy

kitchen. Educators assume that homework/school work is a natural extension of the school day. Failure to complete assignments after school means that learners are failing to accomplish tasks that educators assume necessary and appropriate for all learners. There is a correlation between hours of homework done and learner's achievement. (Lemmer, 2002:85).

Setoi (1999:62), in his research of the impact of second language acquisition on COSC learners in Lesotho, has found that the majority of the learners come from a situation where there are no proper place to do their schoolwork at home. One of the reasons may be poverty where the parents fail to provide for a room or a space where learners can do their schoolwork without being disturbed. The majority of the families are located in small houses where it is impossible to reserve a room or a space for study purposes. Home environment in which children grow up is very important, it can improve both the academic achievement of the children and the relationship between home and school (LeCompte & Dwokin, 2001:63).

Allen (Stern, 2000: 48) expresses the importance of a quiet and proper place to study in the following statements:

- The place to study should be in a quiet environment because a noisy environment provides an excuse for not concentrating.
- It must be possible for the learners to eliminate all potential distractions when studying or doing homework. TV's, radios, etc. can be switched off.
- There should be no major continuous distractions to compete with the learners' attention to his schoolwork. Traffic noises from a highway, people talking, etc. contribute to the learner's disturbance when trying to concentrate on his studies.

According to Stern (2000: 50) the following are important determinants for a learner's academic achievement:

- The amount of homework done by the learner.
- The physical condition of the home where the learner stays.
- The study space available to the learner.

In a study of learners' home environment researchers have found that there is a difference between learners who have their own study rooms and learners who share study rooms. It has been noticed that learners with their own study rooms score higher marks than learners sharing rooms for study purposes. This implies that the poor performance of learners may be partly due to poor studying facilities at home (Brown & Duke, 2008: 431).

It can be argued that for a learner to do his home work, he must have a suitable place in which to operate. Studying is a job, it needs to be in a workshop that is situated in a quiet place in which one can concentrate and capture well what is learned; although some parents due to poverty are unable to provide a suitable place to study. Learners need a conducive atmosphere that allows independence and freedom to study for better academic performance at home. It is not important only how many hours learners spend studying but how much they have learnt that contributes to academic achievement (Kanuka, Heller & Jugdev, 2008: 129).

#### **2.2.4 Parent involvement**

Parent involvement has a significant effect on the quality of the learner's experience of teaching and learning in the school, and also on their results. Without cooperation between the parent and the educator, the child cannot be sufficiently educated. The parent and the educator each have a special and important role to play in the education of the child (Deventer & Kruger, 2008:9). Benefits of parental involvement include improved school performance, reduced drop out rates, a decrease in delinquency, and a more positive attitude towards the school.

According to Deventer and Kruger (2008:9) the following are some ways in which parental involvement may contribute to better teaching and learning and of the culture of learning and teaching:

- The engendering of a more positive spirit between parent and educator.
- The restoration of trust between the home and the educator.
- The educator can rely on an educator's support.
- Knowledge of the home circumstances of learners helps the educator in his instructional task.
- The improvement of the learner's learning performance.
- The improvement of school attendance.
- The elimination of learning and behavioural problems.
- An increase in the learner's sense of security and emotional stability.

Parents who are involved in some way or another in the education of their children create a climate that is conducive to teaching and learning. Individual schools cannot alone rekindle the culture of learning and teaching. Schools need the help and partnership of parents and community to ensure effective teaching and learning. According to Lemmer (2003:115) without a healthy educator parent partnership, the restoration of culture of learning and teaching will remain just another unfulfilled dream and learners will continue to perform poorly. However, schools are relatively ineffective at communicating with parents and often sabotage them. This can be attributed to exclusion of parents from school activities. Related to this is educators' belief that parents and other members of the community infringe on their professional terrain in becoming involved in the school activities. Because of educator's exclusion of parents in the schools, learners intensify poor performance and low self-esteem (Calitz, Fuglestad & Lillejord, 2002:123).

According to Benharian and McMahan (2008:724) parental involvement in school activities has a positive effect on the academic performance of the learners. This is apparently not always a reality. A total absence of parents' meaningful involvement in school activities is generally observed in Lesotho high schools. Associated with this is educators' inability to create and maintain a school environment that is physically and psychologically conducive to welcoming parents resulting in very poor academic performance by learners (Sebatane,

Ambrose, Molise, Mathibeli, Motlomelo, Nenty, Nthunya and Ntoi, 2000:28). According to Kyriakides (2004:281) learners at all levels do better academic work and have more positive school attitudes, high aspirations and other positive behaviour if they have parents involved in their education. Education flourishes in a home where parents make provision for both physical and psychological needs of the child (Prinsloo, Voster & Sibaya, 1996:265).

Without collaboration between parents and educators the child cannot be sufficiently educated. Parent involvement in their children's education creates a climate that is conducive to teaching and learning. Parents will only be active participants in the school activities if they are empowered to do so. However, for various reasons, some educators deny parental involvement in their schools because they believe that the parents and the community may infringe on their professional terrain in becoming involved in school activities (Lemmer, 2002:150). On the other hand, some parents feel that educators are trained to educate their children and that it is not their responsibility to monitor their children's school work even to support them. Parental involvement has a profound influence on both academic performance and culture of learning and teaching (Lemmer, 2002:150).

### **2.3 THE SCHOOL**

A school is a service organization that is committed to teaching and learning (Hoy & Miskel, 2005:33). The ultimate goal of the school is to enlarge the learners' knowledge, experience, and imaginative understanding and thus develop an awareness of moral values, capacity for enjoyment and to enable a learner to enter the world after formal education as an active participant in the society, a responsible contributor to it and capable of independence as possible (Bush, 2003:86). It is at school where educators and learners continually expand their capacities to create and achieve, where novel patterns of thinking are encouraged, where collective aspirations are nurtured, where learners learn how to learn together and where a school as an organization expands its capacity for innovation and problem solving (Hoy & Miskel, 2005:33). Although, sometimes failure emerges with negative results that impact on a learner's social life.

If schools are to be effective learning organisations they must find ways to (Campher, Du Preez, Lock & Shaba, 2003:82):

- Support teaching and learning.
- Enhance organisational adaptation; develop organisational cultures and climates that are open, collaborative and self regulating.
- Attract individuals who are secure, efficacious and open to change.
- Prevent vicious and illegitimate politics from displaying the legitimate activities of teaching and learning.
- Transformational leadership.
- Open and continuous communication.
- Shared decision making.
- Create schools that have the capacity to respond effectively not only to contemporary problems, but also to new and emerging issues of school effectiveness.

An effective transformational education system that schools must implement requires the commitment of those in the driving seat in terms of leadership. This commitment must be tempered by the desire to produce successful results so as to put learners at the level of furthering their studies rather than to produce undesirable results of failure that destroy learners future life ( Sebatane, 2000:67).

### **2.3.1 School management**

School management can be defined as an executive function for carrying out agreed policy, this include a set of activities directed towards efficient and effective utilization of organisational resources such as educators in order to achieve organisational goals (Bush, 2003:4). Poor school management is notable through poor performance or learners dropping out of school before completion of high school education. In the case of Lesotho,

school management is largely in the hands of church missionaries (Lesotho Review, 2000:2). Associated with this is a poor culture of learning and teaching.

Effective school management creates an environment in which a sound culture of learning and teaching will prevail, and which will ensure the successful execution of the instructional school. In such an environment, educators feel secure and they are committed to their task and perform it confidently (Deventer & Kruger, 2008:223). A secure and sound school environment depends, *inter alia*, on how a principal applies his management and leadership skills within the dimensions of the organisational structure and climate of the school as an organisation (Du Plessis, Conley, & Du Plessis, 2007:133). Teaching and learning need to be given careful consideration and should be managed responsibly. Van Westhuizen, Mentz and Nieuwoudt (1999:116) say that ineffective management is one of the contributory factors to a breakdown in learning and thus contribute to the poor performance in most of the schools. In schools where management's authority and power are eroded by the powers, rights and freedom of learners the policies and collective agreements made at higher levels to retain authority, fail to curb learners' disruptive behaviour. According to Deventer and Kruger (2008:65) the purpose of management in all areas of school is to enable the creation and support of circumstances under which high quality teaching and learning can take place.

Competing demands that result from changing environments place big challenges on the management of education and the leadership of the schools. This is true irrespective of whether a school is in an urban environment or an isolated rural (Sebatane *et al*, 2000:28). According to Kydd, Grawford and Riches (1997:54) school management has to reconcile the diverse interests of people involved in the education of the learner distributing limited funds, allocating time, staff and resources, sorting problems which individuals may not be able to handle, such as major disciplinary issues and safety concerns. Balancing all these pressures and ensuring that effective teaching and learning goes well is the responsibility of the school management. The important change is to move from the notion of management as a descriptor to management as an activity. It should be an activity which is engaged in by all members of an educational organization, senior staff, educators and non educators and learners.

Weick (Chilisa, 1997:105) describes ineffective schools as 'loosely coupled' systems that have weak linkages between administrative system and relatively autonomous classrooms. Hence efforts at school improvement have to contend with the organisational structure that could be conducive or detrimental to the implementation of school improvement. In support, Lesotho Review (2000:2) contents that administration need to be improved through advisory school committees to bring about conducive teaching and learning situation. Chilisa (1997:110) depicts schools as organised anarchies and argues that much organisational activity in the school is characterised by under goals, unclear technology and fluid membership that make teaching and learning ambiguous henceforth producing poor results.

In the case of Lesotho, school management is largely in the hands of church missionaries (Lesotho Review, 2008:2). The school governance and management is hierarchically and authoritarian in nature. Locus of control and decision making powers have resided in proprietors and minimal participation from school principal and educators and not from parents. The proprietor views a school as his domain, organising and managing it according to his particular frame of reference and leadership style (Sebatane *et al.*, 2000:28). Principals are vulnerable of under- responsibility that waits for the proprietor to solve their school problems. While it is true that school principals face enormous challenges and difficulties, such as poor academic performance in high schools in the country. This indicates that poor management need immediate change to ensure that every learner in the school has access to maximum opportunities for achieving the highest quality education. The main goal of the school should be to improve the delivery of teaching and learning and ensure that every learner in the school has maximum opportunities for achieving the highest quality education (Naidu, *et al.*, 2008:5).

The role of management in schools in Lesotho context as in many countries needs change from authoritarian, hierarchical, non-consultative and non- participative to one of school self management (Naidu *et al.*, 2008:8) where educational stakeholders, educators, parents and learners are empowered to improve and develop their schools. The Ministry of Education and school proprietors should seriously discuss the problems of education in Lesotho under the theme; control and management of education in Lesotho Sebatane (2000:32) to improve and develop schools. Van Westhuizen *et al.* (1999:116) argues that poor management is one of the contributory factors to break down learning in schools

resulting in poor academic performance. This indicates that school principals together with the Ministry of Education as the steering of the schools have to struggle to establish a climate of cohesion and trust to avoid operating within a tightly structured bureaucracy where the collapse of a culture of learning and teaching is profound in nature. The principals, as the lead learners, must embrace the concept of life-long learning and instill a culture of learning throughout the schools (Du Plessis, Conley & Du Plessis, 2007:133).

School management that accommodates its stakeholders has a potential to produce desirable academic performance that give learners chance to climb up the educational ladder that opens doors for future learning. In contrast ineffective school management that lack legitimacy to unite all parties involved towards the attainment of a common goal becomes a victim of subcultures that pull in different directions thus produce poor performance (Bush, 2003:33).

School management need to assess their own management styles against features that contribute in poor academic performance in Grade 12 (COSC). It is important, however, that the Ministry of Education in Lesotho empowers the schools into democratic governance nevertheless guards against authoritarian rule attitude. This implies greater responsibility and accountability from the school principals. Lemmer (2002:145) argues that the establishment of democratic governance in schools should have a desire to make schools more efficient and effective to improve the quality of education and raise levels of learner performance. This can be achieved when the principals are given access to redress the inequalities in the management system and create an environment whereby all stakeholders access the maximum opportunity for quality education.

### **2.3.2 School policies**

According to Wearmouth, Glynn and Berryman (2005:225) and Campher *et. al.* (2003:82) school policy means a general plan of action or framework that is designed to accomplish the aims and objectives of the school. A school policy sets guidelines as to how persons should exercise their powers and make decisions, it directs every activity at achieving a set goal and should be formulated in a clear manner (Deventer & Kruger, 2008:91). A school

policy therefore serves as guide for making management, functional and administrative decisions and it reflects the culture of the school.

School policy is an essential action that involves a process of conscious decision making and constant review. Policy making creates broad general guidelines, implies planning, is related to aims and is based on shared values and ethos. School policy must reflect and promote both coherence and diversity within teaching and learning (Deventer & Kruger, 2008: 93). When the culture of the school does not support the policy of the school, problems are likely to arise in the implementation process. This is evident by the Lesotho language policy which does not have any provision for the special preparation of learners to meet the challenges that English as a second language and medium of instruction presents to the learners. The challenge is exacerbated when learners have to struggle for academic success in English as an adapt language, where the government designated bilingual education as the norm (Setoi, 1999: 54).

Setoi (1999:49), in his research on second language acquisition, has found that the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate (COSC) examination results in Lesotho are progressively manifesting a downward slide as exemplified by an increasingly poor performance of high school learners. The reason for this might be that the government's language policy in particular does not ensure a good foundation. Hence education is driven by individualistic interests and needs of the small but powerful outward looking minority. Thus the distortion within the education goes beyond the limits of individual groups, communities and the nation (Seotsanyane, 2000:67).

The school policy can be seen as subordinate to the main national policy, and it is planned with the fixed national policy in mind. School policies are manuals and authority for decision-making and they have an impact on every body concerned (Campher *et. al.*, 2003:84). Some of the national policies that can be included when planning school policies are (Wearmouth, Gylmn & Berryman, 2005: 225):

- Language policy which stipulates the medium of instruction.
- Discipline procedures that can be followed.

- Admission policy which provides guidelines on who may be admitted learner.
- When to hold parents meetings.
- How to distribute financial contributions to the running of the school, for example, school fees.
- Mission statement and vision of the school.

These policies must be realistic and fair, within the framework of the different laws of education related to educational goals. They must have long term validity, written and available to all educators and give guidance to task performance (Hoy & Miskel, 2005:67).

However, Van der Mescht and Tyala (2008:189) argue that some schools function without clear procedures, firm guidelines and clear lines of accountability. This obvious truth is borne out when one chooses to visit a dysfunctional school. According to Legotlo, Maaga and Sebegu (2002: 116) and Milner and Khoza (2008) a dysfunctional school is one in which the principal has a wide range of mismanagement; educators have low participation due to lack of recognition, there is no clear mission statement, there is favouritism and the policies are constructed without consultation of other stakeholder. Related to this is learner's risk of dropping out and poor performance.

### **2.3.3 School climate**

According to Deventer and Kruger (2008:15) school climate is the quality and frequency of interactions between all the stakeholders involved in the school. A school climate results from a dynamic interaction of buildings and physical facilities, human factors, which is everything relating to people in the school, organisational and administrative structures, and school culture (Naidu *et al.*, 2008:187). Every school has its own unique culture. This means that every school's culture has a significant effect on decision making, school management structures, group behaviour, work organisation and work control motivation and job satisfaction (Kruger & Steinman, 2003:22). One of the important issues in education is restoration of school cultures that emphasise learning and teaching. Naidu *et al.* (2008:182) maintain that such culture involves a positive attitude amongst role players

and the presence of quality learning processes. The role of education managers in all the programmes of the school impacts on the tone and ethos of learning and teaching.

In a school where the culture allows a shared sense of collegiality and collective desire to achieve, educators will, as a result create a more constructive, productive and positive environment which is conducive to teaching and learning. Deventer and Kruger (2008:4) assert that in a school where there is an established teaching and learning culture, the main focus is on all aspects of academic achievement and professional development of educators. Regardless of this, there is a general lack of sound culture of teaching and learning in some schools. Calitz, Fuglestad and Lillejord (2002:246) assert that educators *do not have a desire to teach, they are often late for classes or sent notes to their classes while they are in the staff room, busy preparing notes or marking scripts.* At the base of all these, features lay poor academic performance of Grade 12 (COSC) learners coupled with learner dropout. Every school requires effective leadership to help examine the actual situation in the school to accomplish the mission of the school.

According to Hoy (Campher *et al.*, 2003:25) some schools function under a threatening climate where the physical environment is not welcoming and conducive to learning for example:

- The social environment does not promote communication.
- The affective environment does not promote sense of belonging and self-esteem.
- Learners are not allowed to participate in decision making and are expected to accept decision without question.
- Learners are also seen as being irresponsible, undisciplined, and untrustworthy and are always in trouble of one kind or another and
- Educators are often less involved in their work and staff morale is low.

Naidu *et al.* (2008:193) say the role of education leaders is to create an environment that emphasises learning and inhibits factors that hinder learning. This can be achieved if leaders promote effective teaching and learning. Calitz, Fuglestad and Lillejord (2002:246) say the most effective schools are those that inform educators about their duties stating

clearly who is responsible for carrying out and coordinating specific tasks and involve them in decision making of the curriculum. Naidi *et al.* (2008:193) state that a healthy climate can be observed in all aspects of the school. This means that high- quality academic performance can be achieved when the leaders of schools consider the demands of educators and involve parents in teaching and learning by informing them about school requirements including academic performance of their children. Although Milner and Khoza (2008:155) state that parental involvement is essential, parents do not contribute towards their children's schooling, in stead the principal and educators are bombarded with the unreasonable demands from parents and the community and the press for academic excellence is limited ( Kydd, Crawford & Riches, 2002: 176). As a result of all these factors, there is strong emphasis on controlling learners by the use of punitive methods. From these kinds of schools, poor performance which is not taken into consideration and are observable in most of the public schools in Lesotho where school policies are planned without the knowledge of the educators (Seotsanyane, 2000:35).

School climate has to allow educators freedom to participate in school activities and conversation is shaped by interest and participation rather than rigid procedures (Hobby & Smith, 2002:8). A school climate that allows educators freedom to participate creates a learning environment that influences every learner's motivation to learn and perform to the best of his ability. In support, Wearmouth, Glynn and Berryman (2005:162) say educators' own behaviour and skills directly influence classroom climate and originates from school climate.

A supportive and collaborative school climate/culture and effective teaching and learning are more likely to take place where every one is treated with respect and fairness. Sharing common values that place learning at the centre of the school, is of particular importance for successful learning environment (Naidu *et al.*, 2008:193). The school climate that embraces culture of teaching and learning is therefore closely bound to a strategic management as determined by values, vision and mission. Therefore school culture that practices a shared sense of collegiality among educators and parents perpetuate successful academic performance.

### 2.3.4 Curriculum

There is a wide spectrum of definitions of curriculum. The term 'curro' I (run) has a Latin origin that suggests race, a track or race course (Printy, 2008: 187). A notable feature of this description is that it emphasizes the role of the personal experience of an individual as he runs the race of life (Lemmer, 2002:97). The function of curriculum is to structure different subjects, learning areas and activities in a school in such a way as to accomplish educative teaching (Deventer & Kruger, 2005: 249). According to Chilisa (1997:115) poorly practiced curricular can lead to prepare learners for future.

Martin and Miller (1999: 12) say school curricular should be thoughtfully planned and ought to make provision for compulsory and optimal learners' activities on the form of examination. Clear instructional teaching techniques can be employed to assist learners in developing academic skill. In complement, learners need to realise that their primary task in school is to learn basic academic skills; this implies that when preparing the curriculum, one needs to note the nature and the needs of the learners and their future. In contrast, the content of what is taught in Lesotho is irrelevant to the needs of the learners. The curriculum in Lesotho remains rooted in the West minister inspired curriculum as it was colonized (Seotsanyane, 2000:35). To further drive home the issue of irrelevance, a good example is the O level English examination paper of 1999 which asked learners to write about the Titanic, a very remote and foreign concept to Basotho learners which made the majority of learners fail COSC English in 1999. Surely there were more relevant events that occurred in the country that could be considered (Seotsanyana, 2000:35).

According to Machobane (2000:48) Lesotho's government has to change the European oriented content of a syllabus that is difficult to learn in schools, colleges and University. The present Lesotho curriculum undermines the development of an empowered liberated citizenry, in the teaching of all subjects as there is no rooting of these subjects in the Sesotho culture and history. Furthermore it is irrelevant to learner's interests and potentials as well as to the national and local occupational and social realities (Sebatane *et al.*, 2000:31). It impacts on the continually increasing poor performance of COSC learners. Education in Lesotho has to introduce education content that will instil in learners a sense of pride in their own culture and identity as Africans and furthermore it should allow them chances to continue their studies (Machobane, 2000:48).

Du Plessis, Conley and Du Plessis (2007:47) say that the curriculum must reinforce and further the skills and attitude of the learners. This indicates that through a well planned curriculum, learners will be prepared for success in fulfilling various life roles and further focus on to creating favourable learning conditions as regard time, teaching strategies and learning success. For instance, what learners learn depends on what and how educators teach. And what and how teachers teach again depends on the knowledge, skills and commitment they bring to their teaching. In the case of Lesotho learners do not take an active part in learning, and do not use higher order cognitive skills such as inferring, analysing synthesis or evaluating. This situation seems to be attributed to learners' over-dependency on the educators as sole source of information (Sebatane *et al.*, 2000: 31). According to Naidu *et al.* (2008:190) learner's academic achievement is higher when the role of curriculum is clearly identified and effectively implemented.

According to Printy (2008:236) when educators are unqualified the aims and purposes of the curriculum will not be fulfilled because such educators lack skills to address and implement the curriculum as desired. In addition, learners often experience difficulty understanding the language accent and communication patterns of migrant educators during the process of learning and teaching. Differences over modes of communication and language nuances causes hostility and affect understanding of curricular contents. Therefore, such educators are unable to maintain authority and discipline in the classroom thus they create a classroom atmosphere that does not allow effective teaching and learning. This situation contributes to poor performance in Grade 12 (COSC). It is important that both the educator and the learner work towards the attainment of a common goal (Martin & Miller, 1999:155).

To ensure that the curriculum is well implemented, clear instructional techniques can be employed to assist learners develop their academic skills. The curriculum should also be relevant to every learner's interest and potentials as well as to national and local occupational and social realities. To achieve this, schools need adequate and relevant human resources that will be able to utilize the curriculum as desired.

### 2.3.5 Language

Language is not only a tool for communication but it is also a resource for creative thought, a framework for understanding the world, a key to new knowledge, human history and a source of pleasure and inspiration (Kern, 2008: 367).

English is the language of power world wide, and it is the main language of communication, learning and assessment in the Lesotho school system. It also carries most of the world's written knowledge and it is the second or foreign language of the majority of the learners in Lesotho. According to a recent survey, only 21% of the population can speak English fluently in Lesotho (Seotsanyana, 2001:48).

However, the linguistic situation in Lesotho is a complex one. Lesotho gained independence in 1966, but retained the colonial language English as a legacy for government and major societal functions (Seotsanyana, 2000:41). Accordingly English has been designated as the medium of instruction in all educational establishments, and either parents or society at large has never neglected its paramount importance. Acquiring literacy in English is a challenging task facing the school children in Lesotho.

Some learners do have sufficient linguistic capital to do well in the school system. In Lesotho, there are some schools with high standards that prepare learners to entrance level for universities worldwide (Lesotho Review, 2008:2). These are children of the elite who attend private and expensive English medium schools. These learners have access to an environment conducive for second language acquisition (Setoi, 1999:81). The English medium private schools have well qualified educators who regularly attend local and international workshops on the latest methods of English as second language acquisition (Lefoka, 2003: 95). The schools have all the necessary facilities for quality education such as libraries, books, and other equipment. Such schools have low learner educator ratios enabling educators to offer individual assistance. Most of these schools are concentrated in the cities where children of all nations are found. These learners acquire the English linguistic capital that the education system demands, and are in a possession of the official language which is essential to participate in the education system and have higher chances

of success than learners in the public schools with a poor command of the English language (Setoi, 1999:45).

In public schools, especially in rural areas, learners experience difficulty because they are required to study all the subjects through the medium of instruction, English, in which their linguistic capital is low. The majority of these learners do not have the necessary cognitive and academic language skills needed to master the content and subject terminology (McKay, 1995: 148-149). The inability of these learners to score high in the public examinations allows the political status quo to blame learners and families for poor performance and absolve them taking responsibility for that learner's progress in schools (Setoi, 1999:47). According to Setoi (1999:47) Lesotho's language policy is such that learners are taught in their mother tongue from Grade 1 to 4. During these initial years of primary education English is taught for 30 minutes during each day of the school and there is no increase in this time as learner's progress through the grades. These 30 minutes per day gives learners not enough exposure to English which is the medium of instruction and official language that is used for external examinations. It is thus evident that Lesotho language policy in education contributes to the high failure rate of COSC learners (Setoi, 1999:47).

The difference between English medium schools and public schools is reflected in the school external examination (Van der Walt & Hattingh, 2007:17) where learners from English medium schools are doing well because they are prepared for English language examinations. Learners with high English proficiency are able to write longer pieces with fewer errors than less proficient ones (Van der Walt & Hattingh, 2007: 17). This examination is particularly important because without a pass in the English language, candidates cannot get a school certificate and cannot be admitted to the National University of Lesotho (Seotsanyana, 2000:19). According to Tracy (2002: 45) learners in the public schools have limited English proficiency and cannot cope and do well in external examination because they are not competent in the usage of English as it is their second language. These learners experience difficulty with academic concepts that include new terms and abstract ideas that are less easily understood. As a result, the Lesotho education system guarantees failure for the learners who are poor (Setoi, 1999:46).

On the basis of these problems caused by language, the state apparatus takes no precautions to ensure a good foundation and therefore hides behind the examination and seek the fault with the learners, yet it is noticeable whose children are failing and whose children are passing in Lesotho ( Setoi,1999: 47).

### **2.3.6 Examination anxiety**

The majority of learners in public schools come to the external examination room ill-prepared due a variety of reasons, and a small minority succeeds in the high school examination (Sebatane, 2002: 21). Examinations are more threat provoking than most educational settings. The formality and time-pressures conspire with the balance between hope for success and fear of failure firmly towards the latter. Only in highly confident learners anxiety and tension will enhance performance.

According to Van Schoor (1994:65) examination time is fraught with tension and anxiety; learners are inclined to make unnatural demands on their bodies and mental capacity. In this regard, they work long hours, have insufficient sleep, neglect exercises, eat unhealthy and engage in variety of practices to which they are not normally accustomed. Consequently they disrupt their normal routine which results in further tension and poor performance. Van Schoor (1994:66) asserts that learners should not deviate drastically from their normal way of life and study routine during examination time.

Academic preparation for examination is extremely important, since this is the basis on which the learner will be tested. In preparation for examination Anderson and Minker (2007:56) encourages learners to prepare calmly and thoughtfully. This implies that learners should start working in good time. It is of no use if learners wait until just before the examinations to begin studying since then they create a potentially dangerous situation which may cause considerable tension and failure. Instead they should reduce their tension level.

Mental and emotional symptoms characteristic of examination are (Van Schoor, 1994:67)

- Problems in recalling and remembering materials that has been studied.
- Difficulty in understanding simple instructions.
- Difficult in thinking, arranging answers logically, reasoning and problem solving.
- Feeling of panic that there will not be sufficient time to complete an examination.
- Inability to choose between two alternatives when required to do so.
- Impression of humiliation if examination performance is poor.

The above symptoms contribute to the poor performance during the final examination, if experienced as such by learners.

Examination anxiety and the accompanying tension are frequently caused by negative thinking without valid reasons (Anderson & Minker, 2007:55). A learner should learn to identify negative thoughts and to replace them with positive statements. In this manner, tension will be concentrated and eliminated. Van Schoor (1994:75) suggests that for learners to eliminate negative thinking and attitudes that makes them to fail examinations, they should simply tell themselves to stop thinking negatively before they affect their performance. Success breeds success. This means that the greater success learners achieve in academic tasks, the greater confidence the learner will have in him and the better he will perform in the future. Examination anxiety is a real feeling and can be a tremendous detriment to learners who suffer from it.

### **2.3.7 Resources**

Lack of certain vital resources at any school is signified as being problematic for effective education. For quality learning to take place, schools must be equipped with the necessary resources such as teaching resources (textbooks), human resources (educators) and

However, many schools are faced with limited resources which make the provision of successful learning difficult. The Lesotho Review (2008:103) indicates that due to fluctuating availability of educators and due to the fact that textbooks are too expensive for the learners, COSC exam results in Lesotho do not always reflect the learner's aptitude for further education. It is further inferred from this that poor facilities and educator turnover have a negative impact on school performance. The overall lack of science and workshop equipment, and materials is alarming. Where such equipment and materials are available, the evidence is that many of them are not properly used. Many of the laboratories are inoperative because of lack of water and/or electricity or gas. Libraries, where they exist, are often used as bookstores. These factors contribute to a poor educational environment and explain the continued decline in Grade 12 (COSC) examination results (Sebatane *et. al.*, 2000:31). The impact of basic resources lead to complex problems of low morale and lack of commitment and mostly have negative impact on learners academic achievement and mean poor performance in Grade 12 ( Mahomed & Venter, 2001: 49).

Educational resources are valuable and necessary in teaching and learning in the classroom. Machobane (2000:56) argues that more schools are talk chalk and they do not have proper resources and teaching and learning becomes difficult and therefore lack of resources contribute to the poor performance of COSC. The unavailability of resources in a school has negative impact on learners' achievement and leads to poor performance. Words alone are insufficient to explain concepts to learners to capture and retain their attention and interest. Educational resources prevent the blind memorization of words without any association to definite object. Chilisa (1997:102) states that educational resources boost the morale of both the educator and learners and they inspire both the spirit of teaching and learning. Therefore resources in education either physical, human or learning aids are important in teaching and learning.

### **2.3.8 Educators**

Educators are facilitators with overarching aims to create self directed and responsible learners who as a result will have well developed critical and creative skills (Benharian & McMahan, 2008:725). Positive perceptions of educators promote good performance in learning while negative perceptions have an adverse effect. Milner and Khoza (2008:158) say that the quality of an education system is more dependent on the quality of its

educators than any other single factor. To achieve high a pass rate education should deliberate on the aspects of educators that are pertinent to establishing a purposeful education system.

### **(1) Educator as a total person**

Educators are involved in a variety of school activities and in each activity certain personal traits affect education success or failure. These personal traits can be identified as good, for example, such as the educator is expected to be fair, democratic, alert, original, responsible, stable, self assured, friendly and dignified. While an educator with a negative trait is identified as biased, autocratic, bleak, callous, boring, stereotyped, apathetic, unimpressive, insecure, evasive, hasty and anxious. These educators' characteristics affect learners' performance either positively or negatively (Prinsloo, Voster & Sibaya, 1996:45).

Educators' traits can reflect their physical appearance; presentable appearance of educators should as far as possible display respect and integrity (Soon, 1999:49). Educators are role models of learners; their appearance has the inspiration to motivate and influence academic achievement and career orientation of learners. On the other hand, sloppy- groomed educators de-motivate learners such that they do not take their school work very serious as they value education as meaningless due to what they see from their educators. For this reason poor performance can be attributed to the unpleasant personal appearance of educators (Prinsloo, Voster & Sibaya, 1996:45).

Educators' social life also has an influence on the poor performance of COSC learners. Frustrated educators because of low motivation, for example, lack of recognition for good work, inadequate salary and excessive paper work, negatively deploy low commitment and are aimlessness in their school work (Purkey & Novak, 1984: 46). Due to the harsh realities of school management, educators' absentee themselves from duty without replacing the lost time, this impact negatively on learners academic performance. In this regard Soon (1999:50) argues that educators should be emotionally stable as emotional and affective stability is one of the most important requirements for establishing sound

educator- learners' relationships. When there is good relationship between educators and learners, education becomes enjoyable and effective thus it produces good results.

## **(2) Educators as facilitators**

According to Mahomed and Venter (2001: 48) educators who are serious about their school work are presented by knowledgeable and teaching proficiency, commitment and dedication, educators' spontaneity and understanding and patience. Learners who do not experience these qualities in their education in all probability indicate life and learning as problematic which in turn could imply high failure rate.

Educators are persons who teach, who impart knowledge. This is only possible if educators possess knowledge and are capable of conveying it (Prinsloo, Voster & Sibaya, 1996:47). Without learners textbooks and writing books proper teaching and learning can not take place. Educators use textbooks for the purpose of teaching and learning and even interpreting the syllabus and simplify the content for consumption by learners so as to perform well in their examination.

In spite of this, some educators, due to lack of professional skills, fail to display relevant approaches to learners who are in need of their assistance. It is notable that in Lesotho, due to a shortage of qualified educators and unemployment, the graduates of other faculties such as tourism get into teaching without proper teaching skills to approach learners. Chilisa (1999:124) says unprofessional educators resort to writing notes on the board with little or no explanation and using difficult words that learners can not understand. The quality of results is not enough for educators to be professionally qualified without being competent (Seotsanyana, 2000:69).

## **(3) Educators as managers of their classrooms**

Educators are also responsible for orderly and well- structured behaviour in the classroom. This can only be achieved if an educator is a disciplined person (Prinsloo, Voster & Sibaya,

1996:55). Learners who are consistently treated with dignity and respect are less likely to cause problems in the classroom. Conversely, learners who think that educators are out to embarrass them and that the education system is geared to convince them that they are worthless, unable and irresponsible will find ways to rebel disrupt and seek revenge (Purkey & Novak, 1984: 52). In this kind of classrooms learners become exposed to the poor performance as they are not fully engaged in their school work.

Beyond manifesting respect for learners, good discipline is developed and maintained by educators who believe that teaching should be as interesting and involving as possible. Discipline problems diminish when learners are interested and involved in their school work. *The ability to invite good discipline depends on the educators perceptions about what constitute misbehaviour.* The identification and acknowledgement of appropriate learner behaviour helps set a positive tone and encourages both the educator and the learner to aim at more beneficial expectations and activities (Smith & Laslett, 1993:67).

#### **(4) Educators as decision makers**

For effective teaching and learning, certain conditions must prevail in the classroom and an educator as a classroom decision maker needs to create and control the conditions in a way that assures successful learning. Giovannelli (2003:294) notes that the systematic and rational decision making lies at the very heart of professionalism. This would explain why the educators have power to make decisions in their classrooms.

Muijs and Reynolds (2005:116) maintain that one way of developing a positive atmosphere in the classroom is creating a warm, supporting environment in which learners feel unthreatened and are therefore willing to make a positive contribution to the lessons to decrease the high failure rate experienced by learners in ineffective schools. The enthusiasm of educators is an important factor in successful teaching and learning.

Good (Giovannelli, 2003:176) describes effective educators as those who's decisions complement their instructional activities, lesson planning maximize learners participation

during seatwork and have a task oriented approach to instruction time. Powell (2003:178) says adopting a positive view of academic success in high schools is important because adopting negative views release learners dropping out of school, and a high failure rate. These can alter the individual's life course detrimentally. Persons who do not graduate from high school are more likely to be unemployed, to earn less money and to rely on public assistance. Females who are not high school graduates tend to have children at a younger age (Powell, 2003:176).

#### **(5) Educators' expectations**

Educators' expectations of learners' achievement and learners actual outcomes is merely the result of educators having accurate perceptions of their learner's ability (Moletsane, 2002:222). Educators tend to behave differently towards their learners, this means that the treatment learners receive from their educators communicates how they are expected to behave socially and perform academically (Kruger & Adams, 2002:222).

According to Muijs & Reynolds (2005:113) educator expectations can affect learners in a variety of ways. Educators, who pay closer attention to high- expectancy learners and spend more time with them, but fail to give feedback to responses from low expectancy learners and have a negative affect on the latter and never praised them for their good work. Of course, one could argue that educators' expectations can affect learners negatively or positively. A typical example given by Moletsane (2000:48) is the poor performance of matric learners that is caused by teaching strategies that favour boys more than girls. Moletsane (2000:23) says educators pay more attention to boys, call on them to solve learning problems and praise them or discipline them more than girls. The reason for this is that traditionally, boys for centuries have been treated with various degrees of tolerance by their cultures. Therefore educators must avoid negative expectations of the learners as they hamper learners' progress and they turn their habits into prejudice.

## **2.4 SUMMARY**

From the different literature sources, common causes for the poor performance in Grade 12 can arise from factors such as lack of parental involvement, an inappropriate curriculum, poor school management, a non-welcoming school climate and a shortage of educational facilities and resources.

Problems with a second language as medium of instruction, fear of external examinations, inadequately qualified educators, lack of discipline and poor school attendance by both educators and learners can also be viewed as factors contributing to the poor performance of learners in their school examinations.

In the next chapter the research methodology followed in this study will be explained

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## **CHAPTER 3**

### **PLANNING OF THE EMPIRICAL RESEARCH**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter details the rationale behind the chosen methodology for this research. These involves methods of collection of data, the sampling procedure and research instruments, its nature in relation to the aims of the study as well as the validity and reliability of the overall research method and the way in which data will be analysed.

#### **3.2 PREPARATION FOR THE RESEARCH**

##### **3.2.1 Selection of the respondents**

Ten high schools were purposively selected from the list of schools in the Leribe district in Lesotho. The Leribe district is divided into five educational centres and schools were selected as follows:

- One average performing school from each centre with a Grade12 (COSC) pass rate of between 50% and 60%.
- A school from each centre with a poor pass rate, below 40%, in Grade12 (COSC).

This provided the researcher with a purposive selected sample of 120 educators (12 educators from each of the 10 schools) as respondents, which can be considered an adequate sample for reliable data analysis by means of descriptive statistics.

### **3.2.2 Sampling method**

According to Best and Kahn (2006:19) and Burns (2000:585) purposive sampling serves the real purpose and objectives of the researcher of discovering, gaining insight and understanding of a particular chosen phenomenon. Therefore purposive sampling was employed in the selection of schools. This method was considered to be the most suitable for the intended research, as in purposive sampling the researcher selects particular elements from the population that will be representative or informative about the topic of interest. On the basis of the researchers' knowledge of the population a judgement is made about which subjects should be selected to provide the best information to address the purpose of research (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:126).

## **3.3 DESIGN OF THE RESEARCH INSTRUMENT**

### **3.3.1 Quantitative research**

The purpose of research is to provide the most valid and accurate answers possible to research questions. Melter (2006: 23) says since there are many types of research questions and many types of designs, it is important to match the design with the questions.

Quantitative research methods collect numerical data that are analysed using mathematically based methods (in particular statistics). The responses to the questions in a questionnaire are recorded in a coded format, presented in frequency tables, graphs and or chart formats, analysed and interpreted (Best & Kahn, 2006: 289). The simplest form of data analysis is univariate which means that one variable is analysed mainly with the view to describing that variable (Burton & Bartlett, 2005:100). It can thus be stated that where information is required by a first researcher, quantitative data collection and analysis seem to be the most suitable methods. The researcher selected the quantitative approach because of the following reasons (Maree, 2007: 178):

- it is more realistic;
- can be controlled;
- has a range that is more defined; and
- uses methods relatively close to physical sciences.

### **3.3.2 The questionnaire as research instrument**

According to Best and Kahn (2006: 312) a questionnaire is a set of questions dealing with some topic or related group of topics, given to a selected group of individuals for the purpose of gathering data on a problem under consideration. Bless and Higson-Smith (2000: 3) say questionnaires are just a range of ways of getting information from people or answers to our research questions, usually but not always by asking questions.

Churchill and Peter (Schnetler, 2004: 77) have shown that the measuring instrument has the greatest influence on the reliability of research data. The characteristics of measurement are best controlled by the careful construction of the instrument. There is, however, insufficient appreciation for the fact that a questionnaire should be constructed according to certain principles (De Vos, 2001:89).

A well-designed questionnaire is the culmination of a long process of planning the research objective, formulating the problem, generating the hypothesis, etc. A questionnaire is not simply thrown together. A poorly designed questionnaire can invalidate any research results, notwithstanding the merits of the sample, the field workers and the statistical techniques (Wills, 2006:23). In their criticism of questionnaires Leedy and Ormond (2005:61) object to poor design rather than to questionnaires as such. A well designed questionnaire can boost the reliability and validity of the data to acceptable tolerance (Melter, 2006: 40).

It therefore stands to reason that questionnaire design does not take place in a vacuum. According to Ary, Jacobs, Razavien and Sorenson (2006:256) the length of individual questions, the number of response options, as well as the format and wording of questions are determined by the following:

- The choice of the subject to be researched.
- The aim of the research.
- The size of the research sample.
- The method of data collection
- The analysis of the data.

Against this background the researcher can now look at the principles that determine whether a questionnaire is well designed. It is thus necessary to draw a distinction between questionnaire content, question format, question order, type of questions, formulation of questions and validity and reliability of questions.

### **3.3.3 Construction of the questionnaire**

Great care and attention needs to be devoted to the construction of a questionnaire for a research project. The questionnaire has to be customised and tailored to the specific research questions at hand (Silverman, 2008:238). In structuring the questionnaire the researcher avoided, useless or biased responses. Such questions also frustrate respondents' feeling towards the whole survey experience. The researcher consulted and sought advice from specialists during the construction of the questionnaire (Crawford & Brandburn, 2008:12). Questions to be taken up in the questionnaire were tested on schools to eliminate possible errors. A question may appear correct to the researcher when written down but can be interpreted differently when asked to another person. There should be no hesitation in changing questions several times before the final formulation whilst keeping the original purpose in mind (Ary *et.al.*, 2006:585). The most important point to be taken into account in questionnaire design is that it takes time and effort and that the questionnaire will be re-drafted a number of times before being finalised (Lauer, 2006:46). Adequate time was therefore budgeted for the construction and preliminary testing of the questionnaire.

The aim of the questionnaire was to obtain information regarding factors contributing to the poor performance of COSC (Grade 12) in Lesotho. The questions were formulated to establish educators' responses with regard to the following:

- Strategies for effective teaching and learning.
- Aspects concerning school resources.
- Factors concerning parental involvement.

The questionnaire was sub-divided into the following sections:

- Section one, which dealt with the biographical information of the respondents, namely COSC (Grade 12) educators and consisted of questions 1-17.
- Sections two, three and four of the questionnaire consisted of closed-ended questions. The respondents were requested to indicate their responses to the statements pertaining to factors contributing to the poor performance of the COSC learners in Lesotho. The educators had to state their views concerning the latter in three ways, namely, agree, disagree and uncertain. The questions were grouped as follows:
  - Section two contained questions on teaching and learning.
  - Section three consisted of questions relating to aspects concerning school resources.
  - Section four comprised questions concerning parental involvement in schools.

### **3.3.4 Characteristics of a good questionnaire**

Throughout the construction of the questionnaire the researcher had to consider the characteristics of a good questionnaire. In order to meet the requirements necessary for the research instrument to be reliable. The characteristics of a good questionnaire that were considered by the researcher are, according to Best and Kahn (2004:320) the following:

- It has to deal with a significant topic, one the respondent will recognise as important enough to warrant spending his time on. The significance should be clearly and carefully stated on the questionnaire and in the accompanying letter.
- It has to be as short as possible and only long enough to get essential data. Long questionnaires frequently find their way into the wastebasket.
- Questionnaires should be attractive in appearance, neatly arranged, and clearly duplicated or printed.
- Directions for a good questionnaire are clear and complete and important terms are defined.
- Each question has to deal with a single concept and should be worded as simply and straight worded as possible.
- Different categories should provide an opportunity for easy, accurate, and unambiguous responses.
- Objectively formulated questions with no leading suggestions should render the desired responses. Leading questions are just as inappropriate in a questionnaire as they are in a court law.

According to Lauer (2006:63) and Burns (2000:5750) questions should be presented in a good psychological order, proceeding from general to more specific and sensitive responses. An orderly grouping helps respondents to organise their own thinking so that their answers are logical and objective. It is preferable to present, questions that create a favourable attitude before proceeding to those that are more intimate or delicate in nature. Annoying and or embarrassing questions should be avoided if possible.

### **3.3.5 Advantages and disadvantages of the questionnaire**

Data can be gathered by means of a structured questionnaire in, *inter alia*, the following ways: a written questionnaire that is mailed delivered or handed out personally; personal interviews or telephone interviews (www.wikipedi.org. 2008). Each mode has specific advantages and disadvantages. The researcher used the written questionnaire as research instrument taking into the following advantages and disadvantages in consideration.

#### **(1) Advantages of the written question**

The written questionnaire as a research instrument, to obtain information, has the following advantages (Burns, 2002:581):

- Affordability is the primary advantage of the written questionnaire because it is the least expensive means of data gathering.
- Questionnaires can be given to many people simultaneously, that is to say a large sample of a target population can be reached.
- Generally the data provided by questionnaires can be more easily analysed and interpreted than data obtained from verbal responses.
- Questionnaires provide greater uniformity across measurement situations than do the interviews. Each person responds to exactly the same questions because standard instructions are given to the respondents.
- A respondent may answer questions of a personal embarrassing nature more willingly and frankly on a questionnaire than in a face to face situation with an interviewer who may be a complete stranger. In some cases it may happen that

respondents report less than expected and make critical comments in a mail questionnaire.

- Questions requiring considered answers rather than immediate answers could enable respondents to consult documents in the case of the mail questions approach.

## **(2) Disadvantages of the written questionnaires**

The researcher is also aware of the fact that the written questionnaire has important disadvantages. According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000:455) the disadvantages of the written questionnaire are, *inter alia*, the following:

- Questionnaires do not provide the flexibility of interviews. In an interview an idea or comment can be explored. This makes it possible to gauge how people are interpreting the question. If questions asked are interpreted differently by respondents the validity of the information obtained is jeopardised.
- People are generally better able to express their views verbally than in writing.
- Questions can be answered only when they are sufficiently easy and straightforward to be understood with the given instructions and definitions.
- The mail questionnaire does not make provision for obtaining the views of more than one person at a time. It requires uninfluenced views of one person only.
- Answers to written questionnaires must be seen as final. Rechecking of responses cannot be done. There is no chance of investigating beyond the given answers. If respondents are unwilling to answer certain questions nothing can be done about it because the mail questionnaire is essentially inflexible.

- In a written questionnaire the respondent examines all the questions at the same time questions can therefore not be treated as "independent".
- Researches are unable to control the context of question answering, and specially, the presence of other people. Respondents may ask friends or family members to examine the questions or comment on their answers, causing bias if the respondents own private opinions are desired.
- Written questionnaires do not allow the researcher to correct misunderstandings or answer questions incorrectly or not at all due to confusion or misinterpretation.

### **3.3.6 Validity and reliability of the questionnaire**

There are two concepts that are of critical importance in understanding issues of measurement in social science research, namely validity and reliability (Best & Kahn, 2006:324). All too rarely, questionnaire designers deal consciously with the degree of validity or reliability of the instrument. This is one of the reasons why so many questionnaires are lacking in these two qualities (Best & Khan, 2006:324). Questionnaires have limited purposes. They are often one-time data gathering devices with a very short life, administered to a limited population. There are ways to improve both the validity and reliability of questionnaires. Basic to the validity of a questionnaire is asking the right questions phrased in the least ambiguous way. In other words, do the items sample a significant aspect of the purpose of the investigation? Terms must be clearly defined so that they have the same meaning to all respondents (Leedy & Ormond, 2005:155).

Opie (2004:65-68) mentions the fact that although reliability and validity are two different characteristics of measurement, they "shade into other". They are two ends of continuum but at points in the middle it is difficult to distinguish between them. Validity and reliability are especially important in educational research because most of the measurements attempted in this area are obtained indirectly. Researchers can never guarantee that an educational psychological measuring instrument measures precisely and dependently what it is intended to measure (Koshy, 2005: 198). It is essential, therefore, to assess the validity and reliability of these instruments. Researchers must therefore have a general

knowledge as to what validity and reliability are and how one goes about validating a research instrument and establishing its reliability.

### **(1) Validity of the questionnaire**

Cohen, Manoin and Morrison (2000:365) define validity as the degree to which a measuring instrument satisfies the purpose for which it was constructed. It also refers to the extent to which it correlates with some criterion external to the instrument itself. Validity is that quality of a data-gathering instrument or procedure that enables it to determine what it was designed to determine. In general terms validity refers to the degree to which an instrument succeeds in measuring what it has to measure.

Koshy (2005:157) and Best and Kahn (2006:295) distinguish between three types of validity:

- Content validity refers to the degree to which the test items actually measure, or are specifically related to, traits for which the test was designed and is to be used.
- Criterion validity refers to the relationship between scores on a measuring instrument and an independent variable (criterion) believed to measure directly the behaviour or characteristic in question. The criterion should be relevant, reliable and free from bias and contamination.
- Construct validity is the degree to which test items and the structure of a test can be accounted for by the explanatory construct of a sound theory.

The validity of the questionnaire indicates how worthwhile a measure is likely to be in a given situation. Validity shows whether the instrument is reflecting the true story, or at least something approximating the truth. A valid research instrument is one that has demonstrated that it detects some "real" ability, attitude or prevailing situation that the researcher can identify and characterise (Burns, 2000:350). If the ability or attitude is itself

stable, and if a respondent's answers to the items are not affected by other unpredictable factors, then each administration of the instrument should yield essentially the same results (Fraenkel & Norman, 2006:101). The validity of the questionnaire as a research instrument reflects the sureness with which conclusions can be drawn. It refers to the extent to which interpretations of the questionnaire as a research instrument results, other than the ones the researcher wishes to make, can be ruled out. Establishing validity requires that the researcher anticipates the potential arguments that sceptic might use to dismiss the research results.

The researcher employed the questionnaire as an indirect method to measure educators' perceptions of high failure rate in COSC (Grade 12) learners in Lesotho. Because of the complexity of the respondents' attributes, one is never sure that the questionnaire devised will actually measure what it purports to measure. Items in the questionnaire cannot be measured like height, mass, length or size. From the interpretation of the results obtained and sureness with which conclusions could be drawn, the researcher is convinced that the questionnaire, to a great extent, did measure that which was designed for.

## **(2) Reliability of the questionnaire**

According to Fraenkel and Norman (2006: 101) and Opie (2005: 65) reliability is a statistical concept and relates to consistency and dependability consistency of obtaining the same relative answer when measuring phenomena that have not changed. A reliable measuring instrument is one that, if repeated under similar conditions, would present the same result or a near approximation of the initial result. McMillan and Schumacher (2006:151) distinguish between the following types of reliability:

- Test-retest reliability (coefficient of stability) consistency estimated by comparing two or more repeated administrations of the measuring instrument. This gives an indication of the dependability of the results on the results on one occasion and on another occasion.

- Split-half reliability; correlating the results obtained from two halves of the same measuring instrument, one can calculate the split- half reliability.

In essence, reliability refers to consistency of measures. But consistency does not guarantee truthfulness. The reliability of the question is no proof that the answers given reflect the respondents' true feelings. A demonstration of reliability is necessary but not conclusive evidence that an instrument is valid. Reliability refers to consistency or stability of a measuring instrument. In other words, the measuring instruments must measure exactly the same way every time is used. This means that the individual should receive similar score every time he uses the measuring instruments (Maree, 2008:67).

When the questionnaire is used as an empirical research instrument there is no specific method, for example the "test-retest" method, to determine the reliability of the questionnaire (Burns, 2000:585). Therefore, it will be difficult to establish to what extent the answers of the respondents were reliable. The researcher, however, believes that questionnaires in the investigation were completed with the necessary honesty and sincerity required to render the maximum possible reliability. Frankness in responding to questions was made possible by the anonymity of the questionnaire. In the coding of the questions it was evident that questionnaires were completed with the necessary dedication.

### **3.4 PILOT STUDY**

A pilot study is trial run of a study which should be conducted on a smaller sample than to be used in the final version of study (Opie, 2005:105). For this reason it is necessary to pre-test the questionnaire before it is used in the full-scale survey to identify any mistakes that need correcting. For the purpose of the pilot study in this research project three schools were selected, one good school with a pass rate of more than 80%, one average school COSC (Grade 12) with a pass rate between 50% and one poor school where the pass rate was less than 40%. Opie (2005:105), Bell (2005:147) say basic purpose of a pilot is to check that the basic aspects of the design and procedure work. A pilot study gives the researcher an idea of what the method will actually look like in operation and what effects (intended or not) it is likely to have. In other words, by generating many of the practical problems that will ultimately arise, a pilot study enables the researcher to avert these problems by changing procedures, instructions and questions.

The number of participants in the pilot study is normally smaller than the number scheduled to take part in the final survey. Participants in the pilot study and the sample for the final study must be selected from the same target population, for the purpose of this study the researcher conducted a pilot study run on schools of her choice.

According to Gorard (2001:103) the purpose of a pilot study and aim of the researcher in this survey are as follows:

- It provided the researcher with the opportunity of refining the wording and ordering the layout, which helped to prune the questionnaire to manageable size.
- It permitted a thorough check of the planned statistical and analytical procedures, thus allowing an appraisal of their adequacy in treating the data.
- It greatly reduced the number of treatment errors because unforeseen problems revealed in the pilot study resulted in redesigning the main study.
- It saved the researcher major expenditures in time and money on aspects of the research which would have been unnecessary.
- Feedback from other persons involved was made possible and led to important improvements in the main study.
- The approximate time required to complete the questionnaire was established in the pilot study.
- Questions and/or instructions that were misinterpreted were reformulated.

Through the use of the pilot study as "pre-test" the researcher was satisfied that the questions asked in the questionnaire complied adequately with the requirements of the study.

### **3.5 ADMINISTRATION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE**

If properly administered the questionnaire is the best available instrument for obtaining information from widespread sources or large groups simultaneously (Burns, 200:139). The researcher personally delivered questionnaires to the selected schools in the district of Leribe in Lesotho and collected them after completion. This method of administration facilitated the process and the response rate. A satisfactory return rate of (83%) was obtained with 100 out 120 questionnaires completed and collected.

### **3.6 THE PROCESSING OF DATA**

Once data was collected, it had to be captured in a format which would permit analysis and interpretation. This involved the careful coding of the 100 questionnaires completed by purposively selected educators.

Descriptive statistics serve to describe and summarize observations (Leedy & Ormond, 2005: 169). Frequency tables, histograms and polygons are useful in forming impressions about the distribution of data.

According to Heiman (2003: 53) frequency distribution is a method to organise data obtained from questionnaires to simplify analysis. A frequency table provides the following information:

- It indicates how many times a particular response appears on the completed questionnaires.

- It provides percentages that reflect the number of responses to a certain question in relation to the number of responses.

### **3.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE INVESTIGATION**

This investigation was constrained by a number of factors. The following are likely factors that might have influenced the reliability and validity of the questionnaire:

- Although anonymity was requested in the questionnaire the possibility exists that, because of educators' cautiousness, they might not have been frank and truthful in their responses.
- The sensitive nature of items in the questionnaires might have elicited false or misleading responses and influenced the reliability of the results.
- To restrict the investigation to manageable proportions, the researcher limited the study to educators of schools which are easily accessible.

### **3.8 SUMMARY**

In this chapter the planning and design of the empirical research was discussed and comprehensive description of the questionnaire as research instrument was given.

In the following chapter the data obtained from the completed questionnaires will be analysed.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE RESEARCH DATA**

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## **CHAPTER 4**

### **PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE RESEARCH DATA**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter the data which was collected from the completed questionnaires will be analysed, findings will be interpreted and some comments will be presented. The data comprises the biographical information of the respondents COSC (Grade 12) educators, and their perceptions of the causes of the poor performance of COSC (Grade 12) learners in Lesotho. The data obtained from hundred completed questionnaires will be analysed, interpreted and commented on.

#### **4.2 DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS**

According to Gray (2004:32) the purpose of descriptive research is to provide a picture of a phenomenon as it naturally occurs in the home, the classroom, recreational centres, the office or factory, as human behaviour can be systematically examined and analysed. The method of descriptive research is particularly appropriate in the behavioural sciences because many of the types of behaviour that interest the researcher cannot be arranged in a realistic setting thus there is no intervention on the part of the researcher and therefore no control. Best and Kahn (2006:119) say descriptive studies do not set out with the idea of testing hypotheses about relationships, but want to find the distribution of the variables. In this study nomothetic descriptive research was employed with the aim of describing educators' perceptions of the factors contributing to the poor performance of COSC (Grade 12) learners in Lesotho. The researcher was primarily concerned with the nature and the degree of existing situations in high schools in Lesotho.

#### 4.2.1 Gender of the respondents

**Table 2 Frequency distribution according to the gender of the respondents**

|   | <b>Gender</b> | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|---|---------------|------------------|-------------------|
| 1 | Male          | 29               | 29%               |
| 2 | Female        | 71               | 71%               |
|   | <b>TOTAL</b>  | <b>100</b>       | <b>100%</b>       |

According to Table 2 most of the respondents (71%) in the research are females. Possible reasons for this finding are the following:

- Deventer and Kruger (2008:267) believe that there are more female educators due to traditional stereotyping of gender roles and also towards sex role socialization thereby positioning women to guide and nurture learners to adulthood.
- A female educator represents a motherly figure and is more accepted by learners.
- Females view teaching as an occupation that affords them time to attend to household chores in the afternoons.
- Many females are single mothers and therefore see teaching as a career that will allow them time to raise their own children (Edge, 2006:39).

#### 4.2.2 Age of the respondents

**Table 3: Frequency distribution according to the age group of the respondents**

|   | <b>Age group</b> | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|---|------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| 1 | 20-25 years      | 16               | 16%               |
| 2 | 26- 30 years     | 26               | 26%               |
| 3 | 31-35 years      | 12               | 12%               |
| 4 | 36-40 years      | 16               | 16%               |
| 5 | 41-45 years      | 19               | 19%               |
| 6 | 46-50 years      | 8                | 8%                |
| 7 | 51-55 years      | 2                | 2%                |
| 8 | 56-60 years      | 1                | 1%                |
|   | <b>TOTAL</b>     | <b>100</b>       | <b>100%</b>       |

Table 3 shows that the larger percentage (40%) of the respondents in the research sample are 41 years and older. Lemmer (2002:93) is of the opinion that the longer an educator stays in the teaching profession the more experience is gained in the exercising of effective teaching and learning. Experience is needed to effectively teach Grade 12 (COSC) learners in order for them to pass.

However, the poor performance in Grade 12 (COSC) can possibly be attributed to the following problems concerning educators (Deventer & Kruger, 2005:9):

- Educators are not fully committed to teaching and are frequently absent or not well prepared.
- Educators lack motivation because of too much paper work and less recognition by the management of good work they have done.

- Educators feel that it is very difficult for them to perform to the best of their abilities if they are not happy at work, because of poor discipline amongst learners, overcrowding and lack of resources.

#### 4.2.3 Qualifications of the respondents

**Table 4: Frequency distribution according to the respondents' qualifications**

|   | <b>Qualifications</b>     | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|---|---------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| 1 | Academic and professional | 98               | 98%               |
| 2 | Professional only         | 2                | 2%                |
|   | <b>TOTAL</b>              | 100              | 100%              |

From Table 3 it emerges that the majority (98%) of the respondents in the research sample possess academic and professional qualifications. This finding might be because high schools prefer to appoint educators with academic and professional qualifications. In order to be an effective educator, a person should have obtained the most suitable qualifications. Calitz, Fuglestad and Lillejord (2002:19) say adequately qualified educators have the ability to conceptualize their strategic insights so that they become public knowledge, open to challenge and further improvement.

One of the requirements to be an effective educator is to keep growing and learning through professional development (Deventer & Kruger 2005:231). The priority of the Ministry of Education is to enhance the quality of education and raise levels of the learners' performance; by making provision for professional development of educators which can only be done if they are adequately qualified.

#### 4.2.4 Years in teaching profession

**Table 5: Frequency distribution according to the experience of the respondents**

|   | <b>Completed years teaching</b> | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|---|---------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| 1 | 0-5years                        | 48               | 48%               |
| 2 | 6-10years                       | 15               | 15%               |
| 3 | 11-15years                      | 18               | 18%               |
| 4 | 16-20 years                     | 12               | 12%               |
| 5 | 21-25years                      | 6                | 6%                |
| 6 | 26-30 years                     | 1                | 1%                |
|   | <b>TOTAL</b>                    | <b>100</b>       | <b>100%</b>       |

The finding that nearly half (48%) of the respondents that partook in the research have 5 years or less teaching experience can be a contributing factor to the poor performance in Grade 12 (COSC). Educators that lack teaching experience may be teaching Grade 12 without the experience and knowledge needed for good performance of these learners (cf.2. 3. 4).

Experience together with adequate training is needed for the responsibilities and demands imposed on educators. The more experience and training an educator have the more confidence and expertise he will have acquired to be an effective educator. Deventer and Kruger (2005:245) say professional development and experience are prerequisites for educators to keep up with the rapid pace of change in knowledge, advancement of technology and increasing demands imposed upon educators.

#### 4.2.5 Post level of the respondents

**Table 6: Frequency distribution according to the post level of the respondents**

|   | Post level           | Frequency  | Percentage |
|---|----------------------|------------|------------|
| 1 | Principal            | 5          | 5%         |
| 2 | Deputy principal     | 7          | 7%         |
| 3 | Head Of Department   | 12         | 12%        |
| 4 | Educator post (level | 76         | 76%        |
|   | <b>TOTAL</b>         | <b>100</b> | <b>%</b>   |

Table 6 shows that more than three quarters (76%) of the respondents that partook in the research are level one educators. This finding is consistent with the composition of educators in most schools. Generally level one educators comprise a little over seventy percent of the teaching personnel in school (MoE, 2007:4).

#### 4.2.6 Type of post held by the respondents

**Table 7 Frequency distribution according to the nature of posts held by respondents**

|   | Nature of post | Frequency  | %           |
|---|----------------|------------|-------------|
| 1 | Permanent      | 84         | 84%         |
| 2 | Temporary      | 10         | 10%         |
| 3 | Part-time      | 6          | 6%          |
|   | <b>TOTAL</b>   | <b>100</b> | <b>100%</b> |

According to Table 7 the majority of the educators (84%) in the research sample are in permanent posts. This was an expected finding as the schools selected for the research are all public schools with most of the educators employed on a permanent basis by Teaching Service Department of Lesotho.

Educators that are appointed on the permanent staff have the following advantages:

- They enjoy job security and might be more motivated to teach.
- They contribute to a pension fund to provide for their retirement.
- They enjoy working in the place of their choice without being transferred.

#### 4.2.7 Area in which schools are situated

**Table 8: Frequency distribution according to the area in which schools are situated**

|   | <b>Area of school</b> | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|---|-----------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| 1 | Urban                 | 56               | 56%               |
| 2 | Semi-urban            | 24               | 24%               |
| 3 | Rural                 | 20               | 20%               |
|   | <b>TOTAL</b>          | <b>100</b>       | <b>100%</b>       |

The schools purposively selected for the research are situated in the areas as represented by the frequencies in table 8.

#### 4.2.8 TEACHING AND LEARNING

**Table 9: Frequency distribution according to the respondents' perceptions of the factors contributing to the poor performance in Grade 12 (COSC)**

|      | <b>The poor performance in Grade 12 (COSC) is caused by the following:</b>  | <b>Agree</b> | <b>Disagree</b> | <b>Uncertain</b> | <b>Total</b> |
|------|---|--------------|-----------------|------------------|--------------|
| 2.1  | An unfavourable educator learner ratio (large classes of up to 50 learners)   | 70<br>70%    | 23<br>23%       | 7<br>7%          | 100<br>100%  |
| 2.2  | Lack of effective discipline ( e.g. educators cannot manage large class group)  | 60<br>60%    | 29<br>29%       | 11<br>11%        | 100<br>100%  |
| 2.3  | Lessons are not well prepared by educators  | 28<br>28%    | 47<br>47%       | 25<br>25%        | 100<br>100%  |
| 2.4  | Learners that experience problems with subject content do not receive individual assistance   | 67<br>67%    | 23<br>23%       | 10<br>10%        | 100<br>100%  |
| 2.5  | Educators don't honour their lessons ( e.g. educators are not punctual or do not attend their lessons)  | 56<br>56%    | 33<br>33%       | 14<br>14%        | 100<br>100%  |
| 2.6  | Learners are not motivated to do school work (e.g. do not attend classes or go home before school closes)   | 59<br>59%    | 17<br>17%       | 24<br>24%        | 100<br>100%  |
| 2.7  | Learners do not do homework given to them (e.g. homework is copied, incomplete or not done)   | 84<br>84%    | 6<br>6%         | 10<br>10%        | 100<br>100%  |
| 2.8  | Educators do not give feedback to learners (e.g. homework, class work tests, etc. are not discussed)  | 33<br>33%    | 49<br>49%       | 18<br>18%        | 100<br>100%  |
| 2.9  | Inadequate assessment methods ( e.g. learners are not prepared for the final examination)   | 54<br>54%    | 30<br>30%       | 16<br>16%        | 100<br>100%  |
| 2.10 | Educators conduct lessons or part of it in Sesotho ( e.g. if they are not familiar with English subject content they switch to the mother tongue) | 75<br>75%    | 16<br>16%       | 9<br>9%          | 100<br>100%  |

Effective educators use their knowledge, skills and behaviour to create effective learning environments in their classrooms. They create environments which maximise opportunities to learn, where learners are well managed and motivated to learn. Deventer and Kruger (2005:18) say that learners' rely on the educator to create a sense of security and order in the classroom.

The responses to the statements in Table 8 show that the majority of respondents in the research sample have similar perceptions about the factors that contribute to the poor performance in Grade 12 (COSC). This statement can be substantiated by the following findings:

### **Educator-learner ratio (2.1)**

Seventy percent (70%) of the respondents in the research sample agreed that an unfavourable educator learner ratio is a contributing factor to the poor performance in COSC (Grade 12). According to Sebatane *et al.* (2000:30) one of the causes of poor performance in Lesotho high schools is the educator learner ratio. Overcrowded classrooms do not allow the educators to use a learner centered approach as it is time consuming when educators have to attend to individual learners to check how they perform in the given activities. Educators believe that the quality of their teaching and interactions with learners decline with an increase in the size of the class and quality of teaching depends on the size of the class (Lemmer, 2002:82).

### **Discipline in the class (2.2)**

Discipline is necessary to maintain a certain standard of social conformity so that a school can function in an orderly and fearless manner (Naidu *et al.*, 2008: 30). Although the larger percentage of the respondents, 60%, agreed that lack of effective discipline in the class is a contributing factor to the poor performance in Grade12 (COSC), more than a quarter (29%) disagreed with the statement. Lemmer (2002:83) argues that learners need a well organized classroom if the activities which take place are to facilitate effective teaching, learning and discipline.

### **Unprepared lessons (2.3)**

Learners' academic needs include the following (Kruger & Deventer, 2005:205):

- understanding of educator's goals;
- to be actively involved in the learning process;
- subject matter related to personal life;
- experience of success;

- receive realistic and immediate feedback;
- *experience an appropriate amount of structure; and*
- receiving instruction matched to skills and learning style.

When a lesson plan and teaching methods respond effectively to these needs, learning is significantly increased. However, the larger percentage, 47%, of the respondents disagreed that poor performance in COSC can be attributed to lessons that are not well prepared. Learner's confidence in their educators has to be earned. An educator's lack of interest in or commitment to a subject, or poor lesson preparation often coincides with the weakening of confidence in the educator.

#### **Individual assistance (2.4)**

More than two thirds (67%) of the respondents that participated in the research agreed that learners that experience problems with subject content do not receive individual assistance and can be one of the causes for the poor performance of Grade 12 learners. Learners with below average attainment need to be attended to and educators have to be able to 'scaffold' the learners' understanding and activity. In large classes educators cannot give individual attention to assist weaker learners

#### **Honouring lessons (2.5)**

The larger percentage (56%) of the respondents in the research sample agreed that educators are not punctual or do not attend to their lessons. According to Legotlo, Maaga and Sebege (2002:116) poor working conditions, an inadequate curriculum and confusing school policies are the major causes of educators' low morale. The latter is evident from educators' lateness or absenteeism, which reduce teaching time, and learners are often left without educators in some subjects. Educators who do not honour their lessons are contributing to the poor performance of learners.

#### **Motivation of learners (2.6)**

Close to sixty percent (59%) of the respondents in the research sample agreed that learners are not motivated to do their schoolwork. Poor attendance of educators, lack of

educator's commitment, poor school performance, weak leadership, management and administration are the core elements that cause lack of motivation amongst learners (Deventer & Kruger 2005:4). Learners' lack of motivation to do school work has a negative impact on their academic performance. A positive school climate forms the basis of a sound culture of learning and teaching and encourages better school attendance.

### **Homework (2.7)**

The majority of the respondents (84%) agreed that one of the causes for the poor performance in Grade 12 (COSC) is poor homework practices. Learners copy homework, do not complete it or do not do the homework given to them. Zacarian (2009:9) says educators have to provide and guide learners on how to complete a task given to them as homework. Homework should be a continuation of the activities that occurred in the class. According to Lemmer (2002:154) parents fail to help their children with homework because the contents of the syllabus are difficult to comprehend and many parents are illiterate and unable to assist their children. Some parents cannot help their children with their schoolwork because of their working conditions.

Homework, according to Stern (1997:150) encourages learners to develop the practice of independent study, develops perseverance and self-discipline, and allows practice where it is needed of skills learned in the classroom. Homework permits more ground to be covered and more rapid progress to be made. It also opens up areas of study and makes possible the use of materials and sources of information that are not accessible in the classroom, it exploits the materials and resources in the environment and the community outside the school.

### **Feedback (2.8)**

The larger percentage (49%) of the respondents in the research sample disagreed that educators do not give feedback to learners but a third (33%) indicated that educators do not give feedback. Closely associated with the need for success experiences is the need to receive immediate and specific feedback (Lemmer, 2002: 25). It is important that learners receive feedback that clearly designates the extent to which they have succeeded at a task. Several studies show that learner achievement is enhanced by providing learners with

information about their current level of performance based on tests, homework, or class work. According to Calitz, Fuglestad and Lillejord (2002:271) supportive comments, accompanied by statements about specific strengths and weakness in learners' work is more effective in improving learners performance. Learners are concerned about their feedback since without it, they tend to judge their performance as unacceptable (Lemmer, 2002:157).

### **Assessment (2.9)**

According to Naidu *et al.* (2008:5) assessment is an approach that gathers information directly pertinent to the quality of performance that perfectly embodies all the defined aspects of that performance. Assessment in an educational setting is a multifaceted process that involves more than just administrating tests (Deventer & Kruger 2008:253). Schools use test information to make decisions about what learners have learned as well as what they should be taught. Educators have to give learners a variety of tests to make them familiar with tests. This will help learners to enter their final examination without fear for examination. More than fifty four percent (54%) of the respondents agreed that poor performance in Grade 12 (COSC) is caused by inadequate assessment methods. Salvia, Ysseldyke and Bolt (2007:54) argue that assessment is a judgment by the educator that a learner is not as competent as other learners.

### **Language proficiency (2.10)**

The majority of the respondents (75%) agreed that educators conduct lessons, or part of it in their mother tongue if they are not familiar with the English subject content. Learners with limited English proficiency are often at risk of poor academic performance due to the classroom challenges they face particularly where English is a medium of instruction (Lemmer, 2002: 86).

According to Xu (2009:9) there is nothing that frustrates English language educators more than to see learners get stuck in a conversation or reading a text. When learners do not understand a word or phrase they stop trying to read or speak. A contributing factor may be learners' level of acceptance. Learners may often find the grammatical, semantic, syntactic phonological and cultural cues unfamiliar, complex, overwhelming or contradicting

and therefore insufficient for constructing a meaningful interpretation. This result in poor performance due to learners' linguistic backgrounds that alienates them from school curricular and schooling.

#### 4.2.9 RESOURCES

**Table 10: Frequency distribution according to the respondents' perceptions of the aspects concerning resources and poor performance in Grade12 (COSC)**

|             | <b>Aspects concerning resources that caused poor performance in COSC are:</b>                      | <b>Agree</b> | <b>Disagree</b> | <b>Uncertain</b> | <b>Total</b> |
|-------------|--|--------------|-----------------|------------------|--------------|
| <b>3.1</b>  | Lack of textbooks ( e.g. learners cannot afford to buy expensive books)                            | 84<br>84%    | 7<br>7%         | 9<br>9%          | 100<br>100%  |
| <b>3.2</b>  | Non functional libraries (e.g. outdated and irrelevant academic books)                             | 79<br>79%    | 12<br>12%       | 9<br>9%          | 100<br>100%  |
| <b>3.3</b>  | Ineffective science laboratories ( e.g. lack of sufficient science equipment)                      | 82<br>82%    | 11<br>11%       | 7<br>7%          | 100<br>100%  |
| <b>3.4</b>  | Lack of teaching aids ( e.g. no over head projectors)  | 83<br>83%    | 10<br>10%       | 7<br>7%          | 100<br>100%  |
| <b>3.5</b>  | Under utilized computer laboratories (e.g. lack of qualified educators to teach computer literacy) | 41<br>41%    | 28<br>28%       | 31<br>31%        | 100<br>100%  |
| <b>3.6</b>  | Unqualified educators ( e.g. educators teaching without relevant training)                         | 29<br>29%    | 57<br>57%       | 14<br>14%        | 100<br>100%  |
| <b>3.7</b>  | Poor classrooms ( e.g. no heating system in cold winter)   | 62<br>62%    | 29<br>29%       | 4<br>4%          | 100<br>100%  |
| <b>3.8</b>  | Inadequate classroom space (e.g. overcrowded classroom with 3 to 4 learners sharing a desk)        | 77<br>77%    | 19<br>19%       | 4<br>4%          | 100<br>100%  |
| <b>3.9</b>  | Lack of required stationary (e.g. exercise books, calculators, mathematical instruments)           | 69<br>69%    | 21<br>21%       | 10<br>10%        | 100<br>100%  |
| <b>3.10</b> | No school feeding scheme (e.g. learners do not get food during break time)                         | 32<br>32%    | 50<br>50%       | 18<br>18%        | 100<br>100%  |

The findings in Table 9 show that the majority of the respondents are in agreement that the lack of sufficient resources are contributing to the poor performance in Grade 12 (COSC) in Lesotho. According to Sebatane (2000:31) poor resources of schools have a negative impact on academic performance. Without resources meaningful teaching and learning cannot take place and the aims and objectives of the school cannot be accomplished. For educators to create a learning environment that respond to all learners'

basic academic needs, resources are essential materials for motivation and success. *Sufficient resources are essential materials for motivation and success.*

The following findings in Table 9 are possible explanations for the poor performance in Grade12 (COSC).

### **Textbooks (3.1)**

The majority of respondents (84%) in the research sample agreed that the lack of textbooks contribute to the poor performance of learners in Grade 12. At school educators use textbooks for the purpose of teaching and even interpreting the syllabus. Learners make use of the textbooks to study the content that educators have taught them. The availability of textbooks enables the educator to assess learner's level of cognitive development and determine the type of abilities the learner needs to understand the subject matter. Many parent's lack of finances is attributed to insufficient textbooks (cf. 2.3.7).

### **Libraries (3.2)**

Most of the respondents (79%) in the research sample agreed that the library at their school is not functional. Sebatane *et. al.* (2000:31) note that libraries, where they exist in Lesotho are often used as book stores. This contributes to a poor educational environment and explains the continued decline in examination results. Stern (1997:139) says a library is a flexible learning or resource centre that is generally better study venue than a classroom. Although libraries may have thousands of books and other expensive learning resources, the most valuable resource of all may be the tables and chairs. When learners work independently, in a space dedicated to learning, they are half way to success. Libraries can and should be ideal places to support learning. This means that if learners make good use of the resources in the library, their academic performance will be improved.

The presence of an effective library at school is considered very important by educators. Schools where libraries are non existent, usually frustrate educators because they cannot refer learners to further reading in books other than the prescribed texts. Library work supplement the information found in the text books so that learners can broaden their horizons as far as knowledge is concerned.

### **Science laboratories (3.3)**

More than eighty percent (82%) of the respondents that partook in the research said their schools lack sufficient science equipment. Sebatane *et. al.* (2000:31) indicate that many school laboratories are inoperative because of lack of water and/or electricity or gas to perform scientific experiments. Science laboratories play an important role in teaching because learners investigate phenomena by doing experiments and so discover things for themselves.

### **Teaching aids (3.4)**

The majority of the respondents (83%) were in agreement with the statement that lack of teaching aids is one of the causes of the poor performance in Grade12 (COSC) in Lesotho. Educators who do not have the necessary teaching aids are often deprived of many technological innovations that could make their work easier. Deventer and Kruger (2005:79) believe that schools that do not have photocopiers frustrate educators because photocopies are used from time to time to duplicate relevant materials that do not appear in the learners text books, such as maps used in geography. Without these materials educators resort to writing subject material on the board with little explanation and using sometimes difficult words the learners cannot understand. Writing notes on the board is time consuming and also related to the poor performance experienced by Grade 12 (COSC) learners.

### **Computer laboratories (3.5)**

The larger percentage (41%) of the respondents said that under utilized computer laboratories have a negative impact on the academic performance in Grade 12(COSC) learners in Lesotho. Sebatane *et. al.* (2000:30) argue that most of the learners in Lesotho are computer illiterate. The reason for this is that there are no qualified educators to teach computer studies. Associated with this is the lack of computers in schools.

Stern (1997:59) argues that technology, including computers, enables the learner to produce something, a picture, a song or anything that has its own existence, its own originality. These products enhance learner's productivity and inspire curiosity to learn. The

act of production best motivates learners and reduces poor performance because learners are able to discover things for themselves

### **Unqualified educators (3.6)**

More than half (57%) of the participants in the research disagreed that poor performance is caused by educators without relevant training. Naidu *et. al.* (2008:16) say in order to improve the quality of results, it is not enough for educators to be professionally qualified without being competent. Incompetent educators, according to Lemmer (2002:153) serve the purpose of delaying or impeding the learners' progress in the classroom.

### **Classrooms (3.7)**

Sixty two percent (62%) of the respondents acknowledged that poor classroom conditions contribute to the poor performance in Grade 12(COSC). Deventer and Kruger (2005:217) maintain that good working conditions are part of the essential requirements for successful education. Educators feel that it is very difficult for them to perform to the best of their abilities if they are not comfortable in the classroom. Classrooms that are cold during the winter months, no heating system, and hot in summer without effective cooling are not conducive to effective teaching and learning. The poor infrastructure of classrooms can thus be seen as a contributing factor to the poor performance of learners

### **Classrooms space (3.8)**

Most of the respondents (77%) in the research sample agreed that overcrowded classrooms with 3 to 4 learners sharing a desk is among the factors that contribute to the poor performance in Grade 12. Educators believe desks are important school furniture that should be available at every school as they are used not only for seating purposes but to provide comfort for the learners while they are taught and for their study. The classroom should be arranged so that it provides enough space for learner movement and allows learning without disturbance. When a class is overcrowded, learners depend on one another and this result in educators not to be able to recognise problems learners' experience with subject content. Lack of classroom space makes learners to be congested

in a class, for example, 70 learners are taught in a class that are suppose to accommodate 50 learners (Lesotho Review, 2008:103).

### **Lack of required stationary (3.9)**

Nearly seventy percent (69%) of the respondents said lack of stationery, for example exercise books, calculators and mathematical instruments are causes of poor academic performance. Exercise books and learning materials are essential facilities and without them teaching and learning cannot take place effectively. Exercises books are used to take notes, to practice subject content taught in the form of class work, homework where applicable and even tests. Learners who have an adequate supply of stationary perform much better than learners without an adequate supply of stationary (Lemmer 2002:88).

### **School feeding scheme (3.10)**

Half of the respondents (50%) disagreed with the statement that poor performance in Grade12 (COSC) learners is caused by learners not getting food during break time. According to educators learners are fed at school during break time. This means that learners who left their homes without food have a chance to eat at school.

#### 4.10 PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

##### 4.2.11: Frequency distribution according to the factors concerning parental involvement and the poor performance in Grade 12 (COSC)

|      | Factors concerning parental involvement that causes poor performance of COSC learners:  | Agree     | Disagree  | Uncertain | TOTAL       |
|------|---|-----------|-----------|-----------|-------------|
| 4.1  | Poor attendance of parent meetings ( e.g. not enough parents attend meeting to select school governing body)                          | 54<br>54% | 22<br>22% | 24<br>24% | 100<br>100% |
| 4.2  | Parents are reluctant to attend meetings to discuss problems experienced by their children  | 73<br>73% | 14<br>14% | 13<br>13% | 100<br>100% |
| 4.3  | Parents fail to pay compulsory school fees (e.g. learners are dismissed from school for non payment)                                  | 91<br>91% | 6<br>6%   | 3<br>3%   | 100<br>100% |
| 4.4  | Poor attendance by parents of school activities their children take part in ( e.g. cultural and sport activities are poorly attended) | 47<br>47% | 35<br>35% | 18<br>18% | 100<br>100% |
| 4.5  | Parents unwilling to partake in school fundraising activities ( e.g. poor parents reluctant to offer their services)                  | 47<br>47% | 27<br>27% | 26<br>26% | 100<br>100% |
| 4.6  | Parents do not monitor the home work given to their children ( e.g. no checking if work was done)                                     | 86<br>86% | 5<br>5%   | 9<br>9%   | 100<br>100% |
| 4.7  | Parents do not readily discuss problems experienced by their children with educators  | 93<br>93% | 3<br>3%   | 4<br>4%   | 100<br>100% |
| 4.8  | Parents are unable to assist their children with schoolwork (e.g. parents are illiterate or lack knowledge of school subjects)        | 81<br>81% | 8<br>8%   | 11<br>11% | 100<br>100% |
| 4.9  | Parents are not involved in their children's selection of suitable subjects   | 74<br>74% | 18<br>18% | 8<br>8%   | 100<br>100% |
| 4.10 | Parents are unwilling to assist educators when asked ( e.g. teaching cultural activities, help with sports etc)                       | 56<br>56% | 18<br>18% | 26<br>26% | 100<br>100% |

According to the majority of the responses in Table 11 parental involvement has an impact on the poor performance in Grade 12 (COSC). The findings in Table 10 are substantiated by the following:

### **Attendance of parents meetings (4.1)**

More than half (54%) of the respondents in the research sample agreed that poor performance of Grade 12 (COSC) is caused by parents not attending meetings at school. For most educators parent meetings are a required form of parent contact. Parent meetings can play a vital role in bringing forth parents support for the educator and also have a profound influence on the culture of teaching and learning. Despite the urgent need for parental involvement in the schools, parents continue to be kept at a distance in some schools. The reason for this, according to Lemmer (2002:160) is an education leader who holds onto authoritarian principles. Associated with lack of parental involvement are the following negative results:

- Performance in the school is generally poor.
- Clear aims and outcomes are not set.
- There is general frustration, aimless and indecision.
- Educators work haphazardly and as a result become demotivated and experience little job satisfaction.
- Control focus only on controlling.

### **Discuss problems (4.2: 4.7)**

More than seventy percent (73%) of the respondents in the research sample said that due to parent's reluctance to attend meetings to discuss problems experienced by their children at school (4.2) *educational attainment continues to decline*. A possible reason for this finding might be insufficient knowledge about how parents may contribute to their children's schooling. Parent meetings are important in eliciting parent support for the educators and assistance in helping the educator work with learners who are experiencing problems.

Parents are legally responsible for the academic performance of their children, they should be kept informed about their children's behaviour and academic performance. When parents feel good about their child's educator, the child is more likely to receive encouragement and reinforcement for desirable school behaviour. The majority of the

respondents (93%) said that one of the causes of poor performance could be attributed to parents who do not discuss problems experienced by their children with the educators (4.7). Despite the fact that educators can derive benefits from interacting with parents, Deventer and Kruger (2008:9) say that educators feel that parent contacts are a difficult and relatively undesirable aspect of teaching. Educators view contact with parents as time consuming and that it interferes with their teaching. Parents might also become aggressive and a physical threat to the educator.

### **School fees (4.3)**

More than ninety percent (91%) of the respondents in the research sample agreed that parents fail to pay compulsory school fees. Learners are dismissed from school because of the non-payment of fees. Children living in poverty are likely to be dismissed from school due to their failure of payment of school fees at the required time. Most of the learners in public schools are from poor families or single-parent households with low income that leads to the unavoidable non-payment of school fees. This results in learners attaining a poor academic record, failure or even dropping out of school (cf.2.2.2).

### **Poor attendance by parents of school activities (4.4)**

The larger percentage (47%) of the respondents that participated in the research agreed that poor attendance by parents of school activities have a negative impact on academic performance. This is associated with educators' inability to create and maintain a school environment that is physically and psychologically inviting to parents (Sebatane *et. al.*, 2000:28). Parents will only be active participants in school activities if they are empowered to do so. Factors that may inhibit effective parental involvement according to Calitz, Fuglestad and Lillejord (2002:120) are the following:

- Educators may be afraid that parents may challenge their authority and knowledge base in class.
- Parents may not have sufficient knowledge to be effective assistants in the classroom.
- The situation may be unfamiliar to both educators and parents, which may inhibit them.

### **Involvement in fundraising (4.5)**

Less than fifty percent (47%) of the respondents were in agreement that parents are unwilling to partake in school fundraising activities. Funding for education is seldom adequate and therefore schools need to explore all possible sources to supplement government funding. Feinstien, Duckworth and Sabates (2008:55) say that no matter how good the teaching and physical surrounding of a school, without enough textbooks, laboratory equipment and other teaching aids education is significantly impaired.

The finding that most of the parents fail to get involved in fundraising activities of the school can thus possibly be explained by their low socio-economic status (cf. 2.2.2). This poverty related reasons might be, *inter alia*, the following:

- Parents who are poor fear that when they get involved in fundraising activities, the school may require from them to also contribute financially.
- Poor parents, who resultantly fail to provide their children with school requirements, do not want to get involved in any money matters concerning the school.
- Fundraising activities in poor communities are poorly supported because of the parents' low socio-economic status.

### **Monitoring home work (4.6)**

Most of the respondents (86%) in the research sample agreed that parents do not monitor home work given to their children or check if the work was done. Regular checking of the child's home work by parents is positively associated with success at school. It is possible however that an illiterate parent may feel that educators are trained to educate their children and that it is not their responsibility as parents to monitor their children's school work (cf.2.3). In the case where parents are forced to sign for their children's home work, they simply sign without checking whether home work was correctly done. When parents monitor their children's school work, they will be able to encourage them even when they do not perform well at school. Children are likely to feel more secure and be

able to do more, if they know people who care for them will value them even if they fail at school as well as taking pleasure in their success. Learners are motivated when they know that their parents are interested in their school work.

#### **Assistance with schoolwork (4.8)**

More than eighty percent (81%) of the respondents in the research sample agreed that one of the causes of poor performance in Grade 12 (COSC) is that parents are unable to assist their children with school work. Associated with this is parents' insufficient knowledge about how they can help their children with school work. Lemmer (2002:86) believes that many parents can not assist their children with school work because they have a low educational attainment. They are not familiar with, and have no knowledge of subject matter. Parents can only support their children's education if they have attended secondary/ high school and know what is required of the child in school.

Communication between parents and educators on school matters is essential for the positive academic progress of the child. The mind-set of children towards their school work is deeply affected by the degree of encouragement their parents give and their own level of emotional ability (Feinstein, Duckworth, & Sabates, 2008:15).

#### **Selection of school subjects (4.9)**

The majority of the respondents (74%) in that partook in the research agreed that educators do not involve parents in their children's selection of school subjects and this contributes to the poor performance in Grade 12 (COSC). A possible reason for this is that *educators believe that parents are illiterate and have insufficient knowledge on subject matter and therefore are not able to help their children to select suitable subjects of their interest.* Many educators also feel they are better able to select suitable subjects because they know learners' intellectual abilities better than their parents.

#### **Assisting educators (4.10)**

A healthy parental educator partnership is essential to support learners in their school performance, and thus promote a culture of teaching and learning. One of the most effective structures for the achievement of such a partnership is parental involvement in

school activities. More than half (56%) of the respondents indicated that parents are unwilling to assist when asked to help in teaching cultural activities or sport events. According to Lemmer (2002:158) when parents are involved in school activities, learners achieve higher grades and have better long-term academic success.

## **4.2 Summary**

In this chapter the researcher's aim was to give some order to the range of information provided by the respondents in their answers to the questions in the questionnaire. Some of the collected data were of a demographic nature which enabled the researcher to construct a broad profile of the sample selected for the investigation. The data collected that dealt with educator's perceptions of the factors contributing to the poor performance in Grade 12 (COSC) in Lesotho were organised in frequency tables to simplify the statistical analysis thereof. The frequency of the responses were interpreted and commented on.

The last chapter of the study will consist of a summary of the literature study and empirical investigation, findings from both from which certain recommendations will be made.

## **CHAPTER 5**

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## **CHAPTER 5**

### **SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

In this final chapter of the dissertation a summary of the previous chapters is presented and some of the most important findings from the research discussed. This is followed by recommendations and a final remark.

#### **5.2 SUMMARY**

##### **5.2.1 Statement of the problem**

In essence this study investigated factors contributing to the poor performance by Grade 12 (COSC) learners in Lesotho. Alternatively, the high failure rate of learners in Grade 12 (COSC) is the reflection of how they have performed in the final examination. This determines the undergrowth of knowledge of the learners, ineffective learning and teaching and unrealistic standards of achievement. Related to this is a lack of facilities and inadequate resources, shortage of qualified educators and dedicated educators, ineffectual teaching, inability to diversify the curriculum in order to accommodate the interests and potential of all the learners and to meet the changing social and economic conditions. Weakness in management practices, coupled with a low level of parental involvement in the running of the schools is a serious problem. Associated with this is the inability to create and maintain a school environment that is physically and psychologically conducive to learning.

##### **5.2.2 Literature review**

Poor academic performance is problematic in schools. It can be placed into two categories: external-related causes and school related causes. The former include familial obligations,

socio-economic problems, environmental factors and parental involvement. The latter include poor school management, policies, school climate, irrelevant curriculum, poor instructional methods, limited proficiency in language of instruction, lack of school resources and facilities, examination anxiety and uncaring educators.

The milieu from which a learner comes has a great impact on his academic performance. Learners who live in single-parent households tend to have lower achievement rates. Related to this is that a single parent lack time, attention and guidance to children coupled with increased economic burdens from a single source of income. Besides single parent families, poverty is one of the main environmental factors with a serious handicap on academic performance; it can be experienced in many situations in the home, for example, from low income, or unemployment. To schools poverty imposes serious repercussions, namely malnutrition; overcrowding in the home and failure to pay prescribed school fees. These factors have a negative impact on learners' academic performance. As a result, learners from families with a low socio-economic status are at greater risk of attaining a poor academic performance in Grade 12 (COSC).

The home environment of a learner has a significant influence on his education. Low educational attainment attached with poverty shape the low expectations parents hold for their children. Parents fail to provide a home environment that allows an atmosphere conducive to study. The majority of poor families are located in small houses where it is impossible to reserve a room or a space for study purposes. Furthermore, inadequate parent involvement with formal education results in a breakdown of learner's academic performance. This lack of involvement can be linked to insufficient knowledge about how parents may contribute to their children's schooling. They feel that educators are trained to educate their children and it is not their responsibility. The academic success of learners depends on a triangle of interaction between educators, parents and learners.

An apparent and puzzling ineffective school management is notable through poor academic performance or learners dropping out of school before completion of high school education. Locus of control and decision making powers have resided mainly in the hands of proprietors with minimal participation from educators, parents and learners. Related to this are unstructured school policies that have no clear guidance to task performance and lack of cooperation.

Poor school facilities have a negative impact on school performance. Lack of science equipment and materials and where such equipment and material are available, many of them are not properly used. Many of the laboratories are inoperative because of lack of water and electricity. These factors contribute to poor academic performance and explain the decline in examination results. Unavailability of resources in schools has a negative impact on learners' achievement and leads to poor academic performance.

There are no guidelines on course offerings in the curriculum. The European oriented content of a syllabus is difficult to learn in Lesotho schools. This undermines the development of an empowered and liberated citizenry in the teaching of all subjects as there is no rooting of these subjects in the Lesotho culture and history. It impacts on the continually increasing poor performance of Grade 12 (COSC). The structure of the curriculum that is used denies learners to take an active part in learning. This situation seems to be attributed to learner's over-dependency on educators as the sole source of information. A balanced school education needs to provide ample opportunities for all learners to explore and develop different aspects of their abilities through a balanced curriculum and challenging approaches to teaching and learning.

Although the curriculum is expected to be well planned and correspond with resources to enable learners to participate, there is a vast gap between the achievements of, and the quality of schooling provided for citizens. Learners from affluent families in private schools obtains a university entrance qualification while learners in the public schools are often at risk of educational failure due to the classroom challenges they face particularly because of limited English proficiency. They cannot cope and do well in their academic studies because the language of instruction (frequently not the same as the learners' mother tongue) often leads to communication problems and inadequate study orientation. These learners experience difficulty with academic concepts and perform poorly in external examinations due to tension and examination anxiety followed by language deficiency.

### **5.2.3 Planning of the research**

This study utilised a questionnaire constructed by the researcher as data base. The questionnaire was aimed at educators in schools in the Leribe district in Lesotho. The

information sought for this investigation was not readily available from any other source and had to be acquired directly from the respondents (educators). When this situation exists, the most appropriate source of data is the questionnaire, as it is easily adapted to a variety of situations.

The aim of the questionnaire was to obtain information regarding educators' perceptions of the factors contributing to the poor performance in Grade 12 (COSC) in Lesotho concerning the following:

- Strategies for effective teaching and learning.
- Aspects concerning school resources.
- Factors concerning parental involvement

#### **5.2.4 Presentation and analysis of research of data**

The purpose of chapter 4 was to discuss the data collected from the questionnaires complete by 100 educators and to offer comments and interpretations on the findings. At the outset, an explanation and description was provided as to the methods in the categorisation of the responses and the analysis of the data. This was followed by calculating the data in percentages, known as relative frequency distribution. This was done in order to explain the presentation of data in that, it specifies the proportion of the total number of cases which were observed for a particular question. The findings from the frequency distributions were analysed, interpreted and commented on.

#### **5.2.5 Aims of the study**

The researcher formulated specific aims (cf. 1.5) to determine the course of the study. These aims were realised, through the literature study together with an empirical survey consisting of a self-structured questionnaire. On this basis certain findings are now given.

### 5.3 FINDINGS FROM THE EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

The following are some of the significant findings from the empirical research:

- The majority of the respondents (70%) in the research sample perceived an unfavourable educator learner ratio as a factor contributing to the poor performance in Grade 12 (COSC). Overcrowded classrooms do not allow educators to use a learner centered approach as it is time consuming as educators have to attend to individual learners to check how they perform in the given activities. The quality of teaching depends on the size of the class (2.1).
- The larger percentage (60%) of the respondents agreed that lack of effective discipline in the class contributes to the poor performance in the final school examination. Discipline is necessary to monitor a certain standard of social conformity so that a school can function in an orderly manner (2.2).
- More than two thirds (67%) of the respondents said that learners that experience problems with subject content do not receive individual assistance. Learners with below average attainment need individual attention. Large classes do not make individual attention possible (2.4).
- The majority of the respondents (84%) acknowledged that one of the factors of the poor performance in Grade 12 is poor homework practice. Homework develops independent study, perseverance and self-discipline. It also opens up areas of study and the use of materials and sources of information that are not available in a classroom (2.7).
- Three quarters of the respondents (75%) agreed that educators conduct lessons or part of it in mother tongue if they are not familiar with the English subject content. Learners with limited English proficiency are often at risk of poor academic performance due to the classroom challenges they face particularly where English is a medium of instruction (2.10).

- The majority of the respondents in the research sample indicated that the following aspects concerning resources can be viewed as factors contributing to the poor performance in COSC:
  - **Lack of textbooks.** Eighty four percent (84%) of the respondents agreed that lack of text books contribute to the poor performance of learners in Grade 12 (3.1).
  - **Library.** Seventy nine percent (79%) of the respondents said that the library at their school is not functional (3.2).
  - **Ineffective science laboratories.** Eighty two percent (82%) of the respondents confirmed that their schools lack science equipment (3.3).
  - **Lack of teaching aids.** Eighty three percent (83%) of the respondents were in agreement with the statement that lack of teaching aids is one of the causes of the poor performance in Grade 12 (COSC) (3.4).
- The majority of the respondents (91%) in the research sample indicated that learners are dismissed from school because of the non payment of fees (4.3).
- Most of the respondents (86%) agreed that parents do not monitor homework given to their children or check if it was done (4.6).
- More than eighty percent (81%) of the respondents in the research sample said that one of the contributing factors to the poor performance in Grade 12 (COSC) is that parents are unable to assist their children with school work (4.8).

## **5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.4.1 School management**

#### **(1) Motivation**

The main responsibility of a school in the community is to educate children. The school holds the whole future of the community it serves and that of the society at large in its hands (cf.2.3.1). This may however at times not be realised due to a number of factors. One of the factors is the lack of accountable management of those who are entrusted with the responsibility of ensuring that effective teaching and learning take place in the school, especially the school principal.

Poor school management is notable through the poor performance of learners and their dropping out of school before completion of their high school education due to management which is not concerned with rationale, coherence, integrity of the curriculum and is not committed to academic pursuits. There is also not much done by the school management to address these problems. It is the responsibility of both the Ministry of Education and the school principals to promote academic performance of learners.

In the light of the above, it is imperative for school managers to receive some form of training and guidance on how to manage their schools so that they perform successfully.

#### **(2) Recommendations**

The recommendation is that in order for schools managers to become effective, the Ministry of Education (MoE) must:

- Facilitate seminars, workshops and in-service training programmes for school managers with a view to improve guidelines in respect of *inter alia*:
- The role and function of the school managers.

- Effective communication skills.
- The creation of a conducive culture of teaching and learning.
- Planning and organization.
- Crisis and conflict management skills.
- Staff development programmes.
- Staff involvement in decision-making.
- Effective delegation.

## **5.4.2 Educators**

### **(1) Motivation**

The findings in this study revealed that educators are the ones that handle the education of the child in school, hence it is important that they are kept motivated at all times for the success of the learner. In many schools, teaching is experienced as isolated and isolating work. This can be attributed to bureaucratic procedures characterised by poor management and the collapse of teaching and learning. There is mutual lack of respect, educators undermine conventional education practices such as punctuality, lesson planning and innovation. *Accepting this irresponsibility, learners lose their commitment to school work and perform poor academically.*

It is therefore of vital importance that the school governing body and the government are adequately equipped to introduce staff members, even under difficult circumstances, to effective learning strategies that will be successful and achievable.

### **(2) Recommendation**

The following are proposals concerning encouragement for effective teaching:

- Classes should be smaller. The ideal educator-learner ration in a school should be 1: 35. This can be achieved by increasing the number of educators in a school.
- Networking between neighbouring schools must be promoted to, *inter alia*, discuss and evaluate school policies and teaching methods.
- Internal workshops on the implementation of the curriculum should be conducted at schools. These workshops should be conducted by experts of the relevant discipline.
- The school management headed by the principal should provide opportunities for educators to plan and learn new skills. These opportunities can include the following:
  - Attendance of in-service training courses on curriculum implementation.
  - Allow educators to attend formally organised workshops by the Ministry.

### **5.4.3 Parental involvement**

#### **(1) Motivation**

*The majority of schools in Lesotho are community schools. Communities are made up of parents, since parents are the primary educators of their children, it is therefore very important for them to be actively involved in their children's formal education.*

Some parents are uncomfortable about involving themselves in school matters. This is caused by a number of reasons, for example, some schools often do not welcome parental involvement in the school. The calibre of the representatives of the parents is often inadequate and slow and that they are unable to cope with the complex educational issues arising from time to time, and thus parents are inadequately represented. These matters need urgent attention and the following are recommended concerning parental involvement.

## **(2) Recommendation**

The recommendations are:

- The Ministry of Education needs to create forums where parents will be empowered in matters regarding their involvement in schools.
- Since parents are primary educators of their children, they must be given a say in the management of their children's schools.
- Schools should go out of their way to encourage parents' active involvement in the running of the schools.
- Schools need to co-opt parents who are competent in areas of school management
- Platforms where parents and educators share their vision about the school, feelings, skills and experiences should be created.
- School governing bodies and other parent structures must be offered full training and support in the responsible exercise of their roles and duties in the school.

### **5.4.4 Further research**

This investigation has shown that effective teaching in a school is mainly the responsibility of educators. It is however, common knowledge that many schools experience poor performance for a variety of reasons. Factors inside and outside the school may be discerned in an analysis of the poor performance. This means a learner's personal background, home conditions, parental models and educational endeavours are all factors that cause poor results. Some of the more important reasons for a decline in pass rate in Grade 12 are associated specifically with lack of facilities in schools.

## **(2) Recommendation**

The recommendation is that further research of a quantitative and qualitative nature must be undertaken in the other nine districts in Lesotho with the aim of developing a well planned strategy to be implemented in schools. It should ensure regular evaluations of the capacity of educators to teach and develop quality education at all levels. It is necessary that research studies be conducted to find appropriate solutions for the improvement in the poor performance.

### **5.4 CRITICISM**

Criticism that emanates from this study includes the following:

- The research focused on a few high schools in one district of Lesotho. Findings from the schools in the other districts, including private schools, might have given different results.
- It can be presumed that some of the respondents in the research sample formed their perceptions of the factors contributing to the poor performance in Grade 12 to the results from an individual school.

### **5.6 FINAL REMARK**

The purpose of the study was to give educators, school managers, parents and other role players in education insight into a critical evaluation of educators' perceptions of the factors contributing to the poor performance in Grade12 (COSC). It is envisaged that this study will be of value to all the stakeholders in education. It is hoped that the recommendations made in this study will be considered for implementation with the view of improving the poor performance of Grade12 (COSC) in Lesotho high schools.

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# **ANNEXURE A**

## **Questionnaire**

**STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL**

**QUESTIONNAIRE**

**An investigation into the factors contributing to the  
poor performance of grade 12 (COSC) learners in  
Lesotho.**

**MRS M M JACKSON**

**AUGUST 2008**

Dear educator

**QUESTIONNAIRE: AN INVESTIGATION INTO FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO THE  
POOR PERFORMANCE OF GRADE 12 (COSC) LEARNERS IN  
LESOTHO**

At present I am engaged in a research project towards my MEd (Masters in Education) degree at the University of Zululand under the supervision of Prof. M S Vos. The research is concerned with the factors contributing to the poor performance of COSC (Grade 12) learners in Lesotho.

I have taken the liberty of writing to you, as one of the selected respondents, in order to seek your assistance in acquiring information about your experience relating to the research.

**CONFIDENTIALITY**  
All information will be regarded as **CONFIDENTIAL**, and no personal details of any educator/ respondent will be mentioned in the findings, nor will any of the results be related to any particular educator or school

We appreciate your cooperation.

Yours sincerely

.....

Mrs. MM Jackson

Date .....

### INSTRUCTIONS TO RESPONDENTS

1. Please read through each statement carefully **before** giving your opinion.
2. Please make sure that you do not **omit** a question.
3. Please be totally **frank** when giving your opinion.
4. Please **do not** discuss statements with any one.
5. Please **return** the questionnaire after completion.

Kindly answer **all the** questions by supplying the requested information in writing, or by making a cross (**X**) in the appropriate space.

**SECTION ONE: BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION****1.1 My gender:**

| <b>Gender</b> |  | <b>code</b> |
|---------------|--|-------------|
| male          |  | 1           |
| female        |  | 2           |

**1.2 My age in completed years as at 2008-12-31:**

| <b>Age group</b>    |  | <b>code</b> |
|---------------------|--|-------------|
| 20-25 years         |  | 1           |
| 26-30 years         |  | 2           |
| 31-35 years         |  | 3           |
| 36-40 years         |  | 4           |
| 41-45 years         |  | 5           |
| 46-50 years         |  | 6           |
| 51-55 years         |  | 7           |
| 56-60 years         |  | 8           |
| 61-65 years         |  | 9           |
| Older than 65 years |  | 10          |

**1.3 My qualifications are?**

Academic qualification(s) Bed, MEd, etc.

Professional qualification(s) (e.g.) HDE, FDEPTC, etc.

|  | <b>code</b> |
|--|-------------|
|  | 1           |
|  | 2           |

**1.4 Completed years in the teaching profession as at 2008-12-31:**

| <b>Number of years</b> |  | <b>code</b> |
|------------------------|--|-------------|
| 0-5 years              |  | 1           |
| 6-10 years             |  | 2           |
| 11-15 years            |  | 3           |
| 16-20 years            |  | 4           |
| 21-30 years            |  | 5           |
| 26-30 years            |  | 6           |
| More than 30 years     |  | 7           |

**1.5 My post level is:**

| <b>Post level</b>      |  | <b>code</b> |
|------------------------|--|-------------|
| principal              |  | 1           |
| Deputy principal       |  | 2           |
| HOD                    |  | 3           |
| Education (post level) |  | 4           |

**1.6 Type of post held by me:**

| <b>Post</b>    |  | <b>code</b> |
|----------------|--|-------------|
| Permanent      |  | 1           |
| Temporary      |  | 2           |
| Governing body |  | 3           |
| Part time      |  | 4           |

**1.7 My school is situated in:**

| Area            | code |
|-----------------|------|
| Urban area      | 1    |
| Semi urban area | 2    |
| Rural area      | 3    |

**SECTION B: TEACHING AND LEARNING**

|      | <b>The poor performance of Grade12 ( COSC) is caused by the following:</b>  | Agree | Disagree | Uncertain |
|------|---|-------|----------|-----------|
| 2.1  | An unfavourable educator learner ratio ( e.g. large classes )   |       |          |           |
| 2.2  | Lack of effective discipline in class ( e.g. educators cannot manage a large class group)   |       |          |           |
| 2.3  | Lessons are not well prepared by educators  |       |          |           |
| 2.4  | Learners that experience problems with subject content do no receive individual assistance  |       |          |           |
| 2.5  | Educators don't honour their lessons (e.g. educators are not punctual or do not attend their lessons  |       |          |           |
| 2.6  | Learners are not motivated to do schoolwork (e.g. absent, do not attend classes or go home before school closes)                                  |       |          |           |
| 2.7  | Learners do not do homework given to them (e.g. homework is copied, incomplete or not done at all)  |       |          |           |
| 2.8  | Educators do not give feedback to learners (e.g. homework, class work, tests, etc. are not discussed with learners )                              |       |          |           |
| 2.9  | Inadequate assessment methods (e.g. learners are not prepared for final examination)  |       |          |           |
| 2.10 | Educators conduct lessons or part of it in Sesotho ( e.g. if they are not familiar with the English subject content they switch to mother tongue) |       |          |           |

**SECTION C: RESOURCES**

|      | <b>Factors concerning school resources that contribute poor performance in COSC are:</b>     | <b>Agree</b> | <b>Disagree</b> | <b>Uncertain</b> |
|------|--|--------------|-----------------|------------------|
| 3.1  | Lack of text books (e.g. learners cannot afford to buy expensive text books)                 |              |                 |                  |
| 3.2  | Non functional libraries (e.g. outdated and irrelevant academic equipment)                   |              |                 |                  |
| 3.3  | Ineffective science laboratories ( e.g. lack of sufficient science equipment)                |              |                 |                  |
| 3.4  | Lack of teaching aids (e.g. no over head projectors)   |              |                 |                  |
| 3.5  | Under utilized computer laboratories (e.g. no qualified educators to teach it)               |              |                 |                  |
| 3.6  | Unqualified educators (e.g. educators teaching without relevant training)                    |              |                 |                  |
| 3.7  | Poor classrooms (e.g. no heating system in cold winter)                                      |              |                 |                  |
| 3.8  | Inadequate classroom space (e.g. overcrowded classrooms with 3 to 4 learners sharing a desk) |              |                 |                  |
| 3.9  | Lack of required stationary ( e.g. exercise books calculators, mathematical instruments)     |              |                 |                  |
| 3.10 | No school feeding scheme ( e.g. learners do not get food during break time)                  |              |                 |                  |

**SECTION D: PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT**

|      | <b>Factors concerning parental involvement that cause poor performance of COSC learners</b>  | <b>Agree</b> | <b>Disagree</b> | <b>Uncertain</b> |
|------|--|--------------|-----------------|------------------|
| 4.1  | Poor attendance of parents meeting (e.g. not enough parents attend meetings to select school governing body)                         |              |                 |                  |
| 4.2  | Parents are reluctant to attend meetings to discuss problems experienced by their children at school                                 |              |                 |                  |
| 4.3  | Parents fail to pay compulsory school fees (e.g. learners are dismissed from school because of non-payment of fees)                  |              |                 |                  |
| 4.4  | Poor attendance by parents of school activities their children take part in (e.g. cultural and sport activities are poorly attended) |              |                 |                  |
| 4.5  | Parents are unwilling to partake in school fundraising activities (e.g. even poor parents can not offer their services)              |              |                 |                  |
| 4.6  | Parents do not monitor the homework given to their children (e.g. no checking if work was done)                                      |              |                 |                  |
| 4.7  | Parents do not readily discuss problems experienced by their children with educators   |              |                 |                  |
| 4.8  | Parents are unable to assist their children with schoolwork (e.g. parents are illiterate or lack knowledge of school subjects)       |              |                 |                  |
| 4.9  | Parents are not involved in their children's selection of suitable school subjects   |              |                 |                  |
| 4.10 | Parents are unwilling to assist educators when asked ( e.g. teaching cultural activities, help with sports, etc)                     |              |                 |                  |