

EFFECTS OF SOCIAL WORKER SERVICES IN RURAL SECONDARY SCHOOLS
ON LEARNER ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN VHEMBE DISTRICT

by

MALANGE SEANI SYLVIA

Submitted to the Faculty of Education in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Education in the Department of Curriculum and Instructional Studies at the University of Zululand, Kwa-Dlangezwa.

Supervisor: Dr H.R. Mhlongo

Co-supervisor: Prof A. P. Kutame

Submitted: January 2020

Candidate's Signature:

DECLARATION

I, SEANI SYLVIA MALANGE hereby declare that this dissertation, entitled '*EFFECTS SOCIAL WORKER SERVICES IN RURAL SECONDARY SCHOOLS ON LEARNER ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN VHEMBE DISTRICT*', is my own original work and has not been previously submitted for a degree at this or any University. This is my own work in design and execution, and that all reference materials contained herein have been duly acknowledged.

CANDIDATE'S SIGNATURE:

DATE:

SUPERVISOR'S SIGNATURE:

DATE:

CO-SUPERVISOR'S SIGNATURE:

DATE:

January 2020

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my dear children; my daughter Muvhumbi, and my son, Mulamuleli. You missed a lot of quality time with me while I was studying, and you understood and supported my dream. I would not have achieved this if you were not selfless and understanding. I appreciate and dearly love you for that.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- To God be the glory, He led me when I was confused and gave me strength when I was weary through my studies. He was always by my side.
- I wish to dearly thank Dr H.R. Mhlongo, my supervisor. I owe you my gratitude for your hard work, respect, encouragement, commitment, expertise, as well as the critical scholarly guidance that flattened the rough journey of my study. I thank you for your expertise and excellent supervision skills throughout this study, provision of diligent guidance, counselling and care that kept me focused when I was climbing up the mountains of challenges; and when the way was covered by the shadow of darkness. I owe you my gratitude for your professionalism, patience, and motivation. You were such an inspiration in my life - that will never be forgotten. You have made me a better person. May God shower you with blessings. No amount of words can describe your valuable support and love. Thank you for believing in me. I have learned a lot from you.
- Prof A.P. Kutame, my co-supervisor, thank you for leading me to this academic journey, and for the support and encouragement, may God bless you abundantly.
- Dr E. M. Mncwango, for professionally editing my entire dissertation.
- Prof H.N. Mutshaeni and Prof T.S. Mashau, for their motivation and encouragement.
- My loving parents; my mom, Mrs. T.E. Malange, and my dad, Mr. M.E. Malange, for laying the education foundation in my life and their never-failing support.
- My friend, sister, and colleague, N.E. Singo, for encouragement.
- The Department of Basic Education, Vhembe District officials, school authorities, educators, school social workers from the sampled schools in Luvuvhu and Mvudi circuits, for permitting me to conduct research in schools under their jurisdictions.
- All participants-Grade 12 learners from the sampled schools under Luvuvhu and Mvudi circuit.

- I wish to acknowledge my siblings, for their varied and selfless contributions to my success: My sisters, Ndivhuwo and Awelani Malange; my brothers, Adv. Azwihangwisi and Khubana Malange.

ABSTRACT

The social worker services are crucial to the success of a lifelong learning process, as they provide assistance, guidance, counselling, and advice to learners so that they can improve and make better-informed decisions and improved academic performance. The purpose of the study was to find out the effect of social worker services in rural secondary schools on learner academic performance in the Vhembe District in Limpopo. The investigation was conducted using the mixed methods approach which was driven by both quantitative and qualitative approaches. A sample of 130 participants was selected from rural secondary schools. The study was underpinned by the ZPD theory. Twenty (20) educators (5 from each school) and 100 grade 12 learners (20 from each school) and 5 heads of departments (1 from each school), were simple randomly selected and they answered a questionnaire with closed and open-ended questions, while 5 social workers (1 from each school) were purposively selected for the in-depth interview session. The findings revealed that the school social workers' motivation strategy used in their schools reduce poor academic performance, based on the results of the in-depth interviews conducted with heads of departments and school social workers. Motivational tools and parental involvement topped the effectiveness. The researcher recommends that for the school social worker services to run smoothly, there has to be a provision of suitable space for school social workers to be effective in rendering their support services to the learners and to keep confidential information safe. Furthermore, enough time should be given for learners to consult a school social worker.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION	i
DEDICATION	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
ABSTRACT	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vi
APPENDICES	xi
LIST OF TABLES	xii
LIST OF FIGURES	xiii
ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS	xiv
CHAPTER 1: ORIENTATION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY	1
1.1. INTRODUCTION	1
1.2. RATIONALE AND MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY	3
1.3. PROBLEM STATEMENT	4
1.4. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY	5
1.5. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY	5
1.6. RESEARCH QUESTIONS	6
1.7. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY	6
1.8. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY	7
1.8.1. Research Methodology	7
1.8.2. Research Design	7
1.8.3. Research Paradigm	8
1.9. Population and Sampling Procedure	8
1.10. Data Collection Instruments	8
1.11. Data Analysis	9
1.12. Validity and Reliability	9
1.13. Ethical Considerations	9

1.13.1. Protection from harm	10
1.13.2. Informed Consent	10
1.13 .3. Right to Privacy	10
1.14. Operational definitions	11
1.14. 1.Social Worker	11
1.14.2. Learner Perfomance	11
1.14.3. Rural	12
1.14.4. Effects	12
1.15. Chapter division	12
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW	14
2.1. INTRODUCTION	14
2.2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	16
2.3. THE INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE OF SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKER SERVICES	21
2.4. THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT ON THE ROLE OF SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKER	24
2.5. THE IMPACT OF SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKER SERVICES ON LEARNER ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE	28
2.5.1. School social worker focus areas in a school	34
2.5.1.1. Learner attendance	34
2.5.1.2. Behaviour management	35
2.5.1.3. Social crisis	35
2.5.1.4. Counselling	36
2.5.1.5. Casework management	37
2.5.1.6. Home-school-community liaison	38
2.6. FACTORS THAT HINDER ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF LEARNERS IN RURAL SECONDARY SCHOOLS	39
2.6.1. Parental involvement	39

2.6.2. Unpredictable home environment	45
2.6.3. Parent's educational level	47
2.6.4. Learner profile	49
2.6.5. Learners' attitude	50
2.7. SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT AS A CONTRIBUTING FACTOR TO LEARNER PERFORMANCE	51
2.8. EFFECTIVENESS OF SOCIAL WORKER SERVICES IN RURAL SECONDARY SCHOOLS	52
2.9. PROBLEMS HINDERING LEARNER PERFORMANCE	53
2.10. STRATEGIES THAT SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS USE TO MOTIVATE RURAL SECONDARY SCHOOL LEARNERS	56
2.10.1. Role playing	56
2.10.2. Campaigns	57
2.10.3. Motivational talks	58
2.11. CHAPTER SUMMARY	60
CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND DATA COLLECTION	62
3.1. INTRODUCTION	62
3.2. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY	62
3.2.1. Research methodology	63
3.2.2. Research Design	63
3.2.3. Research paradigm	63
3.3. POPULATION AND SAMPLING PROCEDURE	64
3.4. DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS	64
3.4.1. Questionnaire	65
3.4.1.1. Advantages of using questionnaires	65
3.4.1.2. Limitations of using questionnaires	66
3.4.2. Interviews	66
3.4.2.1. Strengths of interviews	67

3.4.3.2. Limitations of interviews	67
3.5. DATA ANALYSIS	67
3.6. VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY	69
3.7. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS	69
3.7.1. Protection from harm	70
3.7.2. Informed consent	70
3.7.3. Right to privacy	70
3.8. CHAPTER SUMMARY	71
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	72
4.1. INTRODUCTION	72
4.2. SECTION A DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SAMPLE	72
4.2.1. Demographic profile of learners	73
4.2.2. Demographic profile of educators	75
4.3. SECTION B: FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO POOR ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF LEARNERS	77
4.3.1. Distance travelled to school	77
4.3.2. Mode of transport to school	78
4.3.3. Hours to school	80
4.3.4. State of mind upon arrival at school	80
4.3.5. Frequency of study time	81
4.3.6. Performance rating	82
4.3.7. Factors contributing to poor academic performance of learners	84
4.3.8. Methods used to reduce poor academic performance problems faced at school	87
4.3.9. Effectiveness of measures used to reduce poor academic performance of learners	88
4.4. SECTION C: QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS	89

4.4.1. Perceptions by educators and social workers on factors contributing to poor academic performance of learners	89
4.4.1.1. Causes of poor academic performance	90
4.4.1.1.1. Parental involvement	90
4.4.2. Methods used to reduce poor academic performance problems faced at school	94
4.4.3. Learner disciplinary problems	97
4.5. METHODS USED TO REDUCE INDISCIPLINE AT SCHOOL	99
4.6. CHAPTER SUMMARY	101
CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	102
5.1. INTRODUCTION	102
5.2. THE SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS IS BASED ON EACH STUDY OBJECTIVE	102
5.2.1. Impact of social worker services rendered to enhance learners' academic performance.	102
5.2.2. Social worker services provided in rural secondary schools in Vhembe district are effective to the learners' academic performance.	104
5.2.3. Problems displayed by the learners and how those could hinder satisfactory learner performance.	105
5.3. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY	107
5.4. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS IN AGREEMENT WITH THE RESEARCH TOPIC.	108
5.5. CONCLUSIONS	109
5.6. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF BASIC EDUCATION	110
5.7. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH	111
REFERENCES	113

APPENDIX A: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH-VHEMBE DISTRICT
MANAGER

APPENDIX B: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH-CIRCUIT MANAGER

APPENDIX C: QUESTIONAIRESFOR LEARNERS AND EDUCATORS

APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR SOCIAL WORKERS

LIST OF TABLES

Table4.1. Demographic profile of learners	72
Table 4.2. Demographic profile of educators	73
Table 4.3. Hours to school (duration of time spent walking to school)	78
Table 4.4. Factors contributing to poor performance of learners	82
Table4.5. Methods used to reduce poor academic performance at school	85
Table4.6. Effectiveness of measures used to reduce poor academic performance of learners	86

LIST OF FIGURES

2.1 School social worker services	27
4.1. Distance travelled to school	76
4.2. Mode of transport	77
4.3. State of mind upon arrival at school	79
4.4. Frequency of study	80
4.5. Performance rating	81

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ASCA	American School Counselor Association.
CRT	Crisis Response Team
CTSs	Community Service Teams
DoE	Department of Education
DoEWP	Department of Education White Paper
EBD	Emotional Behavioural Disability
ESSA	Every Student Succeeds Act
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
IDEA	Individuals with Disability in Education Act
MASSW	Mongolian Association of School Social Workers
NASW	National Association of Social Workers
NASWE	National Association of Social Workers in Education
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
PBST	Provincial Based Support Team
QA	Quality Assurance
RSE	Rural Secondary Education
SACSSP	South African Council of Social Services Profession
SASA	South African Schools Act
SGB	School Governing Body
SMT	School Management Team
SSWAA	School Social Work Association of America
SSW	School Social Worker
UK	United Kingdom
USA	United States of America
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development

CHAPTER ONE

ORIENTATION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Since 1994, the National Department of Education in South Africa has embarked on the enormous task of providing quality education to all children. Hence, the Department of Education placed social workers in schools to assist learners because social workers play a vital role in the safety and livelihood of children daily. It has been pointed out that no school system in Africa can claim to provide quality education when the majority of its learners have no access to guidance and counselling services as an integral component of their curriculum (Mwamwenda, 2004).

This study explored the effect of social worker services in rural secondary schools on learner academic performance as a potentially influential factor in learners' behaviour and academic performance. According to Qhingana (2006) pupils sometimes do not find education meaningful, hence they become bored. Consequently, they turn out to be involved in protests, alcohol and drug abuse, lack of discipline, violence, and fruitless activities. Therefore, a school social worker is an advocate who helps students reach their potential in a school setting and provides support services to help remove obstacles to children's success in school.

School social workers encourage creative ways of working to resolve the challenges vulnerable learners face and aim to promote empowerment, enabling learners to take action to improve their lives. The profession (social work) works with learners in a variety of different ways which are appropriate to individual

circumstances, to help them achieve independence and exercise their human and civil rights. School social workers work holistically with learners and families in complex social circumstances.

Recognition of value judgements and the ability to understand conflicts of interest are essential skills which social workers should possess to achieve the best possible results for learners. Effective communication, a non-judgemental approach, building trust and maintaining strong relationships are crucial to enabling change. Social work is, therefore, practiced, whenever possible, in partnership with children, adults, families, and communities (Brody, 2010).

Studies conducted in the United Kingdom by Doel (2010) show that learners were clear that the work of a school social worker had made a difference and brought specific changes. These include self-confidence, giving an idea of what to do to stop bullying, a positive effect on behaviour and encouragement in schoolwork, reduction of stress, having access to the knowledge and services that educators couldn't be expected to have without the provision of a school social worker placement.

In the South African context, Van Sittert (2016) conducted a study that showed that as of 1920, psychologists were appointed at various Departments of Education, mainly for IQ-testing. It seems that school social work developed out of this context. In South Africa, the need for social workers in schools was recognised in the late 1940s. From 1948 onwards the then Transvaal and Natal Education Department appointed special teachers to address some of the social welfare problems in schools. These teachers, however, only focused on the cognitive, whereas social workers addressed the social functioning and interaction of the child in the school, at home and in the community (Kemp, 2014).

In 1958, the then Transvaal province created posts for school counsellors who were professionally qualified as teachers. The goal was that they would address

behavioural and emotional problems in schools, but, because they only had a teaching background, this did not work. Thereafter, a school counselling course was introduced and school counsellors were appointed. However, the need to recognise school social work, as a specialised field, was only identified in 2009 by the South African Council for Social Services Professions (SACSSP).

The first school social worker was appointed in KZN in 1983 and, thereafter, the other provinces followed. The current functions of school social workers in schools in South Africa include crisis intervention and counselling, support services to learners and their families, which include home visits and referrals to outside service providers, identifying and establishing support groups and providing training on social concerns (Kemp, 2014). School social workers, furthermore, have the responsibility to share information and to develop programmes that can assist the strategic goals of the Department of Education (Van Sittert, 2016). Poppy (2012) furthermore also highlights the following areas where social workers can contribute to the academic goals of the child: the improvement of system dynamics, the coordination of information, helping learners gain insight into their functioning in their social environment, assessment of the individual's strengths and the development of strengths-based interventions for the family, school, individual and community. School social work interventions can play a vital role in supporting the learner academically.

1.2 RATIONALE AND MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY

Today, school social workers in guidance and counselling services are essential for primary and secondary school learners more than before, because of the barrier of society, the speed and transformation, the demand of technology and the legacy of the past, Black communities face demoralizing challenges that make social worker services in schools on guidance and counselling a need, not a luxury. The performance of South African learners in secondary schools is generally the lowest among middle-income countries (Spaul, 2013).

The blame for poor academic performance among learners is normally attributed to factors such as those related to teachers, learners, family, school environment and recently, information technology and social media (Needham, Crosnoe & Muller, 2004). Out of these factors, the researcher sought to focus on how learner, family, and school environment factors affect learner performance and behaviour in class, as perceived by learners and teachers. Poor academic performance does not only result in learners having low self-esteem, but also causes significant stress to parents (Spaull, 2013).

In most rural secondary schools where learners perform poorly, educators and the school management are the first to receive blame as communities expect them to produce 'miracles' with learners of different academic abilities and those having family, emotional and social problems that need to be addressed by the school social worker. Although educators and school management teams are accountable for what goes on in the classroom as it pertains to the selection of content, delivery, and organisation of the learning activities, it is unwise to put all the blame on them. School social work is a vital component of most of the schools in the Western countries and social workers play a crucial role in ensuring the mental health and social well-being of children in the education setting (Mann, 2015). School social workers play an important role in enhancing the conducive family environment for effective learning by promoting learner success through the school-family partnership that highlights a school social worker intervention which enhances parents' ability towards creating home conditions that help in learning and promoting family involvement in home learning activities. It is against this background that the researcher was motivated to conduct this study.

1.3. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Learners are the most essential asset for any educational institute because the social and economic development of the country is directly linked with student academic performance (Mushtaq & Khan, 2012). This highlights the importance of

social worker services in the social, academic and personality development of school-aged children. The poor academic performance of learners in rural secondary schools in the Vhembe district had been a concern for quite some time. There are factors contributing to poor performance that need to be reduced; their effects need to be determined. As a secondary school educator, the researcher has observed that despite several interventions to improve learner performance which includes placement of social workers in schools, learners are still not performing to the expected level.

For this study, the school social worker is the integral part of the whole school community working to help learners, educators and other school personnel and parents, by helping learners to face challenges, tough classes, peer pressure, friendship problems, depression and all that can be a roadblock to future success. Because the relationships and emotional process affect how and what we learn, schools and families must effectively address these aspects of the educational process for the benefit of all students (Child Development, 2011).

1.4. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study was to investigate the effect of social worker services on learner academic performance in rural secondary schools.

1.5. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study was guided by the following research objectives:

- To explore the impact of social worker services rendered to enhance learner academic performance.

- To find out whether the social worker services provided in rural secondary schools in the Vhembe district are effective in the learner's academic performance.
- To investigate the problems displayed by learners and how those could hinder satisfactory learner performance.

1.6. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study sought to answer the following questions:

- How do services of the social worker impact on learner performance of the rural secondary schools in Vhembe district?
- What effect do social worker services have on learner academic performance?
- What problems do learners encounter in the process of learning which may hinder their expected academic performance?

1.7. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study explored the role of school social workers in rural secondary schools towards contribution to the enhancement of learner performance. This study will benefit the Department of Basic Education locally and nationally. The study highlight possible strategies for social workers, educators and school management teams working together and their role of supporting learners' education. The findings and results of the study will be distributed to all stakeholders in education such as principals, educators, parents, and School Governing Bodies (SGB) of the selected schools. Intervention strategies and programs to assist learners to improve performance will be employed in selected schools, and they will be encouraged to enforce parental involvement towards their learners' education. Learners may also learn more efficiently to impress their parents and educators, to succeed in their education.

1.8. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This section outlines the research design and methods used in this study. The research design and methodology are explained to indicate what is needed to answer the research questions and achieve systematic management of data collection and analysis.

1.8.1. Research methodology

Creswell (2013) defines research methodology as the creation and development of techniques and strategies to collect data, the development of methods to investigate and improve the properties such as reliability and validity of data obtained employing these techniques and analysis of such data. The study utilised the quantitative and qualitative methods. These are discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

1.8.2. Research design

A research design focuses on the end-product and all the steps in the process to achieve that outcome. In this sense, a research design is viewed as the functional plan in which certain research methods and procedures are linked together to acquire a reliable and valid body of data for empirically grounded analyses, conclusions and theory formulation.

This study is empirical, using a survey and interviews. The design is discussed in full in Chapter 3.

1.8.3. Research paradigm

A research paradigm is a researcher's beliefs on how the data about a phenomenon being studied should be collected, analysed and used (Aliyu, Bello, Kasim & Martin, 2014). This study utilised the pragmatic paradigm, and this is discussed in full in Chapter 3.

1.9. POPULATION AND SAMPLING PROCEDURE

Neumann (2016) defines a population as the group upon which the researcher is interested in making inferences. Furthermore, Creswell (2013) defines a population as a set of entities in which all the measurements of interest to the practitioner or researcher are presented. The population of this study consisted of educators from five schools in the Luvuvhu and Mvudi circuits in Vhembe East District.

In this study, purposive and simple random sampling procedures were used to select participants and respondents as fully discussed in Chapter 3.

1.10. DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

Leedy and Ormrod (2012) maintain that data collection is not just a process of data collection; it is also a process of gathering information in unique ways related to the purpose of the study. These are the methods that the researcher used to describe the findings and to confirm the credibility of the interpretations. Furthermore, interviews and questionnaires enable researchers to receive information from people and convert them into data (Neumann, 2016). The researcher used a questionnaire and interview as instruments of data collection. The instruments are fully discussed in Chapter 3.

1.11. DATA ANALYSIS

Leedy and Ormrod (2012) point out that the term 'analysis means the resolution of a complex whole into parts. It involves reducing to manageable proportions the wealth of data that one has collected or has available. Data analysis was analysed systematically, searching and arranging the interview transcription, field notes as discussed in full in Chapter 3.

1.12. VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY.

Validity refers to whether the questionnaire or survey measures what it intends to measure, the overriding principle of validity is that it focuses on how a questionnaire or assessment process is used and how well it does so. Reliability is the characteristics of the instrument, that is the degree to which any measuring tool control the random error. To enhance reliability, a considerable number of items in the questionnaire and structured interview schedule were used. The instruments are discussed in full in Chapter 3.

1.13. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

De Vos (2010) states that ethical considerations should include non-maleficence (the researcher must do no harm to the participants) and privacy and anonymity (the identity of the participants must not be revealed in any way). Leedy and Ormrod (2012) bring out those most ethical issues in research that falls into one of three categories which the researcher considered while conducting the study. The three categories are as follows:

1.13.1. Protection from harm

A researcher should not expose research participants to unnecessary physical or psychological harm. Participants should not risk losing life or limb, nor should they be subjected to unusual stress, embarrassment, or loss of self-esteem. In cases where the nature of the study involves creating a small amount of psychological discomfort, participants should know this ahead of time, and any necessary debriefing or counselling should follow immediately after participation (Leedy & Ormrod, 2012). Issues of ethical confidentiality and privacy of the personal rights of learners and educators were protected.

1.13.2. Informed consent

According to Leedy and Ormrod (2012), when people are intentionally recruited for participation in a research study, they should be told the nature of the study to be conducted and given the choice of either participating or not participating. Furthermore, they should be told that, if they agree to participate, they will have the right to withdraw from the study at any time. Any participation in a study was strictly voluntary. Informed consent for the respondents who were the grade 12 learners, educators, HoDs and social workers from the sampled schools, was administered.

1.13.3 Right to privacy

Any research study involving human beings should respect participants' right to privacy (Leedy & Ormrod, 2012). Under no circumstances should a researcher's report, either oral or written, be presented in such a way that others become aware of how a particular participant has responded or behaved, meaning that the researcher kept and assured the respondents' anonymity and confidentiality confidential. In general, a researcher must keep the nature and quality of

participants' performance strictly confidential, because the objectives of the study were explained verbally, and participants were assured that the information obtained during interviews would be kept confidential.

1.14. OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

1.14.1. Social worker

A social worker is a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people. Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities are central to social work. Underpinned by theories of social work, social sciences, humanities, and indigenous knowledge, social work engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhances wellbeing (McDavitt, 2017). With this definition in mind, the social service professionals in this study will have the same meaning and aim, that is, working towards the well-being of learners through different systems and interventions.

1.14.2. Learner Performance

This refers to the level of performance in school, accomplishment or success in school (Dzever, 2015). In this study, learner performance can be attributed to the completion of homework and classwork, doing well on projects and assignments and studying for tests and examinations.

1.14.3. Rural

This concept refers to farms and traditional areas characterised by low population density, low levels of economic activity and low levels of infrastructure (Rural Education Policy, 2017). In this study, the concept is attached to schools; a rural secondary school is a school that has a low level of infrastructure, lack of necessary resources, small class sizes, lack of transport to school or back home, lack of water and sanitation, meaning that the school is in a remote area away from services such shops, tarred roads, and street lights.

1.14.4. Effect

This concept refers to an event or action that happened as a result of another event or action (Firgione, 2004). The effect in this study is associated with the impact of social worker services in rural secondary schools; specifically, on learner academic performance.

1.15. CHAPTER DIVISION

This study consists of five chapters, which are presented as follows:

Chapter 1

The orientation of the study

This chapter provides an introduction and orientation of the study, statement of the study problem, aim research objectives, research questions, the significance of the study and rationale and motivation of the study.

Chapter 2

Literature review and theoretical framework

This chapter reviews related literature material on the effect of social worker services in rural secondary schools on learner academic performance. This chapter also provides the theoretical framework which underpins the study.

Chapter 3

Research methodology

This chapter provides the overall research methodology which outlines the design, methods of data collection, data collection instruments, data analysis and issues of ethical considerations.

Chapter 4

Data interpretation, presentation, and analysis

This chapter provides data presentation, interpretation, and analysis of the results.

Chapter 5

Findings, recommendations, and conclusion

This final chapter provides a summary of findings according to objectives of the study, recommendations according to objectives, conclusions, as well as recommendations for further research.

1.11. Chapter Summary

This chapter provided the introduction and orientation of the study, the problem statement, significance of the study, rationale and motivation, research objectives and research questions, as well as definitions of operational concepts. The next chapter discusses the literature review and theoretical framework.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter is aimed at presenting a thorough review of literature that highlights the studies which have been conducted by different experts in the field of education. The chapter also provides an overview of the theoretical framework which underpins the study. The literature review explores the effect of social worker services in rural secondary schools on learner academic performance.

This study explored different factors that affect learner performance in rural secondary schools, as found by other authors in this field. Different literature sources such as journals, books, and newspaper articles were used. Socio-economic factors such as attendance, family income, and parents' education, family stress, proper guidance, counselling, teacher-student ratio, presence of a trained teacher in school, students' gender and distance travelled to school also affect the performance of the students (Raychauduri, 2010). The literature is reviewed in line with the objectives of the study, which are to:

- Explore the impact of social worker services rendered in order to enhance learner academic performance.
- Ascertain whether or not social worker services provided in rural secondary schools in the Vhembe district are effective in the learner's academic performance.
- Investigate the problems displayed by learners and how those could hinder satisfactory learner performance.

Kemp (2013) posits that the social work profession promotes social change, problem-solving in human relationships, their empowerment and liberation to enhance their well-being. He further states that utilising theories of human behaviour and social systems, social work intervenes at the points where people interact with their environments. Principles of human rights and social justice are fundamental to social work. The aim is to provide social work services to learners, parents and the schools who experience psycho-social barriers within the context of the learning site in order to prevent and overcome these barriers that inhibit learners' ability to reach their full potential. School social work services seek to enable learners with psycho-social barriers to learning and development to make maximum use of the academic, developmental and social opportunities in order to reach their full potential. School social workers are an integral link between school, home, and community in helping students achieve academic success. They work directly with school administrations as well as students and families, providing leadership in forming school discipline policies, mental health intervention, crisis management, and support services. As part of an interdisciplinary team to help learners succeed, social workers also facilitate community involvement in the schools while advocating for learner success (NASW, 2017).

Social work is a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people. Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities are central to social work. Underpinned by theories of social work, social sciences, humanities, and indigenous knowledge, social work engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhances wellbeing (McDavitt, 2017).

Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities are central to social work. Underpinned by theories of social work, social sciences, humanities, and indigenous knowledge, social work engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhance wellbeing (Ridley (2010). With this definition in mind, the social service professionals in this study will have the

same aim – working towards the well-being of learners by means of different systems and interventions.

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theory is defined by Ridley (2010) as a framework that offers an explanatory device, often in the form of categories and relationships. It is useful to explain and predict the output in a scientific inquiry based on academic thinking on particular issues or phenomena. In agreement, Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout (2014) define the theoretical framework as a specific collection of thoughts and theories that guides the investigation by providing a framework that ensures that the study is focused. In this case, it is the effect of the school social worker in rural secondary schools on learner academic performance.

The study was underpinned by the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) theory, which was developed by Lev Semenovich Vygotsky during late 1920, focusing on the internationalization of knowledge (Ebadi, Khatib & Shabani, 2010). In the same vein, Tekin (2014) explains the ZPD as the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by the independent problem solving and level of potential development as determined through problem-solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers.

Schools around the world are increasingly recognising that they cannot handle alone the issues that prevent the success of their learners, and that they must tackle these problems with the help of multidisciplinary teams using the expert knowledge and skills of various support personnel, including school social workers. Schools constantly face new and unexpected challenges in a fast-changing society. Poor academic performance of learners in rural secondary schools in the Vhembe district has been a challenge for quite some time. Chinyoka, Denhere,

and Mambeu, (2013) view the Zone of Proximal Development as one way of improving the performance of learners.

The teaching in the Zone of Proximal Development child's learning is mediated and scaffolded by the educator or expert adult or knowledgeable peer, making learning more meaningful, easier, manageable, effective and efficient. Vygotsky defined the ZPD as "the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving, and the level of potential development as determined through problem-solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with a more capable peer (Ebadi, Khatib, & Shabani, 2010). Nordlof (2014) revealed that learning begins socially and it is consequently internalized. Therefore, it provides a model for school social workers to scaffold growth through observing learners' understanding and consequently adjusting intervention levels. The Zone of Proximal Development is the area of exploration for which the learner is cognitively prepared but requires help and social interaction to fully develop (Brinner, 1999). A school social worker collaborates learning, discourse, modelling and scaffolding as strategies for supporting the intellectual knowledge and skills of learners and facilitating intentional learning.

This theory is in line with this study because the learners learn best when working together with others during the joint collaboration that motivates, develops and guides them and it is through such collaborative endeavours with a social worker that learners learn new skills, such as, psychological skills to enhance their academic performance as they are working together with social workers who are trained to guide and counsel them. Socio-economic factors such as attendance, family income, parents' education, family stress, proper guidance, counselling, educator-learner ratio, presence of trained educators in school, learners' gender and distance travelled to school also affect the performance of the learners (Raychauduri, 2010).

Educators and learners need creative problem-solving, decision-making skills and willingness to innovate to meet new challenges. Social professionals in schools

have a strong supporting role to play in education and must themselves innovate to deliver services effectively. Social work training that emphasises problem-solving, resilience, collaborating with other disciplines and new technologies will prepare practitioners to handle changing problems. Furthermore, Vygotsky defined the idea of ZPD as a distance between actual development level as determined by independent problem solving, and the level for potential development and guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers. Therefore, Vygotsky offered a model for understanding learners' learning as a developmental process in which the concepts are internalised through social interaction (Nordlof, 2014).

School social work can provide effective solutions to keep marginalised learners in school by establishing what the learner already knows and what the learner is learning so that intervention can focus on building the scaffolding or structure for the learner to practice under supervision those skills that are in development. Vygotsky viewed the Zone of Proximal Development as the area where the most sensitive instruction or guidance should occur that allows the learner to develop higher mental functions. Vygotsky defines ZPD as the range of tasks that a learner can perform with the help and guidance of the school social worker. Furthermore, Nordlof (2014) stated that within the Zone of Proximal Development there are two levels:

Actual development level –This is the upper limit of tasks one can perform independently.

Level of a potential development-upper limit of tasks that one can perform with the assistance of a more competent individual.

The level of assisted performance indicates what a person can achieve in the near future what is developing (potential level, tomorrow of development, what a person can be). Thus, the Zone of Proximal Development is the distance between what a person can do with and without help. The term 'proximal' means 'nearby' and it indicates that the assistance provided goes just slightly beyond the learner's current competence, complementing and building on their existing abilities

(Verenikina, 2008). In relation to school social work, adapting instruction and tasks to the learners' development level or skill level can be seen as relevant help the learner needs and so is becoming emotionally involved, and giving the learner the necessary instructions and support to progress from one stage to the next level.

School social workers are the members of school-related personnel, and their effectiveness often depends on the collaboration with other people working within school settings (Higy, Haberkorn, Pope & Gilmore, 2012). Because social workers draw on a variety of theories, paradigms, and skills, they can be effective change agents within the educational reform environment. Ecological systems and empowerment approaches provide social workers with potential tools for intervening in the complex and multidimensional educational reform environment (Lipscomb, 2011).

To help learners, the educational institution must effectively use theoretical perspectives such as the Zone of Proximal Dependency theory to respond to the various systems that interact with the school system. Families are empowered when they understand available options and strategies that will maximize youth potential. For example, the school social worker can use the empowerment approach to strengthen learners and their families through the development of problem-solving, advocacy, and personal mastery skills.

Simple issues that lead to difficulties for many rural secondary school learners such as negative mannerisms, gestures, inappropriate attire, and antisocial attitudes can be addressed with parents and their children. Because of school social workers' unique perspective and training, they can effectively assist rural learners in combating psychosocial and institutional barriers found in rural environments that will slow down their academic performance if unaddressed. Social work and school social work, in particular, have undergone diverse changes over time. Nevertheless, in the context of a changing world, the collaboration between educators and school social workers remains critical. The delivery of

education and effective services to learners is indispensable nowadays. As stated by Dente:

"Each professional provides a unique contribution to the student experience, and each of these contributions is enhanced through the synergy that arises from the supportive collaboration of educators and social workers. Thus, teachers and school social workers should work together and unite in their efforts to provide excellence in education for students" (2011: p42).

In the school settings, collaboration should start with school social workers asking educators how they understand schooling and learners' individualities, and how they "perceive that the social worker can be helpful" (Bronstein & Abramson, 2003). Such questions help to avoid misconceptions and predetermined opinions about school social services. It also makes the practices of school social workers more effective and consistent. Educators should understand that school social workers are their great support in achieving success, not the threat to the educational process.

Providing support services for teaching, learning and school management is an important strategy for building schools' capacities to recognize and address several learning difficulties, and for creating a conducive learning environment for effective teaching to enhance learners' academic performance, social and psychological well-being (Bojuwoye, Moletsane, Stofile, Moolla, & Sylvester, 2014). For this study, education support services directed to learners are referred to as learning support.

Providing learning support is consistent with theories of motivation and learning in terms of insight offered into the psychological traits of learners that foster greater academic engagement (Gasiewski, Eagan, Garcia, Hurtado & Chang, 2012).

2.3 THE INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE OF SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK SERVICES

According to Mann (2015) school, social work is a vital component of most schools in the Western countries, social workers also play a crucial role in ensuring the mental health and social well-being of children in the education setting. He further emphasises that school social workers play an important role in enhancing the conducive family environment for effective learning, and by promoting learner success through school-family partnership, which highlights a school social worker's significant intervention. This enhances parents' ability towards creating home conditions that help in learning and promoting family involvement in learning activities done at home.

The findings of a study conducted in the United Kingdom by Doel (2010) shows that learners were clear that the work of school social workers had made a difference and brought specific changes to them, such as confidence about oneself, the idea of what to do to stop bullying, effect on behaviour encouragement in schoolwork, reduction of stress, access to knowledge and services that educators couldn't be expected to have done, but managed to do through the provision of school social work placement.

The history of school social work has its beginnings in the UK (Barrett, 2014; Huxtable, Sottie & Ulziitungalag, 2012). Towards the end of the 19th century, UK social policy enacted the provision of elementary education for all children. With this, came confusion and discord, as many parents had not had their own lived experience of schooling and were encountering poverty and social disadvantage, thereby, making the links to a school community and school experience tenuous (Huxtable, Sottie & Ulziitungalag, 2012).

Furthermore, children often provided a much-needed source of income and this outweighed any perceived advantages of schooling for many families (Phillippo & Blosser, 2013). In the same vein, Barrett (2014); and Phillippo and Blosser (2013) argued that it became evident that bridges between the immediacy of the family's needs and the long term benefits for the learner and society needed to be built, and this responsibility fell to the welfare services within the education sector; social workers subsequently undertook the role. The National Association of Social Workers in Education (NASWE) was founded in 1884 in the UK in response to this development and whilst it continues today, the membership base has diversified so that members are not necessarily qualified social workers (NASWE, 2014).

The advancement of school social work in the United States of America, whilst taking place slightly later during the start of the 20th century, was also brought about by government legislation and the compulsory enrolment of all children in elementary schools (Phillippo & Blosser, 2013). The integration of thirty-six learners from diverse cultural and socio-economic backgrounds created a challenging environment for schools and an acknowledgment that a holistic approach encompassing learners, families and the broader school community needed to take place (Kelly, Thompson, Frey, Klemp, Alvarez & Berzin, 2015; Phillippo & Blosser, 2013). This identified structure was akin to social casework, hence the emergence and development of an alternative style of school social work in the UK (Dulmus & Sowers, 2012).

This early identification with social casework may have been the reason that school social work grew in its professional stature and became a clear field of practice in the US. However, that is not to say that the path has been clear throughout the years, with studies over a number of decades, until the start of the current century, highlighting a clinical model at the exclusion of structural analysis and person-in-environment perspective (Kelly et al., 2015).

Legislation has been introduced in the US more recently that squarely places social work in educational settings, with both every Student Succeeds Act of 2015 (ESSA) (Replacing the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001) and the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA) stipulating the presence of the profession in schools (Dennis, 2015; Kelly et al., 2015). Further, the functions of the social work role are based on a holistic model of social work, informing a comprehensive practice. Lee (2012) details these functions as a case manager, advocate, facilitator, liaison, coordinator, and consultant. School social work in the UK, on the other hand, began with the focus on school attendance and despite having broadened the scope of the role at numerous times throughout the ensuing years, for the most part, this is where it remains (Burt, 2008; Lee, 2012).

However, developed countries such as Sweden and Denmark with a more recent history of school social work draw on the broad skills and qualifications of the profession. In the 1940s, Norway and Sweden created an educational model that had its foundation welfare provision, and within the decade Denmark and Finland had adopted a similar model, all with school social workers as an integral part of the welfare system (Barrett, 2014; Hatta, 2009). Hong Kong has a long thirty-seven associations with school social work, spanning over three decades and is seen as the most developed of the Asian countries in this area, whilst Korean school social work emerged in the 1990s after it was realized that school counsellors could not offer the breadth and depth of skills that were required (Hatta, 2009).

Interestingly, in a socialist and highly structured country such as China, there are calls for social workers in schools, and in the aftermath of the 2008 Sichuan Earthquake, a programme was implemented that involved trained school social workers (Levine & Zhu, 2010; Liang & Zhang, 2014). Whilst a system of school social work in China is in its infancy, there are signs that the inclusion of the profession in schools is gaining momentum (Levine & Zhu, 2010). The Mongolian Association of School Social Workers (MASSW) reports that building on the school social work programme that began in the country in the 1990s, social workers are now in junior (primary) schools. The job description of school social workers

specific to junior schools was confirmed by the Minister of Enlightenment (Mongolian Association of School Social Workers [MASSW], 2015).

It is noteworthy that the International School Social Work Conference has held in Ghana in 2013 and Mongolia in 2015 with the next conference washeld in China in 2017. With school social work being introduced and developed in many countries, according to Lee (2012), the question could be raised as to why it is not in place in all states and territories we consider to be progressive, in a country such as Australia. Huxtable (2013) concurs by stating that in the United States, Sweden and Finland, social work services are an integral part of the school staff and practitioners are typically part of a multidisciplinary school team. In some countries, such as Hong Kong, the service is provided through non-governmental organisations, while in others such as Germany, school social work is a collaboration between youth welfare agencies and the school system.

2.4 THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT ON THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKER.

The education system today faces challenges in offering school experience that affords learners a chance to develop attitudes, knowledge, and skills essential for lifelong careers (Dama et al., 2019). Therefore, towards the completion of high school, education systems realise the need to prepare learners for the labour market or economic sustainability, hence the introduction of career guidance and counselling by the school social worker to help learners.

Van Sittert (2016) conducted a study in the 1920s in which psychologists were appointed at various Departments of Education, mainly for the purpose of IQ-testing. It seems that school social work developed out of this context. In South Africa, the need for social workers in schools was recognised in the late 1940s. From 1948 onwards the Transvaal and Natal Education Department of the

apartheid era appointed special educators to address some of the social welfare problems in schools. Kemp (2014) points out that these educators only focused on the learners' cognitive development, while social workers addressed the social functioning and interaction of the child in the school, at home and in the community.

In 1958, the Transvaal province created posts for school counsellors with professional qualifications in teaching. The goal was that they would address behavioural and emotional problems of learners in schools, but due to the fact that they only had a teaching background, this did not work. Thereafter, a school counselling course was introduced and school counsellors were appointed. However, the need to recognise school social work as a specialised field was only identified in 2009 by the South African Council for Social Services Professions (SACSSP).

According to Kemp (2013), the first school social worker was appointed in the province of KwaZulu-Natal in 1983 and, thereafter, the other provinces followed. He further explains that the current functions of school social workers in schools in South Africa include crisis intervention and counselling, support services to learners and their families, which include home visits and referrals to outside service providers, identifying and establishing support groups and providing training on social concerns. Van Sittert (2016) also states that school social workers have the responsibility to share information and to develop programmes that can assist the strategic goals of the Department of Education.

In agreement, with the important role of the school social workers; Poppy (2012) also highlights the following areas where social workers can make a contribution towards the academic goals of the child: the improvement of system dynamics, the coordination of information, helping learners gain insight into their functioning in their social environment, assessment of the individual's strengths and the development of strengths-based interventions for the family, school, individual and

community. In South Africa, Black communities face demoralising challenges that make social worker services in schools on guidance and counselling a need, and not just an issue of compliance or a luxury. The performance of South African learners in secondary schools is generally the lowest among middle-income countries (Spaull, 2013). Spaull posits that there is a need for School Social Work as a specialisation area.

The South African Council for Social Services Professions (SACSSP) in 2009 was established and the Indaba on Specialisation in Social Work in July 2010 confirmed the need for School Social Work as a specialisation area and recommended the prioritisation of the process. The school social worker forms part of the multi-disciplinary support team that renders psycho-social support services to schools. Browne (2019) stated that health social work operates in a variety of environments and assume numerous role in the design, delivery, and evaluation of care, and this occurs in myriad settings, in a number of different ways and with various levels of transdisciplinary collaboration.

The school social worker, as a consultant, can play an extremely effective role by assisting school personnel in effectively enhancing academic achievement in rural secondary schools. Informing school staff on the educational needs of rural Black families can also include teaching them to operate from the strength perspective (Saleebey, 2013). School staff can be taught to view people, institutions, and situations from the strengths that are inborn in the person in the environmental context. Likewise, learner personnel can be instructed on the importance of education as an empowerment tool that enhances self-worth and increases self-efficacy. As school advocates and consultants, social work practitioners can attend community meetings and forums to both receive and provide information that will assist community residents in the school choice process. To prepare for this professional task, school social workers should stay abreast of local, state, regional, and national research findings that will, directly and indirectly, impact school of choice in their service area.

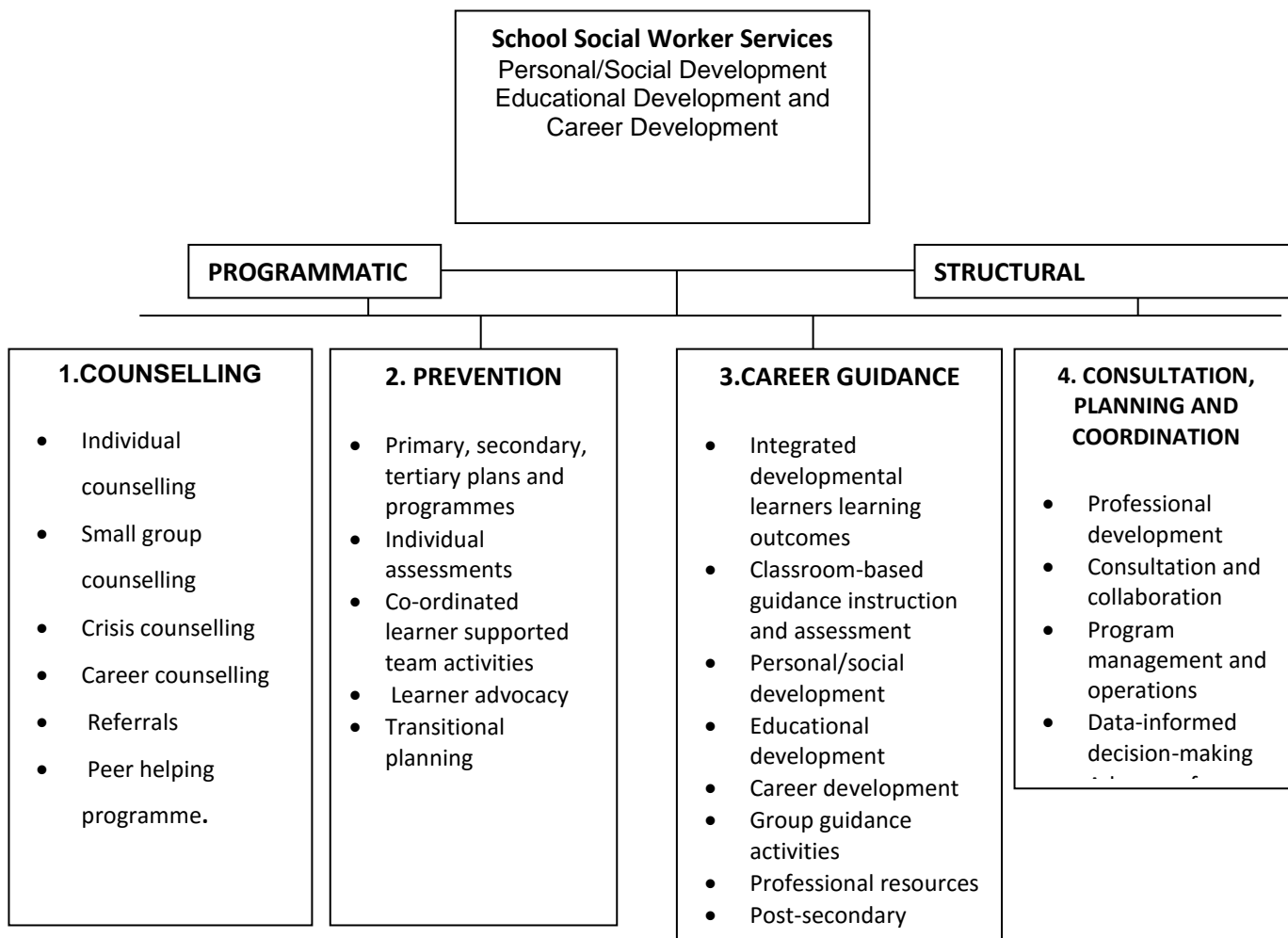


Figure 2.1. School social worker services

Kemp (2013) argues that school social work service provincially is for Policy and Framework development coordination. He further highlights the development and facilitation of school social work services and programmes which are: Intra-and Inter-departmental collaboration, Monitoring, evaluation and QA of social support programmes, Advocacy, awareness, capacity building and training, Social Work Research and Admin, Member of the Provincial Based Support Team in the circuit or district, all coordinate social services and liaise with relevant organisations to provide school social work services to learners, parents, caregivers, and support and empower teachers, SMT's and SGB's in cases where learners are experiencing psycho-social barriers to learning. School social work interventions can play a vital role in supporting the learners academically. However, in the Vhembe district, so far the school social worker services are still on a pilot.

2.5 THE IMPACT OF SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKER SERVICES ON LEARNER ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

Huxtable (2013) points out that a major role for school social work in countries where there is widespread poverty, child labour, and low enrolment is to support education for all targets by reaching out to families to enrol children and to provide basic needs such as school meals and maintain school attendance. He further asserts that learners in rural communities are often subjected to unique barriers and challenges that impact their holistic, emotional, cognitive and physical development, as well as social success in school. These factors have a strong impact on school attendance, behaviour, attitude towards learning and overall success of learners. Hence, school social work programmes in rural secondary schools have been implemented. School social workers should develop a comprehensive continuum of services including school-wide, small groups, and individual support (Clark & Alvarez, 2010).

Research studies show that by implementing a comprehensive school programme, school counsellors can serve a vital role in maximising student achievement. Research in Florida was conducted on students in 5th and 9th grades. The study aimed to investigate the effect of social worker services on learner academic performance. The findings showed that learners in schools with comprehensive guidance programmes scored significantly better on state standardised test for reading and maths (Centre for School Counselling Outcome Research, 2004). A basic ingredient in the professional preparation of the counsellor is heavy indoctrination in methods and procedures essential for understanding and accepting the value of orientation of others with whom he/she comes into contact (Hoyt, 1962 - cited from Clark & Alvarez, 2010).

From its inception in the early 1900s, school counselling was very different from the current functions advocated by ASCA's (2004) professional role statement. The term employed during the early 1900s for the profession was vocational guidance,

which involves roles that were similar to modern career counselling with a focus on the transition from school to work (Lambie & Williamson, 2012). They further insist that there are many issues in schools that call for the expertise of social workers, such as reducing absenteeism, whether caused by truancy, school phobia, dropping out or poor health - it is often a major part of the role.

Other narrowly focused roles may be handed to school social workers depending on the current needs of the school system, like a source of funding, political pressure or preference of the administration. However, the ideal role is broad and flexible, allowing the social worker to tackle any problem that interferes with school success, using a systems approach with school, family, and community to resolve problems.

School counsellors provide solutions to help curb rates of school failures and drop out by addressing broader contexts that include personal, social, emotional and career development (Gonzalez & Scheel, 2007). Within the public schools, the person best trained to help learners to combat their problems while continuing with their healthy development is the school social worker, who is well versed in counselling skills and techniques. A school social worker works with learners individually, in small groups, and large group providing guidance lessons when needed (American School Counsellor Association, 2003).

For example, when the school social worker wants to give guidance to grade 9 learners on teenage pregnancy, he or she takes only grade 9 learners and guides them about their growth development and how they should behave. Learners' everyday life can be challenging and stressful for even resilient learners due to competitiveness, bullying, social exclusion, family crises, sibling rivalry and underachievement, abuse and peer pressure – these are the problems that the learners bring to school social worker's office in schools.

There must be shared accountability for learner achievement. Accountability that requires systematically collecting, analysing and using critical data elements to understand the current achievement story for learner and begin to strategize, impact and document how the school guidance and counselling programme contributes towards supporting learners.

Our school improvement plan emphasises improving opportunities for our learners after they finish secondary school. This means that the school social worker is the one who does classroom presentation on study skills, and time management to the learners, which contribute to building district academic success goals (Dahir & Stone, 2003). School counsellors have an influential role in helping learners become more engaged in the academic and social areas within the school (Sciarra & Seirup, 2008).

School social workers in the school engage learners in a debate by giving them topics which are related to their curriculum needs and their growth development and also give learners roles to play on the drama which also gives them awareness on issues that can disturb their academic performance, such as substance abuse, alcohol, and behaviour modification. This means that a school social worker is more concerned with the educational, career, emotional and behavioural needs and encourages the maximum development of each learner.

According to Miller (1989), cited from Lunenburg (2010), the presence of school psychologists and social workers in the schools has already caused some confusion right from the beginning. These functionaries primarily provide remedial assistance to special education learners, for example, earning disabled and elementary disturbed, and also that elementary school counsellors focus on the promotion of psychological development of all learners in some preventive ways.

The school social worker assists learners in fulfilling their basic psychological needs, which means understanding themselves and acceptance of others, developing association with peers, balancing between permissiveness and controls, the educational setting, realising achievement and providing opportunities to gain independence. They also have to provide for the realisation of learner potentialities by assisting learners to distribute their energies into many learning opportunities available to them.

Lunenburg (2010) posits that the school social worker engages learners in role-playing, like acting educational dramas and dancing, so that learners are learning in the process of playing. He further maintains that the school counsellor contributes to the development of the school curriculum, school social workers provide data that serve as a basis for curriculum development which can help curriculum developers to shape subjects that reflect the needs of the learners. This means that the school social worker assesses learners to collect and analyse psychological and social data about each learner, helping them to understand themselves. Through this assessment by school social workers, learners with special needs are identified. Ideally, learners will have easy access to a school social worker, so that problems can be resolved early before they become destructive or chronic towards learners' academic performance.

The school counsellor helps increase academic achievement, raise career awareness, and improve overall learner self-efficacy (Hoare & Legeum, 2004). The social worker provides accurate and current information so that the learner can make an intelligent choice of an educational programme, an occupation, and social activity with the aim that with such information learners make better choices on careers and informed decision by giving the learners pamphlets and posting posters on career choices. School social workers are also concerned with assisting students, facilitating learning, and improving academic outcomes.

But, the scope of social work extends beyond the classroom, into areas that aren't generally the purview of school counsellors. School social workers often intervene and provide counselling services to learners who are experiencing difficulties outside of school. For example, learners from low-income families who need access to food programmes, affordable housing, and other social services such as healthcare, are likely to be referred to school social workers. These referrals may come from school counsellors, as school social workers are often better situated to connect at-risk learners and their families with government assistance and community service programmes (Bryan, 2005).

School counsellors are in key positions to assist schools in education reform mandates to reduce the achievement gap among low income and minority children (Bryan, 2005, cited from Kemp, 2013). The school social worker assists learners to build their self-esteem even if they come from different backgrounds. According to School Social Work Association of America (SSWAA), these are duties of school social workers: Participating in special education assessment meetings as well as individual educational planning meetings, Counselling (group, individual, and/or family), Assisting learners with conflict resolution and anger management, advocating for new and improved community/school services to meet the needs of learners and families; and Identifying and reporting child abuse and neglect.

In the same vein, Kemp (2013) emphasises that school social work is a discipline that differs from generic or clinical social work, because it focuses on enabling learners to maximise the use of academic, developmental and social opportunities afforded to them in a school setting, and school social work promotes a culture of care, support, learning and developing the human potential to cater for the needs of all learners. The school social worker forms part of the multi-disciplinary support team that renders support services to schools. Moreover, Lloyd (2013) states that, according to the National Association of Social Workers, the primary role of school social workers is to help learners make healthy and appropriate changes while collaborating with the school, family, and community. Learners need support and they also need to learn how to accept responsibility for their behaviour. School

social workers should provide learners with opportunities to develop appropriate behaviours, self-control, and resilience through social interaction with educators and other staff and the curriculum. To accomplish this, school social workers use evidence –based intervention method to focus on learner social, emotional, mental and behavioural health, forming connections between home, school, and community, as well as through advocacy efforts to foster holistic well-being (Kelly et al., 2016; Lloyd, 2013). SSW (2013) highlighted that the impact of school social work is to provide social work services to learners, parents and the schools who experience psychosocial barriers with the context of the learning site to prevent and overcome these barriers, which inhibit learners' abilities to reach their goals. In support, Mann (2015) states that school social workers play an important role in enhancing a conducive family environment for effective learning by promoting learner success through a school-family partnership that highlights a social worker intervention.

The partnership enhances parents' ability towards creating conducive home conditions that help in learning and promoting family involvement in home learning activities by directly facilitating school family communications and ensuring that educational resources are shared with parents. Ideally, school social workers serve to bridge the gap between resources and learners' needs by involving both internal and external supports to foster a school environment where learners can overcome barriers to success (Alvarez et al., 2013). Furthermore, Alvarez states that school social workers initiate research-supported intervention strategies at an individual group and school-wide levels to combat the effects of negative macro and micro influences.

Out of all the services provided, school social workers spend most of their time on learner assessment, individual and group counselling, case management, behaviour management, crisis involvement and interaction with educators, families and outside agencies (Lloyd, 2013). Families with vulnerable children experience multifaceted challenges that require appropriate intervention.

Nhedz and Makofane (2015) aver that, although school social workers intervene in situations with existing obstacles, these professionals are highly equipped to use prevention measures to impact learners who are at risk of dropping out of school. Because school social workers are skilled in using system approach through intervention, they are better able to develop and maintain effective drop out intervention programmes. Hence, this study explores the effect of newly developed school social work pilot programme on learner academic performance in rural secondary schools in the Vhembe district.

2.5.1. School social worker focus area in a school

Lloyd (2013) contends that school social workers focus on issues such as Bullying, Learner attendance, Gender identity, Self-esteem, Abuse and family issues, Substance use, Peer relationship, Anger management, Academic problems, Low socioeconomic status, Emotional or behavioural issues, and Mental illness. However, school social workers tailor their roles to focus on the most common issues within the school community to provide effective services in areas such as:

2.5.1.1. Learner attendance

When learners are not present at school, they are unable to receive instruction or assignments, which often affects academic outcomes (Dalun et al., 2010). As a trend, truancy has been shown to increase with age among high school learners, predominately for learners who have limited supervision and low educational attainment (Gage, 2013). Learners with high levels of school absences are at risk for drop out, failure to progress to the next grade and lower grade point average (Schoeneberger, 2012).

2.5.1.2. Behaviour management

A problematic behaviour within the school system is any behaviour that prevents one or more learners from learning and accomplishing the desired objectives.

2.5.1.3. Social Crisis

A "crisis" can be considered to be an event that necessitates immediate action and involves potential or actual harm to someone in the past, present or future. Examples are: Firstly, past harm - Screening a child to determine if a report for suspected abuse is necessary. Secondly, Present harm - Rushing to the Emotional Behavioral Disability (EBD) classroom to intervene because a learner is out of control; and Thirdly, Future harm - Counselling a learner who is concerned that her verbally abusive boyfriend may begin to physically abuse her.

Other activities that would fall into this category, as well, are regular meetings of a Crisis Response Team, on-going management of the school's crisis infrastructure, or individual threat assessments. School social workers deal with crisis issues, like addressing homelessness, abuse (physical, sexual and emotional), family conflicts, sexual behaviour, grieving and loss, body image, and identity and a variety of mental illnesses such as anxiety, depression and suicidal thought (Allen-Meares et al., 2013). Because learners' educational outcomes are related to the holistic wellbeing of learners, school social workers are prepared to address any issue that hinders growth and success at school. Within the context of the school environment school, social workers and other mental health professionals serve on the front lines of abuse prevention and intervention (Heinrich, 2017).

School social workers keep increasing awareness of suicide in schools through assessment, identification, and intervention on both individual and school-wide

levels. Moreover, school social workers can apply a wide range of evidence-based interventions and strategies, the majority choose from attendance charting, behaviour modification, brief therapy, mentoring, case management, goal setting, solution-focused therapy, crisis management, mindfulness, and motivational interviewing (Early & Vonk, 2001). Therefore, school social workers can recognise the symptoms of learners' mental health issues in school and refer learners to outside agencies.

2.5.1.4. Counselling

School social workers provide professional counselling as a common strategy to address the social, emotional, behavioural, educational, economic, cultural, and mental health needs of learners within the interconnecting environments of the learner's home, school, and community. School social workers provide group counselling at least weekly and 85% of them provide individual counselling at least weekly. School social workers utilise an ecological approach to ensure that all factors that interfere with a learner's learning are examined and addressed systemically and systematically (Allen-Meares et al., 2013). This includes, but is not limited to, the student's intrapersonal and interpersonal in-school functioning, social, academic, behavioural, transitional, developmental influences of family interactions and dynamics, and involvement with peers and within the community (e.g., neighbourhood, peers, faith community).

School social workers are trained to work from a strengths perspective, emphasising the learner's assets, both personal and environmental, to help the learner to be more successful. Formal and informal means are used to assess the learner's current situation and to determine what particular counselling approach is most appropriate. Examples include, but are not limited to, problem-solving, solution-building, cognitive-behavioural, skill-building, and support. Counselling may be provided in individual and/or small group settings, depending upon the

needs of the learners. As and when appropriate, efforts may be coordinated with other people the learner interacts with (e.g., family, teachers).

2.5.1.5. Casework management

The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) has established Standards for School Social Work Services. Within that document, case management is defined as "organising, coordinating, and sustaining activities and services designed to optimise the functioning of learners and/or families." While a school cannot be expected to address all of the challenges in the lives of its learners, when these challenges affect how children learn in school, then the school has a role in alleviating these challenges. Typically, modifications are made to the learner's educational programme or support services are added. There may be a referral to community-based services or for a medical evaluation. Recommended services often need adjustment or changes.

Sometimes the circumstances in the learner's life change. The parents may not have followed through on a referral. Classroom educators may need ongoing support to implement strategies. Regular communication may be necessary with a community-based therapist to ensure that support services enhance each other for the benefit of the learner. Follow-up meetings of involved educators and parents may help make the adjustments needed for the learner to be successful in school (Allen-Meares et al., 2013).

All of these activities can be described as casework or case management. School social workers devote much of their time communicating with everyone involved in the delivery of services to learners: families, educators, administrators, other pupil services professionals, representatives from community-based agencies, health care providers, etc. More than four out of five Wisconsin school social workers report providing casework and case management at least weekly.

2.5.1.6. Home-school-community liaison

Many students experience barriers to learning that involves circumstances outside of the school or require the cooperation of people or organisations outside of the school. School social workers regularly enter the greater community to engage families and representatives from community agencies, social services, juvenile justice, mental health, Birth-to-3, developmental disabilities, and vocational rehabilitation. School social workers are familiar with family and community agency systems and are comfortable interacting with members of these systems on their "home turf" as a critical strategy to elicit support for learners and the school (Dzever, 2015).

This service includes providing referral information to learners and families, including facilitating these referrals for people and advocating for anyone who may be disenfranchised or otherwise challenged to take advantage of community-based services. A family may receive counselling and support to better understand their child's condition and behaviours and to improve parenting skills.

School social workers' training enables them to ecologically assess problems from a systemic point of view, often leading to the development of formal and informal partnerships with community-based agencies to improve outcomes for learners. School social workers are ideally suited to represent the school on county-based, community service teams (CSTs) that plan and oversee "wrap-around" services for youth as an alternative to inpatient treatment (Kemp, 2013).

2.6. FACTORS THAT HINDER THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF LEARNERS IN RURAL SECONDARY SCHOOLS

According to Dzever (2015), academic performance refers to the level of performance in school, and accomplishment or success in school. Academic performance is the process of developing the capacity and potential of the individual learner to prepare that individual to be successful in a specific society or culture (Chinyoka & Naidu, 2014). A lot is expected from the South African education system in terms of preparing future citizens, workers, and leaders. However, poor academic performances by learners in rural schools where the majority of learners, attend stifle this expectation. Poor academic performance by individuals in a learning situation refers to a situation in which learners fail to attain a set standard of performance in a given evaluation exercise such as tests, examinations or series of continuous assessments (Lacour & Tissington, 2011).

2.6.1 Parental involvement

The traditional definition of parental involvement includes activities in the school and at home, and parental involvement can take many forms such as volunteering at school, communicating with teachers, assisting with homework, and attending school events such as performance in parent-teacher conferences (Bower & Griffin, 2011). However, Rajeshkumar and Vijaya (2016) defined parental involvement as getting an imperative status in the field of education which includes several volunteers to help out with school activities or work in the classroom or taking an active role in governance and decision making necessary for planning, developing and providing education for community's children.

Vygotsky's theory emphasises interrelatedness and interdependence in learning and development. The ZPD theory supports the idea that a child's home life is of

importance and parents contribute greatly to the development and academic achievement of a child (Tekin, 2014).

The South African Schools Act, no.84 of 1996, mandated parents to dominate on the governing body membership by fifty-plus one, in a total of all other members (Section 23 (9)). This allowed parents to make good and trusted decisions in the best interests of their children's education. Thus, parents constitute 60% of the SGB, in which the chairperson is also a parent (Mbokodi & Singh, 2011). The parents' role in education is vital for the learners, as per the South African Schools Act, no.84 of 1996, section 16, which deems the school governing body as a legitimate structure that should stand in a position of trust towards the school. These show the dedication of the South African government in establishing a democratic education system in school governance.

Children whose parents are more involved in their education have higher levels of academic performance than children whose parents are involved to a lesser degree (Topor, Keane, Shelta & Calkins, 2010). The academic performance of learners heavily depends upon parental involvement in their academic activities to attain a higher level of quality in academic success. The influence of parental involvement on academic success has not only been noted among researchers but also among policymakers who have integrated efforts aimed at increasing parental involvement in broader educational policy initiatives. Parents can model positive attitudes and behaviours toward school and convey the importance of school (Chowa, Masa & Tucker, 2013).

Systematic evaluations that repeatedly show poor performance have added pressure on the government to intervene, yet progress has been frustratingly slow. Among a myriad of suggestions listed in policy documents and research outputs to improve the situation, parental involvement is seen as crucial, both locally and internationally.

The increase in the parent's school activities, such as increased number of parent-teacher contacts, was associated with worsening achievement, as increased contacts may have occurred to help the teacher manage the child's existing behaviour problems. The significance of parent attitudes toward education and school is less well understood, although attitudes are believed to comprise a key dimension of the relationship between parents and school (Chowa, Masa & Tucker, 2013). In agreement, Sheridan et al., (2017) stated that the benefit of families and schools working together are profusely, particularly to address concerns about learners' behaviour and performance, if parents and school work together it improves good examination results, learner behaviour and parents can be able to say what they want from the school for the benefit of the learners.

Based on previous research, it was hypothesised that parents who have a positive attitude towards their child's education, school, and the teacher can positively influence their child's academic performance by two mechanisms: (a) by being engaged with the child to increase the child's self-perception of cognitive competence and (b) by being engaged with the educator and school to promote a stronger and more positive learner–educator relationship. According to Epstein (2011), the typology of parental involvement includes six categories. These six types of involvement interactions take action as a framework for classifying behaviours, responsibilities, and deeds performed by school personnel and family and community members, working hand in hand to augment involvement and student achievement that activate within the theory of overlapping spheres (Cano, Cape, Cardosa, Miot, Pitogo & Quino, 2016).

The six types of involvement are delineated in the hunt conduct: First, is the Parenting helping where parents and extended family members are aware and conversant about child maturity, and offering possessions that permit them to ascertain home environments that can enhance learning. The results for this include good and improved attendance and awareness of the importance of school. Second, is Communicating-effective, suitable two-way contact about school events and student academic or personal development and progress,

and/or insight within the home environment (Cano et al., 2016). And examples of communication are a parent- educator conferences, clear information on school policies and programmes, and phone calls.

The benefits of the learner are awareness of progress, understanding school policies and improving communication skills (Epstein et al., 2002). Third, is Volunteering-organizing and participating in activities initiated by school personnel like a parent- educator and community association that may be generated by community members which are aimed at supporting learners and school programs, such as service-learning projects, and violence reduction assemblies. Learners can improve communicating skills with adults and increase learning skills from tutoring employing volunteering activities. Fourth, is the Learning at home which is about providing information to parents and families about school procedures like homework opportunities, and grading rubrics to help them supplement their children's academic activities.

For example, information on homework policies and how to supervise children, and family reading activities at school are included in the involvement. This resulted in learners' higher homework completion rates, increased view of a parent as a more similar educator and enhanced self-concept as a learner. The fifth is the Decision-making in which the parents and family members from all backgrounds as representatives and leaders on school committees agreed upon the educational events. On this, there is awareness of the representation of families and understanding that learner rights are protected. Finally, it is collaborating with the community-identifying and integrating funds, services, and other assets from the community to lend a hand and meet the needs of school personnel, learners, and their families.

Learning is complex; it begins at birth and continues throughout life. Parents have a well-built influence on the learning of their children and are labelled as the first educators and role models for their children. This means that learners whose

parents are not involved in their education have poor results and are not motivated to learn. De Marquis (2011) states that parental involvement can be conceptualised as how parents support their children's education and development to ultimately provide a positive influence on their academic achievement and social adjustment.

Parents can support their children's schooling by attending school functions and responding to school obligations, for example, parent-educators' conferences. They can become more involved in helping their children improve their schoolwork -providing encouragement, arranging for appropriate study time and space, modelling desired behaviour (such as reading for pleasure), monitoring homework, and actively tutoring their children at home (Cotton & Wikelud, 1989).

Learners' interaction with their family members in the community is so important for their first learning to take place in the community, meaning that learners gain knowledge about the world through this interaction. The inability of parents to provide basic needs of learners, attend Parent Teacher Association (PTA) meetings and limited interaction with children's educators, among others, are some of the causes of low academic performance of some public schools in Africa, according to findings from a study conducted by Etsey (2005).

The inability to provide basic school needs like textbooks, supplementary readers, and food to eat when coming to school, motivation, and school uniforms, among others, may have ripple effects on the learner's performance. It is well established that parental school involvement has a positive influence on school-related outcomes for children. Consistently, cross-sectional longitudinal studies by Epstein and Dauber (2009) have shown that there is an association between higher levels of parental school involvement and greater academic success for children and adolescents. For the Ghanaian school child to achieve meaningful academic success, parental involvement in learners' homework becomes very crucial or key in pupils' academic performance. It is, therefore, interesting to note that parental

school involvement is thought to decrease as children move to Junior and Senior high school, in part because parents might believe that they cannot assist with more challenging high school subjects.

Despite this challenge, few parents stop caring about or monitoring the academic progress of their children within the high school age, and parental involvement continues to be an important predictor of school outcomes through adolescence. Research on parental involvement in children's homework by Hoover-Dempsey, Battiato, Walker, Reed, DeLong, and Jones (2001) focused on understanding why parents become involved in their children's homework, what strategies they employ, and how such involvement contributes to student learning. The review supported theoretical arguments that parents choose to become involved in homework because they believe they should be involved. They believe their involvement will make a positive difference in their children's learning, and perceive that their involvement is invited, expected and valued by school personnel.

Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's parent involvement model suggests that parents engage in a wide range of activities in this effort. These are from the establishment of basic structures for homework performance to more complex efforts focused on teaching for understanding and helping learners develop effective learning strategies. Therefore, parental involvement in children's homework is pertinent in this present era where parents seem not to have adequate time helping their kids in their homework. This may otherwise not augur well for the academic progress of learners in schools.

Tekin (2014) asserts that parental involvement is a critical factor in learner's educational lives. Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler presented a comprehensive model from the perspective of the parent involvement process grounded in the psychological and educational researchers. Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler suggested that parents often become involved in their children's education for

three reasons: They build up a parental role construction about their participation in their children's education; they develop a positive parental efficacy for helping their children succeed in school, and parents do believe that their involvement will make a difference. They perceive opportunities or demands for involvement from children and school.

Parents are considered to be the most important primary role models in their young children's immediate surroundings, assuring their children's academic achievement and success in school is one of the most important aspirations of every parent in many cultures. Not only does the condition of family relationships affect learner outcomes in school, but the expectations and involvement of rural parents greatly differ from parents in urban areas.

2.6.2. Unpredictable home environment

Learners who are home-alone seem to be more distressed and depressed during and after school hours and have lower levels of self-esteem. Girls are at greater risk than boys in self-care situations. Lack of supervision is problematic for children and is more harmful to some children than to others. Boys have behavioural problems if they are in self-care for extended periods (Lochan, 2012). Furthermore, he states that learners come to school unprepared, unwilling to learn, failing in school, dropping out of school, disrupting their classrooms and bullying other learners.

The home environment also affects the academic performance of learners. Educational conditions attributed to the family need no emphasis, as there is an ever-increasing awareness of the importance of the parents' role in the progress and educational development of their children. Dube (2019) stated that learners experience a myriad of challenges emanating from poverty induced circumstances around them, and weapon of their experiences are amazed at social exclusion,

lack of readiness to attend school, poor performance at school and exhibition of negative attitude towards learning, Furthermore, Dube argued that the foundation of learning for learners is within the family, the family background has a tremendous influence on the education of children and their attitude towards learning.

Family background is the most important and weighty factor in determining the academic performance of learners (Castejon, Perez & Gilar, 2006). Mwamwenda (2014) accentuates that, by saying if parents and siblings assist younger children with their homework and supplement what they have learned in school, coupled with a home background which provides books and newspapers and learning gadgets, such as a radio, television and a computer, their academic performance is enhanced. He further adds that the home background of some learners is not encouraging at all in that they lack even the most basic requirements, such as paper., Moreover, many African parents do not support their children, either because they are not interested in helping them, they are working or the child's level of education is beyond their own.

However, children who live with both parents are also not always safe. For instance, children who are treated harshly or rejected by both parents may rebel against authority at school or may project anger and resentment on to a figure of authority in school or on to a fellow learner. Learners from homes where there is tension and fighting between the parents show anxiety and lack of concentration in the classroom (De Wet, 2007). The family structure of rural areas is less likely to live in a two-parent home than students in urban areas (Bryun et al., 2012). In essence, the structure and dynamics present within rural families have a greater effect on learner achievement in school than finances alone.

2.6.3. Parents' Educational Level

In the study conducted by Yuliant, Denssen and Droop (2020) parents in middle and high levels of education showed a high level of involvement than parents with low levels of education in rural schools, meaning that parents who had middle and high levels of education are more involved in their children's education at home. Saiduddin (2008) claims that among the family factors reported as being of greater influence are the educational levels of learners' parents' perception of family support which directly affects performance, while the parents' level of education does so indirectly. In agreement, Castejon, Perez, and Gilar (2006) concur by stating that learners whose parents are not adequately literate are disadvantaged because they cannot get assistance to complete assignments and projects that are supposed to be done at home with parental assistance.

On the other hand, Chinyoka and Naidu (2014) argue that learners with parents with poor educational backgrounds faced conditions in their homes that left them with less time and energy for studies. Educated parents help their children with school work. However, the roles of a parent's education differ across children's gender and levels of ability (Dzever, 2015).

Mothers' educational levels have more effect than the fathers' (Khan, Iqbal & Tasneem, 2015). Research findings also show that the higher the education level of the parents, the more likely students will have better academic achievement. This shows that parental education is indeed an important and significant unique predictor of child achievement. Parent education and family interaction patterns during childhood also directly influence the child's ability to develop academic success and achievement-oriented attitudes (Dubow, Boxer & Huesmann, 2009). In the study conducted by Yuliant, Denssen and Droop (2020), barriers to school-based involvement of parents were influenced by the inflexibility of parents' work hours. Parents with low levels of education are unable to be involved in their children's education because they lacked capability, but also because of the

inflexibility of their work hours that prevented them from being actively involved in their children's school activities.

In a study by Chen (2009) on the effects of family background, learners' abilities and achievement in rural China, parental education was a key determinant of learners' academic achievement. Teaching and learning in schools have strong social, emotional and academic components. Learners do not learn alone, but rather in collaboration with educators, in company with their peers, and with the encouragement of their families. Emotions can facilitate or impede children's academic engagement, work ethics, commitment and ultimate school success (Durlak, Dymnick, Taylor, Wiessberg & Schellinger, 2011).

Furthermore, Fiske (2010) argues that the primary influence of learners' academic performance is the amount of support that they receive in their homes -meaning the more support and help that the learners receive at home, the greater the likelihood they stand to attain high academic performance. Parents in rural communities receive fewer bachelor's degrees than those in most urban areas, resulting in both lower expectations and less involvement in their learner's academic achievement (Bryun et al., 2012). This leads to a lack of involvement, experience, and expectation, resulting in lower learner achievement in rural areas and minimises the value of education in many communities, which puts learners who wish to go to college at a disadvantage (Bryun et al., 2012). Ultimately, when learners are not held accountable by parents who value education, learners are less committed to the school and more likely to exhibit behaviour that demonstrates their lack of commitment. Therefore, in agreement with the study conducted by Yuliant, Denssen and Droop (2020) stated that parents in urban areas, especially in the predominantly middle to high socio-economic status, schools reported having more involvement in school than parents in rural areas.

2.6.4. Learner Profile

In today's society, learners face countless situations that can have a negative effect on their social-emotional and academic development and in the end, on their happiness in life. Odeh et al. (2013) argue that a positive, respectful school environment provides a solid foundation for supporting learners' academic achievement and the development of positive attitudes and behaviours. However, a poor school environment bears the opposite effects, that is, poor academic performance. The performance of learners should be investigated in line with their opportunity-to-learn indicators (learner-profiles). In agreement, Allen et al., (2010) indicated that there are conditions critical to ensuring competition amongst schools which raise overall attainment such as ability by parents to value and identify educational success as the school characteristic, parental chance must be meaningful and capable of affecting the allocation of learners to school, schools must find it beneficial to be popular and to raise the quality of teaching and learning, rather than to engage in other activities. Indicators such as attendance of classes would highlight anomalies regarding their attendance, whether it is regular or irregular. Such indicators are early signs that might determine whether learners will perform well academically or not, and remedial measures could be implemented before it is too late. Learner-profiles also indicate the positive effects of participation of learners in extra-curricular activities. In Wisconsin, learners who were involved in extra-curricular activities tended to improve in their performance, unlike those who were not participating (Engelbrecht, 2011). Attitudes are learned throughout life and are embodied within our socialisation process.

All of us observe others and assess attitudes based on communication style (verbal and non-verbal) and behaviour. This is an example of an informal approach, which is spontaneous and based on our understanding of social cues. We may be wrong in our judgement of learners who turn up late for classes and do not ask questions, but they may still hold very positive attitudes towards the subject that was being presented at that time. The negative attitude towards learning could

result in learners performing poorly, thereby preventing them from obtaining the required results for university entrance (Saiduddin, 2008).

In South Africa, the problem of learners abusing alcohol is also an issue that needs serious attention as most rural schools are near liquor outlets. Marijuana and cigarettes are easily accessible to learners these days; it becomes even more difficult for educators to control learners who use such substances. Abuse of such substances impairs the learner's ability to learn and respond to questions relating to the learned information.

In most cases of crimes committed at schools, substance abuse is involved (Weeks, 2013). Mwamwenda (2014) pointed out that the quality of primary schools attended by learners differs: some are well equipped and have qualified educators; others are not so fortunate. Wallace (2012) argues that the measures used in most rural schools to assess learners are incomplete since they focus on a single measure of output and ignore the learning that affects competitive variables, like quality, delivery or introduction of new products while telling little about the sources of learning or the levers of change.

2.6.5 Learners' attitude

Attitudes are learned throughout life and are embodied within our socialization process. All of us observe others and assess attitudes based on communication style (verbal and non-verbal) and behaviour. This is an example of an informal approach, which is spontaneous and based on our understanding of social cues. We may be wrong in our judgement of learners who turn up late for classes and do not ask questions, but they may still hold very positive attitudes towards the subject that was being presented at that time. The negative attitude towards learning could result in learners performing poorly, preventing them from obtaining the required results for university entrance (Saiduddin, 2008).

2.7 SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT AS A CONTRIBUTING FACTOR TO LEARNER PERFORMANCE

Job and Pantah (2018) defined the school environment as the social and physical set up of the school where learners/students interact with one another either through groups or individuals. They further explained that the school environment encompasses the classrooms, school location, school facilities, school climate, and technology.

The climate of the school environment can impact students in the school (Nelson, 2016). Learners' satisfaction within this context has the potential to result in significant behavioural and mental health outcomes. Nelson further declares that school climate, extracurricular activities, size, composition of the school and learners' relationships with educators, influence learners' sense of connection to their education. This implies that learners who have a positive perception of their school environment are at a decreased risk of exhibiting undesired behaviours and mental outcomes, which can lower the effect of risk factors present in rural areas. When learners feel welcome at school, they have a more positive self-image and have the ability to regulate aggressive tendencies (Smokowski, 2016). Furthermore, Job and Pantah (2018) explained that the school environment has a strong focus on the physical, social and intellectual environment that can shape learners' life. Similarly, it suggested that learners' academic performance invariably has a link with their immediate school environment factor. Mahmood and Gondal (2017) viewed the school environment as the distance covered by learners before accessing more essential academic facilities such as library services, internet availability and accessibility can be considered as components of a school environment. Traveling long distances and the availability of learning materials affect academic performance. The school environment also plays an important role in the academic performance of learners.

However, negative school and neighbourhood environments have a comparable ability to affect learners' success in a school environment. For instance, in schools with high violence rates and a large percentage of families with low socio-economic status, learners are at risk of internalising symptoms including low self-esteem, anxiety, depression and other mental challenges (Cicchetti, 2014).

These symptoms may also result in problem behaviours such as aggressive tendencies, which further contribute to the original issue of school violence and poor school climate. In essence, learners and educators are greatly affected by a toxic school setting, thus contributing to an ongoing cycle of increasing internal and external problem behaviours in school.

2.8 EFFECTIVENESS OF SOCIAL WORKER SERVICES IN RURAL SECONDARY SCHOOLS

According to Smokowski et al. (2016), the learning support assisted in meeting learners' academic, social and emotional needs by addressing barriers to learning, creating conducive learning environments, enhancing learners' self-esteem and improving learners' academic performance. School social work is a task-oriented field of practice with practitioners involved in multiple roles, including administration, leadership, advocacy, mentoring, casework, mediation, group work, and career, health, family, and socialisation counselling.

School social workers assist and advocate for children's welfare and educational needs; inform educators of differences in cultural values; engage in programme development; act as liaisons between families, educators, and school administrators; engage in training educators; advocate for resource procurement for children; promote diversity; contribute to the social work professional knowledge base; provide information for school systems; examine school-related social and environmental factors identified as important; and develop relationships with neighbourhood and community agencies (Teasley, 2004). He further argues

that privatisation of social services and child welfare systems around the country will most certainly change the structure and function of practice for school-based professionals.

For example, due to the increased emphasis on specialisation, school social workers now enter the school setting in more than one role. For instance, in the Vhembe district, they enter the school settings as learners' agents. In the Vhembe district, it often happens that educators do not understand the roles of school social workers and, as a result, do not value them.

A study conducted by Avant (2014) on the role of school social workers in implementation of response to intervention revealed that school social workers were often regarded as pseudo administrative staff or universal coaches. Educators, who are not involved in special education, did not perceive them as important members of school-related personnel and did not value diverse interactions with them, such as behaviour interventions. School social workers stated that educators just "preferred a quick fix solution to learners' behaviour problems". Thus, school social workers struggled to perform full functions, which means that they are not effective.

2.9 PROBLEMS HINDERING LEARNER PERFORMANCE

Disruptive behaviour in secondary schools has become a great problem. Educators have complained against behavioural problems relating to learners in classroom management. Classrooms where disruptive behaviour occurs frequently get the less academic engaged time and the learners in disruptive behaviour cost considerable educator's time at the expense of academic instructions in the class (Ghazi, Shahzada & Tariq, 2013). Furthermore, school discipline issues such as disruptive behaviour and violence in the classroom affect educators' stress and

burnout, which leads to job dissatisfaction and an early exit from profession, as these can impact negatively on the professional resilience of beginning educators.

Also, secondary educators ranked disruptive behaviour as one of the most serious hurdles in effective teaching and learning processes in the classroom which has a great effect on the academic performance of learners. The following are the problems displayed by learners: Trying to gain power in classroom to threaten educator, sleeping during teaching, chatting with one another during teaching, coming to classroom habitually late (poor time management), unnecessarily arguing with educator, blaming one another upon any mischief, Initiating quarrel among the learners, shouting to create thrill in a classroom, starting to answer before the question finishes, playing with hands, feet, pen, etc. Using foul language with other learners and educator, ignoring the teacher's directions; shifting from one chair to another, undermining educator's authority in the classroom, asking irrelevant questions, not having homework done, refusing to participate in activities, using cell phones in the classroom, and yelling inside and outside the classroom.

Issues related to learner behaviour increasingly are becoming a shared concern, especially as 'behaviour is one of the dominant discourses of schooling (Ball, Maguire, & Braun, 2012). Therefore, behaviour such as teasing, talking out of turn, getting out of one's seat, disrespecting others and more seriously but, less frequently, violence and vandalism have been acknowledged as a growing problem in schools, and most serious concern of educators and parents (Kaplan, Gheen & Midgely, 2002).

Schools today face several challenges in educating learners. In addition to the responsibility of effective teaching academic subjects such as Maths, reading, science, and writing, educators increasingly deal with non-academic factors, one of the most challenging is emotional and behavioural disorders (Lassen, Steeler & Sailor, 2006). However, Thlapi (2011) argues that educators receive minimal

support from parents and this contributes to a lack of learner discipline and poor academic performance. Thlapi (2011) is of the view that parents fail to fully support their children when doing homework due to the recent curriculum change, which is unfamiliar to most parents. Moreover, some parents do not understand their role in the education of their children.

Learners who behave disruptively by bullying other learners, talking during lessons or by requiring the educator to interrupt lessons to discipline them, can have a negative effect on an entire classroom. A 2010 study found that disruptive learners can lower the test scores and academic achievement of an entire classroom (Carrell & Hoekstra, 2010). Excessive talking with other learners during class or the passing of notes can affect the entire class by making it difficult to hear the educator or forcing him or her to interrupt the lesson to stop the chatter. Another disruptive behaviour occurs when a learner challenges the educator's authority or knowledge on a subject because of anger over a grade or a general dislike of that particular educator. This hinders the academic performance of learners and also needs the school social worker's intervention.

Disruptive learners interfere with the educator's ability to teach effectively. The behaviours require large amounts of the educator's time and attention. The educator must stop the lesson or discussion to address the behaviour and this eats away from the valuable time needed to instruct the rest of the class. If the disruptive behaviour is threatening, it may challenge the educator's authority and can create tension in the classroom, which pushes learning into the background and needs the intervention of a school social worker.

Disruptive behaviour by one learner also encourages others to do the same and this compromises the educator's authority and ability to control the class. Educators who have disruptive learners in their classroom have to spend additional time on behaviour management, thus reducing the time they spend teaching (Carrell & Hoekstra, 2010). Therefore, positive encouragement and a focus on

desirable behaviour traits within the classroom foster an atmosphere of productive learning. Ghiora (2010) comments that if learners feel safe within a classroom environment and can ask questions freely and easily, their behaviour tends to be more positive, and they have good academic performance.

Learners with limited proficiency in the language of instruction are often at risk of educational failure due to the classroom challenges they face, particularly bilingual curricula or English as second language programmes are not readily available (HSRC & EPC, 2015). However, stressful life experience in everyday life contributes to feelings of insecurity and isolation and promotes problem behaviour (Nyberg, 2010). This is confirmed by the Department of Education White Paper 6 (2011) which mentions that children's exposure to levels of frustration and increased aggression has given rise to problems within the education system.

2.10 STRATEGIES THAT SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS USE TO MOTIVATE RURAL SECONDARY SCHOOL LEARNERS

In the efforts to improve learner cognition and effective outcomes in school learning, the school social workers search for variables (personal and environmental) that can be manipulated in favour of academic gains. The following are the strategies used by social workers for learner motivation:

2.10.1 Roleplaying

Lunenburg (2010) provides accurate information so that the learner may make an intelligent choice of an educational programme, occupation and social activity with the aim that with such information learners will make better choices and will engage in better planning in and out of the school setting. For example, the school social worker gives learners roles to play on how substance abuse distracts

learners in their learning process and how substance abuse affects learner performance. This means that by giving learners roles to play as characters in a play, it assists the learners to make informed decisions about their life.

Guidance and counselling services prepare students to assume increasing responsibility for their decisions and grow in their ability to understand and accept the results of their choices. Role play is based on active participation and first-hand experience and it is not only methodological learning that is achieved by social and communicative as well as effective learning.

2.10.2 Campaigns

Nickerson (2014) explains the health communication campaigns that include mass media and health-related product distribution. The school social worker uses campaigns to increase awareness of substance abuse, crime, and sexually transmitted diseases and bunking of classes. The message is delivered through multiple communication channels which may be that learners play drama on the topics prepared by the social worker for multiple opportunities and exposure.

The campaign has to facilitate, among other things, the adoption or maintenance of health promoting behaviours such as abstinence from sexual behaviour and help sustain termination of the harmful behaviours like smoking dagga and the use of drugs. The campaign is used as an intervention to curb and motivate learners on healthy living styles and achievement by giving learners prizes for those who perform best. In every community today's schools serve a diverse array of students with varied abilities and motivations for learning, some are academically successful, committed and participate enthusiastically in class and extracurricular activities, and others struggle academically and are disengaged (Carrell & Hoekstra, 2010).

2.10.3 Motivational talks

Tella (2007) defines motivation as the internal drive directing behaviour towards some end. Motivation helps individuals overcome inertia. External forces can influence behaviour, but ultimately, it is the internal force of motivation that sustains behaviour. He has outlined a series of stages to describe the process that a person goes through when making a behaviour change, and those stages are:

- Pre-contemplation (not yet considering change)
- Contemplation (considering change, but not taking action)
- Preparation (planning to change)
- Action (making change in one behaviour) (Bellino, Clement, Neavins & Tara, 1999).

Motivational talk influences learners' progress through stages of change. For example, social workers motivate learners by inviting stakeholders to motivate learners on careers, social issues, and emotional issues. On career issues, learners are motivated on study skills so that they may be able to reach their goals by giving them handouts to motivate the learners and even by doing motivational talks where learners are in groups according to their grade and are motivated on the importance of education and social issues. Allen et al., (2018) stated that systematic review identified themes that influence school belonging at the learner level during adolescence in the educational settings.

Therefore, the motivated learner attends classes regularly and the performance is satisfactory compared to the unmotivated learner who bunks classes, disrupts classes and is a defiant learner. Both the type and intensity of learner motivation for performance are important potential moderation of success. Educational researchers are interested in predicting the academic success and adjustment of colleges of academics in general, but the prediction of academic success for a risk student is especially important (Chualaco, Dennis & Phinney, 2011). It is not

surprising that many struggling learners have low self-efficacy for academics; they believe that they cannot succeed. Consequently, they tend to avoid academics and give up quickly when difficulties arise (Margolis & Mcbee, 2006).

Motivation is not only important because it is a necessary causal factor of learning, but because it mediates learning and is a consequence of learning as well. In other words, learners who learn well will be more motivated to do so in the future, this is because of a motivational talk by social workers to motivate learners on the benefit of learning and success - learners are encouraged to learn and perform better.

The life experiences that shape today's learners are quite different from those of the previous eras, each generation is defined by its life experiences, giving rise to different attitudes, beliefs, and sensitivities. Motivation may lead to a decision to act, and also help to determine goals, management, and execution of goals. Motivational talks have the potential to further engage students and convert those who are struggling with substance use to supportive peers and others within the school environment (Allen et al., 2016).

Motivational talks enhance learner to provide effective peer support and determine the prolongers of the impact of the motivational speaker's message amid multiple influences on the adolescents' decision making around substance use. Schools have been covered with well-intentioned prevention and promotion programmes that address such diverse issues as HIV/AIDS, alcohol, careers, character, civics, conflict resolution, delinquency, dropout, family life, health, morals, multiculturalism, pregnancy, service learning, truancy and violence (Carrell & Hoekstra, 2010).

In many ways, the current era of education reform is truly a shift in the culture of Vhembe district educational enterprise in socioeconomic status and is not the determination of achievement status; instead, only performance counts. Generally,

social work practice in the educational setting has enormous potential for influencing social and educational change. At each level of practice macro, mezzo, and micro the school social worker uses his or her skills to impact student performance, teaching standards, or other educational reform issues. Unfortunately, school social workers need more education and training related to their power and influence within the educational setting in the Vhembe district. This study gives some direction for understanding the central and powerful role that school social workers can play in rural secondary schools in Vhembe district educational reform.

Given appropriate education and training, school social workers can meet the challenges of rural secondary schools' education reform by empowering learners, families, and communities in the pursuit of academic success and pro-social outcomes. As a pilot project in the Vhembe District in fulfillment of these goals, social work education programmes must produce practitioners who are grounded in grass-roots advocacy, and who can design programmes and strategically coordinate collaborative services that are suited for children and youth in rural secondary school systems. This may require specialised training and certification programmes.

Conversely, such an effort must first start with the development of academic faculty members who specialise in education reform and who thoroughly understand the rural secondary schools' cultural ethos - nothing less will be sufficient.

2.11 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The views highlighted in this chapter indicated that school social worker services are vital to the success of the lifelong learning process. They provide assistance, guidance, and counselling to learners so that they make informed future, educational and career choices suitable for them. Through school, social worker

services learners develop a clear understanding of self, their attitudes, interests, ambitions, resources, and limitations from career counselling. They are also guided into various activities, training, advancement and other benefits for sustainable self-reliance and self-worth.

Learners can achieve fulfilled lives and can contribute significantly to the development of their country in all spheres of life. School social worker services look at the holistic development of the learner by taking into account social, emotional and physical development aspects of the learner within the context of the learner environment. School social worker services are systematically planned to meet the needs of all learners and must be infused into the daily activities of the school.

The next chapter presents the research design and methodology, description of population and sampling, instrumentation, data collection procedures, data analysis, and ethical considerations.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the methods that were used in collecting and processing data. It includes the research design, population of the study, sampling procedures and sample size, instrumentation, data collection methods, data analysis procedures, and lastly, ethical considerations. This study sought to answer the following research questions:

- How do services of the social worker impact on learner performance of the rural secondary schools in Vhembe district?
- What effects do social worker services have on learners' academic performance?
- What problems do learners encounter in the process of learning which may hinder their expected academic performance?

3.2. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This section outlines the research method and techniques, with appropriate justifications. The research design and methodology are explained to indicate what is needed to answer the research questions and achieve systematic management of data collection and analysis.

3.2.1. Research Methodology

Creswell (2013) defines research methodology as the creation and development of techniques and strategies to collect data, the development of methods to investigate and improve the properties such as reliability and validity of data obtained employing these techniques and analysis of such data. The study utilised quantitative and qualitative methodologies (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2011). A quantitative approach is structured in nature in which data is gathered in a statistical form using questionnaire whereas the qualitative approach focused on understanding a phenomenon from a closer perspective and data is gathered through individual interviews.

3.2.2. Research design

A research design provides a clear research framework and guides the methods, decisions and sets the basis for interpretation. This study is empirical, involving a survey and interviews. A mixed methods research design was chosen to increase the scope and range of the research, to address the research problem and the related research questions.

3.2.3. Research Paradigm

A research paradigm is a researcher's beliefs on how the data about a phenomenon being studied should be collected, analysed and used (Aliyu, Bello, Kasim & Martin, 2014). This study utilised the pragmatic paradigm. The pragmatic paradigm is a set of beliefs that arose as a single paradigm in response to the debate surrounding the paradigm wars in the emergence of mixed methods approaches, collecting data through qualitative and quantitative approaches (Creswell, 2013; McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

3.3. POPULATION AND SAMPLING PROCEDURE

Neumann (2016) defines a population as the group upon which the researcher is interested in making inferences. Furthermore, Creswell (2013) defines a population as a set of entities in which all the measurements of interest to the practitioner or researcher are presented. The population of this study consisted of educators from schools in the Luvuvhu and Mvudi circuits in Vhembe East District.

In this study, 100 learners and 20 educators were sampled through a simple random selection procedure for a quantitative study. Twenty learners and 4 educators were selected from each school. Five (5) social workers and (5) HODs were purposively sampled for a qualitative study. Social workers were selected based on their experience in working with schools; having worked as social workers in schools for more than five years. HODs were also selected based on their experience working in schools for more than five years which was considered sufficient to having been acquainted with situations in schools.

3.4. DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

Leedy and Ormrod (2012) maintain that data collection is not just a process of data collection; it is also a process of gathering information in unique ways related to the purpose of the study. These are the methods that the researcher used to describe the findings and to confirm the credibility of the interpretations. Furthermore, interviews and questionnaires enable researchers to receive information from people and convert them into data (Neumann, 2016). The questionnaire and interview were used to collect data for this study. The instruments are discussed in the sections that follow:

3.4.1 The Questionnaire

A questionnaire contains written questions that must be answered by research participants (Neumann, 2016). According to Neumann (2016), the Likert scale is one of the most widely used techniques to measure attitudes. Close-ended questions, according to Creswell (2013), are quick to compile and straightforward to code, and they do not discriminate unduly based on how articulate the respondents are. A Likert-type questionnaire was used to collect data for the research questions stated. It was appropriate for reaching a large sample of the targeted population of Grade 12 learners and educators. The five-point Likert-type scale ranged from "Strongly Agree" (SA), "Agree" (A), "Uncertain" (U), "Disagree" (D) to "Strongly Disagree" (SD).

The questionnaire was administered to the educators and learners of the selected schools on appointed and accepted dates. The questions were clarified before distributing them to respondents. The items in the questionnaire were based on the three research questions. Research question one sought to find out what school-related factors contribute to poor academic performance in the Vhembe district. The second research question looked at external school factors that influence the academic performance of learners. The third research question considered mechanisms that exist in monitoring students' performance in the Vhembe district, and this also had three items raised to solicit the views and opinions of respondents.

3.4.1.1. Advantages of using questionnaires

A self-administered questionnaire only exerts financial pressure to produce many copies needed but has decreased traveling costs as the researcher collected data from a centralised school (Leedy & Ormod, 2007). This method of data collection offered great anonymity as the respondents did not give their details when

answering questions from the questionnaire. Respondents were given assurance that their answers would be kept confidential.

3.4.1.2. Limitations of using questionnaires

Neumann (1997) states that a low response rate means that bias could be introduced into the study and dealing with low response rate means an increase in printing and postal costs. Some respondents did not return the questionnaires. Neumann (2014) further postulates that there is a lack of personal contact if questionnaires are emailed, which means that the response rate decreases.

In questionnaires, there is no control over the respondents' answers as there is no guarantee that the appropriate respondents will respond to the questionnaires, as the researcher cannot guarantee that the questionnaires will be distributed to the appropriate respondents. Less data is collected as questionnaires have to be shorter and simpler to complete. The response to a questionnaire may be influenced by the response to other questionnaires. It was tiresome and time-consuming to do a follow-up.

3.4.2. Interviews

Interviewing is a favoured method in interpretive studies (Creswell, 2013); and interviews are a primary source (Heck, 2005) of collecting in-depth information. Interviewing is one of the most common methods of data collection used by researchers to inform them about social life. Interviewing could thus be regarded as the universal mode of systemic inquiry (Neumann, 2006). The technique of individual face-to-face interviewing treats the interview as a pipeline for extracting and transmitting information from the interviewee to the interviewer (Creswell, 2013).

Individual face-to-face interviews were used to collect qualitative data. An-structured interview schedule in which questions were planned as used to collect data. In-depth interviews were conducted with the social workers and HoDs to understand more about the effect of the social worker services on learners' academic performance in rural secondary schools.

3.4.2.1. Strengths of interviews

The researcher conducted interviews with the social workers, and five HoDs of the reviewed schools, focusing on the participants' individual circumstances in their setting. The interview is more appropriate for complex situations (Kumar, 2014). The respondents were allowed the freedom to express their views in their way. During the interviews, a tape recorder was used as an assistive device to capture all the content. Field editing was conducted on the interviews to rectify the errors and omissions whilst the interviews were in progress.

3.4.2.2. Limitations of interviews

Kumar (2014) points out that the interview is time-consuming and expensive. There were difficulties when making appointments with the participants from different sampled schools, because each interview is unique, and so, the quality of responses obtained from different participants varied significantly. Potential respondents were scattered over a wide geographical area making it challenging to reach them.

3.5. DATA ANALYSIS

Leedy and Ormrod (2012) point out that the term 'analysis means the resolution of a complex whole into parts. It involves reducing to manageable proportions the

wealth of data that one has collected or has available. Qualitative data were analysed thematically. Braun and Clarke (2013) point out that thematic analysis offers an accessible and theoretically flexible approach to analysing qualitative data. Furthermore, Holloway and Todre (2003) add that thematizing means one of a few shared generic skills across the qualitative analysis. The data were transcribed, coded and then themes were identified in the coded data. They had to be read and re-read for the researcher to become familiar with the data, and notes were made to capture recurring concepts, common themes, events, and other patterns in the data. These were then labelled and referred to as open coding. Next, the coded data were sorted and categorised. Then the analysed categories were to be ready to be written up in a report, or as was done in this case based on the framework from the recordings in the interview.

Following Pearson et al., (2017) thematic steps were followed in analysing data for this study: This involved familiarization with data: transcribing was done, reading and re-reading while taking notes; thereafter coded interesting codes across the entire data set. Themes were identified and reviewed to generate a thematic "map" of the analysis and check the themes relevant to the research questions.

The quantitative data from the questionnaires were analysed statistically through the computer loaded with the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) programme to analyse quantitative data. A statistician, who is an expert in SPSS, was involved in capturing and analysing quantitative data. According to Wiersma (2000), computer packages are ideal for data analysis because they have functionality, speed, accuracy, and accessibility. The data were presented according to the responses and/or the views of the respondents using tables and figures.

3.6. VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY.

Validity refers to whether the questionnaire or survey measures what it intends to measure, the overriding principle of validity is that it focuses on how a questionnaire or assessment process is used and how well it does so. Reliability is the characteristics of the instrument, that is the degree to which any measuring tool control the random error. Heale and Twycross (2015) defined validity as the extent to which a concept is accurately measured in a quantitative study and reliability is the accuracy of an instrument. Validity means that the researcher 's conclusion is true and correct, and is the extent to which a measuring instrument satisfies the purpose for which it is constructed. The validity of the questionnaire relies on reliability because if the questionnaire cannot be shown to be reliable, there is no discussion of validity. As nearly as possible, the data gathering should match the decisions the researcher needs to make. For example, the researcher tried to get a sample of the sampled population (learners, educators. HODs and school social workers). To enhance reliability, the researcher ensured that there were enough items in questionnaires and structured interview questions.

3.7. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

De Vos, (2010) states that ethical considerations should include non-maleficence (the researcher must do no harm to the participants) and privacy and anonymity (the identity of the participants must not be revealed in any way). Leedy and Ormrod (2012) bring out those most ethical issues in research that falls into one of three categories which the researcher considered while conducting the study. The three categories follow are:

3.7.1 Protection from harm

A researcher should not expose research participants to unnecessary physical or psychological harm. Participants should not risk losing life or limb, nor should they be subjected to unusual stress, embarrassment, or loss of self-esteem. In cases where the nature of the study involves creating a small amount of psychological discomfort, participants should know this ahead of time, and any necessary debriefing or counseling should follow immediately after participation (Leedy & Ormrod, 2012). Issues of ethical confidentiality and privacy of the personal rights of learners and educators were protected.

3.7.2 Informed consent

According to Leedy and Ormrod (2012), when people are intentionally recruited for participation in a research study, they should be told the nature of the study to be conducted and given the choice of either participating or not participating. Furthermore, they should be told that, if they agree to participate, they will have the right to withdraw from the study at any time. Any participation in a study was strictly voluntary. Informed consent for the respondents who were the grade 12 learners, educators, HoDs and social workers from the sampled schools, was administered.

3.7.3 Right to privacy

Any research study involving human beings should respect participants' right to privacy (Leedy & Ormrod, 2012). Under no circumstances should a researcher's report, either oral or written, be presented in such a way that others become aware of how a particular participant has responded or behaved, meaning that the researcher kept and assured the respondents' anonymity and confidentiality confidential. In general, a researcher must keep the nature and quality of

participants' performance strictly confidential, because the objectives of the study were explained verbally, and participants were assured that the information obtained during interviews would be kept confidential.

3.8. CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter, the researcher described and outlined the research methodology and design, population and sampling procedures, and data analysis were also discussed. The strengths and limitations of the questionnaires and interviews were also discussed. The next chapter presents the interpretation and analysis of data.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter looked at the study methodology and design. In the previous chapter, target population was defined as well as the sampling procedure used in the study. The research methodology was also explained and so was the methods used to analyse data. This chapter presents the results found and data are analysed and interpreted. Data analysis is the procedure of finding the accurate data to answer a research objective, understanding the procedures underlying the data, ascertaining the significant patterns in the data, and then stating the results having the greatest possible impact (Leek, 2011).

The findings are based on the empirical analysis of the data obtained from the research participants. Five steps, which are validation, coding, data transcribing, data entry and data cleaning, were used to ensure that the analysis was properly conducted. Several data presentation instruments are used in this section to analyse the data collected; and these include cumulative frequency tables, pie charts and bar graphs. SPSS version 25 was used to analyse quantitative data presented in Section A and B; while Thematic analysis was used for analysing the qualitative data that were collected and presented in Section C.

4.2 SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SAMPLE

In this section the demographic characteristics of the sample are examined. Since the study comprised learners and educators; both demographic characteristics will be examined in this section separately, starting with the learners' characteristics.

4.2.1 Demographic profile of learners

The results depicted in Table 4.1 reveal the demographic characteristics of the respondents in terms of; gender, age, home language, guardian, and whether they had repeated any grade and the reason for repeating.

Table 4.1: Demographic Profile of Learners(n=101)

Demographic characteristic		Percent
Gender	Male	47
	Female	53
Age	13-15 years	8
	16-19 years	54
	20-23 years	38
Home language	Tshivenda	98.0
	Tsonga	2.0
	Sepedi	0.0
	Other	0.0
Guardian	Both parents	46
	Mother only	45
	Father only	1.0
	Grandmother	4.0
	Extended Family	5.0
Repeated grade?	Yes	64
	No	36
Reasons for repeating	Illness	1.0
	Request by parents	2.0
	Failed to meet minimum requirements	54
	Lack of support from school	3.0
	Other reasons	4.0

Studying the results shown in Table 4.1, it is evident that female (53%) students are dominating in the high schools, as compared to the male counterparts (47%) given that there are more females in South Africa. Meanwhile, a significant

proportion of the total respondents (54%) fell within the age group 16 – 19 years. These age ranges, according to Piaget's theory of learning, belong to a stage where a learner understands the world through hypothetical thinking and scientific reasoning and their cognitive development enables them to acquire and use rules in complex situations (Piaget, 1970). This means that the participants are cognitively ready and should perform well in their academics.

In addition, when asked to state their home language, an overwhelming majority of respondents (98%) indicated that they were Tshivenda speaking, with the remaining 2% speaking Xitsonga, while none of the respondents spoke Sepedi as their home language. Furthermore, in terms of the participants' guardian, most (46%) stayed with both parents, followed by 44.6% who indicated that they stay with their mothers only. The results of this study indicate that the participants possessed a high possibility of being disciplined, since they had parents who supervised their actions. A further 5% of the participants stayed with relatives from extended families, with the lowest proportion of respondents (1%) indicating that they stay with only the father.

As mentioned earlier, the other characteristic which was asked from respondents was to reveal if they had repeated any grade. The majority (64%) revealed having repeated a certain grade. From the proportion of participants who had repeated a grade, the majority (36%) indicated having repeated grade 10, and the second largest percentage (13%) had repeated grade 11. Last, failing to meet the minimum requirements was cited by respondents (55%) as the main reason for repeating.

From the demographic results depicted above, the rate at which students repeated a grade can be considered disturbing. Of concern mostly, is the fact that the respondents' main reason for repeating a grade was due to failure to meet the minimum requirements for proceeding to the next grade. These findings are consistent with one of the key findings published by Businessstech (2018) which indicated that as South African learners advance through the school system, levels

of grade repetition increase, particularly in the latter years of high school. The Businessstech (2018) article further indicates that grade10 learners were particularly found to be at risk, with over 1 in 5 learners between 2009 and 2015 having to repeat the grade. A description of the demographic profile of the respondents who were composed of educators is highlighted in the next section.

4.2.2 Demographic profile of educators

The results depicted in Table 4.2 reveal the demographic characteristics of the respondents in terms of; gender, age, home language, guardian, whether they had repeated any grade, and the reason for repeating.

Table 4.2: Demographic Profile of Educators (n=36)

Demographic characteristic		Percent
Gender	Male	44
	Female	56
Age	20-30 years	10
	31-40 years	17
	41-50 years	41
	51+years	32
Teaching experience	0-5 years	7
	5-10 years	3
	10-15 years	17
	15-20 years	27
	20+years	46
Academic qualification	Diploma	17
	Degree	78
	Master's	5
	PhD	0.0
Position at school	Cs1 Educator	93
	Head of Department	7
	Deputy principal	0.0
	Principal	0.0

Reviewing the results shown in Table 4.2, the (56%) majority of participants was composed of female educators, with male respondents constituting 44% of the total responses. The above results demonstrate that there are more female teachers in South African public schools. These results corroborate Skosana's (2018) findings of the study he conducted on "Women teach and men lead? Gender inequality in South African schools examined", that women teachers make up more than 70% of state-paid teachers.

In terms of age, most participants (41%) composed of the 41 to 50 years' category, followed by 31% whose age ranged from 51 years and above. The least proportion of respondents was within the 20 to 30 years' category. Additionally, when asked to indicate their teaching experience, 46% were in the teaching profession for more than 20 years, while the least proportion of respondents (7%) had teaching experience of not more than 5 years.

As a follow up, a question was asked from the respondents to reveal their highest academic qualification. Out of the total responses, the majority (78%) had Honours degrees and none (0%) had a PhD qualification. Lastly, in terms of the position held at their respective schools, 93% of respondents indicated being Cs1 educators - these are level 1 educators and the least proportion (7) were holding the Head of Department positions.

The above results show that many of the teachers possess huge experience in teaching. The teachers are, therefore, capable of ensuring good academic performance of their students, given the experiences they have gained in their respective subject knowledge. A study by Clotfelter, Ladd and Vigdor (2007) revealed that there is a statistically significant relationship between teaching experience and student performance. The authors found a positive and statistically significant impact of teacher experience and learners' performance in both Mathematics and English.

It is also significant to note from the results of the study that the findings show that the majority of the teachers have undergraduate degrees only, which suggests that they have not furthered their studies. This may be leading to poor academic performance of learners as the teachers have not furthered their qualifications to acquire more skills and experience associated with good teachers. The above assertion is in line with Ojera's (2016) study which revealed that learners taught by teachers with higher qualifications performed better than those taught by teachers with low qualifications.

4.3 SECTION B: FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO POOR ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF LEARNERS

4.3.1 Distance travelled to school

The results shown in Figure 4.1 give an indication of the common distance travelled by the respondents to school.

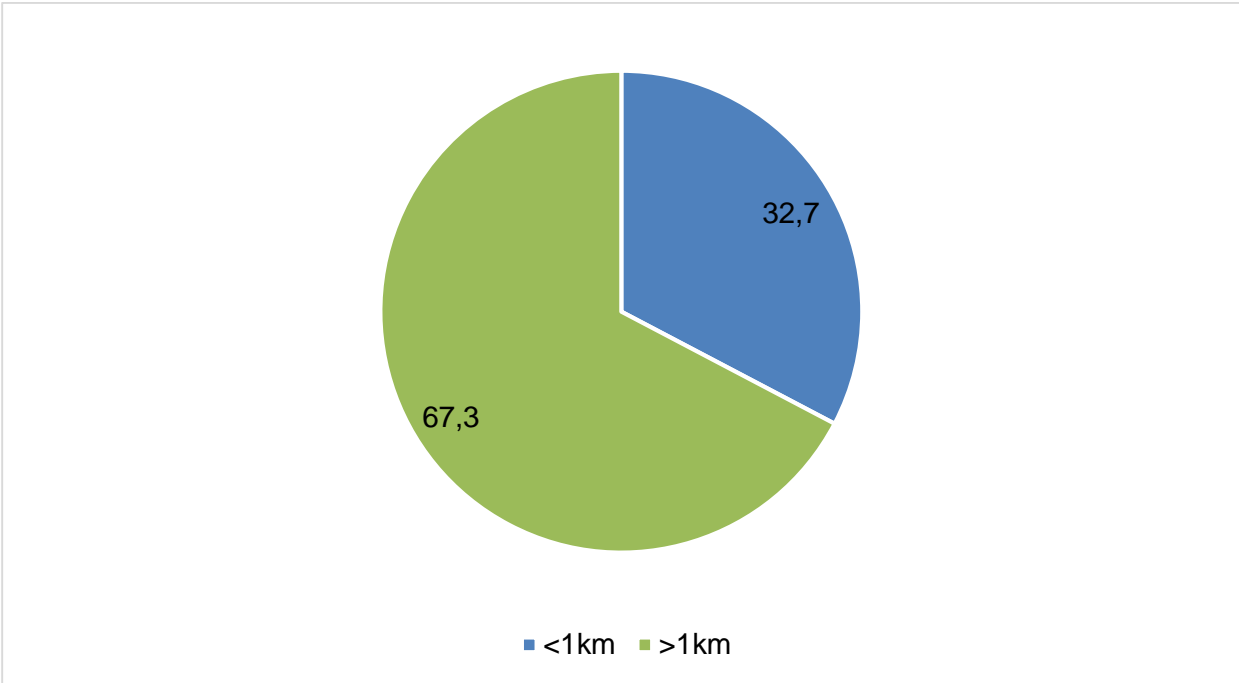


Figure 4.1: Distance travelled to school

Regarding distance travelled to school, out of the 101 valid responses, the majority (67.3%) of learners revealed that they travel to school for more than 1km. The remaining 32.7% of the respondents travelled less than 1km to their respective schools. Given these results, with more students travelling longer distances to school, chances are high that the respondents' performance was affected by distance.

The above results show that students who travel long distances do not perform well in their activities as distance makes them to be tired and exhausted, hence, their concentration levels will be very low. In supporting this proposition, The New Times (2016) explains that students who travel long distances are more likely to get to school late and miss an entire lesson or the introductory part of it, which affects their overall learning in the long run as well as compromising their performance.

Similarly, a study conducted by Germany-based Education International (The New Times, 2016; Claude, 2012) showed that long journeys to school have a negative impact on students' health and on their education achievement levels. As such, in order to determine contributing factors to poor academic performance of learners in this study, the researcher recommends factoring in the aspect of distance.

4.3.2 Mode of transport to school

Mode of transport can be considered as another factor which can affect students' performance as those who cannot afford to pay for transport often walk long distances. As such, this section examines the various modes of transport which the responses used to get to school. The results from their responses are depicted in Figure 4.2.

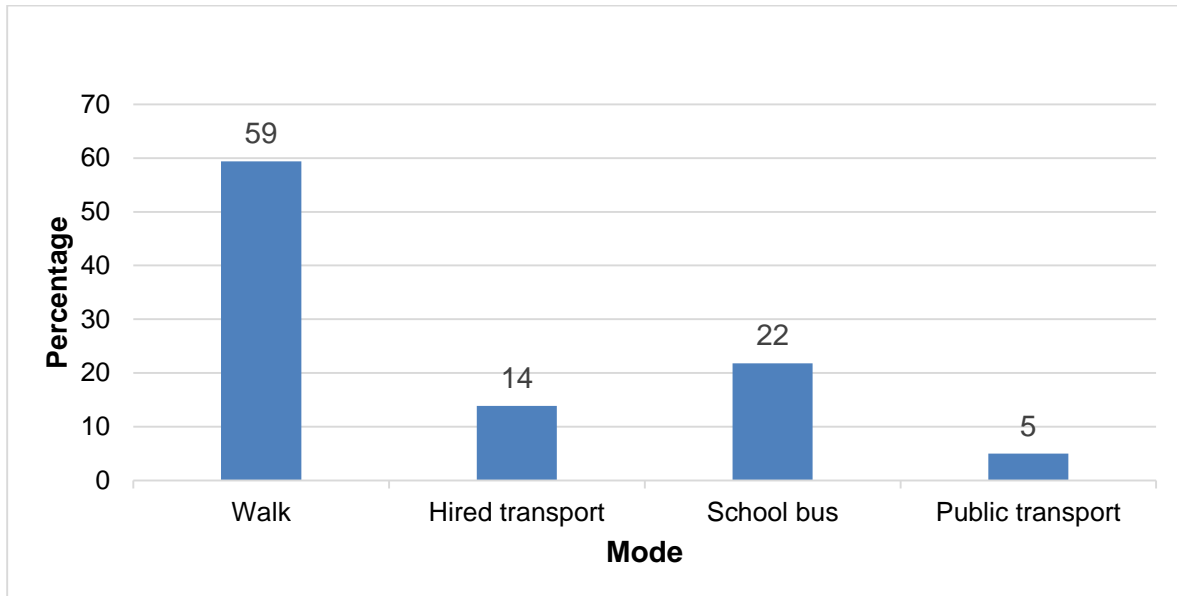


Figure 4.2: Mode of transport to school

The results in Figure 4.2 indicate that most respondents (59%) walked to school, while the second largest percentage of the total respondents (22%) used the school buses. The results further reveal that, 14% of the respondents used hired transport which was organised by their guardians, with the lowest proportion of respondents (5%) resorting to public transport as their sole source of transport to school. From the results, most of the respondents walked to school, and taking into account that in the previous section most learners revealed that they travel to school for more than 1 km; chances are high that a considerable number of learners walked to school relatively long distances.

The study results are supported by Portwig's (2018) study results that showed that long distances affect the emotional well-being of the learners, hence, the majority of the learners who travel long distance to school do not perform very well. In the same vein, Claude (2012) explained that the lengthy footing of students to school disorganises their concentration in class as some of them arrive at school sweating, stressed and exhausted; both physically and psychologically. The long distances, therefore, lead to poor performance of the learners.

4.3.3 Hours to school

The researcher found it imperative to ascertain the nature of the time spent by the respondents to get to school, and their responses are depicted in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Hours to school

Response	Frequency	Percent
Less than an hour	62	61
1 hour	15	15
Other	24	24

The results in Table 4.3 show that, a greater proportion of respondents (61%) on average took less than an hour to get to school, followed by (24%) who indicated that they take more than 1 hour to get to school. The least proportion (15%) of respondents revealed that they spend exactly 1 hour to arrive at school. The duration of commuting to town has an effect on the academic performance of learners. Tigre, Sampaio and Menezes' (2017) study established that the duration of commuting to school has a significant causal negative effect on academic performance.

4.3.4 State of mind upon arrival at school

It was deemed necessary to ascertain the state of the learners' mind upon arriving at their respective schools. The results from the respondents are depicted in Figure 4.3:

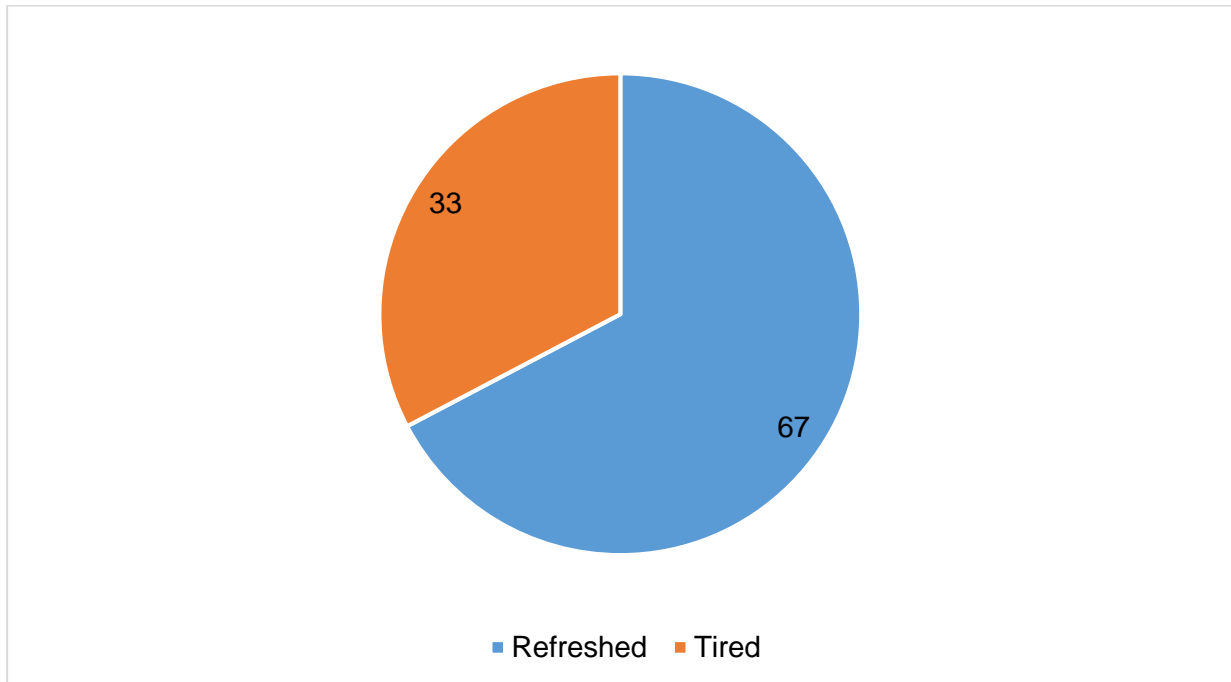


Figure 4.3: State of mind upon arrival at school

Studying the results shown in Figure 4.3, most of the respondents reported arriving at school refreshed, with the remaining 33% arriving at school feeling tired. These results imply that the state of the respondents for this study cannot be considered a major contributing factor to the students' performance, as the majority reported being refreshed and ready to learn upon arriving at school. According to the results of an interview that was conducted by Loya (2016) among learners, the respondents agreed with the claim that, being tired during school has a negative effect on their academic performance. Consistent with this notion, the aim of testing the state of this study's respondents upon arriving to school was to ascertain whether there was a general pattern of learners getting to school tired.

4.3.5 Frequency of study time

A question was asked to respondents to indicate whether in terms of having time to study they considered themselves as people who studied; (1) frequently, (2) everyday, or (3) rarely. The results from their responses are depicted in Figure 4.4.

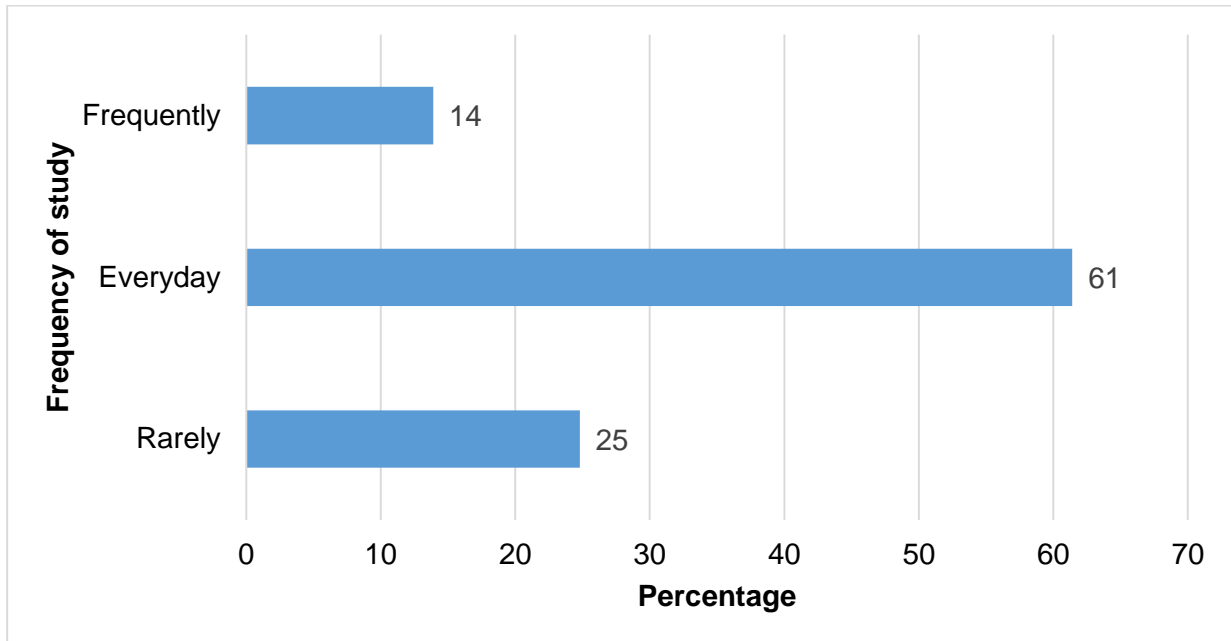


Figure 4.4: Frequency of study

The results in Figure 4.4 indicate that out of the 101 valid responses, the majority (61%) studied every day, while those who rarely studied constituted the second largest proportion of respondents (25%). The results further revealed that, the least proportion of respondents (14%) studied frequently. From these results it can be concluded that, respondents were devoting their effort towards study.

However, Plant, Ericsson, Hill and Asberg (2005) argued that researchers have consistently found a weak or unreliable relationship between the weekly amount of reported study time and performance for college students. The authors established that, the amount of study only emerges as a significant predictor of students' performance when the quality of study and previously attained performance were taken into consideration.

4.3.6 Performance rating

For the researcher to get an understanding of the students' perception of themselves regarding their academic performance, the respondents were asked to

rate themselves. The results from the learners' responses are depicted in Figure 4.5.

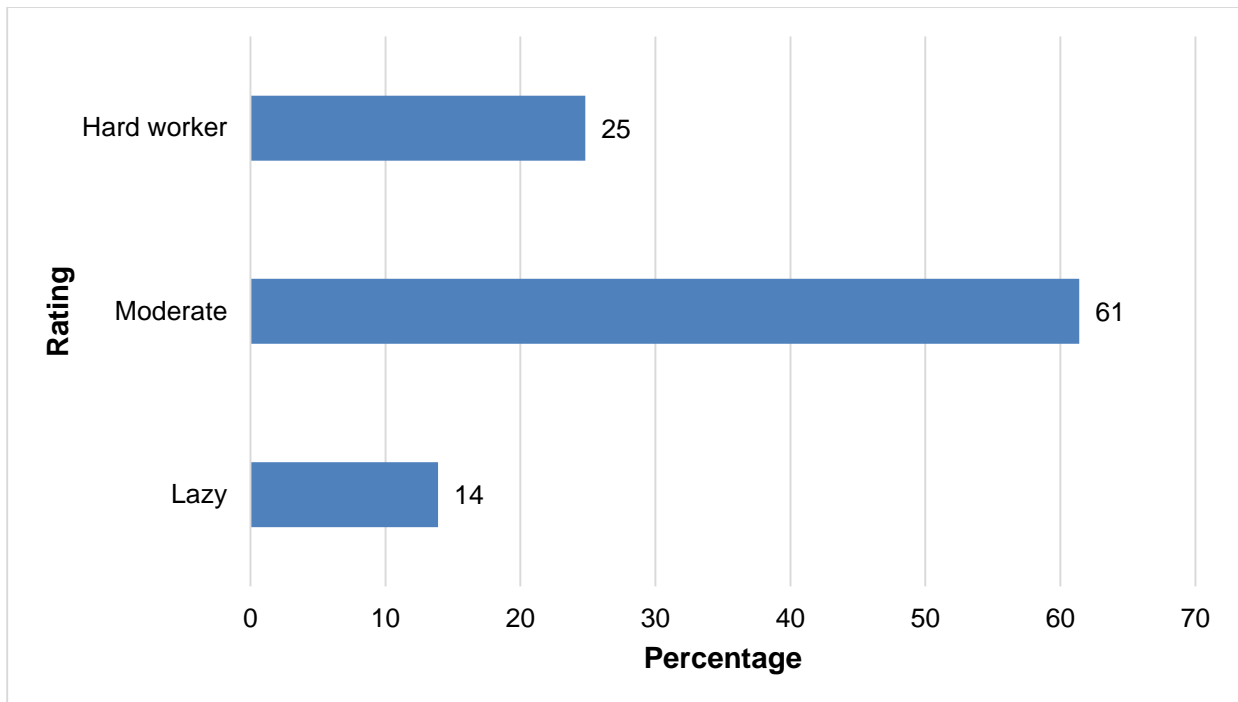


Figure 4.5: Performance rating

When they were asked to personally rate their academic performance, 61% who constituted the largest proportion of respondents, revealed being moderate academic performers. The second largest proportion of respondents (25%) reported being hard workers, with the least number of respondents (14%) revealing that they are lazy. The above results show that the majority of the students rate their academic performance as being moderate, hence they do not rate themselves or see themselves as good academic performers.

This shows that the learners have poor study habits, skills and poor study behaviours. Therefore, it is very important that the learners establish good study habits as these form an important component of learning. It is in this regard that if learners do not develop good study habits, it becomes very difficult for them to perform very well academically.

4.3.7 Factors contributing to poor academic performance of learners

Table 4.4 Factors contributing to poor academic performance of learners

Factor	Strongly agree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)
Parental involvement	93	7
Lack of study skills among learners	90	10
Learner absenteeism	95	5
School environment	73	27
Poor education support systems at home	98	2
Lack of study time at school	71	29
Leaners' negligence of school work	100.0	0.0
Learners' disruptive behavior	95	5
See no reason for attending school	93	7
Low levels of education among parents	90	10

As demonstrated in Table 4.4 above, the majority (93%) of the participants (educators) indicated that lack of parental involvement in learners' academic activities contributes to the poor performance of learners. This, therefore, shows that the more parents are involved in the learners' academic activities, the more they form partnerships with teachers, which leads to improved performance of learners' poor academic performance. Only a mere 7% disagreed. This shows that parental involvement in the learners' academic activities is very vital, like any other kind of involvement. The above results agree with the results from the interviews conducted with the educators, which show that lack of parental involvement negatively affects the performance of learners.

With regards to lack of study skills, the majority (90%) of the respondents strongly agreed that lack of study skills among learners causes poor academic performance, whilst a mere 10% disagreed. From Table 4.4 above it is clear that the following factors lead to poor academic performance of learners. The majority (95%) of the participants strongly agreed that learner absenteeism leads to poor academic performance of learners, while only 5% disagreed.

Moreover, 73% of the participants strongly agreed that a poor school environment also leads to the poor performance, while 27% disagreed. The majority (97%) of the educators strongly agreed that a poor education support system at home leads to learners' poor academic performance, while 3% disagreed. With regards to lack of study time, the majority (71%) of the educators strongly agreed that it leads to learners' poor academic performance. All (100%) the respondents concurred that learners' negligence of schoolwork leads to learners' poor academic performance at their schools. The majority (95%) of the respondents also strongly agreed that learners' disruptive behaviour causes learners' poor academic performance at their schools, while 5% of the respondents strongly disagreed with this assertion.

The results shown in the table indicate that most (93%) of the respondents strongly agreed that learners' poor academic performance at their schools is caused by the fact that learners see no reason for attending school, while only 7% of the respondents disagreed. The results of the study also show that most (90%) of the respondents strongly agree that low levels of education among parents are a major factor that contributes to learners' poor academic performance at their schools, while only 10% of the respondents strongly disagreed.

The above results demonstrate that, lack of study skills among learners, learner absenteeism, school environment, poor education support systems at home, lack of study time at school, learners' negligence of school work, learners' disruptive behaviours, seeing no reason for attending school, and low levels of education among parents negatively affect the academic performance of learners.

Therefore, the findings confirm the argument by Shetty and Srinivasan (2014) that there are many ways to study that can be used by learners, but that not all methods may enhance learning. Gettinger and Seibet (2012) project a view by explaining that, similar study skills involve a lot of other skills, which include the competencies associated with acquiring, recording, organising, synthesising, remembering, and using information. The results on absenteeism are in line with

Post's (2017) assertion that students who attend classes more regularly seem to be more successful in their studies than those who are regularly absent.

Learners who attend classes more regularly are more likely or are in a better position to remember well all the information that they would have been taught and can even apply the knowledge in their lives. Furthermore, learners class participation becomes affected due to absenteeism. They therefore, miss becoming a part of the class, and cannot raise questions about any confusion regarding topics. The results obtained for the school environment support the available literature that positive, respectful school environment provides a solid foundation for supporting learners' academic achievement and development of positive attitudes and behaviours (Banerjee, 2016). However, a poor school environment bears opposite effects, that is, poor academic performance.

The results in Table 4.4 are in line with Ghazi, Shahzada and Tariq (2013) who explain that secondary educators ranked disruptive behaviour as one of the most serious hurdles in effective teaching and learning process in the classroom which has a great effect on academic performance of learners. Learners who behave disruptively by bullying other learners, talking during lessons or by requiring the educator to interrupt lessons to discipline them, can have a negative effect on an entire classroom. A similar study by Carrell and Hoekstra (2010) found that disruptive learners can lower the test scores and academic achievement of an entire classroom.

Table 4.5 shows that the majority (73%) of the respondents indicated that they use motivation to increase learners' performance, whilst only 27% do not use motivation. The results from the table above show that the majority (66%) of the respondents agreed that they use campaigns as a measure in order to increase learners' performance at their schools, while 34% of the respondents do not use campaigns.

4.3.8. Methods used to reduce poor academic performance problems faced at schools

Table 4.5: Methods used to reduce poor academic performance at schools

Factor	Yes (%)	No (%)
Motivation	73	27
Campaigns	66	34
Role play	51	49
Consultation	34	66
Extra guidance	24	76
Prize giving	39	61.0
Career guidance	39	61.0
Motivational speakers	59	42

The study results attest that social workers use campaigns to increase awareness of substance abuse, crime and sexually transmitted diseases and bunking of classes. Furthermore, 51% of the respondents use role-plays as a measure to increase learners' performance at their schools, while 49% of the participants do not use role plays. The results confirm Lunenburg's (2010) assertion that school social workers engage learners through role playing like acting, educational drama and dancing, so that learners are learning in the process of playing.

With regards to the use of consultation as a measure to increase learners' performance at schools, the majority (66%) of the respondents indicated that they do not use consultation, whilst 34% indicated that they use consultations. The results of the study do not conform to Maluleke's (2014) assertion that, consultation is an important measure that can be used to reduce poor academic performance of learners. This may be attributed to the fact that the parents of the learners are not involved in their children's academic activities, hence, they are likely not to attend consultations or arranged consultation meetings with teachers. The consultations are done with students and parents. These help to involve parents in their children's learning activities. Parent consultations assist both the parents and teachers to get to know the children better. This ensures that parents

get involved in their children’s education, which also helps in solving disciplinary problems.

4.3.9 Effectiveness of measures used to reduce poor performance of learners

Table 4.6 below shows the results obtained from the study about the effectiveness of the measures that are being implemented by educators in reducing poor learner performance at their schools.

Table 4.6: Effectiveness of measures used to reduce poor performance of learners(n=36)

Factor	Effective (%)	Not Effective (%)
Motivation	51	49
Campaigns	46	54
Role play	44	56
Consultation	41	59
Extra guidance	37	63
Prize giving	34	66
Career guidance	44	56
Motivational speakers	43	57

As shown in table 4.6 above, 51% of the respondents expressed that motivation is an effective measure in reducing poor learner’s performance, while 49% of the respondents find motivation as not effective in helping to reduce poor performance of learners. The study results show that 54% of the respondents have the perception that campaigns are not effective measures that help in reducing poor learner performance, while 46% perceive campaigns to be effective in reducing poor learner performance.

The majority (56%) of the respondents perceive role plays as not effective, while 44% perceive that they are effective in helping to reduce poor learner performance. With regards to consultations, the majority (59%) of the respondents expressed

that they are not effective in helping reduce poor learner performance, while 41% found them to be an effective measure in reducing poor learner performance.

The results of the study, as shown in table 4.6, show that 63% of the respondents find extra guidance to be not effective, while 37% found extra guidance to be effective in helping reduce poor performance at their schools. The study also shows that the majority (66%) of the respondents indicated that prize giving is not an effective measure that helps reduce poor performance of learners, while 34% perceive that prize giving is effective in helping to reduce poor performance of learners at their schools. The results of the study oppose the existing literature by Carrell and Hoekstra (2010) that campaigns are used as an intervention to curb and motivate learners on healthy living style and on achievement by giving prizes to those who perform best.

4.4 SECTION C: QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

Data for qualitative analysis was sourced from 8 participants (5 educators and 3 school social workers) through semi-structured interviews. Throughout this chapter and the dissertation, pseudonym names of Educators (**E**) are used to identify the Educators, whilst Social Workers (**SW**) is used to identify social workers.

4.4.1 Perceptions by educators and social workers on factors contributing to poor academic performance of learners

This section presents the views of the educators that emerged from the interviews conducted with them. The following themes emerged from the interviews conducted; causes of poor academic performance, methods used to reduce poor academic performance problems faced at schools, effectiveness of measures used to reduce poor performance of learners, learner disciplinary problems and methods used to reduce indiscipline at schools.

4.4.1.1 Causes of poor academic performance

The following are subthemes that emerged from the interviews as causes of poor academic performance of learners; lack of parental involvement in learner's academic activities, learners' attitudes towards academic activities, poor teaching methods, lack of guardians and poor family backgrounds.

4.4.1.1.1 Parental Involvement

The study interviews revealed that there is lack of parental involvement in learners' academic activities, which leads to poor performance by learners.

E2: had this to say, "Learners are not serious, the parents are not involved, and learners do not study".

SW2: had this to say, "Parents are not serious about the school academic activities of their children".

The above excerpts from the study results show that, lack of parental involvement emerged as a factor that contributes to the poor academic performance of learners, because when parents are not involved in their children's education, they get exposed to negative role models from an early age which contributes to poor performance and dropping out of school system. Furthermore, lack of parental involvement also emerged when the educators shared their views regarding the question on whether the parents show interest in their children's education.

The extracts below show that parents do not show interest in their children's education, hence the majority of the respondents concurred that lack of parental involvement is a contributing factor to poor learner academic performance. One of the educators had this to say:

E2: *“No, they do not show interest, because they only come when they want to collect the reports of their children. They do not come during the year”.*

E3: *“Sometimes, but only a few of them - when we call them concerning the performance and problems that the learners will be having. Only a few come when we call them.”*

SW1: *“No, they only come when we call them regarding the performance of their child.”*

The results of the study overwhelmingly prove that parental involvement in learners' learning at high schools is positively related to good academic performance. These results are in line with Cotton and Wikelund (1989) who stated that the more intensively parents are involved in their children's learning, the more beneficial the achievement effects are. In the same vein, Mutshaeni (2008) explained that, researchers have found that the more active forms of parental involvement produce greater achievement benefits than the more passive ones.

The parents need to be involved in their children's academic activities actively by helping them with their homework to rekindle the culture of learning within learners. support this notion, children from intact homes are less likely to repeat a school grade even when socio-economic status is low, while learners from unstable families or from poor backgrounds are emotionally disturbed and, therefore, tend to perform poorly and repeat grades. Therefore, parental involvement in their children's school work is pertinent in this present era where parents seem not to have adequate time for helping their kids in their homework.

Learners' attitude towards their academic activities also emerged as a factor that leads towards poor academic activities. E5 had this to say;

E5: *“The attitude of a learner towards a certain subject or negligence of the learner because the majority of our teachers are skilled and competent”.*

The above added lamentation shows that the attitude of learners towards their teachers and certain subjects negatively affects their academic performance. Research by Abudu and Gbadamosi (2014) regards attitude towards science as an important factor that affects the learners' performances and conceptions about the subject. It is only a positive attitude that can result in a learner doing well in science, because a positive attitude leads to interest in the subject, and interest leads to commitment, and commitment, in turn, leads to a yearning for academic achievement (Osborne, Simon & Collins, 2003). The negative attitude towards learning could result in learners performing poorly and prevent them from obtaining required results for university entrance.

Another factor that emerged from the interview is the poor teaching methods being used by the educators.

E5: "The methods used by teachers when teaching".

If the educators employ poor teaching methods, the learners are more likely not to perform very well. The results are in line with Morakinyo's (2003) assertions that the falling level of academic achievement is attributable to educators' on-use of verbal reinforcement strategy. Others found that the attitude of some educators to their job is reflected in their poor attendance to lessons, lateness to school, unsavoury comments about learners' performance that could damage their ego, poor methods of teaching, and the likes affect pupils' academic performance (Asikhia, 2010). Therefore, if educators are ineffective, all learners they teach will perform poorly, but importantly, educators play a crucial role in transmitting knowledge, values and skills during the learning process.

According to this line of thinking, teaching skills would include formal education, experience, subject matter knowledge, pedagogy studies, duration of training, certificates and professional development. Educator professionalism should be exhibited in skills like giving prompt feedback, questioning, dealing with learners' problems effectively and creating specific kinds of climate settings for different

lessons, making sure learners understand and cope with the amount of knowledge given to them.

In addition, it makes educators likely to remain committed to their work and overcome situations that challenge their ability to teach effectively. An educator is seen as the pivot of the communication of knowledge and ineffective if he/she learns to apply all the teaching principles and methods that make an educator professional and competent enough to impart knowledge in any given field of discipline.

From the outcome of the study it also emerged that learners who come from poor family backgrounds perform very poorly in their academic studies. Inability to provide basic school needs like supplementary reading, food to eat when coming from school, motivation and school uniforms, among others, may have a ripple effect on the learner's performance:

SW2: *"The backgrounds sometimes show that they come from dysfunctional families wherein they come to school being stressed by burdens from home, so it hinders their learning instead of the learner listening to the educator teaching, they will be reflecting on circumstances at home".*

From the interviewee's assertion above, poor family background is one of the factors that cause poor learner academic performance. White (1987) and Morakinyo (2003) indicate the existence of a relationship between socio-economic (SES) status and academic achievement. White (1987), in a meta-analysis of 620 correlation coefficient from 100 students, indicates that a definite relationship exists between SES and academic achievement. He notes that the frequency obtained from correlation ranged from 0.10 to 0.70 - that is a positive relationship, which means as one factor increases the other also increases. Most untrained educators point fingers at students rather than at themselves when the learners are unable to carry out the expected behaviour at the end of the lesson or in examinations.

The findings of the study also show that lack of guardians is one of the causes of poor academic performance. This is confirmed by the following remark;

***SW1:** “The environment that the learners come from, especially their family backgrounds, some learners come from child-headed families, hence there is absence of guardians who can encourage them to study and to take their education very seriously.”*

The above view corroborates the assertion that some of these learners come from child-headed families. This presents a great challenge to the learner as the head child who has to keep the household routine, including continuous access to school, after the parents have died. A study on special needs of children in child-headed households reports the attempts made by a head child to sustain education in activities like home-work and peer learning when he/she can no longer afford to physically attend school because of the household duties and responsibilities (Nelson Mandela Children’s Fund, 2001).

In addition, family and school responsibilities for education are sequential, that is, families are responsible for preparing their children with necessary skills in the early years, and school takes over from there with the input from the families. However, today, in the context of greater accountability and demands for children’s achievement, school and families must form partnerships and share the responsibilities for children’s education, although to those learners who are heading their families this is difficult.

4.4.2 Methods used to reduce poor academic performance problems faced at schools

The other theme that was explored in this study concentrated on the methods that are used by the educators to reduce poor academic problems they face at their schools. The following subthemes emerged from the interviews that were conducted; use of motivation, parental involvement, and having extra classes.

Most of the participants indicated that they use motivation as a method of reducing poor academic performance problems at their schools. The use of motivation involves motivating the learners by the educators themselves and inviting guest speakers and or motivational speakers to help motivate learners to improve their academic performance. The following views were expressed;

E2: *“I motivate all the learners to do well with their studies and educate them about the importance of education in their lives”.*

E5: *“Motivational talks, because they need less time to organise than campaigns - these can be done class by class.”*

E3: *“Inviting the school alumni who are doing well to motivate them to inspire them to be like them”.*

In a similar manner, a social worker had this to say:

SW1: *“I sometimes show them motivational videos as a way of motivating them and even tell them motivational stories.”*

The above results show that motivation is not only important because it is a necessary casual factor of learning, but because it mediates learning and is a consequence of learning as well. Motivation may lead to decision to act, and helps to determine goals, management and execution of goals. Motivational talks have the potential to further engage students and convert those who are struggling with substance use to supportive peers and others within the school environment (Allen et al., 2016). Motivational talks enhance learner to provide effective peer support and determine the prolongers of impact of the motivational speaker’s message during multiple influence on the adolescents’ decision making around substance use.

The study also found that motivation is also used to reduce learner disciplinary problems at schools. Some of the respondents explained that:

E2: *“Motivating and encouraging them all the time, we also award prizes for good performance to learners at the end of the year”.*

E4: *“Giving awards to learners who are well behaved and performing very well academically in a way to motivate them.”*

The results from the respondents above prove that motivational talks influence learners to progress through stages of change. The literature confirms this, as Tella (2007) confirms that the motivated learner attends classes regularly and the performance is satisfactory compared to unmotivated learner who bunks classes, disrupts classes and is a defiant learner. This indicates that the learner’s behavior is an important way of commitment in effective academic work before the learner can succeed.

Another contribution that emerged from the study results as a method that helps to reduce poor academic performance, is parental involvement. The results of the study show that involving parents in their children’s academic activities helps to reduce the poor performance of learners. The educators expressed the following:

E2: *“We call the parents of the learner to make sure that the disciplinary problems are resolved”.*

E3: *“Parental involvement to make sure they know their children are performing at the school”.*

E4: *“Parental involvement to make sure they know their children are performing at the school, so that they may identify the problems of the children and how their children behave – so, that can help the learners”.*

By the same token, a social worker shared a similar view to that of the educators by explaining that:

SW3: *“We call parents to a meeting where we discuss issues that affect their children’s academic performance”.*

The voices above attest that parental consultations assist both the parents and teachers to get to know the children better. This ensures that parents get involved in their children’s education, which also helps in solving disciplinary problems. The study results also show that educators conduct extra classes as a measure to help

reduce poor academic performance of learner's at their schools. The following was said to support this:

***E2:** "Having extra classes on Saturdays and during vacation period or holidays."*

***E4:** "We do encourage educators to have extra classes and the students to attend these after normal classes, during the weekends and school holidays and sometimes encourage the best performing learners to teach other learners. Inviting the school alumni who are doing well to motivate them to inspire them to be like them".*

***SW2:** "Educators should have programmes to enrich the learners with information, for example, you will find that the learner does not have extra classes and does not understand what the educator would have taught them previously. So, educators should have extra classes and time with the learners during the afternoon to make sure that they polish the lesson they would have done for that particular day".*

The above is a testimony that conducting extra classes is one of the efficient methods that are being used by educators to reduce poor academic performance. It is during extra classes that learners are given extra attention, so that they can improve their academic understanding of concepts. Furthermore, the extracts indicate that, educators are competent, dedicated and can use multiple teaching methods to ensure that students' performance improves.

4.4.3 Learner disciplinary problems

The researcher sought to find out the learner disciplinary problems that are faced at schools by educators. The following are some of the concerns that emerged under this main theme; back chatting, lack of respect towards educators, and inattention.

The educators and the social workers expressed their views in the following manner to confirm back chatting:

E1: *“My school experiences the problem of back chatting from the learners. If the educator says something to the learners, some of them respond negatively in a disrespectful manner”.*

E3: *“Back chatting when the educator is reprimanding the learner”.*

E4: *“They do not concentrate when the educator is teaching and when asked to concentrate, they back chat and sometimes they insult the educator”.*

Another disciplinary problem that emerged from the interviews was inattention and lack of respect by learners. The following was said:

E2: *“Learners do not respect their educators - while educators are teaching they do not pay attention; they do what they want. You will find others playing, singing, sleeping, and whenever they are asked to concentrate, they give excuses for not paying attention to the educator, which are not related to their education”.*

E4: *“They do not concentrate when the educator is teaching and when asked to concentrate, they back chat and sometimes they insult the educator.”*

The disciplinary problems that were expressed attest that learner indiscipline is still among the most serious problems which educators must deal with and a contributory factor in the poor academic performance of students in South Africa. Rossouw (2003) asserts that currently one of the most prominent factors influencing the learning environment is the conduct of learners. Supporting Rossouw's assertion, Steward (2004) points out that maintaining discipline is seen to be a major problem and is a source of stress to educators and, consequently, a major cause of resignations from the profession.

The views shared confirm Rosen's (1997) assertion of the types of disciplinary problems which are experienced at schools. Those types of disciplinary problems mentioned which are presented in figure 4.8, make the work of educators difficult.

Marais and Meier (2010) report that educators in South Africa are becoming increasingly distressed about disciplinary problems in schools.

According to Rossouw (2003), disrespectful behaviour towards educators is very prevalent in the classroom. Learners often display defiance and disrespect in respect of rules, authority and structures of the school system. They react defiantly and disrespectfully when reprimanded by the teacher. According to several researchers (De Wet, 2006; Rossouw, 2003; Tiwani, 2010), such behaviour includes: disobedience, a refusal to keep quiet when an educator is talking, a refusal to follow instructions or requests, calling out when the educator is speaking, responding aggressively when caught with a cell-phone, storming out of the classroom and disrespect for authority.

4.5. METHODS USED TO REDUCE INDISCIPLINE AT SCHOOLS

The researcher sought to find out the methods that are used to reduce learner indiscipline problems that are faced by educators at schools. The following are the subthemes that emerged under this main theme; awards and prize giving for good discipline, involving parents, and encouraging students to adhere to the school's rules and regulations.

The results of the study show that awards and prize giving are being used by educators to reduce learner disciplinary problems. The educators underscored that;

***E1:** "It is being promoted through award, the most well-behaved learner is given an award in the form of a trophy and some money. By doing that, positive behaviour is being enhanced in a way that some other learners will wish to have, hence they will change their behaviour."*

***E3:** "Giving awards to learners who are well behaved and performing very well academically."*

E4: *“Giving awards to learners who are well behaved and performing very well academically in a way to motivate them.”*

In accordance with the above, a social worker explained that;

SW1: *“I have seen that they are given prizes and some are made school prefects”.*

The study also established that involving parents in the academic activities and in disciplinary hearings and procedures is one of the methods that the educators are currently utilising to reduce learner disciplinary problems. The educators expressed that;

E2: *“We call the parents of the learner to make sure that the disciplinary problems are resolved”.*

E3: *“Parental involvement to make sure they know their children are performing at the school”.*

SW3 *“Parental involvement makes sure that the parents are informed about their children’s performance”.*

The above responses show that it is very important to involve parents in their children’s school activities. This helps the teacher to inform parents and listen to them when early warning signs of disciplinary problems are observed. This is confirmed by Plessis (2015) who argues that effective and safe schools make persistent efforts to involve parents by: informing them routinely about school discipline policies, procedures, and rules, about their children’s behavior (both good or bad); involving them and making decisions concerning school wide disciplinary policies and procedures; and encouraging them to participate in prevention programmes, intervention programmes, and crisis planning. It is in this regard that parents need to know what school-based interventions are being used with their children and how they can support their success.

The results of the study further conform with Plessis’s (2015) assertion that learners need to be encouraged to abide by the rules and regulations of their schools and be supported in being responsible for their actions: Effective school

communities encourage learners to see themselves as responsible for their actions, and actively engage them in planning, implementing, and evaluating violence prevention initiatives.

The study was underpinned by the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) theory, as developed by Lev Semenovich Vygotsky during late 1920s, focusing on the internalisation of knowledge (Ebadi, Khatib & Shabani, 2010). In the same vein, Tekin (2014) explains the ZPD as the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by the independent problem solving and level of potential development, which is determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers.

The above views by participants also support the ZPD theory explanation that school social workers are the members of school-related personnel, and their effectiveness often depends on the collaboration with other people working within school settings (Higy, Haberkorn, Pope & Gilmore, 2012). The school social workers and the teachers are, therefore, collaborating with motivational speakers and parents to help learners improve the poor learning academic performance.

4.6. CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter presented and analysed results of the study; which included, the biographical information of the respondents as well as the reasons for poor academic performance, measures used to reduce poor academic performance, disciplinary problems being experienced by educators and the methods used to reduce disciplinary problems. The next chapter presents summary, conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Previous chapters presented the rationale, introduction and background, the literature review, methodology, data analysis, results for the study and discussion of findings. This chapter gives the summary of the research findings as per study objectives, it pays brief attention to the study limitations, draws overall conclusions and gives some recommendations for the teachers, parents and the Department of Basic Education, as well as the recommendations for further research.

5.2 THE SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS IS BASED ON EACH STUDY OBJECTIVE.

5.2.1 Impact of social worker services rendered to enhance learner academic performance.

The study intended to explore the impact of social worker services rendered in order to enhance learner academic performance. This study revealed that there is different of ways in which the social workers' services are enhancing the learner academic performance. The social workers indicated that they use motivational videos as a manner of enhancing academic performance. Motivation was noted to be an imperative strategy that the social workers were adopting as a casual factor of learning towards learning mediation.

The study revealed that the motivation strategies that are used by the social workers have positive effect on the learners' level of thinking. This is so, because it was evident that motivation improves learners' decision making, it assists in goal determination and goal execution as well. These motivational talks are effective towards improving the learner performance as they act as some internal and external stimuli that increase the desire and energy of learners to be continually interested and committed to their academic goals.

Parental involvement is another strategy that the social workers indicated they adopted towards enhancing learner performance. Parental involvement refers to the amount of participation a parent has when it comes to schooling of her or his child's life. The strategy that the social workers use involves having sound discussions with the learners' parents to understand different factors that affect the learners' performance. This would result in some corrective measures that are taken by both the parents and the social workers. This is an effective strategy and an integrative and collaborative approach between parents, social workers and learners which results in a collective approach of improving learners' performance.

Social workers alluded to that they also engage with the learners, parents and the educators with the aim of establishing the importance of conducting extra classes on learner performance. Though the social workers will not be the ones offering the extra classes, they offer a supportive role to ensure that extra classes are accessible to the learners where need be. It is also imperative to note that the levels of understanding of learners differ, hence, extra classes provide a platform that boosts the learner understanding and consequently, boosting learner performance.

The parental involvement has been deemed to be an effective strategy towards improving academic performance. This implies that the service of parental involvement or discussions that the social workers are offering are effective towards learner academic performance. As a result, to a greater extent, most of

the services that the social workers are offering to the secondary schools in Vhembe District are effective towards learner academic performance.

Indeed, the ability to give quality education to learners to produce encouraging academic performance largely depends on parents, educators and other education stakeholders. Conditions and experiences in learners' families are of paramount importance in their academic performance, meaning that parental involvement in education includes contribution to their children's home-based activities (helping with homework, encouraging them to read, and promoting school attendance). These activities which are done by parents at home fuel the improvement of academic performance of the learners as well as learner's behaviour and attitude towards learning. Therefore, parental involvement makes an enormous impact on the learner's attitude, attendance and academic achievement and promotes better cooperation between parents and school.

Conclusively, the study has revealed that the social workers are indeed playing a positive role towards impacting the enhancement of learner performance. This is done through the strategies that involve motivational talks, parental involvement and support for extra classes. Hence, to a greater extent, the services rendered by the social workers are significantly influencing the enhancement of the learners' performance.

5.2.2 Social worker services provided in rural secondary schools in the vhembe district are effective to the learner academic performance.

This study intended to ascertain the effectiveness of social worker services provided in rural secondary schools in Vhembe district towards learner academic performance. This was to check whether or not their presence is positively assisting learners to improve performance. The findings revealed that the

motivation strategy that the social workers are using is effective towards learner academic performance. This is evident from the results of the study, with 76% having indicated that motivation is being used in their schools to reduce poor learner academic performance. Furthermore, the results of the interviews conducted with the educators and the social workers also revealed motivation as one of the useful methods being used to improve poor learner academic performance.

Most of the learners indicated that this strategy is effective in reducing the poor academic performance of learners. To add on, the learners who were performing poorly academically have improved their academic performance due to the motivational strategies that are being used by the social workers. Learners who were likely to write 3 subjects in grade 12 final examination this year, are now writing all subjects they have registered for the National Senior Certificate, meaning that they are no longer the Multiple Exam Opportunity (MEO) candidates.

With regards to the introduction of extra classes or extra guidance that is proposed by the social workers as a strategy to enhance learners' performance; the study revealed that the learners perceive this strategy to be not effective. This is shown by most of the learners, who indicated that this strategy is not effective. This implies that the extra lessons strategy is not effective towards learner academic performance.

5.2.3 Problems displayed by learners and how those could hinder satisfactory learner performance.

Another objective of this study was to investigate the problems displayed by learners and how these problems could hinder satisfactory learner performance. Lack of study skills was also noted as another problem that the learners are facing, and the lack of these skills consequently affects the learner performance

negatively. Furthermore, it puts learners at disadvantage and it is one of the main reasons why learners need remedial classes, because they fall behind the syllabus and dropout of school, which increases the risk of academic struggles and poor academic performance.

Learner absenteeism was also established as another factor that affects the learner performance negatively. The learners indicated that the learner absenteeism is detrimental to their academic performance. Poor school environment was also noted to be a problem that is affecting the learner performance. This implies that the lack of a conducive environment is detrimental to the performance of learners. A poor education support system was also proffered as another problem that is influencing learner academic performance. If the learners are not accessing effective academic support, this also affects their level of understanding and is detrimental to their performance.

The findings of the study also showed that, learners' lack of study time is another problem that is leading to learners' poor academic performance, and negligence of schoolwork was also noted to be another problem that is resulting in poor performance of learners. The study results show that all (100%) the educators strongly agreed that negligence of schoolwork by learners was one of the factors contributing to poor academic performance of learners. So were the disruptive behaviours by learners during classes. Learners revealed that the parents' expectations of their children when they are back from school made them not to study at home, because some learners do a lot of house chores after school.

Furthermore, some learners are heading the families due to the HIV/AIDS pandemic that made them to lose both parents, meaning that the climate which surrounds learners will determine their readiness to learn, which will result in learners performing poorly academically. Disruptive behaviour by learners was also established to be another factor that results in poor learners' performance.

Parents' level of education was noted to be a problem that also contributes to poor performance as most parents whose education level is lower are not able to give extra support to the learners in their studies, which is detrimental to the performance of learners. Moreover, the findings showed that some of the problems that contribute to poor academic performance of learners include lack of study time at school, lack of study skills among learners, learner absenteeism, uncondusive school environment, poor education support systems at home, learners' negligence of school work, and low levels of education among parents. These problems are destructive to the performance of learners and are stifling their academic prospects.

The Zone of Proximal Development (ZDP) influenced the study findings as the results of the study had to show how the social workers are collaborating different learning methods to support the intellectual knowledge and skills of learners. Furthermore, the results had also to show how the socio-economic factors affect the performance of learners. As a result of the ZDP theory, the study shows that the social workers are using motivational strategies to support the intellectual learning and skills of learners.

The study also shows that learners who travel long distances, learners who come from poor backgrounds, and learners who do not have guardians, perform poorly in their academic studies. The results also show that parental involvement in the learners' academic activities helps improve the learners' academic performance.

5.3 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study also had some limitations. The identified limitations were in the context of the data collection and sampling procedures of the population under study. Limpopo is divided into 5 districts and 25 municipalities. However, the researcher

focused the study on one district, which is Vhembe District, which was accessible to the researcher and within the research budget.

The study was limited by lack of access to the participants, so, the researcher made more appointments with the participants from the sampled schools, and by so doing, limited the study because the planned number of participants decreased, leading to not getting enough data. Some educators were reluctant to participate in a study with such a research topic. The researcher visited them more than once. And, due to lack of funds, data were collected from the accessible participants who were near the geographical area of the researcher. This implies that the findings of this study cannot be generalised in the other 4 districts and also other provinces in South Africa. Nevertheless, some generic conclusions might be derived from the study, albeit with extreme caution.

5.4 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS IN AGREEMENT WITH THE RESEARCH TOPIC

The title and the aim of the study focused on investigating the effect of social worker services on learner academic performance in rural secondary schools. The statement of the problem that was presented in chapter one was based on the need to unravel the impact of social worker services on learner academic performance, effectiveness of these services in rural secondary schools and problems that hinder satisfactory learner performance. Chapter 2 provided the literature review that was aligned with the objectives of the study, the theoretical framework was established for data collection and the qualitative study as shown in chapter 3. The data analysis and interpretations of the findings that were presented in chapter 4 addressed the pivotal issues that were answering the research questions and objectives of the study.

In agreement with the title of the study, the study established that there are several barriers that affect learners' academic performance and which pose a great challenge towards improving learners' academic performance in South Africa. The study also established that there are a lot of barriers that negatively affect social workers' efforts towards improving learners' academic performance, for example, lack of parental involvement in their children's academic activities. The strategies that are being used by the social workers and educators have the potential to be used as a solution towards curbing the factors that affect learners' academic performance.

All the above illustrates that social workers play a pivotal role in improving learners' academic performance and as such, their roles should be recognised, especially in the rural schools. The establishment of the effect of social workers' services on learner academic performance has also established the role they currently and have to play toward improving learners' academic performance in rural schools.

5.5 CONCLUSIONS

The conclusion that is drawn from the impact of social worker services on learner academic performance, effectiveness of these services in rural secondary schools, and problems that hinder satisfactory learner performance, show a plethora of issues that this study contributes to the body of knowledge. The services that social workers provide to enhance learner performance, as revealed by the findings, are motivational services, parental involvement and extra classes. These services are positively affecting the learners' academic performance. It is imperative to also note that through these services, the social workers can provide a supportive environment for learners and integrative solutions which, in turn, influence learner academic performance positively.

The findings also revealed that the services that are provided by the social workers are, to a greater extent, effective towards improved learner academic performance. Motivational tools and parental involvement topped the list of effectiveness, whilst extra classes were deemed to be ineffective. This implies that there is need for more effort towards addressing extra guidance to learners and establishing new approaches to doing so in order to achieve effective results. More so, the findings acknowledged that learners are facing problems that are haunting their academic performance, with poor performance as the resultant effect. Learners are not being awarded sufficient study time at schools and this is detrimental to their performance.

Moreover, other problems that have been revealed by this study as contributing to poor academic performance include learner absenteeism, where learners do not attend their classes, with poor performance as a resultant factor. Parental involvement in children's studies was also deemed to be lacking and also there was an un conducive environment at the schools which, in turn, affects the performance of learners. Among other problems that are leading to poor learner academic performance, there are: lack of study skills among learners, poor education support systems at home, learners' negligence of school work, disruptive causes, and parents' lower educational standards.

5.6 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF BASIC EDUCATION

- The Department of Basic Education needs to implement an integrative approach through engaging organisations like Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience (AIME) and community engagement services in universities towards offering extra guidance to learners and improving their study skills.
- The social workers, too, need to work with organisations such as AIME and universities and invite university students and lecturers to offer extra

guidance, extra classes, motivational talks and career guidance advice to the learners so that they can improve their academic performance.

- The Department of Basic Education needs to make it a priority that the infrastructure which is available at schools provides a conducive environment for learners and this can be done by total quality management of the schools' infrastructure, provision of suitable space for school social workers to be effective in rendering their support services to learners, and providing a place to keep confidential information.
- Tutors can be assigned from the community and universities who will be responsible for offering extra classes to learners rather than extra classes being offered by the same educators whom learners may not be understanding.
- The Department of Basic Education also needs to ensure that Information Technology and learner academic support services are also accessible in rural schools to ensure accessibility of diverse study materials to learners to improve performance, as social workers sometimes need to use videos and other technological platforms to instill morals and values among learners.
- There is need for a continued collaboration among social workers, educators, parents and school management to ensure effective learner academic boosting solutions.
- The Department of Basic Education should ensure that there are residing social workers in all South African schools to ensure counselling and support services are readily available to learners, as there is a decline of morals and values among learners; and that affects both learners' and teachers' performance.

5.7 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The research findings have the potential to be of value to other researchers in understanding the effect of social worker services on learner academic performance in rural secondary schools. In this regard, the data have provided a window into the problems that are affecting satisfactory learner performance, and

the role of social workers towards reviving the stimuli of academic commitment among learners in rural schools in Vhembe district.

The possibility exists of conducting a replicate study within other districts and provinces of South Africa. This could help to assess the similarities and differences regarding the impact of social worker services and the problems faced by learners in different districts and provinces. It is to be hoped that some of the future research could be conducted on a larger scale by the government to ensure a wider generalising of the results. Future studies can also be done on 'investigating the impact of social worker services among urban schools'.

REFERENCES.

- Abudu, K. A., & Gbadamosi, M. R. (2014). Relationship between teacher's attitude and student's academic achievement in senior secondary school chemistry. A case study of Ijebu-Ode and Odogbolu Local Government Area of Ogun state. *Wudpecker Journal of Educational Research*, 3 (3), 035-043. Retrieved July 5 the, 2015 from <http://www.wudpeckerresearchjournals.org/WJER/pdf/2014/April/Abudu%20and%20Gbadamosi.pdf>.
- Al Khatib, A. S. (2014). Time management and its relation to students' stress, gender and academic achievement among sample of students at Al Ain University of science and technology, UAE. *International Journal of Business and Social Research (IJBSR)*, 4(5), 47-58.
- Aliyu, A. A., Bello, M. U., Kasim, R., & Martin, D. (2014). Positivist and non-positivist paradigm in social science research: Conflicting paradigms or perfect partners. *J. Mgmt. & Sustainability*, 4, 79.
- Allen, J., Robbins, S. B., Casillas, A., & Oh, I. S. (2008). Third-year college retention and transfer: Effects of academic performance, motivation, and social connectedness. *Research in Higher Education*, 49(7), 647-664.
- Allen, K., Kern, M. L., Vella-Brodrick, D., Hattie, J., & Waters, L. (2018). What schools need to know about fostering school belonging: A meta-analysis.
- Allen, L.B., Barlow, D. H.& Choate, M. M. (2016). Toward a unified treatment for emotional disorder-published article-behaviour therapy.
- Allen, M. L., Hartado, G.A., Huidobro, D, G, Reynoso, U.& Svetaz, V. (2015). *Does variation Across collaborative site, Impact outcomes in CBPR Youth, Tobacco prevention Trial?* (available online)<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jodohealth.10.2.235>.
- Allen-Meaers, P., Montgomery, K. L., & Kim, J. S. (2013). School-based social work interventions: A cross-national systematic review. *Social work*, 58(3), 253-262.
- Alvarez, J., (2013). Semiotic analysis of textual communication in snow.Sociology.DOI:10.17263.

- Alvarez, M., Bye, L., Bryant, R. & Mumm, M. (2013). School social workers and educational outcomes. DOI:10.1093/cs/cdt019
- American school counsellor association. (2003). American school counsellor model: *A framework for school counselling program*. Alexandria, VA: Author.
- American school counsellor Association. (2004). ASCA. National standards for students. Alexandria, VA: Author. copyright 2004 by American school counselor Association.
- Asikhia, O.A. (2010). Students and teachers' perception of the causes of poor academic performance in Ogun State secondary schools [Nigeria]: Implications for counseling for national development. *European Journal of Social Sciences*, 13(2), 229-242.
- Avant, D. W. (2014). The role of school social worker in implementation of response to intervention. *School social work journal*, ingentaconnect.com.
- Bai, Y., Zhang, L., Liu, C., Shi, Y., Mo, D., & Rozelle, S. (2018). Effect of parental migration on the academic performance of left behind children in North Western China. *The Journal of Development Studies*, 54(7), 1154-1170.
- Ball, S., J., Maquire, J.B. & Braun., A., (2012). How schools do policy: *Policy enactments in secondary schools*. ERIC.no.Ed 527845.ISBA-978-0-4156-7626-7.
- Banerjee, P.A., (2016). A systematic review of factors linked to poor academic performance of disadvantaged students in science and maths in schools. *Cogent Education*, 3(1), 1178441.
- Barlett, H.M. (2010). Working definition of social work practice, National Association of social workers, *Research on social work practice*, 13,.3. 267-270. *The journal in community care*.co.uk/2010/09/20/what-is the –role-of-social workers. google scholar.
- Barrett, C. (2014). *School social work in the state of Victoria, Australia: 65 years of student wellbeing and learning support* (Doctoral dissertation).

- Bartlett, M. (2003). *Working definition of social work practice, journal of Research on social work practice*, 13,3:267-270.
- Beady, S. Khatib, M.& Shabani, K. (2010). *Vygotsy's Zone of Proximal Development: Instructional Implications and teachers 'professional development, English teaching*.3(4), 237-248.
- Bellino, E. L. Diclemente, C.C., & Neavins.T., M. (1999). *Motivation for change and AlcoholismTreatment*.vol23, no2. google scholar.
- Bojuwoye, O., Moletsane, M., Stofile, S., Moolla, N., & Sylvester, F. (2014). Learners' experiences of learning support in selected Western Cape schools. *South African Journal of Education*, 34(1), 1-15.
- Bower, H. A., & Griffin, D. (2011). Can the Epstein model of parental involvement work in a high-minority, high-poverty elementary school? A case study. *Professional School Counseling*, 15(2), 2156759X1101500201.
- Brody, G. H., Stoneman, Z., & Flor, D. (1995). Linking family processes and academic competence among rural African American youths. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 567-579.
- Brody, S. (2010). *What is the role of social worker? The student zone social work career guide is supported by Unison.*
- Bronstein, L.R. & Abrahamson, J., S., (2003). A model for interdisciplinary collaboration, social work, volume 48. number 3.pdf.
- Bryan, J., (2005). Fostering educational Resilience and achievement in Urban school family community partnership. *Journal of professional school counselling*. University of Nebraska at Omaha. College of William and Mary.
- Bryun, S., Meece, J. L. & Agger, A. (2012). The role social capital in educational aspirations of rural youth. *Rural Sociology* .77(3): 355-379.DOI: 10.1111/j.1549-0831.
- Burt, S. A., Barnes, A. R., McGue, M., & Iacono, W. G. (2008). Parental divorce and adolescent delinquency: Ruling out the impact of common genes. *Developmental psychology*, 44(6), 1668-1677.

- Businessstech, (2018). Shocking school stats: this is how many South African students repeat a grade. [Online]. Available from: <https://businessstech.co.za/news/business/246479/shocking-school-stats-this-is-how-many-south-african-students-repeat-a-grade/> [Accessed 2 October 2019].
- Caño, K. J., Cape, M. G., Cardoso, J. M., Miot, C., Pitogo, G. R., & Quinio, C. M. (2016). Parental Involvement On Pupils'performance: Epstein's Framework. *The Online Journal of New Horizons in Education*, 6(4), 143-150.
- Carrell, S. & Hoestra, M.L. (2010). Externalities in the classroom: How children exposed to domestic violence affect everyone's kids. *American economic journal. Applied Economics*.2(1), 211-28.
- Castejón, J. L., Gilar, R., & Pérez, A. M. (2006). Complex learning: The role of knowledge, intelligence, motivation and learning strategies. *Psicothema*, 18(4), 679-685.
- Castejón, J. L., Gilar, R., & Pérez, A. M. (2006). Complex learning: The role of knowledge, intelligence, motivation and learning strategies. *Psicothema*, 18(4), 679-685.
- Centre for school counselling outcome Research, (2004). Mission statement. Retrieved October 10,2005 from <http://www.umass.edu/schoolcounselling/mission.htm>.*
- Chen, J.J.L. (2009). *Relation of parental, teacher and peer support to academic engagement and achievement among Hong Kong students. School Psychology Intern*, 29,183-198.
- Chinyoka, K., & Naidu, N. (2014). Influence of home based factors on the academic performance of girl learners from poverty stricken families: A case of Zimbabwe. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 5(6), 223-232.
- Cicchetti, D. (2014). *Developmental psychology. Risk, Resilence and Intervention*. Wiley publishers.
- Clark, J., & Alvarez, M. (2010). *Responses to intervention: A guide for social workers*; NewYork: Oxford University press.

- Clarke, V. & Braun, V. (2013). Successful qualitative research: A practical guide
 Jurnal Ilmu Keperawatan – Volume 4, No. 2 November 2016 268 for
 beginners. London: Sage. ISBN 9781847875815 Brinner, B. (1999).
 Vygotsky socio-cultural theory-CEEBL,
<http://www.parentcentredparenting.com/.pdf>.
- Clarke, V., & Braun, V. (2013). Teaching thematic analysis: Overcoming
 challenges and developing strategies for effective learning. *The
 psychologist*, 26(2), 1-13.
- Claude. (2012). Germany: Long journeys to school undermine education. [Online].
 Education International. Available from: [https://ei-
 ie.org/en/detail/1985/germany-long-journeys-to-school-undermine-education](https://ei-ie.org/en/detail/1985/germany-long-journeys-to-school-undermine-education)
 [Accessed 5 October 2019].
- Clotfelter, C. T., Ladd, H. F., & Vigdor, J. L. (2007). Teacher credentials and
 student achievement: Longitudinal analysis with student fixed
 effects. *Economics of Education Review*, 26(6), 673-682.
- Cotton, K., & Wiklund, K. R. (1989). Parent involvement in education. *School
 improvement research series*, 6(3), 17-23. Creswell, J.W. (2007). Qualitative
 Research designs: Selection and
 implementation. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0011000006287390>.
- Creswell, J. W. & Plano-Clark, V. L. (2011). Designing and conducting mixed
 methods research (2nd ed). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Creswell, J. W. (2008) *Educational Research: planning, conducting, and evaluating
 quantitative and qualitative research* (3rded). Upper saddle river, NJ:
 Pearson Education, Inc.
- Creswell, J. W. (2009). Research design Qualitative, Quantitative and mixed
 methods approaches. SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Creswell, J. W. (2013). Research design: Qualitative and quantitative approaches
 and mixed methods approach. 4th edition. University of Nebraska-
 Lincoln. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publication.

- Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry & research design choosing among five approaches* (3rd ed). Thousand Oaks, CA. SAGE.
- Creswell, J. W. & Garret, A. L. (2008) The movement of mixed methods research and the role of educators. *South African journal of education*. 128, 321-333.
- Creswell, J. W. Piano-Clark, V. L. (2011). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research* 2nded. Thousand Oaks.CA: SAGE.
- Dahir, C. A. & Stone, C. B. (2003). Accountability: A M.E.A.S.U.R.E. of the impact school counsellors have on achievement. *American school counsellor Association pdf*.
- Dama, N. G., Mathwasa, J., & Mushoriwa, T. (2019). Promoting Career Guidance and Counselling of Secondary School Learners: Implication for Policy and Practice. *Journal of Human Ecology*, 65(1-3), 52-64.
- Davitt, J., Lehning, J. A., Nicklett, E. J. B. & Wiseman, H. (2017). *Social work and aging in place: A scoping review of the literature. social work research*. 41(4), 235-248.
- De Marquis, H. (2011). *Predicting parental home and school involvement in high school African American Adolscents*.The university of North Carolina Press.
- De Vos, A., S., (2010). *Research at grassroots* .3rdedition. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publisher.
- De Wet, C. (2006). Free State educators' experiences and recognition of bullying at schools. *South African journal of education*, 26(1), 61-73.
- De Wet, C., & Wolhuter, C. (2007). From 'borrowing'to 'learning'in international comparative study: a critical reflection. *South African Journal of Education*, 27(2).317-328.
- Denhere, C., Kudzai, C., & Josiah, M. (2013). Vygotsky's zone of proximal development theory: What are its implications for mathematical teaching. *Greener Journal of social sciences*, 3(7), 371-377.

- Dennis, C. A. (2015). Blogging as public pedagogy: Creating alternative educational futures. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 34(3), 284-299.
- Dennis, J. M., Phinney, J. S., & Chuateco, L. I. (2005). The role of motivation, parental support, and peer support in the academic success of ethnic minority first-generation college students. *Journal of college student development*, 46(3), 223-236.
- Department of Education (2002). Education White Paper 6. Specialneeds education, building an inclusive education and training system. *Department of Education: PretoriaDevelopment*, 82(1), 405-432.
- Department of Education, White paper PSETZ. (2011). *White paper on post school education and training*. Department of Education: Pretoria, Government printing.
- Doel, M. (2010). *Supervising a learner in Practice-Bournemouth University*. Social work placements. London: Routledge.pdf
- Doel, M. (2010). The impact of an improvised social work method in a school: aspirations, encouragement, realism and openness. *Practice: Social Work in Action*, 22(2), 69-88.
- Du Plooy-Cilliers, F. Davis, C. & Bezuidenhout, R. (2014). *Research matters*, Paarl media Paarl, South Africa.pdf.
- Dube, M. (2019). Poverty, gender and primary education: experiences of learners in Elandskop, Kwazulu Natal. *Department of social, life style diseases entity, Faculty of health sciences*, North West University (Mafikeng campus), Republic of South Africa.
- Dubow, E. F., Boxer, P. & Huesmann, R. L. (2009). *Long-term Effects of Parents' Education on Children's Educational and Occupational Success: Mediation by Family Interactions, Child Aggression, and Teenage Aspirations*. *Merrill Palmer Q (Wayne State Univ Press)*. 2009 Jul 55(3): 224–249. 10.1353/mpq.0.0030, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2853053> Accessed 20 July 2018.

Dulmus, C. N. & Sower, K. M. (2012). *Social work fields of practice: Historical trends, professional issues, and future opportunities*. John Wiley Sons Inc. ISBN10:1118176928.

Durlak, J. A., Weissberg, R. P., Dymnicki, A. B., Taylor, R. D., & Schellinger, K. B. (2011). The impact of enhancing students' social and emotional learning: A meta-analysis of school-based universal interventions. *Child development*, 82(1), 405-432.

Dzever, L.T. (2015). The Impact of Home Environment Factors on Academic Performance of Senior Secondary School Students In Garki Area District, Abuja –Nigeria. *Bulgarian Journal of Science and Education Policy (BJSEP)*, 9(1), 66 – 97.

Early, T. J., & Vonk, M. E. (2001). Effectiveness of school social work from a risk and resilience perspective. *Children & Schools*, 23(1), 9-31.

Engelbrecht, P. (2011). *Perspective on learning difficulties. International concerns and South African Realities*. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

Epstein, J. L. & Sheldon, S. B. (2002). Present and accounted for: Improving students' attendance through family and community involvement. *The journal of educational research*, Taylor & Francis.

Epstein, J. L., & Salinas, K. C. (2004). Partnering with families and communities. *Educational leadership*, 61(8), 12-19.

Epstein, J. L. (2011). *School, family and community partnerships: Preparing educators and improving schools*. (2ndend). Philadelphia, PA: Westview press.

Etsey, K. (2005). Causes of low academic performance of primary school pupils in the shamasubmetro of shama Ahanta coast metropolitan assembly (SAEMA) in Ghana. *Department of educational foundation. University of Cape Coast*. Cape Coast, Ghana.

Federal Republic of Nigeria national policy on education (Revised edition). Lagos: Federal ministry of education. (2004). Morakinyo, Relative efficiency of

systematic desensitization, self statement monitoring and flooding on subjects' tests anxiety. Unpublished Phd.Thesis. University of Ibadan.

Firgione, K. (2004). "Cause-and Effect Scavenger Hunt", Definition cards, Examples(non examples Scavenger Hunt sheet,<https://www.beacon.learningcentre.com>).

Fiske, S. T. & Oldmeadow, J. (2010). *Social status and the pursuit of positive social identity: systematic domains of intergroup differentiation and discrimination for high and low status groups. group process & intergroup relations* 13(4).

Foster, L. H., Young, J. S., & Hermann, M. (2005). The work activities of professional school counselors: Are the national standards being addressed? *Professional School Counseling*, 8(4), 313-321.

Gage, N. A., Sugai, G., Lewis, T. J., & Brzozowy, S. (2015). Academic achievement and school-wide positive behavior supports. *Journal of Disability Policy Studies*, 25(4), 199-209.

Gasiewski, J. A., Eagan, M. K., Garcia, G. A., Hurtado, S., & Chang, M. J. (2012). From gatekeeping to engagement: A multicontextual, mixed method study of student academic engagement in introductory STEM courses. *Research in higher education*, 53(2), 229-261.

Gettinger, M., & Seibert, J. K. (2002). Contributions of study skills to academic competence. *School Psychology Review*, 31(3), 350-365.

Ghazi. S. R., Shahzada, G., Tariq, M. & Khan, A. O. (2013). Types and causes of students' disruptive behaviour in classroom at a secondary level in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. *American Journal of educational research*.1(9): 350-359.

Ghiora, W. (2010). Characteristics of effective teachers. *Teaching for change*. (3/18/2010).

- Gonzalez, J. & Scheel, M. (2007). An investigation of model academic motivation for school counselling. *Journal of American school counsellor Association*, (available online) www.schoolcounselor.org. Accessed in 20 July 2018.
- Greenberg, M. T., Weissberg, R. P., O'Brien, M. U., Zins, J. E., Fredericks, L., Resnik, H., & Elias, M. J. (2003). Enhancing school-based prevention and youth development through coordinated social, emotional, and academic learning. *American psychologist*, 58(6-7), 466-474.
- Halloway, S. D., Yamamoto, Y., Suzuki, S., & Mindnich, J. D. (2008). Determinants of parental involvement in early schooling: Evidence from Japan. *Early Childhood Research & Practice*, 10(1).1-10.
- Hatta, Z. A. (2009). Towards establishing school social work in Malaysia. *Asian Social Work and Policy Review*, 3(3), 187-197.
- Heale, R., & Twycross, A. (2015). *Validity and reliability in quantitative studies. Evidence-based nursing*, 18(3), 66-67.
- Heck, R. H., & Hallinger, P. (2005). The study of educational leadership and management: Where does the field stand today? *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 33(2), 229-244.
- Heinrich, B. (2017). *Evaluation of the impact of social work services in rural school districts*. Abilene Christian University.
- Higy, C., Haberkorn, J., Pope, N., & Gilmore, T. (2012). The role of school social workers from the perspective of school administrator interns: A pilot study in rural North Carolina. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 2(2), 8-15.
- Hill, N. & Taylor, R. (2014). *Parental involvement and children's academic achievement*. Current directions.
- Holloway, I., & Todres, L. (2003). The status of method: flexibility, consistency and coherence. *Qualitative research*, 3(3), 345-357.
- Holloway, I.M. & Todres, L. (2003). *The status of method: flexibility, consistency and coherence. Qualitative research*.3(3), 345-357.

- Hoover-Dempsey, K. V., Battiato, A. C., Walker, J. M., Reed, R. P., DeJong, J. M., & Jones, K. P. (2001). Parental involvement in homework. *Educational psychologist, 36*(3), 195-209.
- Hoover-Dempsey, K. V., Battiato, A. C., Walker, J. M., Reed, R. P., DeJong, J. M., & Jones, K. P. (2001). Parental involvement in homework. *Educational psychologist, 36*(3), 195-209.
- Hoyt, K. B. (1962). Guidance: a constellation of services. *The Personnel and Guidance Journal, 40*(8), 690-697.
- Huxtable, M. (2013). A global picture of school social work in 2013. *Port Townsend, Washington: INSSW. [Google Scholar][PDF]*.
- Huxtable, M., Sottie, C. & Ulzitungalag, K. (2012). Social work and education. *Journal of social work. WingHong Chui(ed.), School social work current practice and research.pdf*
- Job, A. & Pantah, A. M. (2018). Assessing the influence of University for Development Studies *school environment on student learning. 6*(1), 1-15.
- Kaplan, A., Gheen, M., & Midgley, C. (2002). Classroom goal structure and student disruptive behaviour. *British journal of educational psychology, 72*(2), 191-211.
- Karande, S., & Kulkarni, M. (2005). Poor school performance. *The Indian Journal of Pediatrics, 72*(11), 961-967.
- Kelly, J., Thomson, G.D.; Fre, A.; Kemp, G.H.J. & Alvarez, L.V. (2013) Consultation Theory education practice: A handbook for school social worker, Oxford workshop series.
- Kemp, D. D. (2004). *Exploring environmental issues: An integrated approach*. London, Routledge.
- Kemp, M. (2013). *The role of the school social worker with regard to management of violence inschools, consultant. school social worke & social issues in education.*<https://com.org.za.2013.pdf>.

- Khan, R. M. A., Iqbal, N., & Tasneem, S. (2015). The Influence of Parents Educational Level on Secondary School Students Academic Achievements in District Rajanpur. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 6(16), 76-79.
- Kim, S. H., Lee, J. L., & Thomas, M. K. (2012). Between purpose and method: A review of educational research on 3D virtual worlds. *Journal for Virtual Worlds Research*, 5(1), 1-18.
- Kumar, R. C. (2014). *Methodology-A step-by-step*. (3rdedition: London.SAGE.
- Lacour, M., & Tissington, L. D. (2011). The effects of poverty on academic achievement. *Educational Research and Reviews*, 6(7), 522-527.
- Lambie, G. W., & Williamson, L. L. (2004). The challenge to change from guidance counseling to professional school counseling: A historical proposition. *Professional School Counseling*, 124-131.
- Lassen, S.; R., Steele, M. M. & Sailor, W. (2006). The relationship of school-wide positive behaviour support to academic achievement in an urban middle school. Wiley online library.<https://doi.org/10.1002/pits.201777>.
- Lee, K. (2012). Augmented reality in education and training .TECHTRENDS TECH TRENDS.56,13-21(2012) <https://doi.org/10.1007/511528-012-0559-3>.
- Leedey, P.D. & Ormod, J.C. (2014). *Practical research planning and design*. (10thend). Edinburg: Pearson Educational.Inc.
- Leedy, P.D. & Ormod, J. E. (2007). *Practical Research: Planning and design* (7thed). Upper saddle river, Merrill practice Hall.
- Leedy, P.D. & Ormod, J.E. (2012). *Practical research: Planning and design.ed*. upper saddle river: Merrill prentice hall.
- Leek, L. (2011). School-based support groups for traumatised students. *School psychology international*.32(2) 163-178.
- Lee-Man, Y. C., & Luk-Fong, P. Y. (2013). *School guidance and counselling: Trends and practices*. Hong Kong University Press, HKU.Persson, H.C.

- Legum, H. L., & Hoare, C. H. (2004). Impact of a career intervention on at-risk middle school students' career maturity levels, academic achievement, and self-esteem. *Professional School Counseling*, 8(2), 148-155.
- Levine, K. A., & Zhu, K. (2010). The changing context of China: Emerging issues for school social work practice. *International Social Work*, 53(3), 339-352.
- Lindsey, B. C. & Avant, D. W. (2015). School social worker as response to intervention change champion. *Advances in social work*, 16(2), 276-291.
- Lipscomb, M. (2019). *Critical realism and realist pragmatism in mixed methods: Problematics of event identity and abductive inference* (evolving paradigms in mixed methods research)-Paper kindly presented on Dr Lipscomb's behalf.
- Lloyd, C. (2013). The stigmatization of problem drug users: A narrative literature review. *Drugs: education, prevention and policy*, 20(2), 85-95.
- Lochan, D. (2012). *Students' perceptions of indiscipline at three primary schools in one educational district in Central Trinidad* (Doctoral dissertation).
- Loya, M. (2016). *The Effects of Being Tired in School*. [Online]. Available at: <http://www.hhsrampages.com/student-life/2016/05/23/the-effects-of-being-tired-in-school/>[Accessed 03 September 2019].
- Lunenburg, F.C. (2010). *School Guidance and counselling Services*, Sam Houston State University. Google scholar.
- Maddi, S. R., Matthews, M. D., Kelly, D. R., Villarreal, B., & White, M. (2012). The role of hardiness and grit in predicting performance and retention of USMA cadets. *Military psychology*, 24(1), 19-28.
- Maluleke, S. G. (2014). *Parental involvement in their children's education in the Vhembe District, Limpopo* (Doctoral dissertation). Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, (2007). *Manitoba sourcebook for school guidance and Counselling services a comprehensive and developmental approach* (online)Available

from:http://www.educ.gov.mb.ca/k12/doc/support/mb_sourcebook/full_document.pdf
d(fAccessed:05August 2018

- Mann, A. (2015). *School social work in India*: International journal of innovative Phd Scholar of social work, IndiaGagndiNationalOpenUniversity, New Delhi, India.
- Marais, P., & Meier, C. (2010). Disruptive behaviour in the Foundation Phase of schooling. *South African Journal of Education*, 30(1).41-57.
- Margolis, H., & McCabe, P. P. (2006). Improving self-efficacy and motivation: What to do, what to say. *Intervention in school and clinic*, 41(4), 218-227.
- McMillan, J. H., & Schumacher, S. (2010). *Research in Education: Evidence-Based Inquiry*, MyEducationLab Series. Pearson.
- Mendels, P. (2012). The effective principal. *Journal of staff development*, 33(1), 54-58.
- Miller, G. D. (1989). Elementary school guidance & counselling, 24, 1, *special issue on preventive and developmental counselling*, 77-88. googlescholar.
- Mushtaq, I., & Khan, S. N. (2012). Factors Affecting Students's Academic Performance. *Global journal of management and business research*, 12(9).17-22.
- Mutshaeni, H.N. (2008). *An analysis of factors influencing Grade 12 results* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Pretoria). [Online]. Available from:<https://repository.up.ac.za/handle/2263/28173>[Accessed 8 November 2019].
- Mwamwenda, T. S. (2014). Early childhood education in Africa. *Mediterranean Journal of social sciences*, 5(20), 1403-1403.
- Mwamwenda, T. S. (2004). *Educational psychology.an african perspective 3rd ed*,Durban:Butterworth.
- Needham, B. L., Crosnoe, R., & Muller, C. (2004). Academic failure in secondary school: The inter-related role of health problems and educational context. *Social problems*, 51(4), 569-586.

- Needham, B. L., Crosnoe, R., & Muller, C. (2004). Academic failure in secondary school: The inter-related role of health problems and educational context. *Social problems*, 51(4), 569-586.
- Nelson Mandela Children's Fund. (2001). *A study into the Situation and Special Needs of Children in Child-Headed Households*. Nelson Mandela Children's Fund.
- Nelson, I. A. (2016). Rural students' social capital in the college search and application process. *Rural sociology*, 81(2), 249-281.
- Neuman, W.L. (2014). *Social Research methods: Qualitative and Quantitative approaches*. (7thend). Pearson Edition.
- Neumann, E. (2006). Descriptive research in education: *International journal of educational research*.2006.
- Neumann, W.I. (2006). *Social research methods: Quantitative and qualitative approaches*. CapeTown. Pearson Education.
- Neumann, W.L. (2016). *Understanding Research* (1sted). ISBN-13:978-0205471539.Amazon.
- Nhedz, F., & Makofane, M. (2015). The experiences of social workers in the provision of family preservation services. *Social Work*, 51(3), 354-378.
- Nordlof, J. (2014). Vygotsky, scaffolding, and the role of theory in writing center work. *The Writing Center Journal*, 34(1), 45-64.
- Nyberg, A. (2010). Retaining your high performers: Moderators of the performance–job satisfaction–voluntary turnover relationship. *Journal of applied psychology*, 95(3), 440-453.
- Ode. R. C., Oguche, O. A. & Ivagher, E. D. (2015). Research Article Influence of School Environment on Academic Achievement of Students in Secondary Schools in Zone: A Senatorial District of Benue State, Nigeria. *International Journal of Recent Scientific Research*, 6(7): 4914-4922. Available Online at <http://www.recentscientific.com>. Accessed 30 August 2018

- Ojera, D.A., (2016). Impact of teacher qualification on pupils' academic achievement in Kenya certificate of primary education in public primary schools of Migori county, *Kenya. world*, 3(7), 1-20.
- Osborne, J., Simon, S., & Collins, S. (2003). Attitudes towards science: A review of the literature and its implications. *International journal of science education*, 25(9), 1049-1079.
- Phillippo, K. L., & Blosser, A. (2013). Specialty practice or interstitial practice? A reconsideration of school social work's past and present. *Children & Schools*, 35(1), 19- 31. Retrieved from <http://ezproxy.stthomas.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.stthomas.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=swh&AN=84395&site=ehost-live>
- Piaget, J. (1970). *Science of education and the psychology of the child*. University of Virginia, Penguin Books. Trans. D. Colman.
- Plant, E. A., Ericsson, K. A., Hill, L., & Asberg, K. (2005). Why study time does not predict grade point average across college students: Implications of deliberate practice for academic performance. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 30(1), 96-116.
- Plessis, P. D. (2015). Learner discipline in crisis: Can South African Schools overcome the problem? *International Journal of Educational Sciences*, 9(3), 383-394.
- Poppy, A. A. (2012). *The role of social worker from an administrator's perspective*. Minnesota: St Catherine University & University of St. Thomas St Thomas St Paul. (Clinical research paper –MA).
- Portwig, C. (2018). *The impact of learner transport on Grade 3 learners' physiological, emotional and educational well-being: a case study of a rural primary school in the Cape Winelands*, South Africa (Doctoral dissertation, University of Cape Town). [Online]. Available from: https://open.uct.ac.za/bitstream/handle/11427/27905/thesis_hum_2018_portwig_carla.pdf?sequence=1 [Accessed 2 November 2019].
- Post, R.N. (2017). Effects of Absenteeism on Students Performance. *International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications*, Volume 7, 9:151-168.

- Qhingana, N. (2006). *Needs of career guidance*. Umtata, University of Transkei.
- Raines, J. (2017). *School social work association of America position paper supervision of school social workers*.www.sswa.org/pdf.
- Rajesh, K. M. & Vijaya, R. (2016). *Parental involvement and academic achievement among high school students*,<https://www.researchgate.net.317548158>.
- Raychaudhuri, A., Debnath, M., Sen, S., & Majumder, B. G. (2010). Factors affecting students' academic performance: A case study in Agartala municipal council area. *Bangladesh. e-Journal of Sociology*, 7(2), 34-41.
- Republic of South Africa (1996). *Constitution of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996)*. *Government Gazette*, 378 (17678). Cape Town: Government Printers. ISBN 978-0-621-39063-6.
- Resch, J. A., Mireles, G., Benz, M. R., Grenwelge, C., Peterson, R., & Zhang, D. (2010). Giving parents a voice: A qualitative study of the challenges experienced by parents of children with disabilities. *Rehabilitation psychology*, 55(2), 39.
- Ridley, G. (2010). *Introduction: presenting animals*. Wiley online library.<https://DOI.org./10.1111.j.1754-0208>.
- Rosen, L. (1997). *School discipline, best practices for administrators*. Thousand Oaks: Corwin Press.
- Rossouw, J. P. & Oosthuizen, I.J. (2003). *Fundamentals of educational law*. Azrel publishers, 2003.
- Rossouw, J. P. (2003). Learner discipline in South African public schools-a qualitative study. *Koers: Bulletin for Christian Scholarship= Koers: Bulletin vir Christelike Wetenskap*, 68(4), 413-435.
- Saiduddin, J. (2003). *Factors affecting achievement at a junior high school on the Pine Ridge Reservation, South Dakota* (Doctoral dissertation, The Ohio State University).
- Sale, D. (2015). *Creative teaching: An evidence-based approach*. Springer.

- Saleeby, D. (2013). *The strengths perspective in social work practice*, Upper seattle river. NJ: Pearson education.inc.
- Schoeneberger, J.A. (2012). *Longitudinal attendance patterns: Developing high school dropouts*.Research.net.DOI:10.1080/00098655.2011-603766.
- Sciarra, D. T., & Seirup, H. J. (2008). The multidimensionality of school engagement and math achievement among racial groups. *Professional School Counseling*, 11(4), 2156759X0801100402.
- Shabani, K., Khatib, M., & Ebadi, S. (2010). Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development: Instructional Implications and Teachers' Professional Development. *English language teaching*, 3(4), 237-248.
- Sheldon, S. B., & Epstein, J. L. (2004). Getting students to school: Using family and community involvement to reduce chronic absenteeism. *School Community Journal*, 14(2), 39-56.
- Sheridan, S. M., Witte, A. L., Holmes, S. R., Coutts, M. J., Dent, A. L., Kunz, G. M., & Wu, C. (2017). A randomized trial examining the effects of Conjoint Behavioral Consultation in rural schools: Student outcomes and the mediating role of the teacher–parent relationship. *Journal of School Psychology*, 61, 33-53.
- Shetty, S. S., & Srinivasan, S. R. (2014). Effectiveness of study skills on academic performance of dental students. *Journal of Education and Ethics in Dentistry*, 4(1), 28.
- Singh, P., & Mbokodi, S. M. (2011). Parental partnerships in the governance of schools in the black townships of Port Elizabeth. *Perspectives in Education*, 29(4), 38-48.
- Skosana, I. (2018). *Women teach and men lead? Gender inequality in South African schools examined*. [Online]. Available at: <https://africacheck.org/reports/women-teach-and-men-lead-gender-inequality-in-south-african-schools-examined/>[Accessed 10 October 2019].
- Smokowski, P. R., Cotter, K. L., Robertson, C. I., & Guo, S. (2013). Anxiety and aggression in rural youth: Baseline results from the Rural Adaptation Project. *Child Psychiatry & Human Development*, 44(4), 479-492.

- Smokwskiet, K., Cotlier, K.L. & Evans, C.B.R. (2016). *An overview of findings from rural adaptation project. The routledge international handbook of rural criminology*, 201.
- Spaull, N. (2013). Poverty and Privilegeprimary school inequality in South Africa. *International Journal of Education Development*.33.436-447.
- Stewart. D. (2004). Learner Discipline an Australian Perspective. *Kores*, 69 (2): 3 17-335.
- Topor, D. R., Keane, S. P., Shelton, T. L., & Calkins, S. D. (2010). Parent involvement and student academic performance: A multiple mediational analysis. *Journal of prevention & intervention in the community*, 38(3), 183-197.
- Teasley, M. (2004). School Social Workers and Urban Education Reform with African American Children and Youth: Realities, Advocacy, and Strategies for Change. *School Community Journal*, 14(2), 19-38.
- Tekin, A. K. (2014). Omani young children's language proficiencies: The outcomes of a bilingual education program. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 5(23), 784.
- Tella, A. (2007). The impact of motivation on student's academic achievement and learning outcomes in mathematics among secondary school students in Nigeria. *Eurasia Journal of Mathematics, Science & Technology Education*, 3(2), 149-156.
- Thalapi, P.M. (2011). *Management of discipline in a post corporal punishment*.<https://uir.unisa.ac.za>.
- Tigre, R., Sampaio, B., & Menezes, T. (2017). The impact of commuting time on youth's school performance. *Journal of Regional Science*, 57(1), 28-47.
- Tiwani, S. V. (2010). *Managing learner behaviour: a collective case study of three effective secondary schools* (Doctoral dissertation).

- Tlhapi, P. M. (2011). *Educator participation in the implementation of a total quality management strategy: a case study* (Doctoral dissertation). Pretoria, University of South Africa.
- Tombom, K., Sunnerhagen, K.S. & Tombom, M. (2017). *The six steps for Thematic analysis according to Braun and Clarke*.
- Van Sittert, H. W. (2016). *School social workers' perceptions of their role within the framework of inclusive education* (Doctoral dissertation, North-West University (South Africa), Potchefstroom Campus).
- Van Sittert, H., & Wilson, L. (2018). School social workers' perceptions of their role within the framework of inclusive education. *Southern African Journal of Social Work and Social Development*, 30(2), 1-21.
- Verenikina, I. (2008). *Scaffolding and learning: Its role in nurturing new learners*. University of Wollongong, Irina@uow.edu. av. Faculty of education-papers.pdf.
- Wallace, S. & Atkins, L. (2012). *Qualitative research in education*. Pretoria, SAGE publications.
- Weeks, F. H. (2013). *Teaching practice: Behavioural problems. Department of Further Teacher Education*. Pretoria: University of South Africa.
- White, J.J. (1987). The teacher as a broker of scholarly knowledge. *Journal of teacher education* .38(4),19-24.1987.
- Wiersma, W. (2000). *Research methods in education: An introduction 7thed*. Boston: Alyn & Bacon.
- Wiley, (2011). Child development.vol82.no.1. JSTOR.Society for research in child development. *Raising healthy children*. 82(1), 1-447.

QUESTIONNAIRE

APPENDIX A: LEARNERS' QUESTIONNAIRE

Questionnaire on Effect of social worker services in rural secondary schools in Vhembe District.

Please answer this question to the best of your knowledge and use your first impression. There are no correct responses. Place a tick (✓) or cross (X) in the appropriate box corresponding to your response.

Section 1: Learner demographic information

- 1.1. Gender: Female Male
- 1.2. Your age.....years
- 1.3. Home language: Tshivenda Tsonga Sepedi Other
- 1.4. I stay with both parents mother only father only grandparentrelatives
- 1.5. Once repeated a grade in FET Yes No
- 1.6. If Yes, which Grade?
- 1.7. How many times did you repeat? Once Twice Thrice
- 1.8. Reason for repeating a grade:
Poor academic performance illness request from parents
complying to requirements other reasons

Section 2: Factors contributing to poor academic performance of learners in rural schools of Vhembe District.

- 2.1. What is the distance from home to school?Less than 3km 4 to 6 km
more than 6km
- 2.2. How do you get to school? Walk Hired transport Public transport
- 2.3. How many hours do you spend to get to school? Less than an hour
between 1 and two hours more than 3 hours
- 2.4. How do you feel when you get to school? Refreshedtired
- 2.5. How frequently do you do your school work at home? Rarelyoccasional
Frequently
- 2.6. How frequently do you do your work at home?
Rarelyoccasional frequently
- 2.7. How do you rate yourself with regard to school work?Lazy person
moderate work hard worker

APPENDIX B: EDUCATORS' QUESTIONNAIRE

2.8. What is your opinion on each of these as major factors for learners' poor academic performance at your school? (SA = strongly agree, A = Agree, D = disagree and SD = strongly disagree).

	Factor	SA	A	D	SD
a.	Parental involvement				
b.	Lack of study skills among learners				
c.	Learner absenteeism				
d.	School environment				
e.	Poor educational support systems at home				
f.	Lack of study time at school				
g.	Learner's' negligence of school work				
h.	Learners' disruptive behaviour at school				
i.	See no reason for attending school				
j.	Low level of education among parents				

Section 3: How Social worker solve poor academic performance problems besides the traditional solutions

3.1. Does your school social worker implement each of these measures in order to increase learners' performance at you school?

	Measure implemented	Yes	No
a.	Motivation		
b.	Campaigns		
c.	Role playing		
d.	Holding consultation day with parents of failing learners		
e.	Providing slow failing learners with extra guidance and counselling during the afternoon		
f.	Holding prize giving days to encourage learners		
g.	Holding career guidance days in school		
h.	Inviting motivational speakers for learners.		

3.2. How effective do you think each method implemented by your school social worker is in addressing poor learner achievement? E = effective, NE = not effective

	Measure implemented	E	NE
a.	Motivation		
b.	Campaigns		
c.	Role playing		
d.	Holding consultation day with parents of failing learners		
e.	Providing slow failing learners with extra guidance and counselling during the afternoon		
f.	Holding prize giving days to encourage learners		
g.	Holding career guidance days in schools		
h.	Inviting motivational speakers for learners.		

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKER

The interviews for the research were formulated as follows:

1. What is your opinion on poor academic performance of learner?
2. Were you trained on strategies to improve academic performance of learners?
3. If yes, for how long? If no, how did these strategies come to your attention?
4. Do parents in your school show interest in their children's education? Motivate your answer.
5. Which learner disciplinary problems does your school experience?
6. In your opinion, what causes these poor performance problems?
7. How do you ensure that poor performance is reduced in your school?
8. How do learners with misbehaviour perform at your school?
9. Which methods do you employ to correct poor performance in your school?

10. Which methods do you find effective in improving learner performance, and why do you consider them effective?

11. How do you promote positive behaviour in your school?

12. How do you ensure that disciplinary problems are reduced in your school?

FORM A

AS PUBLISHED IN THE REGULATIONS FOR RESEARCH WITH HUMAN PARTICIPANTS

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH


<p style="text-align: center;">APPLICATION FOR MINISTERIAL CONSENT FOR NON-THERAPEUTIC RESEARCH WITH MINORS</p>
--

1 INSTRUCTIONS

- 1.1 This application form must be completed for all protocols that are classified as “non-therapeutic” and involve the participation of minors. *Non therapeutic research is defined in the regulations relating to research on human participants as “research that does not hold out the prospect of direct benefit but holds out the prospect of generalizable knowledge”. Minors are defined as persons under the age of 18 by section 17 of the Children’s Act (No. 38 of 2005).*
- 1.2 This application form should be submitted with a copy of the protocol and supporting documents.
- 1.3 This application should be submitted to the Minister of Health or the delegated authority in terms of section 92(a) of the Act.
- 1.4 This application form should describe how ‘non-therapeutic’ research protocols with minors meet the conditions set out in section 71 (3)(b) of the Act (described below).
- 1.5 All sections of the form must be completed in full.
- 1.6 Ministerial Consent may be granted for non-therapeutic health research with minors when certain conditions set out in section 71 (3)(b) of the Act are met and these conditions are:
- (a) The research objectives cannot be achieved except by the enrolment of minors;
 - (b) The research is likely to lead to an improved scientific understanding of conditions, or disorders affecting children;
 - (c) Any consent given to the research must be in line with public policy; and
 - (d) The research does not pose a significant risk to minors, and if there is some risk, the benefit of the research outweighs the risk.

PLEASE COMPLETE AND PRINT THESE LAST TWO PAGES AND SUBMIT WITH YOUR PROTOCOL

2. INVESTIGATORS' DETAILS

Name of principal investigator	SEANI SYLVIA MALANGE
Title of research protocol	EFFECT OF SOCIAL WORKER SERVICES IN RURAL SECONDARY SCHOOLS ON LEARNER ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE
Institutional affiliation	University of Zululand
Postal Address	P.O.BOX 705 THOHOYANDOU 0950
Physical Address	151 HA DUMASI VILLAGE VHEMBE DISTRICT THOHOYANDOU LIMPOPO PROVINCE 0950
Email Address	Malangeseani@gmail.com
Phone	082 414 3311
Fax	N/A
Date of Application	25 July 2018
Signature of Applicant	

Or

3. APPLICATION

3.1 CONDITION 1: THE RESEARCH OBJECTIVES CANNOT BE ACHIEVED EXCEPT BY THE PARTICIPATION OF MINORS

Describe the scientific justification for the enrolment of minors. Explain why this research must be done with minors as participants:

- **The study needs to ascertain, not ascertain whether or not social work services provided in rural secondary schools in Vhembe district are effective to the learner academic performance.**

3.2 CONDITION 2: THE RESEARCH IS LIKELY LEAD TO AN IMPROVED SCIENTIFIC UNDERSTANDING OF CERTAIN CONDITIONS, DISEASES OR DISORDERS AFFECTING MINORS

Describe how the research might, or aims to, advance knowledge affecting the health and welfare of minors as a class. Note that 'condition' is defined in the Regulations as 'physical and psychosocial characteristics understood to affect health' allowing that this research does not only involve children with an illness.

- **The study aims to investigate the effect of social work services in rural secondary schools on learner academic performance.**

3.3 CONDITION 3: ANY CONSENT GIVEN TO THE RESEARCH IS IN LINE WITH PUBLIC POLICY

Consent given by authorised persons must be in line with public policy considerations. Describe how consent to the research will be in line with public policy or would be acceptable, for example, show how the research poses acceptable risks and promotes the rights of minors:

- **The approval to conduct the research was obtained from Vhembe district department of education, ensuring that during data collection learning and teaching will not be disturbed however the objective of the study will be explained verbally and participants will be assured that the information obtained during interviews will be kept confidential.**

3.4 Condition 4: The research does not pose a significant risk to minors; and if there is some risk, the benefit of the research outweighs the risk.

Describe how the potential risks from the research procedures and/or intervention to minor participants will be minimized and describe any possible benefits from the research to society in the form of knowledge:

- Participants will not risk losing life or limb, nor should be subjected to unusual stress, embarrassment, or loss of self-esteem. In case where the nature of the study involves creating a small amount of psychological discomfort to minor participants should know this ahead of time, any necessary debriefing or counselling should follow immediately after participation.

PARTICIPANT INFORMED CONSENT DECLARATION

INFORMED CONSENT DECLARATION

(Participant) (teachers)

Project Title:Effect of social worker services in rural secondary school on learner academic performance in Vhembe district

The researcher is registered for the Master of Education (M.Ed.) degree at the University of Zululand, Department of Curriculum and Instructional Studies.

The nature and the purpose of the research project and of this informed consent declaration have been explained to me in a language that I understand.

I am aware that:

1. The purpose of the research project is to investigate the effect of social worker services in rural secondary schools on learner academic performance.
2. The University of Zululand has given ethical clearance to this research project and I have seen/ may request to see the clearance certificate.
3. By participating in this research project I will be contributing towards the improvement of the improvement of social worker services in secondary schools of Vhembe district.
4. I will participate in the project by completing a questionnaire providing my perspectives about the effect of social worker services in rural schools on learner performance in Vhembe district.
5. My participation is entirely voluntary and should I at any stage wish to withdraw from participating further, I may do so without any negative consequences.
6. I will not be compensated for participating in the research, but my out-of-pocket expenses will be reimbursed.
7. There may be risks associated with my participation in the project. I am aware that
 - a. the following risks are associated with my participation: information disclosure and identification of the participants
 - b. the following steps have been taken to prevent the risks: consideration of ethical issues.
 - c. there is no chance of the risk materialising.

8. The researcher intends publishing the research results in the form of journal article and forwarding them to the Department of Basic Education. However, confidentiality and anonymity of records will be maintained and that my name and identity will not be revealed to anyone who has not been involved in the conduct of the research.

9. I will receive feedback in the form of empirical findings and access to the copy of this report regarding the results obtained during the study.

10. Any further questions that I might have concerning the research or my participation will be answered by Ms Seani Malange on the following mobile number and email: 0824143311 or email: malangeseani@gmail.com

11. By signing this informed consent declaration I am not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies.

12. A copy of this informed consent declaration will be given to me, and the original will be kept on record.

I,have read the above information / confirm that the above information has been explained to me in a language that I understand and I am aware of this document's contents. I have asked all questions that I wished to ask and these have been answered to my satisfaction. I fully understand what is expected of me during the research.

I have not been pressurised in any way and I voluntarily agree to participate in the above-mentioned project.

.....
Participant's signature

.....
Date



LIMPOPO

PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION
VHEMBE DISTRICT

REF: 14/7/R

ENQ: MATIBE M.S

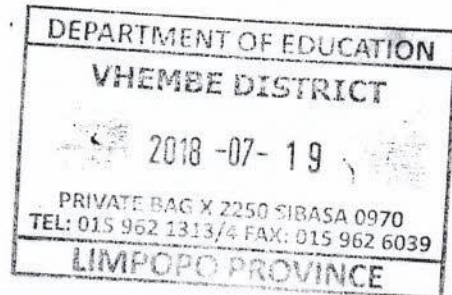
TEL: 082 200 8117

MS MALANGE S.S

P.O.BOX 705

Thohoyandou

0950



REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN MVUDI AND LUVUVHU CIRCUIT SCHOOLS.

1. This serves to inform you that your request to conduct research in schools in the above-mentioned circuit has been granted.
2. You are expected to ensure that your interactions with teachers and learners will not disrupt teaching and learning activities.
3. Kindly inform the circuit manager and principals of selected schools prior to visiting your research subjects.
4. Wishing you the best in study.

DISTRICT DIRECTOR

19/07/2018

DATE

Thohoyandou Government Building, Old Parliament, Block D, Private Bag X2250, SIBASA, 0970
Tel: (015) 962 1313 or (015) 962 1331, Fax: (015) 962 6039 or (015) 962 2288

The heartland of southern Africa - development is about people



ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

Certificate Number	UZREC 171110-030 PGM 2018/531			
Project Title	EFFECT OF SOCIAL WORKER SERVICES IN RURAL SECONDARY SCHOOL ON LEARNER ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN VHEMBE DISTRICT			
Principal Researcher/ Investigator	S.S Malange			
Supervisor and Co-supervisor	Dr. H.R Mhlongo	Prof A.P Kutame		
Department	Curriculum and Instructional			
Faculty	Education			
Type of Risk	Med Risk – Data collection from people			
Nature of Project	Honours/4 th Year	Master's	x	Doctoral
				Departmental

The University of Zululand’s Research Ethics Committee (UZREC) hereby gives ethical approval in respect of the undertakings contained in the above-mentioned project. The Researcher may therefore commence with data collection as from the date of this Certificate, using the certificate number indicated above.

- Special conditions:**
- (1) This certificate is valid for 1 year from the date of issue.
 - (2) Principal researcher must provide an annual report to the UZREC in the prescribed format [due date-16 October 2020]
 - (3) Principal researcher must submit a report at the end of project in respect of ethical compliance.
 - (4) The UZREC must be informed immediately of any material change in the conditions or undertakings mentioned in the documents that were presented to the meeting.

The UZREC wishes the researcher well in conducting research.


Professor Gideon De Wet
 Chairperson: University Research Ethics Committee
 Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research & Innovation
 17 October 2019



P. O. Box 7376
EMPANGENI RAIL
3910

09 December 2019

Cell: 072 347 0662

E-mail: Mncwan_oEM@mail.com

INVOICE

Editing of a Master's dissertation, titled 'EFFECTS OF SOCIAL WORKER SERVICES IN RURAL SECONDARY SCHOOLS ON LEARNER ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN VHEMBE DISTRICT', by Seani Sylvia Malange.

AMOUNT = R2 970, 00


Dr. E. M. Mncwango (D. Phil)

P. O. Box 7376
EMPANGENI RAIL
3910
09 December 2019
Cell: 072 347 0662

E-mail: MncwangoEM@gmail.com

To whom it may concern

Confirmation of Editing

This serves to confirm that a Master's dissertation, titled 'EFFECTS OF SOCIAL WORKER SERVICES IN RURAL SECONDARY SCHOOLS ON LEARNER ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN VHEMBE DISTRICT', by Seani Sylvia Malange, was proof-read and edited by me.

Sincerely



Dr E. M. Mncwango (D. Phil)