

**JOURNAL OF GENDER, INFORMATION AND  
DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA (JGIDA)**

ISBN: 2050-4276 (Print) ISSN: 2050-4284 (Online)

- Indexed at: EBSCO, ProQuest, J-Gate and Sabinet
- Accredited by IBSS

Volume 7 Number 3, Dec. 2018

Pp 97-125

**Influence of Home Factors on At-Risk Learners'  
Academic Performance in Limpopo Province,  
South Africa**

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31920/2050-4284/2018/v7n3a6>

**\*ME Letsoalo**

*Centre for Academic Excellence*

*\*E-mail: MaupiELetsoalo@gmail.com*

**RS Maoto**

*Department of Mathematics,  
Science and Technology Education  
E-mail: Satsope.Maoto@ul.ac.za*

&

**KM Chuene**

*Department of Mathematics,  
Science and Technology Education  
University of Limpopo  
Private Bag X1106  
SOVENGA, 0727  
South Africa  
Email: Kabelo.Chuene@ul.ac.za*

---

**Abstract**

This exploratory study followed a qualitative phenomenological design. It explored the influence of home factors on the academic performance of at-risk

learners in South Africa's Limpopo Province. The authors used secondary data from a parent study that sought to determine how dysfunctional families hamper effective learning in primary schools in South Africa's Limpopo Province. Though participants in the parent study included both learners and teachers, this paper reports on findings from ten purposively identified learners from two primary schools in the rural area of Ga Modjadji. Polkinghorne's (1995) analysis of narratives was used to reformulate data from participants using both Bronfenbrenner's (2005) ecological theory and Maslow's (1943) theory of human motivation as paradigmatic lenses. This study concludes that the academic performance of at-risk learners is influenced by multiple factors within their micro- and meso-systems. The home circumstances of at-risk learners appear to be detrimental to meaningful learning. Family dysfunction has a significant negative effect on the performance of learners and, ultimately, on the well-being of children. This study recommends that the Department of Basic Education should sensitise parents to the need for, and importance of, support, as well as provide education interventions for at-risk learners. The department should also provide rehabilitative programmes so that at-risk learners may improve in their performance. Finally, the Department of Social Development should make every effort to ensure that the affected learners have stable care and adequate social support.

**Keywords:** Dysfunctional Family, Learners' Perspective, Academic Performance, Home Factors, At-Risk Learners

## **Introduction**

South Africa's population consists of informal, rural, urban and semi-urban citizens. Citizens who reside in informal and rural areas are generally poor or live in poverty and such people are said to be at-risk citizens (McGranahan, Jacobi, Songsore, Surjadi, & Kjellen, 2001). It follows that most families that reside in the rural areas of South Africa are at-risk families. Learners from such families are at risk since they are more likely not to complete their secondary or their post-secondary education. In rural communities, most families are dependent on social grants for income. The grants, which are received monthly, are insufficient to sustain these families beyond their basic needs. It is at these levels of poverty that the majority of young adults in the country still find themselves, unskilled and jobless.

Studies conducted to determine the factors that affect the academic performance of learners concluded that learner-characteristics, such as

gender, social background and outlook, play varying roles in influencing achievement gaps and enrolment disparities (Chowa, Masa, Ramos, & Ansong, 2015). According to Dee (2005) and Letsoalo (2017a), the many factors that affect academic performance can be grouped as cognitive and non-cognitive factors. Inglis and Lewis (2013) suggested that family characteristics also play a role in academic performance of at-risk learners. Examples of such characteristics are single-parent households, divorced or separated parents, loss of parents and family conflicts. This paper will extend current knowledge by using Bronfenbrenner's (2005) ecological theory and Maslow's (1943) theory of human motivation as a lens through which to explore the influence of home factors on the academic performance of at-risk learners.

### **Literature review**

The meaning of academic performance seems to be 'taken as shared' as authors do not clearly define what academic performance is. Academic performance is said to refer to how an individual learner is able to demonstrate his or her intellectual abilities (Letsoalo, Maoto, Masha, & Lesaoana, 2017). The research community highlights myriad factors that may affect the academic performance of learners. Unqualified educators, underqualified educators, a shortage of staff, inadequate resources, a lack of support and a lack of proper mentorship are some of these factors. Home environment is ranked highly among these factors (Shahzadi & Ahmad, 2011).

Learners are referred to as at-risk when factors such as low socio-economic status (SES), language and cultural differences and dysfunctional family situations are present (Ruff, 1993). Those factors increase the probability of learners' experiencing adverse outcomes such as pregnancy, incarceration, suicide, decreased academic performance and/or dropping out of school (Martin & Vaiga, 2010). The family characteristic that is the most powerful predictor of school performance is SES (which is determined by occupation of principal breadwinner, family income, parents' education, or a combination of these). It has been shown that the higher the SES score of a student's family, the higher the academic achievement of that student (Martin & Vaiga, 2010; Hamid, 2011). Several studies reveal that a student who comes from a higher SES group achieves significantly better test results than a student from a lower SES group, especially in science, languages and humanities

(Aikens & Barbarin, 2008; Singh & Choudhary, 2015). Sui-Chu and Willms (1996) assert that parents from higher SES groups are more involved in their children's school activities than parents from lower SES groups. Greater involvement has been found to foster more positive attitudes towards school, reduces absenteeism and dropping out and enhances academic achievement. Evaluation of SES is not without controversy. As Sirin (2005) points out, SES is assessed by a variety of different combinations of variables, which creates ambiguity when interpreting research findings.

Dysfunctional families are more likely to be unable to provide for their children's basic needs, such as food, shelter, safety and security (Du Preez & Luyt, 2011). As Sadock and Sadock (2003) highlight, dysfunctional families provide chaotic home environments that are frequently associated with conduct disorder and delinquency. This lack of fundamental support has the potential to increase the chances of poor academic performance among learners.

Poverty is a human condition that can affect all interactions that an individual has with the world (Letsoalo, 2017b). The multidimensional interpretation of poverty moves far beyond the notion of poverty as being solely related to a lack of financial resources. Sen (1992) suggests that inadequate education can, in itself, be considered a form of poverty in many societies. Poverty has the potential to create chaotic home environments in which learning is difficult, if not impossible. Learners from deprived home environments are more likely to resort to illegal activities for survival. Although the link between poverty and low student performance in the general population is clear, some schools are successful despite being located in low-income areas, while some poor children are successful in underperforming schools.

Children who have experienced abuse and neglect are at an increased risk for a number of problematic developmental, health, and mental health outcomes, including learning problems (Petersen, Joseph, & Feit, 2013). In particular, learners who experience abuse and/or child neglect at home are more likely to fail academically. As underscored by McCoy and Keen (2009), victims of childhood physical abuse have intellectual and academic problems, resulting in lower academic performance. While such learners generally have lower test scores, they are often diagnosed with learning difficulties, unlike their non-abused peers.

There are studies that report mixed findings on the effect of single parenthood on the achievement of learners. The results of a study by

Milne, Myers, Rosenthal and Ginsburg (1986) show that a mother's employment situation and living in a one-parent family can have a negative effect on school achievement. However, this also differs depending on age, race and family structure. Yaw (2016) found that growing up in a single-parent household may have a profoundly negative impact on a learner's academic performance because of the important role parents play in the academic development of most children. McLanahan and Sandefur (1994) concluded that children who grow up with only one of their biological parents (nearly always the mother) are at a disadvantage across a broad spectrum of outcomes. Their findings

indicate that such children are twice as likely to drop out of high school, 2.5 times as likely to become teen mothers and 1.4 times as likely to be idle - out of school and out of work - when compared to children who grow up with both parents. Children in one-parent families are likely to perform poorly, have poorer class attendance records and lower post-school aspirations. As adults, they tend to have higher rates of divorce. According to McLanahan (1994) these patterns persist even after adjusting for differences in race, parents' education, number of siblings and residential location. Amato, Patterson and Beattie's (2015) findings do not support the notion that single-parent households have serious consequences for the school achievement of U.S. children. Similarly, Herzog and Sudia (1973) argue that there is no difference in school achievement between learners from father-present homes and those from father-absent homes. Therefore, it can be concluded that the absence or presence of the father in the family has a significant effect on the academic performance of the child only under certain circumstances.

Alcohol and drug abuse by parents can result in parents resorting to unacceptable ways of raising their children. For example, a parent who is under the influence of alcohol or drugs could provide alcohol to his or her children. Negative effects of alcohol use can manifest in areas such as planning and executive functioning, memory, spatial operations and attention span (Brown, Tapert, Granholm, & Delis, 2000). Neurological research suggests that underage drinking can impair learning directly by causing alterations in the structure and function of the developing brain, with consequences reaching far beyond adolescence (White & Swartzwelder, 2004). Behavioural research reports that there is a strong correlation between educational performance and substance abuse (Balsa, Giuliano, & French, 2011). The finding of Balsa et al (2011) indicates

that an increase in alcohol consumption results in small, yet statistically significant reductions in overall performance of male students, and in statistically non-significant changes in female students. In females, however, higher levels of drinking result in self-reported academic difficulty. At worst, the consequence of alcohol and substance abuse by parents may lead to their children dropping out of school and leaving their home environments to take up a life on the streets, and street life is a breeding ground for delinquents.

Parental involvement and interest in the schoolwork and educational performance of their children are significantly correlated (Meighan & Harber, 2007; Khajehpour & Ghazvini, 2011). Englund, Luckner, Amy and Egeland (2004) assert that mothers with a higher education level are able to provide more support to their pre-school children in problem-solving. In particular, as reported by Faize and Dahar (2011), performance of learners who have educated mothers is better than that of learners who have illiterate mothers. According to Eccles (2005), parents with higher education make sure that their children are exposed to educational opportunities in their communities. Well-educated parents are more likely to enrol their children at the best schools and provide for tutoring when their children start experiencing difficulties at school. Therefore, it can be asserted that learners need parental support in order to maximise their full potential at school.

### **Purpose of the study**

This exploratory cross-sectional study explored the influence of home factors on the academic performance of at-risk learners in South Africa's Limpopo Province. The guiding questions were:

- What home factors influence the academic performance of at-risk learners in Limpopo Province?
- What implications do these home factors have on how at-risk learners are treated at school?

### **The significance of the study**

Educators and school principals should be able to recognise the symptoms or identifiers of learners from dysfunctional families and apply strategies that would alleviate or curb the effect of home factors before they take root in a child's life. The Department of Basic Education

should put in place policies that advocate (re)training of all educators to address barriers to learning, thereby accommodating all learners in an inclusive learning environment. Parents should be supportive of their children and always avoid behaviours that contribute to a dysfunctional family because such behaviours can easily ruin the life of their children.

Though it was not the purpose of this paper, its findings have implications for how a family is viewed. In the absence of a significant (grand) father, a family is viewed as a mother, grandmother and the children.

### **Theoretical framework**

This study was underpinned by two theories, Bronfenbrenner's (2005) ecological theory and Maslow's theory (1943) of human motivation. Bronfenbrenner's theory looks at the development of an individual within the context of a system of relationships. It posits that child development occurs within an interactive system of nested influences between a child and the environment. The environment consists of five nested structures: a microsystem, a mesosystem, an exosystem, a macrosystem and a chronosystem. Children's microsystems include any immediate relationships or organisations they interact with, such as their immediate family, school, peers, neighbours and caregivers. The more encouraging and nurturing these relationships and places are, the better the child grows (Donald, Lazarus, & Lolwana, 2010). A mesosystem describes how the different aspects of a child's microsystems need to work together for the sake of the child. Mesosystems involve the relationships between the microsystems in the child's life. An exosystem includes other people and places that the child may not often interact with, but which still may have a significant effect on the child, such as places of work of the parents, extended family members and the neighbourhood. A macrosystem is described as a system that involves dominant social and economic structures as well as values, beliefs and practices that influence all other social systems (Bray, Gooskens, Kahn, Moses, & Seekings, 2010). A chronosystem involves the transitions and shifts in one's lifetime. Understanding the interactions of these systems is very important to understanding how at-risk learners develop and what home factors could influence their academic performance.

The theory of human motivation, referred to as Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Maslow, 1943) emphasises the need for human motivation to

realise the full potential in human effort. According to this theory, people are constantly preoccupied with needs that must be met at a given point in time, at which point the response gives birth to another need which is often insatiable in the long run. Maslow's hierarchy postulates that the satisfaction of a certain need will automatically give rise to a desire to attain the next level of need (Maslow, 1943). Lower needs [basic needs - physiological; safety; belongingness and love needs) must be satisfied before higher-order needs (psychological needs (esteem needs) and self-fulfilment` (self-actualisation)] can be satisfied. If there is deficiency or an absence of needs, or some needs are neglected, this can negatively influence the performance and behaviour of a learner at school. This theory guides educators to understand why learners behave the way that they do and it assists in determining how learning may be affected by factors such as physiological or safety hazards.

### **Research methodology**

This exploratory cross-sectional study followed a qualitative phenomenological design to explore the influence of home factors on the academic performance of at-risk learners in South Africa's Limpopo Province (Creswell, 2012). It intended to raise deep issues and make the voices of the at-risk learners heard. Research conducted in this manner also allows the researcher to gain an understanding of social phenomena from the perspective of participants in their natural settings (ibid.). In this study the academic performance of at-risk learners was explored within the context of the interplay between school and home settings.

A purposeful or judgment sampling technique (Cochran, 1977) was used to select information-rich informants. Ten at-risk learners from two primary schools were purposively sampled as information-rich cases for an in-depth study of the issues central to the purpose of this study.

Primary data were collected through life histories; individual interviews and focus-group interviews, as well as observations captured in field notes. Individual and three focus-group interviews were conducted, until a point of information saturation was reached.

Four questions guided the interviews:

- Is there anything that you wish your parents/family can provide you with but they fail to do so?
- Who do you blame for all these problems?



- How do these problems affect you?
- How do you think you can be assisted?

The participating learners were observed during the interviews, both in their homes and at their schools. Field notes captured observations on emotions, analytic comments and the expressions of the participants. To minimise interviewer-effect, independent data collectors recorded their personal reactions to participant responses (West & Blom, 2017). Guided by Polkinghorne’s (1995) analysis of narratives, qualitative data analysis, including the reconstruction of the participants’ system of knowledge; their interpretations of their lives and their classification of experiences (Laverty, 2003), was performed through a thematic approach, guided by the emerging key aspects of Bronfenbrenner’s (2005) ecological theory and Maslow’s (1943) hierarchy of needs.

### Findings and interpretation

This section starts by describing participant profiles generated from the data. The subsequent sub-sections are organised according to those aspects of Bronfenbrenner’s (2005) ecological theory that we found to be dominant. In the sub-sections we also reflect on Maslow’s (1943) hierarchy of needs.

Table I: Distribution of learners in the two schools

School	Learner No.	Present Grade	Gender	Age	Grade(s) Failed	Person living with	Employed/Not
A	1	7	Male	14	1	No parent	Mother farm worker
A	2	6	Male	13	1 and 2	Grandmother	Mother unemployed (in cities with social grant card for kids)
A	3	5	Female	11	-	Both parents (Father and Mother)	Father employed and Mother unemployed
A	4	4	Male	11	2	Mother	Mother unemployed (brother employed)
A	5	3	Female	12	1	Mother (Father not staying with them but takes mother every night)	Unemployed
B	1	7	Female	14	1	Mother	Unemployed
B	2	6	Male	14	1 and 4	Both parents (Father and Mother)	Father in business
B	3	5	Male	12	4	Mother	Unemployed
B	4	4	Male	10	-	Grandmother (Mother passed on)	Unemployed
B	5	3	Male	9	-	Mother	Unemployed

We particularly limit our interpretations to those home factors that seem to influence the academic performance of the participants. Within the identified themes we also interpret the implications of these home factors on how at-risk learners are treated at school.

### ***Participant profiles***

All learners were first-timers in their respective grades. Twenty percent (two out of ten) of the learners lived with both parents, another twenty percent lived with guardians (the grandmother), ten percent (one out of ten) lived with no parent or guardian, and fifty percent (five out of ten) lived with one parent (the mother). None of the learners had parents that were both employed. A total of four learners indicated that one member of the family was employed. The fathers of two learners were employed, one learner's mother was employed and one family had a brother who was employed. Table I makes this information more explicit.

Families of all the learners from the two primary schools were found to be dysfunctional. They struggled to provide their children with basic needs, such as food, shelter, safety and security (Du Preez & Luyt, 2011). Learner A5 stated clearly that she wanted her father, who was not staying with them, to stop taking her mother away during the night because, out of fear, her mother leaves without cooking. She further reported that her mother was afraid that their father might beat her or burn the house down. Learner B1 also reported not having enough food at home and that her mother resorted to borrowing money to buy food. That struggle to provide a conducive home environment often led to disorderly and delinquent conduct on the part of the learners (Sadock & Sadock, 2003), as is evident from some of the remarks made by the learners:

Learner A2: "My elder sister is staying at her boyfriend's house. I sometimes run away and come late. I also steal money from neighbours to buy food since my mother left home to cities with our Social Grant card".

Learner A3: "I wish I could run away or kill myself. I go to school hungry and always feel tired".

Learner B1: "I feel jealous looking at other learners with beautiful clothes. And get angry, especially on casual days. I don't play with them. I hate other learners".

Learner B2: “My mother fights me. I once stole my father’s car and hit the wall”.

It is clear that these learners already experience family challenges that result in feelings of neglect, lack of self-motivation and low self-esteem, which often leads to deviant behaviour, impacting on their academic performance.

### ***Non-repeaters’ micro- and meso-systems***

Table I, column labelled ‘Grade(s) Failed’, indicates that thirty percent (three out of ten) of learners had not repeated any grade. One of those non-repeaters, learner A3, an eleven-year-old female in grade 5, who stayed with both parents, reported that her father was overtly abusive to her mother. She responded that:

At home, my father buys mealie-meal only. My mother cooks *morogo* all the time. When my father comes home he will beat her for not finding job because he is tired of eating *morogo* and working alone for dogs. I wish I could run away or kill myself. I go to school hungry and always feel tired.

Morogo is a wild African dark-green leafy vegetable from the Amaranthaceae family that can be harvested from the wild or is cultivated (Van der Walt, Loots, Ibrahim, & Bezuidenhout, 2009; Medoua & Oldewage-Theron, 2014).

Children are indirectly or directly affected by the beatings their mothers receive. Although in this case it could not be concluded that the mother’s beatings affected the child’s performance, such behaviour ultimately impacts on the children’s performance at school. It could be deduced from the learner’s response that her motivation towards school activities had been tempered by the failure to have her physiological needs (food) met. In addition, the abusive relationship within the family, particularly from the father, impacted on the learner’s psychological wellbeing. The learner’s words “...run away or kill myself” depict a feeling of despondence.

Learner B4, a ten-year-old male in Grade 4, appeared to receive support and overprotection from his grandmother. Although he might appear to have feelings of security and a sense of belongingness, he reported missing the warmth of his mother. He reported that his mother passed on and his grandmother, who could not read or write, did not

want him to play with other children for fear that he would be killed. This happened to his mother, who was beautiful and who worked in town. Although it would seem proper to support children through overprotection, it is the psychological scar that would ultimately remain. There was an embedded cry in learner B4's response:

My mother has passed on. My grandmother does not want us to play with other children. She says they will kill us as they did to my mother who was beautiful and working in town.

A child whose caregiver does not relate well to neighbours may display conflicting emotions and uncertainty, which may affect a child's development. That learner B4's overprotective grandmother did not want him to play with other children who were perceived to have been jealous of their late mother may affect the learner's need for interpersonal relationships which may be required during classroom interactions. Implicit was a degree of indoctrination in the grandmother-child relationship. Although the grandmother's concern could have about providing security or safety to her grandchild, the learner longed for a sense of belongingness among friends. This clash of concerns, or neglect of the learner's needs, appeared to be sinking into the learner's mind. In one way or the other, this could later influence his motivation for self-actualisation which, in the context of this paper, may originate from academic performance.

Learner B5, a nine-year-old male in Grade 3, reported dissatisfaction with the misuse of grant money, which was supposed to be used for his physiological needs, through gambling. He stated that "My mother plays cards with my money. She says she gave birth to me, I must eat food at school and learn to wash my clothes". The mother's perception of school appeared to be a means of serving the child's basic needs instead of balancing this with the child's educational needs. Unfortunately for this learner the dissatisfaction recurred at school. He reported that I don't want to go to school. I just go to school because I want to eat food to stay alive. My teacher always put me in front of the class for my friends to laugh at me. I'm afraid of her and my friends who beat me. I don't know what makes me noisy in class. That's why I absent myself from class, I hate school.

Failure by a teacher to provide necessary the protection and support for the at-risk learner, who was being ostracised from the other learners, did not provide a secure and safe environment. For this learner, there was the negative synergy between his treatment at home and his

treatment at school. This resulted in a lack of personal affirmation that may, unfortunately, deprive him of conducive relationships in his mesosystem. That lack of positive synergy possibly contributed to his deviant behaviour, as expressed at school through truancy and misbehaviour.

Three contributing factors emerged from the three cases: abuse (psychological, physical), poverty and child neglect. Although at this stage it could not be concluded that these factors impacted positively or negatively on the motivation towards school work of the three learners, their basic needs were not met and that interfered with their micro- and meso-systems. Once a learner's micro- and meso-systems are dysfunctional, their academic performance will ultimately be negatively impacted. For a learner to be academically successful, the different aspects of their lives, including the relationships between their microsystems, need to work well together (Lightfoot, Cole, & Cole, 2009). Although these three at-risk learners reported that their academic performance could be attributed to doing their home-work and finding the school work easy, it could not be concluded that intrinsic motivation played a role. In these cases, the basic needs of the learners were not satisfied and yet they performed well academically. In terms of Maslow's theory (1943), satisfaction of basic needs automatically gives rise to feelings of accomplishment, but that was not the case here.

### ***Grade-repeaters' micro- and meso-systems***

Seven at-risk learners repeated a grade. Six of them were from unemployed single-mother families and experienced difficult living conditions. One learner, who stayed with both parents in good living conditions, repeated two grades. The treatment of the learners within their mesosystems exposed different symptoms of externalising and internalising behaviours (Al-Yagon, 2015).

#### *a) Treatment and externalising behaviour*

It could be deduced from the experiences of two male learners in Grade 6, learner A2 (a thirteen-year old) and learner B2 (a fourteen-year old) and one female learner in Grade 3, learner A5 (a fourteen-year old) that they were unhappy with how they were treated at home and/or at school and by their peers. Thus they resorted to expressing their emotions openly. Learner A2 found his grandmother hard on him, while easy-

going to his siblings. The same treatment occurred at school as his teacher would not intervene when he was bullied by his class mates. He reported:

My grandmother says I must wash my clothes and also for my 3 siblings because her arm is painful and my elder sister is staying at her boyfriend's house. I sometimes run away and come late. She always says God will punish me. I steal money from neighbours to buy food since my mother left home to cities with our Social Grant card. I wish social workers could visit us every month and see what we eat because my grandmother does not want to report my mother.

So our school clothes are always dirty. My class mates think I smell like a cow and the teacher does not do them anything. I beat other children who laugh at me, and feel like hitting the teacher with a duster and never come again.

Learner A2 emerged dissatisfied with his mother, grandmother, class mates and the teacher. He found himself without support, abused and neglected. His utterance that “I need to look beautiful like other children” revealed a sense of longing for self-esteem. It could have been his failure to see a way out of his mesosystem’s maltreatment that led to noncompliance with his grandmother’s instructions, stealing money from neighbours, beating other children and having feelings of hitting the teacher. Such externalising behaviours ultimately resulted in this learner failing two grades. It could be deduced that he had difficulties in attention and self-regulation at school and that negatively impacted on his academic performance.

Learner B2 he had better living conditions when compared to all the other at-risk learners, but his relationship with his mother upset him most. Although he did not explicitly state his relationships in the school environment, there was an undertone regarding his failure in two grades. He stated that:

I want my mother to stop forcing me to school. I know business because my father thinks I'm 'intelligent, I'm bright'. When I'm in class I think about money. My mother fights me. I once stole my father's car and hit the wall. I think I'm too old to be failed in primary. I can do my homework, I'm bright, but primary school is not for me. My time to do business is wasted.

Learner B2 displayed a lack of intrinsic motivation to learn due to having developed an interest in business and that clashed with the mother's wish for him to study. Although his mother could have been playing her role, the learner saw it as maltreatment and that affected his relationship with her. That lack of a happy mother-child relationship ultimately affected other relationships within this learner's mesosystem. He manifested by him stealing his father's car and hitting a wall. It could also be deduced from the excerpt that the learner had feelings of denial and anger; "I'm too old to be failed", "Primary school is not for me", "My time to do business is wasted". Without intervention from the family, it would be hard for the learner to ultimately achieve his potential.

Learner A5's anger was towards her father who did not to stay with them, but used to take her mother away every night. Although she failed a grade once, her age did not correspond well with being in Grade 3. She lamented:

I want my father to stop taking my mother away from us during the night. No one helps me with my homework. Sometimes she leaves the house without cooking as she is afraid of my dad who is not staying with us, might beat her or burn the house. I am always hungry in class. I don't understand a thing. I sometimes steal other learners' lunch boxes.

In her case, it was more out of fear of domestic abuse and her mother's neglect of her children that led to her externalising behaviour of stealing other learners' lunch boxes. The learner's poor academic performance could have been contributed to by her difficulty in concentrating in class because of the domestic abuse.

*a) Treatment and internalising behaviour*

Four learners, A1; A4; B1 and B3 reported some aspects of internalising behaviour. Learner A1, a fourteen-year old male in Grade 7, felt lonely and alienated, with no parental figure at home and no one to assist him with his school work. He was convinced that no one understood him and that made him worried, angry and withdrawn. He stated that "...my mother is never home, as she is working in the farm far from home. I get angry and leave the classroom for good until the next day". Although there was no maltreatment, absence of a parent figure to offer a secure attachment contributed much to his internalising behaviour and that

affected his motivation to be attentive at school. In the case of learner A4, the mother's failure to provide basic needs engendered sadness. The family relied on his brother, who occasionally brought good food home. He survived by eating enough at school. Reportedly upset by his mother, he mentioned that:

I need to have tea and bread in the morning. My mother tells me to eat enough at school and stop asking things she does not have, like asking for Vaseline, knowing she is not working. I always feel sad when I'm at school when I look at neat children.

At his age, eleven-year old learner A4 realised a need to be neat so that he would become accepted by his friends. His feelings of sadness could ultimately engender a lack of confidence, social withdrawal, a sense of inferiority and loneliness.

In the case of learner B1 (a fourteen-year old female in Grade 7), the problem lay with the grandmother who, besides receiving an old age grant, did not bother to assist her struggling mother but, instead, shared mealie meal with them, bought with borrowed money. She reported feeling jealous and anger, especially on casual days when looking at children with beautiful clothes. She uttered that "I don't play with them. I hate other children". Learner B3 (a twelve-year old male) reported a lack of assistance with school work by any family member. Instead of finding encouragement at school, he reported being laughed at by other learners when he had failed and being beaten by the teacher, which made him to abscond from classes and stay in the toilets. When asked why the teacher beat him, he stated that "I always get low marks in class". He found school difficult because his friends and teachers said he would not pass. He wished to be kept in a hostel so that he could be fed, assisted with homework and have clothes bought for him.

#### *a) Concluding thoughts*

In the case of the seven at-risk learners in this category; poverty, non-parental involvement, child neglect and maltreatment emerged as key home factors that contributed to the poor academic performance of the learners. The learners appeared to have developed various externalising and internalising behaviours. Grade repetition, as mandated by South Africa's Ministerial Committee (2008), is generally ineffective as an intervention to address early learning problems, regardless of when the



grade repetition occurs. This became evident particularly from learner B2's remarks. He felt out of place and that encouraged ill-discipline, instead of being motivated to work harder and improve academically.

## **Discussion**

Although various factors were identified, in this section we will discuss these factors within the broader themes of the relationship between motivation and microsystems and academic performance.

### *Motivation and academic performance*

What emerged from the excerpts was that the participating learners came from low-SES families where, in nine cases, the father was absent or his support was minimal. Living in dire poverty meant that families were less likely to provide enriching educational experiences for their children. This finding is in line with the findings by Bainbridge and Lasley II (2004) who maintain that many children of non-English-speaking immigrants who entered the US, whose parents have little or no formal education and who lack the resources to provide academic stimulation to their children, are twice as likely to live in poverty and have lower academic achievement than white children. The chances of academic success of these nine at-risk learners appeared to be hampered by poverty. This was evident in the utterances of learners A3 and B3, who said that they always went to school hungry and failed to understand in class and, thus, performed poorly. The parental role was found to be crucial in the achievement of the learners' success. The findings revealed that the participants had no parental involvement with their academic work. This was echoed by some learners who reported that their mothers could not assist them because of a lack of knowledge. The only remaining motivation for the learners to continue attending school seemed to be access to food rather than access to learning.

### *Microsystems' relationships and academic performance*

For the participants in this study, deprivation is not only related to food and clothing but includes the educational support that is expected at microsystem level from parents, grandparents and siblings. This is because those who could help are less skilled to do so, or are not available to assist. This could explain why the parents of the participants

are mainly unemployed, thus drawing attention to the relationship between educational levels, employability and academic performance.

Bullying is a problem that can have negative consequences for the general climate within a school and for the right of learners to learn in a safe environment without fear. Since bullying is comprised of direct behaviours, such as teasing, taunting, threatening, hitting and stealing that are initiated by one or more learners against a victim, at-risk learners are more likely to experience one of these bullying behaviours. At-risk learners are also more likely to experience bullying indirectly by being socially excluded by other learners. This form of bullying is more prevalent among female learners (Ahmad & Smith, 1994). Victims of bullying often fear school and consider school to be an unsafe and unhappy place. Therefore, bullying may negatively affect the academic performance of at-risk learners. Arguably, bullying may influence the drop-out process. A parental awareness campaign can be conducted during parents meetings (or parent-educator meetings) aimed at increased parental awareness of the problem. In other words, an intervention plan that involves all learners, parents and school staff is required to ensure that all learners can learn in a safe and fear-free environment. To counter bullying, staff or educators and learners (especially in secondary schools) may need to cooperate in developing and implementing appropriate policies and procedures (Peterson & Rigby, 1999).

## **Conclusion**

In this article we explored the influence of home factors on the academic performance of at-risk learners in two primary schools in Limpopo Province, South Africa. Two research questions guided the study: a) What home factors influence the academic performance of at-risk learners in Limpopo Province? and b) What implications do these home factors have on how at-risk learners are treated at school? In concluding this paper, we revert to these two questions.

## **Home factors influencing at-risk learners' academic performance**

The findings of this study revealed that the participating learners came from low-SES families, where one parent, the father, was absent. The presence of the mother is not conducive to the provision of both economic and school work support. Though the absence of a father has been found to affect financial provision negatively, more than the

absence of the mother in an American study, performance in schools has no direct relationship to the gender of the absent parent (Downey, 1994). This observation may require further observations in the context of SES in rural South Africa.

The study also reveals that in cases wherein the family or household is headed by the mother (single-parent household) – then such a mother does not necessarily get involved interpersonally in the lives of her children. In particular, such mothers are more likely not to assist their children with academic work due to, among others, irregular time periods they spend away from home for economic reasons. In such cases, the role of mothers is often taken up by grandparents or guardians. This may be an added variable to home factors that may affect learner performance and may thus require further exploration.

It is concluded that, in order for learning to take place, learners require a healthy environment that is conducive to learning. In other words, creating the conditions that foster the academic success of learners has never been more important (Letsoalo, 2017b). A dysfunctional family is one of the obstacles to achieving this goal if children from such families are not exposed to necessary interventions in the early stages of their lives. The education level of parents plays a critical role in the performances of learners at school. Parental roles may include encouragement, support and supervision (Masemola & Letsoalo, 2017). In particular, the mothers' education level is a significant predictor of school-programme completion (Letsoalo, 2017b). Parents need to be informed of their responsibilities to enable them to take part in their children's education. This involvement has to include insight into their children's progress, participation in decision-making and awareness of information on educational issues.

#### *Implications for at-risk learners' reception at school*

This study established that home-based factors, such as absent parents, poverty, child neglect, illiteracy and non-parental involvement in educational matters, put learners at risk for academic failure. They have the potential to negatively affect the academic performance of learners. The micro- and meso-systems of at-risk learners appear to impact unfavourably on meaningful learning. Family dysfunction has a significant negative effect on learners' performance, and ultimately on the

well-being of children. There may be cases where educators are doing all the right things, yet learners' achievement remains low.

The study showed that home-based factors for learners at risk also include the quality of academic support that the learners receive at home. In the absence of parents, grandparents and siblings that are either present or skilled to provide academic support, it can be asserted that undesired academic performance of at risk learners is, among other factors, also engendered from the home.

Dysfunctional relationships in the microsystem of at-risk learners are obstacles to achieving that goal if children from such environments are not exposed to necessary interventions in the early stages of their lives. In the absence of such interventions, at-risk learners may grow up to become at-risk adults and, thus, adversely affect the quality of the labour personnel drawn the areas from which they come. This is not economically viable for any country. The schooling system needs to be revised to consider possible and viable interventions, such as accelerated schools for at-risk learners, in order to redirect their lives by keeping them in schools, altering their chances of success and breaking the vicious cycle of poverty in the areas from which they come. Existing interventions at institutions of higher learning come at a stage when the majority of at-risk learners may have been sifted out of the system. Large-scale studies should be conducted to model and develop a comprehensive framework from which more reliable deductions on interventions in the academic development of at-risk learners can be drawn.

### **Conflict of interest**

The authors declare that they have no financial or personal relationship(s) that could have influenced them inappropriately in writing this article.

### **Acknowledgements**

Authors wish to thank Given Luvhimbi (Information Librarian: Tshwane University of Technology) for some technical assistance. Special appreciation goes to Rosina Mogale (SMT Member: Medingen School, Ga-Kgapane) for making data available and Andrew Scholtz (The Computer Room) for language editing.

## References

- Ahmad, Y., & Smith, P. K. (1994). Bullying in schools and the issue of sex differences. In J. Archer, *Male violence*. London: Routledge.
- Aikens, N. L., & Barbarin, O. (2008). Socioeconomic differences in reading trajectories: The contribution of family, neighborhood, and school contexts. *Journal of Psychology*, 100, 235 - 251.
- Al-Yagon, M. (2015). Fathers and mothers of children with learning disabilities: Links between emotional and coping resources. *Learning Disability Quarterly*, 38(2), 112 - 128.
- Amato, P., Patterson, S., & Beattie, B. (2015). Single-parent households and children's educational achievement: A state-level analysis. *Soc Sci Res*, 53, 191 - 202.
- Bainbridge, W. L., & Lasley II, T. J. (2004). Demographics, diversity, and K-12 accountability. *Education and Urban Society*, 34(4), 422 - 437.
- Balsa, A. I., Giuliano, L. M., & French, M. T. (2011). The effects of alcohol use on academic achievement in high school. *Economics of Education Review*, 30(1), 1 - 15.
- Bray, R., Gooskens, I., Kahn, L., Moses, S., & Seekings, J. (2010). *Growing up in the new South Africa: Childhood and adolescence in post-apartheid Cape Town*. Cape Town: Human Sciences Research Council.
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (2005). Ecological systems theory (1992). In U. Bronfenbrenner, *Making human beings human: Bioecological perspectives on human development* (pp. 106 - 173). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Brown, S. A., Tapert, S. F., Granholm, E., & Delis, D. C. (2000). Neurocognitive functioning of adolescents: effects of protracted alcohol use. *Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research*, 24(2), 164 - 171.
- Chowa, G. N., Masa, R. D., Ramos, Y., & Ansong, D. (2015). How do student and school characteristics influence youth academic achievement in Ghana? A hierarchical linear modeling of Ghana YouthSave baseline data. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 45, 129 - 140.
- Cochran, W. (1977). *Sampling techniques* (3rd ed.). Harvard University: John Wiley & Sons.

- Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Educational research: Planning, conducting and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research*. New Jersey: Pearson Education, Inc.
- Dee, T. S. (2005). *Teachers and the gender gaps in student achievement: Working Paper #11660*. Retrieved July 07, 2016, from <http://www.nber.org/papers/w11660>
- Donald, D., Lazarus, S., & Lolwana, P. (2010). *Educational psychology in social context* (4th ed.). Oxford University Press SA.
- Downey, D. B. (1994). The school performance of children from single-mother and single-father families: Economic or interpersonal deprivation? *Journal of Family Issues*, 15(1), 129 - 147.
- Du Preez, N., & Luyt, W. (2011). *Fundamentals and developmental psychology in youth corrections* (2nd ed.). Pretoria: UNISA Press.
- Eccles, J. S. (2005, November). Influence of parents' education on their children's educational attainments: The role of parent and child perceptions. *London Review of Education*, 3(3), 191 - 204.
- Englund, M., Luckner, E., Amy, W. J., & Egeland, B. (2004). Children's achievement in early elementary school: Longitudinal effects of parental involvement, expectations, and quality of assistance. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 96(4), 723 - 730.
- Faize, F. A., & Dahar, M. A. (2011, June). Effect of mother's level of education on secondary Grade Science students in Pakistan. *Research Journal of International Studies*(19), 13 - 19
- Hamid, M. O. (2011). Socio-economic characteristics and English language achievement in Rural Bangladesh. *Bangladesh e-Journal of Sociology*, 8(2), 31 - 51.
- Herzog, E., & Sudia, C. (1973). Children in fatherless families. In B. M. Caldwell, & H. N. Ricciut, *Review of child development research* (pp. 141 - 232 ). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Inglis, D., & Lewis, A. (2013). Adolescents at risk of dropping out in a high-risk community. *Child Abuse Research: A South African Journal*, 14(1), 46 - 54.
- Khajehpour, M., & Ghazvini, S. D. (2011). The role of parental involvement affect in children's academic performance. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 15, pp. 1204 - 1208.
- Laverty, S. M. (2003). Hermeneutic phenomenology and phenomenology: A comparison of historical and methodological considerations. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 2(3), 21 - 35.

- Letsoalo, M. E. (2017a, June). Disaggregated analysis of performances of Grade 12 learners in Gauteng Province, Republic of South Africa. *Journal of Education and Vocational Research*, 8(2), 34 - 44.
- Letsoalo, M. E. (2017b). Learners' perceptions on factors that affect their overall performances in mathematics. *Gender & Behaviour*, 15(3), 9502 - 9523.
- Letsoalo, M. E., Maoto, R. S., Masha, J. K., & Lesaoana, M. A. (2017). The effect of gender on learner achievement in Gauteng and the Western Cape Provinces of South Africa. *Gender and Behaviour*, 15(2), 9177 - 9184.
- Lightfoot, C., Cole, M., & Cole, S. R. (2009). Social and emotional development in adolescence. *The development of children*, 6.
- Martin, L., & Vaiga, P. (2010). Do inequalities in parents' education play an important role in PISA students' mathematics achievement test score disparities? *Econ. Educ. Rev.*, 29(6), 1016 - 1033.
- Masemola, L. P., & Letsoalo, M. E. (2017). Comparative study of matriculants' performances in Mpumalanga province, South Africa. *Gender and Behaviour*, 15(4), 10187 - 10199.
- Maslow, A. H. (1943). A theory of human motivation. *Psychological Review*, 50, 370 - 396.
- McCoy, M. L., & Keen, S. M. (2009). Risk factors for child maltreatment. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 19 - 29.
- McGranahan, G., Jacobi, P., Songsore, J., Surjadi, C., & Kjellen, M. (2001). *The citizen at risk: From Urban sanitation to sustainable cities*. London and Sterling, VA: Earthscan Publications Ltd.
- McLanahan, S. (1994, Summer). The consequences of single motherhood. *The American Prospect*.
- McLanahan, S., & Sandefur, G. (1994). *Growing up with a single parent. What hurts, What helps*. Cambridge, MA 02138: Harvard University Press.
- Medoua, G. N., & Oldewage-Theron, W. H. (2014). Effect of drying and cooking on nutritional value and antioxidant capacity of morogo (*Amaranthus hybridus*) a traditional leafy vegetable grown in South Africa. , 51(4), *Journal of Food Science and Technology*, 51(4), 736 - 742.
- Meighan, R., & Harber, C. (2007). *Sociology of educating* (5th ed.). London: Ashford Colour Press Ltd.

- Milne, A. M., Myers, D. E., Rosenthal, A. S., & Ginsburg, A. (1986, July). Single parents, working mothers, and the educational achievements of school children. *Sociology of Education*, 59(3), 125 - 139.
- Petersen, A., Joseph, J., & Feit, M. (2013). New directions in child abuse and neglect research. In Report of the Committee on Child Maltreatment Research, Policy, and Practice for the Next Decade: Phase II. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.
- Peterson, L., & Rigby, K. (1999). Countering bullying at an Australian secondary school with students as helpers. *Journal of Adolescence*, 22(4), 481 - 492.
- Polkinghorne, D. E. (1995). Narrative configuration in qualitative analysis. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 8(1), 5 - 23.
- Ruff, T. P. (1993). Middle school students at risk: What do we do with the most vulnerable children in American education? *Middle School Journal*, 24, 10 - 12.
- Sadock, B. J., & Sadock, V. A. (2003). *Synopsis of psychiatry: Behavioural sciences a clinical psychiatry*. Philadelphia: Lippincott and Wilkins.
- Sen, A. (1992). *Inequality reexamined*. . Oxford: Oxford.
- Shahzadi, E., & Ahmad, Z. (2011). A study on academic performance of university students. *Recent Advances in Statistics*, 255 - 268.
- Singh, P., & Choudhary, G. (2015). Impact of socioeconomic status on academic-achievement of school students: An investigation. *International Journal of Applied Research*, 1(4), 266 - 272.
- Sirin, S. R. (2005). Socioeconomic status and academic achievement: A meta-analytic review of research. *Review of Educational Research*, 75(3), 417 - 453.
- Sui-Chu, E. H., & Willms, J. D. (1996, April). Effects of parental involvement on eighth-grade achievement. *Sociology of Education*, 69(2), 126 - 141.
- Van der Walt, A. M., Loots, D. T., Ibrahim, M. I., & Bezuidenhout, C. C. (2009). Minerals, trace elements and antioxidant phytochemicals in wild African dark-green leafy vegetables (morogo). *South African Journal of Science*, 105(11 - 12), 444 - 448.
- West, B. T., & Blom, A. G. (2017, 1 June). Explaining interviewer effects: A research synthesis. *Journal of Survey Statistics and Methodology*, 5(2), 175 - 211.



White, A. M., & Swartzwelder, H. S. (2004). Hippocampal function during adolescence: a unique target of ethanol effects. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, 1021, 206 - 220.

Yaw, L. H. (2016). The effect of single parenting on student academic performance in secondary schools in Brunei. *The Social Sciences*(11), 698 - 703.

#### References

Ahmad, Y., & Smith, P. K. (1994). Bullying in schools and the issue of sex differences. In J. Archer, *Male violence*. London: Routledge.

Aikens, N. L., & Barbarin, O. (2008). Socioeconomic differences in reading trajectories: The contribution of family, neighborhood, and school contexts. *Journal of Psychology*, 100, 235 - 251.

Al-Yagon, M. (2015). Fathers and mothers of children with learning disabilities: Links between emotional and coping resources. *Learning Disability Quarterly*, 38(2), 112 - 128.

Amato, P., Patterson, S., & Beattie, B. (2015). Single-parent households and children's educational achievement: A state-level analysis. *Soc Sci Res*, 53, 191 - 202.

Bainbridge, W. L., & Lasley II, T. J. (2004). Demographics, diversity, and K-12 accountability. *Education and Urban Society*, 34(4), 422 - 437.

Balsa, A. I., Giuliano, L. M., & French, M. T. (2011). The effects of alcohol use on academic achievement in high school. *Economics of Education Review*, 30(1), 1 - 15.

Bray, R., Gooskens, I., Kahn, L., Moses, S., & Seekings, J. (2010). *Growing up in the new South Africa: Childhood and adolescence in post-apartheid Cape Town*. Cape Town: Human Sciences Research Council.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (2005). Ecological systems theory (1992). In U. Bronfenbrenner, *Making human beings human: Bioecological perspectives on human development* (pp. 106 - 173). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications Ltd.

Brown, S. A., Tapert, S. F., Granholm, E., & Delis, D. C. (2000). Neurocognitive functioning of adolescents: effects of protracted alcohol use. *Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research*, 24(2), 164 - 171.

Chowa, G. N., Masa, R. D., Ramos, Y., & Ansong, D. (2015). How do student and school characteristics influence youth academic achievement in Ghana? A hierarchical linear modeling of Ghana

- Youth Save base line data. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 45, 129 - 140.
- Cochran, W. (1977). *Sampling techniques* (3rd ed.). Harvard University: John Wiley & Sons.
- Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Educational research: Planning, conducting and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research*. New Jersey: Pearson Education, Inc.
- Dee, T. S. (2005). Teachers and the gender gaps in student achievement: Working Paper #11660. Retrieved July 07, 2016, from <http://www.nber.org/papers/w11660>
- Donald, D., Lazarus, S., & Lolwana, P. (2010). *Educational psychology in social context* (4th ed.). Oxford University Press SA.
- Downey, D. B. (1994). The school performance of children from single-mother and single-father families: Economic or interpersonal deprivation? *Journal of Family Issues*, 15(1), 129 - 147.
- Du Preez, N., & Luyt, W. (2011). *Fundamentals and developmental psychology in youth corrections* (2nd ed.). Pretoria: UNISA Press.
- Eccles, J. S. (2005, November). Influence of parents' education on their children's educational attainments: The role of parent and child perceptions. *London Review of Education*, 3(3), 191 - 204.
- Englund, M., Luckner, E., Amy, W. J., & Egeland, B. (2004). Children's achievement in early elementary school: Longitudinal effects of parental involvement, expectations, and quality of assistance. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 96(4), 723 - 730.
- Faize, F. A., & Dahar, M. A. (2011, June). Effect of mother's level of education on secondary Grade Science students in Pakistan. *Research Journal of International Studies*(19), 13 - 19.
- Hamid, M. O. (2011). Socio-economic characteristics and English language achievement in Rural Bangladesh. *Bangladesh e-Journal of Sociology*, 8(2), 31 - 51.
- Herzog, E., & Sudia, C. (1973). Children in fatherless families. In B. M. Caldwell, & H. N. Ricciut, *Review of child development research* (pp. 141 - 232 ). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Inglis, D., & Lewis, A. (2013). Adolescents at risk of dropping out in a high-risk community. *Child Abuse Research: A South African Journal*, 14(1), 46 - 54.
- Khajehpour, M., & Ghazvini, S. D. (2011). The role of parental involvement affect in children's academic performance. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 15, pp. 1204 - 1208.

- Laverty, S. M. (2003). Hermeneutic phenomenology and phenomenology: A comparison of historical and methodological considerations. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 2(3), 21 - 35.
- Letsoalo, M. E. (2017a, June). Disaggregated analysis of performances of Grade 12 learners in Gauteng Province, Republic of South Africa. *Journal of Education and Vocational Research*, 8(2), 34 - 44.
- Letsoalo, M. E. (2017b). Learners' perceptions on factors that affect their overall performances in mathematics. *Gender & Behaviour*, 15(3), 9502 - 9523.
- Letsoalo, M. E., Maoto, R. S., Masha, J. K., & Lesaoana, M. A. (2017). The effect of gender on learner achievement in Gauteng and the Western Cape Provinces of South Africa. *Gender and Behaviour*, 15(2), 9177 - 9184.
- Lightfoot, C., Cole, M., & Cole, S. R. (2009). Social and emotional development in adolescence. *The development of children*, 6.
- Martin, L., & Vaiga, P. (2010). Do inequalities in parents' education play an important role in PISA students' mathematics achievement test score disparities? *Econ. Educ. Rev*, 29(6), 1016 - 1033.
- Masemola, L. P., & Letsoalo, M. E. (2017). Comparative study of matriculants' performances in Mpumalanga province, South Africa. *Gender and Behaviour*, 15(4), 10187 - 10199.
- Maslow, A. H. (1943). A theory of human motivation. *Psychological Review*, 50, 370 - 396.
- McCoy, M. L., & Keen, S. M. (2009). Risk factors for child maltreatment. *Child Abuse and Neglect*, 19 - 29.
- McGranahan, G., Jacobi, P., Songsore, J., Surjadi, C., & Kjellen, M. (2001). *The citizen at risk: From Urban sanitation to sustainable cities*. London and Sterling, VA: Earthscan Publications Ltd.
- McLanahan, S. (1994, Summer). The consequences of single motherhood. *The American Prospect*.
- McLanahan, S., & Sandefur, G. (1994). *Growing up with a single parent. What hurts, What helps*. Cambridge, MA 02138: Harvard University Press.
- Medoua, G. N., & Oldewage-Theron, W. H. (2014). Effect of drying and cooking on nutritional value and antioxidant capacity of morogo (*Amaranthus hybridus*) a traditional leafy vegetable grown in South Africa. , 51(4). *Journal of Food Science and Technology*, 51(4), 736 - 742.

- Meighan, R., & Harber, C. (2007). *Sociology of educating* (5th ed.). London: Ashford Colour Press Ltd.
- Milne, A. M., Myers, D. E., Rosenthal, A. S., & Ginsburg, A. (1986, July). Single parents, working mothers, and the educational achievements of school children. *Sociology of Education*, 59(3), 125 - 139.
- Petersen, A., Joseph, J., & Feit, M. (2013). New directions in child abuse and neglect research. In *Report of the Committee on Child Maltreatment Research, Policy, and Practice for the Next Decade: Phase II*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.
- Peterson, L., & Rigby, K. (1999). Countering bullying at an Australian secondary school with students as helpers. *Journal of Adolescence*, 22(4), 481 - 492.
- Polkinghorne, D. E. (1995). Narrative configuration in qualitative analysis. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 8(1), 5 - 23.
- Ruff, T. P. (1993). Middle school students at risk: What do we do with the most vulnerable children in American education? *Middle School Journal*, 24, 10 - 12.
- Sadock, B. J., & Sadock, V. A. (2003). *Synopsis of psychiatry: Behavioural sciences a clinical psychiatry*. Philadelphia: Lippincott and Wilkins.
- Sen, A. (1992). *Inequality reexamined*. . Oxford: Oxford.
- Shahzadi, E., & Ahmad, Z. (2011). A study on academic performance of university students. *Recent Advances in Statistics*, 255 - 268.
- Singh, P., & Choudhary, G. (2015). Impact of socioeconomic status on academic-achievement of school students: An investigation. *International Journal of Applied Research*, 1(4), 266 - 272.
- Sirin, S. R. (2005). Socioeconomic status and academic achievement: A meta-analytic review of research. *Review of Educational Research*, 75(3), 417 - 453.
- Sui-Chu, E. H., & Willms, J. D. (1996, April). Effects of parental involvement on eighth-grade achievement. *Sociology of Education*, 69(2), 126 - 141.
- Van der Walt, A. M., Loots, D. T., Ibrahim, M. I., & Bezuidenhout, C. C. (2009). Minerals, trace elements and antioxidant phytochemicals in wild African dark-green leafy vegetables (morogo). *South African Journal of Science*, 105(11 - 12), 444 - 448.

- West, B. T., & Blom, A. G. (2017, 1 June). Explaining interviewer effects: A research synthesis. *Journal of Survey Statistics and Methodology*, 5(2), 175 - 211.
- White, A. M., & Swartzwelder, H. S. (2004). Hippocampal function during adolescence: a unique target of ethanol effects. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, 1021, 206 - 220.
- Yaw, L. H. (2016). The effect of single parenting on student academic performance in secondary schools in Brunei. *The Social Sciences*(11), 698 - 703.