

**FACTORS WHICH CONTRIBUTE TO ORPHANED
LEARNERS' ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENTS**

by

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FACTORS WHICH CONTRIBUTE TO ORPHANED LEARNERS
ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

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DEDICATION

I wish to dedicate this study to my late grandfather, Mr. Charles Magasela for being able to assist the orphans who were under his care by providing them with education. My late father Mr. E.B.Zulu for his commitment to education.

DECLARATION

This is to declare that this dissertation represents my own work both in conception and execution.



LINDOKUHLE OCTAVIA MAKHONZA

ABSTRACT

The research investigated the factors which contributed to orphaned learners resilience. Resilience was measured as good academic achievement of orphaned learners. This study further investigated the relationship between an area type and custodian type respectively and the resilience of orphaned learners. Data was collected by means of a questionnaire. The sample consisted of 183-orphaned learners, in the intermediate phase of Primary school. 12 schools in Vryheid District participated in the study.

The findings of the study suggested among the three factors: familial, societal and school factors, family factors were the most significant factors in relation to resilience. No significant relationship was found between the custodian type and academic achievement of orphaned learners. The significant relationship found in this study indicated that the type of an area appeared to influence the resilience of orphaned learners. The study further revealed that a large number of orphaned learners stayed and were cared for by their grandparents.

TABLE OF CONTENT

CHAPTERS	PAGE
Cover pages	(i-ii)
Acknowledgements	(iii)
Dedication	(iv)
Declaration	(v)
Abstract	(vi)
Table of content	(vii-viii)
 Chapter One	
1.1	Introduction 1
1.2	Motivation of the study 2
1.3	Statement of the problem 5
1.4	Aims of the study 7
1.5	Hypotheses 7
1.6	<i>Definition of terms</i> 7
1.7	Research methodology 8
1.8	Summary 12
 Chapter two	
	<i>Literature review</i>
2.1	Introduction 13
2.2	Resilience and academic achievement 14
2.3	Factors that contribute to resilience of orphaned learners 17

2.4	Orphan learners custodian and academic achievement	22
2.5	Type of an area and orphan learners academic Achievement	25
2.6	Summary	26
Chapter three	Research design and methodology	27
3.1	Introduction	27
3.2	Aims of the study	27
3.3	Formulation of hypotheses	28
3.4	Method of data collection	28
3.5	Sample design and sample procedure	30
3.6	Research procedure	33
3.7	Summary	34
Chapter four	Data presentation and interpretation	35
4.1	Introduction	35
4.2	<i>Data analysis</i>	35
4.3	Discussion	42
4.4	Summary	45
Chapter five	Conclusion	46
5.1	Introduction	46
5.2	<i>Discussion of findings</i>	46
5.3	Recommendations	48
5.4	Limitations of the study	49
5.5	Conclusion	49
6.	References	50

CHAPTER ONE

Overview of the study

1.1 Introduction

The Department of Education (DoE) in Kwa-Zulu Natal province has made provision for the assistance of learners who experience problems academically, socially and emotionally through the support provided by Psychological, Guidance and Special Education Services (PGSES) based in District offices. During school visits the researcher discovered that the number of orphaned learners has increased. Through the National Integrated Plan (NIP) for children affected and infected by HIV/AIDS (of which the Department of Health and Social Welfare services are major role players), orphaned learners are supported. The Department of Social Welfare attends to screening of orphaned learners with a view to providing food parcels and grants to orphans.

The estimated number of children, living and dead who, since the epidemic began, lost their mother or both parents to AIDS while they were the age of 15, are 200 000 (Louw, Edwards & Orr, 2001 p. 3). By the end of 2003 there were approximate 37.8 million people in the world living with HIV/AIDS. Of these, about 35.78 million were adults and 2.1 million were children (UNAIDS, 2004). In KwaZulu-Natal HIV prevalence among those who attend clinics is almost 37%, about three times higher than in the Western Cape, the Province with the lowest prevalence (Van Dyk, 2005). By the end of 2003 an estimated 2.2 million children (12% of all children) under the age of 18 years in South Africa would have lost one or both parents to AIDS (Bradshaw, Jonhson, Schneider, Bourne & Dorrington, 2002). There was a need in this study to identify factors, which could assist orphaned learners to survive.

The present chapter focused on highlighting the statement of the problem, the motivation of the study and the summary of the whole study.

1.2 Motivation for the study

Denis, Philippe and Makiwane (2003) stated that there was evidence that children who lost their parents undergo a traumatic experience. In their study they indicated the role played by memory boxes in building resilience of orphans who lost their parents through the HIV/AIDS pandemic in South Africa. The memory box may include photographs, a family tree, stories and other familiar things that enable the child to remember the parent. Memory boxes are trusted to be effective in building the resilience of such orphans. In this way, orphans do not feel a complete emptiness arising from the loss of parents. Denis, Philippe and Makiwane (2003) indicated that there was a need, especially in South Africa, to identify factors, which can assist in developing resilience in our children, especially, orphans, since death is more prevalent due to HIV/AIDS. The present study aimed at identifying more factors other than memory boxes, which could assist in building the resilience of orphan learners.

Palmay and Moat (2002) revealed that in South Africa in 1999, 42% of children under 7 years of age lived in single parent, female-headed households. In their study they emphasized that many young people in South Africa do not grow up in families where they learn respect, warmth and good interpersonal relations, but there are still young people who overcome severely traumatic childhood experiences and become productive and well-adjusted members of society. With this research, a programme was designed to assist in preventing criminality among young people.

Coombe (2000) drew attention to the harsh reality of the HIV/AIDS pandemic on children. She warned that 'HIV/AIDS reduces the number of parents who are twenty to forty years old, and increases the number of orphans' (p.5). The increase of orphaned learners lead to trauma and a high drop out rate in schools. A study by Kalemba (1999) revealed that *community willingness to absorb and care for orphaned children in Malawi was high*. The communities in Malawi found it unacceptable to place orphans in orphanages, since it was found that a number of children who had been raised in institutions were psychologically difficult. Psychological difficult implied that children became uncontrollable and developed serious behavioural problems. A need exists in

South Africa, to examine whether orphanages and foster homes do assist orphan learners to cope with life challenges or not.

Several researchers (Ainsworth-Darnell and Roscigno, 1999; Braxton, 1999; Mdanda, 1999; Mthembu, 1996) studied the association between the family background and academic achievement of learners. The focus of the above mentioned studies was on the causes of academic failure while the present study focused on factors which contributed to academic success of children at risk. Not much research has been conducted on the academic success of learners who experience trauma, problems and environmental barriers. Luther and Zigler (1991) found that although environmental disadvantage and stress can lead to behavioural and psychological problems amongst children, there are children who overcome these difficulties to become well-adjusted adults. Such a study is important since it focuses on the predictors of academic success and social adaptation rather than academic failure. Masten, Bert and Garmezy (1990) indicated that the more resilient young people are, the less likely they are to get into serious trouble in a range of risk behaviours, including drug use.

Osher, Tendziora, Vandenberg and Dennis (1999) indicated that it is not individual characteristics only which are important in building resilience in children, but addressing the social factors that enable those conditions to occur. In their study they emphasized and examined various social components of resilience, and how the environment can be created to support resilience. They moved away from the traditional model of resilience, which stressed that it is only the individual who contributes to his/her success, to considering the individual and the environment that surrounds the individual in contributing to the individual's success. The present study followed the same pattern, where it identified possible factors in resilience of orphaned learners.

‘With the community's shift from risk-orientated to competence-orientated programme, resilience research provides a meaningful framework for developing programmes and support systems for children and youth’ (Victor, 2003, p.7). Several organizations (Meyer's Hope Project in gardening; Orphans of the Hills; Sinosizo Project, Wildlife Community Project) in South Africa are addressing the issue of orphans' resilience, through memory boxes, garden creation, food parcels and the teaching of life skills.

More factors, which promote resilience, should be identified since the number of orphans is increasing in South Africa.

Krovetz (1999) stated that all students can overcome adversity if important protective factors are present in their lives. This study further mentioned that the resiliency theory is based on defining the protective factors within the family, school and community that exist for the successful child or adolescent. In the same study it was mentioned that ‘if members of one’s family, community and /or school care deeply about that person, have high expectations and purposeful support, the person cared for maintains faith in the future and can overcome almost any adversity’ (Krovert. 1999, p. 1).

The Medical Research Council of South Africa (2001) demonstrated that a large number of children who are orphans get more traumatized by hearing their grandparents, aunts and elder siblings describe how difficult it is for them (the caregivers) to cope with the burden of caring for them (the orphans). When the grandparents were interviewed with “Orphans of the Hills organization”, they insisted that they would not put their grandchildren in orphanages, no matter how difficult life was to become. It was important for this study to identify the effect, if any, that the type of custodian had on the resilience of orphaned learners.

Collecting information from children, educators and communities who are experiencing death and who seem to be surviving might assist in developing strategies for promoting resilience of orphaned learners. A recent article in the Newcastle and District advertiser revealed that two children were placed in an orphanage where they began to ‘live a semi-normal life’ (Mlotshwa. 2004, p.1). In this article a semi- normal life meant a life where children live with a stranger who becomes a guardian, separated from family members, relatives, siblings and the community in which the child grew up when the parents were still alive.

The article further stated that children were then removed from an orphanage in Newcastle where they were reported to be doing well, and placed with the foster parent who abused them physically and emotionally. It was through poor academic performance that the social worker was informed of the situation and went to visit the children at home. The social worker discovered that the foster parent was abusing the children.

There is therefore a need to research whether there is a relationship between the custodian type and orphaned learners resilience. Braxton (1999) in the study on academic achievement found that culture and family influenced students' performance where parents assisted the children to learn.

The Medical Research Council of South Africa (2003) stated that Durban, South Africa will face the challenge by 2015 of having to look after 1,85million children orphaned by the HIV/AIDS pandemic. While (Braxton, 1999; Mdanda, 1997; Pong, 1998) in their studies, emphasized the importance of parental guidance and family involvement in academic achievement of learners. Today parents are dying and their children are placed at risk. Hunter and Williamson (1997) have documented the problems of children who are orphans, i.e. lack of caring and warmth provided by parents; development of behavioural problems, and little has been written about the successful outcomes in these children.

Kalemba (1999) stated that Malawians are developing an orphan policy programme, since the AIDS crisis in Malawi has had a crippling impact on the country's children. As early as 1991, the Government of Malawi established a National Orphan Care Task Force, which has been responsible for planning and monitoring all programmes on orphan care. In 2004 the UNAIDS, estimated that the number of children orphaned by AIDS will rise drastically in the next 10–20 years, especially in southern Africa. It further mentioned that, in South Africa alone, it is estimated that, by 2010, there will be 1,5 million children orphaned as a result of AIDS (UNAIDS, 2004).

1.3 Statement of the problem

The main aim of this study was to establish factors, which would promote resilience in orphaned learners. The established factors may be used to formulate strategies that can promote the ability of orphaned learners to be resilient. Why do some orphans do well at school while others do not? This was the primary question in this study. There was a need for this research in South Africa, as much has been done on resilience in other

countries (Kalemba, 1999; Krovert, 1999; Osher et al., 1999; Victor, 2003) but not in South Africa.

Cerin (2003) conducted a drug education programme, which was an initiative of the National Department of Education and Training. This program was conducted in Australia in an economically-depressed urban area. Five primary schools were involved. The study focused on getting learners' views on what they thought made the difference between "kids with tough lives who were successful and kids with tough lives who were unsuccessful". Their views were used to create strategies, which would promote resilience in vulnerable children.

Given the evidence that there is an increasing number of orphans in South Africa (UNAIDS, 2004), it seems logical to examine societal, familial and other factors, which might contribute to orphaned learners' resilience. There was therefore a need to look for what can assist orphaned children in deep rural areas of Kwa-Zulu Natal where there is a high rate of children who are victims of poverty. Children, who are at the intermediate phase of learning, need more guidance and support in academic work since it is the middle phase of schooling. At this age some children still struggle to take care of their basic needs.

A study on academic achievement and custodian type revealed that 'university students were not influenced by type of custodian due to the fact that parents were not monitoring their academic work as compared to elementary pupils' (Mthembu, 1996, p.55). The above information indicated that children at elementary level of learning are more vulnerable to changes in the family structure. This study therefore aims to come up with strategies to help orphaned learners to be resilient.

This research study will answer the following questions:

- (a) Which factors contribute to the orphaned learner's ability to cope with life challenges (resilience)?
- (b) What is the relationship, if any, between the custodian type and orphaned learners ability to cope with life challenges?
- (c) What is the relationship, if any, between the types of environment (rural or urban) and the ability of orphaned learners to cope with life challenges.

1.4 Aims of the study

- (a) To establish factors which contribute to the resilience in orphaned learners.
- (b) To find out the relationship, if any, between the custodian type and orphaned learners ability to cope with life challenges/resilience.
- (c) To find out the relationship, if any, between the type of environment (rural or urban) and orphaned learners ability to cope with life challenges.

1.5 Hypotheses

The Hypotheses formulated were based on the above aims of the study.

1.6 Definition of terms

(a) Orphaned learners

In this study orphaned learners refer to learners (in the intermediate phase) who have lost parents through death.

(b) Resilience

In this study resilience shall mean the average or high academic achievement of orphaned learners.

1.7 Research methodology

1.7.1 Descriptive research

This study used a descriptive research design. The researcher went out to orphaned learners in selected primary schools and administered the questionnaire, with the aim of identifying the possible factors which could have caused them to perform better at school. Descriptive research design has been used with learners and academic achievement by several researchers (Jaung & Silbereisen, 2002; Kohl, Lengua & Mc Mahon, 2000; Mthembu, 1996).

1.7.2 Sampling Design

A random sampling design was used in this study, where participated primary schools were randomly selected from a list all primary school in the District. This sampling design has been used by (Mthembu, 1996; Pong, 1998; Sun & Li, 2001) in their studies on academic achievement. The target population for this study was the intermediate phase orphaned learners who were from rural and semi-urban schools around the Vryheid District. Mondlo and Babanango Wards were classified under the rural schools and the Filidi Ward was classified under semi-urban schools. A list of Senior Primary Schools in the wards was requested from the Vryheid District Department of Education.

This selection of senior primary schools was a purposive selection, since the purpose was to target learners from the intermediate phase. Konningsdale Primary School at Babanango was included in the study. learners in Konningsdale Primary school were from the orphanage. This was a purposive selection since learners in an orphanage were targeted. Permission was requested from the Department of Education to conduct the study on these learners. Schools were randomly selected from each list.

From school records a list of orphaned learners who performed below average, average and above average, including both girls and boys were selected. Learners were grouped on the basis of the sampling frames. The sampling frames that influenced the choice in this study were the following: phase of learners; the area where learners lived, e.g. rural

and semi urban; and lastly, the custodian type of orphaned learners, e.g. who are in foster care, who are living alone or with relatives, and learners who are in orphanages/homes.

In summary, 12 schools were randomly selected from the list. Orphaned learners were chosen from each school. They were then clustered accordingly to custodian types and the area they came from, i.e. either urban or semi- rural.

1.7.3 Research Instruments

A semi- structured questionnaire was used. The researcher designed the questionnaire because it was difficult to locate the previously -used questionnaires from similar studies. The questionnaire included the following: in section A the questions related to demographic information: section B, questions related to the support learners get at home, from the community and from the school. Several writers (Kinard, 1998; Krovert, 1999; Osher et al., 1999) have used questionnaires in their studies on academic achievement. The questionnaires used by the above mentioned researchers were designed in such a way that questions were grouped into certain themes as mentioned above.

A pilot study was conducted with 15-orphaned learners. The two schools used for the pilot study were selected randomly from the list that was used to select schools, which participated in the study. Schools which participated in the pilot study did not participate in the final study. The questionnaire was piloted to test how long it would take the respondents to answer it, to check if all questions were clear, and to allow the researcher to remove any items that did not yield usable data. This is in line with what (Bell, 1997), explained as reasons for pilot testing a questionnaire. Pilot testing is described as 'the testing, which is important for establishing the content validity and to improve questions' (Creswell, 2003, p. 158). The learners in the present study did not experienced difficulties with the materials of the study when answering the questionnaire.

To identify orphaned learners in schools, school records were used. Several researchers have used school records in gathering information on learners. For academic achievement, the researcher used academic records (progress reports) for learners available at school. Progress reports were used by several writers (Biblarz & Raftery, 1999; Braxton, 1999) in attaining learners' academic achievement. For aim 1, factors that contribute to resilience, data was collected using questionnaires. For aim 2, custodian and resilience, school academic achievement (from school records) and Section A of the questionnaire. For aim 3, type of an area and resilience, learners' academic reports and Section A of the questionnaire was used to collect data.

1.7.4 Data Analysis Method

- For Aim 1: To establish factors, which contribute to resilience, Chi-square test was used to compare frequencies obtained from the different types of factors that were chosen by orphaned learners and resilience (academic achievement).
- For Aim 2: Establish a relationship, if any, between the custodian type and resilience/academic achievement of orphaned learners. Table 1 represents the frequency table for the dependent and independent variables. A non-parametric test: Chi-square test, was used to compare frequencies obtained from the different custodian types and resilience in a form of academic achievement. The contingency coefficient (C) test was used to test the degree of association, if any, between independent and dependent variables. Mthembu, 1996 used this analysis in her study of parental involvement on academic achievement of learners.

- For aim 3, Chi- square test was used to compare frequencies obtained from the different types of areas where orphaned learners live and their resilience. Tables 2 represent how the frequencies of the dependent and independent variables were compared. The contingency coefficient (C) test was also be used to test the degree of association, if any, between a rural area and orphans resilience, and a semi-urban area and orphans resilience.

1.8 Summary

In this chapter an attempt has been made to look at the HIV/AIDS pandemic as the main cause of the orphan crisis in South Africa. An increasing number of orphans had been identified through literature study and a motivation to conduct this study was explained. It was further argued that certain factors may promote resilience in orphaned children. The correct identification of these factors will assist in developing strategies that can promote resilience in orphaned learners. The next chapter will look at the views of other researchers regarding resilience of orphaned learners and factors that contribute to their resilience. Literature on resilience and academic achievement will also be reviewed.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature review

2.1 Introduction

According to the constitution of South Africa, all children have rights and education is one of them. Before a child is old enough to attend school, she/he requires basic needs such as food and to be cared for. Orphaned children are faced with empty homes after school: no one has cooked for them, they have no one to share bad and / or good experiences that they may have at school every day. Limited attention has been given to the reality of the effect of HIV/AIDS on learners particularly which has led to the increase of the number of orphans in schools. Chala (2002) in a newspaper article 'Children do it themselves' wrote about a certain principal and his school who "has about 60 orphans and most of them are children whose parents died either of AIDS related diseases or just natural death" (Chala, 2002, p 1).

One is aware of the effect of the HIV/AIDS pandemic in the country and can assume that there are many more orphans in our country as a result. Understanding orphans who perform better at school can assist communities and educators in supporting orphans to maintain resiliency. Again factors can be identified and used by communities and educators in assisting orphans who perform poorly at school to perform better. "The resiliency research offers a more positive and a more accurate perspective. It offers hope based on scientific evidence that many, if not most, of those who experience stress, trauma, and "risks" in their lives can bounce back. It challenges educators to focus more on strengths instead of deficit" (Henderson & Masten, 1996, p. 3).

Masten (1996) in his study indicated that there is a great danger in the idea of resilience, where children are expected to overcome deprivation and anger on their own. As a result he concluded his study by saying, "There is no magic here, resilient children have been protected by action of adults, by good nurturing, by their assets, and by opportunities to succeed. We can not stand by as the infrastructure for child development collapses in this

nation, expecting miracles” (Masten, 1996, p.24). In South Africa too, parents who are the infrastructure for child development are dying, yet there are limited orphanages available. Thus factors that promote resilience should be established, so that irrespective of where the orphan stays, resilience is promoted.

In literature (Braxton, 1999; Ainsworth-Darnell & Roscigno, 1999; Juang & Silbereisen, 2002) more attention has been given to factors which contribute to academic failure, e.g. lack of parental guidance, lack of resources at home, etc, overlooking the fact that some children become successful even if factors which contribute to academic failure are there. Some families in South Africa are under pressure to cope with the negative impact of poverty, HIV/AIDS, unemployment, crime, abuse of alcohol and drugs and other illnesses. Children who are exposed to stressors and reared in social environments that threaten their survival, are vulnerable to negative outcomes, such as school drop-out, and academic failure, which are stress related (Smith & Carlson, 1997, pp. 232-235).

Moat and Palmay (2002) indicated that the presence of the risks or challenges identified in young people’s lives does not mean with any certainty that they will involve themselves in crime or violence. Moat and Palmay (2002) suggested that local government should focus on the factors that best predict a young person becoming involved in delinquency and devise ways to alter these. The main aim of their document was to promote strategies, which can be used to prevent crime and violence in young people. They further indicated that when young people make successful adaptations, despite exposure to high risk conditions, their ability to survive and succeed (often called resilience) has been attributed to three causes. Firstly, personal attributes such as intelligence; secondly, a warm responsive and responsible family and lastly, adult support.

2.2 Resilience and academic achievement of orphan learners

Resilience may be associated with good academic achievement since a learner with stress tends to perform poorly. So a learner who has experienced a traumatic experience, i.e. the death of a parent, began being stressed long before the death of a parent. The child first becomes aware that the parent is infected; she or he starts to worry about siblings, money, school, etc. and is expected to perform badly. However some do perform satisfactorily even after such experiences. As a result, in the present study, the researcher felt that using academic achievement as a measure of resilience was more appropriate since a traumatized person rarely performs at his or her expected level.

Osher, Tendziora, Van Den Berg and Dennis, (1999) studied resilience and quoted (Alger, 1868, pp.18-19) the case study of Richard, who would not steal or cheat, but was frank and straightforward. This boy was from a very poor background. Osher et al., (1999) in their study emphasized that children seldom live alone; there is family, school, and the community in their lives. They emphasized the social context rather than the child as an individual. This study also looked at the child as a whole i.e. including his/her environment. There was a need for this research since many studies focused on parental role and academic achievement (Braxton, 1999; Mthembu, 1996; Pong, 1998).

Several authors have stated that cognitive competence in school and other social settings are markers of resiliency (Bernard, 2004; Jew, Green & Kroger, 1999; Masten et al., (1999). Resiliency is a process that occurs within a cultural context. "In South African context, academic success, to a large extent, can be seen as a measure of resiliency, even though in other societies it might be considered an ordinary developmental task" (Dass - Brailsford, 2005, p.576). Malmquist (1986) mentioned that trauma can be experienced by children e.g. witnessing the murder of a parent, the long illness of a parent, which ends in death and witnessing sexual assault.

“All students can overcome adversity if important protective factors are present in their lives” (Krovetz, 1999, p. 2). In his study the emphasis was on children who came from ‘at-risk’ backgrounds, who later needed intervention, and many more children who came from the same background who became healthy, competent adults. These studies (Benard, 1991; Krovetz, 1999; Kinard, 1998) indicated the importance of further research, which would identify protective factors, which promote resilience in children. A study by Victor (2003) described resilience by mentioning that children can overcome difficult, challenging and even dangerous situations and become caring, competent and confident. He described these children as resilient, because they can exceed expectations, cope with stress well, and/or bounce back effectively from traumatic experiences.

Benard (1991) in the study on resilience described a resilient child as one who loves well, works well, plays well, and expects well. The study further indicated that these children usually have four attributes which are: social competence, problem solving, autonomy and a sense of purpose and future. In the same study the researcher commented by saying “Whether or not those attributes are strong enough within the individual to help that person bounce back from adversity depends on certain protective factors in his or her life” (Benard, 1991, p. 3).

The memory box research by Makiwane (2001) confirmed that memory boxes are able to enhance resilience in orphans affected by HIV/AIDS in S.A. The study further mentioned that in the context of HIV/AIDS, resilience is the ability of children to develop to their full potential even if their parents are dead. This is confirmed by the study by Palmary and Moat (2002) where the aim of their study was preventing criminality in youth, and resilience was described as the ability of young people to survive and succeed (make successful adaptations despite exposure to high risk conditions). When reading the above-mentioned work there is an indication that there seems to be a match between a resilient child and his/her ability to achieve academically.

“In general children facing adversity are considered resilient if they are functioning within normal or acceptable bounds on measures of competence with respect to behavioral, social or cognitive functioning” (Kinard, 1998, p. 670). Werner and Smith (1998) in their longitudinal study of individuals exposed to biological risk, poverty, limited parental education, and parental mental disorder, stated that “it is the balance between risk, stressful life events, and protective characteristics in the child and his care giving environment that appears to account for a range of outcomes encountered in our study” (Werner & Smith, 1998, p.5).

A study by Miller (1999) on racial socialization and racial identity as a factor that can promote resiliency for African American adolescents, mentioned that racial socialization and racial identity protect urban African American adolescents against some of the harmful effects of a discriminatory environment. These factors were hypothesized to influence academic achievement. Academic achievement is an indicator of resiliency, and has long been considered in many studies (Barbarin, 1993; Bowman & Howard, 1985) as signifying resiliency among adolescents. However, ‘limited attention has been given to the factors that promote educational achievement among urban adolescents’ (Miller, 1999, p.1). The present study has used academic achievement to indicate resilience of orphaned learners, like the above-mentioned study, which has used academic achievement to describe resilience of urban youth.

Juang and Silbereisen (2002) indicated that there is ample evidence for the belief and academic performance relationship as demonstrated by the extensive theorizing and research on how self-beliefs are linked to academic success. Juang and Silbereisen (2002) in the same study further indicated that children with higher academic capability beliefs are also better academically, as measured, for instance, by school grades or achievement tests. A resilient learner will have a higher academic capability belief, which will manifest itself as good academic performance.

Mdanda (1999) in his study on parental influence on academic achievement of learners mentioned that, in assisting learners who are orphans, it is important that the focus be on learners who are achieving in spite of their parents' death. Jubber (1994) found that there is an association between school performance and parental structure. Children who lived with both parents were found to perform better academically. "The single parent and any other type of parental structure affect school performance more negatively than does the two parental structure (Jubber, 1994, p. 139). The above studies suggested that orphans may be at risk, i.e. when their parents die their family structures change, which expose them to risk of academic problems.

This study aimed to look at orphaned learners who are academically successful and to establish factors that contributed to their success. Kinard (1998, p. 672) indicated that intelligence tests, academic tests and grades in school are commonly used to define resilience with respect to cognitive functioning. He further mentioned that the problem, which can be encountered with standardized intelligence tests, is that these tests can be culture biased which may result in invalid information. The problem with school grades is that grading standards differ within and across school systems, making it difficult to compare children from different countries. However, above all his comments he commented by saying, "research on maltreated children needs to devote more attention to this issue of resilience because understanding how some children manage to manifest competencies in the face of maltreatment may suggest ways to promote competence in more vulnerable maltreated children." (Kinard, 1998, p. 676).

2.3 Factors that contribute to resilience of orphaned learners

Miller (1995) discussed comprehensively the stress adaptation in children where he mentioned the phases of trauma accommodation and expressed the belief that children confronted by an event or threatened death can accommodate stress through psychological and biochemical processes. His study was an elaboration of what Kobas (1979) called the "psychological hardness", which was seen as a personality concept

assisting the child not to deteriorate physically and psychologically under stress. Due to an increase of deaths being experienced by learners in our country, (UNAIDS, 2000; UNAIDS, 2002; UNICEF, 2003) there was a need to elaborate on such studies by going beyond the previous studies and looking further to environmental factors, such as the school, home environmental factors and the areas where children grow up in.

Chala (2002) indicated that the principal of a school she wrote about in her article "Children do it themselves" took six orphans to a beading course. After completing their training course, they were required to train 5 other orphaned learners in their school. Orphaned learners in that school grew vegetables and sold them, which enabled them to have an income and to be able to buy food and have sufficient energy to study in their homes. This improved their academic performance (Chala, 2002, p.1). In the same article the principal was quoted as saying, "I wanted to provide a long term solution to their problem, thus I took them to a beading course" (Chala, 2002, p.1). In reviewing literature on academic achievement, it became clear that students with higher academic achievement records are those who experience certain home environments and educational activities that are conducive to learning.

Hess and Holloway (1984) identified the following factors, which enhance academic achievement: the structure of parents and encouragement provided at home to explore various aspects of the larger environment. There are more factors, which can be explored so as to be able to deal with challenges facing orphaned learners. This is evidenced in a study on academic achievement where it was mentioned that, "within a given school type and, therefore, within each individual school, teachers cannot do anything substantial to prevent the exacerbation of the association between achievements and social background" (Schnabel et al., 2002, p.194). Some studies have examined the associations between child outcomes and continuous measures of parental behaviour, such as: support, involvement, warmth, approval, control and monitoring (Ainsworth-Darnell and Roscigno, 1999; Braxton, 1999; Mthembu, 1996). Studying the association between a child without parents (orphan) and his or her academic achievement is important.

The same factors which were part of parental involvement that promoted academic achievement of learners can be used by orphaned learners' caregivers or the community to assist children to survive after the trauma. Different organizations are supporting orphans such as Ingwavuma District Orphans Care, which assists orphans through advocacy to access grants, teaching life skills, food gardens, school support and emergency food and clothes provision and the Wild Life Community project which is an online promotion project aimed at raising funds in order to render assistance to a non-government funded shelter, based in Kempton Park (Gauteng). Wild Life Community project provides food for street children (some who are orphans) who are addicted to alcohol and drugs.

Jaung and Silbereisen (2002) in their study, found that parents who demonstrated more warmth, engaged in more discussions concerning academic and intellectual matters with their adolescents, had higher school aspirations for their adolescents, and reported more involvement in their children's schooling. Looking at familial factors, which have been used by parents to make a success of their children's academic achievement, it is possible that if the communities, relatives and foster parents can adopt these factors, academic success can be achieved.

Being specific and focused on the resiliency of orphaned learners can benefit the communities who look after orphans. A similar study conducted by D'abren Mullis and Cook (1999) concentrated on the resiliency of street children, where factors that contribute to resiliency of street children were identified. In their research it was mentioned that identification of factors within the environment that make one child more able to survive on the streets than another, can be of great value. It is considered as a specific learning barrier for a child to lose a parent. In the *Care and Support manual on HIV/AIDS*, Louw et al (2001, p. 31) indicated that support groups can be formed in schools for learners who have lost parents and workshops can be organised with staff in order to teach them how to help orphaned learners cope. Accordingly, care and support programmes for orphaned learners and vulnerable children in schools could enable orphaned learners to cope with their difficult circumstances.

Krovetz (1999) in the study on the resiliency theory indicated that defining the protective factors that exist within the family, school and community is the first thing to do for the successful child/adolescent. In this study emphasis was made on the following factors: caring environment, positive expectations and participation. The study in (KZN) South Africa by Makiwane (2001) mentioned that in enhancing resiliency in orphans, the following factors need to be considered: family visits, child support groups through peer groups and establishing the methodology of memory boxes. "For the grieving process to unfold in a meaningful way the children's perceptions and feelings need to be validated by supporting adults" (Makiwane, 2001, p. 2)

A study by Palmary and Moat (2002) when developing a policy of preventing criminality in young people, indicated that the responsibility of the local government is to develop an after-school care programme, where after-school care for children can include: combining homework supervision with fun, building on youth group's work and other activities. The recommendation of their study was to find well-trained, caring workers who were going to be able to work with and assist children with problems. A generic term has been used which is 'children with problems' or 'children at risk', representing all children with problems, e.g. street kids, orphans, drop outs, etc. (Krovetz, 1999; Victor, 2003; Osher et al., 1999).

Randolph (1996) commented, "When we talk about resiliency, we cannot neglect talking about adversity. We have to do a better job talking about particular adverse circumstances and try to untangle some of the large contextual variables, like poverty, and what these contexts mean for children's development" (Randolph, 1996, p.15). Rutter cited in Garmezy (1985) indicated that "many children do not succumb to deprivation, and it is important that we determine why this is so and what is it that protects children at risk from the problems they experienced". Garmezy (1985) further indicated that there was a need to identify factors within the environment that makes one child more able to survive on the streets than another. The above-mentioned studies indicated that factors which contribute to resilience were important concepts to be researched.

When investigating the factors which contribute to resilience in children, several writers have discouraged researchers from focusing on learners' personal traits only, like intelligence, personality, etc. (Osher et al. 1999; Bernard, 1993). A study on resiliency suggested that, "The individualistic conceptualization of resilience teaches us that if a child is smart, does well at school, that means he/she is born with the right genetic makeup or is fortunate enough to have the supportive adults at home. While it is not up to the child alone to determine his or her success in life, the entire community must contribute to positive, resilient outcomes. These are sources of help and promises for children growing up under a cloud of accumulated risks, and these are programmes that work to foster resilience" (Osher et al., 1999, p.3).

Cerin (2003) conducted a qualitative study in Australia on building resiliency in the early years of school. The study asked 9-12 yrs old children and their teachers from 5 primary schools in an economically depressed urban area to give their views on what makes them (learners) resilient. This study focused on three protective factors, which are, family, school and community. Victor (2003) in the study on supporting resilience of children and youth, identified protective factors that contribute to the resilience of children. The identified factors were: children's ability to solve problems, and to be sociable; family's warm and supportive care-giving; schools' safe environment and high monitoring of school work. The conclusion drawn from this study was that it is not only the individual child's characteristics which make/contribute to that learner's resilience. He commented by saying, "A shy student can develop friends and self confidence with the aid of a sensitive teacher who carefully plans cooperative learning activities that capitalize on the child's strengths" (Victor, 2003, p.4).

Nash (2000) conducted a study to find out the impact of a "Resourceful adolescent program" which was designed to build resilience in schools. The aim of the program was to give students skills, like cognitive restructuring, building and assessing support networks, creating personal problem-solving models and recognition of personal strengths. The results indicated that after the implementation of a program, positive change was noticed in children at homes and schools. Straus (2003) cites a child

psychiatrist, Neal Mazor, who emphasized three basic elements that make children more resilient, namely: safe place, people they love, and self-confidence (Straus, 2003, p. 1).

This study aims to go beyond the individualistic characteristics of a child, and look at all possible factors that might contribute towards orphaned learners' good academic achievement. "When looking at a resilient child we must look beyond personality traits and the ever present temptation to "blame the victim" or "fix the kid" and examine the environmental characteristics that have fostered the development of resiliency" (Bernard, 1991, p. 45). His study emphasized that there were more factors that could be considered in assisting the child to be resilient rather than looking at the child as an individual with all the powers to be resilient. Factors which were identified in the above-mentioned study were caring and support by peers, parents and the community and the ongoing participation between the child, community, the school and peers.

An independent study by the Institute for Education in Transformation at Claremont Graduate School (1992) had a similar concern about the factors, which contribute to resiliency of learners. Werner and Smith (1989) in their longitudinal study of resilient children and youth, found caring friends to be a major factor in the development of resiliency in the disadvantaged children in Kauai. Some researchers (Fergusson & Lynskey, 1996; Herrenkohl, Herrenkohl, & Egolf, 1994) reported that higher cognitive ability is related to resilience. "Factors associated with resilience are likely to differ according to the sources of data. Thus combining different domains or sources of information to produce an overall index of resilience is likely to mask these important distinctions" (Kinard, 1998, p. 671).

2.4 Orphaned learners' custodian and academic achievement.

Chala (2002) indicated that some of the orphans had no adults caring for them, thus they were forced to head families themselves. It was further indicated in the same study that these orphans did not have school uniforms, could not afford to pay fees and even more sadly, they came to school on empty stomachs. A study by Mthembu (1996) on parental

influence on academic achievement, suggested that parents should ensure that children receive material and emotional support so that children could become motivated to acquire the educational and occupational skills necessary for achieving socially accepted goals. The same study indicated that, "In the society where the opportunities for reaching the objectives have been denied due to socio economic status, the next of kin would in most cases serve as a parental substitute in providing fees" (Mthembu, 1996, p. 47). Mthembu (1996) further explained that the other agencies are sometimes helpful to students, but the parents remain the main source of influence in the students' academic achievement. It was further mentioned in her study that the relationship between students and their next of kin (other than the parents) was not as natural as that of parents themselves, and as a result high academic achievement was not attained.

An Executive Summary report (2004, p. 13) of CASI (a foundation for children, committed to creating families through adoption and improving the quality of orphanages and lives for orphans) indicated that there were over 1000 orphanages in China and untrained workers ran 80% of them, which made it difficult for orphans there to survive. CASI has provided a foster care model where orphan schools' dormitories are converted to family style homes and they are converted into community schools rather than orphanages to remove the stigma attached to orphans. CASI has assisted with the 'training of orphanages management and with providing vocational education to orphans with the aim of making orphans productive members of the community' (CASI, 2004, p.13).

Kalembe (1999, p. 16) argued that, "Community willingness to absorb and care for orphaned children in Malawi appears to be high". He further indicated that placing children in homes/orphanages is unacceptable because it removes them from their traditions, their properties and their relatives. This study discouraged removing orphans from their families since it was mentioned that it did not promote resiliency. He further mentioned that "a number of children who have been raised in an institutional setting develop behavioral problems" (Kalembe, 1999). Krovert (1999) mentioned that fostering resiliency in children was a long-term project, involving systemic change within the communities of children.

Palmary and Moat (2002) in their study on preventing criminality in young people indicated that young people who were prone to involvement with gangs, drugs and early sexual activity were those who were lonely and unsupervised at home. They made an example of youngsters who did not have any option but to look after their younger siblings in the absence of parents, as more households became affected by HIV/AIDS. They further mentioned that extended family networks were becoming less available to care for children as AIDS takes its toll on household support patterns and children are becoming more responsible for the community.

UNICEF (2003) mentioned that Mark Connolly, a UNICEF Specialist suggested that

“Orphans don’t need to be reminded of why they are alone. About the worst thing that can happen to these kids is to be separated from their siblings.” UNAIDS/WHO (2005) indicated that orphans who grow up in communities disrupted by the AIDS epidemic are more likely to cope if they can live in surroundings that are familiar to them. It further explained that institutionalization (keeping orphans in orphanages) creates a problem for society because children in orphanages have not been socialized in the communities in which they have to live. An alternative suggestion was made by UNAIDS/WHO (2005) that community members can assist orphans by visiting orphans in their homes where they live either with foster parents, grandparents, other relatives or in child headed households.

Richter (2004) indicated that there is little quantitative information on the prevalence and the effect of fostering on fostered children. This study further mentioned that no definitive conclusion could be drawn about the impact of fostering on schooling. This indicated the importance of the present study in finding out if there is any relationship between custodian type and academic achievement of orphaned learners.

Subbarob and Coury (2004) indicated that uncles and aunts were the traditional choice which was available as substitute caregivers for orphans. These caregiver are less available now either because they are themselves victims of AIDS or they are more reluctant to foster orphans. The same study further mentioned that grandparents and older orphans are forced to take the role of being caretakers themselves. “In many

settings, grandparents appear to be the most common caregivers” (Subbarob & Coury, 2004, p. 24). The same study further indicated that grandparents provide a loving environment that helps children to socialize, but may find it difficult to respond to children’s legal, economic and basic needs. They suggested that some kind of alternative support should be arranged before grandparents die.

2.5 Type of environment and orphaned learners’ academic achievement

Rutter (1979) conducted a study in schools within poverty-stricken areas of London, which showed a considerable difference in rates of delinquency, behavioural disturbances, attendance and academic attainment. Successful schools shared certain characteristics: an academic emphasis, teachers’ clear expectations and regulations and a high level of student’s participation. When investigating resilience in learners it was more important to look at the area where they lived because factors that contributed to resilience may have differed according to the environment of the child. Biblarz and Raftery (1999) indicated that vulnerability was intimately connected to a social environment that perpetuates discrimination. The stress caused by the hostile environment clearly affected the individual’s degree of risk of disorders.

Howard (1990) in the study on how to assist learners on getting better academic results, found that children in inner city Detroit schools performed better academically when they were directly taught that intellectual development was something they could achieve through effort. All the subjects who were used in the study on social competence in rural and urban children with mental retardation and who lived in rural areas lacked electricity, piped water and sanitation (Pillay, 2003). In the same study all the children who came from urban areas lived in homes that were electrified. The focus of the present study was to establish the relationship if any, between the type of custodian and the type of the area (where orphaned learners live) respectively and their good academic achievement.

2.6 Summary

Little has been done on orphaned learners' ability to survive, and the literature reviewed in this study indicated that there was a need for a study on orphaned learners' resilience. Literature on the type of area and custodian type respectively and resilience has been discussed in this chapter. The following chapter focuses on research design and methodology. Methods of data collection, sample design and the sampling procedure that was used was also be discussed in the next chapter .

CHAPTER THREE

Research design and methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter looked at the research design and methodology for the study. The methods of data collection, which were used included the questionnaire and the school records. The researcher designed the questionnaire and test piloted it. A list of Primary schools was requested from the Department of Education: Vryheid District. Random sampling was done to choose schools from two clusters: rural schools and semi urban schools. Konningsdale Primary School was purposefully selected, because learners who attended that school stayed in the orphanage. All orphaned learners from the selected schools who were in the Intermediate Phase participated. The total sample was 183-orphaned learners.

3.2 Aims of the study

The study aimed:

- To establish factors, if any, which contribute to good academic achievement of orphaned learners.

To determine a relationship, if any, between the following variables:

- Custodian type and orphaned learners' good academic achievement.
- Type of an area and orphaned learners' academic achievement.

3.3 Formulation of hypotheses

The following are the hypotheses of this study:

- There will be societal, familial and school factors which contribute to orphaned learners' good academic achievement/resilience.
- There will be a relationship between custodian type and orphaned learners' good academic achievement/resilience.
- There will be a relationship between the type of an area and orphaned learners' good academic achievement/resilience.

3.4 Methods of data collection

Researchers have used various methods to gather data about learners' academic achievement and family involvement (Sun & Li, 2001; Pong & Ju, 2000; Mthembu, 1996). Sun and Li (2001) in their study of marital disruption, like divorce and academic achievement of learners, measured academic achievement by students' scores on science, maths, social studies and reading.

Pong and Ju (2000) in their study on students' background characteristics and a range of other topics, such as schoolwork, educational aspirations, occupational aspirations and social relationships, used the questionnaire to gather information from educators and school administrators. Similarly Schnabel, Alfeld, Eccles and Baumert (2002) in their study on parental influence on student educational choice in the United States and Germany, used achievement tests (Maths achievement and English achievement) taken from school records in measuring academic achievement of learners. In the study of parental involvement in pupils' education, Grolnick and Ryan (1990, p. 89) measured parental involvement by using teachers' reports. Questionnaires were also used to assess pupils' motivational resources. School competence was highlighted by means of pupils' grades obtained from school records.

Jaung and Silbereisen (2002) examined the interplay between parenting, adolescents' academic capability beliefs and school grades. Questionnaires were administered in the classrooms and all data was gathered from three sources: the parents, teachers and adolescents. The conclusion made in this study was that adolescents who were characterized by low parental school involvement and capability beliefs demonstrated the worst school performance. Adolescents, who experienced high parental involvement in their schooling, had higher school achievement.

'When writing about the methodological issues in assessing resilience of maltreated children studies of resilience have used various sources of data for measuring the construct: maternal rating, teacher ratings, children's self reports, intelligence tests, achievement tests and school performance' (Kinard, 1998, p. 671). Roscigno and Ainsworth-Darnell (1999) used students' grade point average to represent educational achievements of black and white learners' achievement at school. The findings suggest that significant racial variations in capital and household educational items are largely a function of disparities in family socio-economic status, but that these resources have only a small mediating effect on the gap in black-white achievement.

A study by Salomon and Strobel (1997) of the relationship between social network and school performance in primary grade school children between 9 and 13 years old, used three questionnaires: one on the social network, one on interpersonal concerns and the last one on help-seeking behaviour. One hundred and fifty seven (157) children were from middle class and 173 children were from lower class. They were then divided into good and poor academic achievement. Children's academic achievements were taken from their school annual report cards, where French and mathematics marks were recorded. The finding of this study was that children with poor academic performance had difficulties in forming social relationships and enjoyed less support from friends.

Mthembu (1996) in the study of parental influence on University students' academic achievement obtained information about student's academic performances from the University of Zululand records. In the same study, each student's profile was drawn, consisting of the following variables: type of custodian, home language, age of student, sex of student and student academic achievement.

The present study requested the list of orphaned learners from the schools. Orphaned learners' academic achievements were taken from learners' academic records in their respective schools (Aims 2 and 3). Each learner profile was drawn according to the following variables: Custodian type, type of area and academic achievement. Academic achievement was measured as below average (0%-49%), average (50%-69%) and above average (70%-100%). A questionnaire designed by the researcher consisted of two sections: Section A (demographic information)) to answer aims (2 and 3). Section B questions based on family context, societal context and school context, which answered Aim 1.

3.5 Sample design and sampling procedure

Several researchers have drawn samples in their respective studies on familial environment and academic achievement. Mthembu (1996, p. 27) in the study of parental influence on students' academic achievement used a cluster-sampling design, which is a form of probability sampling type. Mdanda (1997) used probability sampling in a form of stratified random sampling in the study on parental influence on academic achievement of learners. In the study of Kellaghan (1977) of the relationship between home environment and scholastic behaviour, a sample was drawn from the population of children aged 8 and 9 years. The proportion of children from each school was randomly selected. Secondly, one classroom of students at each of the two grade levels was randomly sampled from each school.

The present study used a random sampling design to select a proportional number of primary schools from the list of all primary schools of the circuits (Wards) in the Vryheid District. The study sample consisted of one hundred and eighty three (183) orphaned learners who were in grade 5, 6 and 7, which is the Intermediate Phase in primary schools. *Intermediate Phase learners* were chosen because these learners were of the same age, developmental changes and academic content. The achievement of learners, which ranged from 50% to 100%, represented resilience. The academic achievements used in the present study were based on continuous assessment (CASS) results of learners; this included tests, assignments and projects.

Orphaned learners were clustered according to the location of their schools; that is semi-urban and rural. The schools from which these learners came were chosen from the Vryheid District among the following circuits: Mondlo, Babanango and Filidi circuits. Filidi circuit was classified as a semi-urban area since most schools are in the township, which is approximately 3 km away from town. The other schools including the orphanage are in the rural area of the Vryheid district. Those were at Mondlo and Babanango. The numbers of schools in each circuit were as follows: Mondlo, 4; Babanango, 4 including the orphanage and Filidi, 4 and it is the only circuit which is considered to be semi-urban. From Babanango Circuit, Konningsdale Primary was purposefully chosen because learners in that school stayed in the orphanage. An orphanage was one of the types of custodian, which formed part of the study.

A list of all Intermediate Phase Primary schools available from both clusters (three circuits) was requested from the Department of Education (Kwa-Zulu Natal) Vryheid District Office. From the list of schools per cluster, random sampling of schools was done to choose schools, which participated in the study. From each school a list of all orphaned learners were requested with learners already grouped according to their custodian, which was available from school records. From each selected school all orphaned learners in the intermediate phase participated.

Participated schools were randomly selected from a list of all intermediate primary schools of the Ward in the District. A total sample of 183 exclusively African orphaned learners from Vryheid district schools participated in the study. Black orphaned learners were used because the researchers aimed to avoid variables, like: cultural differences, language and other extraneous variables. Table 3.1 showed the distribution of subjects in the study.

Table 1. Distribution of subjects in the study sample: [N = 183]

Characteristics	N
Language 1	
IsiZulu	170
English	13
Custodian Type	
Grandparents	84
Siblings	11
Relatives	42
Fostered	16
Orphanage	30
Type of an area	
Semi-urban	69
Rural	14
Academic achievement	
Low (0-49%)	64
Moderate (50-69%)	77
High (70-100%)	42
Primary school phase	
Intermediate phase	183

Note. 1 Language in which questionnaire was completed

3.6 Research procedure

The outline was drawn on how the research was planned, structured and conducted to fulfill the need of testing the hypothesis. Data to be presented was obtainable from readily available school records.

- (a) The Kwa-Zulu Natal Department of Education and Culture was approached for permission to do research in their schools. The letter was written and, after approval, personal contact was arranged between the department and the researcher.
- (b) A concise description of the research (proposal) was given to the principals of each participating school.
- (c) The researcher conducted *fieldwork personally*.
- (d) Each principal or school administrative clerk helped in grouping learners according to required levels of academic achievement and custodian types.
- (e) Information on the custodian type and grade were obtainable from admission registers. Orphaned learners academic achievements were obtained from continuous assessment marks for two first terms of the year (2005).

The coding was as follows:

1. Custodian type: Grandparents –1. Fostered 2: Orphanage 3: Relatives 4. Siblings 5.

This information was obtained from school registers and it was confirmed by information gathered in the first section of the questionnaire where biographical information appeared.

2. Type of an environment: Urban 1; Rural 2. This information was gathered from the lists of schools, which were clustered accordingly.
3. Academic achievement: Below average 1; Average 2; and Above average 3.
4. Factors, which contributed to orphan learners' academic achievement, were gathered through the use of a questionnaire. Section B covered family factors, societal factors and school factors. Section B questions were the form of the Likert scale. All questions (items) were coded, from 1 to 17.

- (f) Hypotheses one, two and three were tested by means of Chi-square test to determine the relationship, if any, between the independent and dependent variables. The SPSS computer program was used to analyze the questionnaire, so that factors which contribute to learners' good academic achievement were identified.

3.7 Summary

Lists of schools from three wards (circuits) were used. Primary schools that participated in the study were randomly selected from the list of primary schools in three wards of the Vryheid District. Orphaned learners from Primary schools around the Vryheid District who were in the intermediate phase were selected as the sample. The questionnaire was the main instrument used in the study. Permission to do research was requested from the Provincial Department of Education (KZN). The next chapter describes the interpretations of data in detail. The SPSS computer programme was used for the analyzing of the data.

CHAPTER FOUR

Data presentation and interpretation

4.1 Introduction

This chapter aimed to present data on orphaned learners academic achievement and their responses on familial, community and school factors. In the previous chapter, data presented was collected through a semi-structured questionnaire. In this chapter the Chi-square test was used to compare frequencies obtained from the orphaned learners' responses on different factors and academic achievement. The contingency coefficient test was also used to test the degree of association between the type of area, custodian type respectively and orphaned learners' academic achievement. Relevant tables were also presented and interpreted after each table.

4.2 Data analysis

Table 2 shows the frequency distribution between academic achievement and availability of food at home, availability of time to do homework at home, availability of someone to help with homework at home, availability of relatives to assist at home, reading books other than schoolbooks at home, respectively. Table 3 shows the relationship between the academic achievement and custodian types and area types respectively. Table 4 shows the percentage distribution of orphaned learners per custodian type and area type respectively. Table 4 also indicates the percentages of resilient orphaned learners per custodian type and area type respectively.

Table 2. Family factors and academic achievement (N= 183)

Responses	0-49%	Academic 50-64%	Achievement 65-100%	Total	Statistics
		There is	food to eat	at home	
Never	12	3	-	15	$\chi^2=18.99$ df= d P=0.004
Sometimes	11	23	11	45	
Most of the time	6	7	8	21	
Always	35	44	23	102	
Total	64	77	42	183	
		I have time	for homework	at home	
Never	10	4	-	14	$\chi^2=12.726$ df=6 P=0.048
Sometimes	7	13	4	24	
Most of the time	7	14	8	29	
Always	40	46	30	116	
Total	64	77	42	183	
	Someone	helps with	homework at home		
Never	16	15	4	35	$\chi^2=12.985$ df=6 P=0.043
Sometimes	15	17	5	37	
Most of the time	12	7	6	25	
Always	21	38	27	86	
Total	64	77	42	183	
		Relatives	assist with homework		
Never	25	36	20	81	$\chi^2=14.036$ df=6 P=0.029
Sometimes	22	27	16	53	
Most of the time	6	4	6	16	
Always	11	10	12	33	
Total	64	77	42	183	
	Read	books	other than schoolbooks		
Never	25	27	5	57	$\chi^2=17.356$ df=6 P=0.008
Sometimes	19	29	12	60	
Most of the time	9	9	8	26	
Always	11	12	17	40	
Total	64	77	42	183	

Table 2 indicated the responses of orphaned learners on family factors, which were identified as having an influence on academic achievement. The other factors; societal and school factors, the Chi-square of each of these factors was not significant. This implied that learners who indicated to have family factors available mostly performed higher academically and those who indicated the lack of family factors performed poorly.

There is food at home: frequencies of all responses, that is: always, most of the time, sometimes and never and academic achievements of learners were compared. The Chi-square is statistically significant at 0.05 level. The critical value is equal to 0.05. The observed value is $p = 0.004$. The Chi-square of 18.99 at $df = 6$, is statistical significant at $p = 0.004$. If the observed value is the same or less than the critical value, it implies that the null hypothesis is rejected and the Chi-square is statistically significant. In the above table, $p < 0.05$, it implied that orphaned learners who indicated to have food at home, performed better academically compared to those who did not have food at home.

Availability of time to do homework at home: A Chi-square test was used to test hypothesis and frequencies of all responses and academic achievement of learners were compared. The critical value is 0.05. The Chi-square of 12.726 at $df = 6$ is statistically significant at 0.05 level. The observed value is $p = 0.048$. Therefore $p < 0.05$. This implies that academic achievement of orphaned learners is determined by the availability of time for learners to do homework at home.

There is someone to assist with homework at home: A Chi-square test was used to test the hypothesis. The Chi-square is statistically significant at 0.05 level. The critical value is 0.05. The observed value is $p = 0.043$. The Chi-square of 12.985 at $df = 6$ is statistically significant at 0.043 level which is $p < 0.05$. This implied that learners who indicated having someone helping them with homework at home mostly performed higher academically, and those who indicated the lack of assistance performed badly.

Relatives assist with homeworks: A Chi-square is statistically significant at 0.05 level. The critical value is equal to 0.05. The observed value is $p = 0.029$. The observed value is less than the critical value, which is $p < 0.05$. The Chi-square of 14.036 at $df=6$, is statistical significant at $p=0.029$. This implied that orphaned learners who indicated to have assistance from their relatives in doing homework mostly performed higher academically and those who indicated the lack of relatives' assistance usually performed poorly.

Read books other than school books: A Chi-square test was used to test the hypothesis, and frequencies of all responses and academic achievement of orphaned learners were compared. The Chi-square is statistically significant at 0.05 level. The critical value is equal to 0.05. The observed value is $p = 0.008$. The Chi-square of 17.356 at $df=6$ is statistically significant at 0.008 level. This implied that orphaned learners who indicated reading books other than schoolbooks at home performed higher academically and those who indicated the lack of family factors performed badly.

The other factors: societal and school factors, the Chi-square of each of these factors were not significant since their calculated values ($p > 0.05$) were greater than 0.05 level. This implied that there was no difference in academic achievement of orphaned learners who indicated to have societal and school support and those who did not get such support. A nonsignificant finding should be interpreted to mean that further research is necessary, not that there is no relationship (McMillan & Schumacher, p 367).

Table 3. The relationship between custodian type, area type and orphaned learners' academic achievement.

Custodian Type	Academic Achievement			Total	Statistics
	0-49%	50-69%	70-100%		
Grandparents	29	38	17	84	C = 0.084 $\chi^2 = 10.14$ df = 8 p = 0.259
Relatives	18	15	9	42	
Siblings	3	6	2	11	
Foster parents	9	3	4	16	
Orphanage	5	14	11	30	
Total	64	76	43	183	
Area type					
Rural	33	51	30	114	C= -0,163 $\chi^2 = 5.14$ P= 0.027
Semi-urban	31	26	12	69	
Total	64	77	42	183	
					df= 2

In Table 3 a Chi-square statistical procedure was used to compare frequencies obtained from the different custodian types, area type respectively and orphaned learners' academic achievement. The contingency coefficient (C) was also used to test for the degree of association between the independent and dependent variables.

Custodian type and academic achievement: The critical value was 0.05. The calculated value was $p = 0.259$. In the above table, $p > 0.05$, it implies that a significant difference between dependent and independent variables does not exist. Table 3 indicates that there was no significant relationship between custodian type and orphaned learners' academic achievement. The Chi-Square of 10.14 at $df = 8$ is statistically not significant at 0.05 level.

Further considerations display that the association between the variables of the custodian type and orphaned learners' academic achievement was expressed by a very low positive correlation, that is $C = 0.084$. This implied that academic achievement of orphaned learners was not determined by the type of person who stayed with the learner. In other words, custodian type was found not to correlate with the resilience of orphaned learners ($C = 0.084$, $p > 0.05$).

The area type and academic achievement: The critical value was 0.05. The calculated probability was $p = 0.027$. When the calculated value is equal or less than the critical value, a significant difference exists between variables. In Table 3 the calculated value is $p < 0.05$. Table 3 shows that there was a significant difference between the type of an area and academic achievement of orphaned learners. The Chi-square of 5.139 at $df = 2$ is statistically significant at 0.05 level since $p = 0.027$. Further considerations displayed that, although there was a significant relationship between the type of an area and orphaned learners' academic achievement, the association between the two variables was expressed by a very low negative correlation coefficient, that is $C = -0.163$. This indicated that academic achievement of orphaned learners was more determined by the area they come from.

Table 4. The distribution of orphaned learners per custodian type and area type and the percentage of resilient orphaned learners per custodian type and area type

Custodian type	% of the total sample	Resilient sample per custodian type
Grandparents	46 %	65 %
Relatives	23 %	57 %
Orphanage	16 %	82 %
Foster parents	10 %	40 %
Siblings	5 %	72 %
Total	100 %	
Area type		Resilient sample per area type
Rural	71%	29%
Semi-urban	55%	45%

It was interesting to note that the interval 50%–69% had the highest frequency of orphaned learners. Also noted in Table 4 was that grandparents are the highest custodian type for orphaned learners: 84 (46%) of the whole sample stayed with grandparents. Twenty three percent (23%) of orphaned learners stayed with relatives which is n=42; 30 (16%) of orphaned learners stayed in an orphanage, 16 (10%) with foster parents and 11 (5%) with siblings.

However there is not much difference among the distribution of percentages of orphaned learners good academic achievement (resilience) and their custodian type. Table 4 shows that 55 (65%) of those who stayed with grandparents were found to be resilient. Eighty three percent (83%) of those in orphanages were found to be resilient which is n=25. 7 (40%) of those who stayed with foster parents, 8 (72%) of those who stay with siblings and lastly, 24 (57%) of those who stay with relatives were found to be resilient.

In Table 4 it is further noted that the distribution of academic results of orphaned learners in rural areas, which fall under the categories of 50-64% and 65-100% (indicating resilience or good academic achievement) were the highest percentage (71%) n=114 of the whole sample. Seventy one percent (71%) of the total sample in rural areas were resilient while 38 (55%) of learners in semi-urban areas were resilient. Of the total number of orphaned learners in the sample who came from the rural area, 33 (29%) were not resilient compared to 31 (45 %) of orphaned learners from the semi urban areas, who were not resilient.

4.3 Discussion

The aims of the study were:

- To establish factors, if any, which contribute to academic achievement of orphaned learners.
- To establish the relationship, if any, between orphaned learners' academic achievement and type of custodian.
- To establish the relationship, if any, between orphaned learners' academic achievement and the area.

The study reveals the following with respect to the above aims:

4.3.1 Findings with regard to the factors, which contribute to academic achievement of orphaned learners' academic achievement.

There is a significant difference between the academic performance of orphaned learners who got lower results and those who got higher results in terms of familial factors. Learners, who indicated to have supportive families, seemed to do well academically. Examples of factors mentioned in the study were the following; to have time to do the homework at home, to have someone who assists with homework, availability of food to eat at home, and others. Moat and Palmary (2002) indicated in their study that a warm responsive family make young people do make successful adaptation despite exposure to high risks conditions.

Makiwane (2001) in the report on the pre- launch of the international year of the family stated that 'studies show that the stable and emotional supportive family has been associated with higher levels of performance at school' (Makiwane, 2001, p. 4). This finding is consistent with the findings of other studies (Mdanda: 1999; Jubber 1994, p. 173; Hewison & Tizard, 1980, p.209). 'Learners receiving parental-managed learning programmes and whose homework, school attendance and progress are monitored stays ahead in the education race' (Hewison and Tizard ,1980, p. 209). This is consistent with the findings of (Salomon & Strobel, 1997; Mdanda, 1999, p. 160) where monitoring of educational programmes by the family contributes to academic achievement. The frequency of learners' academic achievement and all other factors; societal and school factors which were measured with a Chi-square test did not show any significant difference. These results did not confirm the findings of Dass-Brailsford (2005) which identified supportive schools and communities as factors that contributed to the resiliency of learners.

4.3.2 Findings with regard to the relationship between the custodian type and orphan learners' academic achievement

There was no significant relationship between orphaned learners academic achievement and the custodian type. The present findings on this study on academic achievement of orphaned learners confirmed the findings of the study conducted by Mthembu (1996). Mthembu (1996) found that there was no significant relationship between students' academic achievement and type of custodian. Mthembu (1996) further mentioned that 'in the society where the socio economic status is low and denies children the opportunity to receive material support, their parents and the next of kin would provide support' (Mthembu, 1996, p. 47).

The findings of the present study indicated that more orphaned learners stay with their grandparents. A study by Makiwane (2001) on Nosizo orphans indicated that the majority of orphans in S.A. are taken care of by their grandparents. Forty six percent (46%) of orphaned learners who stay with grandparents, which is 84 of the total sample, 55 (65%) of them were resilient. Twenty three percent (23%) of the sample stayed with relatives, 30 (16%) in an orphanage, 16 (10%) with foster parents and 11 (5%) with siblings only. The study by Dass-Braisford (2005) showed that grandparents and an extensive network of uncles and aunts could compensate for the neglect of one or both parents. This finding was also confirmed by (Carter & Murdock, 2001; Logan, 2001; Werner, 2001).

4.3.3 Findings with regard to the relationship between type of an area and orphaned learners academic achievement

There is a significant relationship between the area type and orphaned learners resilience. Of the samples used in this study, from learners who stay in rural area, only 33 (29 %) failed and 81(71 %) indicated to be resilient because they achieved higher academically. From the sample of learners who are in semi urban areas, 31(45%) of them failed and 55 % passed.

4.4 Summary

The findings of this study indicated that family involvement in the life of an orphaned learner remained the most important factor which contributed to orphaned learners' academic achievement. The availability of the following family factors: (assisting with home works, making food available at home, reading books other than school books at home) in the life of an orphaned learner seemed to relate to good academic results. Learners who indicated to have these factors available performed better than those who do not have family support. This finding is in line with those mentioned in paragraph 4.3.1. of the present study. On the basis of the research studies reviewed, and the findings of this study, it appears that among the custodian types available for orphaned learners, grandparents are the most available custodian type.

However in the present study it was found that custodian type does not contribute to academic achievement of orphaned learners. This is in line with the findings of Mthembu (1996) reviewed in Chapter 2. The findings of this study further indicated that orphaned learners from rural areas performed better than those in semi urban areas. The next chapter presented a conclusion on the findings of the study. The findings of the study enabled the researcher in the next chapter to make recommendations and outlined the limitations of the study.

CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusion

5.1 Introduction

South Africa, like the rest of the world, seems to be in dire need for strategies to assist orphaned learners survive. In the present chapter the results of the study will be discussed, referring back to the initial research questions. Conclusions will be made from both the literature study and the present study. In the present chapter the researcher highlighted the successes and some limitations, which can assist future researchers when conducting a similar study. It is hoped that recommendations made will assist government departments and other institutions that are involved with orphaned learners in creating programmes, which can assist orphans in being resilient. This can be done by making the family factors available to the life of an orphaned learner.

5.2 Discussion of findings

5.2.1. Factors which contribute to orphaned learners academic achievement

The study revealed that family factors are more significant in influencing academic achievement. This finding is in line with those of (Mdanda, 1997; Salmon & Strobel, 1997; Seitz & Apfel, 1994). The reason for this could be that schools mainly provide academic support with no regard to emotional and physical support, which contribute to academic achievement. This might be the reason for care and support programme in schools, which aims to equip educators with skills to manage and support learners who are affected and infected by HIV/AIDS. As a result most orphaned learners in the study indicated that they do not receive social grants. Most learners indicated that they do not get support from the churches in providing them with food and assistance in doing

homeworks. This indicated the lack of community support in assisting with improving academic achievement of orphaned learners.

5.2.2. Academic achievement and orphaned learners' custodian types.

There is no significant relationship between custody and academic achievement of orphaned learners. The reason could be that most children need family support to survive. This has been confirmed by the first finding in the study. The custody per se does not matter most. What matters most is the availability of family factors in any available custody; like assistance with homework, to have food for breakfast and supper at home, love, acceptance and belonging. Several researchers (Benard, 1999; Boyd & Eckert, 2002) suggested that resilience is promoted by adult support and caring caregivers. The present study revealed that most orphans who achieve better stayed with their grandparents. This finding does not confirm the findings of (Makiwane, 2001) who discovered that most orphans stay with their grandparents, but due to increased poverty and ages of grandparents, they function poor compared to other orphans.

5.2.3. Academic achievement and area

Findings in this study revealed that a significant relationship exists between the area orphan learners stay in and their academic achievement. The reason for this could be that orphan learners need more of warm family environment, where they can get food, support and love which might be available to them at homes in rural areas since that is where grandparents are mostly available compared to urban areas where people work and they are mostly not available. This finding is in line with the findings of (Foster & Germann, 2000) where it was mentioned that the largest increase of the unsupported orphans is higher in urbanized countries. It further indicated that urban areas have weakened family safety nets, since parents in these areas spend most of their time in workplaces not with their families.

5.3 Recommendations

This study opened the following avenues for future research:

- a) Much research is currently needed around orphanages as custody for orphaned learners and orphan learners academic achievement. In particular a comparative study is needed to investigate resilience of orphans who stay with grandparents and those in orphanages.
- b) There is a need to investigate factors, which contribute to the ability of orphaned learners to cope in all phases. The present study has limited itself to intermediate phase learners in primary schools, while there are also orphan learners in secondary schools and tertiary institutions.
- c) More longitudinal studies need to be conducted which investigate foster parents – orphaned child relationship to academic achievement of orphan learners in a longitudinal design. Relatively few studies have been conducted among families using this form of design.
- d) We need to investigate the effect of Life skills and HIV/AIDS programme, in care and support of the infected and affected, on orphaned learners in schools. This is the programme that is currently being implemented in all schools by the Department of Education through the Integrated National Plan for children affected and infected by HIV/AIDS.
- e) As the findings revealed that the availability of food for orphaned learners to eat at home contributed to the academic achievement of learners, it would therefore be of benefit that school's nutrition programmes be fully implemented, co-ordinated and monitored in all schools.
- f) The findings revealed that there are factors which contribute to orphan learners academic achievement, e.g. food available for breakfast and supper, assistance with homework, availability of time to do homework, reading books other than

school books. A program incorporating these factors need to be developed to assist guardians of orphan learners in providing academic, physical and emotional support to learners.

5.4 Limitations of the study

This study has achieved its objectives, but limitations exist with regard to sampling, instrumentation and research topic.

- a) One of the limitations of this study is that the researcher has based the research upon a focused local sample. The researcher would have greater confidence in generalizing research results based upon broader samples, for example the sample consisting of all orphaned learners.
- b) The researcher missed some relevant variables, such as gender, socio economic status and literacy level of the guardians, which would contribute in enriching the current study.
- c) There is a need to supplement the method of data collection used in this study by means of interviews that is to use the respondents' verbal account of information, which would allow the researcher to gather in-depth information about support available to learners.

5.5 Conclusion

In spite of the limitations mentioned above, this study was able to identify factors that promote academic achievement (resilience). It was also able to determine the influence of the areas where orphans stay: assistance orphans receive at home in doing homework as factors, which contribute to academic achievement. When analysis was conducted a significant relationship was evident between the family factors and academic achievement of learners.

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