FACTORS INFLUENCING ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE: AN ANALYSIS OF GRADE 12 RESULTS OF HIGH AND LOW PERFORMING SCHOOLS IN CAPRICORN DISTRICT,LIMPOPO PROVINCE

By

NKGAPELE DIMAKATSO ESTHER

RESEARCH DISSERTATION

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of

MASTERS IN EDUCATION

In

CURRICULUM STUDIES

In the

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

(School of Education)

At the

UNIVERSITY OF LIMPOPO (TURFLOOP CAMPUS)

SUPERVISOR: PROF. MJ THEMANE

2021

i

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my family members:

☐My parents (Maffa Matshotshi Letia and Maffa Ngwako Frans)

☐My daughter Nkgapele Moloko Magdeline

☐ My son Nkgapele Dimpho Starledon

☐ My husband Nkgapele Selopi Justice

☐Brothers

☐ Sisters

DECLARATION

I, NKGAPELE DIMAKATSO ESTHER, HEREBY DECLARE THAT:

FACTORS INFLUENCING ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE: AN ANALYSIS OF GRADE 12 RESULTS OF HIGH AND LOW PERFORMING SCHOOLS IN CAPRICORN DISTRICT, LIMPOPO PROVINCE:

IS MY WORK AND THAT ALL SOURCES USED AND QUOTED ARE INCLUDED IN THE REFERENCE LIST AND THIS RESEARCH PROJECT HAS NOT BEEN SUBMITTED AT ANY UNIVERSITY.

…………………………………………
………………………………………….

NKGAPELE DIMAKATSO ESTHER   DATE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and above all, I thank God, the Almighty, for His continued Grace, love and blessings in my life.

Second, I am deeply indebted to every person who found the time in their busy schedules to contribute to the success of my study. I highly appreciate their efforts. As God waters his creations, may He also sprinkles His wonderful love and blessings over them.

I, therefore, acknowledge the following:

My supervisor, Prof MJ Themane for his wonderful support, advice, encouragement, guidance and sense of humour. I have gained wisdom through working with him in making this study a success.

The University of Limpopo for granting me an opportunity to be one of their successful graduates, through this University, my intellectual abilities have been broadened.

My loving grandparents, Matshosi Lettia Maffaand Mafia Ngwako Frans,for their love, care, support and wisdom throughout my educational journey.

All participants of this study.

Limpopo Department of Education for permitting me to conduct this study in the Capricorn District of Limpopo Province.

My husband, Mr Nkgapele S.J, for his love, support and motivation in my life.

My adorable children, Ms Moloko Magdeline Nkgapele and Mr Starledon Dimpho Nkgapele.

ABSTRACT

Limpopo Province comprises five districts namely Capricorn, Vhembe, Sekhukhune, Waterberg and Mopani. Furthermore, Limpopo Province has been amongst the bottom three provinces concerning Grade 12 results for the past years specifically since the introduction of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) in 2014. The Capricorn District of Limpopo Province has shown a decline in Grade 12 results from 71.6% to 69.9% in 2016. However, there are certain schools in this district that are high performers while some are low performers. Also, the Sekhukhune District has shown a decline in Grade 12 resulted from 63.9% in 2014 to 51.1% in 2016. The purpose of this research study was to investigate and analyse the factors influencing Grade 12 results in low performing and high performing secondary schools in the Capricorn District, Limpopo Province. The objectives of this research study were to identify factors contributing to the high performance and low performance of grade 12 learners in the Capricorn district and investigate the perceptions of teachers and principals with regards to the school's academic performance. Besides, the objectives include assessing the culture of teaching and learning in the participating low and high performing secondary schools and its influence on academic performance and assessing the roles of the school management team in the schools.

This study employed a qualitative research approach in examining the factors that contribute to the academic performance of Grade 12 results of high and low performing schools in Capricorn District of Limpopo province. In addition, a case study was utilised to collect data of this study through interviews, observations and field notes. The sampled population of this study is as follows: Two school principals from the selected two secondary schools, thus one from poor performing school and one from high performing, four grade12 teachers from the two secondary schools, thus two grade 12 teachers from high performing secondary school and two teachers from low performing secondary schools. The data was thematically analysed by highlighting phrases that presented the respondents' attitudes and thoughts, repeating the interview transcripts, reading to ensure accuracy, highlighting important statements and organising the themes that emerge from the interview.

.

The following themes emerged from the thematic analysis of data in this study (i) Physical resources, (ii) parental involvement, (iii) learner discipline, (iv)school community and (v) senior support. The findings of this study revealed that for the schools to achieve high performance and obtain excellent results, both teachers and learners must be distinctly committed to the teaching and learning process.

LIST OFABBREVIATIONSAND ACRONYMS

CAPS   Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement

CAESL   Centre for Assessment and Evaluation of Student Learning

DBE   Department of Basic Education

EEA   Employment of Educators Act

HOD   Head of Department

HRSC   Human Science Research Council

LDE   Limpopo Department of Education

NSC   National Senior Certificate

S.A   South Africa

SGB   School Governing Body

TREC   Turfloop Research Ethics Committee

US   United States

TABLE OF CONTENTS   **PAGES**

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

CH APTERFIVE: DISCUSSIONS

CHAPTER ONE

1.1 Background and motivation of the Study

Limpopo Province as one of the Provinces of South Africa comprises five districts namely Capricorn, Vhembe, Sekhukhune, Waterberg and Mopani. Furthermore, Limpopo Province has been amongst the bottom three provinces concerning Grade 12 results for the past years specifically since the introduction of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) in 2014. South Africa has nine Provinces and Limpopo Province is one of them.

The Department of Basic Education superintends the secondary and primary schools in these nine provinces. The Capricorn District of Limpopo Province has shown a decline in Grade 12 results from 71.6 % to 69.9 % in 2016. However, there are certain schools in this district that are high performers while some are low performers. The Sekhukhune District has also shown a decline in Grade 12 resulted from 63.9% in 2014 to 51.1% in 2016. Various factors may be contributing to the variance of academic performance of these schools. The researcher of this study has realised that most studies have been conducted on the role played by physical and human resources, absenteeism and teacher morale to mention a few as the contributing factors to school performance, particularly grade 12 results. However, a few studies on the analysis of high and poor performing schools have been conducted to see what is it that is being done at some schools which is not being done in other schools which leads to different performances. Therefore, this study sought to investigate factors influencing the academic performance of poor and high performing schools in the Capricorn district.

Table 1 below shows the Grade 12 results according to five districts in Limpopo Province.

District	2017	2018	2019
Vhembe	76.6 %	80.1 %	81.5%
Capricorn	59.7 %	63.5 %	75.3%
Sekhukhune	57.3 %	66.8 %	63.0%
Mopani	67.7%	68.6 %	72.4%
Waterberg	69.4%	73.2 %	81.4 %

Source: Adapted from DoE,2019

The reality of lack of resources in some schools is another factor contributing to the poor performance of those very schools (Matsitsa, 2004). However, there are still schools in the Capricorn District that still perform outstandingly as represented in the table 2 below:

School	2017	2018	2019
Hoerskool Noordeland	87.8 %	98.9 %	98.7 %
Hoerskool Pietersburg	100 %	98.8 %	98.1 %
Dendron High School	98.2 %	98.3 %	97.2 %
Capricorn High School	93.3 %	94.6 %	86.0 %
Taxilla Secondary School	96.8 %	97.7 %	96.7 %

Source: Adapted from DoE,2019

Similarly, in the same district, there are still schools that have been underperforming for the past years, specifically since the introduction of CAPS as shown in table 3 below:

School	2017	2018	2019
Moruleng	51.7 %	53.0 %	54.8%
Makobateng	18.8 %	20.0 %	0.0 %
Ncheleleng	26.5 %	17.2 %	16.7 %
Makama	10.0 %	10.0%	0.0%
M.E Makgato	27.8 %	55.3 %	43.8%

Source: Adapted from DoE,2019

Below is the map of Limpopo province showing the districts' performance for the year 2018. Vhembe East is achieved 80.1% followed by Vhembe West at 79.4 %. Capricorn District achieved 63.5%. Other districts' performances are further shown on the map.
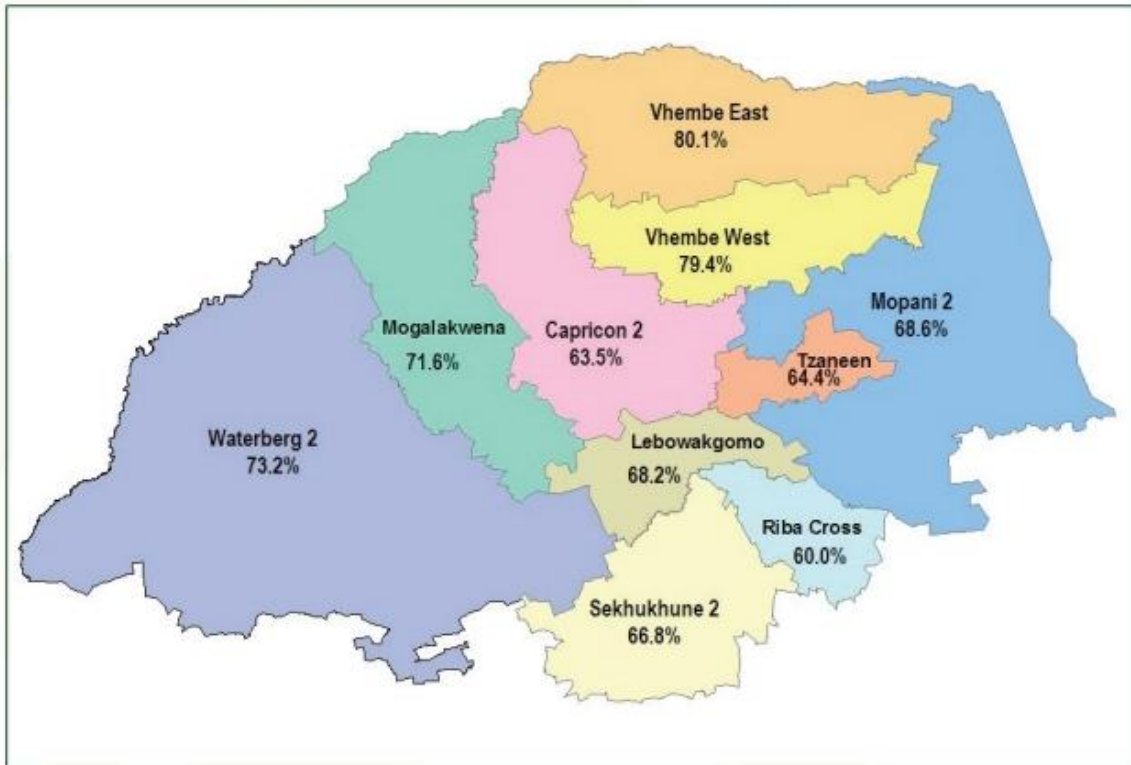
Figure 1.1 The map of Limpopo Province showing the district's performance for the year 2018(Adapted from DoE, 2018)

The achievement of good results of high-performing schools in the Capricorn District indicates that it will be imperative to research the factors that contribute to high performances given that most researchers are mostly concerned with the poor performance of learners whereas the emphasis should be on factors that contribute to success and high performance. Such factors might be used as intervention strategies to assist poor performing schools in improving their pass rates.

1.2. Research Problem

The Department of Basic Education(DBE) particularly the Limpopo Department of Education(LDE) invest a lot of capital and resources such as teacher workshops, learner representative council workshops and enrichment classes to improve learner performance in schools yet some secondary schools continue to perform poorly while others perform highly(DBE,2015). This has been experienced by the researcher in her

years of experience as an educator in Limpopo province, particularly Capricorn District. The researcher has realised that majority of studies have been conducted on the role played by physical and human resources, absenteeism, drug abuse and teacher morale to mention a few as the contributing factors to school performance, particularly grade 12 results but few studies on comparative analysis of high and poor performing schools have been conducted to see what is it that is being done in some schools which is not being done in others which leads to different performances. Therefore, this study sought to investigate factors influencing the academic performance of low and high performing schools in the Capricorn district of Limpopo Province.

1.3.Research Objectives

This research study aimed at investigating and analysing factors influencing Grade 12 results in low and high-performing schools for the period 2014 to 2016 in the Capricorn District, Limpopo Province.

The following were the research questions of this study:

☐What are the factors contributing to the high and poor performance of grade 12 learners in the Capricorn district.

☐ what are the perceptions of teachers and principals regarding their schools' academic performance.

☐Which roles do the school management team play with regard tonthe academic performance in their schools?

The following were the research objectives of this study:

☐To identify factors contributing to the high and poor performance of grade 12 learners in the Capricorn district.

☐ To investigate the perceptions of teachers and principalsregarding the schools' academic performance.

☐ To assess the culture of teaching and learning in these schools and their influence on academic performance.

☐To assess the roles of the school management team

1.4 Conceptualisation of the main theme

1.4.1 Academic performance

Academic performance refers to the accomplishment of a given task measured against pre-set standards of accuracy, completeness, cost and speed(Hart, 2003). It is a fulfilment of an obligation from all abilities under the contract (Clarke,2005). In education or sports, to perform is to do something up to a standard, to succeed, to excel. In the arts, to perform is to put on a show, ap lay, a dance or a concert. In everyday life, to perform is to show off, to go to extremes, to underline an action for those who are watching.

Academic performance is the outcome of education; it is the extent to which learner, teacher or institution has achieved their educational goals (Annie, Horward & Mildred, 2006). The DBE in South Africa has set up its annual performance plan which includes its strategic objectives and performance indicators.

1.5 Paradigmatic perspective

1.5.1 Metathoretical paradigm
The researcher in this study was guided by interpretivism because qualitative data was generated through interviews, observations, informal conversations and field notes to investigate the factors contributing to academic performance particularly the grade 12 results of secondary schools in Capricorn District of Limpopo Province.

The researcher employed interpretivism as the research paradigm of this study as she needed to understand the phenomena of academic performance in its context. This meant an analysis of the situation within the school context and the factors contributing towards the schools' academic performance, Grade 12 results in particular. Qualitative data from participants of the selected secondary schools was collected as a case study.

The researcher used an inductive approach in analysing data, thus the researcher began

with the immersion of natural setting, described events as accurately as possible and the way they occurred under broad themes to understand the phenomenon and generate theory.

The data collected in the selected secondary schools were audio recorded to capture the information regarding academic performance in a fairly authentic manner. Also, open ended interviews, observations, field notes and informal conversational interviews were used in this study as data collection methods. The meta-theoretical paradigms are further discussed in detail in chapter three of this study.

1.5.2 Methodological paradigm

The researcher employed a qualitative research approach in this study as this research study took place in a natural setting of the two selected secondary schools (High performing and Low performing) than controlled settings. The study was based on thick descriptions, thus describing and understanding the factors that influence the Grade 12 results of the participating secondary schools.

The researcher had a preference for understanding the events, actions and processes in their context (contextual interest). thus, understanding the events within the school environment, the actions by teachers and learners and the educational processes within the school environment and their influence on academic performance was important.

Gay (2003) further states that a qualitative research approach allows the researcher to interpret events, activities and conservations to construct their meaning and understanding of them. In this study, factors influencing grade 12 results of the participating schools were examined, hence a qualitative research approach was employed. The methodological paradigms are further discussed in detail in chapter three of this study.

1.5.3 Theoretical framework

This study employed the theory of academic performance by(Don Eger,2000). According to the theory of academic performance, humans are capable of extraordinary accomplishments (Wiske, 1998). The Theory of Performance informs learning by an organisation through the

idea of examining the level of performance of the organisation. The reason why the researcher chooses this theory is that the transformation of knowledge starts from the performer's mind, in this case, are the teachers, principals and the learners, how they set up their minds for the bigger picture(which is the best performance). This theory further includes reflective practice which is essential for poor performing schools to help them pay attention and learn from experiences, observe the current level of performance and, analyse strength as well as areas for improvement.   As a school principal advances his level of performance, he can organise human resources (i.e., teachers, learners, parents and SGB) and also other resources more effectively (Pellegrino et al., 2000). When a teacher advances his level of performance, he can produce (a) a deeper level of learning, (b) improved level of skills development and (c) more connection with discipline for larger classes. Performance is closely related to learning for understanding (Wiske, 1998). When people learn and grow, they are empowered to create results that make a difference. The theory of academic performance informs us about the six foundational concepts of the theory of performance as discussed below:

Six foundational concepts (Don Elger 2000).

- **Perform:** To perform is to produce good results. In this context, when learners pass with flying colours, we say they have performed well. The main organisational goal of schools is to perform. Schools implement the curriculum according to the policies provided by the National Department of Education. The success of this implementation is seen through the schools' performance. There has to be collaboration and hard work between all stakeholders in education. All the stakeholders have to work hand-in-hand to ensure that schools as organisations perform well. The stakeholders are principals, teachers, parents, learners, SGBs and the community at large. For the schools to perform well, there has to be teamwork between these stakeholders

- **Performer:** A performer is an individual engaging in a collaborative effort to attain a certain goal set. Parents, principals, SGBs, learners and teachers are all performers in the school context, who should engage in a collaborative effort to ensure that high-quality results are achieved. They all have to perform outstandingly for the

performance to be enhanced and also for the vision and mission of the school to be achieved.

- **Level of performance:** The level of performance describes the location of the journey. This depends on an organisation with mission and vision, educators' level of education and training, level of skills that learners acquire in a learning environment and level of identity, which is the socio-environment from which the learners come. For the level of performance to be enhanced in schools as organisations, there has to be a creation of positive teaching and learning environment by performers. The creation of positive teaching and learning environment will enhance the quality teaching and learning process and improve academic performance.

- **Performers' mindset:** This explains how individuals or a group should set up their minds to view the bigger picture. In this case, SGBs, parents, principals, teachers and learners should set up their minds to view and ensure that all school activities run smoothly with the perspective of achieving organisational goals. All the performers should set up their minds towards the attainment of the schools' vision and mission. Teachers are to set up their minds for their professional development to deliver quality teaching to the learners. Learners are to set up their minds to work hard and receive adequate information during the teaching and learning process. Parents are to set up their minds in proving support and adequate parental involvement in their children's education. SGB's are to set up their minds for the provision of support to the principal, learners and educators in ensuring that their role is adequately played in the school as an organisation. Principals are to set up their minds in supporting the educators by providing good leadership and management skills for the attainment of improved academic performance.

- **Immersion:** Immersion can elevate performance as well as professional development. This element includes social interaction and disciplinary knowledge. When all the performers' minds are immensely set up, attaining the organisational goal can be assured. Stakeholders are to be immersed for academic performance to be enhanced.

- **Reflective practice:** Reflective practice involves actions that help people pay attention to and learn from experiences namely observing the current level of performance, noting accomplishment and analysing strength as well as areas for improvement. All this, according to the researcher, is to be done by the principal, learners, parents, teachers and the SGB. When the schools have shown unsatisfactory academic performance, all the performers are to reflect and improve for the attainment of the vision and mission of the school and improved academic performance.
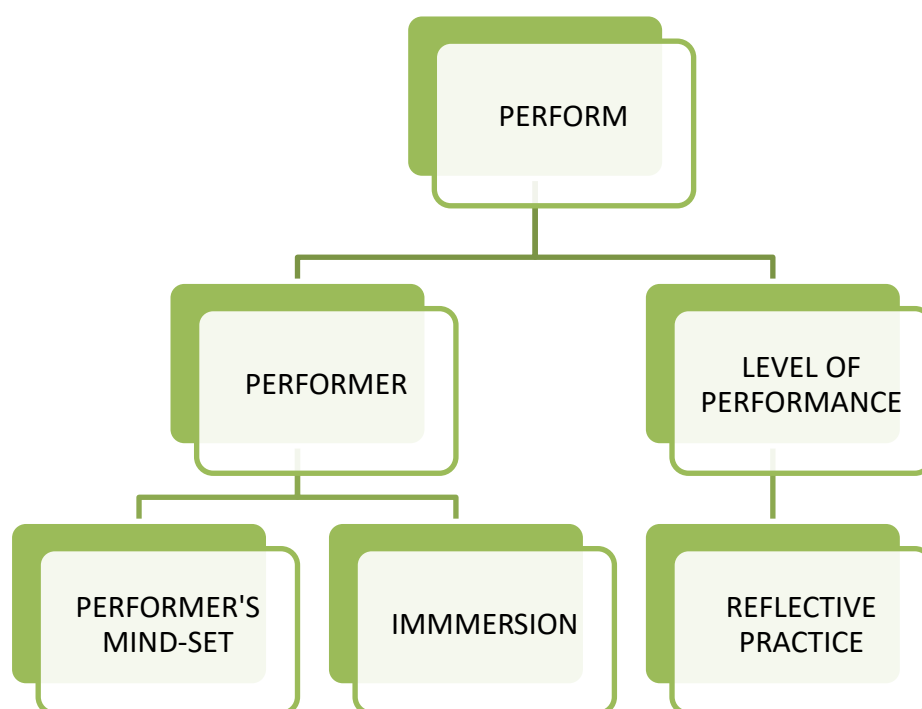
```
                    ┌─────────────┐
                    │   PERFORM   │
                    └──────┬──────┘
             ┌─────────────┴─────────────┐
      ┌──────────────┐            ┌──────────────┐
      │  PERFORMER   │            │   LEVEL OF   │
      │              │            │ PERFORMANCE  │
      └──────┬───────┘            └──────┬───────┘
       ┌─────┴─────┐                     │
┌──────────────┐ ┌──────────────┐ ┌──────────────┐
│ PERFORMER'S  │ │  IMMMERSION  │ │  REFLECTIVE  │
│   MIND-SET   │ │              │ │   PRACTICE   │
└──────────────┘ └──────────────┘ └──────────────┘
```

Figure 2.1 the six foundational concepts of the theory of performance as aligned to the findings of this study.

The Rationale for Theory of Performance

Humans are capable of extra-ordinary accomplishments (Wiske, 1998). The Theory of Performance informs learning by an organisation through the idea of examining the level of performance of the organisation. The reason why the researcher chooses this theory is that the transformation of knowledge starts from the performer's mind, in this case, are

the teachers, principals and the learners and how they set up their minds for the bigger picture(which is the best performance).

This theory further includes reflective practice which is essential for poor performing schools to help them pay attention and learn from experiences, observe the current level of performance, analyse strength as well as areas for improvement.   As a school principal advances his level of performance, he can organise human resources (i.e., teachers, learners, parents and SGB) and also other resources more effectively (Pellegrino et al., 2000). When a teacher advances his level of performance, he can produce (a) a deeper level of learning, (b) improved level of skill development and (c) more connection with discipline for larger classes. Performance is closely related to learning for understanding (Wiske, 1998). When people learn and grow, they are empowered to create results that make a difference.

1.6 Research methodology

1.6.1 Research design

In this study, the researcher employed a case study research design to draw data through interviews and observations. Case studies are also used to make a research topic to be more researchable by narrowing very broad fields of study(Creswell, 2008). In this study, there was a narrowing of the sample size to suit the research needs. Further details will be discussed in the sampling of study participants. Research design further specifies the methodologies and steps to be followed in data collection and data analysis. It can further be defined as a blueprint for the planning of the research activities for the project (Zikmund, 2003).

According to McMillan and Schumacher (*2006*), "the research design describes how the study is conducted and the purpose of a research design is to indicate a plan that will generate evidence that will be able to answer the research questions".The information collected during a research study project is affected by the way researchers develop their research designs and whether the research question is descriptive or explanatory (Fox, 2007). Moreover, case studies are an intense exploration of abounded systems with which their bases are on extensive data collection (Creswell,

2008). Furthermore, a case study is an in-depth investigation of a certain context rather than a quantitative study.

1.6.2 Sampling

Sampling can be defined as a process of selecting apart of a population of interest in that the results from the studied sample can be generalised to the population in which the sample was selected (Gravetter & Forzano, 2011).

This study utilised a purposive sampling procedure. The researcher deemed this procedure fit for this study because only the candidates who fit the criteria of the desired participant will participate in this study. De Vos, Strydom, Fouché and Deport(2005) indicated that this sampling procedure is entirely based on the researcher's judgement. Also, the sample comprises the elements that have the characteristics required attributes of the target population.

1.6.3 Data collection

This study utilised various methods of data collection such as observations, interviews, field notes and informal conversations. The selection of data collection strategies will be discussed in full in chapter three of this study. Below is an overview of these selected data collection strategies.

Interviews

The interviews were conducted by the researcher to collect data from the respondents using the interview questions. An interview questionnaire is a written list of questions that were prepared by the researcher for utilisation by the researcher during data collection(Kumar,2011) Interview questions are the instruments used for data collection in qualitative studies (Nziyane, 2011).In this study, qualitative interviews were used to collect data from the respondents. The data collection process involved the researcher posing questions to the respondents and using a voice recorder to record the responses.

Fieldnotes

The informal interviews and observations made by the researcher during data the collection process were documented inform of field notes, These field notes were analysed afterwards (Braun, 2006). All observed aspects, exterior physical signs, expressive movements, physical location, language behaviour and time duration were all documented in the field notes (Babbie & Mouton, 2001).

Observations

The researcher made use of observations to collect the data of this study. The re-searcher observed the classroom activities and the school environment to record the chronological processes of events. This information from these observations provided the researcher with detailed data of the low the performing schools' activities that con-tribute to their academic performance. The observations were documented in the field notes and through photographs from the field.

1.7 Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations are concerns that are considered relevant or irrelevant when dealing with research in general (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). During the proceedings of this study, the researcher adhered to the guidelines on informed and voluntary participation of the participants, confidentiality of the information provided by the participants, no harm to participants and trust. Further principles of ethics are discussed indetailinChapter three of this study.

1.8 Quality assurance matters

In addressing the quality assurance matters, the researcher adhered to the issues of

credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Thomas, Nelson & Silverman, 2005). The quality assurance matters are discussed in detail in chapter three.

1.9 Outline of the chapters

Chapter One: **Contextualising the study** provides the background and motivation of the study. The research problem is also explained in detail. Exploration of the purpose of the study and the research objectives of this study are also presented. An overview of metatheoretical paradigms and methodological paradigms are also outlined to provide the readers with a sense of coherence. Lastly, an overview of ethics and quality assurance matters is outlined.

Chapter two: Literature review outlines the literature review and insight into the view that academic performance has underlying factors that contribute towards it, thus political, economic and social factors. These factors can, therefore, neither be overlooked nor isolated from academic performance. Furthermore, this chapter highlights the importance of academic performance in the education system. Academic performance in education cannot be treated in isolation; therefore, this chapter also elaborates the factors that contribute to academic performance in education. Moreover, the impact on academic performance will be discussed. The theory of performance, leadership theory, goal setting theory and Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory are the four most appropriate theories in academic performance. Throughout this chapter,not only research gaps are identified but also the strengths reveal potential areas for further research with regards to academic performance.

Chapter three: Research methodology provides an exploration of research paradigms, research approaches and methodologies that will be employed in the execution of this research study. Also, it includes methods that were employed to address the research problem as formulated, subjects of the study and who or what kind of respondents were covered by the method (Welman, Kruger & Mitchel, 2001). Methods used in collecting data are outlined and explained in this chapter.

Chapter four: Data presentation presents the results of the study from the interviews and observations. The results obtained through thematic analysis of identified themes and sub-themes are also outlined. Explanation of the main themes and sub-themes are explained in detail in this chapter. Presentation of the results as supported by direct quotations, visual images and field notes is also outlined in this chapter.

Chapter five: Discussions and conclusions. This chapter is the concluding one of this study. It links the results of the study to the research objectives outlined in chapter one of this study. The limitations and recommendations for further research, practice and training are mentioned in this chapter.

CONCLUSION

This chapter serve sas an introduction to all the chapters that follow in this study. The background and motivation of the study were given followed by a literature overview in which important concepts and the theory relevant to this study were discussed. Also included are the purpose of this study as well as the research questions. Themain concepts used throughout this study were also described. Lastly, the ethical-considerations and quality criteria were briefly discussed. The next chapter will present the literature review about academic performance. The conceptualisation of the main themes of the study and factors influencing academic performance will be outlined. The historical overview and theories on academic performance will also be explored in the next chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to present a literature review of the study. The purpose of a literature review is to establish the current state of knowledge in the field (Hart, 2003). This chapter is organised into some categories. There is a conceptualisation of key terms (academic performance and related principles, factors influencing academic performance) and roles of school management teams in academic performance. Besides, it includes the historical overview of the problem outlined. Last, theories on academic performance are explored and the methodological perspectives are discussed.

2.2 CONCEPTUALISATION OF MAIN THEMES OF THE STUDY

2.2.1 Academic performance

Academic performance refers to the accomplishment of a given task measured against pre-set, known standards of accuracy, completeness, cost and speed (Hart, 2003). It is a fulfilment of an obligation from all abilities under the contract (Clarke,2005). Ineducationorsports, 'to perform' is to do something up to a standard, to succeed or to excel. In the arts, 'to perform' is to put on a show, a play, a dance or a concert. In everyday life, 'to perform' is to show off, to go to extremes and to underline an action for those who are watching.

Academic performance is the outcome of education; it is the extent to which a learner, teacher or institution has achieved an educational goal (Annie, Horward & Mildred,2006). The DBE in South Africa has set up its annual performance plan which includes its strategic objectives, performance indicators and targets (DBE 2015). According to the South African Education system, a school is regarded as under-performing if it obtains a pass rate of below 60% in the National Senior Certificate final examinations. The under-

performance of a school simply means that learning outcomes, assessment standards and content competencies were not achieved to a satisfactory level (DBE, 2015). Academic performance as used in this study will refer to the percentage marks obtained by Capricorn District grade 12 learners against the set standards of the South African Education system. However, academic performance cannot be dealt with in a vacuum or be treated in isolation.Academic performance is the outcome of education, it is an extent to which learner, teacher or institution has achieved their educational goals (Annie, Horward & Mildred ,2006).

The DBE has set up its annual performance plan which includes its strategic objectives, performance indicators and targets (DBE 2015).According to the South African Education system, a school is regarded as an under-performing if it obtains the pass rate of below 60% in the National Senior

Certificate final examinations. The under-performance of a school simply means that learning outcomes, assessment standards and content competencies were not achieved to the satisfactory level (DBE 2015). Academic performance as used in this study will refer to the percentage marks obtained by Capricorn District grade 12 learners against the set standards of the South African Education system.However academic performance cannot be dealt with in a vacuum or be treated in isolation. There are various factors which influence academic performance and these factors are discussed below :

Factors that influence academic performance

2.2.2   Time management

Time management and academic performance correlate in every educational institution. For every organisation to perform outstandingly, time management is the key factor to take into consideration. Setting and prioritising goals and planning is necessary for the success of every organisation (Liu, Rijman, McCann & Roberts, 2009). It is not surprising that time management is a topic of importance to educators, learners, principals and also researchers as it relates to performance (Claessens, 2007).

Time management is positively related to academic performance (Adamson,2004). It is

an important cognitive aspect of self-regulated learning that could lead to higher academic achievement (Eilam & Aharon 2003). The assumption is that should teachers and learners use their time wisely, schools will yield much better results.

2.2.3 Language of teaching

Language of teaching and learning in the classroom has also been identified as another challenge (Matsitsa,2004). Subjects such as Mathematics and Science are taught in English,thus language becomes a barrier to comprehension because most learners are not native speakers of English.

DBE (2011), reports that academic performance is improving if there is no switch of languages during teaching and learning. It was also found that the best achievers were the Afrikaans speakers as they have the privilege of a monolingual learning environment. Afrikaans is their home language and they learn it from their elementary years (Mamwenda,2002).

This is also seen in some schools that have a monolingual learning environment in the Capricorn District of Limpopo Province. These schools are high achievers and perform outstandingly every year.

2.2.4 Motivation and academic performance

 The term motivation can be described as adimension that which is a determinant of success or the contributing factor of high dropout rate among learners (Morrison, 2002). What this means is that when the learners are not well motivated, they may end up dropping out of school. Sanacore (2000) argues that motivation guides behaviour towards attainment of a particular goal .

Accordingto Mamwenda (2002), theconcept of motivation is utilised as an explanation ofthe manner in which a person behaves. A generic descriptionof the term motivation is to influence individuals to achieve the goal that the manager wants them to achieve (Steyn, 1999). For the purpose of this study, the people involved will be the school

principals, teachers and learners. A teacher is any person who is appointed to teach the learners at school (Rossouw & Oosthuizen, 2007). Then, a learner refers to any person receiving education in terms of the South African Schools Act no.84 of 1996.

2.2.5 Leadership and academic performance

According to Bisschoff and Mestry (2003), leadership refers to the ability to influence other people to willingly strive to work towards the attainment of the objectives of an organisation. In this regard, the school is an organisation. Bisschoff & Mestry (2003) further indicated that successful leaders are the ones who can motivate and guide other personnel. For the context of this study, a leader is a school principal and educators Included.

The school principal leads both the teachers (entire staff) and the learners. Moreover, the teachers lead and guide the learners. The responsibilities of a leader is to plan organise and control (Bisschoff & Mestry,2003). These researchers indicate that a leader with good leadership skills provides trust and confidence to the subordinates, in this context, the teachers and learners.

The characteristics of an effective school are a capable principal, good human relations amongst the staff members, good governance, supportive school management team (SMT), and two-way communication between the principal and his subordinates, which in turn, promotes learner performance (Bisschoff & Mestry, 2003).

School leadership plays an important role in the school's academic performance because learners follow good behaviour, morale, relations and time management from the teacher. Following all positive attributes of their classroom managers and the school principal could enhance their academic performance and put their school on high academic achievers lists in their respective circuits, districts, provinces and country at large.

2.2.6 Roles of the School Management Team

The school planning and management teams are responsible for developing a comprehensive school plan to improve academic and school climate (DBE 2015). According to Bush and Clover (2009), the SMT appears to have little impact on teaching and learning issues. They further indicate that the role of principals is to focus strongly on managing the process of teaching and learning by performing the following activities: overseeing the smooth implementation of the curriculum in the schools, ensuring that lessons take place, evaluating learner performance through giving them examinations and internal assessments and monitoring the work of HOD's' through scrutinising their work plans and portfolios.

The SMT has the responsibility to plan and work together towards the attainment of the school's vision and mission. When all the roles and responsibilities of the school management team are fulfilled without failure, academic performance could be enhanced.

2.2.7 Educators' role

The role of the educator is of paramount importance in the education system (Adu & Olatundun, 2007). Furthermore, an educator is the custodian and instructor of knowledge. The standard of education cannot grow beyond the level of the teachers (Adu & Olatundun,2007). Educators' perceptions affect learner performance (Mandla,2000). Educators should see their careers as ones that offer workers great opportunities to the learners whom they teach. Educators' roles include providing leadership and care to the learners (Adu & Olatundun, 2007), thus establishing friendly relations and acting as a liaison officer between the learners to avoid conflicts amongst them. This will maximise the spirit of teamwork and enhance learners' academic performance.

The educators are under the obligation to provide custody to the learners as minors for the time learners are at school, hence providing physical and mental protection of a learner for intellectual development and maximum academic performance (Ziolony, 2002).

2.2.8 Environment

An environment refers to all the surroundings that are capable of affecting the behaviour, growth and development of the living things within the system (Adu, Olatundun & Oshati,2014). It is our surroundings and affects our ability to live on the earth including the air we breathe, the water that covers most of the earth's surface, plants and animals (Steyn & Wolhunter, 2008). It refers to the total of what is around something or someone including living and natural things (Foli, Koch & Landen,2003). It provides conditions for development and growth as well as of danger and damage. Environmental problems are not new but they are simply enlarging and threatening to become uncontrollable (Adu, 2014). Some of the environmental problems include pollution, waste disposal, soil erosion, flooding and deforestation. Therefore, environmental problems may contribute tremendously to academic performance.

2.2.9 Home background

Motivating students to achieve set goals in school is of great concern to teachers, parents and researchers. A child's first educational experience is centred on the home; his ideas, attitudes and general patterns of behaviour are a result of his childhood rearing. The variation in the academic attainments of learners could be related directly to differences in the home and its influence. Onukwo (2007), in his investigation among four thousand (4000) primary and secondary school children from Ibadan in Nigeria, found that 88% of children from extended family situations were influenced by grandparents, aunts and uncles in the discipline at home, 92% complained of lack of clear standards to follow and 91% of being unable to study at home because of being sent on errands by relatives.

2.2.1 Peer influence

The term 'peer' refers to one that is of equal standing with another, one belonging to the same societal group especially based on age, grade and status (Zins, Elias & Greenberg, 2003). Foli, Koch and Landen (2003)defined 'peer' as a person who is equal to another in abilities, qualifications, age, background and social status. Peers

influence one's life even if one does not realise it. By spending time with peers one learns from them and they learn from you.

It is human to listen and learn from other people of your age group. On the other hand, peer pressure refers to the influence exerted by a peer group in encouraging a person to change his or her attitudes or values to conform to group norms (Kirk, 2000). Castrogiovanni (2002) reports that a peer group is a small group of similar age, fairly close friends, sharing the same activities while Ryan (2000) defined 'peer pressure' as when people of one's age encourage or urge the person to do something or to keep from doing something else no matter if the person personally wants to do it or not.

The more subtle form of peer pressure is known as peer influence and it involves changing one's behaviour to meet the perceived expectations of others (Burns & Darling, 2002). Peer group is an important socialisation agent(Kirk,2000). Peers have both positive and negative sides (Foli, Koch & Landen,2003).
Peers may impact negatively or positively on learners' performances depending on the foundation of the peer group. Some peers form study groups for helping one another which will enhance learner performance while other peer groups might be substance abusers, which will impact negatively on academic performance.

2.2.11 School climate

The physical structure of a school building and the interactions between students and teachers are two main diverse factors that both affect and help to define the broad concept of school climate. School climate has been researched for many years and continues to be examined and redefined as a result of its significant influence on educational outcomes.

School climate is multidimensional and influences many individuals, including students, parents, school personnel, and the community. Additionally, school climate can be a positive or negative influence on the health of the learning environments (Freibery, 2004).

The school environment can affect many areas and people within schools. For example, according to Freibery (2004), a positive school climate has been associated with fewer behavioural and emotional problems for students. Additionally, specific research on school climate in high risk urban environments indicates that a positive, supportive and culturally conscious school climate can significantly shape the degree of academic success experienced by urban students (Hayness & Corner, 2003). School climate research suggests that positive interpersonal relationships and optional learning opportunities for students in all demographic environments can increase achievement behaviour.

In addition to that, school climate can play a significant role in improving a healthy and positive school atmosphere. (Freibery,2004) noted that "the interaction of various school and classroom climate factors can create a fabric of support that enables all members of the school community to teach and learn at optimum levels". A positive school climate can yield positive educational and psychological outcomes for students and school personnel. Similarly, a negative climate can prevent optimal learning and development (Freibery, 2004). School climate including "trust, respect, mutual obligation and concern for others' welfare, can have a powerful effect on educational relationships well as learners' academic achievement and overall school progress" (Freibery, 2004)

2.2.12   Monitoring and curriculum support

The main organisational goal of schools is to perform outstandingly all year long p:articularly at the end of the year. All the stakeholders in the education sector have to work hand-in-hand with one another to ensure that schools perform well. The Employment of Educators Act (EEA)76 of 1998 stipulates the functions of Curriculum Advisors as representatives of the Department of Education to give support to schools.

The Act indicates that the functions of the curriculum delivery are to provide pastoral support to schools whenever requested and to assist in the equitable deployment of staff

and resources to facilitate teaching and learning (EEA, 1999). It further states that curriculum delivery assesses professional development needs, evaluates successes, problems of staff and provides support for professional growth of educators within an appraisal programme while ensuring that departmental curricula and other information received which affect colleagues or their work are brought to their notice as soon as possible. It also promotes the National Campaign on the culture of teaching, learning and service.Academic monitoring and support is very important in a learning environment for assisting learners to complete their studies(Paideya & Dhunpath,2018)

2.2.13   Socio-economic realities of rural areas

According to the researcher, the status of socio-economic factors are considered to be an important determinant of educational outcomes. According to Don Elgar (2000), the level of performance describes the location of the journey. This depends on the vision and mission of the school, educators' level of education and training, level of skills that learners acquire in a learning environment and the level of identity, which is the socio environment from which the learners come from. The study conducted by DBE (2011) has revealed that socio-economic status strongly affects earnings.

This shows that rural areas are the vulnerable sector where the majority of learners are disadvantaged. This is supported by a high number of illiteracy and innumeracy amongst the rural areas (DBE, 2011). Again, the study by the universal Annual National Assessment of the Department of Basic Education (2011) confirmed that many rural areas lack learning materials. The results show that learners in Quintile 5 schools performed far better than learners in Quintile 1 schools, which are the under-resourced schools typical of rural areas(DBE, 2010). However, this researcher has witnessed cases where some of the schools in the rural areas outperformed some schools in the urban areas.

Evidence from several studies suggests that a measure of intellectual quality varies directly with the size of the family and that correlation cuts across social class lines. Musgrave in Freiberry (2004) found that the greater the number of children in the family, the lower the measure of the intellectual quantity of the subsequent children.

The significant relationship between socio-economic class and success in school has been shown by Fraser (2003). She looked at socio-economic class as one of the major causes of unnatural inequalities in education. In most western countries, all types of public and private serve different social classes. She further explains that inequality of educational opportunities results when there is keen competition to enter an institution and the need to pay high fees. Learners from higher socio-economic classes are expected to perform better in schools.

2.3   HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

Many studies have attempted to estimate the impact of school and teacher characteristics on student performance yet most have serious estimation problems that cast doubt on their results (Glewwe & Kremer, 2006). Almost all existing studies are "retrospective," which is based on data collected from schools as they currently exist (in contrast to data collected from a randomised trial). Yet, even the best retrospective studies offer only limited guidance due to their estimation problems, the most serious being omitted variable bias (unobserved school, household and child characteristics that are correlated with observed school variables) and measurement error in school data.

This has led to a wide variation in the estimated impacts of key variables. For example, of 30 studies from developing countries reviewed by Hanushek (1995), 8 found significantly positive impacts of the teacher-pupil ratio on student learning, 8 found significantly negative impacts and 14 found no significant impact. In recent years, researchers have turned to natural experiments and randomised trials. Natural experiment studies use "natural" variation in school characteristic that is unlikely to be correlated with all other

factors that determine learning. An admittedly rare example is allocating students to different chools based on a lottery.

Two recent natural experiments suggest that increases in school resources measured by student-teacher ratios raise scores on reading but not Mathematics tests among black South African students (Case & Deaton, 1999). Second, vouchers that provide funds for Colombian secondary students to attend private schools raise reading test scores (Angrist, 2002).

Studies in Israel suggest that reducing class size raises reading scores and perhaps Mathematics scores but providing computers has no effect (Angrist & Lavy, 2002). Randomised trials have provided evidence from several developing countries. In Nicaragua,workbooks and radio instruction raised pupils' Mathematics scores (Jamison et al.,1981). Textbooks raised test scores in the Philippines (Heyneman,1984) but in Kenya, textbooks had effects only among the best students perhaps because the content in the textbooks was difficult for most students (Glewwe, Kremer & Moulin, 2006). Evidence from Kenya also suggests a little impact on test scores from flip charts (Glewwe, Kremer & Moulin,2006).

Recent research shows that children's health can affect their schooling outcomes. Such research faces similar econometric challenges, yet a few recent papers have used credible methods to quantify the impact of early childhood health and nutrition on schooling outcomes. Height for age, a cumulative indicator of children'shealth status increases school enrolment (Glewwe, Jacoby &Alderman, 2001). Glewwe, Jacoby& King (2001) used panel data from the the Philippines to show that well-nourished children perform better in school because they enrol earlier and learn more per school calendar. Miguel and Kremer (2004), using a randomised trial, found that deworming drugs increased school attendance but not test scores among Kenyan primary school students. Another problem with studies on developed countries are that it is unclear whether the findings in one country apply to others especially those with very different histories, cultures and education systems. Thus, the best policy advice for South Africa requires South African data. This study examines the factors that influence the academic performance of grade 12 learners in

Capricorn District of Limpopo province, South Africa.

2.4 THEORIES ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

Academic performance in a school setting is very important, It is the accomplishment of a given task measured against pre-set and known standards of accuracy; completeness is the accomplishment of a given task measured against known standards of accuracy, completeness and excellence. The researcher believes that various factors contribute towards academic performance, thus social, economic and political factors. Different researchers support this notion as highlighted below.

The theory of academic performance relates to six foundational concepts. Below is the description of those concepts:

2.4.1 Six foundational concepts (Don Elger 2000).

- **Perform:** To perform is to produce good results. In this context, when learners pass with flying colours, we say they have performed well. The main organisational goal of schools is to perform. Schools implement the curriculum according to the policies provided by the National Department of Education. The success of this implementation is seen through the schools' performance. There has to be collaboration and hard work between all stakeholders in education. All the stakeholders have to work hand-in-hand to ensure that schools as organisations perform well. The stakeholders are principals, teachers, parents, learners, SGBs and the community at large. For the schools to perform well, there has to be teamwork between these stakeholders

- **Performer:** A performer is an individual engaging in a collaborative effort to attain a certain goal set. Parents, principals, SGBs, learners and teachers are all performers, in the school context, who should engage in a collaborative effort to ensure that high-quality results are achieved. They all have to perform outstandingly for the performance to be enhanced and the vision and mission of the school to be achieved.

- **Level of performance:** The level of performance describes the location of the journey. This depends on an organisation with mission and vision, educators' level of education and training, the level of skills that learners acquire in a learning environment and level of identity, which is the socio-environment from which the learners come. For the level of performance to be enhanced in schools as organisations, there has to be a creation of positive teaching and learning environment by performers. The creation of positive teaching and learning environment will enhance the quality teaching and learning process and improve academic performance.

-

- **Performers' mindset:** This explains how individuals or a group should set up their minds to view the bigger picture. In this case, SGBs, parents, principals, teachers and learners should set up their minds to view and ensure that all school activities run smoothly, with the perspective of achieving organisational goals. All the performers should set up their minds towards the attainment of the schools' vision and mission. Teachers are to set up their minds for their professional development to deliver quality teaching to the learners. Learners are to set up their minds to work hard and receive adequate information during the teaching and learning process. Parents are to set up their minds in proving support and adequate parental involvement in their children's education. SGB's are to set up their minds for the provision of support to the principal, learners and educators in ensuring that their role is adequately executed in the school as an organisation. Principals are to set up their minds in supporting the educators, providing good leadership and management skills for the attainment of improved academic performance.

- **Immersion:** Immersion can elevate performance as well as professional development. This element includes social interaction and disciplinary knowledge. When all the performers' minds are immensely set up, attaining the organisational goal can be assured. Stakeholders are to be immersed for academic performance to be enhanced.

- **Reflective practice:** Reflective practice involves actions that help people pay attention to and learn from experiences namely: observing the current level of performance, noting accomplishments and analysing strengths as well as areas for improvement. All this, according to the researcher, is to be done by the principal,

learners, parents, teachers and the SGB. When the schools have shown unsatisfactory academic performance, all the performers are to reflect and improve for the attainment of the vision and mission of the school and improved academic performance.

The Rationale for Theory of Performance

Humans are capable of extraordinary accomplishments (Wiske, 1998). The Theory of Performance informs learning by an organisation through the idea of examining the level of performance of the organisation. The reason why the researcher chose this theory was that the transformation of knowledge starts from the performer's mind, in this case, teachers, principals and the learners, how they set up their minds for the bigger picture(which is the best performance)..

This theory further includes reflective practice which is essential for poor performing schools to help them pay attention and learn from experiences, observe the current level of performance, analyse strength as well as areas for improvement. As a school principal advances his level of performance, he can organise human resources (i.e., teachers, learners, parents and SGB) and also other resources more effectively (Pellegrino et al., 2000). When a teacher advances his level of performance, he can produce (a) a deeper level of learning, (b) an improved level of skill development and (c) more connection with discipline for larger classes. Performance is closely related to learning for understanding (Wiske, 1998). When people learn and grow, they are empowered to create results that make a difference.

2.4.2 Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory

Maslow's hierarchy of needs is a theory proposed by Abraham Harold Maslow. According to this theory, the needs of people are what motivate them to address their concerns. People's needs differ in many ways and should thus be ranked in terms of how important they are towards each person (Tay & Diener, 2011). Maslow thus

proposed a five-level hierarchy of needs (see figure 1) The arrangement of these needs is expressed in the name of the theory whereby lower level needs must be satisfied first before individuals can be expected to be concerned by higher level needs (Kenrick, Griskevicius & Neuberg, 2010).

According to Maslow, each person has a different set of needs at different points of time in his/her life (Koltko-Rivera, 2006). He states that all needs of humans could be arranged in a hierarchy and each person is said to move through the hierarchy by fulfilling each level of needs. The main premise of this theory is that people will not seek to satisfy higher needs such as self-actualisation needs unless the lower needs are met, however, some people may have dominant needs at a particular level and thus never move through the entire hierarchy (Koltko-Rivera, 2006).

1. Physiological needs

Physiological needs, which constitute the lowest level, deal with the necessities of human survival such as food, clothing and shelter. A student whose physiological needs are not met will not have the drive or energy to engage in activities. The best that the student will do is to study to pass and not necessarily achieve good academic results (Sago, 2003).

2. Safety needs

According to Maslow, safety is a need (Tay & Diener, 2011). Once the physiological needs have been satisfied, a person feels the need to have security in life. A need of a learner is to feel safe emotionally and physically. This includes the need to feel accepted to progress and reach his full academic potential. This means that the academic environment must be safe and conducive for students.

3. Social needs

According to Cherry (2016), social needs include the need to have family and friends. An individual needs to have a sense of belonging whether it is in a social group or amongst any other relationships. Relationships such as friendships and families help this need for companionship and acceptance as does involvement in social, community or religious groups (Cherry, 2016). Learners need to have a strong family structure to feel secure and supported throughout their academic life. A strong family support system will help the learner to be able to face the challenges that come with being a student such as academic and social peer pressure (Cherry, 2016).

4. Esteem needs

Self-esteem, achievement, mastery, independence, status, dominance and prestige are examples of esteem needs (McLeod, 2016). Learners with low self-esteem have a sense of helplessness and will not have the confidence to participate in group academic activities. Such learners' self-esteem needs to strengthen first for them to be able to progress academically (McLeod, 2016).

5. Self-actualisation needs

Self-actualisation represents the highest level of Maslow's hierarchy and refers to the need to maximise one's potential and becoming the best one can be. In self-actualisation, one will realise their full potential and seek experiences that lead to growth and will be self-fulfilled (McLeod, 2016).

Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory is important in the educational psychology theories of learning. Educators should be aware of the needs of learners and consider these needs when developing plans to motivate them.

Most of the learners' needs such as family, social and financial problems come from

areas outside the school.

2.4.3 Goal setting theory

According to the theory of goal setting (Locke & Latham 2002), a higher performance can be achieved by setting challenging and specific goals. Well-known early studies found that the relationship between goal difficulty and performance may not be linear. Khajawa (2004) had shown that task difficulty measured as the probability of task success was related to performance in a curvilinear, inverse function. The highest level of effort occurred when the task was moderately difficult and the lowest levels occurred when the task was either very easy or very hard" (Locke & Latham, 2002). However, a meta-analysis of the following contributions based on more accurate measures of goal difficulty shows that goal difficulty and performance can be positively and linearly correlated.:

2.4.4 Leadership Theory

The educational leadership of a school is important for the community in general and school administration in particular because of its direct relationship with parents, teachers and learners. Leadership is not simply a combination of common characteristics or needs but a working relationship between the members of the school or the educational institution. This theory approaches the ideas of human relations theory in that they focus on reaching the natural goal of man (Khawaja, 2004).

Besides the basic idea that if people try for specific, hard goals, then they will perform better, the goal-setting theory introduces three relevant moderating conditions: goal commitment, feedback and task complexity (Locke & Latham, 2002)

This study was guided by the theory of performance in examining the factors that contribute to academic performance.

2.5 CONCLUSION

The literature review outlined in this chapter provided an insight into the view that academic performance has underlying factors that contribute towards it, thus political, economic and social factors. These factors can therefore neither be overlooked nor isolated from academic performance. Furthermore, this chapter has highlighted that academic performance in education is very important. Academic performance in education cannot be treated in isolation, therefore in this chapter, it was elaborated that there are factors that contribute to academic performance in education. Moreover, their impact on academic performance was also discussed.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1   INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, literature was reviewed. The appropriate theories relating to academic performance were discussed for the provision of considerable background information for the context of the study. This chapter focuses on a detailed discussion of methodological paradigms which were employed in this study including the research designs and data collection methods that were used to investigate the factors which contribute to academic performance. The ethical principles which were applied during data collection are also discussed in detail in this chapter. The investigated factors are the contributors to the academic performance of the selected schools. (See figure 3.1 for the location of the Capricorn District of Limpopo Province shown here with other Districts of Limpopo Province).

Figure 3.1 The map showing the location of the Capricorn district of Limpopo

Province with other districts within the Province(Adapted from municipality website, 2019)

3.2   RESEARCH PARADIGMS

 Research paradigms are described as a set of assumptions regarding important aspects of reality that give rise to a certain worldview, serving as an organising notion by which reality is interpreted (Maree, 2007). Different paradigms have been utilised by various researchers. These paradigms are chosen because of various reasons as they are the viewpoints that reflect particular ideology to the aspects related to the study (Nieuwenhuis, 2007; Hay, 2005; Denzen & Lincon, 2003). In this study, the interpretivism paradigm was employed as a research paradigm. Different paradigms are discussed below:

3.2.1 Critical theory

In critical theory, it is assumed that the objects researched are affected by the researcher (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005). The assumptions are that reality exists through the cultural, ethnic, religious, gender and political aspects which interact with one other in the creation of the social system. Critical researchers in education communicate their epistemological assumptions when entering into an investigation. This is done because of the political and epistemological ideas they bring into the research site" (Kincheloe & McLaren,2005). The objective of critical researchers is to come into confrontation with people in positions of power and expose the structures which are oppressive to people and establish inequalities (Kinchiloe, 2008). The task of critical educational researchers is to confront those in positions of power and expose the oppressive structures that subjugate people (Kinchiloe, 2008). The researcher in this study did not employ critical theory as the study was about examining the factors that contribute to the academic performance of the participating secondary schools.

Positivism

Positivism is part of philosophy that began during the early 19[th]century because of the works of the French philosopher, Auguste Comte (Richards, 2000). Positivism presumes that reality exists autonomously of humans. Positivism is not interceded by our senses and it is presided over by immutable laws. The ontological stand of positivists is that of realism. Positivists attempt to understand the social world similar to the natural world. Naturally, there is a cause-effect relationship amongst the phenomena. "Positivists see the world as being available in a more or less motionless form (Gall, 2003). Positivists are of the view that laws governing social phenomena do exist and that through the application of scientific methods and that through factual statements, these laws can be formulated and presented.

The objectives of the positivism paradigm are appropriate for studying natural objects even though they are that successful when they are applied to social phenomena (Richards,2003). In this study, the researcher did not employ positivism because examining factors contributing to Grade 12 results is a social phenomenon and positivism is said to not yielding successful social inquiry.

3.2.3. Interpretivism

Interpretivism is counter to positivism which is over-dominant (Grix, 2004). Interpretivism refuses the idea that a sole, empirical reality exists independent of perceptions. Interpretive ontology rejects adaptation to any unvarying standards by which truth can be known universally (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). Interpretivists believe in multiple realities which are socially contracted. Truth and reality are generated and not discovered. It is impossible to know reality in isolation because it is always interceded by our senses. According to interpretive

methodology, social phenomena must be understood through the eyes of respondents rather than the researcher (Cohen, 2007).

The objective of the interpretive methodology is to understand social phenomena in their context. Interpretivists in qualitative studies collect data for an extended period just like in case studies and ethnography. The researchers in interpretive methodology understand the phenomenon and generate a theory through inductive data analysis by discovering the patterns generated from broad themes.

This method is the opposite of the deductive approach whereby themes and patterns are identified before the commencement of the data collection process. Furthermore, when the data is collected, events, statements and words which were identified before the data collection method will be searched by the researchers.

Interpretivists use an inductive approach. This is because they see theory being derived from data collected not as the driving force of research" (Grix, 2004). Data are in form of words not numbers and the data is audio/video recorded to preserve the events of data collection for subsequent analysis of data (Gall, 2003).

Interpretive researchers use the methods that will extract qualitative data even though quantitative data could be derived, they are not relied upon. Examples of data collection methods that yield qualitative data include interviews, observations and informal conversational interviews, field notes, personal notes and documents to mention a few. Below are the differences between positivism and interpretivism:

Metatheoretical assumptions	Positivism	Interpretivism
Epistemology	Objective reality exists beyond the human mind.	Knowledge of the world is intentionally constituted through a person's life
ResearchObject	Research object has inherent qualities that exist	Research object is interpreted in light of the meaning structure of a person's
Method	Statistic, content analysis.	Hermeneutics, phenomenology, etc.
TheoryofTruth	Correspondencetheoryoftruth: one-to-one mapping between researchstatementsandreality.	Truthasintentionalfulfilment: interpretations of research objectmatchlivedexperienceof object.
Validity	Certainty: data truly measures reality.	Defensible knowledge claims.
Reliability	Replicability: research results	Interpretiveawareness: recognizeand subjectivity.
Ontology	Researcher and reality are separate	Researcher and reality are inseparable

Figure 3.2 :Adapted from Weber, 2004

The researcher in this study was guided by interpretivism because qualitative data was generated through interviews, observations, informal conversations and field notes to investigate the factors contributing to academic performance, in particular, the grade 12 results of secondary schools in Capricorn District of Limpopo Province.

 Below are the reasons why the researcher employed Interpretivism as the research paradigm of this study:

The researcher needed to understand the phenomenon of academic performance in its context, thus, the situation within the school context and the factors contributing towards the schools' academic performance, Grade 12 results in particular. Qualitative data from participants of the selected secondary schools was collected as a case study.

The researcher used an inductive approach in analysing data, thus the researcher began with the immersion of natural setting and described events as accurately as possible, the way they occurred under broad themes to understand the phenomenon and generate theory.

3.3 RESEARCH APPROACHES

A research approach can use a quantitative, mixed-method or qualitative approach (Creswell, 2012). These research approaches have been linked to the metatheoretical traditions discussed above (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). The quantitative approach has been linked to positivism which the qualitative approach has been linked to interpretivism. Critical theory is linked to both quantitative and qualitative studies. This study employed a qualitative research approach.

3.3.1 Qualitative research approach

A qualitative research approach can be described as an exploration process of understanding based on a methodological tradition of inquiry that explores human or social problems (De Waal, 2004). Qualitative research is conducted using a variety of methods that are descriptive and qualifying words for recording and investigating aspects of social reality (Bless & Smith, 2000). Qualitative researchers study people in natural settings and interpret the phenomena in terms of the data that people bring with them. It uses a variety of interconnected methods to get closer and derive a better fix on the responded matter at hand (DeWaal, 2004). In this study, the researcher used the collected data on factors contributing to the academic performance of participating secondary schools to derive the findings of this study.

3.3.2 Quantitative Approach

A quantitative research approach is the kind of research in which the researcher- chooses what to study, poses specific questions to the respondents, collects quantifiable data from the respondents, analyses the data through statistics and conducts the research study in an unbiased manner (Creswell, 2012). Creswell (2012) further stated that it generally involves collecting numerical data that can be subjected to statistical analysis.

	Quantitative Studies	Qualitative studies
Approach to the natural setting	Controlled settings Selected samples	Natural settings Whole context
Aim of research	Quantitative descriptions Explanation and description	Thick descriptions Interpretive understanding
Research strategy	Deductive Generalising	Inductive Contextualizing
Notion of objectivity	Maximum control over extraneous factors	Inter subjectivity

Figure 3.3 Qualitative and Quantitative research approaches by Earl Babbie & Johann Mouton, 2001)

3.3.3 MIXED METHOD APPROACH

A mixed method is an individual design with a strong quantitative background (Cresswell, 2012). He stated that the mixed method approach is a project with two phases whereby the researcher first collects quantitative data and analyses the results. Furthermore, the researcher uses the results from quantitative data to build the second phase. This second phase is qualitative. The quantitative data results will then inform the researcher about the respondents to be purposefully selected for the qualitative phase and the type of questions to be asked to the participants.

The main aim of the mixed method approach is to have the qualitative data which will assist in explaining in detail the quantitative results from the first phase (Cresswell, 2012). Below are the main reasons why the researcher chose a qualitative research approach over quantitative and mixed method approaches in investigating the factors influencing the Grade 12 results of the participating secondary schools.

Reasons why the researcher employed the Qualitative research approach in this study:

This research study took place in a natural setting of the two selected secondary schools (high performing and low performing) than controlled settings. The study was based on thick descriptions, thus describing and understanding the factors that influence the Grade 12 results of the participating secondary schools.

The researcher had a preference for understanding the events, actions and processes in their context (contextual interest). This meant understanding the events within the school environment, the actions by teachers and learners and the educational processes within the school environment and their influence on academic performance.

Gay (2003) further states that the qualitative research approach allows the researcher to interpret events, activities and conservations to construct meaning and understanding of them. In this study, factors influencing grade 12 results of the participating schools were examined, hence a qualitative research approach was employed.
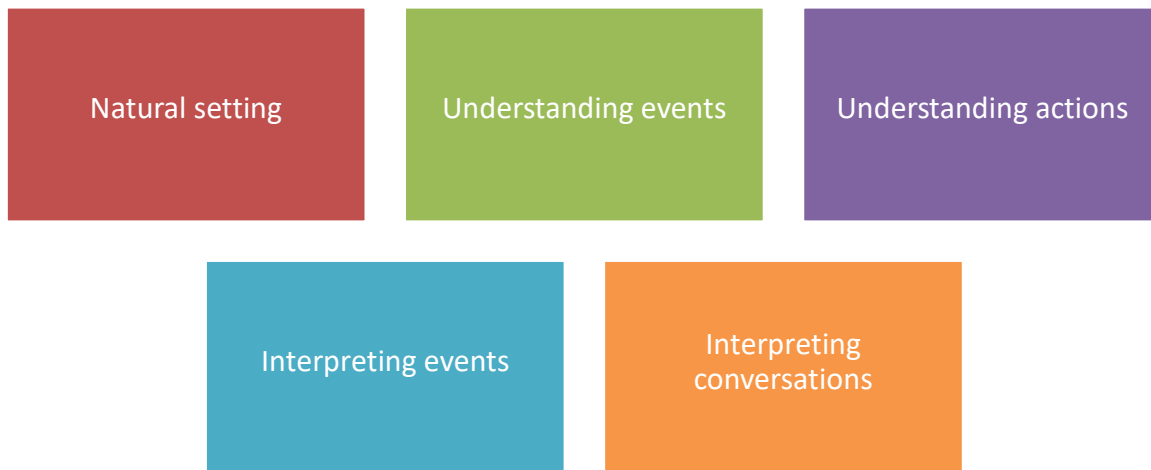
| Natural setting | Understanding events | Understanding actions |

| Interpreting events | Interpreting conversations |

Figure 3.4 Reasons for employing qualitative approach by the researcher

3.4   RESEARCH DESIGN

Research design can be described as a preliminary plan for conducting research (Cant & Goddard, 2003).In this study, the researcher employed a case study research design to draw data through interviews and observations. Case studies are also used to make a research topic more researchable by narrowing very broad fields of studies (Creswell, 2008). There was a narrowing of the sample size to suit the research needs. Further details will be discussed in the sampling of study participants. Research design further specifies the methodologies and steps to be followed in data collection and data analysis. It can further be defined as a blueprint for the planning of the research activities for the project (Zikmund, 2003).

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2006), "the research design describes how the study is conducted and the purpose of a research design is to indicate a plan that will generate evidence that will be able to answer the research questions". The information collected during a research study project is affected by the way researchers develop their research designs and whether the research question is descriptive or explanatory (Fox, 2007). Moreover, case studies are an intense exploration of abounded systems with which their bases are on extensive data collection (Creswell, 2008). Furthermore, a case study is an in-depth investigation of a certain context rather than a quantitative study. A case study was employed to collect data in this study through interviews and observations.

3.5   SAMPLING

Sampling can be defined as a process of selecting a part of a population of interest in that the results from the studied sample can be generalised to the population in which the sample was selected (Gravetter & Forzano, 2011). This study utilised a purposive sampling procedure. The researcher deemed this procedure fit for this study because only the candidates who fit the criteria of the desired participant will participate in this study.The criteria that I used to select the participants was identifying the High perfoming schools in the District and the Low performing schools which have maintained the same state of performance for more than 3 years,This includes purposinve sampling of Grade 12 teachers and school principals from the schools. De Vos, Strydom, Fouché and Deport

(2005) indicated that this sampling procedure is entirely based on the researcher's judgement. Also, the sample comprises the elements that have the characteristics required of the target population.

The sample of this study is as follows: Four school principals from the selected four secondary schools, thus two from poor performing schools and two from high performing ones. Also included are eight grade12 teachers from the four secondary schools, thus four grade 12 teachers from high performing secondary school and four teachers from low performing secondary school.

All the selected participants were very important for the study as they were of great help in understanding the whole phenomenon as they spent time at school to accomplish the mission and vision of the school and working together for the production of outstanding results, particularly Grade 12 results.

Pilot study

The researcher conducted a pilot study from the sampled population. This assisted in the assessment of the shortcoming of the data collection of this study (Babbie, 2005). This was done by interviewing one principal, one teacher from low performing school and one principal and one teacher from high performing secondary school in Capricorn District. A pilot study was conducted to examine any shortcomings before the commencement of the data collection process. The following is the presentation of the findings from pilot study:

During the interviews with Pilot teacher A and pilot teacher B from the High performing and the low performing schools.One of the themes tha emerged was parental involvent.It was found that lack parental involvement seems to be available in both schools but it was found to be in prevalence in the low performing school than in the high performing school. Teacher A from the low performing school mentioned that lack of parental involvement is one of the challenges faced in their school,Pilot principal A of the low performing school also indicated that lack of parental involvement is a challenge on it's own in their school. She added that some parents do not care about their children's education. Furthermore, Pilot teacher B of the high performing school stated that when they are called to parents' meetings at school,majority of the parents

show up while some do not come. This finding was echoed by pilot principal B of the high performing school who further stated that some parents choose not to involve themselves in their children's school matters.

The second theme that emerged during the interviews with pilot teachers A and B of the high performing and the low performing schools is learner absenteeism. indicated that learner absenteeism is sometimes experienced in their school. Pilot teacher A of the low performing school mentioned that absenteeism is prevalent in their school and that majority of the Grade 12 learners absent themselves to school during normal school days and also during the enrichment and extra classes organised for them. According to pilot teacher B of the high performing school, learner absenteeism affect academic performance as few earner who often absent themselves to school finds it difficult to catch-up with the school work.

During the pilot study it was highlighted that facilities are one of the important factors that are required in school.Pilot principal A of the low performing school stated that the school facilities play a major role in the school's academic performance.The principal stated that their school do not have enough facilities that support effective teaching and learning. Pilot principal B from the high performing school also stated that their school does not have adequate facilities like proper school library,laboratory and proper sport fields.

3.6   DATA COLLECTION

Data collection is defined as the gathering of data that will assist in clarifying the problem of the research study (De Vos, 2001). The quality of the research study entirely depends on the quality of the instruments of data collection (De vos, 2001). It means the design of the data collection instrument plays an important role in the effective collection of data for the research study in any area of research.

Researchers in qualitative studies make use of different data collection methods in the field. These data collection methods include observations, interviews, document analysis and field notes to mention a few. In this study, data was collected through

interviews, observations and field notes.

This section discusses the instruments used for collecting data for this study.

3.6.1 Observations

Observation is the process of monitoring, noting and observing someone (Babbie, 2001). He indicated that the two types of observations are simple observation where the researcher is an outside observer and participant observation in which the researcher is also a member of the group he/she is observing. In this study, the researcher was an observer of the situation, activities and processes from outside.

Table 3.4Types of things a researcher may wish to observe by Earl Babbie & Johann Mouton

Type of things to observe	Description of action taken by the researcher
Exterior physical signs	The state of the classrooms and learner uniforms and other visible physical signs within the research site were observed
Expressive movements	The body movements and eye expressions of the teachers and learners during the teaching and learning process were observed.
Physical location	The physical location of the school was observed
Language behaviour	The language used within the school environment
Time duration	The duration the teacher took engaging with the learners was observed

(**Adapted from Earl Babbie & Johann Mouton, 2001**)

During an observation, the researcher observed awards and a trophy stand in the main administration building of one of the participating schools. The award and trophy stand was full of trophies and awards. The observation gave the researcher descriptive

information regarding the natural setting of the research site rather than recalling from memory and notes (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003).

In this study, the researcher observed all the classroom activities and teaching by the grade 12 educators, infrastructure, computer rooms, awards and trophy display cabinets. In the classroom, the researcher observed the situation directly rather than depending on the information that the respondents were giving.

The researcher during the data collection process observed the participation by the learners in the classroom, subject content knowledge by the teachers, learners' behaviour during the learning process, the buildings within the schools' environment and policy documents used within the schools.

After the classroom observation, the researcher requested the subject policy documents and learners' workbooks to see if they correlate with the adopted working policies. Below are some of the observed policy documents:
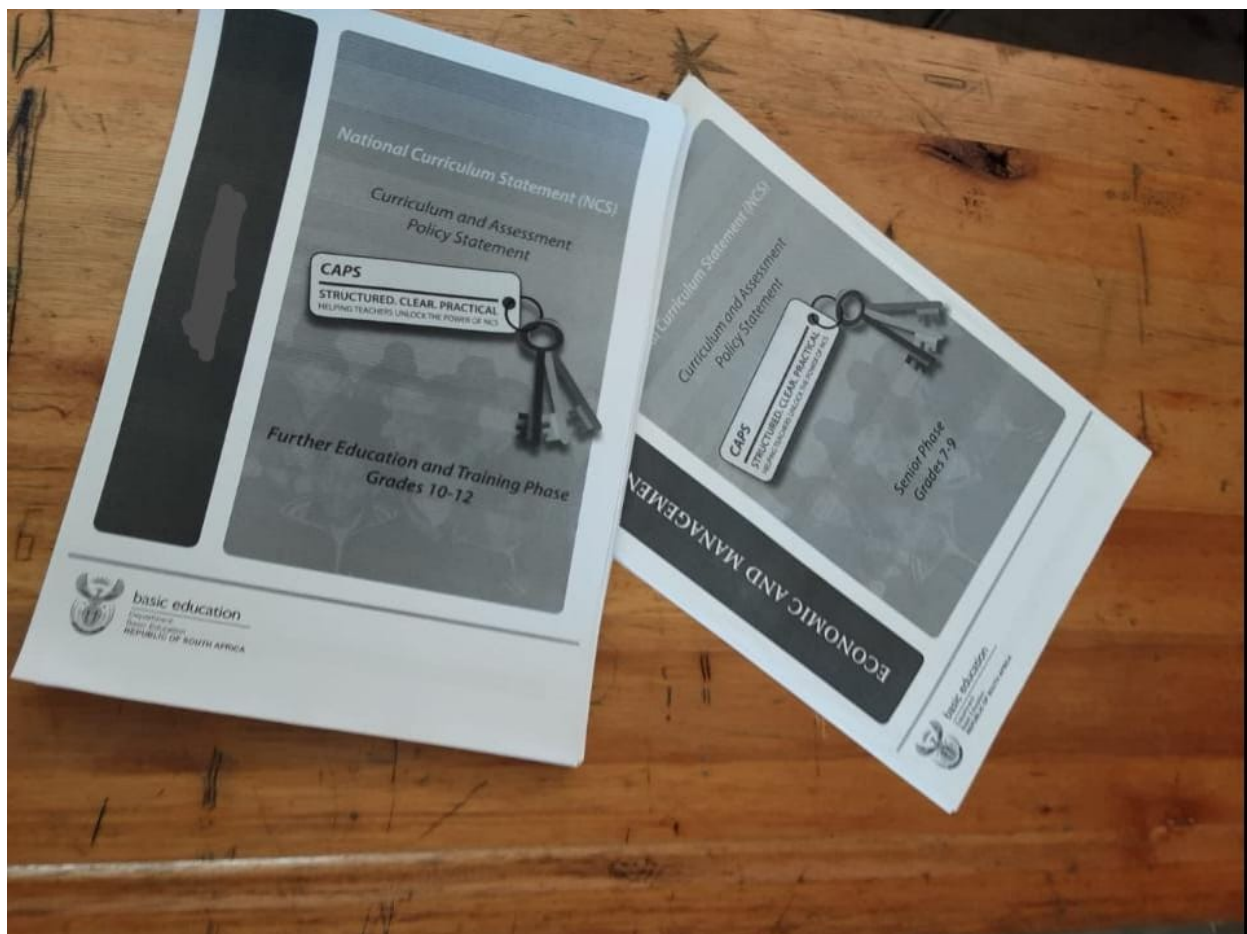
Photograph 1:Observed policy documents

3.6.2 Interviews

The interviews were conducted by the researcher to collect data from the respondents using the interview questions. An interview questionnaire is a written list of questions that were prepared by the researcher for utilisation by researcher during data collection (Kumar, 2011). Interview questions are an instrument used for data collection in qualitative studies (Nziyane, 2011). In this study, qualitative interviews were used to collect data from the respondents. The data collection process involved the researcher posing questions to the participants and using a voice recorder to record the responses. Questionnaires are flexible, hence the researcher utilised them (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006). Four grade 12 teachers and two principals in Capricorn District were interviewed to identify factors contributing to the high performance and low performance of grade 12 learners in Capricorn District. Also, the thrust was to investigate the perceptions of the grade 12 teachers and school principals concerning their school's performance, to assess the culture of teaching and learning in these schools and their influence on academic performance, Last, it was meant to assess the school management teams' roles. The information gathered was presented and interpreted by the researcher.

3.6.3 Informal conversational interviews

The researcher in this study interacted with the principals and teachers of the participating secondary schools in informal conversational interviews. This was done to develop an understanding of the setting and establish a rapport with the participants. The information from the informal interviews with the participants was documented as field notes. This is supported by Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2000).

3.6.4 Fieldnotes

The informal interviews and observations made by the researcher during the data collection process were documented in form of field notes. These field notes were to

be analysed afterwards (Braun,2006). All observed aspects, exterior physical signs, expressive movements, physical location, language behaviour and time duration were all documented in the field notes (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). The researcher used field notes to produce meaning and understanding of the culture of the participating schools to examine the factors contributing to academic performance in particular the grade 12 results of the high performing and low performing secondary schools within the Capricorn District of Limpopo Province.

3.6.3 Pilot study

The researcher conducted a pilot study from the sampled population. This assisted in the assessment of the shortcoming of the data collection of this study (Babbie, 2005). This was done by interviewing one principal, one teacher from low performing school and one principal and one teacher from high performing secondary school in Capricorn District. A pilot study was conducted to examine any shortcomings before the commencement of the data collection process. When it was found that the interview schedules were effectively constructed, the researcher continued with the entire data collection process.

3.7   DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis is regarded as an important research process stage of a research study. According to Creswell (2003), the data analysis process entails deriving sense out of the information collected. It involves getting deeper into the understanding of the data collected, presentation of data and interpreting the information from the respondents of the research study. Analysis of data and interpretation means a systematic process of coding data, categorising themes and interpreting information to give explanations of a phenomenon of research interest. Qualitative data analysis is about categorising, defining, exploring, explaining and mapping all the important information collected regarding the research study (Struwig & Stead, 2001)

The data was analysed by highlighting phrases that presented the respondents' attitudes and thoughts, repeating the interview transcripts, reading to ensure accuracy,

highlighting important statements and organising the themes that emerge from the interview.
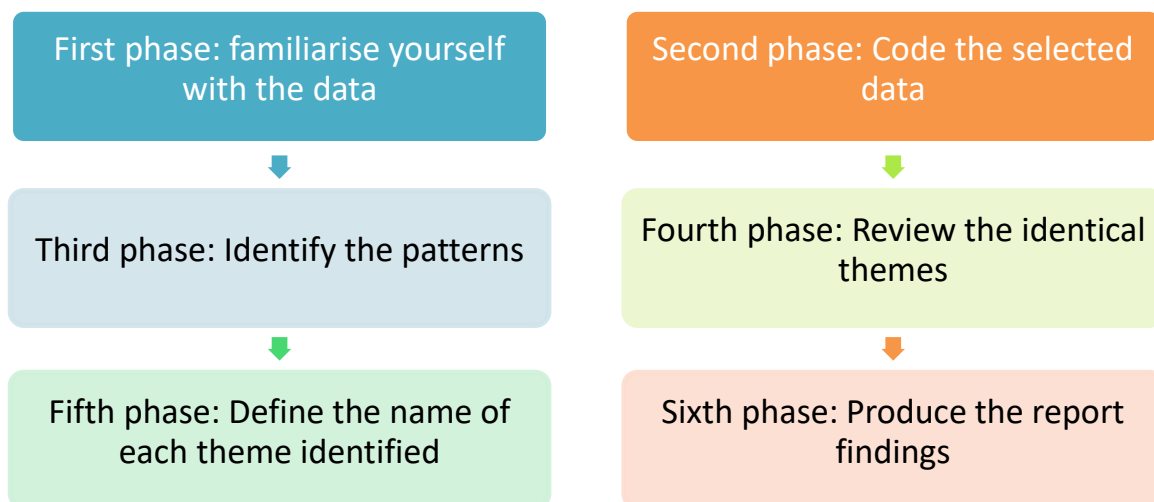
First phase: familiarise yourself with the data	Second phase: Code the selected data
↓	↓
Third phase: Identify the patterns	Fourth phase: Review the identical themes
↓	↓
Fifth phase: Define the name of each theme identified	Sixth phase: Produce the report findings

Figure 3.5 six phases of a thematic analysis of data by (Braun, 2006)

In analysing the data of this study, the researcher followed the above mentioned phases of thematic data analysis as suggested by Braun (2006). The advantage thematic analysis has is its relative flexibility particularly when working with various data collection methods (Braun, 2006). Firstly, the researcher familiarised herself with the data from the interview recordings as she transcribed it. The researcher also familiarised herself with the observed data from the research sites and her written notes that she wrote during the data collection process. The information that emerged was of great importance during this process, then noted and written down. The second phase of thematic data analysis was coding the selected data through coding schemes (Struwig & Stead, 2001). Patterns were carefully noted to identify the themes from the data. During phase four of the thematic analysis of data, the identified themes were reviewed. In this phase, the researcher ensured that the identified themes of the previous phase correlate with the identified codes in phase two of the thematic data analysis of this study. In phase five of thematic analysis, the researcher defined and named the identified themes. In the last phase as suggested by Braun (2006), the report findings were produced. The report findings are further outlined and discussed in chapter four of this study.

Furthermore, the researcher also used tables to interpret data that was gathered during interviews and observations.

3.8   QUALITY ASSURANCE MATTERS

3.8.1 Transferability

Transferability refers to the extent to which the research findings can be applied in other contexts, situations or other respondents (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). Transferability also enables the readers of the research study to compare the research situation to their own (Mertens, 2010).In qualitative research studies, the researchers do not claim that the knowledge from a particular context will apply to other situations (Babbie & Mouton,2001).

The research findings of this study can be used by future researchers. This is because this research study is informative as the researcher has spent more time collecting the data of this study (Edward, 2001). Given the information and findings of this study, the readers can make comparisons with different studies.

Therefore, readers of this research study can relate to how the results of the study would have been if conducted in wider population ranges with thorough descriptions and explanations. According to Babbie & Mouton (2001), the obligation of transferability in qualitative studies rests on those who wish to apply it (the researcher of this study) and those who wish to receive it (the readers of this study).

3.8.2 Credibility

Credibility refers to the extent to which the research study is appropriate and believable (Lincon, 2002). The researcher has spent more time in the participating schools collecting sufficient data for this study.

The researcher did adequate observation in the participating schools' settings and documented the findings. The researcher further consulted with the relevant literature related to her study and the theories about the study. It is important to collect adequate data to ensure credibility (Seale, 2000). The researcher spent adequate time in the participating schools 'premises collecting data (Babbie & Mouton,2001). Before reaching conclusions and providing the research findings, the researcher needs to spend more time in the field (Patton, 2002).

3.8.3 Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the level at which the findings of a study are the product of the focus of the research topic and are not based on any researcher biases (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). The researcher ensured that the findings of this study are a product of factors influencing the academic performance of Grade 12 results in particular. In this study, the researcher reviewed all the raw data from the audio recordings, field notes and documents to interpret the data for findings and conclusion (Lincon, 2002). During the process, the researcher remained unbiased to ensure that the findings are the product of the research focus (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). The researcher documented the data analysis process and reflected on this process throughout the study. The researcher also attempted to understand and interpret the results).

3.5.3 Dependability

A research study should provide the readers with the same findings if it were to be repeated (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). This refers to the repetition with the same respondents in the same environment. The researcher extracted thorough data from the respondents. The data was from the interview voice records, field notes and observations for the dependability of this study in examining the factors that contribute to the academic performance of the participating secondary school in particular the Grade 12 results.

3.9 ETHICAL MATTERS

Whenever human beings or any creatures with physical and psychological emotions are involved, we must look closely at ethical implications (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). Leedy and Ormrod (2010) further stated that most ethical issues in research fall into one of four categories and those categories were employed in this study as follows:

3.9.1 Permission to Conduct Research

A clearance certificate from TREC was obtained before commencing with the envisaged study. The researcher also sought permission to conduct the study from the DBE in Capricorn District of Limpopo Province, which was granted and from the principals of schools who allowed the researcher to collect data from the teachers in their schools and the principals.

3.9.2 Informed Consent and voluntary participation

Informed concern implies measures according to which research participants decide whether to participate in the research study after being informed of the details that would likely predispose them towards participation (Cohen, Manion & Marrison, 2000). In this study, the researcher informed the participants and clearly explained to them that participation is voluntary and allowed them to make decisions. The researcher further explained to the participants what was expected of them as the respondents of the study. The respondents were asked to sign a consent form to participate freely in this research study. In signing the consent form, only the signatures were appended and not the names.

3.9.3 Confidentiality

In this study, the researcher used codes to identify the respondents and maintained confidentiality. Furthermore, no names and addresses were used and every data was kept in a safe place and protected.

3.9.4 Privacy

Privacy was of great importance in this study and the researcher ensured that the rights and dignity of respondents were maintained and handled as private. Furthermore, special care was taken to ensure that there was no physical, psychological or mental damage to the respondents. Babbie (2005) states that 'social research should never injure the people being studied regardless of whether they volunteer for the study. Intensive precautionary measures were taken during this study to ensure that the participants are not harmed in any way be it may physically, mentally or psychologically.

3.9.5 Respect

The researcher ensured that all participants were treated with respect throughout the process. The principals and teachers from all the selected participating secondary schools were highly respected throughout the data collection process in their premises. In the process of data collection of this study, the researcher further ensured that the participants do not experience humiliation or discomfort.

3.9.6 Dignity

The researcher ensured that the rights and dignity of the respondents were maintained. The rights and dignity of the principals and the teachers from the participating secondary schools were maintained. In this study, the researcher established an atmosphere and dignified relationship between herself the respondents. This ensured that the data collection process regarding the factors which influenced the academic performance of the school became successful.

3.9.7 Standard care

Special care was taken in ensuring that there was no physical, psychological or mental damage to the respondents. During the process of data collection, the researcher exercised special care and fairness with regards to her actions and humanity. This is further supported by McMillan and Schumacher (2010),when they urged that respondents special care need to be applied when dealing with participants. The researcher treated the principals and teachers from the participating secondary schools with care and fairness which led to successful data collection.

3.10   CONCLUSION

This chapter provided an exploration of research paradigms, research approaches and methodologies that will be employed in the execution of this research study. It includes the methods that were employed to address the research problem as formulated, subjects of the study and who or what kind of respondents were covered by the method (Welman, Kruger & Mitchel, 2001). Methods used in collecting data were outlined and explained. In the next chapter, the research results are presented and analysed.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter three focused on the research methodology that was followed in investigating the factors that contribute to poor academic performance in Grade 12 results in the Capricorn District of Limpopo Province. In this chapter, the results of the study are presented. The results are presented in form of themes. The chapter includes the profile of the performance of the Limpopo Districts for the year 2019 and the profile of the performance of the four participating schools for the past three years -2017, 2018 and 2019.
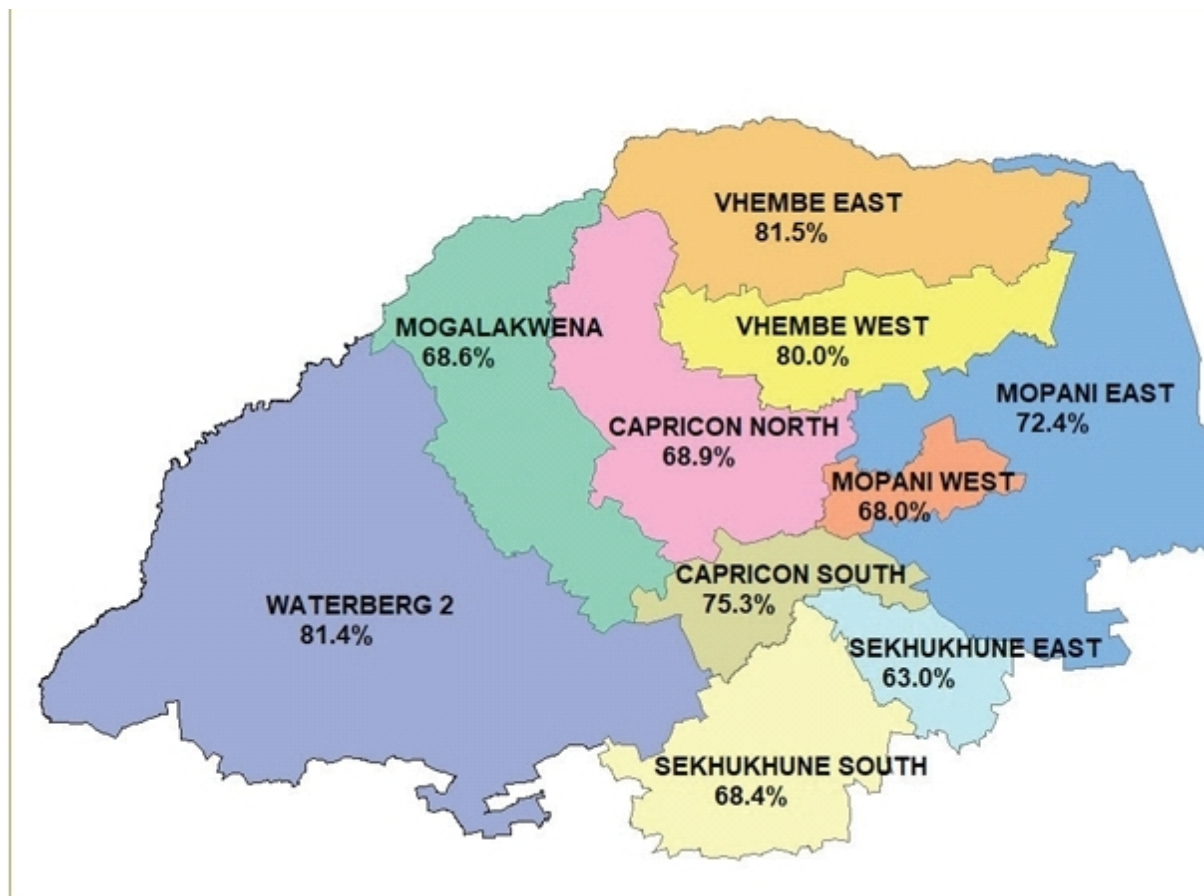

Figure 4.1The academic performance (Grade 12 NSC Results) of the districts of Limpopo Province (Adapted from DBE, 2019).

According to the academic performance (Grade 12 NSC Results) as per district for the year 2019, Capricorn South and North achieved 75.3% and 68.9% respectively and the top achieving District was Vhembe East with 81.5%.

Below is the academic performance of the participating high performing secondary school A from the year 2017 to 2019.

YEAR	Number of learners who wrote	Number of learners Passed	Percentage of learners achieved	Number of learners not achieved	Percentage of learners not achieved
2017	157	152	96.8	05	3.2
2018	174	169	97.1	06	2.9
2019	180	174	96.7	06	3.3

Table 4.1 the academic performance (Grade 12 NSC results) of the participating High performing secondary school A of the Capricorn District of Limpopo Province.

The academic performance of Grade 12 NSC results of the participating high performing secondary school as depicted in the above table indicates that the school has been performing outstandingly. These Grade 12 NSC results of the high performing secondary school further indicate that for three consecutive years, the school has been performing above 90%. In 2017, the number of learners who wrote the NSC Grade 12 examination was 157. Of these learners, 152 passed their examinations which is 96.8% and only 5 failed which is 3.2%. In 2018, 174 wrote the examinations and 169 learners passed, which is 97.1 % and 5 failed which is 2.9%. Lastly, in 2019, 180 learners wrote the examinations and 174 passed the examination which is 96.7% and only 6 failed that is 3.3%.

Below is the academic performance of the participating high performing secondary school B from the year 2017 to 2019.

YEAR	Number of learners wrote	Number of learners passed	Percentage of learners achieved	Number of learners not achieved	Percentage of learners not achieved
2017	103	91	88.3	12	11.7
2018	96	76	79.2	20	20.8
2019	90	74	82.2	16	17.8

Table 4.1 the academic performance (Grade 12 NSC results) of the participating high performing secondary school B of the Capricorn District of Limpopo Province.

Below is the academic performance of the participating low performing secondary school A from the year 2017 to 2019.

YEAR	Number of learners who wrote	Number of learners achieved	Percentage of learners Achieved	Number of learners not achieved	Percentage of learners not achieved
2017	116	60	51	56	49
2018	66	35	53.	31	47
2019	42	23	54.8	19	45.2

Figure 4.3 the academic performance (Grade 12 NSC results) of the participating low performing secondary school A of the Capricorn District of Limpopo Province.

The academic performance for Grade 12 NSC results of the participating low performing secondary school as depicted in the above table indicates that the school has been performing poorly. These Grade 12 NSC results of the low performing secondary school further indicate that for three consecutive years, the school has been performing below 60%. In 2017, 116 learners wrote the examination and 60 learners passed their examinations which is 51% and 56 failed that is 49%. In 2018, the learners who wrote the Grade 12 NSC examinations in the school were 66 and 35 learners passed the NSC

examinations which is 53% and 31 failed that is 47%. Last, in 2019, the learners who wrote the Grade 12 NSC examinations in this school were 42 and 23 learners passed the examination which is 54.8% and 19 failed, which is 45.2%.

Below is the academic performance of the participating low performing secondary school B from the year 2017 to 2019.

YEAR	Number of learners wrote	Number of learners achieved	Percentage of learners Achieved	Number of learners not achieved	Percentage of learners not achieved
2017	144	40	27.8	104	72.2
2018	103	57	55.3	46	44.7
2019	89	39	43.8	50	56

Figure 4.4 the academic performance (Grade 12 NSC results) of the participating low performing secondary school B of the Capricorn District of Limpopo Province.

4.2 RESULTS OF THE STUDY

4.2.1 Data obtained from the participating schools pertaining to academic performance

From the data gathered during the interviews with all the principals, it is clear that the schools' academic performances are affect by various factors.

The researcher presents the five themes from the interviews with all the selected schools, high performing and low performing secondary schools in the Capricorn District :

Theme 1□Parental involvement

Theme 2□Performance improvement plans

Theme 3□ District and school management support

Theme 4□ Drugs and alcohol abuse

Theme 5 Commitment matters

Below is figure 4.5 indicating an overview of the themes and the subthemes of interviews with the school principals

Category: Factors contributing to academic performance				
Theme 1 Parental involvement	**Theme 2** Schools' performance improvement plans	**Theme 3** Senior support matters	**Theme 4** Drugs and alcohol abuse	**Theme 5** Commitment matters
Subtheme	**Sub-themes**	**Sub-themes**	**Sub-themes**	**Sub-themes**
Meeting attendance	Extra lessons Outsourcing Team-work	Supportive circuit managers	Working relations	Teacher commitment
Learner schoolwork Assistance	Learner profiling	Supportive curriculum advisors	Code of conduct for learners	Learner commitment
	Facilities Accountability sessions	Supportive school management team		

Figure 4.5 An overview of the themes and the subthemes of interviews with the school principals

4.2.1.1 Theme 1: Parental involvement

According to the interviewed principals, parental involvement is of utmost importance in the school's academic performance. The principal from school A which is the low performing school indicated that even though parental involvement is crucial in the

school's academic performance, they experience a lack of parental involvement in their school. The principal explained:

"Even when the learners misbehave here in the school premises and the parents are called to come to school, a majority of the parents do not come. The majority of the learners do not attend the enrichment classes and when the parents are informed, they promise that the learner will come to attend and in the end, those learners do not attend the enrichment classes"

In contrast, the principal from School B of the low performing school indicated that the parents in their school are hands-on in their children's education. He added that parental involvement in their school is good and that parents provide adequate support to their children regarding their school matters even though some parents often do not come for the meetings. Both principals A and B of the high performing schools also made it clear that parental involvement in their schools is satisfactory. Principal A from high performing school A explained:

"We go to an extent of liaising with the parents in contributing certain amounts towards the extra lessons for paying the teachers who go an extra mile in assisting our learners. We liaise with them and they give full support concerning this"

Principal B of the high performing school B furthers explained that they set their goals and targets at the beginning of the year which they present to the parents in the parents' meeting. According to principal B a of high performing school, setting goals assists a lot because their school performance is high.

Parents who are not involved in their children's education disadvantage their children academically (Maluleke, 2014). Principal B of high perfoming schoolfurther indicated that parents attend the school meetings and always come to school when they are by the school management.

4.2.1.2 Theme 2: Schools' performance and performance improvement plan

(a) Extra lessons

During the interviews with the school principals, the researchers established that there seems to be a norm in all the schools regarding the performance improvement plans.

From the interviews with the principals of the low performing and high performing schools, there are performance improvement plans put in place by the schools. The principals indicated that there are extra lessons that are conducted at their schools to enhance their academic performance and improve the results. These extra classes included weekend classes, afternoon lessons from both performing and underperforming schools. Principal B of the high performing school explained that there are enrichment classes put in place by the DBE where all the learners are to attend. Principal A of the low performing school indicated that these enrichment classes are conducted at centralised venues. They are autumn and spring, enrichment classes. Both principals in school B of the low performing school and A of the high performing school highlighted that learners attend these classes at full capacity without fail. Principal A from a low performing school A further indicated that even though the improvement plans are put in place for our learners, some of the learners in her school do not attend these classes. She further added that this is a challenge on its own and contributes to our school's academic performance.

 (b) Outsourcing

The principals from low performing and high performing schools both indicated that they often outsource the educators from other schools to come and assist the learners at their schools. Principal A of the low participating school explained:

 "We sometimes as a schools call other teachers from other schools to come and teach our learners. We once called teachers××× from a certain school who came and taught our learners study skills through the video. Often these teachers come and teach our learners subject content and afterwards the learners do self-study"

According to these principals, outsourcing is essential for the school's academic performance.

Principal B of the high performing school explains:

   "Where possible we outsource if a certain teacher experiences challenges concerning a particular topic. We call a subject expert or other teachers from other schools to come and assist."

(c) Learner Profiling

Principals A and B of the high and low performing participating schools made it clear that on regular basis, they profile their learners according to their academic performance or results from ongoing tests and tasks. Principal B of the low participating school added that the learners are profiled according to their performance; the high performing learners are put together. Then, the average performing learners are grouped as well as the low performing learners. Furthermore, principal A of the low performing school and principal B of the high performing school claimed that these learners are being taught according to their profiles to cater to their academic needs and level of understanding so that they are not left behind concerning subject content matters and syllabus. The researcher established that this seems to be a norm in all schools.

(e) Facilities

The general response of all the participating principals is that the school facilities play a major role in the school's academic performance. Principal B from the high performing school indicated that their school does not have adequate facilities. He explains:

  "The classrooms here at our school are dilapidated even though we are performing outstandingly. We do not have the grounds for extra mural activities and our school does not have a proper library for learners to study"

 Both principals A and B of the low performing schools also indicated that their schools do not have adequate facilities and resources. Principal A of the low performing school explained that lack of facilities in their school contributes to the academic performance of the school. She added that they do not have a computer laboratory with internet access where teachers and learners can access the internet and download teaching and learning materials. The principal from the low performing school B responded by saying that lack of facilities is a challenge on its own at their school. He further added that there are inadequate classrooms, no computer and science laboratories in their schools. The principal of the high performing school A made it clear that their school has adequate resources. He explained that they have enough teaching classrooms, proper school grounds, a computer laboratory with internet access, proper administration block and adequate furniture for learners.

The researcher in this study is of the view that facilities are very important for the effective process of teaching and learning. This notion is supported by Early & Bubb (2004) when

they indicated that physical resources play a vital role as their availability directly affects teachers and learners.

4.2.1.3 Theme 3: Support from the District

(a) Circuit manager support

The general response from both high performing school principals and principal A of the low performing school was that the circuit managers in their circuits are very supportive. They indicated that the circuit managers do come to their schools and offer them support concerning curriculum matters. Principal A from the low performing school explains:

"The circuit manager often conduct the curriculum management workshops where she shows the HoD's and the principals their roles as far as curriculum management is concerned"

On the other hand, principal B of the low participating school was of the view that the support that they receive from their circuit manager is more of a critic rather than motivational support. The principal explained:

"The circuit manager asks us more of the why questions rather than giving us the solution and support of the challenge that we are faced with of low performance. As the principal, I perceive it has been a critique rather than motivation"

(b) Curriculum advisors support

Both the principals from the participating schools stated that the curriculum advisors are very supportive with regards to the curriculum matter in their schools. The Principal from the low performing school indicated that the curriculum advisor went to an extent of teaching their learners when they came to school and that they do so to serve as an example to the teachers in their school. The principal from the low performing school further added that the curriculum advisors conduct curriculum delivery workshops for educators. The principal from the high performing schools explained that the curriculum advisors are hands-on and very helpful. He added that they often request them to identify the challenging topics so that they can address the challenge and that they give them a lot of teaching guides to enhance their performance.

The research in this study is in agreement with Personen (2003) when he mentions that support and commitment from senior management is an absolute requirement for effective sailing of school matters.

(c) School Management Team support

The principals from the participating schools except for principal B of the low performing school stated that the school management teams in their schools support them as principals and the cs1 educators. The principal from the low performing school B indicated that the SMT does not support him fully though some do support him. He further indicated that he is not satisfied with the support that he received from some of the SMT members. Moreover, he indicated that this affected the schools' performance because they do not work as a team. On the other hand, the other principals of the participating schools indicated that the School Management Teams in their schools are hands-on and work as a team. Principal A of the low performing school reported that their SMT holds meetings and conducts some internal workshops with cs1 educators. Principal A from high performing school indicated that the SMT respects the cs1 educators and vice versa. Principal B of the high performing school indicated that some of the SMT members are also teaching Grade 12 and produce good results. This motivates the cs1 teachers to work hard and also produce good results.

The researcher sees it being of paramount importance for the school management team to lead by example, thus is setting targets and achieving them as stipulated. Tolinson (2004) shares the same sentiments with the researcher of this study when he mentions that setting the schools' performance target is the key responsibility of the school management team.

4.2.1.4 Theme 4: Working relations and code of conduct for learners

(a) Working relations

Principal A from the low performing school acknowledged that the working relations in their school are not that good. She indicated that several factors may have contributed to the working relations in their school be not so good but she urged that the major factor that contributed to these unhealthy working relations is the process of rationalisation and redeployment. The principal explained:

"Educator affected by the rationalisation and redeployment process, who are declared in excess by the post establishment, they perceive as if they are not wanted here at school by the principal. This is because they are not matched to other schools and they remain here and teach the subjects whom they haven't majored in due to this process of R & R. This affects the working relations between the teachers and I"

Principal A from the high performing school stated that the working relations in their school are very good. The staff members get along very well although there may be some rifts amongst the teachers; they always find a way to resolve them so that they can work together amicably. Principal B from the high performing claimed that some of the relationships amongst SMT members and teachers are not professional and this hinders the school's progress in a way. The essence of a successful school is good human relations, governance and two-way communication between the principal and his subordinates, which promotes learner performance (Bisschoff & Mestry, 2003). The researcher agrees with the above statement for one has to lead by example.

(b) Code of conduct for learners

Both the principals from the participating schools made it clear that they have schools' code of conduct for learners to assist them in dealing with discipline issues in their schools. The principal from the low performing school A stated that they follow the school's code of conduct to enforce discipline in school by all the learners. She explains:

"Here at our school, we have the school's tribunal committee which is the committee that deals with learner cases. These cases range from minor cases to more serious ones and in serious cases, the processes are followed until there is a hearing for those learners who have misbehaved. Thereafter, the sanctions are given according to the learners' code of conduct as stated".

The principal from the high performing school A mentioned that they make sure that every educator has the misconduct and incident report book which is blue. When the learners misbehave, the teacher records the incident. He further acknowledges that even though learners in their school do not like their names to be written in the misconduct and incident book, there are still some learners who misbehave in the school premises wherein we

involve the parents. Principal A of the high performing school also indicated that they do have a code of conduct for learners in place but they do have some ill-disciplined learners.

At some point, immediate action is required to reduce the disruption of the teaching and learning process in the classrooms and schools (Gottfredson, 2001 & Maag, 2001). The researcher in this study is in support of this view.

4.2.1.5 Drugs and alcohol abuse

Principals A and B from the low performing schools mentioned that they have a challenge of drugs and alcohol abuse in their schools. Principal B of the low performing school stated that this is a serious problem that they are faced with as a school as learners are engaged in alcohol and drug abuse in abundance. Principal A indicated that there is a need for rehabilitation for learners who are involved in these activities. Principal B claimed that drugs and alcohol contribute to the school's poor performance. The researcher agrees that drug and alcohol abuse contribute to poor academic performance. This is consistent with the study by Ibrahim, Bakori, Abdul-Kadir & Jabo, 2019) when they revealed that heavy drug abuse impairs academic abilities, which limits academic performance.

4.2.1.6 Theme 5: Commitment matters

(a) Teacher commitment

During the interviews, principals A and B from the low performing schools mentioned that they have a challenge of commitment in their schools. Principal A of the low performing school stated that some teachers and the majority of learners in their school are not committed to their work. Principal B from the low participating school indicated that commitment plays an important role in the school's academic performance. He further added that there has to be a commitment from both the educators and the learners if we are to achieve good results. Principal A from a low performing school highlighted that lack of commitment from some of the teachers in their school is a cause of concern. She explains:

 "Some educators are not willing to go an extra mile and often tell me about a seven hours normal working time".

The school principal from high performing school A stated that the teachers in their school are very committed, work hard and go the extra mile most of the time, hence contribute to the school's academic performance. Principal B of the high performing school mentioned that they do experience a lack of commitment from some teachers and learners but a majority of them show commitment and hard work.

This finding is consistent with the view of the researcher in this study that teachers' role and commitment are of great vitality in learners' education. This is further supported by Adu and Olatundun (2007).

4.2.2 Data obtained from the participating teachers of the participating secondary schools

The researcher presents the six themes that emerged from the interviews with the teachers from participating secondary schools:

Theme 1 □ Parental involvement

Theme 2 □Drugs and alcohol abuse

Theme 3 □ Learner absenteeism and bullying

Theme 4 □ Overall schools' performance and subject matters

Theme 5□District and SMT support

Theme 6 □ Discipline issues

Figure 4.2 an overview of themes and sub-themes that emerged from the interviews of the teacher from the participating schools.

4.2.2.1 Theme 1: Parental involvement

During the interviews, teachers C and D from the low performing schools mentioned that lack of parental involvement is one of the challenges faced in their schools. She added that some parents do not care about their children's education. Furthermore, teacher B of the low performing school stated that when they are called to parents' meetings at school, they do not come. Similarly, teacher D indicated that when their children portrayed disruptive behaviour in the school premises and the parents are called, they neither come nor give an apology. This has escalated to an extent that they do not even come. Teacher C of the low performing school explains:

"Even when we have identified certain challenges of the learner and we call the parent of that particular learner, the parent doesn't come and those parents often assume that we as teachers don't like their learners. Others do not even inquire about their learners' school work for as long the learners are admitted to the school, then all is well".

The teacher further explained that this further affects their children's education because they do not get encouraged by their parents at home and the parents do not care about their school work. Teacher A of the low performing school explains:

"When the parents are called to come and collect their children's school reports during term one, they come only in December during term four to collect the learners' reports".

Parents who choose not to involve themselves in the promotion of a good learning environment disadvantage their children academically (Maluleke, 2014). The researcher in this study supports this statement and in addition to this, lack of parental involvement can be associated with being irresponsible in a way. During an informal interview with teacher A of the low performing school, she revealed an important aspect that the researcher of this study noted. Teacher A explains:

"Some learners are not qualified to be in the mainstream; instead, they should be attending LSEN schools. It is just that we are teachers not psychologists. As a teacher, I see these learners when I am teaching them in class and we are often afraid to tell their parents because we won't know what their response will be."

As a researcher, this response brought me to a realisation that even when teachers realise serious issues concerning the learners, they keep the issue to themselves because they are demoralised as they often call the parents to the school and they do not come. The lack of parental involvement disadvantages the learners. This is further

supported by Maluleke (2004) who argues that parents who choose not to involve themselves in the promotion of a good learning environment disadvantage their children academically. Teachers A and C from the high performing schools indicated that parental involvement in their school satisfactory. Teacher A further added that parents of their learners are very concerned about their children's education and are very supportive. Teacher C explains:

"Our learners' parents do not hesitate to come to school whenever we call them and this makes our work easy when there is a cooperation between educators and parents"

Teacher C further reported that the role of parents in their school also motivates the learners a lot as they are aware that should anything go wrong, my parents will be called to come to school.

The researcher perceives parental involvement in children's education being an important contributory factor to the academic performance of every learner. The researcher's experience of working in a school context has taught her that most of the schools experience a lack of parental involvement which contributes to academic performance. In line with the above statement, Baloyi (2002) claims that there is a link between poor parental participation or involvement and low academic performance.

4.2.2.2 Theme 2: Drugs and alcohol abuse

 Teachers A and C from the low participating schools both indicated that there is a problem of drugs and alcohol abuse by the learners from their school. Teacher A of the participating high school revealed that even though they experience drug abuse by learners in their school, it is not in abundance. Only a few learners are involved in drug abuse. Teacher C of the low performing schools stated that the use of substances by learners contributes to the schools 'academic performance and high failure rate amongst the learners in their school. Teacher A of the low participating school indicated that when the learners are involved in the abuse of these substances, they often absent themselves from school or bunk the classes at times. Teacher A from the low performing school explains:

"Majority of learners are engaged in drugs and alcohol abuse and this affects their school work because they perform poorly and display bad behaviours"

Teacher C from the low performing school explains:

"Most of the learners are still involved in drugs and they even don't attend the weekend extra classes organised for them by their teachers".

The researcher in this study finds substance abuse by learners as a disappointment because it will tremendously ruin their future. The evidence of this is found in the researcher's experience of working in the school context for several years witnessing how the abuse of drugs and alcohol ruined many learners' future.

4.2.2.3 Theme 3: Learner absenteeism and bullying

During the interviews, teachers A and C from the high performing school indicated that learner absenteeism is sometimes experienced in their school. Teacher A of the low performing school mentioned that absenteeism is prevalent in their school and that majority of the Grade 12 learners absent themselves to school during normal school days and also during the enrichment and extra classes organised for them. According to teacher B of the low performing school, learner absenteeism contributes to the school's academic performance. Moreover, Teacher A of the low performing school also stated that what matters the most is their parents who are called to the school to come to address their learner absenteeism issue and they do not come. She added that as teachers, they do not have control over these learners as lack of parental involvement is making the matters worse. Teacher D of the low performing school indicated that even though they do not experience absenteeism that much, some of the Grade 12 learners end up failing majority of subjects because they do not have the subject content which was taught during their absent days to school.

The researcher in this study is of the view that learner absenteeism is a school environmental problem that needs to be dealt with as it will escalate to a level where it will be more uncontrollable and this will affect this school further in a tremendous way than it currently does. In assent to this view, Adu (2014) reports that school environmental problems are not new but are simply enlarging and threatening to become uncontrollable. In the researcher's field notes, the researcher noted the absenteeism of some learners during observations in the low performing school.

Bullying

Teachers A and B of the low performing school mentioned that there is a problem of bullying in their school. Often, learners bully one another. This problem contributes to academic performance as those learners who are bullied become afraid to come to schools in fear that they will be bullied again. Furthermore, she indicated that bullying is not condoned at their school but is prevailing and it is getting out of control. The researcher appreciates there need for the principal and teachers of this school to be given support and training by the department's officials on how to deal with the issue of bullying in their school to minimise disruptive behaviours and violence in the school. This is supported by Maag (2001) when he urges that local school boards should guarantee that their personnel, all-inclusive and continuing training, are properly trained in the effective and lawful means of curbing school disruption and violence.

"Another problem in our school is bullying; the learners are involved in a lot of scandals and bullying. I think the school community is the one contributing to this problem"

According to teacher B, this bullying problem starts from their community and escalates to the school premises where learners settle scores from home at school. The researcher notes that this kind of environment is unsafe for the learners and will compromise the process of teaching and learning in this school. This is further supported by Skiba and Peterson (2002) who argue that for an effective learning environment, a school needs to be safe; for effective teaching and learning process to be effective, learners need to feel safe in the school environment. In line with this view, Tay and Diener (2011) show that safety is fundamental.

.

4.2.2.4 Theme 4: Overall school's performance and subject matters

Both teachers A and teacher B from the low performing schools indicated that even though the school is performing poorly, some subjects perform outstandingly. What this means is that not all the subjects perform poorly. They outlined that language subjects, that is, Sepedi and English together with Tourism are performing outstandingly. Teacher A explains:

"The language subjects in our school perform outstandingly. In public schools, learners speak Sepedi most of the time even though English is the language of instruction. I think learners pass subjects like Sepedi outstandingly because it's their home language and they speak this language all the time. As for other subjects, I think learners find it difficult to interpret some of the questions in those subjects"

Language of teaching and learning in the classroom has also been identified as another challenge (Matsitsa, 2004). Subjects such as Mathematics and Science are taught in English. The researcher in this study is of contrary view to this statement because other subjects like Tourism in this school are performing very well and these subjects are written in English. Furthermore, all the subjects in the participating high performing school are performing outstandingly yet the subjects are written in English and not the learners' home language. Moreover, the researcher perceives that there might be underlying challenges of low academic performance other than this one of language challenges.

Teacher B of the low performing school further explained that maybe it is because of the effort that these subject teachers put into the subjects that they teach. According to the response of teachers A and B from the high performing school, all the subjects perform outstandingly in their school and majority of the teachers at their school received teachers' awards in their respective subjects from the Department of Education. Majority of the subjects perform above 90% and some even get 100%. Teacher B explains:

"Language subjects always come top here at school in terms of academic performance followed by Life sciences and Accounting and then all the content subjects. All subjects perform outstandingly; the only difference lies in the number of distinctions received by learners in a particular subject"

Teacher A explains

"All subjects perform outstandingly in our school. Last year, about 90% of the teachers received awards in their respective subjects. Even this year, we have two teachers who managed to get about 20 distinctions with raw scores in their respective subjects"

4.2.2.5 Theme 5: District and SMT support

During the interviews, teachers A and C from the low performing school indicated that even though their school is performing poorly, they do get support from the curriculum advisors and the school management team. Teacher D of the low performing school stated that they often attend workshops which are organised by the curriculum advisor where they are given support on how to yield better results in their subjects. Teachers B and D further added that their school management teams give them support in their subject matters.

Teachers A and B from the participating high performing schools indicated that they receive support from the DBE through their subjects' curriculum advisors. Teacher C from the high performing school further added that the curriculum advisors often come to their school to offer support. Moreover, these curriculum advisors conduct the curriculum workshops for the teachers to discuss the subject content matters.

The researcher agrees that support from curriculum advisors is of great importance because their primary duty is to support the teachers. Employment of Educators Act 76 of 1998 stipulates functions of Curriculum Advisors as representatives of the DBE to give support to schools.

Teacher B of the high performing school further added that the respect they get from the SMT is the one to be reckoned with. She indicated that the SMT motivates and encourages them to do their best. Teacher B explains:

 "The SMT in this school highly supports and provides us with every resource that we need as subject teachers and also when we need to conduct the extra lessons they support us to make it a success. They are behind us and we know that when they are behind us, we can achieve whatever results we want concerning our subject performance.

In this study, views of the school management team have an impact on the achievement of high academic performance of the school and attainment of its objectives. This finding is consistent with Bisschoff and Mestry (2003) when they describe school leadership as the ability to influence teachers so that they work willingly towards the accomplishment of schools' objectives.

In the researchers' field notes, the researcher noted the supportive behaviour by the principal when interacting with the teachers; they were respectfully interacting with them.

4.2.2.6 Theme 6: Discipline issues

Teachers A and C from the low performing schools responded that the majority of the learners in their school are not disciplined; they do not show respect to their teachers and do not write their homework. Sometimes, they backchat to their teachers. The researcher deemed it fit for the disciplinary rules to be communicated and enforced for the school's academic performance not to be compromised. DiGiulio (2000) suggested communicating the rules in a variety of ways in order to reach the diverse learning styles of students. Moreover, rules can be posted, discussed, reviewed, illustrated and even dramatised.

Teacher B of the low performing school further added that disruptive behaviour prevails at their school and it is a major concern as it affects the teaching and learning process in the school. Teacher D of the low performing school mentioned that learners often do not show good conduct in the school premises and that there is a need for enforcement of learner discipline at school as their disruptive behaviour contributes to academic performance.

The researcher in this study notes that there seem to be ineffective disciplinary practices that are practised in this school. Discipline seems not to be adequately enforced in this school. In acceptance of the researcher's view, Cotton (2001) indicates that ineffective disciplinary practices include those of teachers ignoring misconduct. Teacher C from the high performing school indicated that discipline at their school is at a high level and that learners behave well though we sometimes experience ill-discipline from the learners, it is not in prevalence.

Teacher C explains:

"Discipline is a key factor that contributes to academic performance. Discipline at this school is at a high level. Learners in our school are disciplined. And through the

management of this school, discipline is enforced. If there is no discipline in a school teaching and learning are impossible. Discipline makes it easy for teaching and learning to take place. Learners know that any kind of misconduct will be dealt with accordingly from the top management.

Teacher D of the high performing explains:

"As a teacher, I have class rules as a way of disciplining learners in my classroom. I also have a sitting plan and arranged my learners in terms of their behaviour.).
I also make sure that I go to class prepared as a way of disciplining learners because if as a teacher you are not prepared, learners can see and start misbehaving"

She further explained that here at xxxxxx secondary school, we have a misconduct book which is 'Blue'. Learners make sure that they do not misbehave as they do not want their names to appear in the 'Blue' book. This 'Blue' misconduct book is used by every educator in our school for learners who present disruptive behaviour. Once the learner's name appears twice in the 'Blue' misconduct book, necessary steps are followed. SMT gets involved until the parents of the misbehaving learner are called to the school, hence the learner behaves well on the school premises.

Teacher C of the high performing school e explains:

"It is very important for a teacher to go to class thoroughly prepared to maintain discipline in class. When I go to my class, I make sure that I prepare the content that will last the whole period to avoid learners losing focus and engaging in ill-manners.

Teacher C further explained that she has a set of classroom rules that learners have to follow so that they do not misbehave. She explains:

"At times, I do experience disruptive behaviour from some learners but I manage to deal with them accordingly"

Moreover, Teacher C mentioned that she has a 'Blue book' which she uses to register learner misconduct.

At some point, immediate action is required to reduce the disruption of the teaching and learning process in the classrooms and schools (Gottfredson, 2001; Maag, 2001. The researcher in this study is in support of this view.

4.3Presentation of results from observations made by the researcher

4.3.1 Facilities

The researchers observed that the school facilities of the two low performing schools are in a poor state and existing facilities needed to be repaired for them to be in a good state. The low performing school A has only two blocks with few mobile classrooms. Furthermore, the school does not have laboratories where the learners can do the practical activities. The school does not have a computer laboratory for both teachers and learners to download teaching and learning material and also do their research of which is the case with the low performing school B. The high performing school B does not have a school library, intercoms and air conditioners. This is the case with the two low performing schools. Other researchers argued that a school that is in poor physical condition with graffiti needed repairs and lack of proper facilities can negatively affect learners' attitudes (Dwyer, Osher & Hoffman, 2000). The researcher in this study agrees with these researchers as is the case in these low performing schools. The facilities of the high performing school A were also observed by the researcher and found to be in a good state although the teaching block was having cracks that needed to be repaired. The high performing school A is having most of the needed facilities that the two low performing schools and one high performing school are not having. These facilities include laboratories in the low performing schools, school libraries in both the two low performing schools and one high performing school. Besides, they include computer laboratories in the two low performing schools, proper buildings in the high performing school and the two low performing schools, extramural activities courts in both the low performing schools and one high performing, intercoms and air conditioners in all the above mentioned three schools.

4.3.2 Observed supporting documents

The researchers' observations were as follows:

Type of things to observe	Description of action taken by the researcher and observed activities
Exterior physical signs	The state of the classrooms, other facilities learner uniforms and other visible physical signs within the research site were observed. The state of the classrooms, facilities and learners' school uniforms of all the schools were observed. The learners of all schools were wearing proper school uniform
Expressive movements	The body movements and eye expressions of the teachers and learners during the teaching and learning process were observed. Learners in both schools seemed to be attentively listening to their teachers though some learners in the low performing school were absent without the knowledge of their teachers nor the principal. Learners at the high performing school were all present during the period of observation
Physical location	The physical location of the school was observed. The schools were located in good areas away from liquor stores.
Language behaviour	The language used within the school environment was multilingual in performing school A. The learners in the high

	performing school B were communicating in their mother tongue, same applies to the two low performing schools.
Time duration	The duration the teacher took engaging with the learners was observed.
Documents	The policy documents, learner workbooks and misconduct books were observed and they correlated with the adopted policies in all the schools.

(**Adapted from Earl Babbie & Johann Mouton, 2001**)

4.4. Conclusion

This chapter presented the results of the study from the interviews and observations. The results obtained through thematic analysis of identified themes and sub-themes were outlined. The main and sub-themes were explained in detail in this chapter. Presentation of the results was further supported by presenting direct quotations, visual images and fieldnotes.

The next chapter interprets the results of the study inline with the existing literature and theoretical framework, thereby presenting the findings of the study. Furthermore, limitations of this study and recommendations are also discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1   INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter focused on data presentation. The thematic analysis of data in terms of the themes identified was explained. The purpose of this chapter is to present the summary of the results from the study and discuss the results and conclusions of the research study. Also, it includes the implications and limitations of the study. The subsections of this chapter are as follows:
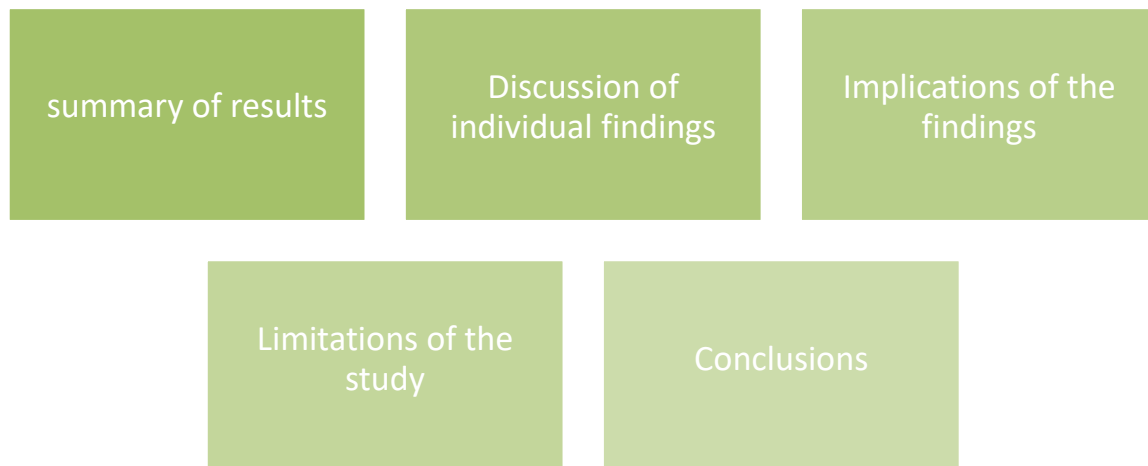
summary of results	Discussion of individual findings	Implications of the findings
Limitations of the study	Conclusions	

Figure 5.1: Alignment of the subsections of the chapter

5.2   SUMMARY OF RESULTS

5.2.1   Purpose of the study and research objectives

The purpose of this research study was to investigate factors influencing Grade 12 results in low performing and high-performing secondary schools in the Capricorn District, Limpopo Province. The following were the research objectives:

☐To identify factors contributing to high performance and low performance of grade 12 learners in Capricorn district.

☐To establish the perceptions of teachers and principals with regards to the school's academic performance.

☐ To assess the culture of teaching and learning in the participating low and high performing secondary schools and its' influence on academic performance.

☐ To assess the roles of the school management team in the school

5.2.2   Methodologies followed in conducting this study

This study employed a qualitative research approach in examining the factors that contribute to the academic performance of high and low performing schools of Capricorn District of Limpopo Province. Within the qualitative research approach, the study employed the case study design to collect data through interviews, observations and field notes. The sampled population of this study was as follows: four principals from the four sampled secondary schools (two school principals from poor performing secondary schools and two principals from high performing school) and eight Grade 12 teachers (four teachers from low performing schools and four teachers from high performing secondary schools). Data were thematically analysed through highlighting phrases that presented the respondents' attitudes and thoughts, listening to the interviews over and over again, reading to ensure accuracy, highlighting important statements and organising the themes that emerged from the interviews.

5.2.3 Overall findings of the study

The findings of this study revealed that several factors contributed to the poor academic performance of learners in high and low performing schools in the Capricorn district of Limpopo Province. This study revealed that drug abuse by the learners is the main contributor to poor academic performance in schools in particular, Grade 12 learners. From the interviews conducted with the respondents of this study, It was found that the issue of drug abuse by learners is there in both the high and poor performing schools. The finding of this study revealed that the difference between these schools is that drug abuse by learners is in prevalence in the low performing schools while only a few learners in the high performing schools were engaged in it as confirmed by the respondents of this study. From the interviews conducted with the respondents of this study, it was revealed that learners who engaged in drug abuse perform poorly academically. It was revealed that the use of drugs by a majority of learners in low performing schools correlates to poor performance in these schools.

The second finding was the commitment of learners and teachers. This study revealed that majority of teachers and learners in high performing schools are committed to their work as compared to the low performing schools. A majority of teachers and learners in the low performing schools were found to be not committed. As a result, these schools tend to perform poorly academically due to a lack of commitment by teachers and learners. Commitment by teachers and learners contributes to poor performance in low performing schools and good performance in high performing schools.

The third finding of this study is the lack of resources in these schools. This study revealed that the low performing schools were not having most of the resources required for effective teaching and learning process whereas the high performing schools were having adequate resources required for the teaching and learning process. These resources include school libraries, computer and science laboratories, proper and adequate infrastructure and playgrounds for extramural activities. Even though the other high performing school was not having all the teaching and learning resources required, most of the resources assist with teaching and learning except for proper facilities for extramural activities. Lack of resources is

revealed as a contributing factor for poor academic performance in low performing schools and good performance in high performing schools.

The fourth finding of this study was parental involvement. It was revealed from the findings of this study that parental involvement plays a major role in children's education. From the interviews conducted with the respondents of this study, parents in low performing schools do not support their children in their educational journey as compared to the parents of children from high performing schools. Parental involvement was found to be prevalent in the low performing schools as compared to the high performing schools.

The fifth finding of this study was commitment. It was revealed from the interviews conducted that commitment is another contributing factor to academic performance in schools. It was found that commitment by teachers and learners enhances academic performance. This study revealed that teachers and learners from high performing schools are more committed to their work as compared to the teachers and learners from low performing schools.

5.3   DISCUSSIONS OF INDIVIDUAL FINDINGS

The following themes emerged from the thematic analysis of data. The findings are discussed in comparison to the literature review and theory of this study.

5.3.1   Drug abuse

The findings of this study from the interviews with the respondents of this study revealed that there are learners who are involved in drug abuse in their schools. They further urged that the use of these substances affects those learners academically as they tend to perform poorly in their academic work and lack proper concentration in their studies. The result is comparable with other studies elsewhere. Evidence is abound which proves that drug abuse has disastrous consequences to learners (Nodding, 2010). Drug abuse is a real threat to the academic performance of learners (Nodding, 2010). From the results of this study, it has been revealed that the majority of the learners in low performing schools is engaged in drug abuse whereas a few learners in high performing schools are involved in drug abuse and that these learners from both schools find it difficult to perform academically as a

result of the use of these substances. Adewuya (2005) claims that the issue of drug abuse needs urgent attention as it a matter of concern amongst educational stakeholders, parents, medical practitioners, sociologists and religious leaders. Adewuya (2005) further indicated that drug and other substance abuse have become a threat to educational institutions all over the world. This is consistent with the study by Ibrahim, Bakori, Abul and Jabo (2019) when they revealed that heavy drug abuse impairs academic abilities which limits academic performance. The researcher agrees with these findings that learners perform poorly academically when they are involved in drug, alcohol or other substance abuse. This finding is placed within the performer's mindset in the six foundational concepts of the theory of performance by Don Elgar (2000). When the mindset of the learners as performers is pre-occupied by substances such as drugs, their minds will not be in a good state to perform academically. Majority of the learners in the high performing schools are focused on their studies and not engaged in drug abuse whereas the use of drugs was found to be prevalent in the low performing schools, hence the poor academic performance in these schools.

5.3.2 Commitment

The second finding that contributed to the academic performance of Grade 12 results was commitment. The findings from this study revealed that commitment plays a role in the school's academic performance. From the interviews conducted with the respondents of this study, it was indicated that commitment by educators and learners in high performing schools contributed to their academic performance. They further urged that majority of teachers and learners are very committed to their work. This was a different case in low performing schools as it was revealed from the interviews that majority of teachers and learners in these schools were not committed to their work. This contributed to poor academic performance in these schools. This finding is consistent with the findings by Hardiness (2007) when he urged that there has to be a commitment from both the educators and the learners if we are to achieve good results. The researcher agrees with this finding for according to the theory of academic performance commitment is placed within the performer's mindset (Elgar, 2000). Teachers and learners are all performers according to the theory of

performance. Teachers and learners as performers should be committed to their work to enhance performance for the attainment of good results and improved academic performance.

.

5.3.3   Physical resources

The third finding that contributed to the academic performance of Grade 12 results was the lack of physical resources. This study revealed that the low performing schools were not having most of the resources required for effective teaching and learning process whereas the high performing schools were having adequate resources required for the teaching and learning process. These resources include school libraries, computer and science laboratories, proper and adequate infrastructure and playgrounds for extramural activities. Even though the other high performing school was not having all the teaching and learning resources required, most of the resources assist with teaching and learning except for proper facilities for extramural activities. Lack of resources is revealed as a contributing factor to poor academic performance in low performing schools and good performance in high performing schools.

This finding is consistent with other studies elsewhere for example; Early and Bubb (2004) when they found in their study that physical resources play a vital role as their availability directly affects teachers and learners. Rogan and Grayson (2003) further in their study revealed that curriculum and resources are interdependent. This means that the resources and proper facilities are needed for the smooth running of curriculum matters. The schools are to be results orientated and this should be preceded by adequate resources for the accomplishment of schools' objectives. This finding is supported by Cohen (2007) when he indicated that the unavailability of resources in schools is understood well by the teachers who teach the learners under those circumstances rather than the researcher (Cohen, 2007).

From the results of the study, it was found that majority of low performing schools lack resources as compared to the high performing schools even though there are some high performing schools in the district that lack some resources. The placement of this finding

in the theory of this study is that of the level of performance. The level of performance according to the six foundational concepts of the theory of performance is the location of the journey depending on the organisation's mission and vision. The relevance of this concept of theory of performance is that before attaining the mission and vision of the organisation, all necessary resources to be utilised are to be put in place first.

5.3.4 Parental involvement

The fourth finding of this study was that parental involvement contributes to academic performance in schools. From the results of this study, it was found that parental involvement is a challenge in both the high and the low performing schools but in prevalence in the low performing schools as compared to the high performing schools. This confirms that parental involvement plays an empirical role in a school's academic performance. This is evident from the interviews with the respondents which shows that learners whose parents are involved in their education show improved academic performance and work harder to impress their parents and teachers.

This finding indicates that there is a correlation between academic performance and parental involvement. An emphasis should be made that if parental involvement in school is not adequate, the results yielded will not be in a satisfactory state. Those researchers are of the same view on this finding when they argue that parents who choose not to involve themselves in the promotion of a good learning environment disadvantage their children academically (Maluleke, 2014). Parental involvement as affirmed by Foley (2015) has been linked to the academic performance of learners and a decrease in the number of dropouts in schools.

This finding is further advocated by Benner and Mistry (2007) and Holcomb-McCoy, (2010) when they urged that parents are important role players in the education of their children. Learners get motivated when their parents are involved in their education to an extent that they perform better academically (Benner & Mistry, 2007; Holcomb-McCoy, 2010). Parents are performers. The researcher agrees with the finding above. The six foundational concepts of the theory of academic performance by Elgar (2000) support

for the teaching and learning to be enhanced; parents as performers should perform their duty of supporting their children through the journey of their education.

5.3.5 Discipline

This study revealed that discipline by learners in schools contributes to academic performance. The findings from the interviews revealed that discipline is enforced in the high performing schools as compared to the low performing schools. Respondents from the high and low performing schools confirmed that their academic performance was related to discipline. It was found that discipline is lacking in the low performing schools as compared to the high performing schools. The results from this study indicated that schools that have disciplined learners produced better results. Effective disciplinary practices are to be put in place and enforced. Besides, ineffective disciplinary practices appeared to be a challenge in low performing schools. There seems to be an empirical connection between discipline and school results. This study further revealed that discipline in school should be a collective effort amongst teachers and school management. Working as a team by staff members in enforcing discipline in schools is of paramount importance. From the results of the study, it was found that discipline is the major challenge in the low performing schools as compared to the high performing schools.

Discipline seems to not be adequately enforced in low performing schools. In acceptance of this finding, Cotton (2001) found that ineffective disciplinary practices include the practices of teachers ignoring misconduct. Gottfredson (2001 and Maag (2001) indicated that immediate action is required to reduce the prevalence of ill-discipline in schools as this prevalence will disrupt the teaching and learning process in the schools. Teachers and learners are all performers according to the theory of performance. Teachers as performers impart knowledge to the learners and learners as performers receive the knowledge and enhance their academic performance with the knowledge received.

5.3.6 District and Senior management support in education is essential for the improvement of academic performance in schools.

Correlation between improved results, effective smooth running of the school and senior management support were some of the findings of this study. The District and Senior support in schools was found to be of great importance in this study. In this study, the view is that the school management team, circuit managers and curriculum advisors have an impact on the academic performance of schools, Grade 12 results in particular. This study revealed that the district supports both low and high performing schools.

Circuit managers and curriculum advisors do visit the low and high performing schools. Achievement of good results by the school and attainment of its objectives are found to be aggravated by the role of these managers in the teaching and learning process. For teachers to work hard, the senior management must have a positive influence on them. This finding is consistent with Bisschoff and Mestry (2003) when they describe leadership as the ability to influence teachers so that they work willingly towards the accomplishment of schools' objectives.

5.3.7 Working relations in schools have an impact on academic performance

The findings of the study reveal that working relations affect organisational performance. Good relations in schools are required for the school staff to work as a team to achieve the organisational goals. This finding is consistent with other researchers (Oluoch, Gupta & Bostrom, 2013; Huber, 2010; Aguinis & Kraiger, 2009) when they also revealed that employee relations have an impact on organisational performance. This study further revealed that there are some of the established government processes in the education system that contributes towards working relations of schools' staff members in particular the relationship between the school principals and teachers, for example, the process of rationalisation and redeployment.

Although this process was aimed at redistributing the teacher to the schools where they were much needed other than their current stations, it seems the process bring the adverse results of its aim in some schools. This process was found to be affecting the low performing schools as compared to the high performing schools. The reason

behind this was that the enrolment of learners decreases in the low performing schools due to academic performance. It was found that learners tend to move to other schools in hope of yielding better results. This finding is consistent with the findings of HSRC (2007) when they revealed that the programme of rationalisation and redeployment yielded undesired results.

The teachers in some schools perceive that the principal dislike them when they are told that they will be redistributed to other schools. This affects the working relations because at times these teachers who are in excess are not placed at other schools but remain in the same school yet they are in excess. This finding is placed within the performer's mindset in the six foundational concepts of the theory of performance by Don Elgar (2000). When the mindset of teachers as performers is put on the set goals, they should strive to have good working relations with one another and work as a team for the attainment of the set goals

5.3.6 The role played by social environment and school environment on academic performance

The school community and school environment play a role in the academic performance of learners in schools. This finding was revealed by the researcher of this study. The community has a role to play in upbringing, behaviour and moulding of learners' morale towards education, the same applies to schools. According to Adu, Olatundun and Oshati (2014), an environment can be described as all the surroundings that have the capability of impacting the growth, development and behaviour of the living organisms within the system. Learners need a safe environment to learn and grow. Provision of safety and support to the learners from both the school and environment is of importance as it will yield better results.

 The issue of the social environment and school environment is a reflective practice. Reflective practice involves action that helps people to pay attention and observe the current level of performance thereafter place your role in that particular environment (social or school) and your contribution to it thereof. Teachers, learners and parents should reflect on their role in these environments and their contribution to academic performance.

5.3.7 Bullying in schools promotes ineffective teaching and learning environment.

Bullying in schools contributes to ineffective teaching and learning processes, which in turn, affects academic performance. Bullying in schools is a significant challenge that needs not to be undermined and should be addressed as it implicates the safety and development of learners in schools. The finding of this study with regards to bullying was that it is prevalent in low performing schools as compared to high performing schools, thus contributing to low academic performance. A significant action needs to be taken to address the problem of bullying in schools. This finding is consistent with other researchers (Rigby & Ken, 2000) when they showed that effective action needs to be taken to address bullying. According to the theory of academic performance, bullying is placed in the foundational concept of immersion. Bullying is the element of social interaction and discipline practices by the performer (Elgar, 2000), the performer in this regard being a learner.

5.4   IMPLICATIONS OF THE FINDINGS

The high number of low performing schools coupled with severely compromised school culture means that the conditions in most of the schools are not conducive to effective teaching and learning (HSRC, 2007). All the stakeholders in the education system have to be worried about the state of performance in schools. In line with this view, the findings of this study's implications are as follows:
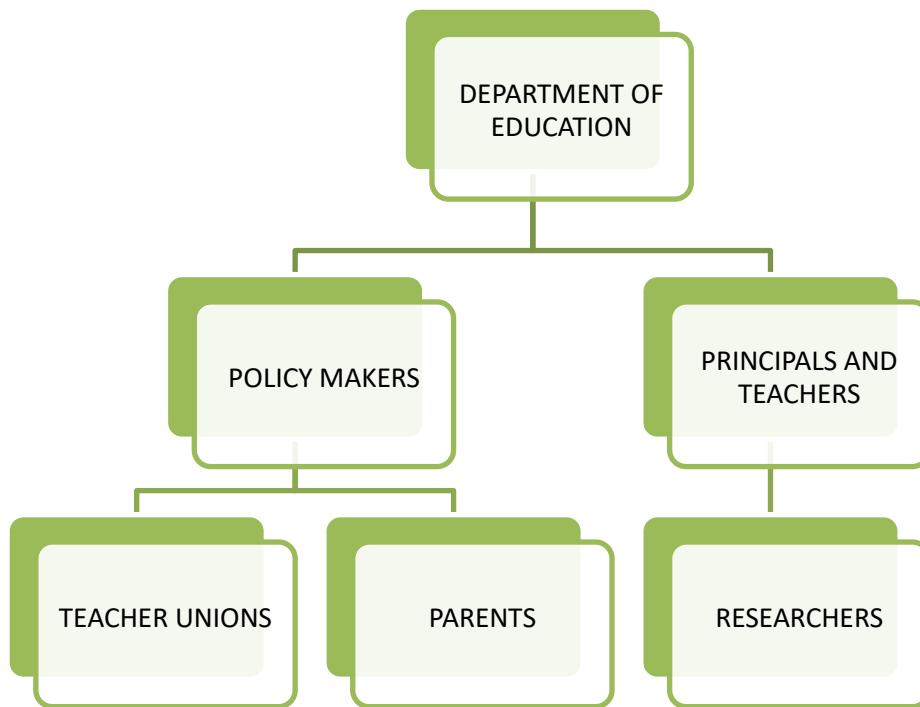
Figure 5.1 Implications of the findings

The implications on the above individuals are hereby discussed below:

☐Teachers are to be capacitated in dealing with the issues of drug and alcohol abuse and bullying in schools. The officials of DBE should conduct capacity-building workshops equipping teachers on strategies to assist them on how to respond to bullying in schools. For bullying to be addressed in schools, immediate action needs to be taken. Policymakers are to come up with strategic policies to address drug and alcohol abuse together with bullying in schools.

☐Parental involvement is imperative in their children's education. Parents should be involved in their children's educational affairs. While practising discipline in schools, teachers need parental involvement for the effectiveness of disciplinary practices in those schools. Parents who do not involve themselves in their children's education disadvantage their children in a tremendous way. A call is for the parents to be involved in their children's education

☐ The persistent and unsatisfactory academic performance of some schools in the country needs to be addressed. The school principals and teachers have a major role to play with regards to instilling discipline in the schools for effective teaching and learning process. The fact is they cannot do this spadework in isolation; ,therefore, it is imperative for the Department of Education to come up with strategies to address the issue of discipline in schools.

☐This study has corroborated that a gain can be drawn from the use of photographs and other technological devices for data collection and further study by researchers be conducted, action research or intervention research on the contributing factors of academic performance

☐ The process of rationalisation and redeployment by the DBE needs to be sensitively handled as some teachers affected teachers perceive it as a form of retrenchment in a way whilst is not. It is in the DBE's call to provide psychological and emotional support for the affected teachers. The department should address this issue of redeployment and rationalisation to the teachers through the teacher unions in a way that they will understand it better because the programme seems to cause rifts amongst the principals and teachers.

5.4.1 Alignment of the findings to the theoretical framework

This section discusses the link of the research finding to the theory of performance

5.5.1 The theory of performance

This study was placed within Don Elgar's theory of performance. In considering this theoretical framework from chapter one (4.1) of this study, the purpose of the study and the objectives, this theory served as a lens. The major focus of this study was to examine the factors contributing to the academic performance of Grade 12 in secondary schools. The theory of Performance relates to six foundational concepts. Below is the description of the six foundational concepts and their link to the findings of this study:

The six foundational concepts of the theory of academic performance (Don Elgar 2000).

- **Perform:** To perform is to produce good results. In this context, when learners pass, it means that they have achieved that set standard of the Department of Education. In the education context, we say they have performed well. The main organisational goals and objectives of the schools are to perform. When schools do not perform well, it should raise a concern to all the stakeholders of the education system because the goals are not met. All stakeholders in education have to work hand-in-hand to ensure that school organisations perform well. Positioning this research finding to the foundational concept 'perform' within the theory of performance indicated that some schools do not perform well according to the findings of this study.

- **Performer:** A performer is an individual engaging in a collaborative effort to attain a certain goal set. Parents, school principals, SGBs, learners and teachers are all performers in this context. Placing this foundational concept from the Don Elgar's' theory of performance with the findings of this study, the performers (teachers, learners, principals and parents) should engage in a collaborative effort to ensure that the school as an organisation meets the set standard of pass requirements set by the Department. It was found that through the collaborative efforts of these performers, high performance and high-quality results will be achieved.

- **Level of performance:** The level of performance describes the location of the journey. This depends on an organisation's mission and vision, educators' level of education and training, level of skills that learners acquire in a learning environment and level of identity, which is the socio-environment from which the learners come. The researcher found that the socio-environment is one of the factors contributing to the academic performance of the school. Learners from the socio-environment which is not good were found not to be having educational support and safety from the school community and this affected

their academic performance. The growth and development of learners first take place from their socio- environment before the school environment.

☐ **Performers' mindset:** This explains how individuals or a group should set up their minds to view the bigger picture. In line with the theory of performance foundational concept of performer's mindset, this study found that parents, school principals, teachers and learners should set up their minds in ensuring that all school activities run smoothly, the process of teaching and learning is effective and relations within the school environment are also good. All this will be done through the mindset of the performer with the perspective of achieving organisational goals.

▪ **Immersion:** Immersion can elevate performance as well as professional development. This element includes social interaction and disciplinary knowledge. The position of this foundational concept in the findings of this study is that good social interaction within the education context is of paramount importance. Teachers should have disciplinary knowledge to deal with the great variance of learners' behavioural patterns within the school environment. Immersion in the findings of this study further relates to the commitment of both teachers and learners within the school environment.

▪ **Reflective practice:** Reflective practice involves actions that help people pay attention and learn from experiences namely observing the current level of performance, noting accomplishment and analysing strength as well as areas for improvement. According to the findings of this study, the schools are to do a reflective practice of their performance, note what they have accomplished according to the set goals and objectives, analyse their strength and areas for improvement. All this, according to the findings of the study, are to be done by the principal, parents, teachers and the learners.
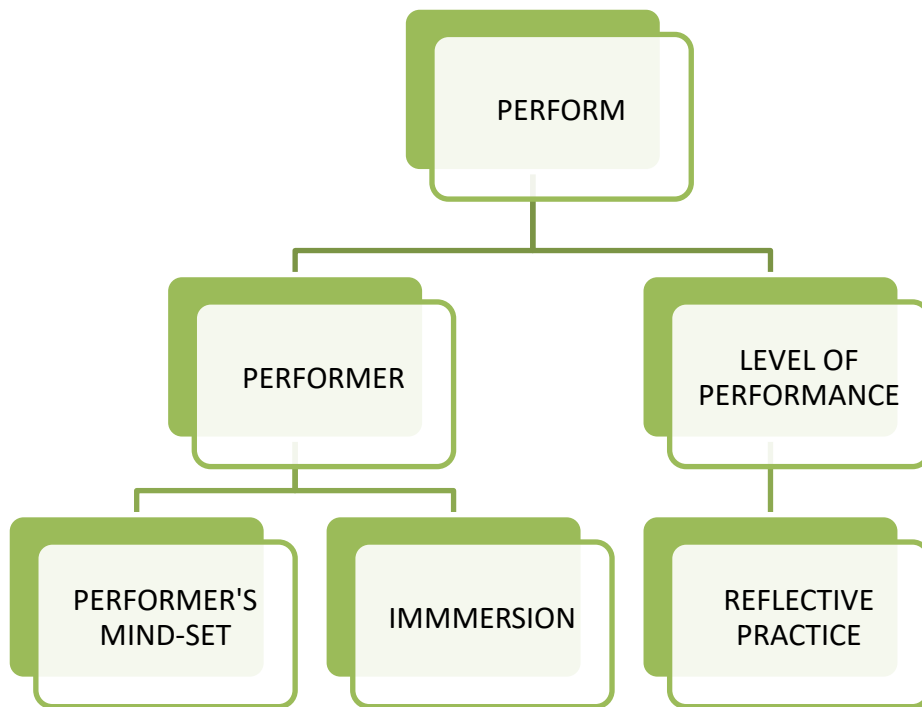
Figure 5.2 the six foundational concepts of the theory of performance as aligned to the findings of this study.

5.4.2 Alignment of findings to the people

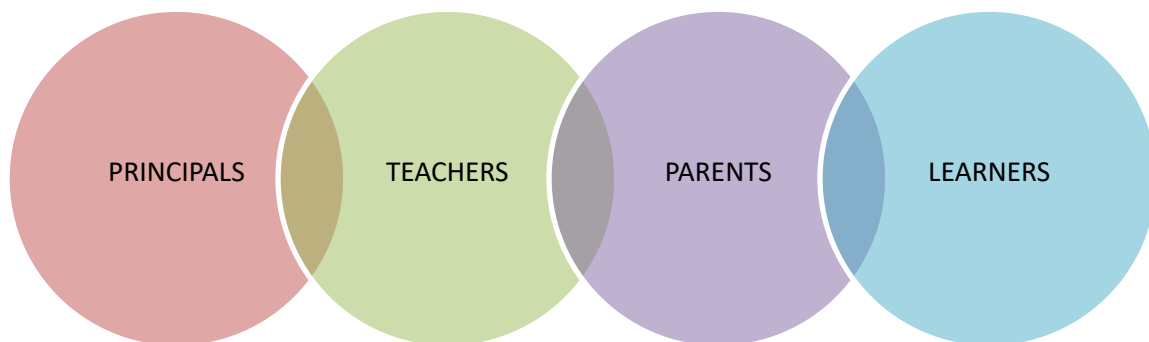The following people are aligned to the findings of this study:

Figure 5.3 People aligned to the findings of this study

(a) Principals are recommended to:

☐ Motivate and give support to the entire staff members within the school environment all the time bearing in mind articulation of mission and vision of the school.

☐ Establish working relationships for them to work together as a team to achieve their organisational goals

☐Evaluate how well the goals and objectives of the school are being achieved, furthermore, come with strategies to improve where needed

☐ Put systems, processes and resources in place for purpose of comparing, measuring and decision making in improving the academic performance of the school

☐Ensure that parental involvement is enforced for the effectiveness of teaching and learning processes and addressing the issue of drug and alcohol abuse by learners in schools to improve the Grade 12 results in particular

(b) Teachers are recommended to:

☐☐Create a classroom environment where learners will develop the necessary skills that they might need in the future or even in the present.

☐☐Commit themselves to assist learners whenever they need help for improvement of academic performance of the school in particular Grade 12 performance

☐☐Assume their role as assessors and provide feedback to the learners

☐☐Work with other educators as a team to achieve the organisational goals

☐☐Involve parents in the learners' schoolwork and create a working relationship amongst themselves for effective teaching and learning

☐☐Mediate amongst the learners and educate them about the importance of good relationships amongst themselves and its link to academic performance

(c) Learners are recommended to assume the following responsibilities:

☐Ensure that they attend classes regularly for improvement of their academic performance

☐Respect themselves and others within the school environment and also refraining from drug and alcohol abuse

☐Avoiding disruptive behaviours in the classroom and the school premises for effective teaching and learning to take place

☐Read on regular basis to improve their academic performance. Reading regularly will enhance their intellectual abilities and yield better results.

☐Respect their teachers at all cost for effective teaching and learning; this is because when teachers feel respected, they will enhance and maximise their skills to improve their respectful learners' academic performance

☐Refrain from bullying, use of alcohol and drugs and stay focused on their school work

(d) Parents should:

☐Parents bear in mind that they are their children's first teachers. Moral values taught at home emerge at school. In light of this, children are to be taught good moral values from home. Children's growth and development first take place at home followed by the school

☐Parents are to further play an important role in supporting and engaging in their children's education, most importantly, help in addressing the issue of drug abuse in schools

☐It cannot be overemphasised that when parents and teachers work together, children's academic performances improve

☐ Bullying behaviours can first be spotted at home or the community before escalating to the school premises, therefore parents should spot unusual behavioural patterns displayed by their children. By so doing, they will assist them with immediate help before the behaviours interfere with their academic performance.

5.4.3 Alignment of literature with the findings of the study

The focus in this section is to align the findings of this study with the literature for purpose of substantiating the findings of this study. This research study aimed at investigating and analysing factors influencing Grade 12 results in low and high-performing schools in the Capricorn District, Limpopo Province.

The following were the research objectives of this study:

☐To identify factors contributing to high performance and poor performance of grade 12 learners in Capricorn district.

☐ To investigate the perceptions of teachers and principals with regard to the schools' academic performance.

☐To assess the roles of the school management team

The results of the study revealed seven findings factors influencing Grade 12 results in low and high-performing schools in the Capricorn District, Limpopo Province. The data from the findings provided the answers to the research questions. The findings are discussed below in alignment with the literature:

A superior and surprising finding of this study is drug abuse by learners and its impact on the academic performance of learners. There is a correlation between drug abuse and poor academic performance of Grade 12 learners. From the results of this study, it was found that there are learners who are involved in drug abuse in some of the sampled schools and the findings revealed that these learners find it difficult to perform academically as a result of the use of substances. This finding was not expected before embarking on this study to be one of the factors contributing to the academic performance of the Grade 12 learners.

It could have been expected to have an impact on learners in lower Grades, say Grade 9 and 10, where the adolescent stage and peer pressure are their high levels. This finding is supported by Oshodi, Aina and Onajole (2010) when they revealed that learners aged 15-16 years have shown a high percentage of drug abuse and that curiosity and peer pressure were noted to be primary reasons for drug abuse in

schools. This is further echoed by Makanjuola, Daramola and Obembe (2007) when they argued that many adolescents are not aware of the tremendous consequences of drug abuse and that one of the reasons for drug abuse is loneliness. The researcher agrees with the above researchers as this is the reason why the researcher regards this as a superior finding that could not have been expected before embarking on this study because Grade 12s cannot be associated with loneliness as there is a lot of work and studying that needs to be done. For more than 10 years as a teacher, the researcher reckons Grade 12 to be a focus demanding Grade of all Grades.

The other finding of this study is that school community and school environment play a role in the academic performance of learners in schools. Other researchers are in support of this finding this includes Freibery 92004) when he indicated that school climate can be a positive or negative influence on the health of the learning environments. Hayness and Corner (2003) argued that school climate can significantly shape the degree of academic success experienced by urban students . Freibery (2004) revealed that school climate including "trust, respect, mutual obligation and concern for others' welfare can have a powerful effect on educational relationships as well as learners' academic achievement and overall– school progress".

.

The finding of this study was that there is a correlation between improved results, effective smooth running of the school and senior management support. Furthermore, the support from the SMT and curriculum advisors in schools was found to be of great importance in this study. The results of this study indicated that the support they get from the seniors in education contributes to improved performance. For example, it was found that in schools where the SMT gives full support to the educators, learners perform well academically. This finding is consistent with the Employment of Educators (Act 76 of 1998) when it stipulates that the function of curriculum advisors as representatives of the DBE is to give support in schools. The Act further stipulates that the functions of the curriculum advisors are to provide pastoral support to schools

whenever requested and assist in the equitable deployment of staff and resources to facilitate teaching and learning (Employment of Educators Act, 1999).

The other finding of this study is that parental involvement is very important in their children's education. What this means is that parents should provide psychological, emotional and physical support to their children to enhance their academic performance. The finding of this study was that there is a prevalence of lack of parental involvement in the low performing schools. Those other researchers are of the same view on this finding when they argue that parents who choose not to involve themselves in the promotion of a good learning environment disadvantage their children academically (Maluleke, 2014).

Parental involvement as affirmed by Foley (2015) has been linked to the academic performance of learners and a decrease in the number of dropouts in schools. This finding is further advocated by Benner and Mistry (2007) and Holcomb-McCoy (2010) when they urged that parents are important role players in the education of their children. Learners get motivated when their parents are involved in their education to an extent that they end up performing better academically (Benner & Mistry, 2007; Holcomb-McCoy, 2010). This finding is supported by a study conducted in the Philippines by Glewwe, Jacoby and King (2001) when they revealed that well-nourished children perform better academically in schools. Maluleke (2014) further revealed that parents who choose not to involve themselves in the promotion of a good learning environment disadvantage their children academically.

5.5   Limitations of the study

One of the limitations of this study relates to the sampling strategy. Only a small portion of Limpopo Province was sampled. Only the Capricorn district of Limpopo Province out of the five districts of Limpopo Province was sampled.

Since only twelve participants (teachers and principals) from the four schools were sampled, a generalisation of results cannot simply be justified although the representation of the population was obtained.

Purposive sampling was employed in this study; therefore the researcher cannot confidently claim that the sampled participants are representative of the population.

This study examined the factors that contribute to academic performance in secondary schools, Grade 12 results in particular. These factors were investigated according to the perceptions of principals and teachers. Though the decision of sampling principals and teachers was purposeful, it does not imply that learners, SGB and parents' perceptions were not of significance and this can be regarded as a limitation, however, this can be noted as an area for further research.

Although the researcher in this study used the strategy of sampling that is limited, valuable information was gathered from the respondents of this study in investigating the factors that contribute to academic performance (Creswell, 2007) in a school setting where the population was represented. Only one District (Capricorn district) was selected by the researcher in this study. Different perceptions regarding academic performance could have been obtained from other Districts of Limpopo Province. The findings of this study cannot be generalised to a larger population.

5.6   Conclusions

Factors contributing to academic performance, Grade12 results in particular in secondary schools were found to be in alignment with the theoretical framework of this study and the contributing factors in the literature review. The finding of this study revealed that several factors contribute to academic performance. These factors include drug and alcohol abuse, commitment, working relations, physical resources, parental involvement, bullying in schools, the school environment and the community. The researcher in this study is of the view that if these factors are addressed in schools by various implicated stakeholders of the education system, there will be an improvement in academic performance of many if not all schools in the District, Province and South Africa at large.

REFERENCES

Adu,E.O.& Olatundun,S.O. (2007*).Teachers' Perception of Teaching as Correlate of Students' Academic Performance in Oyo state*: Nigeria. Essay in Education, 20,57-63.

Adu, E.O., Olatundun, S.O. & Oshati, I.T. (2014). *Impact of outdoor educational activities on pupils' environmental knowledge and attitude in selected primary schools in Idadan*, Nigeria. *Mediterranean Journal of SocialSciences* vol,no23*.*

Aguinis H, Kraiger K. (2009). Benefits of training and development for individuals and teams, organizations, and society*. Annual review of psychology*, 60:451-474

Angrist, J, Bettinger, E, Bloom, E, King and Kremer, M. (2002)*.* Vouchers for Private Schooling in Colombia: Evidence from a Randomized Natural Experiment. *American Economic Review,* 92(5): 1535-1558.

Angrist,JoshuaandVictorLavy. (2002). New Evidence on Classroom Computers and Pupil Learning. *The Economic Journal,* 112(482):735-786.

Babbie,E.andMouton,J.(2002).*The Practice of Social Research.* OxfordUniversity Press, New York.

Baloyi, H.G. (2002). *Exploring the experiences of parents serving inain rural school governing body: A casestudy of a rural school governing body with keen interest on the experiences encountered b yparent members*. University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

Bisschoff, T.& Mestry,R. .(2003). *Financialmanagementexplained. (2ndEd.*). Pretoria: Kagiso Education.

Castrogiovanni, D. (2002). *Adolescence: Peer groups. . The Economic Journal,* 112(482):735-786. http://www.lanr.unl.ed/pubs/family/nf211.htm .

Clarke,P.(2005).*Improving schools in difficulty*. London: Continuum International Publishing Group.

Crouch, L. (2005). *South Africa equity and quality reforms: possible lessons. Journal of Education for International Development*,1(1), 2.
http://www.equip123.net/JEID/articles/1/1-2.pdf

Bogdan, RC & Biklen, SK. (2003) *Qualitative Research in Education.* Boston: Ellyn & Bacon.

Burns, A.& Darling,N. (2002*).Peer pressureis not peer influence.The Education Digest,*6 8,4-6.

Bush,T & Glover, D. (2009). *Managing teaching and learning*, MGSLG, Johannesburg.

Bless, C & Smith, CH. (2000). *Fundamentals of Social Research Methods: An African Perspective.* 3rd edition.Lansdowne: Juta Education (Pty)Ltd.

Braun, V.C. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 77-101.

Case, A, Angus D (1999). School Inputs and Educational Outcomes in South Africa. *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 114(3): 1047-1085.

Cohen, LM & Morrison, K. (2000). *Research Methods in Education,* 5th edition, London: Routledge Falmer.

Claessens, B.J.C, Eerde, W.V, Rutte C.G.$ Roe, R.A. (2007). "*A Review of the Time Management Literature*" Available online at http://www.arno.unmaas.nretrieved on 28thJuly, 2012

Cotton, K. (2001*). Schoolwide and classroomdiscipline.School Improvement Research Series*.Retrieved fromhttp://www.nwrel.org/scpd/sirs/5/cu9.html

Cottton,K.,Landau,L.&Gathercoal,P.(2000).*Creating peaceful classrooms:Judicious discipline and class meetings*.Phi Delta Kappan 81(6)

Cherry, K. (2016)

Creswell, J.W., (2003). *Educational Research: Planning, conducting and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research.* Boston: Pearson.

DBE.Department of Education, (2011) A comprehensive guide for school development planning and school improvement planning for public schools, Government Printers, Polokwane.

De Vos, A.S, Strydom, H., Fouché, C.B., & Delport, C.S.L.,(2005). Research at Grass Roots: For the Social Sciences and Human Service Professions, 3rd ed. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

DepartmentofEducation,DoE.(2010*).Assessmentinstruction 13.Provinceofthe EasternCape.*

Department of Basic Education,(2011). Report on the Annual National Assessments. Pretoria:

DiGiulio, R. D. (2000). *Positive classroom management, 2ndEd*. Thousand Oaks: Corwin Press.

Dwyer, K. P., Osher, D. & Hoffman, C. C. (2000*). Creating responsible schools: Contextualizing early warning, timely response. Exceptional Children,*

66(3). 347-365.

Eilam, B. & Aham, I,.(2003). Student planning in the process of self-regulated learning. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 28,304-334.

Edwards, A. (2001). Qualitative design and analysis. In G.Naughton, S.Rolfe & I. Siraj-Blatchford. *Doing early childhood research:international perspectives on theory and practice.* (pp.117-135).Philadelphia: OpenUniversity Press.

Elger,D. (2000.) Theory of performance. In S.W. Beyerlin, C. Holmes, & D.K. Apple,(Eds), Faculty guidebook: A comprehensive tool for improving faculty performance 4th ed.). Lisle, IL. Pacific Crest.

Early, P & Bubb, S. 2004. *Leading and Managing Continuing Professional Development: Developing People, Developing Schools.* London: Paul Chapman.

Foli, C, Koch, E.& Landon, J. (2003). *First Brush strokes: Initial Comparative Resultson Addictive Bilingual Education Project* (Able) Vol.

27.:

Fraser, E. (2003*).School and home.* London: University of London Press.

Freibery, H. J. (2004). Measuring school climate:Let me count the ways. *Education Leadership*, 56(1), 22-26.

Gay, L.R. & Airasian, P. (2003). Educational research: competencies for analysis and applications. N*ewJersey:Merrill Prentice Hall*

Gall,M.D, Gall, J.P & Borg, W.R. (2003). *Educational research: An introduction*

(7thed.). Boston, MA: Pearson.

Godfreson, D.C & Maag, J.W. (2001). Rewarded by punishment: Reflections on disuse of positive reinforcement in schools. *Exceptional children,* 67,173-186.

Glewwe, P, Jacoby, G.G and King, E.M. Early childhood nutrition and academic achievement: a longitudinal analysis. *Journal of Public Economics 81(2001):345-68.*

Glewwe, P & Kremer, M. (2006). *Schools, Teachers and Education Outcomes in Developing Countries*. Forthcoming in E. Hanushek and F. Welch, eds.. *Handbook of the Economics of Education*. North-Holland.

Grix, J. (2004).*The Foundations of Research*. NewYork, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

Guba,E.G & Lincoln,Y.S. (2005*). Paradigmatic controversies, contradictions,and emerging confluences* .In N.K.Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.).*The Sage handbook of qualitative research*(3rded.,pp.191–215). ThousandOaks, CA:Sage.

Hayness, N.M. & Corner, J.P. (2003). The Yale school development programme process outcomes, and policy implications. *Urban Education*, 28(2),166-2003.

Hanushek, E. (1995).Interpreting Recent Research on Schooling in Developing Countries. *World Bank Research Observer,* 10(2):227-246.

Heyneman, S, Dean J and Xenia, M..(1984). Textbooks in the Philippines*:* Evaluation of the Pedagogical Impact of a Nationwide Investment. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis,* 6(2):139-150.

Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC). (2005). *Teacher workload in South Africa*. HSRC Press, Cape Town.

Kenrick, V, Griskevicius, V. & Neuberg, S.L. (2010). Perspectives on
Psychological Science, 5(3),292-314.

Kincheloe, J.L. (2008). *Knowledge and critical pedagogy*. London, England: Springer.

Kirk, A.M. (2000). Riding the Bull: Reform in Washington, Kentucky, and
Massachusetts. *Journal of Health Policy and Law,* 25(1), 133-173.

Koltko-Rivera, M.E. (2006). *Review of general psychology journals*,sagepub.com25(1), 133-173.
25(1), 133-173.

.

Kumar, R. (2011). *Research Methodology: A step-by-step Guide for Beginners (3rd Ed.)*. Los Angeles: Sage Publication

Khawaja, A. F. (2004). *The development of the school administration.* The House of
Culture: Amman.

Leedy, P.D & Ormrod, J.O. (2010). *Practical Research: Planning and design, 9th ed.*
New Jersey, United States of America: Pearson Education, Inc.

Liu,O.L, Rijman,F, McCann,C & Roberts, R. (2009). The assessment of time
management in middle school students. *Personality and Individual difference,47,174-179.*

Locke, E.A. & Latham, G.P. (2002). Building a practically useful theory of goalsetting
and task motivation: A 35-year odyssey. *American Psychologist,* 57(9),705.

Maluleke, S.G. (2014). *Parental involvement in their children's education in the Vhembe district: Limpopo.* University of South Africa.

Mamwenda,T.S., (2002). Educational Psychology: An African perspective, 2nded. Butterworth: Heinemann.

Mandla, P.(2000).*Theblack teacher's Dilemma*.CapeTownandJohannesburg: SkotaviceePublishers.

Morrison, E.W. (2002).Motivation and learner performance . *The Academy Management Journal, 45(6):1149-1160.*

Maree, K. (2007). *First steps in research*. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

Mertens,D. (2010). *Research and Evaluation in Education and Psychology. Intergrating Diversity With Quantitative, Qualitaitve, and Mixed Methods*(4th Edition ed.). Carlifornia: SAGE Publications Inc.

Matsitsa, G. (2004). For critical causes of under-achievement in township schools. London: SAGE Publications LTD.

McMillan, J. & Schumacher, S., (2006.) *Research in Education: Evidence-based inquiry.* Boston: Pearson.

Nziyane L.N. (2009). *Attaining a System of Quality Teaching and Learning through Effective Teacher Evaluation in Selected Schools in the Limpopo Province.* MEd Thesis.. Pretoria: Unisa.

Oluoch,J.O, Gupta, S, Bostrom, R.P & Huber, M. (2010). *Employee relations and its effect on organisational performance.* ACM SIGMIS Database 41(4):9-39.

Onukwo,G. (2004). *Class note on Educational Psychology*, PostGraduate Diploma in Education. Oxford University Press

Paideya, V. & Dhunpath,R.(2018) Journal of student affairs in Africa volume 6(1)2018,33-48 2307-6267-DOI10.24085/JSAA.V6I1.3064

Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods. (3rd ed.) Thousand Oaks. CA:* Sage Publications.

Patton, M. (2002). *Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods.* London: SAGE Publications.

Personen, HL. (2003). Challenges of integrating environmental sustainability issues into business school curriculum: a case study from University of Jyvaskyla. Finland*: Journal of Management Education, 27 (2)158-71*

Pellegrino, J.W & Susan, R. (2015). Policy insights from the Behavioral and Brain sciences: 2(1):33-41.

Steyn,H.J.& Wolhunter, C.C. (2008). *Education systems: Challenges of the 21st century.* Potchefstroom: Kaurkopieuitgewers.

Struwing, F.W & Stead, G.B. (2001). *Planning, Designing and Reporting Research,* Cape Town: Maskew MillerLongman.

Richards,K. (2003). *Qualitative inquiry in TESOL*. NewYork,NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

Rigby, K, (2000). Bullying in school: Guidelines for effective action. London: SAGE Publications LTD.

,

Rossouw, J.P.& Oosthuizen, R.J. (2007).*Statutes for Educational Law*. (3rd Ed.). PlatinumPuss: Potchefstroom.

Ryan, A.M. (2000). Peer Group as a context of socialisation of adolescents' motivation, engagement andachievement in schools. *Educational Psychologist*, 35,101-112.

Sanacore, J2000). Promoting effective literacy learning in minoritystudents by focusing teacher workshops and reflective practice: a comprehensive project supported by the Annenberg Foundation*. Reading Psychology, 21(3):*

Seale,C. (2000). *The Quality of Qualitative Research: Introducing Qualitative Methods.* London: SAGE Publications LTD.

Skiba, R. J. & Peterson. (2000). School Discipline at a Crossroads: From Zero Tolerance to Early Response. *Exceptional Children*, *66*(3), 335-347.

Tay, L. & Diener, E. (2011). . Journal of personality and social psycology,Psynet.apa.org. Los Angeles: Sage Publication

Tomlinson, H. (2004). *Educational Leadership: Personal Growth for Professional Development,* London: Sage.

Zins,J.E.,Elias, M.J. & Greenberg, M.T. (2003). Facilitating success in school and life through social and emotional learning.Perspectives in Education, 21(5),59-60
.

Welman, C, Kruger, F, Michell, B. (2005).*Research Methodology. Third Edition. South Africa*: Oxford University Press.

VanRooyen, L. & Hartell, C. (2000).Innovations and improvisations: the use of media in the historically deprived schools in South Africa. *South African Journal of Education*, 20:293-298

Wiske, M.S. (Ed) (1998). *Teaching for Understanding: Linking research with practice*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass.

Zikmund, W.G, (2003). *Business Research Methods* (7th Ed.). Oklahoma: State University, Thomson South-Western.

ANNEXURE A
CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPANTS

Part 1
The researcher is required to conduct in-depth interviews as part of the process of completing her studies for the Degree Master of Education in curriculum studies at the University of Limpopo. The researcher therefore humbly requests your participation in these interviews.

The purpose of the study is to investigate the factors contributing to the high performance and low performance of Grade 12 results in Capricorn District. The results of this study will be of great importance to the practitioners in the Department of Education, Circuits, principals and teachers as well as the parents and learners.

The researcher highly value your participation

Part 2
The following principles are applicable, therefore it is advisable and important that you thoroughly read and understand:

1. As respondents your participation in this study is voluntary and you are under no obligation to participate in this research study. The subtle may be placed on you to take place.

2. Please feel free to ask me any questions regarding the study and your queries will humbly be answered.

3. Though you may not personally gain anything from your participation in this study, the information and knowledge that may be gained using this study may benefit other circuits, districts, communities and Provinces in South Africa and the world at large.

4. Upon request, your data will be easily accessible as a participant.

5. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time during the interviews and you will gladly be released from your participation.

6. You shall be respected and given the dignity that you deserve during the process of conducting the interviews as your well-being is primarily to the objectives of this study.

7. Title of the study: Factors influencing academic performance: An analysis of Grade 12 results of high performing and low performing schools in Capricorn District Limpopo Province.

 I hereby confirm that I have read the principles in relation to the study as outlined in Part 1 and Part 2 of this informed consent form. I hereby also declare that I understand them. I was given the opportunity to discuss important aspects of the study with the researcher and I hereby declare that my participation in the study voluntarily.

Signature: ……………………   Date: …………………………

ANNEXURE B

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE **SCHOOL PRINCIPALS**

SECTION A

1. What are the factors that contribute to your school's academic performance?

…………………………………………………………………………………………..

2. What support do you receive from the department's officials at higher structures concerning your schools' academic performance?

………………………………………………………………………………………….

3. How is the relationship between you and the entire staff members?

…………………………………………………………………………………………..

4. What type of relationship does the SMT have with the Cs1 educators?

………………………………………………………………………………………….

5. How do educators' react towards your school's academic performance?

…………………………………………………………………………………………

6. Which academic improvement plan do you have in place as a school?

………………………………………………………………………………………….

7.How do you discipline learners who misbehave on the school premises?

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS TO THE TEACHERS

1.How do learners perform academically in your school?

……………………………………………………………………………

2.Why do they perform the way they do?

…………………………………………………………………………….

3.Which subjects are performing outstandingly in your school?

……………………………………………………………………………

4.Why do these subjects perform outstandingly?

…………………………………………………………………………..

5.How do teachers improve their performance?

……………………………………………………………………………

6.Which factors contribute to academic performance in your school?

……………………………………………………………………………

7.How do you discipline the learners in your class?

University of Limpopo
Department of Research Administration and Development
Private Bag X1106, Sovenga, 0727, South Africa
Tel: (015) 268 3935, Fax: (015) 268 2306, Email: anastasia.ngobe@ul.ac.za

---

| **TURFLOOP RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE** |
| **ETHICS CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE** |

MEETING: **21 October 2020**

PROJECT NUMBER: **TREC/308/2020: PG**

PROJECT:

Title: Factors Influencing Academic Performance: An Analysis of Grade 12 Results of High Performing and Low Performing Schools in Capricorn District, Limpopo Province

Researcher: DE Nkgapele
Supervisor: Prof MJ Themane
Co-Supervisor/s: N/A
School: Education
Degree: Master of Education in Curriculum Studies

PROF P MASOKO
CHAIRPERSON: TURFLOOP RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE
The Turfloop Research Ethics Committee (TREC) is registered with the National Health Research Ethics Council, Registration Number: REC-0310111-031

> **Note:**
> i)   This Ethics Clearance Certificate will be valid for one (1) year, as from the abovementioned date. Application for annual renewal (or annual review) need to be received by TREC one month before lapse of this period.
> ii)   Should any departure be contemplated from the research procedure as approved, the researcher(s) must re-submit the protocol to the committee, together with the Application for Amendment form.
> iii)   PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER IN ALL ENQUIRIES.

Finding solutions for Africa

LIMPOPO

PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

CONFIDENTIAL

Ref: 2/2/2   Enq: Mabogo MG   Tel No: 015 290 9365   E-mail:MabogoMG@edu.limpopo.gov.za

Nkapele DE
P O Box 455
Sekgopo
0802

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

1. The above bears reference.

2. The Department wishes to inform you that your request to conduct research has been approved. Topic of the research proposal: **"FACTORS INFLUENCING ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE: AN ANALYSIS OF GRADE 12 RESULTS OF HIGH PERFORMING AND LOW PERFORMING SCHOOLS IN CAPRICORN DISTRICT LIMPOPO PROVINCE"**

3. The following conditions should be considered:

3.1 The research should not have any financial implications for Limpopo Department of Education.

3.2 Arrangements should be made with the Circuit Office and the School concerned.

3.3 The conduct of research should not in anyhow disrupt the academic programs at the schools.

3.4 The research should not be conducted during the time of Examinations especially the fourth term.

3.5 During the study, applicable research ethics should be adhered to; in particular the principle of voluntary participation (the people involved should be respected).

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH: NKGAPELE BE

Cnr. 113 Biccard & 24 Excelsior Street, POLOKWANE, 0700, Private Bag X9489, POLOKWANE, 0700
Tel: 015 290 7600, Fax: 015 297 6920/4220/4494
The heartland of southern Africa - development is about people!

LANGUAGE EDITING CERTIFICATE

Registered with the South African Translators' Institutes (SATI)

Reference number 1000363

SACE REGISTERED

9 March 2021

Report on Master Thesis: *NKGAPELE DIMAKATSO ESTHER*

Thesis title: *FACTORS INFLUENCING ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE: AN ANALYSIS OF GRADE 12 RESULTS OF HIGH AND LOW PERFORMING SCHOOLS IN CAPRICORN DISTRICT, LIMPOPO PROVINCE*

This serves to confirm that I edited substantively the above document including a Reference list. I returned the document to the author with some tracked changes intended to correct errors and clarify meaning. It was the authors' responsibility to attend to these changes.

Yours faithfully

Dr. K. Zano

Ph.D. in English

kufazano@gmail.com/kufazano@yahoo.com

0631434276