Educators' perceptions about the health status of farm schools

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DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to the two most important men in my life, who not only form the foundation and support network in which I anchor my life, but who are also two of the best friends any woman could ask for, my father Malefetsane Abimael Ndaba, and my loving husband Rodney Daniel Segale

And

To my two sons, Neo and Tshiamo, Mommy loves you and hopes this will serve as a source of motivation for you to go further than this academically.

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ABSTRACT

Educators' perceptions about the health status of farm schools

It is common to find farm schools some distance from the villages where learners reside, and in most cases these do not look good from the outside and are normally not given as much support as they should get. There are many challenges facing educators who are teaching learners in farm schools. Some of the problems emanate from home, including the socio-economic status and parental involvement. Other problems are as a result of the environmental conditions, including a lack of basic services like water, electricity and others.

The education system is believed to be failing farm school learners in a way when it comes to issues like a lack of teaching or learning aids, a lack of a referral system, a lack in high schools, a lack of funding, managing and controlling the feeding scheme. At times some additional problems are caused by the learners themselves, including late-coming, absenteeism, a high drop–out rate, teenage pregnancy and vandalism. The bad road conditions and the fact that learners have to walk long distances to school, also impact negatively on the learners.

Educators in farm schools feel that they are over-burdened in their task of teaching because of issues like multi-grade classes, too much administration, and lack of support from the department and the parents, as well as financial constraints. The above factors cause much frustration in the teaching profession and educators become drained and experience serious fatigue, which impacts negatively on their work.

The aim of this study is to investigate the general perceptions of educators about the health status of farm schools.

To attain this aim, the study had the following specific objective:

To determine the perceptions of educators about the health status of farm schools.

A qualitative research design was considered to be the most appropriate for gaining in-depth insight into the educators' perceptions about the health status of farm schools. Data was collected through phenomenological semi-structured interviews and direct

observations. This data was then organised into categories and subcategories, and direct quotations were presented verbatim. Research findings were compared to the relevant literature to identify existing information and possible differences, and the findings were then recorded.

The study showed that there are many barriers in farm schools that hinder the smooth running of the school, in other words the learning and teaching. It is necessary to eliminate these barriers where possible, and to minimise and control the barriers that can be detrimental to the health status of farm schools. Findings from this research were classified according to the following main categories:

- Difficult working conditions experienced by educators in the classroom.
- Poor socio-economic status of learners.
- Lack of support to learners from outside the school.
- Dissatisfaction with the Department of Education's management.
- Lack of transport and bad road conditions on the way to school.
- The adverse effect of the status quo on learners.
- The adverse effect of the status quo on educators.
- Learners' negative attitude.
- Struggles with helper mothers.

Key words for indexing:

Educators, perceptions, health status, farm schools.

OPSOMMING

Onderwysers se siening oor die gesondheidstoestand van plaasskole

Plaasskole is oor die algemeen redelik ver van die nedersettings waar die leerders woon, lyk meestal nie goed van buite af nie en ontvang nie die ondersteuning wat hulle nodig het nie. Daar is baie uitdagings vir onderwysers wat by plaaskole skoolhou. Sommige probleme ontstaan reeds by die ouerhuise, soos die sosio-ekonomiese status en ouerbetrokkenheid. Ander probleme ontstaan as gevolg van omgewingstoestande wat 'n gebrek aan basiese dienste soos water, elektrisiteit en ander insluit.

Dit word aanvaar dat die onderwyssisteem plaasskole in 'n mate te na kom wanneer dit kom by sake soos onderrig- en leermedia, 'n goeie verwysingsraamwerk, sekondêre skole, befondsing, bestuur en die beheer van 'n voedingskema Soms word addisionele probleme deur die leerders veroorsaak soos laatkommery, afwesigheid, die uitsaksyfer,, tienerswangerskappe en vandalisme. Die swak gehalte van die paaie en die feit dat leerders lang afstande na skole moet stap, het ook 'n negatiewe impak op die leerders.

Onderwysers by plaasskole voel dat hulle in hulle onderrig oorlaai word deurdat verskillende grade gekombineer word, daar te veel administratiewe take aan hulle opgedra word, dat geen ondersteuning van die onderwysdepartement en die ouers ontvang word nie, sowel as finansiële beperkings. Dit veroorsaak baie frustrasie binne die onderwysprofessie, onderwysers is afgemat en moeg en dit alles het 'n negatiewe invloed op hulle werk.

Die doel van hierdie studie is om ondersoek in te stel na plaasskoolonderwysers se algemene persepsies van die gesondheidstoestand van hulle skole.

Om hierdie doel te bereik het die studie die volgende spesifieke doelstelling gehad:

Om vas te stel wat die persepsies van plaasskoolonderwysers is oor die gesondheidstoestand van hulle skole.

'n Kwalitatiewe navorsingsontwerp is geïdentifiseer as die mees geskikte wyse om 'n indiepte ondersoek te doen na die persepsies van die onderwysers rakende die gesondheidstoestand van plaasskole. Data is ingesamel deur fenomenologiese semi-

gestruktureerde onderhoude te voer, asook deur direkte waarnemings te maak. Hierdie data is georden in kategorieë en sub-kategorieë, asook deur direkte mondelingse mededelings te noteer. Die navorsingsbevindings is daarna vergelyk met relevante navorsingsliteratuur om sodoende moontlike verskille en ooreenkomste met vorige navorsings te identifiseer en te beskryf.

Die ondersoek het getoon dat daar baie hindernisse by plaasskole is wat die gladde verloop van die skool verhinder en onderrig en leer belemmer. Dit is dus noodsaaklik om hierdie hindernisse waar moontlik, uit die weg te ruim, te verminder of so te beheer dat dit nie nadelig op die gesondheidstoestand van die plaasskole inwerk nie.

Die bevindings van hierdie navorsing is geklassifiseer volgens die volgende hoof-kategorië:

- Moeilike werksomstandighede soos beleef deur die onderwysers in die klaskamer.
- Swak sosio-ekonomiese status van leerders.
- Gebrek aan leerderondersteuning van buite die skool.
- Ongelukkigheid oor die Departement van Onderwys se bestuur van plaasskole.
- Tekort aan vervoer en slegte paaie na die skool.
- Die negatiewe uitwerking van die huidige situasie op leerders.
- Die negatiewe uitwerking van die huidige situasie op onderwysers.
- Die negatiewe houding van leerders.
- Probleme met helper-moeders.

Sleutelwoorde vir indeksering:

Onderwysers; persepsies, gesondheidstoestand, plaasskole

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CHAPTER 1
ORIENTATION

1.1 Introduction

South Africa is a country where there had historically been different categories of schools. These were separate schools for Blacks, Whites, Coloureds and Indians. The Education systems within these schools were not of the same standard, and some learners received better education whilst others received inferior education. Later on, model "C" schools emerged, which included a classification of schools as urban area schools or rural or farm schools. The latter remained the most disadvantaged categories in that learners still do not have common school uniforms, no proper school buildings, roads or even running water and toilets, just to mention a few obstacles.

The problems in South African farm schools come a long way. These problems continue up to the present, where these schools are still operating under severe poor conditions. According to Wilson (2002) most obstacles to delivering education to African children on commercial farms result from the following two root causes:

- Dependency on and vulnerability to the farmer on whose land the school is built.
- Often the most extreme examples of indigence in the South African education system.

Wilson (2002) furthermore elaborates that the dependency was established by the Bantu Education Act, which subsidized farmers to compensate them for accommodating schools on their farms. According to this Act, the state subsidies covered half the building costs and provision of utilities, and paid the teachers. The farmers provided the land, half the building costs and either managed the schools themselves or nominated someone else to do so. A number of cases have been heard where farm owners refused to open the gate to the school because he no longer wanted the school to operate on his farm because there is no contract between the government and the land owners.

This study will focus on the educators' perspectives about the health status of these farm schools. Chapter 1 focuses on an orientation and motivation for the study, including a discussion on the background, challenges faced by learners, the research question, and the aim of the study and the method of investigation.

1.2 Orientation, motivation and problem definition

Educators are expected to do their best while educating the farm workers' children, even in trying conditions. According to the Education Labour Relations Council (2003:A-3), the "educator" means any person who teaches, educates or trains other persons at an education institution or assists in rendering education services or support services provided by or in an education department. In common language, these are also referred to as 'teachers'.

The educators and the learners are the people who are directly affected by conditions in farm schools. It is in these often difficult conditions in farm schools that the educators are expected to educate, lead and mould the future leaders. These educators have their own views, ideas or 'perspectives' about the health status of farm schools, as well as about which aspects act as barriers in the performance of their normal duties and to the health status of farm schools.

The word 'perspective', comes from perception, which according to the South African Concise Oxford Dictionary (2006:864) may have two meanings. The first one is the ability to see, hear or become aware of something through the senses. The second meaning is a way of regarding, understanding or interpreting something. Perceptive is therefore an adjective meaning to have or show acute insight. It is from this point that educators will give their views, believes and experiences concerning the health status of farm schools.

According to the Longman Dictionary (1991:485), health means the state of being well in one's body and mind and free from disease. More clarity is given on the definition of health in the constitution of the World Health Organization (1999) as a state of physical, mental and social well-being, and not as the absence of disease or infirmity. The latter definition gives a broader meaning of the concept of health in that it does not only focus on the medical definition, but everything in totality.

The health status that is referred to in this study relates to whether the conditions at farm schools are conducive for both learning and teaching, or not. This means that throughout the study, aspects that are seen as barriers to the health status of farm schools will be referring to those aspects that hinder the free flow of the teaching-learning relationship.

1.2.1 Location of farm schools

One of the most important aspects of concern with regard to farm schools is their location, which is far away from the learners' homes. The aspect of location is complex, and more details will follow as everything unfolds in the study.

According to Wilson (2002), most farm school learners come from labouring families on the farms, and living conditions on these farms are harsh.

The schools are mostly situated on white owned commercial farms. They are the only educational opportunity for farm workers' children. Sometimes these schools are referred to as PSPP's i.e. Public Schools on Private Properties (Afrol News, 2005) or "Public Schools on Private Farmland", as stated by Hanes (2005). Mabogoane and Patel (2006:133) refer to these schools as "hard to teach schools", because of the unpleasant teaching and learning conditions prevailing at these schools.

These schools often serve the children of workers on that specific farm, and learners from nearby farms may be accommodated (Engelbrecht P, Green, Naicker & Engelbrecht L, 2001:31). Farm schools constitute 13% of all state funded schools and provide education to 3% of learners in the public school system (Human Rights Watch, 2004). This shows that farm schools serve a reasonable size of the South African population, hence should also be taken good care of.

In terms of Chapter 2 of the Bill of rights, Section 29(1) of the constitution of South Africa (1996), everyone has the right to an education. Failure to protect the right to primary education for children living on farms will therefore be violating the 1996 South African Schools Act, National Education Policy Act and its obligation to the rights of the child (Human Rights Watch, 2004).

1.2.2 Physical structure and appearance of most farm schools

After fifteen (15) years of democracy, the structure of some farm schools is not something we can be proud of. Although it has been mentioned that these schools play a prominent role in the education of farm children, they are among the poorest with regard to financial resources, physical structure and quality (Human Rights Watch, 2004). Some of these schools have dilapidated buildings (Afrol News, 2005), often no running water, no proper sanitation and electricity, all of which may result in unnecessary risk of diseases and have a negative impact on the health status of both the learners and educators.

According to Harmon and Weeks (1999:2086), at least one in two farm schools has inadequate building features such as a roof, a foundation, or plumbing. Many of these schools have no electricity, which makes it impossible to have computers or wiring for any technological equipment. Without the necessary infrastructure, schools cannot use technology to help overcome the historical barriers associated with rural disadvantages and isolation.

Wilson (2002) highlights that at the 2000 Farm Schools Conference, it was confirmed that the conditions at farm schools were described as being either poor or very poor. It was furthermore reported that over 80% of farm schools had no telephones and 76% were without electricity. Finally, 43% of farm schools had no water inside the building or on site, and 17% had no toilet facilities at all. The data given also suggested that most farm schools have less than 50 learners, and these are mostly primary schools.

The information stated above shows why there is great concern that farm schools are "forgotten", not taken good care, and not offered the kind of support given to other state schools in urban areas. Engelbrecht *et al.* (2001:36) believe that farm schools will remain impoverished and will limit children's educational opportunities if nothing is done about these conditions.

1.2.3 Contracts between farm owners and the Department of Education

In order to improve the afore-mentioned conditions, there should ideally be clear contracts negotiated between the state, which is the Department of Education, and farm owners. Such contracts should negotiate and determine the key service delivery. (Afrol

News, 2005). According to the former Education Minister Kader Asmal (News 24.com, 2000), the absence of the legal certainties is a blockage for the infrastructure and service upgrading of farm schools. Asmal further added that donors have shown interest in upgrading farm schools once legal certainty had been established.

Mecoamere and Motloung (2004:46) mention some of the problems that created delays for the signing of legal contracts:

- Resistance by some farm owners to sign agreements, for various private reasons.
- Disputes regarding the ownership of the land where the farmers themselves have located the school.
- The difficulty in obtaining information about the deceased farm owners.

One may also add by raising a serious concern about officials in the different state departments dragging their feet and showing some incompetence in assisting people with their different requests. The government should thus see the importance of attending to this matter urgently and seriously as it affects people's lives. The learners become the unintended victims of the government inaction as they are caught between the landowner's private interests and the state's unsuccessful attempt to meet its obligation (Afrol News, 2005).

1.2.4 Health status of farm schools

One issue of concern about farm schools is their state of health. We can start by defining what the concept "health" means to us. In the Ottawa Charter in Ottawa (1986), health is defined in the constitution of the World Health Organization as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, and not merely as the absence of disease or infirmity. This definition has been strongly criticized in that it only focuses on the health of the individual rather than that of the community. Furthermore, it also fails to recognize that health problems may lie in society and not only in the individual (Kibel & Wagstaff, 2001:4). Health should therefore be viewed holistically, inclusive of the person and his/her total environment, and the interaction between all aspects of them.

From the above, we learn that health promotion is important. According to the Ottawa Charter (1986), health promotion is a process of enabling people to increase control over their health, and to improve it. The Charter furthermore explains that to reach a

state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, an individual or a group must be able to identify and to realize aspirations, to satisfy needs and to change or cope with the environment. This is very important information that should be shared with farm school learners, educators as well as the parents to make a difference.

Wikipedia defines holistic health as a concept in medical practice that entails that all aspects of people's needs, psychological, physical and social, should be seen as a whole. This means that the environment plays a prominent role in the health status and well-being of people's lives. Clean water for drinking and washing, hygienic disposal of domestic and human waste and clean air are essentials of a health promoting physical environment (Kibel & Wagstaff, 2001:10).

According to Adams and Wagstaff (*in* Kibel & Wagstaff, 2001:290), the learners' health needs should be met by a school health system that is specifically dedicated to the task and which is itself an important part of primary health care. Research has shown in many instances that this is not the case with most farm schools, as they do not play any part in primary health care.

Averill (2006:1) also shows great concern for the poor health status of farm schools. He further adds that rural populations experience higher rates of illness, less access to health care resources and lower rates of health insurance coverage than urban populations. This is evident in that most farms do not have clinics or health care facilities around. Mobile clinics at times take long before they visit the farms, which mean that primary health care is lacking.

This emphasizes the fact that school health has not been taken seriously in some instances. Schools need to come up with health promoting strategies to eliminate this problem. The health promoting school aims at achieving healthy lifestyles for the school population by developing environments that are supportive and conducive for health promotion (Kibel & Wagstaff, 2001: 290).

1.2.5 Challenges learners face to get to school

Most farm schools grapple with the problem of distance in that some schools are very far from where learners live. Even small children have to walk long distances to school each morning and afternoon (Human Rights Watch, 2004). This result in fatigue and

exhaustion, and on arrival at school, learners are too tired to participate fully in class; some may even sleep in class.

Furthermore, long walks to school may also result in irregular attendance or non-attendance, children are at risk of being killed or kidnapped and girls are exposed to the risk of sexual assault or rape (News, 2004). In some instances learners have to walk these long distances because the farmer has for one reason or the other decided to close down the short cut to the school because of a lack of clear contracts between the government and land owners.

At times farms do this because they no longer want to have the school on their premises. Some farmers prevent learners and educators from entering the school by locking the school gates or deliberately obstructing access in any way possible (Afrol News, 2005).

1.2.6 Educators' perceptions regarding farm schools

Ngidi (1995:111) found in his research that some educators are of the opinion that rural communities do not show enough, and that people from rural areas will be better off working in urban areas. This means that some educators have a negative attitude towards farm schools. Boylan, Sinclair, Smith and Squires (93:122) mention some points that educators perceive as disadvantages of working in farm schools:

- Having to travel long distances.
- Lack of educational opportunities for learners.
- Lack of employment opportunities for spouses and the educator's children.
- Lack of health and sports facilities.

The above are among some of the reasons that cause educators to consider leaving teaching and looking for 'greener pastures' or other employment in the urban areas. The concern would for now be who will then educate learners at farm schools? This calls for Government to do something about the conditions at farm schools and to meet the educators' needs before there is no one left to look after the learners.

1.2.7 Summary of the challenges at farm schools

Ethiopia (2005:6-7) states the challenges facing rural education in South Africa as follows:

- Lack of basic services (water, electricity, roads, sanitation) affects access to and quality of schooling.
- Inadequate infrastructure and the poor condition of school buildings, toilet facilities, telecommunications and equipment are a problem.
- Distances travelled to school – children walk long distances and no adequate transport is available.
- Quality of education – lack of qualified educators, large classes, lack of teaching aids, higher learner ratios are a challenge.
- Curriculum relevance – need for Maths, Science and Technology educators.
- District support is minimal.
- Inappropriate conditions of service for educators.

The above-mentioned challenges highlight problems experienced generally at farm schools. Engelbrecht *et al.* (2001:46), further add that farm school children are not exposed to the outside world, the 'real' world, but are cocooned within a small community. They add that within poor communities, the learning environment is usually bad, and the amount of additional investment by parents is low. Consequently, the standard would be lower than it would be in an urban or wealthier area. In short, learners in poor communities are assumed to have limited knowledge since they cannot afford to expand their knowledge.

1.3 Research question

In the light of the above description of the problem identified for this research, the following research question arises:

- What are the educators' perceptions about the health status of farm schools?

1.4 Aims of the study

1.4.1 General aim

The aim of this study is to investigate the general perceptions of educators about the health status of farm schools.

1.4.2 Specific aim

The specific aim of this research is:

- To determine the perceptions of educators about the health status of farm schools.

1.5 Research design and method of investigation

1.5.1 Research design

- For the purposes of the empirical investigation, a qualitative research approach will be followed.
- Research will be conducted through a phenomenological investigation and focus group interviews.

1.5.2 Method of investigation

In order to determine which aspects are perceived by educators as the barriers to the health status of farm schools and what the opportunities at farm schools are, a detailed literature study and qualitative investigation of the above aspects will be undertaken.

The research question as identified in 1.3 will be answered as follows:

- How do you perceive the health status of farm schools?

The educators will be identifying aspects that they think are barriers to the health status of farm schools. These will be investigated by means of a qualitative method, which will include a range of interviews and participant behaviour.

Educators from five farm schools in the Limpopo Province, around the Northam/ Thabazimbi District will be interviewed by means of semi-structured group interviews. These will be conducted individually as well as in groups consisting of 3 to 5 educators.

They will be asked questions concerning the aspects that are barriers to the health status of farm schools.

Observations will be made at the time of these interviews and field notes will be taken for the purpose of triangulation. The data will be transcribed and analyzed with a view to determining categories. The data will be cross-checked with the literature by using co-codes for the purpose of triangulation. For ethical consideration, participants will be requested to sign consent to be interviewed. Educators who do not sign such a consent form will not be considered for interviews.

1.5.3 Paradigmatic perspective

Paradigm is originally a Greek word, which according to Dictionary.com (2009) means a model or pattern. It is furthermore clarified that this could also mean a set of assumptions, concepts, values and practices that constitute a way of viewing reality, especially in an intellectual discipline.

The researcher's personal anthropology is also of importance in this study, especially because of the qualitative research component. In this qualitative component of study, the researcher can be seen as a primary instrument (for the gathering and analysis of data). As such, the researcher's paradigm, bias, assumptions, preconceptions and values need to be reflected explicitly in qualitative research. This increases the consistency of the research and serves to identify potential dangers pertaining to the validity of the conclusions made (Jonker, 2005:12).

The researcher is a graduated mathematics and science teacher, but is currently an ABET-facilitator at Anglo Platinum Mines, Rustenburg Section, and Thusanang College. The researcher has been trained and has graduated as an educator and is registered with the South African Council of Educators. The researcher was formerly an educator at Bethlehem Correctional Services, and then moved to Rustenburg Correctional Services as senior educator. Exposure to prison life, and work with inmates (juveniles) who came from different backgrounds, sentenced for different types of crimes, drove the researcher to find out what type of schools these juveniles attended.

Juveniles who came from farm schools got the attention of the researcher. This is when the researcher developed an interest in finding out more about what the conditions are like in farm schools and how the educators there view the health status of farm schools.

Once the aspects that are barriers to the health status of farm schools are identified, better suggestions can be made to improve the status quo and make sure that learners in those schools grow up to become good civilized citizens who will not resort to doing crime as a coping strategy.

1.5.4 Theoretical assumption

The theoretical assumption of this study is that there is a widening gap between the teaching-learning conditions in urban and farm schools. This is so because dis-advantages both limit access to educational opportunities and reduce the ability of children to benefit from the schooling that they engage in.

1.6 The course of the study

Chapter 1 of this study acts as an introduction to the research, where the orientation to the research is discussed. It also contains the problem statement and general and specific aims of the research.

Chapter 2 deals with the research design and methodology. The aim of this chapter is to provide a chain of evidence by means of dense, holistic description of the entire research process, to ensure that if a different researcher should undertake the same study in a similar context, s/he would be able to come up with similar, if not the same findings regarding the educators' perspectives about the health status of farm schools.

Chapter 3 will focus on the findings obtained from the interviews and will reflect on which aspects can be identified as barriers to the health status of farm schools; this is data analysis and interpretation.

Chapter 4 will deal with literature control on different categories identified from the perspectives of educators on the health status of farm schools.

Chapter 5 will provide a summary of the identified reasons, as well as the way in which these can be used to promote the health status of farm schools. Limitations of the study will be presented. Recommendations will be provided in the form of guidelines for the promotion of the health status of farm schools.

CHAPTER 2
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter the focus will be on the elaboration of the research design and strategies that will be followed, as well as the details concerning the methods that will be used to gather information from farm school educators. The research is qualitative and will follow a phenomenological approach. The research will also focus on important attributes of a good researcher, namely: Truth value, Applicability, Consistency, Neutrality, Ethical considerations and Literature control.

The purpose of this research is to:

- Determine the educators' perceptions about the health status of farm schools.

2.2 Research design

The research deals with the educators' perspectives about the health status of farm schools. A qualitative research design is selected as the most appropriate to enable the participants to actively take part in the research.

According to Kvale and Brinkmann (2009:26) there is no way that one can separate a phenomenological approach from qualitative research as the former is prevalent in the latter. Creswell (2007:57) furthermore elaborates that a phenomenological study describes the meaning that several individuals' lived experiences of a concept or a phenomenon hold for them. Groenewald (2004) indicates how the research unfolds according to his experience. It starts with the synopsis of the research, then description of locating the research participants, data gathering methods and data storage.

2.2.1 Qualitative research

According to Creswell (2007:39) qualitative research is conducted because a problem or issue needs to be explored, hence it is said to be appropriate. This research type allows for a variety of methods to use for data collection e.g. sampling, observation and

interviews, etc which are all important in order to make a valid, reliable and more accurate analysis of the educators' perceptions about the health status of farm schools.

Strauss and Corbin (*in* Hoepfl, 1997:2), defines qualitative research as any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of qualification. Some of the information may be difficult to convey quantitatively, hence qualitative research design will be appropriate. This will provide first hand information in the form that it is experienced i.e. detailed with participants' experience of the world (Hoepfl, 1997:3).

Modise (2003:21) contends that "one major feature of qualitative research is that it focuses on naturally occurring events in natural settings so that we could have a strong indication of real life". Patton (2002:4) adds that there are three kinds of Qualitative Data, namely: interviews, observations and documents and he further adds that for successful research, one needs to contact relevant people to talk about their experiences, opinions, feelings and knowledge.

De Vos (*in* Denzin & Lincoln, 1994:2) defines qualitative research as a multi-perspective approach, utilizing different qualitative techniques and data collection methods to social interaction, aimed at describing, making sense of, interpreting or reconstructing this interaction in terms of the meanings that the subjects attach to it. One should understand in this case what educators perceive as barriers to the health status of farm schools.

According to Evans (2000:15) listening and inquiring skills are crucial for qualitative research. This type of research involves openness; questions and experimentation. Good communication skills are very important to a researcher. The researcher must be able to ask relevant good questions, varying the questioning techniques to enable him/her to get as much information from the participant as possible. Even so, the researcher needs to remember to do this with respect to the participants, and to be at ease with the limits of the interviews; but to be patient and to show empathy.

Flick (2006:14) advices in using the qualitative research and outlines it as follows:

- Appropriateness of methods and theories.
- The recognition and analysis of different perspectives of the participants and their diversity.
- Reflexivity of the researcher and the research.

- Variety of approaches and methods in qualitative research.

2.2.2 Phenomenological interview

In-depth phenomenological interviews were conducted in the format of semi-structured group interviews. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009:26) highlight that in focusing the interview on the experienced meanings of the subjects' life world, phenomenology has been relevant for clarifying the mode of understanding in a qualitative research interview. Groenewald (2004) describes these interviews by stressing that the aim of the researcher should be to describe as accurately as possible the phenomenon, refraining from any pre-given framework, but remaining true to the facts. This is very important as it keeps the researcher always within the scope of the research.

According to Henning, Van Rensburg and Smit (2004:69), phenomenological study captures lived experiences, deeply held beliefs, or world views as expressed in the language of the participant. Patton (2002:69) elaborates that phenomenologists are committed to understand social phenomena from the actor's own perspective. The main focus here is how the world is experienced, most importantly, what people perceive it to be. In this study, how the educators perceive the health status of their farm schools is our main focus.

Patton (2002:104) adds that in phenomenology, one interviews people who have "lived experience" as opposed to second hand experience. This captures how people perceive their experience, how they describe it, feel about it, judge it, make sense of it, remember it and talk about it with others. He further elaborates that the phenomenon that is the focus of the inquiry may be an emotion, anger, a relationship, a marriage or a job. It might even be a program, an organization or a culture.

Henning *et al.* (2004:53) emphasizes that any type of interview, whether it is a survey interview or phenomenological interview about someone's articulation of their lived experience or deeply felt emotions, the data is regarded as credible and believable as long as the data is without pollutants and there was no interference from the interviewer, e.g. through leading questions or leading the speaker into a confessional mode.

2.3 Research method

The research method includes a qualitative investigation and a literature review. The first important part of the research was to obtain first hand information from the subjects themselves, regarding their experience. This includes sampling, data collection, interviews, debating the trustworthiness and ensuring ethical correctness of the research.

The chronological process of the research in this study can be explained as follows:

- Prior to the interviews, in August 2007, the researcher wrote a formal request to the Area Manager of Northam/Thabazimbi District to request permission to conduct interviews in some farm schools within that district.
- On receipt of the permission from the Area Manager, the researcher then contacted the principals of the relevant farm schools to interview three to five educators teaching at the specific institution at a venue that was chosen as central to all the schools.
- Educators from all schools were classified into three groups, the first group being that of principals, followed by second group of experienced educators and lastly third group of young educators.
- Identification of educators in each institution for the interviews was random.
- Permission was granted from identified educators (interviewees) to be interviewed.
- Formal arrangements of appointments with respondents to be interviewed were made and this was clarified with the school.
- Interviews of educators in three groups were conducted at Fairfield Primary school, which was a central location.
- Interviews took place on the 30 November 2007 and the first group started at 08h00 to 09h30, then the second group at 09h45 to 11h00 and lastly the third group from 11h30 to 13h00.
- Transcription of audiotape material.
- Categorizing and encoding data.
- Quantification of results – prioritizing the data and tabulating the results according to corresponding themes into main and subcategories.

The second part of the research includes data analysis and interpretation of results, as well as literature control.

2.3.1 Sampling

The word sampling comes from the word sample, which is described as a small part or amount of something that shows what the whole is like. This literally gives one an experience of what is going on and it is a relatively small portion of all possible experiences (De Vos, 1998:190).

It is from the very same samples that researchers are able to come up with general statements, based on their experiences, which in a way, give people a 'hint' or 'idea' of how some people view certain aspects. De Vos (1998:191) further adds that the use of samples may result in more accurate information than might have been obtained if the entire population was studied. Indeed, with a sample, time, money and effort, can be concentrated to produce better quality research, better instruments, more in-depth information and better trained interviewers or observers.

Sampling can either be purposive or theoretical (Silverman, Kurtz & Draper, 2005:130). These are often treated as synonyms. The only difference between the two procedures applies when the 'purpose' behind purposive sampling is not theoretically defined.

An illustration of the target group, the way in which the participants are selected as well as the criteria for inclusion in the study is provided below:

- Target group

  The target group of the research consists of educators and principals, working in farm schools within the Dwaalboom/Thabazimbi circuit in the Limpopo province. These are the people who have to educate and motivate the learners in the PSPP's, i.e. Public Schools in Private Properties as quoted by Afrol News, (2005).

- Selection for inclusion in the study

  Participants of the research consist of educators and principals from five farm schools in the Dwaalboom/Thabazimbi circuit in Limpopo. These educators do not hear what other people are saying about farm schools, they have firsthand experience of all the educational obstacles, challenges or opportunities on a daily basis in their working environment. They might have different opinions as to how

they view the health status of farm schools, but each will be talking from his/her own experience.

- Criteria for inclusion in the study

The criteria for inclusion in this study included educators who:

a) have a teaching qualification and are registered as educators at SACE.

b) are educators in the Dwaalboom/Thabazimbi circuit in Limpopo?

c) are teaching in the farm schools?

d) are able to speak and understand English.

e) are willing to take part in the study.

2.3.2 Pilot study

It is important for a researcher to have thorough background knowledge on a specific problem prior to it being researched (De Vos, 1998:5). This is the way in which the researcher can orientate herself to the project she might have in mind. This is very helpful since the researcher will be able to clarify instructions, thus improving the quality of questioning (Modise, 2003:30)

In this study, the researcher took the first group of Principals for the pilot study. This prepared the researcher for the upcoming task, eliminated the stage freight and gave her the platform to test whether her participants will be able to take part in the interview planned and will freely express themselves. This was a success, and this gave the researcher an indication that it would not be difficult for the members of the other two groups to participate and to answer the research questions.

2.3.3 Data collection

Data was collected in the following ways:

2.3.3.1 Focus group interviews

Educators from the five farm schools were grouped into the following three focus groups: Principals, Older/Experienced educators and Young educators. Each group was interviewed as a separate group. This was done in order to allow for freedom of

expression and not to have a situation where an educator would not be able to express herself because the principal would hold it against her. This exercise prevented any victimization that could have occurred.

The research process commenced with a formal written request to the district manager of the Dwaalboom/Thabazimbi circuit in Limpopo province. After written permission was granted by the circuit manager, the principals of the five schools were contacted. The schools were the Kesarona, Van Wyk's Kraal, Mogotlho, Rabogale and Fairfield Primary Schools. The educators were classified into three groups, Group A the principals, Group B the older or experienced educators and Group C the young educators.

Once the samples were selected, permission was obtained from the educators themselves to be interviewed. Formal appointments were then arranged with the respondents for the interviews to be conducted. Arrangements were made with the schools for the interviews to be conducted at one central school, Fairfield, in one of the classrooms at a suitable time.

Participants selected for the interviews

11 educators from 5 farm schools in the Dwaalboom/Thabazimbi circuit were interviewed. The 11 subjects included 5 school principals, 4 being females and 1 male, and then 6 educators, all females. One of the principals was placed in the experienced/ older educators group, for the purpose of balancing the numbers. This resulted in the numbers dividing as follows: Group A: 4 participants, Group B: 3 participants and Group C: 4 participants. All participants were speaking Afrikaans/English or Setswana/English. Their ages were as follows:

Table 2.1 Representative age groups of participants

Age Range	20-30 years	30-40 years	40-50 years	50-60 years
Female participants	1	3	3	3
Male participants				1

The interviews

The interviews took place in a classroom at the central location, Fairfield Primary School. Interviews started in the morning at 08:00 and ran until 13:00. At the time there were no proper classes because educators were preparing to submit their yearend

schedules, towards school closure. There were no class interruptions. The interviews were conducted on the 30th November 2007. The three groups were conducted independently and the duration of each interview differed from one to several hours.

During the interviews, which were audio taped, the respondents were asked one question, based on the demands and needs they experienced. The question was:

Question 1: How do you perceive the health status of farm schools?

Participants were encouraged to say anything they thought would help to identify barriers to the health status of farm schools.

2.3.3.2 The role of the researcher

According to Welman and Kruger (2005:181) the phenomenologist believe that what the researcher observes is not the reality as such, but an interpreted reality.

The role of the researcher involves the use of the self (2.3.3.3.1), his/her communication techniques (2.3.3.3.2), the creation of a relaxed atmosphere (2.3.3.3.3) and field notes (2.3.3.3.4). These aspects will be discussed in detail below.

2.3.3.2.1 Use of self

Effective researchers, as viewed by Leedy and Omrod (2001:36), do not just accept research findings as they are. Instead, they scrutinize them for faults, question logic, weaknesses in methodology, inappropriate statistical analyses and conclusions.

According to Evans (2000:15), listening and enquiring skills are crucial for qualitative research. This type of research involves openness, questions and experimentation. Good communication skills are very important for a qualitative researcher. The researcher must be able to ask relevant questions, varying questioning techniques to enable him/her to get as much information as possible. Even so, the researcher needs to remember to do this with respect to the participants and to be at ease with the limits of the interview, but mostly, to be patient and show empathy.

The KwaZulu Natal Department of Education (2006:1) emphasizes the above by adding that Qualitative research uses unstructured logic to get at what is real quality. This means that there are no step-by-step rules or guides. This implies that the researcher should be innovative, creative and focused. As Evans (2000:13) puts it, a focus on flexibility should be maintained.

The researcher's basic purpose is to understand and explain (Patton, 2000: 215). It is through this act that everybody will be informed. According to Modise (2003:30), one of the amazing strengths of the qualitative researcher is the ability to use all senses to undertake the research act. This includes sight-seeing, learning, touch, smell and taste, all of which must often be used to collect data.

De Vos (1998:13) adds that the researcher has an obligation to strive to be a person whose work is effective and current. There must not be a big gap between what the researcher is investigating and the reality. In De Vos (1998:308) it is mentioned that a qualitative researcher has to acquire a set of skills that includes a well-trained memory, a mind capable of logical analysis, a desire for achievement, tolerance and sensitivity, good observation skills, a sense of timing, awareness and understanding of body language, and roles adopted by people in interactive situations.

2.3.3.2.2 Communication techniques of the researcher

Communication can be verbal or non-verbal. This is the vital part of the interview or of a process of transmitting information, and it should be done correctly from the very start. De Vos (1998:309) states that interviewers should constantly be aware that their own non-verbal communication and the effect it has on interviewees, as well as of the non-verbal communication of the interviewees and what it conveys, e.g. forced eye contact which may intimidate the interviewee.

Poggenpoel (*as cited* by Modise, 2003:31) highlights the important communication techniques amongst those that are employed by the researcher as the following:

- Reflecting on content and feelings that occur when the researcher communicates to the respondent how s/he understands the perceptions, experiences and feelings of the respondent.
- Paraphrasing, this entails reformulating a statement by the respondent.
- Summarizing, which is feedback given to the teacher on the general content of the interview, or part of it.
- A request for clarifications, which is an attempt to obtain greater clarity when the respondent's response is vague, confused or unclear; and
- A request for examples and descriptions

2.3.3.2.3 Creation of a relaxed atmosphere

For a conversation to start and proceed smoothly, one needs to be in a relaxed atmosphere where participation is voluntary. This is important for contributing to and establishing a good interviewer-interviewee relationship (Jonker, 2005:31). According to Patton (2002:496), this means:

(a) Creating an environment in which those collaborating feel that their perspective is genuinely valued and respected.

(b) Demystifying research.

(c) Maintaining confidentiality with multiple analysts and creating a warm, relaxed atmosphere.

Modise (2003:31) highlights that a friendly joke can be employed as an ice- breaker. One might also offer a cold drink to the interviewee, to keep calm, relaxed and focused.

2.3.3.2.4 Field notes

Jonker (2005:32) advices that immediately after each interview; the researcher should record field notes of the interview situation. She further mentions that this ensures that the researcher is not distracted from the task of observing and listening to the respondents by taking notes during interview. Notes of the interview and the researcher's own impressions are recorded.

Patton (2002:302) shares the same view and emphasizes that taking of field notes is not optional, as they contain everything that has been observed. They should contain everything that the observer believes to be worth noting. Nothing should be left to future recall. He furthermore adds that field notes are descriptive. They should be dated and should record basic information of where observation took place, who was present, what the physical setting was like and all activities that took place.

Field notes also contain the observer's own feelings, reactions to the experience, and reflections about the personal meaning and significance of what has been observed. Feelings and reactions should be recorded at the time they are experienced.

According to Silverman *et al.* (2005:158), in making field notes, one is not simply recording data, but also analyzing it. He further adds that if the researcher is physically

present, the following should not be neglected: what you can see and hear, and how you are behaving or being treated.

Lincoln and Guba (*in* Jonker, 2005:32) summarize it by dividing field notes into four categories, namely:

- Observation notes - in which the researcher records what s/he saw and heard during the interview.
- Theoretical notes – which refer to deliberate, controlled efforts to extract meaning from observation notes.
- Methodological notes – which includes notes on operational practices such as the time schedule, the sequence and the physical set-up.
- Personal notes – such as the researcher's feelings, assumptions, reactions and experiences during the interview.

2.4 Data analysis

Qualitative data was collected through transcribed interviews, observations and the researcher's field notes. The interviews were recorded using an mp3 recorder, and after the interviews had been concluded everything was transcribed for authenticity. Thereafter, the researcher read through the transcribed interviews to recall and collect the educators' views. This information was then used to group the educators' views according to main categories as well as sub-categories. The number of entries per sub-category will be indicated to highlight how many educators mentioned that specific point.

Below the sub-categories, the direct citation of the sub-category as well as the speaker is highlighted, e.g. "3A" means person 3 of the first group of three groups. The number indicates the person and the letter represents the group. The principals will be Group A, the Older/Experienced educators will be Group B and Young educators will be Group C. This data integrated with information obtained from the literature study. After the data had been collected, it was analyzed according to a combination of methods.

2.5 Literature control

The results of the research will be compared to those of similar research and with relevant literature. In this way, the similarities, differences and unique contributions of the research will be identified.

2.5.1 Literature study

- In view of promoting the health status of farm schools, a detailed literature study on the needs and perceptions of educators will be undertaken.
- Using a dialogue computer search on the ERIC database, information was gathered on relative and available literature for this specific study.
- The key words that were used in the literature search process are: *educators, perceptions, health status, farm schools, South Africa.*

2.6 Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness refers to an assessment of the entire research process to determine whether the research findings are valid, internally coherent and trustworthy. The reputation of the researcher as being an honest, ethical professional, will determine whether the interviewees see him/her as trustworthy. Establishing trustworthiness ensures the quality of the findings. To assess the trustworthiness of qualitative data, Lincoln and Guba (*in* Jonker 2005:33) propose a model for assessment. This model identifies four aspects of trustworthiness. They are truth-value (2.6.1), applicability (2.6.2), consistency (2.6.3) and neutrality (2.6.4).

2.6.1 Truth value

The truth value establishes how confident the researcher is with the truth of the findings based on the research design, informants, and context, Lincoln & Guba (*in* Krefting, 1991:215).The truth value of the research refers to the trust in the authenticity of the findings from the interviews. Authenticity is the primary criteria for acceptability of qualitative measures and refers to the detailed and credible depiction of natural events as experienced by the participants.

According to Krefting (1991:215), the truth value of the researcher refers to the trust in the authenticity of the findings from the interviews. Authenticity is the primary criteria for

acceptability of qualitative measures and refers to the detailed and credible depiction of natural events as experienced by the participants. This involves aspects of credibility (2.6.1.1), triangulation (2.6.1.2), and clarification with experts (2.6.1.3), peer group evaluation (2.6.1.4), the authority of the researcher (2.6.1.5) and structural coherence (2.6.1.6)

2.6.1.1 Credibility

In qualitative research, data must be audible through checking that the interpretations are credible, transferable, dependable and confirmable. The following techniques can be used to raise the credibility of the researcher.

2.6.1.2 Triangulation

Triangulation involves the collection of data from multiple sources on multiple occasions, using various data collection strategies. By layering the triangulated data, observations and interpretations are verified and authenticity and conformability are achieved (Jonker, 2005:34). Triangulation is therefore a validity procedure where researchers search for convergence among multiple and different sources of information to form themes or categories in a study (Modise, 2003:42). There are four main types of triangulation:

1. by source: data is collected from different sources (different people, resources etc.)
2. by methods: different data collection strategies are used, like participant observation, individual interviews and focus groups;
3. by researcher: this involves the use of more than one researcher to analyze the data, develop and test the coding scheme; and
4. by theories: multiple theories and perceptions are considered during data analysis and interpretation (Law *et al.* as cited by Jonker, 2005:34).

The first use of triangulation is introduced by virtue of the fact that data regarding the educators' perspectives about the health status of farm schools are collected by means of phenomenological interviews with these educators. These are recorded on audio tape and by means of direct observations, which are recorded as field notes.

The second triangulation measure is applied with the data analysis, where the data is interpreted according to a combination of descriptive and content analysis, as proposed by Jonker (2005:34).

The literature study is a further control measure. Through the literature control, the findings of this research are compared to relevant other research findings, in order to identify similarities, differences and unique contributions.

2.6.1.3 Clarification with experts

The experts in this research are educators teaching in farm schools identified as experiencing different perceptions about the health status of farm schools. To ensure that their original meanings are reflected in the findings of the research, the researcher returned to some of the farm school educators and cleared her findings with them.

2.6.1.4 Peer group evaluation

The input of other educators provided the researcher with the opportunity to remain open and honest. This helped to rid her of emotions and feelings that may have influenced her good judgment.

2.6.1.5 Authority of the researcher

The researcher has completed the degree B.Ed (Honours) at the former Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education, now known as the North West University (Potchefstroom Campus) as well as the course formerly known as HED (post-graduate) at the same University. The researcher also studied with Mankwe Christian College where she started her career with University Diploma (UDES).The researcher has also taught in the village, Herman Thebe High School at Matau village, near Rustenburg and then moved to Bethlehem Correctional Services in the Free State as the educationist. It is this experience and exposure that made the researcher aware of the different learning environment and how each environment has its own challenges.

The researcher then developed interest in finding out how different educators or educationists view the health status of their working environment, and has had hands-on experience with the difficulties and pressures endured, and this stretched up to and included farm schools. The researcher felt it important to firstly determine the educators' perspectives about the health status of farm schools, since these different

perspectives will assist researchers in coming up with the workable solutions to promote the health status of farm schools.

2.6.1.6 Structural coherence

Consistent focus was placed on a certain group of educators in farm schools within the Dwaalboom/Thabazimbi District. These educators were identified as those:

- teaching in farm schools within this district; and
- who are affected by the health status of these farm schools?

During the interviews, coding and analysis of the data, the emphasis was on the barriers these teachers have come across in the health status of farm schools and the resulting stress.

2.6.2 Applicability

According to May (2002:23) qualitative research studies a phenomenon in its unique, natural context, which allows little opportunity for external control of variables. Applicability in qualitative research refers to the degree to which the findings can be applied to other contexts and settings or with other groups. It is for this reason that reference is made to the applicability of findings when dealing with qualitative research.

The control measures to ensure the applicability of the research are sample selection and transferability.

2.6.2.1 Sample selection

A purposive sample is selected from the target group, while at the same time it is ensured that each participant duly fulfils the criteria for inclusion in the research (see par.2.3.1).

2.6.2.2 Transferability

Transferability of the research is the way in which it may be applied to contexts beyond the study situation, as determined by the degree of similarity between the two contexts. This transferability depends on time and context-bound experiences and not on the researcher of the original study (Krefting, 1991:216). In order to make the study

transferable for other research situations, May (2002:24) suggests that the researcher envisages presenting a sufficient database of the research, including a description of the selection criteria for inclusion in the sample, as well as verbatim quoting from the interview.

2.6.3 Consistency

The third criterion of trustworthiness considers the consistency of the data (Krefting, 1991:216).That is, whether the findings would be consistent if the inquiry were replicated with the same subjects or in a similar context. Factors involved in consistency are dependability (2.5.3.1), step-by-step replication (2.5.3.2) and the coding and decoding procedure (2.5.3.3).

2.6.3.1 Dependability

A sufficient description of the research methodology must be presented to enhance the reliability of the research. The concept of dependability implies traceable variability.

2.6.3.2 Step-by-step replication

The second measure of control is step-by-step replication. To enhance the standardization in this research, for instance, the same steps were followed with each interview, namely:

- Written permission was obtained from the District Director of Education, and the principal of the institution where the teachers were teaching gave his verbal consent.
- Each subject was interviewed.
- Each subject gave consent for the interview to be conducted.
- It was explained to the subject what was expected of him/her.
- The central request was presented to each subject in exactly the same words.

2.6.3.3 Coding and decoding procedure

The third and final measure of control is the application of a coding/decoding procedure (Krefting, 1991:217). This involves that an experienced expert in the field of qualitative research is appointed as an independent coder. After the interviews have been

transcribed and coded by the researcher, a protocol of the data analysis is presented to the independent coder, who encodes and categorizes the data on his/her own, before meeting with the researcher to discuss the results and to obtain the greatest possible degree of consensus.

2.6.4 Neutrality

Neutrality describes the freedom from bias in the research procedure and results. It refers to the degree to which the findings are exclusively a function of the respondents and the conditions of the research, and not those of the researcher (Krefting, 1991:217).The criterion for neutrality is conformability.

2.6.4.1 Conformability

The two techniques used to ensure the verifiability of the research, are:

2.6.4.1.1 Chain of events

May (2002:26) points out that in order to make a chain of events possible, records must be kept of the following:

- Raw data, including audiotapes of the interviews, field notes and research results.
- Data reduction and analysis, the description of the field notes, collective information, qualitative summaries and theoretical notes.
- Reconstruction of the data and the summaries, such as the structuring of categories (themes, definitions and relationships), findings and conclusions, the final report with the integration of the concepts relationships and interpretations.
- Process notes, which include notes about the methodology, trustworthiness, as well as chain of evidence notes.
- Research presentation and personal notes.
- Pilot study forms, preliminary schedule and observation format (Jonker, 2005:39).

2.6.4.1.2 Triangulation

Triangulation is also a means of controlling variability. This entails the same measures as explained in paragraph 2.3.5.1.

2.7 Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations for this research involved permission, confidentiality and anonymity, privacy, termination of involvement of respondents and the provision of research assistance. Permission

Permission was obtained from the Acting Circuit Manager of Dwaalboom/ Thabazimbi Circuit of the Limpopo Department of Education, as well as the principals of the institutions where the educators were teaching and the educators themselves.

2.7.1 Confidentiality and anonymity

The names of the educators participating in the research were withheld in this mini-dissertation. If their anonymity would ever be threatened, all research records will be destroyed. Oxford Brookes University (2007) advises that research participants must be informed on how much they will be afforded anonymity and confidentiality. It is further advised that researchers should not breach this duty of confidentiality and that they should be properly trained in procedure to maintain confidentiality.

The consent to participate should clearly state the purpose of the study and what the information gathered will be used for (Colantuono, 2008). All records form the research task will be kept for up to six years for authenticity in a securely locked place, and be destroyed thereafter.

2.7.2 Privacy

The researcher applied the necessary precautionary measures to ensure that the dignity and integrity of the educators were protected. They were free to think and behave as they pleased, without interruption and without the possibility that their private thoughts or behaviour would ever be misused or used in such a way that they would be embarrassed.

Colantuono (2008) believes that privacy in research refers to the confidentiality given to the participants and this should always be guaranteed. Furthermore, research participants are more likely to provide honest responses when they know that their identity is not going to be exposed.

2.7.3 Termination

Despite the fact that an educator may have initially agreed to participate in the study, his/her involvement would be immediately terminated should such an educator wish to withdraw from the study. Groenewald (2004) emphasized that the subjects, meaning participants, have the right to stop the research at any time. Research would also be terminated in the event of the study not proceeding according to the standards laid down as planned.

2.8 Summary

This chapter provided a concentrated, holistic description of the entire research process, including the qualitative research design and method. The qualitative approach to research is employed in this study, and data is collected by means of phenomenological interviews and direct observation.

The next chapter (3) will concentrate on the discussion of collective results and will focus on the aspects that are considered barriers to the health status in farm schools according to the educators' perspective.

CHAPTER 3

DATA ANALYSIS: ASPECTS THAT ARE BARRIERS TO THE HEALTH STATUS OF FARM SCHOOLS ACCORDING TO THE EDUCATORS' PERSPECTIVES

3.1 Introduction

Farm schools are perceived by many as dull places to work at. Most people are not aware of the challenges that farm school educators have to endure on a daily basis. One sees some farm school learners progressing well in life, and just think that they went to a normal school like all learners in the urban areas, not knowing the hardships they went through to get where they are now. In this chapter, the focus will be on five (5) farm schools in the Northam /Thabazimbi district.

This study is aimed at finding out from the farm schools educators and principals what their perceptions are about the health status of farm schools. By identifying the issues and the reasons why those are the barriers, this study could eventually contribute to transforming farm schools into healthy schools that will have minimal barriers compared to those that will be listed in the study.

3.2 Data analysis

Data generated through the interviews were analysed as outlined in Chapter 2. Categories that were included in the grouping were perspectives on the factors that are considered barriers to the health status of farm schools. Direct quotes are presented verbatim without corrections as part of the explanation of the categories. Occasionally explanatory remarks are inserted in the verbatim quote by the researcher. The quotes are linked to the participants through the use of the following symbols:

(a) '1A', '2A', '3A' and '4A' refer to Person1, Person 2, Person 3 and Person 4 in Group A, which is a group for Principals.

(b) '1B', '2B', '3B' and '4B' refer to Person1, Person 2, Person 3 and Person 4 in Group B, which is a group for Older or experienced educators.

(c) '1C', '2A', '3A' and '4A' refer to Person1, Person 2, Person 3 and Person 4 in Group C, which is a group for Young educators.

3.3 Findings

The following are the categorized responses of the participants in the interviews:

3.3.1 Category 1: Difficult working conditions experienced by educators in the classroom

Educators experience difficult conditions in classes. These conditions hinder the smooth running of the classroom set-up or cause barriers to learning. In one way or the other, the factors below have an impact on the educators' functioning and ultimately on the learners' performance. The table that follows represents the educators' perceptions of these barriers.

Category	Subcategory		Respondents n = 11
Difficult working conditions experienced by educators in the classroom	3.3.1.1	Lack of teaching/learning resources or facilities	4
	3.3.1.2	Lack of basic services (water, electricity, accommodation, toilets, etc)	3
	3.3.1.3	Multi-grade classes	3
	3.3.1.4	Too much paper work/admin	2
	3.3.1.5	Learners put through to next grade regardless of any progress	2
	3.3.1.6	Unsafe school environment	2
	3.3.1.7	Language of teaching and learning	1

3.3.1.1 Lack of teaching/learning resources or facilities

Teaching resources are basically used to enhance learning. They also make life easier for educators. They can for instance just make copies without having to copy down long notes. At most farm schools educators experience this as a strain, since at their schools the problem is not even a shortage in teaching resources, but obtaining any resources whatsoever.

This subcategory is formulated from the following direct verbatim quotes:

2A: "We don't have school facilities.....school facilities, I'm talking about computers."

4A: " .....most of the material needs to be Photostat, it's very hard."

2B: "..... We don't have even a library"

4C: "Another one is lack of resources in the classrooms.....like dictionaries,..., learners' books."

3.3.1.2 Lack of basic services (water, electricity, accommodation, toilets, etc)

At most farm schools, basic resources such as adequate classrooms, cause constant concern. Besides other stressors, not having a classroom raises all sorts of concerns. Teaching under the trees always has problems during bad weather. Learners do not concentrate when they are outside and are easily distracted by passers-by. There are some things that people can still survive without, but as for others, like these basic needs, life becomes unbearable.

During this technological era one cannot imagine life without electricity, but educators and learners are exposed to this and even more, including no running water, proper sanitation or electricity for the most part of their lives. There is no line of communication, except through the educators' cell phones, which also struggles to get good signal or reception as there is no land line.

This subcategory is formulated from the following direct verbatim quotes:

4A: "At my school, we do have lack of accommodation....we do have a problem of water...we have no electricity."

2B: ".....the other barrier is that we use pit toilets.....We don't have electricity, we don't have water."

3C: "We don't have enough classrooms. We only have 2 classrooms and the storeroom, also used as the third classroom."

3.3.1.3 Multi-grade classes

Multi-grade classes' means that in one classroom there will be two or three different levels attending at the same time. In most cases, this is brought about by the fact that there are fewer educators at the farm schools because of the low roll of learners. The

educators are then obliged to do all the work (learning areas) of each Grade, and to also cater for the progress of learners from one grade to the other, in other words doing more than two grades at a time in one class. This is strenuous for the educators and all learners as different groups need to be attended to. This means that there is no proper teaching and individual queries cannot be addressed. Overcrowding in classes also makes it easy for diseases to travel within the group.

This subcategory is formulated from the following direct verbatim quotes:

4A: "Another problem at our school is the teaching of multi-grades."

2B: " .....but the problem is multi-grades because you have to prepare separately for each grade."

3C: "I think I have a problem of teaching many learning areas. ..... Teaching from Grade 4 to Grade 7!"

3.3.1.4 Too much paperwork and admin to be done

At the moment, there are no typists or clerks at the farm schools. This means that the educators have to do everything themselves, i.e. type tests, make copies and many others tasks that keep them away from their classes for long periods. In the end, educators feel that they are doing far too much paper work as compared to what they are there for, namely teaching the learners.

This subcategory is formulated from the following direct verbatim quotes:

2B: "You have to set the exam for different classes...coming to the examinations, you have to make (she meant set) the question paper."

1C: "Imagine maybe having to set question papers, for five learning areas, for five grades, then you have to write them yourself."

3.3.1.5 Learners put through to the next level/grade regardless of any progress made

At farm schools it sometimes becomes difficult to let a learner repeat a grade, because the parents do not understand how their child can fail. Some educators are so frightened that they just let the learner proceed to the next grade for the sake of peace, even if the learner knows very little.

This subcategory is formulated from the following direct verbatim quotes:

1B: "You would found that they had to just pass, just because the principal has befriended his/her father."

4C: "When you call the parent and tell them that their child is not doing well and the child must fail, most of them; they do not agree. They say: 'my child must pass!'

3.3.1.6 Unsafe school environment

The school is the place where the learners spend most of their day time; it should therefore be as safe and conducive for learning as possible. An unsafe environment does not establish stability and an uneasy mindset will not allow a learner to relax and perform well. This does affect the learner performance.

This subcategory is formulated from the following direct verbatim quotes:

2B: "....our school is in the bush. You will find that children are not safe as they are playing around, since there are lots of snakes around."

2C: "Another thing is safety of the learners and teachers due to lack of security in schools."

3.3.1.7 Language of teaching and learning

In order to keep the education level of learners in townships/urban areas, the same medium of instruction, that is English, must be used by all educators. The learners normally quickly implement what the educator practices. This means that if the educator always speaks English with her learners, they get used to it and they also try to respond in English. The contrary is also true, and this really disadvantages our learners since they would now want to be taught everything in their mother-tongue.

This subcategory is formulated from the following direct verbatim quotes:

2B: "When we teach in class, we use Setswana as the medium of instruction. When we teach EMS, we are using mother-tongue."

3.3.2 Category 2: Poor socio-economic status of learners

Poor socio-economic status relates to interaction of the social and the economic factors. According to the South African Concise Oxford Dictionary (2007:908), the word poor means "lacking sufficient money to live at a standard considered comfortable or normal". This means that poor people struggle with money to afford the basics. Social factors relate to the society and its organization, habits, people living together and how they relate to one another. This includes amongst others things that people usually do and those that seem to be 'normal' for that specific society.

The point regarding the economic factors covers the financial aspects and affordability. In general, learners experiencing poor socio-economic status are those whose parents are not working or do not have a consistent salary income and therefore experience the circumstances listed below.

Category	Subcategory		Respondents n = 11
Poor socio-economic status of learners	3.3.2.1	Difficult home circumstances	4
	3.3.2.2	Hunger	4
	3.3.2.3	Illiterate parents	4
	3.3.2.4	Inadequate resources due to poverty.	3
	3.3.2.5	Teenage pregnancy	3
	3.3.2.6	Migration to Towns	1

3.3.2.1 Difficult home circumstances

These are the situations from the learners' homes that have a serious impact on the learners' performance. Most of these are the problems that are beyond the learners' control, and where parents are the root cause. The following aspects may be included: abuse, fighting and giving learners too much responsibility.

This subcategory is formulated from the following direct verbatim quotes:

1A: "They don't have something to live for, so they drink. People should learn to have a purpose in life."

3A: "Parents have got a tendency of making learners to look after their young siblings at home."

4A: "...learner who is abused, the mother does not want to go to the police because the father is the only one who is working."

3C" "I think when they drink or whatever at home; they use to fight a lot."

3.3.2.2 Hunger

Hunger can be defined as "a feeling of discomfort or weakness caused by lack of food, while one has a desire to eat". When a person is at this stage, s/he cannot say nor do anything because of the cramps in the hungry stomach. Learners cannot concentrate in class or perform well under such circumstances. This is because parents cannot afford to buy or provide food for their families, or do not care to do so.

This subcategory is formulated from the following direct verbatim quotes:

1A: "They are hungry."

4A: "If you don't cook, learners are hungry."

1B: "... the learners were always hungry'"

3B: "...some children come to school hungry, they even faint because of hunger at school."

3.3.2.3 Illiterate parents

When parents are illiterate, it causes a problem because they do not have any interest in their children's education because they cannot read themselves. Their support towards educational matters will therefore be minimal. When coming to important issues that affect their children like parents meetings, where decisions should be taken about their children's future, attendance would also be poor. This will in turn demoralize the learner.

This subcategory is formulated from the following direct verbatim quotes:

1B: "I found that parents were illiterate...they didn't know anything about education."

4B: "Parents some do not know how to read and write."

2B: "We cannot also communicate with parents with circulars or letters."

1C: ".....because most people are illiterate here."

3.3.2.4 Inadequate resources due to poverty

When something is inadequate, it means that it lacks the quality or quantity required or that it is insufficient for the specific purpose (South African Concise Oxford Dictionary, 2006:581). Inadequate resources means that what is available to be used by the learners is just not enough to allow them to do everything they need to do to concentrate on their studies. Poverty therefore discourages learners to continue with their studies because they will be suffering, will not be able to afford to buy some important basic needs that other learners would have. Some learners might drop out at this stage.

This subcategory is formulated from the following direct verbatim quotes:

3A: "...parents are not paying school fees."

2B: "Some of the children do not have a school uniform. They come to school with their private clothes."

3B "They come to school without shoes..... they don't even have winter shoes."

3.3.2.5 Teenage pregnancy

Teenage pregnancies are usually unwanted pregnancies due to unprotected sex. For a start, some of the learners who become pregnant are not even old enough to care for themselves, let alone for the baby.

This subcategory is formulated from the following direct verbatim quotes:

4A: ".....this year, we had teenage pregnancy."

3B: "You would find that a twelve year old girl is pregnant,..."

1C: "....which leads to teenage pregnancy, HIV/AIDS and all those things which are not healthy."

3.3.2.6 Migration to towns

Migration to towns means that there is a movement from one area (in most cases rural area) where people cannot find jobs, to an urban area where there are many chances of job opportunities. This movement includes relocation to a new place.

This subcategory is formulated from the following direct verbatim quotes:

3A: ".... Too many people on the farms have moved to towns."

3.3.3 Category 3: Lack of support to learners and educators from outside the school

Both the learners and educators need support from outside the school to function optimally. There must be some support structures to assist here and there. The basic one is parental support. Parents are important to both the learners, as well as the educators. This support structure enables the teaching process to flow and eliminates any barriers that come along the way.

Category	Subcategory		Respondents n = 11
Lack of support to learners and educators from outside the school	3.3.3.1	No/Lack of parental care and involvement.	6
	3.3.3.2	No/Lack of services	2
	3.3.3.3	Abuse experienced by learners	2
	3.3.3.4	Lack of support staff	1
	3.3.3.5	Lack of support from farm owners	1
	3.3.3.6	Lack of referral system	1

3.3.3.1 No/Lack of parental care and involvement

Some parents do not care for their children and therefore do not take part in their education. This means they do not support their children by attending parental gatherings to know more about the progress of their children. This lack of support does not encourage the learners to take their school work seriously and work hard. Learners therefore lack motivation and some end up dodging school and ultimately dropping out. Even if the learner does not attend school regularly, the parent will not know and intervene, and most parents would only want to do something about this when too much damage has been done already.

This subcategory is formulated from the following direct verbatim quotes:

1A: "Parents have little responsibility for their children."

3A: "majority of parents do not care about their children's future and education."

4A: "Parents are not involved in the education of their children."

1B: "……even in meetings, when we call meetings they don't come."

3B: "...but others don't even know where the school is. You just see a parent at school when s/he registers his/her child.

4C: "Another problem that we are having at school is working together of us with our parents."

3.3.3.2 No/Lack of services

The community should also support both the learners and the educators. Basic services like mobile clinics, police services and social development services should be provided, even on farms. These services are important to cater for the basic needs of all individuals.

This subcategory is formulated from the following direct verbatim quotes:

3A: "People should get services."

4A: "... mobile clinic sometimes don't come for three months."

3.3.3.3 Abuse experienced by learners

It is important to understand that even if these factors come from outside the school, they do have a serious impact within the teaching and learning set-up. Learners who are abused cannot concentrate in class as they are sensitive, reserved, think a lot to try and get solutions for their problems, and therefore their progress is delayed.

This subcategory is formulated from the following direct verbatim quotes:

4A: "I've got one of my learners who is abused by her father, and the mother does not want to go to the police because the father is the only one who is working."

1C: " ... most children are being abused emotionally, sexually, you can mention them."

3.3.3.4 Lack of support staff

With the assistance of support staff, the educators' load would be much lighter as they would be able to spend more time in class instead of taking care of administrative duties like typing tests and making copies. These duties rob the learners of their tuition time included in the term plan.

This subcategory is formulated from the following direct verbatim quotes:

1C: "...we do not have clerks."

3.3.3.5 Lack of support from farm owners

Some farm owners do not support farm schools. They can show their support by backing educational programmes and also not disturbing the progress at school like closing the short-cuts to school, using learners to plough the field during lessons and destroying school buildings just because they are built on private land.

This subcategory is formulated from the following direct verbatim quotes:

4C: "...they are having problems with the farm managers.....sometimes they demolish the school, like Deo Gloria (school's name, the farmer demolished it)."

3.3.3.6 Lack of referral system

Farm schools need to link with other special institutions or psychological services to ensure that whatever has been recommended by the educators to assist the learner to overcome his/her problems is carried out in time. Mental blockages need to be addressed as soon as possible, since teaching and learning involves a lot of thinking. The department should establish these links for the quick recovery of the learners.

This subcategory is formulated from the following direct verbatim quotes:

3C: "We have learners who are experiencing barriers in learning ... when you try to write a letter to refer a learner, there's no help."

3.3.4 Category 4: Dissatisfaction with the Department of Education's management

There are many complaints raised against the Department of Education and their way of doing things. People at the grass roots level feel that the department is not doing its part, as stated by the Batho Pele principles and other regulators. There is a great separation between the management and the educators, which needs to be addressed as soon as possible.

Category	Subcategory	Respondents n = 11
Dissatisfaction with the Department of Education's management	3.3.4.1 Lack of funds	3
	3.3.4.2 Educational cul-de-sac	3
	3.3.4.3 Lack of support for educators	2
	3.3.4.4 Dept unaware of the reality of what goes on in farm schools	2

3.3.4.1 Lack of funds

The schools are without funds because of the laws or policies set up by the department, like the 'no school fund' policy. Schools struggle because the department promised to provide them with some income, but that money either comes late or does not cover the expenditure, and the procedure to retrieve the money takes too long.

This subcategory is formulated from the following direct verbatim quotes:

4A: "The department said parents must not pay school fees."

4C: "...some of the learners' books are not provided, so as a school, we do not have money to buy them."

3.3.4.2 Educational cul-de-sac

In most areas with farm schools, there are no high schools. Learners who wish to continue with their studies are disadvantaged because there are no high schools around. This in a way limits the potential of the farm school learner and means that the learner will go up to a certain level of education and beyond that is luxury. In this democracy that we are living in, we all have the right to education up to the level that we want. Learners need support to go through this.

This subcategory is formulated from the following direct verbatim quotes:

4A: "Our learners when they finish Grade 7, there's no Grade 8 here."

1B: "...most learners were disadvantaged because they could never go further with their studies."

1C: "there are no high schools or secondary schools around farm schools. ...they take Grade 7 as being the end of education."

3.3.4.3 Lack of support for educators

It is every employee's right to be developed. Farm school educators feel that they have been deserted and that the department does not have a developmental plan for them. They are not empowered like the urban areas educators. The teaching environment also needs to be upgraded.

This subcategory is formulated from the following direct verbatim quotes:

4A: "...if there is training, maybe for computers, they won't choose us here at the farm ...because we don't have electricity, we don't have computers."

1C: "...farm school teachers are not regarded as teachers, and their problems are not taken seriously."

3.3.4.4 Department unaware of the reality of what goes on in farm schools

The department needs to take time to visit farm schools, learn of their challenges and see how they can be addressed. Sometimes it seems as if educators lose trust in the department and they do not feel part of the department because none of their needs are met or addressed. This leaves them strongly believing that the management officials need to take some time out to learn thoroughly of their challenges, and then work from there. Some departmental officials are not honest and after visiting, they go for good and never bring feedback.

This subcategory is formulated from the following direct verbatim quotes:

2C: "...the government, it gives us a problem, because they don't take any matter from the farm school as another school in the community."

3C: "I think if maybe government officials can take their precious time, and visit these farms, and see what is happening, I think that when they plan their things, they will take everything into consideration."

3.3.5 Category 5: Lack of transportation and bad road conditions to school

Most farm schools are far from the learners' residential places and it is common practice that they travel far distances on the road to and from school, without any means of transport. The roads are normally gravel roads that are very dusty and busy, and there

are lots of hit-and-run accidents. In general, it is not safe for learners to travel on those roads, but there are no alternative routes to school.

Category 5	Subcategory		Respondents n = 11
Lack of transport and bad road conditions	3.3.5.1	Walking long distances	7
	3.3.5.2	Dusty, busy and unsafe roads	3

3.3.5.1 Walking long distances

As mentioned previously, learners travel long distances on foot because schools are too far and there are no other means of transport. This in itself has disadvantages since the learners get to school tired and hungry, and can consequently not concentrate in class. As a result of long walks, they come to schools very late, resulting in delays in the day's progression.

This subcategory is formulated from the following direct verbatim quotes:

1A: "The children come from far-far away."

3A: "One other problem in our school is travelling long distances from school to home on daily basis."

4A: "Another problem is that our children are travelling long distances on foot."

1B: "The distance that the learners travelled to school was too much."

2B: "...learners travel long distances from home to school."

1C: "...they have to walk long distances from the different farms to the school."

2C: "...those distances, the learners are travelling, gives us a problem in school.'

3.3.5.2 Dusty, busy and unsafe roads

The conditions of the roads on the farms are not good as most of them are not maintained by public works. These roads are not tarred, nor do they have sidewalks for pedestrians. This means that learners use the same road as that used by the big trucks. These roads are very busy and dangerous.

This subcategory is formulated from the following direct verbatim quotes:

1A: "...are dust roads. It is terrible, so the dust affects us a lot."

4A: "...this road is very busy!"

2B: "The roads where the learners are travelling are not safe.....many accidents happen.

3.3.6 Category 6: The adverse effect of the status quo on learners

The situation at farm schools and the problems learners experience have some effect on the learners. All these also have an impact on the learner performance in class, as well as the educators' progress. The following points listed below are discussed further here.

Category 6	Subcategory		Respondents n = 11
The adverse effect of the status quo on learners	3.3.6.1	Late coming	5
	3.3.6.2	Absenteeism	4
	3.3.6.3	Drop-outs	4
	3.3.6.4	Fatigue	3
	3.3.6.5	Waking up very early	2

3.3.6.1 Late coming

Learners' homes are far from school, they do not wake up on time and they walk long distances arriving at school late. These delay the whole programme of the day since the educator has to repeat what was explained to the few who were on time when the other group arrives. This is very tiring and delays the educator to finish the syllabus on time.

This subcategory is formulated from the following direct verbatim quotes:

2A: "In our school, the only problem is late coming."

3A: "The other bigger problem we are experiencing here is that of late coming."

4A: "They come every day by ten o' clock."

2B: "When we started at 07:30...learners always came here at 09:00 or 10:00."

3B: "From their homes, it was hindering the school because they came late every day."

3.3.6.2 Absenteeism

The term simply means that children do not attend to school without having been given permission. There is a serious problem with absenteeism at farm schools. The weather conditions, especially on rainy or very cold days, learners do not come to school. This

is because some learners are not motivated enough and sometimes it is because of reasons beyond the learners' control, like unsafe roads, etc. This problem needs serious attention and should be handled with care.

This subcategory is formulated from the following direct verbatim quotes:

2A: "The other problem is absenteeism."

3A: "The bigger problem we are experiencing here is that of ..... and absenteeism."

4A: "At times, like rainy days, learners don't come to school."

1C: "They don't afford to pay for transport costs, and this leads to absenteeism."

3.3.6.3 Drop-out rate

The drop-out rate refers to learners who leave school in the middle of the year, without finishing a grade. Some of these farm schools learners drop out because of their parents who are frequently taking them out of school to perform their private tasks. Some parents are not supportive and do not encourage or motivate their children to work hard in school. Some do not even monitor their children's progress, which makes it easier for the learner to dodge school without being traced.

This subcategory is formulated from the following direct verbatim quotes:

3A: "We experience too many drop-outs during the course of the year."

4A: "The issue of drop-outs at our school, we do experience it."

3B: "Their children just come to school for 3 months, and drop-out, then come again for 5months then drop-out again."

1C: "So, the children end up dropping out of school at an early age and....."

3.3.6.4 Fatigue

All these factors are related to one another and the effects go to the next point. Fatigue is brought about by the learners waking up early and walking long distances. When they get to school, where they need to work hard and learn, they are tired and sleep for most part of the day.

This subcategory is formulated from the following direct verbatim quotes:

1A: "They are very tired when they come to school."

4A: "When they arrive at school, they are tired.

2B: "...and very tired and hungry."

3.3.6.5 Waking up very early

In order for learners who have to walk long distances to get to school on time, they must wake up very early. This factor causes a lot of fatigue for the poor learners during the day.

This subcategory is formulated from the following direct verbatim quotes:

1A: "They come by bus, so they leave very early in the morning."

4A: "They wake up very early in the morning."

3.3.7 Category 7: The adverse effect of the status quo on educators

Educators, just like learners, are also affected by the situation at the farm schools. They face different challenges, and the points below are discussed in detail in the subcategories.

Category 7	Subcategory		Respondents n = 11
The adverse effect of the status quo on educators	3.3.7.1	Frustration regarding the profession	3
	3.3.7.2	Emotional drain/fatigue	3
	3.3.7.3	Financial constraints	2

3.3.7.1 Frustration regarding the profession

As an educator, one always intends to give only the best when teaching, but the situations that the farm school educators find themselves in are very stressing. This extends to a point where some educators would feel that the best option would be to quit the job or leave the department. Some of these decisions are taken while the teacher is under a lot of strain and later the educator regrets the decision s/he took.

This subcategory is formulated from the following direct verbatim quotes:

4A: "It frustrates us at times."

1C: "The principal most of the time is not the principal, but the teacher."

3C: "I think we have a lot to do."

3.3.7.2 Emotionally drained/tired

Educators at farm schools work under a lot of strain, and this is not good for their health. They become drained and this definitely has an impact in the educators' private life. The factors of concern need to be addressed so that we can be able to get back healthy and sober educators for the growing minds that are entrusted in their care. At times, some educators are even referred for counselling to improve their lives.

This subcategory is formulated from the following direct verbatim quotes:

3A: ".....and it is very stressful...And it is very hard work for us."

4A: "Like now, I am the principal, I 'm an educator, I 'am a social worker, I 'm everything."

1C: "So really the situation is difficult?"

3.3.7.3 Financial constraints

Every person bears the burden of his/her financial constraints. With farm school educators it is worse because for them to see progress or to get things done, they have to use their own money without a refund for items like making copies, transport and many more. In a way this is unfair and it taxes the poor educators when their counterparts in urban area schools claim for everything they do.

This subcategory is formulated from the following direct verbatim quotes:

1C: "You have to make sure that everything is in order, use your own car, and spend your own money..."

4A: "...to attend a meeting somewhere, you have to spend from your own pocket. There is no money or no funds.

3.3.8 Category 8: Learners' negative attitude

When learners have a negative attitude, they are not supportive of the process that is taking place, namely education. The South African Concise Oxford Dictionary (2006:778) describes negative as expressing or implying denial, disagreement, or refusal. Learners with a negative attitude see the wrong/bad in every good thing that is attempted, they do not support it. They act like bitter people who have hidden agendas,

and as a result, these learners may start engaging in undesired activities with the influence of the peers.

Category 8	Subcategory		Respondents n = 11
Learners' negative attitude	3.3.8.1	Vandalism of school or educators' property	3
	3.3.8.2	Practice of bad habits or behaviour	3
	3.3.8.3	Learners are not motivated	2

3.3.8.1 Vandalism of school/educators' property

Vandalism simply means deliberate destruction of property. This is not something occurs accidentally, but is planned and has a bad intention. The people who normally do these acts are not people from outside, but those from within, meaning the learners.

This subcategory is formulated from the following direct verbatim quotes:

4A: "At my office there, they came daylight at 2pm, broke the window, went in and did their things there."

2B: "Even the security at the school is not that good because every time they break here at the school and steal some things. No arrests are made."

3B: "...they come again and break the house, looking for money and food."

3.3.8.2 Practice of bad habits or behaviour

Bad habits include things that are not acceptable, but people continue to do them. They often come with bitter endings. Some of the things learnt in this way, make a person an addict and spoil the person's future for good. Adult people would normally talk to the learner doing bad things, but as a group, they never listen.

This subcategory is formulated from the following direct verbatim quotes:

3A: "Too many of our kids leave their homes to come to school and decide to stay at the shop..."

4A: "...we did have a problem of children drinking.....At the end of the day, they are smoking."

3C: "...it seems as if they go with their parents to the drinking places, because you can see them maybe on Monday, sleeping the whole day in class."

3.3.8.3 Learners are not motivated

Learners without a purpose in life do to know where to go or what to do. Learners should firstly be motivated to have a purpose in life so that they can each determine their goals and the means to achieve them. As adults, we need to guide them to make their dreams true.

This subcategory is formulated from the following direct verbatim quotes:

3A: "...they leave their homes to school and decide to stay at the shop; they don't care whether they stay there for the whole day."

2B: "They are just staying at home. Some are travelling with their parents."

3.3.9 Category 9: Struggle with helper mothers or mother cooks

Helper mothers or mother cooks are the ones helping with the preparation of the learners' food during breaks. They prepare the food so that it is ready by break or lunch time. It is not an easy job as people need money to survive and the department is only offering very little per month.

Category 9	Subcategory	Respondents n = 11
Struggle with helper mothers	3.3.9.1 Shortage of volunteers	2
	3.3.9.2 Insufficient payment	2
	3.3.9.3 Impact on learners and Educators	2

3.3.9.1 Shortage of volunteers

The money that is offered for this job is too little, so that schools actually need more volunteers. As a result of the current financial situation, no one wants to work for free. There is therefore a serious problem with volunteers to do the job.

This subcategory is formulated from the following direct verbatim quotes:

4A: "Helper mothers should be appointed to come and cook."

1B: "The school struggle with people who should come and cook."

3.3.9.2 Insufficient payment

The money that the helper mothers are paid is not enough to provide for their families. Unhappy workers normally do not do a good job; they do not give their utmost performance and they work with grumbles. The department must see to it that it increases the wages of the helper mothers because unsatisfied workers can leave at any time, and this should by all means be avoided.

This subcategory is formulated from the following direct verbatim quotes:

4A: "We were paying them R110. They refuse now; they say it is too little."

1B: "We pay them R110 per month."

3.3.9.3 Impact on the learners and educators

Learners get used to eating at school, so when the food is not there, they cannot concentrate in class. For some, that is the only time when they get a decent meal. Absence of the helper mother interrupts day's programme as educators have to take over. This means that the education lessons suffer because food must be prepared by the educators and learners do not concentrate in class without food.

This subcategory is formulated from the following direct verbatim quotes:

4A: "If the helper mother is not there, it means learners have to cook for themselves, or you the teacher have to cook."

3C: "It's very hard for us because you have to make sure that the food is prepared. We must make sure that the kids are eating and we have to make a register, how the kids are eating."

3.4 Summary

In Chapter 3 the interviews were transcribed and problems were classified into categories and subcategories. From all the three group interviews, there were nine categories formulated and each differed with the number of subcategories. The main categories were as follows:

- Difficult working conditions experienced by educators in the classroom.
- Poor socio-economic status of learners.
- Lack of support to learners and educators from outside the school.

- Dissatisfaction with the Department of Education's management.
- Lack of transport and bad road conditions to school.
- The adverse effect of the status quo on the learners.
- The adverse effect of the status quo on the educators.
- Learners' negative attitude.
- Struggle with helper mothers or mother cooks.

Chapter 4 offers a literature control of the findings on these categories. Whatever will be reflected in the literature must reflect what was said by the interviewees, anything that does not correspond should be disregarded.

CHAPTER 4

LITERATURE CONTROL OF THE OBTAINED EMPIRICAL RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

In chapter 3, the empirical research results were discussed and interpreted according to the identified categories or themes. The themes were as follows: difficult working conditions experienced by educators in the classroom; poor socio-economic status of learners; lack of support to educators from outside the school; dissatisfaction with the Department of Education's management; lack of transportation and bad road conditions to school; the adverse effect of the status quo on learners; the adverse effect of the status quo on educators; learners' negative behaviour and struggle with the helper mother or mother cooks.

In this chapter, the empirical research results are compared to the relevant literature in order to identify existing concurrences as well as possible differences or exceptions. In doing so, the themes are placed within their paradigmatic systems.

4.2 Categories

The categories that were identified as the aspects that are barriers to the health status of farm schools are the following:

4.2.1 Difficult working conditions experienced by educators in the classroom

Many farm schools are under-resourced, and this impacts on both the quality of education received by the learners as well as the general health and well being of the learners (Education Rights Project, 2003). The state of being under-resourced results in difficult working conditions for educators to perform their duties. These basic facilities and needs are necessary to meet the basic expectations of any ordinary school in order

to function according to the norms and values of quality education. "Teachers' working conditions affect their ability to provide quality education" (Colby *et al.*, 2000:17).

4.2.1.1 Lack of teaching/learning resources or facilities

At most farm schools, learning materials are poorly provided and virtually no schools have libraries or specialized classrooms for Science or Home Economics (Shindler & Fleish, 2007:140). According to Williams (2003:2) rural schools often find themselves working against the odds with inadequate resources, inexperienced teachers as well as poor facilities and working conditions.

In most schools, there are no basic teaching and learning resources (Kwazulu Natal Department of Education, 2006). This issue raises concern over our education system or government, whether it takes education as a serious investment of our future leaders or not, and whether it is doing enough to see to it that teaching and learning facilities are awarded on time to the different schools, especially farm schools, which seem to be neglected in most cases.

Colby *et al.* (2000:17) highlights that the conditions of infrastructure, availability of textbooks and learning materials and class size all influence the teacher's experience as an educator. Strauss (1999:7) also mentions that in his visit to some schools, he found that not all learners had textbooks, and that this fact forced the teachers to write the class work on the chalkboard so that the learners could do it. This is time consuming and uses up the time that the educator could have done other important things to enhance learning. Furthermore, if not all learners have textbooks, how are those without textbooks supposed to study? Which criteria have been used to distribute the textbooks? Was it fair and unbiased? These are the questions that come to mind in situations like these.

Strauss (1999:7) further adds that the schools do not have any other learning materials other than textbooks, and that photocopy and duplicating machines are not available. Teaching and learning resources are very important in trying to help the learners to understand what they are taught and what is expected of them. Lack of these teaching or learning materials therefore denies the learners the opportunity to grasp quicker and have a clear understanding of what is being taught. It furthermore wastes much time with re-writing.

4.2.1.2 Lack of basic services (water, electricity, accommodation, toilets, etc)

Most farm schools are small in size due to few learners attending there. This has resulted in some sort of neglect from the government. Pambazuka News (2004) raises the concern that children attend dilapidated schools, often without running water and electricity, and further adds that unavailability of drinking water or proper sanitation put the learners at the unnecessary risk of disease. Furthermore, this means that there is definitely a problem in as far as hygiene is concerned. The learners move in and out of the toilets without washing their hands, which is non-compliance to the basic hygiene principle, resulting in unnecessary illness.

The above concerns are regarded as some of the most important basic needs of all human beings, shortage of which proves how much some of our farm schools are neglected.

According to Department of Education (2008:26), other basic services such as the lack of access to clinics also "impinge" on the learning process. When a learner has a chronic illness for which such a learner needs regular medical treatment, it may result in the learner absenting him/herself often in order to reach treatment. In the worst cases, such a learner may drop out of school to be hospitalized somewhere far away from home and school, especially those with severe disabilities.

The Kwazulu Natal Department of Education (2006) mentions that most farm schools lack basic physical infrastructure, which includes physical learning space, classrooms, furniture, running water and sanitation. The same sentiments are also shared by Colby *et al.* (2000:7) who adds that the quality of school facilities has a direct effect on learning. This means that if school facilities are not up to the prescribed standard, the quality of learning will surely be affected. Although it is difficult to measure this effect, the learners' performance and results could indicate this. For a better education for our learners, it is important to keep our learning environment in order.

4.2.1.3 Multi-grade classes

In these types of classes, learners of different levels or grades are taught by one educator. The educator manages to do so by giving one group of learners' exercises to write whilst teaching the other group. The Kwazulu Natal Department of Education (2006) explains that multi-grades classes exist in South African farm schools because

some of these schools are small and have fewer educators as a result of a formula that was adopted in the Education Labour Relations Bargaining Chamber (ELRC: 2003). The said formula is not based on the educational considerations, but class size and budgetary dictates.

According to Strauss (1999:5) teaching in multi-grade class is teacher-centred. He furthermore adds that the teacher takes the initiative while the learners are listening passively. In such cases, learners patiently wait to be told what to do next without being actively involved in the learning process. This concept takes one to the old education system that regarded the learners as the "empty vessels" waiting to be filled with information from the teacher, who "knows everything". National Curriculum Statement (NCS) encourages learner participation; hence this multi-grade approach slows down the learners' progress.

4.2.1.4 Too much paperwork or administration work

Farm school educators are not only faced with the hard work of teaching these disadvantaged learners, but also need to do a lot of administration and paperwork without any computers or printers. This really leaves the educator with little time to attend to the needs of each learner to ensure that they learn something at the end of the day. According to Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana (2006:187) the teacher as the classroom manager needs to manage change, conflict in particular and the administration related to work. No matter how much administration work there is, it must be done.

Motimele (2005:13) explains that increasingly, teachers find themselves having to do more and more with limited resources. Teachers are expected to perform duties beyond the classroom. For example, they are expected to deal with socio-economic and health issues for which they often do not have the required skills. According to Hargreaves & Goodson1996 (*in* Motimele, 2005:16), the accountability systems have also increased teachers' administrative responsibilities and increased paper work. This causes intensification, meaning that teachers become de-professionalized because they do not get time to develop their skills and to keep up with developments in their fields because of the heavy workload.

The Minister of basic education, Mrs Angie Motshekga, acknowledged the positive support and criticism they ministry has received on the new curriculum, i.e. National

Curriculum Statement (Motshekga, 2009). She further highlighted that the criticism was of teacher overload, confusion and stress. The department decided as a whole to emphasize time for teaching and learning. She added that teachers would be relieved of the administrative burdens that impact on teaching time.

Motshekga (2009) further explains that the relief on administrative duties would be implemented from January 2010 as follows:

- Learner portfolios and formal completion of assessment tasks would be discontinued from January 2010.
- The number of projects required for formal assessment per learning area is reduced to one (1) project per learning area.

The above changes were implemented because teachers complained that administrative tasks took the teaching time. This will no longer be a problem.

4.2.1.5 Learners put through to the next grade regardless of any progress

Shindler and Fleish (2007:143) explain that in some instances educators promote learners to the next level even if they are not competent because the educators did not meet with the parents during the school year, and so it becomes difficult to give a negative report at the end of the year. In farm schools it is difficult for educators to get parents to come to school and discuss the learner's progress.

4.2.1.6 Unsafe school environment

There are so many factors that can affect the safety of the school environment. Children are left at school under the guardianship and protection of the educators and their parents expect to find them back safe at home after school. Mapimhidze (2004:1) states that the teachers take the place of "loco parentis" the moment the child is dropped off at the school premises. It is the educator's responsibility to see to it that learners are safe at all cost. When learners do not feel safe, they become withdrawn and do not participate in class, no learning takes place when there is fear.

4.2.1.7 Language of teaching and learning

Research has shown that it is beneficial for learners to be taught in their mother tongues during the early childhood development and junior primary phases (Kwazulu Natal Department of Education, 2006). This is because learners are still vulnerable at these ages, and letting them flow in the language they know best enables them to gain confidence and to say directly what they mean without getting stuck because they lack vocabulary. On observing heritage and culture, children need to know who they are and where they come from, before they know where they are going.

The languages schools use for instruction can have an impact on learning and academic achievement in general (Colby *et al.*, 2000:17). Most black parents believe that if their children can start and master English at a primary level; this will improve their chances of having a better life. South Africa is a Rainbow Nation, meaning we have people of different cultures and speaking different languages.

According to MacFarlane (2006), Black South Africans have negative attitudes towards their own indigenous languages. He further indicated that this is brought about by the fact that Blacks consider their languages to be of a low status and that English is a useful global business tool. However, the mother tongue is considered to be important in primary learning. The former Minister of Education, Naledi Pandor, consequently initiated a drive to teach children in their mother tongue until the end of primary schooling. This will fully develop their base language skills to allow for better understanding of the second language as it is introduced.

4.2.2 Poor socio-economic status of learners

The socio-economic status of learners makes it very demanding to teach them. Poverty plays a huge part in this, especially in cases where learners cannot afford their own resource materials and school equipment (Jonker, 2005:68). Shortage of school accessories may at times encourage learners who do not have them to steal from others, and a chain of events such as bullying, bunking school and ultimately dropping out of school, may result.

4.2.2.1 Difficult home circumstances

Learners at farm schools are exposed to conditions beyond their control. Due to ignorance and a lack of health education sessions, more and more people are

contracting HIV and AIDS. At times the illness takes a toll and learners are forced to drop out of school to take care of their dying parents. Witnessing the final stages of their parents does not only leave learners with feelings of grief and loss, but they are traumatized, depressed and full of anxiety (Medical Missionaries of Mary, 2004).

Children on farms are the most vulnerable as far as abuse and neglect are concerned. Although other different types of abuse are prevalent, the most common are physical and sexual abuse. At times the child is abused by a family member and due to the parents fearing the loss of their jobs, this is not reported (Western Cape, 2004:8). Another reason for not reporting such cases is to avoid a scandal in the family. This does no good to the poor child, but destroys her further, and justice would have helped her to heal and deal with happened to her. In most cases, parents are the ones delaying the healing process of their children.

Domestic violence is one of the issues of great concern causing difficulties in the different learners' homes. According to Al Selwi (2009), domestic violence, especially between parents, negatively affects children within the family. He furthermore adds that it destroys their feeling of security and causes them to worry about potential break-ups within the family. These worries become a burden on the poor learners and they can therefore not cope or be able to study or concentrate at school.

In addition to abuse, there is the matter of children working in their homes. Webster (2006) lists the tasks parents give children as follows: doing laundry, sweeping the floor, washing the dishes, minding the younger siblings, selling goods at the market and many others. The above tasks are said to be educating children about responsibility in life. Girls are the mostly affected. However, too many tasks cause children to be late for school, absent from school and ultimately to drop out. Learners have to spend hours after school doing household chores and they find this tiring, but it is central to the smooth running of the household and therefore children feel responsible for contributing in this way (Maarman, 2009:326). Parents should not just leave everything to the kids to do. Age appropriate chores should be given, from which children will learn a lot. Parents should always be around to offer support and acknowledge the effort of their children.

Another problem is that of drinking parents. Some of the parents get involved in fights with everybody in the house when they have been drinking, including children (Webster, 2006). To young children, this is traumatizing and boys learn from their fathers that problems are solved by fighting. They will also practice this in their own homes when

they are grownups. It therefore has a bad influence on all at home. The embarrassment of seeing your mother being chased away with a whip is a bad memory to the growing mind. Most of these social problems are related to alcohol abuse by parents.

4.2.2.2 Hunger

In simple terms, when a person experiences hunger, we know in order to satisfy that discomfort, he needs to eat. The focus of the study is on farm school learners and how they are affected by hunger in their lives. The Department of Education, Free State (2008:2) gives a brief summary of the feeding program that was initiated by government to deal with this hunger at the schools. The initiative of the department was brought about by the learners who were constantly sleepy in class and did not participate in lessons and on inquiry reported that they were hungry and did not have anything to eat at home. They did not concentrate in class and always lacked strength, and could therefore not learn anything. The initiative started with the primary schools. The Primary School Nutrition Programme (PSNP) was introduced in 1994 as a Presidential lead project under the Reconstruction and Development Programmes (RDP).

The purpose of the above programme was to enhance the educational experience of needy primary learners by promoting punctual school attendance, alleviating short-term hunger and improving the concentration of learners in class. Mosala et al. (*in* Maarman, 2009:327) highlights that learners are so dependent on PSNP that if meals are not provided for a month, some learners skip school until the meals are provided again.

The above point reflects total dependency and learners are pushed by the hunger at home to rely on the school for food. Maarman (2009:327) further highlights that some learners are not certain of their next meal at home, hence attend school to ensure that they have access to the PSNP.

Mohlala (2005) recounts how a teacher at Ntabanhle Primary school expresses their relief about the feeding scheme. The teacher explained how some learners were coming to school with parched lips and trembling from hunger, but now it is a thing of the past as they are fed at school. Most schools are surrounded by poor families stricken by HIV and AIDS, and learners do not disclose this until there are problems and they are asked to bring their parents to school.

4.2.2.3 Illiterate parents

Illiterate parents cannot read or write, and their level of education is very low. According to Mncube (2009:95), parents' participation depends on their educational level. It plays a major role in the contributions they make to their children's education. New educational changes and challenges make them passive participants. It is therefore important that parents should be literate in order to engage in their children's educational matters.

The Education Rights Project (2003) highlights that due to poverty and illiteracy, farm labourers are seldom able to contribute either morally by helping with homework, or materially by paying school fees for their children's education.

Charleston (2000) elaborates that parents who are barely surviving financially, find that their children's school attendance is a hardship and that children could improve the family income by working in the fields if they do not have to go to school. Being illiterate themselves, they do not see the importance of education. This in a way encourages learners to drop out of school.

4.2.2.4 Inadequate resources due to poverty

Landsberg, Kruger and Nel (2005:28) define South Africans living in poverty as vulnerable, powerless and isolated. They furthermore explain that these conditions are caused by inadequate education, low wages, unemployment, malnutrition, disadvantageous surroundings, substance abuse and psychological degradation. According to Williams (2003:6) rural communities tend to have higher poverty rates, lower property values and less economic development, and are unable to raise adequate resources.

The effect of this state of poverty extends to the learners in class. They lack relevant resources to study effectively and this affects their performance in class. Some learners have to share small rooms at home, they do not have tables or desks to do homework on, they share their clothes with siblings, they do not have the privacy appropriate for their age groups and they experience the small, cramped space at home as an unhealthy way to live (Maarman, 2009:327).

Gathoni (2008), states that in many cases parents are not able to afford school fees, uniforms, stationery, etc. and thus remove their children from school. These are the

parents who do not see the importance of education or who do not feel that education is an investment for the future of their children. This practice does not help to break the chain of poverty. Consequently, illiterate parents remain in poverty for the rest of their lives. Communities should be afforded opportunities to attend school and receive education to develop their abilities, and other educational opportunities should be available which will improve the living conditions (Maarman, 2009:321).

4.2.2.5 Teenage pregnancy

Teenage pregnancy refers to a teenaged or under-aged girl (usually within ages of 13 and 19) becoming pregnant. In most cases the child resulting from the pregnancy is unwanted because the mother is still attending school and cannot provide for the child since she is not working. The poor child becomes a shame and an obstacle in its mother's life, resulting in abortion, even by using illegal means (Bezuidenhout 2005: 33-37).

Teenage pregnancy is a problem in schools because according to Matsuyama (2009), schools are faced with cases of drop-outs of female learners due to pregnancy. Learners should be thoroughly educated about good morals and HIV/AIDS. According to Khoza (2007), girls fall pregnant because they need the money from grants to buy groceries and food because they have no income.

Khoza (2007) furthermore explains that some teenage mothers are orphans and deliberately fall pregnant to get the government grant. This affects schools in that tests can for instance not to be written on the day grants are paid out, since some children have to go and collect their grants.

4.2.2.6 Migration to towns

People normally migrate from rural to urban areas for job opportunities to maintain their families. There are various forms of migration (Statsonline: 2006), like movement from rural villages to small towns and movement between rural villages to metropolitan areas (cities). Migration to small towns seems more permanent, whilst the second form of migration is temporary. In the process of migration, metropolitan areas receive a large population when there is some economic growth. The migrants are there for business only, and therefore search for low-budget rental accommodation, normally in backyard shacks.

Urban Health Updates (2009) highlights that in many poor countries; employment opportunities make urban areas very attractive for migrants from rural areas. These urban migrants lack access to economic safety nets or security, hence when a crisis hits, e.g. if persons lose their jobs or get terminally ill, they often have only one option, namely to return to their rural homes. This causes circular migration, which is movement of people between rural and urban areas.

According to Kalipa and Nkuna (2009), South African migration is often misunderstood as a rural to urban flow, but the journeys of ill or seriously ill patients back to their rural origin underlines that the traffic is still both ways. This means that as some people go to big cities to look for employment, others come back from big cities because they are now sick and need support from their families in rural areas.

The issue is further explained that the terminally ill patients decide to go back to their roots because they are now pushed away or neglected by their relatives in urban areas. What is even more of a concern is that when these patients arrive at their rural places, they feel isolated as people there lack knowledge about HIV/AIDS and "do not want to be infected by getting close to them". Furthermore, the issue of long walks to clinics to get medication and unavailability of transport to medical facilities worsens the patients' conditions as they do not get timeous assistance when it is needed.

Migration leads to many child-headed families, where the older child is left with the responsibility of caring for the young ones. In most farm school communities, children migrate with parents wherever they go, and just leave school. The children normally join school later if the parents come back to the same farm again, which delays their progress.

According to Charleston (2000), in addition to problems associated with mobility, migrant learners are often handicapped by limited English fluency, poverty, and lack of academic skills and to help support the family. Charleston (2000) further adds that migrant learners, in short, are at a great risk of dropping out of school and are vulnerable to under-education.

4.2.3 Lack of support to learners and educators from outside the school

According to the SACOD (2006:1178) the meaning of the support is "give assistance, encouragement, or approval to". Again it can also mean "be actively interested in". When a person supports the other, it means that s/he cares about the person's well-being. Similarly, for a good process of learning and teaching, there are other important stakeholders that also play a prominent role in the education process. All role players need to work harmoniously in order to produce a good, well-nurtured, educated product. The educators as well as learners need that assistance, encouragement, approval and a sign of interest from others to survive.

According to Motimele (2005:29-30), the teacher organizations and teachers that were interviewed pointed out that teachers are quickly blamed when the system does not work, but no one mentions the lack of support for teachers. Professional development should be the basis for accountability.

4.2.3.1 No/Lack of parental care and support

It is always a concern that some parents are involved in their children's education, whilst others are not. At most farm schools, parents do not show interest in or support for the education of their children. The result is that some children do not take their studies seriously.

According to Colby *et al.* (2000:6) the parents' level of education has a multifaceted impact on children's ability to learn in school. Another reason raised is that parents with little formal education may also be less familiar with the language used in school, limiting their ability to support learning and participate in school-related activities. In short, this means that at times it is not that parents are not willing to participate in school-related activities; they do, but they feel inferior due to the fact that some did not even go to Grade 1 at school.

On the other hand, the commitments of parents are keeping them from attending matters at their children's school. According to Human Rights Watch (2004) farm workers do not participate on school governing boards because they do not want to lose working hours. It is furthermore mentioned that in some cases, the parents are

prevented from attending meetings during the school week by the threat they get from their employers.

Maarman (2009:328) also stresses the fact that parents have no control over their working hours and employment conditions, and this affects communication in the household. Learners never discuss their school activities with their parents. Maarman (2009:328) furthermore emphasizes that the reason why parents cannot bargain with the employers for better working conditions is the fact that their work is seasonal and casual, they are not permanently employed. This means they use the opportunity to make extra money for their families, while neglecting their children's school work.

Charleston (2000) further adds that these parents believe that it is the school's responsibility to educate their children. For these parents, parent participation in education is a new cultural concept. The parents want the best for their children, but believe the school might see their personal involvement as interference.

Matsuyama (2009) elaborates that as a result of a lack of parental support, the performance of the school is seriously affected and that lower parents' educational background also contribute to the situation. He further adds that some of the learners who perform better abscond to work as labourers at farms.

4.2.3.2 No or a lack of services

Services that are referred to in this sub-category are the services that every citizen of our country regards as fundamentals that the government should provide for everybody. These include amongst others proper public roads, health care facilities, medication, water, sewerage systems, social work services, police services and many other public services.

According to Human Rights Watch (2004) health care facilities are frequently physically and economically inaccessible to the poor and rural populations. When there are clinics in rural areas, frequently there is lack of drugs, long waiting periods for treatment, poor infrastructure, shortage of ambulance services and poor hospital management. People living in rural areas have no proper roads and means of transportation to health facilities. They have to travel long distances on foot to access health care facilities that are not up to standard.

The South African Human Rights Commission (2005:19) also adds that access to health care services in farming communities is inadequate and quotes the following factors as the disturbances:

- Distance that must be travelled to access services.
- Lack of transport.
- Lack of access to telephones.
- Access to farms is difficult for emergency vehicles and health personnel.
- Few health care workers want to work in rural areas.
- There is little or no health education.

As far as social services are concerned, farm workers are still not able to access them, because they are far away from all the services. Low literacy levels of the parents, make it difficult for the parents to help themselves and their children in any way possible. They have difficulty accessing the child grants because to apply, they need a birth certificate. In some cases, learners do not have birth certificates and therefore households do not have access to all possible funds from government (Maarman, 2009:327).

4.2.3.3 Abuse experienced by learners

Child abuse may take three different forms: sexual, physical and emotional abuse. Unfortunately, sexual abuse has become such an emotional issue that it is often seen as the only form of child abuse, which is not true; all forms of abuse should be a concern (Donald *et al.*, 2006:267).

Landsberg *et al.* (2005:34) explains abuse as a repulsive and deliberate act committed by an older, stronger person in order to harm a younger defenceless person. It is further explained that the effects of abuse on children are: low self-image, self-blame, violent behaviour, brain and other physical damage, emotional problems, negative vision of the future and death.

As a result of the above, children will not see the importance of education and will start to dodge school and get involved in drugs. In most cases, the perpetrator is known by the victim. Children sometimes experience violence from people against whom they

have not been warned: fathers, acquaintances, teachers, priests and peers. Children often believe that they are the guilty party in this process (Landsberg *et al.,* 2005:34). As a result of feeling guilty, children may resort to suicide.

Sexual abuse

Donald *et al.* (2006:267) explains sexual abuse as the kind of abuse involving any sexual activity, from sexual touching to full intercourse, between an adult or adolescent and a child who is not developmentally able to understand fully or give consent to the activity. Bezuidenhout (2005:47) adds that activities associated with sexual abuse may be divided into:

- Non-contact sexual activities (sexual statements made to the child, exposure to sexual organs, voyeurism).
- Sexual contact activities (fondling, mutual masturbation).
- Oral sexual activities (tongue kissing, sucking of breasts, cunnilingus, fellatio).
- Sexual activities in which penetration takes place (anal and genital sex).

Physical abuse

Donald *et al* (2006:267) defines it as abuse that involves intentional acts on the part of parent(s), their partners, or care-givers (including teachers) to physically hurt the child. Most commonly this entails beatings. Physical child abuse is physical injury inflicted upon the child with cruel and/or malicious intent. It can be the result of punching, beating, kicking, biting, burning, shaking, or otherwise harming a child physically (WebMD:2008). The parent or caretaker who abused the child may not have intended to hurt the child, but rather the child's injury may have resulted from overly harsh discipline or physical punishment.

Emotional abuse

This is the most hidden and the most common form of abuse, and may have long-term effects on the development of the child. The parent or caregiver engages in patterns of behaviour that consistently destroys the child's emotional and psychological well-being (Donald *et al.,* 2006:267). The patterns may include emotionally neglecting, negating, rejecting, isolating, terrorizing, or corrupting the child. The above might not be destructive, but when repeated over and over in a child's life, then they can be destructive.

'Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It may involve causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill treatment of a child, though it may occur alone (South Africa Department of Health, Home office & Dept of Education & Employment, 1999, p.5-6).

Bezuidenhout (2005:48-49) states some of the reasons for failure to report the perpetrator and failure to divulge the event are as follows:

- The child may be too young to realise the nature of the incident.
- The perpetrator may be known to the victim and the act may not be perceived as a deviant act, but rather as an act of parental love.
- The child may fear the threats of the perpetrator.
- The mother may deny that the abuse is occurring and may support the perpetrator by isolating the victim.
- The child may fear the legal process and its consequences for the individual members of his or her family and that of the perpetrator.
- The child may be intimidated by the thought that the non-abusing parent may hold him or her responsible for what has happened.
- The victim may not know where and how to report the sexual child abuse.
- The income obtained from child prostitution may help to meet the victim's and their families' financial needs.

4.2.3.4 Lack of support staff

Support staff includes the people who are there to support the educators, to make sure that the teaching process takes place with ease. In simple language, these may be cleaners, handymen and clerks who monitor the cleanliness of the school, check pipes and the surroundings and keep everything in order, make copies, type tests and do the administration duties of the school. In most farm schools, none of these functions exist.

According to Mohlala (2008) schools will be bolstered by an increase in support staff to free teachers from the administrative duties so that they can spend more time on teaching and delivering quality education.

The school should still perform all the tasks expected from all schools without extra manpower. The teachers have to do everything alone. These are some of the factors that make educators leave farm schools and seek employment in urban area schools. According to Department of Education (2009:11) small rural and farm schools do not provide for large staff establishments, which detracts from the departmental vision to attract and retain educators in rural areas.

4.2.3.5 Lack of support from farm owners

Some farm owners are not interested in the schooling of their employees' children. They believe that giving them space to learn is enough, they have played their role. Some farmers deliberately interfere with access to schools. According to Human Rights Watch (2004:9) there were cases where closure of the school was linked to a possible eviction of farm workers. In another case, the farm owner wanted the school to shut due to the proposed sale of the farm. The poor learners are caught in the middle of all these acts.

In order to come up with the agreement between the land owners and the Department of Education, some agreements were supposed to be signed by both parties. For various reasons, land owners resist the signing of Section 14 agreements, which may compel the province to close the school, to merge it with another school in the area or embark on a land expropriation process (Department of Education, 2009:11).

According to Human Rights Watch (2004:11) some landowners are not behaving in an acceptable manner to both the learners and to the educators. They do not give any support or care. At one of the farms, one morning the gates were padlocked and the teachers did not have the keys. At another school, the landowner erected a fence around the school blocking the short-cuts that learners were using. This furthermore prevented any free access to the school premises to engage in different educational activities.

4.2.3.6 Lack of a referral system

A school is supposed to be an institution where a learner feels safe at all times. If there are problems in a learner's life, s/he should feel free to run to school for help. It is therefore the responsibility of educators to identify vulnerable children by monitoring the school attendance, drop-out rate and also recognizing changes in the children's behaviour.

The Department of Education (2008:26) explains that a lack in early intervention facilities from the referral system and services means that many children, especially those with severe disabilities, are unable to receive necessary interaction and stimulation. These (interaction and stimulation) would equip them to participate effectively in the learning process.

According to Giese (2003:27) one of the care and support activities suited to the school environment is establishing and maintaining an effective referral system, i.e. referring vulnerable children to services and providing information in accessible formats to learners regarding where services and support can be accessed. This is a good strategy, but as has been discussed before, there are no services at farm schools, and therefore learners cannot be referred anywhere.

It is important for the learner to get the maximum support from the department in order to assist him/her to get good results, which will be the key to the learners' future. According to Mashau *et al.* (2008:416) support services to the learners include those non-educational services required to assist the learner to maximally gain from the available teaching and learning activities. The examples of these are school psychological services, school social work services, remedial or special education services, career counselling services, school transport services, school feeding schemes, medical and dentistry services and accommodation services.

4.2.4 Dissatisfaction with the Department of Education's management

Dissatisfaction means that there is something that people are not satisfied with. In this case, it is the management or control or supervision of the Department of Education. It is the way the department runs and controls its affairs.

Tabane (2004) explains how a school, Saheso Farm School outside Ventersdorp in the North West province, was closed early in 2004 because it could not provide quality education. It received no support from the provincial department of education. The principal of the school, Mr. Mokgethi, explained how he tried for two (2) years to communicate and write to the department to request assistance, but he was always told to be patient.

Mokgethi explains (*in* Tabane, 2004) that the school did not have proper chalkboards, toilets were a hazard to the learners, there was no electricity for facilitation purposes, and the school grounds needed fencing. Most importantly, there was no water supply and the school had to depend on the mercy of the farmer for drinking water, which was later tested and found to be unhealthy for consumption. One wonders how much the department cares for our children's education if it lets things to get out of hand until the school is closed without any intervention.

4.2.4.1 Lack of funds

Funds in this context refer to the money used to run the school. Around the farms, there are more and more poor and unemployed people who lack the money to buy books, clothes and food for their children (Landsberg *et al.*, 2005:29). This means that the school cannot afford to generate its own income, as learners will not be able to pay school fees or other educational necessities as a result of high poverty rate. This will also mean that school fees become a barrier to good education because other important educational tasks cannot be performed because of a lack of payment of school fees.

According to South African Schools Act , Act 84 (*in* Policy handbook for educators 1996: B-58) if the combined annual gross income of the parent is less than ten times the annual school fees per learner, the parent qualifies for full exemption. Such institutions receive all their required funding from the state and as a result do not have to charge school fees. These schools have been carefully identified in the country's most poverty-stricken areas, and made up 40% of all schools in 2007 (South Africa, info: 2009).

According to Ramadiro (*in* Dieltiens & Meny-Gilbert, 2008:3) school fees and the non-payment of fees have a bearing on educational access for the poor. Some schools have resorted to illegal and punitive steps to force payment of fees, such as withholding learners' results, depriving learners of access to school facilities, and humiliating

learners and parents publicly. This practice is not acceptable in terms of the South African Schools Act, and those who may be found promoting it will be charged with serious misconduct.

4.2.4.2 Educational cul-de-sac

The major concern in this sub-category is the lack of support for farm school learners after they have completed their fundamental phase of schooling. They have to go further with their studies, but there are no high schools near most farm schools. According to Department of Education (2009:11) the proximity and size of rural schools do not always support the smooth progression of learners from the General Education and Training (GET) phase to the Further Education and Training (FET) phase.

The Department of Education (2009:11) further suggested that in order to support the smooth progress of learners to FET, small schools in close proximity of each other should be merged into one entity that provides for infrastructure in addition to classrooms such as libraries, laboratories, workshops for practical subjects, sport fields, etc. Learners forced to travel long distances to schools should therefore be accommodated in hostels. Furthermore, safe transport must be provided to transport learners from their homes to the hostels on a weekly, monthly and quarterly basis.

4.2.4.3 Lack of support for educators

Mashau *et al.* (2008:416) define support services as the specialized non-educational services needed to improve the quality and effectiveness of educational activities. The following types of support services are mentioned:

- Support services to the educator: include non-educational services required to optimize the work of the educator and to help in solving problems that could impede the effectiveness of the educator. Examples are subject advisory and professional services, educator research services, communication services and teacher associations.
- Support services for the teaching activities and structures: these are educational services required to assist the provision of effective education. Examples are as follows: education media services and examination services.

The above points are important for effective functioning of the educators and are important for the whole education system.

According to the Department of Education (2006:21) they, as the principal employer of teachers, are responsible for ensuring that teachers' conditions of service, working conditions and career prospects meet appropriate standards, and that the teaching profession becomes a desirable occupation for an increasing number of South Africans.

4.2.4.4 Department unaware of what goes on in farm schools

Most of the farm schools are on private land. There was a contract entered into by the Department of Education and farm owners to settle their differences about the land issue. According to The Christian Science Monitor (2005), school officials tend to blame farmers, saying land owners are loath to sign agreements because they want the flexibility to kick students off their land. Farmers say the local education departments have defaulted on lease payments and maintenance work, and say it is the government that is failing. One can argue that the Department of Education is unaware of what goes on in farm schools and this does not create a good impression to those affected.

4.2.5 Lack of transport and bad road conditions to school

In this category, more emphasis will fall on the means that farm school learners use to get to school. In most cases, they have to walk to school and experience all of the challenges involved when one does not have transport. According to the Department of Education (2009:10), the state of roads or non-existence of access roads to schools in rural areas, and the distances travelled by learners to school are some of the important criteria to consider when deciding on the merger or closure of farm schools.

According to Mathe (2006:7) lack of transport to and from farm schools, exposes learners to various forms of dangers and abuses. It is furthermore explained that in some cases, girl-learners are offered lifts and sexually abused on their way to school. It is not only the learners who are suffering because of lack of transport, teachers are also affected. The case of Wolfsburg farm school in Limpopo illustrates how teachers also suffer from the lack of transport. The Human Rights Watch Report of 2003 cited in Ndlovu (2005: 6) explains how teachers do not teach learners on Mondays and Fridays because they leave early to hike to town. This means that learners lose their education for those two days every week.

The Department of Education (2008:9) explains that some areas are unsafe and that learners may be exposed to possible attack, including sexual harassment or injury, as a result of traffic accidents.

4.2.5.1 Walking long distances

Many learners are forced to walk long distances (Department of Education, 2009:10). The above matter is because farm schools are always far away from learners' residences. Mogotsi and Masibi (2006) explain that pupils in the rural areas risk being run over and are often exhausted by the time they arrive at school. This prompted the provincial department of transport, roads and works to hand over bicycles to the farm school learners.

The departmental spokesperson in the Department of Education (2009:10) explained that the department has the mandate to ensure that children were safe on the way to school. It was further explained that children walk more than five kilometres to school, and by the time they get to school, they are already tired.

Human Rights Watch (2004) holds that farm schools are often distant from the learners' homes. It is further explained that the lack of transport leads to learners walking long distances to school. However, this results in truancy, non-attendance and drop-outs.

According to Maepa (2009), in the beginning of 2001 the Department of Transport started a project called "Shova Kalula" meaning "pedal easy". In this project, bicycles were provided to learners and commuters to ease their transport difficulties. Teachers helped with the formulation of the criteria to receive the bicycle, and the final criterion used to hand over the bicycles was as follows:

- No accessible transport where the learner lives.
- Income of both parents is less than R1 500 per month.
- Travelling distance to school is 3km or more.

According to Human Right Watch (2004:11), some landowners would padlock the gates, without giving keys to the educators, and this would mean that the learners would be compelled to travel extra long distances. Some learners were now travelling 20 km to school instead of 8 km. This means fatigue and exhaustion that adversely affect learners, and they end up being passive in the classroom.

4.2.5.2 Dusty, busy and unsafe roads

Most farm schools are characterized by dusty, unsafe roads. According to Gardiner (2009:3) farm schools are a long way from town, with difficult and uncomprornising roads, houses are screened by the thorny bushes and learners just emerge from them. This shows how unsafe the environment is, with houses hidden by bushes, when children have to travel such long distances to school without any adult supervision.

Farmers or landowners blocking roads to farm schools are forcing learners to take dangerous alternative roads to school, exposing them to more risk (Human Rights Watch, 2004:11). There are so many other things that can pose a risk to the learners.

4.2.6 The adverse effect of the status quo on learners

This category focuses on how the barriers to farm schools impact on the learners, how are they affected, and what they are doing about their situation.

4.2.6.1 Late coming

Most farm schools are remotely located and are therefore not easily accessible. According to Mathe (2006:7) lack of transport compels both learners and educators to travel long distances to and from the school, resulting in late coming, truancy, and high drop-out rates.

According to Human Rights Watch (2004:16), one of the learners at Monate School in Limpopo, Joseph, explained that they start walking to school each morning at 6:30 am and only arrives at school around 9:30am, therefore classes will start late to accommodate late comers. They always arrive late at school. This is because he is walking with fellow learners in groups because they fear of being kidnapped for rituals. Some are as young as seven years old and cannot manage long distances without rests along the way to school.

4.2.6.2 Absenteeism

According to Maarman (2009:326) absenteeism is caused by learners being assigned too many responsibilities or household chores due to parents working as farm labourers. These children are more prone to start working on farms at a young age and

absent themselves from school whenever there is an opportunity to boost the family income.

Weideman, Goga, Lopez, Mayet, Macun and Barry (2007:32-33) explains that there are many factors that contribute to learners' absenteeism. Some of the causes mentioned are as follows:

- Punishment for late coming

  South African learners reported that punishment for late coming at many schools was so severe that they would rather stay away from school on the days they were late. It was reported that many schools still practice corporal punishment, so learners would rather absent themselves to avoid punishment.

- Violence in schools

  Bullying, abuse in the classroom by the teacher and learners and on the playgrounds, also contribute to absenteeism.

- Sexual abuse and harassment

  This mostly affects girls. Male teachers and boys, who continually abuse or harass girls on daily basis, force them to lose interest in school, increasing absenteeism and eventually dropping out of school.

- Gangsters and drug-dealing

  The above two points negatively affect the attendance rates and in particular in the Western Cape where learners would stay at home during "gang wars".

- Time of week/season/ year

  There is evidence that attendance is higher in the middle of the week and is lower on Fridays due to various reasons. Furthermore, absenteeism is reported higher in winter than at the beginning of the school year.

- Poor school facilities

  Some interviewees indicated that because schools do not have flush toilets, girl learners tended to stay at home when they are menstruating because the sanitation facilities at school are inadequate.

Krauss-Mars (2000:3) shared that absenteeism is an ongoing problem in the pre- and primary schools. He further adds that at any given time of the day, children of all ages can be seen on the farms. Very few of these learners continue school beyond grade 7 as they become labourers.

4.2.6.3 Drop–out rate

According to Human Rights Watch (2004:15), in some case learners walk distances of up to thirty kilometres each way. This lack of transport is too much for the learners because it has impacts truancy, non-attendance and drop-out rates.

Poverty is usually said to be the cause of learner drop-out, but this is not true in South Africa because there is high poverty rate, but still learners from poor families attend school. The reasons for school drop-out are complex and the youth's 'decision' to drop out of school is seldom related to one clear factor, but to the compounding effects of a complex of social and economic factors. It can be concluded that fees and access costs are not the problem, but the daily burden of poverty and the relative experience of poverty pushes the child out of school (Dieltiens & Meny-Gilbert, 2008:7).

4.2.6.4 Fatigue

Makhanya (2009) mentions how Nkele Mathibela, the farm school principal, was touched by learners walking such long distances that some get so tired that when they get into class, they just fall asleep. This means they do not learn anything in class on that day. Even learners as young as five years (Grade R) have to walk a minimum of 4km per day to and from school.

The Department of Education (2008:9) highlights that some learners walk long distances to school and arrive late, tired and hungry. The fatigue becomes too much for them and they are unable to concentrate fully on their school work, and this definitely affects their performance and pass rate.

4.2.6.5 Waking up very early

This sub-category is brought about by the fact that schools are far away from the learners' residential places and that there are no means of transport to get learners to school. It means learners have to wake up early because the distance they will be walking to school is long.

During the discussion of the Parliamentary Monitoring Group (2007), one member mentioned that without transport, children simply could not attend school or were severely hampered in their ability to get to school, and that it was the government's responsibility to see to it that learners attend school closer to their homes or that they are transported to nearby schools.

4.2.7 The adverse effect of the status quo on educators

The challenges in farm schools also impact on educators. All the strain that the educators take affects each of them as individuals differently. Below are some of the issues of educators' concern concerning the strain of the challenges in farm schools.

4.2.7.1 Frustration with the profession

There are many things that can bring about frustrations with a profession. A profession should be something that a person chooses because of the love s/he has for it. Since the person will be spending a lot of time in the chosen profession, duties should be performed whole-heartedly and with love, determination and dedication, and the professional must derive pleasure and enjoy his/her work.

Ngidi (1995:160) found that teachers in farm schools have a negative attitude towards their job. They are of the opinion that they have fewer opportunities than their colleagues in urban schools. This negative attitude will surely affect the teachers' performance, and will cause frustrations with their duties as they will not be enjoying what they are paid for. It was further found that teachers at farm schools were academically not as qualified as teachers in urban areas. The learners also suffer because of the state their teachers are in.

According to Makhanya (2009), the principal of a school near Randfontein, Nkele Mathibela mentions that she had to work like a slave to get her school where it is today. Lack of water, toilet and others, frustrated her until she did something about the situation. The school has no recreational facilities and what frustrates her most is a lack of transport for learners.

4.2.7.2 Emotional drain or fatigue of the educators

The high rate of unemployment around farm schools, educators 'work load, travelling long distances to work, multi-grade classes and many other factors, result in emotional

drain and fatigue to the educators. Power *et al.* (2008) explain that most teachers have indicated that they had experienced fatigue. A variety of terms are used to describe fatigue, such as "*tired*", "*exhausted*", "*worn out*", "*weakness*" and "*loss of energy*". Emotions and adverse moods, including frustration, anger, stress and depression were additionally linked to fatigue by participants.

4.2.7.3 Financial constraints

Educators find it hard to cope in farm schools since at some schools there is lack of funds, and educators end up using their own money to handle issues of the school such as travelling costs to meetings and workshops, buying stationery and making copies for learners. Educators also use their cell-phones for educational purposes since there are no land lines (Mashau *et al.*, 2008:416).

4.2.8 Learners' negative behaviours

This is the unacceptable behaviour that is displayed by the learners. There can be different reasons that contribute towards this behaviour. This kind of behaviour needs to be eradicated as soon as possible, because if it is not treated, it might spread to other learners. Points are discussed below:

4.2.8.1 Vandalism of school/educators' properties

Debel (2005) believes that the term *school vandalism* refers to willful or malicious damage to school grounds and buildings or furnishings and equipment. Specific examples include glass breakage, graffiti, and general property destruction. The term *school break-in* refers to an unauthorized entry into a school building when the school is closed (e.g., after hours, on weekends, on school holidays).

Learners engage in vandalism for a variety of reasons. For some, it is a way of expressing anger or frustration stemming from social difficulties or academic failure. For others, it is a way of impressing their peers (Shore, 2004). For others, it is an act that constitutes an innocent cry for help when children do not know the appropriate behaviour. No matter how small the act of vandalism may be, it must be avoided at all costs and learners should be discouraged to engage in such actions.

4.2.8.2 Practice of bad habits or behaviour

The bad habits here include mostly smoking and drinking alcohol. According to Bezuidenhout (2005:71) adolescents tend to be drawn to friends, and adolescents with friends who drink or abuse illegal substances are more likely to also engage in such behaviour. He furthermore adds that teenagers do not have the effective strategies to deal with stress, and may perceive alcohol use as a functional way of coping with stress and frustration. Furthermore, the saying that "charity begins at home" becomes relevant when parents and other loved ones relax by using alcohol. This behaviour is reinforced in the adolescents. The school performance of teenagers who abuse substances drops as a result of their behaviour.

4.2.8.3 Learners are not motivated

There are things that cause learners to be de-motivated. These amongst others include a lack of libraries and laboratories to keep them busy and focused. Bezuidenhout (2005:71) adds that if the community or residential area lacks recreational, educational and sport facilities or does not have facilities that meet the demand for children, it is likely that the adolescents and young adults in the area will become bored. The danger is that when an adolescent reaches a stage of extreme boredom, he/she will try almost anything, including alcohol, drugs and even sniffing glue.

4.2.9 Struggle with helper mothers or mother cooks

According to SA PSC (2008:23) helper mother or mother cooks are referred to as food handlers. These are the people responsible for preparing and serving food to the learners and as such, they have an important role to play in the operations of the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP). Food handlers are parents who come from the local community and would provide key information in terms of the communication perspectives.

Food suppliers are contracted service providers who play an important role in ensuring that the food is delivered to schools according to the NSNP guidelines and contract agreements.

The feeding scheme introduced at some schools by the department of education means that learners get meals at the school. The feeding scheme was initially known as the Primary School Nutritional Programme (PSNP), and was instated in selected schools

from 1994 onwards. It was later renamed to the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP), following an intensive review (PSC, 2008: 3).

Mosala *et al. (In* Maarman, 2009:327) highlights that if PSNP does not provide meals for a whole month, some learners skip schools until meals are provided again. Learners are not sure of their next meal, and some attend school to ensure that they have access to PSNP. This serves as a good extrinsic motivation for attending school. Maarman (2009:327) further adds that PSNP has problems, but its success depends on proper management.

4.2.9.1 Shortage of volunteers

Cooks are 'volunteers' drawn from the community surrounding the school and are paid a stipend. The Department sometimes pays the service provider directly and pays the cooks a stipend of between R100 and R300 per month (SA PSC, 2008:40). Looking into the issue of the recession and inflation rates, this money is far too low, and schools struggle to get people to help with this task.

The cooks are employed based on the totals of the learners, but because of the amount paid; there are never enough volunteers. The result is that the cooks take longer than they should to prepare food for all the learners. Another issue is that the cooks do not last in this work and regularly leave to look for better employment. Consequently, somebody new always has to be trained and the work falls behind schedule.

4.2.9.2 Insufficient payment

Ms Mgijima, the Chief Director of School Nutrition in the Department of Education in the Parliamentary Monitoring Group (2007) raised the concern that the 7% allocation for administration was not getting through to the women who work with the food. These women need to be empowered in order to ensure that they are not being paid less than R500. This again requires better monitoring of the payment of honoraria to food handlers. The Department of Labour could possibly assist in this regard.

One of the suggestions to improve the National School Nutritional Programme was that it would be better if the food handlers are trained and their remuneration is improved to meet the current inflation status (SA PSC, 2008:40). This was suggested in order to try and keep the food handlers because they are leaving to get better paying jobs and

many people do not want to come and help because of the insufficient salary of the food handlers.

4.2.9.3 Impact of the feeding scheme on learners and educators

The food scheme encourages learners to come to school because they are sure that they are going to get food (SA PSC, 2008: 20). The Department of Education (2008:10) explains that the feeding scheme enhances children's active learning capacity, alleviates short-term hunger and provides an incentive for children to attend school regularly.

For educators, this is extra work since there should be close monitoring during feeding times. SA PSC (2008:23) highlights the importance of the inclusion of the teacher union representative, so that opinions of educators regarding the NSNP are taken into consideration.

4.3 Summary

The literature study reveals that the educators' perceptions about the health status of farm schools revolve around the barriers that were mentioned and discussed. The categories or themes include the following : difficult working conditions experienced by educators in the classroom; poor socio-economic status of the learners; lack of support to the learners and educators from outside the school; dissatisfaction with the Department of Education's management; lack of transport and bad road conditions to school; the adverse effect of the status quo on learners; the adverse effect of the status quo on educators; learners' negative behaviour and struggles with helper mothers or mother cooks. These themes will form the basis of the recommendations in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The research is summarized in this chapter (section 5.2.). The limitations are discussed in section 5.3 and in section 5.4. The conclusions were deduced from the interviews. Recommendations are made in section 5.5.

Summary, limitations of the study, conclusions and recommendations

5.2 Summary

In South Africa, the history of farm schools reflects extreme neglect. In general, most schools serve learners from disadvantaged communities. The term "disadvantaged", according to the Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary (92006:413) means not having the things such as education, or the money that people need in order to succeed in life. Schools serving these disadvantaged learners are not expected to perform as well as their counterparts that serve learners from more affluent communities (Thabane, 2008:69).

The reality though is that in spite of farm schools serving disadvantaged communities, there are factors that educators teaching at farm schools perceive as barriers to the health status of farm schools. The educators are the ones who have to face these farm schools' challenges on a daily basis and they are well conversant with what goes on around and in farm schools.

The structural conditions of most farm schools are not up to standard as institutions of learning. Without even entering the school premises, one can tell a lot from what they look like on the outside. They are not attractive, the buildings mostly look old, and they are in the bushes as if deserted. Most of them are not well taken care of. There are many challenges around these farm schools from the educators' perceptions.

Chapter 2 provided a description of the qualitative research design, which was a phenomenological approach. This was considered to be the appropriate choice of research since the research was aimed at gaining in-depth insight into the challenges that educators at farm schools are faced with. Focus groups were made up of three to four people and three groups were formed, for young educators, experienced educators and principals. There were three sessions in order to see one group per session.

Chapter 3 focused on the results and findings from the interviews with the educators and the principals of farm schools in the Northam/Thabazimbi district. The findings from the interviews were such that the following categories were identified as barriers to the health status of farm schools from the educators' perspective.

- Difficult working conditions experienced by educators in the classroom.
- Poor socio-economic status of learners
- Lack of support to learners and educators from outside the school.
- Dissatisfaction with the Department of Education's management
- Lack of transport and bad road conditions to school
- The adverse effect of the status quo on learners
- The adverse effect of the status quo on educators
- Learners' negative behaviour
- Struggle with helper mothers or mother cooks

Chapter 4 dealt with literature control on different categories as identified from the interviews.

5.3 Limitations of the study

This is a case study research focusing on five farm schools around the Northam/ Thabazimbi district in Limpopo. The aim of the study was to find out from the educators how they view or what their perceptions are about the health status of farm schools.

During the study the researcher experienced the following limitations:

- All four of the five schools were black or African schools, and only one was a white school, which was far different from the black schools.

- Interviewees were encouraged to relax and freely express their views without any fear that whatever they said would be misused against them. Nevertheless, in group interviews people tend to say things that would agree with others, especially when the utterance is positive for the image of the school.
- More educators could have been included in this study, but due to the fact that the interviews were done in November when schools and educators were busy with schedules, submissions and reports, only five schools were interviewed and some educators were excused to continue with their work. It would have been more ideal if interviews were done earlier, but that would have had to take place after hours to avoid disturbing the lessons.
- Schools were located far apart and transport arrangements to get everybody to the interview venue (Fairfield primary), which was a central venue, had to be made since some educators did not have any means of transport.
- The researcher believes that if more schools had been involved in this study, more experiences and perceptions of educators would have been captured.

5.4 Conclusion

The study was aimed at answering the following question: What are the **educators' perceptions about the health status of farm schools?**

According to the educators, there are a number of factors that are barriers to the health status of farm schools. The following points below, categories and sub-categories were discussed at length and the following summary can be made:

5.4.1 Difficult working conditions experienced by educators in the classroom

There are challenges that distract educators from performing their core duty of educating learners and the smooth running of teaching and learning in class. These distractions need to be attended to in order for learning to take place.

The difficult conditions are discussed below:

5.4.1.1 Lack of teaching/learning resources or facilities

In most farm schools there are either no teaching or learning facilities, while others have limited resources. Textbooks and learner books are not available for each learner and notes have to be copied down all the time, which takes up learning time. There are no copiers to make copying easy, and no libraries or computers for reference and enrichment.

5.4.1.2 Lack of basic services (water, electricity, accommodation, toilets, etc)

There is a serious problem with drinking water in farm schools. Learners do not have water to constantly wash hands to eliminate bacteria. As a result of the above issue, pit-toilets are used because no proper sanitation is available, and this causes many diseases. Electricity is not available, so facilities like photocopiers or computers are not available. The number of classrooms is not enough. There are mostly a maximum of three to four classes to cater for learners from Grade 1 to Grade 9.

5.4.1.3 Multi-grade classes

As a result of a lack of accommodation, many levels or grades are taught in one class. The educator has to do a number of preparations for different classes, each with its set of different learning areas. Sometimes learners are not given enough attention as another grade has to be attended to. For young learners, it is difficult to continue with their given work whilst the educator is talking to another group or grade of learners. They cannot share their concentration, and this slows down their progress as they listen to the irrelevant content.

5.4.1.4 Too much paperwork

Problems in this category are inter-related and linked. As a result of accommodating many learners of different grades in one class, the teacher must prepare and teach at different levels, and must complete the administration for each level separately. This includes lesson plans, registers, setting exam papers and many others. Educators therefore have little time to teach and spend much of their time doing administration work. Often they do not cover the entire syllabus they were supposed to. This practice develops a back-log in the learners education span since there are some unfilled gaps.

5.4.1.5 Learners put through to the next level/grade regardless of any progress made

This issue raises a concern for educators since sometimes, even when the learner has not been working hard, the parent expects her/him to pass, just because the parent is a friend of the principal. Another problem is brought about by a lack of involvement of parents in the school matters because they do not accept it when they are told that their children did not make it through to the next level/grade. At times, such parents fight educators.

5.4.1.6 Unsafe school environment

The environment where some farm schools are is not conducive for learning. There are untrimmed trees and long grass around, which pose a safety hazard to the learners regarding snakes in class and on the playgrounds. Furthermore, there are no security guards and everybody comes and goes as they wish. There is no proper control of strangers, and learners and educators are all at the risk of being attacked, even during the day.

5.4.1.7 Language of teaching and learning

Most farm school learners cannot easily express themselves in English. This is brought about by the fact that in some content learning areas, they are taught in their mother-tongue (Setswana), and therefore cannot freely say what they want using English. The inability to use English causes communication break-down, and if it is not properly addressed, learners may finish matric struggling to express their thoughts and themselves.

5.4.2 Poor socio-economic status of learners

The high poverty rate also has an impact on children's learning. This status hinders the progress that could have been achieved if conditions were different.

5.4.2.1 Difficult home circumstances

When learners are given too much responsibility at home, like household chores e.g. taking care of the siblings, cleaning, cooking, etc it takes too much of the learner's time away from studying and doing homework as they are too tired to do anything after their

chores. They therefore fall behind with homework given in class. Some parents put the entire burden on older siblings and do not perform their roles as parents. Some learners experience sexual abuse at home, and this is often not reported due to the fear that the breadwinner will be imprisoned and the family will not survive. Some parents drink too much and fight in front of the children, or in some cases, the children join them in drinking and the whole family becomes directionless. In some cases, after parents have drunk a lot, other forms of abuse re-surface, like verbal abuse, physical abuse and lastly, financial abuse.

5.4.2.2 Hunger

Most learners in farm schools suffer a lot because of hunger. This is because they are not well taken care of at home, and most of the learners survive with the meals that are provided at school. As a result of hunger, some learners faint because they go home and come back to school without having eaten anything. The feeding scheme or nutrition programmes at school serve as an incentive for most learners to come to school. The learners get used to this food so that when there is no food at school, they do not come to school. The high poverty rate is the root source of this hunger and the dependency on the nutritional programmes.

5.4.2.3 Illiterate parents

In most farm schools, parents do not know how to read or write. This causes many problems since the school can for instance not communicate with them using letters. Most do not honour parents' meetings. These parents do not show any interest in the school or their children's performance except for at the end of the year. They always want their children to pass. When such parents are called to school to discuss their children's performance, they make excuses and never come to school.

5.4.2.4 Inadequate resources due to poverty

There are many of the learners' needs that are not met because most farm schools are very poor. Learners come to school in their private clothes because they do not have school uniforms, they cannot afford it. Some come to school without shoes or jerseys in winter, and it becomes so difficult for them to concentrate in class. Furthermore, parents are not paying school fees and there is nothing the school can do to assist with fund raising since no one will be able to pay.

5.4.2.5 Teenage pregnancy

Farm schools, like many other urban area schools, also experience teenage pregnancy. It is as bad as children as young as twelve years becoming pregnant. These children do not even know how to properly take care of themselves hygienically and to wash neatly. This is an indication that either learners are not equipped with knowledge about HIV/AIDS, or they are ignorant. The need for health talks and a mobile clinic is very high for both learners and their elders to address the issue of primary health care, which is a great concern.

5.4.2.6 Migration to towns

Due to the high poverty rate, people move from farms to towns to look for better employment opportunities. This also means that the learner statistics in farm schools will drop. The move to town takes place at any time of the year, and learners drop out without finishing their current grades. Research has also shown that a few percentages of these learners continue with their studies once they arrive in towns, so their education level remains the same.

5.4.3 Lack of support to learners and educators from outside the school

The support that farm school educators receive from outside the school, e.g. parents, farm owners and the department of education is alleged to be minimal to none.

5.4.3.1 No or a lack of parental care and involvement

Many parents at farm schools are not involved in the education of their children. Some do not even show a little responsibility towards their children. To make matters worse, some do not even know where the school is. When these parents are called to the parents' meetings, they do not attend.

They do not work together with educators to mould their children's future, but make their work more difficult by not co-operating. They do not show any moral support to the educators or motivate their children to do better. This attitude is dangerous in that it teaches learners that education is not important, and learners do not take their studies seriously and fail as a consequence.

5.4.3.2 No/lack of services

In most farm schools, there are no services such as health care, pension grants, police services, social work services, etc. People in these areas are neglected and there is high rate of pregnancy, HIV/AIDS infection and even crime. Mob justice is implemented in some instances because there is no visible policing. Old people and children do not enjoy their grants accordingly because of a shortage of relevant identification documents.

5.4.3.3 Abuse experienced by learners

Abuse is rife on farms because of the unavailability of services like police stations, clinics and social welfare. Nothing is done to address complaints, and criminals get away with crime. In most cases, the perpetrators or abusers are family members. When it happens that this act has been committed by the bread-winner, mothers do not report such cases out of fear that they will suffer if the father is imprisoned.

Not reporting abuse cases have a negative impact on the victims as they never heal because they see their perpetrators daily and nothing is done to stop them from committing further abuse. In the end, at times the blame of the act is put totally on the victim. Learners in these conditions need guidance, support and love. If the above is not shown, some learners resort to suicide.

5.4.3.4 Lack of support staff

There should be some staff members to support the educator(s) like care takers, cleaners, clerks and others. The low enrolment numbers of farm school learners disadvantages them from getting extra staff support. It is only schools with big enrolment numbers that qualify for support staff. This means that due to the ever decreasing numbers at farm schools, these schools will never qualify for support staff.

5.4.3.5 Lack of support from farm owners

Most farm owners do not support farm schools on their premises because of the incomplete negotiations between themselves and the government about the benefits of hosting farm schools on their farms. Some farmers go to the extent of expelling teachers and learners on their farms by locking gates to short-cuts to school, trying to make their lives difficult.

5.4.3.6 Lack of referral system

Educators in farm schools always struggle to successfully assist a learner with problems, because even if the problem is identified on time, there is no place where the learner can be sent for a second opinion. Nobody assists in problems beyond the scope of education like social workers, etc. This means the learner would have to travel to town for assistance and in farm schools money is always a problem.

5.4.4 Dissatisfaction with the Department of Education's management

Farm school educators raised a lot of complaints about the department of education. Most reported that they are not treated the same as their other colleagues in urban areas in as far as in-service training and other developmental programmes are concerned. They do not feel a sense of belonging to the department because they get different treatment.

5.4.4.1 Lack of funds

Parents in farm schools do not pay school fees; as a result the schools do not have funds. There are serious shortages of learner books and no funds to assist in this urgent matter. It is extremely difficult to run the school without funds, because even the funds they are promised from government take long to reach them.

5.4.4.2 Educational cul-de-sac

Most farm schools provide only primary or fundamental learning. There are no high schools near farm schools, and when learners finish Grade 7 they cannot proceed to Grade 8. They therefore view Grade 7 as the end of education. For learners to proceed with studies, they have to go and stay with relatives in urban areas or travel to such schools on daily basis. This is impossible, looking into the socio-economic status of farm school learners.

5.4.4.3 Lack of support for educators

Educators at farm schools feel that their problems are not taken seriously because they are farm school educators. Often they are the last group to be updated or work shopped on the latest developments in the education system and all the new matters of

concern. This in a way belittles them in front of urban area schools educators as they often appear as if they are not committed to doing their work because they do not follow what has been discussed with others already or do not have the background.

5.4.4.4 The department is unaware of the reality of what goes on in farm schools

Educators at farm schools believe that most of the top management staff of the Department of Education has never worked or been in farm schools, hence do not understand the challenges they are faced with. They believe that if the management could take time off and "live" with them for a week, they would get a clear picture of what is happening at farm schools. The problem is that most of these top management members visit and promise to come back again with feedback, but they never keep their promises.

5.4.5 Lack of transport and bad road conditions to school

Most farm school roads are gravel roads, dusty and very busy, and therefore unsafe for learners to travel on daily.

5.4.5.1 Walking long distances

A high percentage of farm school learners stay far away from their schools and due to transport problems, they to walk those long distances on foot daily to and from school. Some learners even walk from one farm to the other because their farms do not have schools around. Even young learners have to walk long distances on foot, sometimes without shoes on.

5.4.5.2 Dusty, busy and unsafe roads

Most roads are gravel roads. These roads are not maintained by public works, so they are not up to standard, with potholes and they are very busy and dusty. These roads are therefore not safe for learners travelling on foot because cars at high speeds cause much dust, which obstructs traffic and many accidents occur. Girls are not safe as they use short-cuts to school, and these are in the bushes and therefore expose them to the risk of being raped.

5.4.6 The adverse effect of the status quo on learners

Challenges at farm schools have an impact on learners and this affects their performance in class.

5.4.6.1 Late coming

Most learners come to school late because they walk long distances to school. This affects the starting time of lessons as the educator has to repeat what has been taught to the group that came earlier. Waiting until the majority of learners are present shortens the school hours and affects quality time for teaching and learning.

5.4.6.2 Absenteeism

Absenteeism in farm schools is a serious barrier in that learners come across many challenges on their way to school. Some end up bunking school. Weather conditions also have a negative impact on school attendance.

5.4.6.3 Drop-out rate

To most farm school learners, there is no motivation to attend school. Any obstruction like a job on the farm, serves as an opportunity and learners do not hesitate to drop-out of school. Some learners register at school in January, drop out in June and come again in October. On their arrival back to school, they expect to get "their space" back. They do not understand the issue of continuity. Others like girls, just drop out to stay with boyfriends.

5.4.6.4 Fatigue

Walking daily to school a distance of about 7 km or more is tiring, and learners suffer from fatigue. When they get to school, they are tired and just sleep. They do not listen or participate in class, and do not learn anything. Besides the long walking, some are tired from household chores they have to perform. They do not have time to be children and enjoy their youth and study. All this is too much for them and they do not cope. It is useless for educators to teach tired learners, as no learning takes place.

5.4.6.5 Waking up very early

Due to the fact that farm schools are far from the learners' homes, they have to wake up early to start walking in time in order not to be too late for school. This is very strenuous to the learners, especially young ones. They do not concentrate in class and just fall asleep during lessons.

5.4.7 The adverse effect of the status quo on educators

This category deals with the challenges that impact directly on educators as professionals in farm schools.

5.4.7.1 Frustration towards the profession

Educators feel frustrated because they must handle too much of a work load, including different roles they have to play as educators, parents, social workers and others. For principals, they do not even enjoy the status of being the principal because their workload is as much as those of educators. This aspect hinders principals from perform managerial tasks that make them appear incompetent. It is with frustrations like these that educators keep on wondering whether they made the right career choices or not.

5.4.7.2 Emotional drain/fatigue

Challenges at farm schools cause educators to work under a lot of strain and stress. Educators work hard to make an abnormal environment a normal learning environment and this requires skills, time, patience, dedication, commitment, eagerness and passion. There is nothing that uplifts the morale of educators because they know that they are awaited by problems daily that will prevent them from covering the syllabus in time. Educators get home tired and the following day the day starts again in the same spirit and mood that is unhealthy for learners who are expected to learn.

5.4.7.3 Financial constraints

Most farm schools do not have funds to run the school. This means that for educators to attend workshops, meetings, etc they must use their own money and transport and there are no refunds. At times, making copies of learners' exam papers in town have to be paid for by the educator making the copies. This cripples educators financially as they always have to have an extra budget to cater for the school's needs within their

personal budgets. This does not mean that they have an extra allowance, but use their family money.

5.4.8 Learners' negative attitude

There are a number of reasons why learners have a negative attitude towards school. At times it is because they no longer want to go to school because they are failing and parents are forcing them to stay at school. Other reasons may not be disclosed and could also include peer influence. Learners with negative attitudes behave in a strange manner as compared to normal children. This may include being engaging in different activities involving bad behaviour and always being in the company of group members.

5.4.8.1 Vandalism of school or educators' property

Learners involved in vandalism make sure that they firstly study the behaviour or moves of the educators before breaking into their homes or offices. These people at times come during the day and break in, look for something that can be stolen, then take it and leave. In most cases, no arrests are made. Some do not only steal at home, they go to the educators houses, break in and steal food. From what thieves are taking in a person's house, one can easily tell from what has been stolen that it was young children. Some of these young people get used to stealing and doing it such that they cannot live without stealing and continue stealing things of great value.

5.4.8.2 Practice of bad habits /behaviour

Some learners, because they are not doing well at school, leave their homes saying they are going to school, while the actually stay at the shop with friends all day, not going to school. When school knocks off, they go with the other learners back home as if they were at school as well. At these spots at the shop, they start alcohol drinking and other things to get through the day. Due to the fact that in some homes there is alcohol abuse, learners continue with this bad practice with friends. Once learners get used to and addicted to this lifestyle of bad behaviour, they forget about school and totally drop out.

5.4.8.3 Learners are not motivated

We always find that there are some parents who do not motivate their children to work hard at school by supporting them and attending school meetings. To some parents, it

is not even strange to see a learner at home not going to school; they do not care to know why s/he is not going to school. This gives an indication to the learners that whether they go to school or not does not make a difference, they are therefore demoralized to go on with school and automatically drop out.

5.4.9 Struggles with helper mothers or mother cooks

Mother cooks or helper mothers assist in preparing food for learners in nutritional programmes. There is a serious problem in getting people who will assist as helper mothers because of some reasons.

5.4.9.1 Shortage of volunteers

The nutritional program is the initiative of the department of education and social welfare to assist learners who come to school on empty stomachs. An additional focus of the programme is helping learners with food, and people helping with the preparation and dishing out of the food are volunteers who are just given a living allowance and not a salary. This living allowance is so little that no one is prepared to work as a volunteer anymore. A lot of trained volunteers leave and look for better employment elsewhere, and it becomes difficult to replace them.

5.4.9.2 Insufficient payment

Payment for helper mothers is far too little to consider it a living allowance. In some instances, they are paid as little as R110. No one wants to help, saying the money is too little to cater for their basic needs. This means that a volunteer will work for a month or two and then leave. The school will have to keep on orientating new cooks every day because no one is prepared to stay and work for R100 a month!

5.4.9.3 Impact on learners and educators

Shortage of these helper mothers take up a lot of learning time in that either the educators or the learners have to prepare food , and this takes up some time. The procedure of keeping the register while learners are eating is far too much for the educators. Working like this just for one day, seems like forever to the educators and they cannot perform their normal duties as well as focusing on the nutritional programme and also having to supervise washing the dishes or doing it themselves.

Relevant cooks should be employed to do this, and learners and teachers should go to class.

5.5 Recommendations

- Similar research can be undertaken to find out why things happen the way they do in other farms schools so as to provide guidelines to help eradicate these barriers that hinder effective teaching and learning and which decrease the status of the farm schools.
- There is a definite need for the Department of Education to try and address the basic needs in farm schools, although they cannot be solved all at once. At least the basic ones like buildings, water, electricity and sanitation must be given the first priority.
- Parents and the community as a whole should be encouraged to be more involved with school activities, so that the school will be better supported and less opposed.
- ABET can be introduced at farms to help parents to become literate.
- The Department of Education must show support to the farm school educators as far as training them and empowering them is concerned. They must try to be more conversant with what is happening in and around farm schools. Team building sessions should be organized to try and lift the morale of the educators.
- The government can intervene on the issue of learners walking long distances by assisting with transport subsidy for those staying far away from the school.
- Due to the high poverty rate, farm schools can be exempted from paying school fees and schools should be subsidized accordingly to cater for the educational needs of both educators and learners.
- The issue of the feeding schemes should be seriously attended to, and problems associated with salaries of the cooks or food handlers and other related concerns should be addressed. Educators should not be given the burden of attending to these nutritional programme's issues and neglecting the learners in class. Relevant people should be employed.

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ANNEXURE A

MOTIVATION FROM STUDY LEADER TO DO RESEARCH

NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY
YUNIBESITI YA BOKONE-BOPHIRIMA
NOORDWES-UNIVERSITEIT

Faculty of Educational Sciences
Tel (018) 018 299 1883
082 54 77655
Fax (018) 018 299 1909
Email tiaan.kirsten@nwu.ac.za

Mr N.R. Leshiba (Area Manager)
Department of Education
P.O. Box 646
Thabazimbi
0380

7 August 2007

Dear Mr. Leshiba

PERMISSION: RESEARCH WITHIN THE NORTHAM/ THABAZIMBI DISTRICT

This is to state that Ms Segale is currently enrolled as an M.Ed student at the Potchefstroom Campus of the North-West University, and that I am her supervisor for the said study. The title of the study is:

Educators' perceptions about the health status of and in some farm schools: guidelines for support.

I herby support her request to you for permission to do research in the Northam/Thabazimbi District on the indicated topic above, also stated in the research proposal attached.

Yours sincerely

Dr. Tiaan (GJC) Kirsten
Chair: Subject Group Educational Psychology, Learner Support & Life Orientation

p:\Brf PermissionResearch TalitaSegale 07.doc

POTCHEFSTROOM CAMPUS
Private Bag X6001 Potchefstroom South Africa 2520 Tel: +27 18 299-1111 Fax: +27 18 299-2799 http://www.nwu.ac.za

ANNEXURE B

APPLICATION TO THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

P.O. Box 8796
Rustenburg 0300
07 August 2007

For Attention: Mr N.R. Leshiba (Area Manager)
Department of Education
P.O. Box 646
Thabazimbi 0380

Dear Mr Leshiba

Permission: Research within the Northam/ Thabazimbi District

I am at present a student at the North West University, Potchefstroom Campus, currently enrolled for my M.Ed degree under the supervision of Dr Tiaan Kirsten. My humble request to you is to give me permission to do research in the Northam/ Thabazimbi District with regard to the topic as set out in my research proposal.

The title of my proposed is: **Educators' perceptions about the health status of farm schools.**

I think that the Department of Education will benefit from the research to be done, seeing that the topic is relevant for the development, improvement and upliftment of the conditions our farm schools find themselves in.

I have identified a few of these farm schools that I would like to visit. They are:

Mogotlho Primary, Fairfield Primary, Van Wyk's Kraal Primary, Kesarona Primary, Primary as well as Rabogale Primary.

I hope that my application will be successful.

Thanking you in anticipation.

_____

Mrs M.T. Segale
Student no. 11813210, 083 7319 093 (c)

ANNEXURE C

RESPONSE AND PERMISSION TO DO RESEARCH IN THE THABAZIMBI/DWAALBOOM DISTRICT

LIMPOPO PROVINCE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
WATERBERG DISTRICT
DWAALBOOM/THABAZIMBI CIRCUIT

Enquiries NR LESHIBA
TEL NO: 014 777 1200/1
CEL NO: 079 495 6246

P.O. BOX 646
THABAZIMBI
0380

20 August 2007

MRS M.T SEGALE

RE: PERMISSION: RESEARCH WITHIN THE DWAALBOOM/THABAZIMBI CIRCUIT

1. Thank you for your application dated 07/05/07.
2. Permission has been granted.
3. Banking on your continues support.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
THABAZIMBI
CIRCUIT OFFICE
2 0 Aug 2007
P.O. BOX 644
THABAZIMBI 0380

Regards,

NR LESHIBA
ACTING CIRCUIT MANAGER
DWAALBOOM/THABAZIMBI CIRCUIT

ANNEXURE D

CONFIDENTIALITY REPORT AND AGREEMENT

TITLE: Educators' perceptions about the health status of and in some farm school: guidelines for support

I, as the researcher, undertake that all the information which appears on this form and which will be given in the accompanying questionnaire as well as all matters raised during the discussions with the focus group will be handled with the strictest confidentiality. No information may/will be held against a person to harm him/her in any way physically, psychologically, emotionally, socially or other means.

....

M.T. SEGALE (Researcher) Date

I, as a farm school educator/principal in the Northam/Thabazimbi District in Limpopo, am conversant with the aim of the research as well as what is expected of me during the focus group discussion. I undertake to handle all matters that might arise during the discussion as highly confidential. I further undertake not to use information given during the research against a person to harm him/her in any way either physically, psychologically, emotionally, socially or other means.

Age	20 - 30	31- 40	41 - 50	50 - 60
Male Participate				
Female Participate				

NAME: .....

....

Signature – Educator/Principal Date

ANNEXURE E

CODED RAW DATA/ VERBATIM QUOTES

Direct quotes are presented verbatim without corrections as part of the explanation of the categories. The quotes are linked to the participants through the use of the following symbols:

(a) '1A', '2A', '3A' and '4A' refer to Person1, Person 2, Person 3 and Person 4 in Group A, which is a group for Principals.

(b) '1B', '2B', '3B' and '4B' refer to Person1, Person 2, Person 3 and Person 4 in Group B, which is a group for Older or experienced educators.

(c) '1C', '2A', '3A' and '4A' refer to Person1, Person 2, Person 3 and Person 4 in Group C, which is a group for Young educators.

Category 1: Difficult working conditions experienced by educators in the classroom

Category	Subcategory		Respondents n = 11
Difficult working conditions experienced by educators in the classroom	1.1	Lack of teaching/learning resources or facilities	4
	1.2	Lack of basic services (water, electricity, accommodation, toilets, etc)	3
	1.3	Multi-grade classes	3
	1.4	Too much paper work/admin	2
	1.5	Learners put through to next grade regardless of any progress	2
	1.6	Unsafe school environment	2
	1.7	Language of teaching and learning	1

1.1. Lack of teaching/learning resources or facilities

This subcategory is formulated from the following direct verbatim quotes:

2A: "We don't have school facilities.....school facilities, I'm talking about computers."

4A: " .....most of the material needs to be Photostat, it's very hard."

2B: "..... We don't have even a library"

4C: "Another one is lack of resources in the classrooms.....like dictionaries... learners' books."

1.2. Lack of basic services (water, electricity, accommodation, toilets, etc)

This subcategory is formulated from the following direct verbatim quotes:

4A: "At my school, we do have lack of accommodation....we do have a problem of water...we have no electricity."

2B: ".....the other barrier is that we use pit toilets.....We don't have electricity, we don't have water."

3C: "We don't have enough classrooms. We only have 2 classrooms and the storeroom, also used as the third classroom."

1.3. Multi-grade classes

This subcategory is formulated from the following direct verbatim quotes:

4A: "Another problem at our school is the teaching of multi-grades."

2B: ".....but the problem is multi-grades because you have to prepare separately for each grade."

3C: "I think I have a problem of teaching many learning areas. ..... Teaching from Grade 4 to Grade 7!"

1.4. Too much paperwork and admin to be done

This subcategory is formulated from the following direct verbatim quotes:

2B: "You have to set the exam for different classes,.... .....coming to the examinations, you have to make (she meant set) the question paper."

1C: "Imagine maybe having to set question papers, for five learning areas, for five grades, then you have to write them yourself."

1.5. Learners put through to the next level/grade regardless of any progress made

This subcategory is formulated from the following direct verbatim quotes:

1B: "You would found that they had to just pass, just because the principal has befriended his/her father."

4C: "When you call the parent and tell them that their child is not doing well and the child must fail, most of them; they do not agree. They say: 'my child must pass!'

1.6. Unsafe school environment

This subcategory is formulated from the following direct verbatim quotes:

2B: "....our school is in the bush. You will find that children are not safe as they are playing around, since there are lots of snakes around."

2C: "Another thing is safety of the learners and teachers due to lack of security in schools."

1.7. Language of teaching and learning

This subcategory is formulated from the following direct verbatim quotes:

2B: "When we teach in class, we use Setswana as the medium of instruction. When we teach EMS, we are using mother-tongue."

Category 2: Poor socio-economic status of learners

Category	Subcategory		Respondents n = 11
Poor socio-economic status of learners	2.1	Difficult home circumstances	4
	2.2	Hunger	4
	2.3	Illiterate parents	4
	2.4	Inadequate resources due to poverty.	3
	2.5	Teenage pregnancy	3
	2.6	Migration to Towns	1

2.1. Difficult home circumstances

This subcategory is formulated from the following direct verbatim quotes:

1A: "They don't have something to live for, so they drink. People should learn to have a purpose in life."

3A: "Parents have got a tendency of making learners to look after their young siblings at home."

4A: "...learner who is abused, the mother does not want to go to the police because the father is the only one who is working."

3C" "I think when they drink or whatever at home; they use to fight a lot."

2.2. Hunger

This subcategory is formulated from the following direct verbatim quotes:

1A: "They are hungry."

4A: "If you don't cook, learners are hungry."

1B: "... the learners were always hungry'"

3B: "...some children come to school hungry, they even faint because of hunger at school."

2.3. Illiterate parents

This subcategory is formulated from the following direct verbatim quotes:

1B: "I found that parents were illiterate...they didn't know anything about education."

4B: "Parents some do not know how to read and write."

2B: "We cannot also communicate with parents with circulars or letters."

1C: "…….because most people are illiterate here."

2.4. Inadequate resources due to poverty

This subcategory is formulated from the following direct verbatim quotes:

3A: "...parents are not paying school fees."

2B: "Some of the children do not have a school uniform. They come to school with their private clothes."

3B "They come to school without shoes..... they don't even have winter shoes."

2.5. Teenage pregnancy

This subcategory is formulated from the following direct verbatim quotes:

4A: ".....this year, we had teenage pregnancy."

3B: "You would find that a twelve year old girl is pregnant,"

1C: "....which leads to teenage pregnancy, HIV/AIDS and all those things which are not healthy."

2.6. Migration to towns

This subcategory is formulated from the following direct verbatim quotes:

3A: ".... Too many people on the farms have moved to towns."

Category 3: Lack of support to learners and educators from outside the school

Category	Subcategory		Respondents n = 11
Lack of support to learners and educators from outside the school	3.1	No/Lack of parental care and involvement.	6
	3.2	No/Lack of services	2
	3.3	Abuse experienced by learners	2
	3.4	Lack of support staff	1
	3.5	Lack of support from farm owners	1
	3.6	Lack of referral system	1

3.1. No/Lack of parental care and involvement

This subcategory is formulated from the following direct verbatim quotes:

1A: "Parents have little responsibility for their children."

3A: "majority of parents do not care about their children's future and education."

4A: "Parents are not involved in the education of their children."

1B: ".....even in meetings, when we call meetings they don't come."

3B: "...but others don't even know where the school is. You just see a parent at school when s/he registers his/her child.

4C: "Another problem that we are having at school is working together of us with our parents."

3.2. No/Lack of services

This subcategory is formulated from the following direct verbatim quotes:

3A: "People should get services."

4A: "... mobile clinic sometimes don't come for three months."

3.3. Abuse experienced by learners

This subcategory is formulated from the following direct verbatim quotes:

4A: "I've got one of my learners who is abused by her father, and the mother does not want to go to the police because the father is the only one who is working."

1C: " ... most children are being abused emotionally, sexually, you can mention them."

3.4. Lack of support staff

This subcategory is formulated from the following direct verbatim quotes:

1C: "...we do not have clerks."

3.5. Lack of support from farm owners

This subcategory is formulated from the following direct verbatim quotes:

4C: "...they are having problems with the farm managers.....sometimes they demolish the school, like Deo Gloria (school's name, the farmer demolished it)."

3.6. Lack of referral system

This subcategory is formulated from the following direct verbatim quote:

3C: "We have learners who are experiencing barriers in learning ... when you try to write a letter to refer a learner, there's no help."

Category 4: Dissatisfaction with the Department of Education's management

Category	Subcategory		Respondents n = 11
Dissatisfaction with the Department of Education's management	4.1	Lack of funds	3
	4.2	Educational cul-de-sac	3
	4.3	Lack of support for educators	2
	4.4	Dept unaware of the reality of what goes on in farm schools	2

4.1. Lack of funds

This subcategory is formulated from the following direct verbatim quotes:

4A: "The department said parents must not pay school fees."

4C: "...some of the learners' books are not provided, so as a school, we do not have money to buy them."

4.2. Educational cul-de-sac

This subcategory is formulated from the following direct verbatim quotes:

4A: "Our learners when they finish Grade 7, there's no Grade 8 here."

1B: "...most learners were disadvantaged because they could never go further with their studies."

1C: "there are no high schools or secondary schools around farm schools. ...they take Grade 7 as being the end of education."

4.3. Lack of support for educators

This subcategory is formulated from the following direct verbatim quotes:

4A: "...if there is training, maybe for computers, they won't choose us here at the farm ...because we don't have electricity, we don't have computers."

1C: "...farm school teachers are not regarded as teachers, and their problems are not taken seriously."

4.4. Department unaware of the reality of what goes on in farm schools

This subcategory is formulated from the following direct verbatim quotes:

2C: "...the government, it gives us a problem, because they don't take any matter from the farm school as another school in the community."

3C: "I think if maybe government officials can take their precious time, and visit these farms, and see what is happening, I think that when they plan their things, they will take everything into consideration."

Category 5: Lack of transportation and bad road conditions to school

Category 5	Subcategory		Respondents n = 11
Lack of transport and bad road conditions	5.1	Walking long distances	7
	5.2	Dusty, busy and unsafe roads	3

5.1. Walking long distances

This subcategory is formulated from the following direct verbatim quotes:

1A: "The children come from far-far away."

3A: "One other problem in our school is travelling long distances from school to home on daily basis."

4A: "Another problem is that our children are travelling long distances on foot."

1B: "The distance that the learners travelled to school was too much."

2B: "...learners travel long distances from home to school."

1C: "...they have to walk long distances from the different farms to the school."

2C: "...those distances, the learners are travelling, gives us a problem in school.'

5.2. Dusty, busy and unsafe roads

This subcategory is formulated from the following direct verbatim quotes:

1A: "...are dust roads. It is terrible, so the dust affects us a lot."

4A: "...this road is very busy!"

2B: "The roads where the learners are travelling are not safe.....many accidents happen.

Category 6: The adverse effect of the status quo on learners

Category 6	Subcategory		Respondents n = 11
The adverse effect of the status quo on learners	6.1	Late coming	5
	6.2	Absenteeism	4
	6.3	Drop-outs	4
	6.4	Fatigue	3
	6.5	Waking up very early	2

6.1. Late coming

This subcategory is formulated from the following direct verbatim quotes:

2A: "In our school, the only problem is late coming."

3A: "The other bigger problem we are experiencing here is that of late coming."

4A: "They come every day by ten o' clock."

2B: "When we started at 07:30...learners always came here at 09:00 or 10:00."

3B: "From their homes, it was hindering the school because they came late every day."

6.2. Absenteeism

This subcategory is formulated from the following direct verbatim quotes:

2A: "The other problem is absenteeism."

3A: "The bigger problem we are experiencing here is that of ..... and absenteeism."

4A: "At times, like rainy days, learners don't come to school."

1C: "They don't afford to pay for transport costs, and this leads to absenteeism."

6.3. Drop-out rate

This subcategory is formulated from the following direct verbatim quotes:

3A: "We experience too many drop-outs during the course of the year."

4A: "The issue of drop-outs at our school, we do experience it."

3B: "Their children just come to school for 3 months, and drop-out, then come again for 5months then drop-out again."

1C: "So, the children end up dropping out of school at an early age and....."

6.4. Fatigue

This subcategory is formulated from the following direct verbatim quotes:

1A: "They are very tired when they come to school."

4A: "When they arrive at school, they are tired.

2B: "...and very tired and hungry."

6.5. Waking up very early

This subcategory is formulated from the following direct verbatim quotes:

1A: "They come by bus, so they leave very early in the morning."

4A: "They wake up very early in the morning."

Category 7: The adverse effect of the status quo on educators

Category 7	Subcategory		Respondents n = 11
The adverse effect of the status quo on educators	7.1	Frustration regarding the profession	3
	7.2	Emotional drain/fatigue	3
	7.3	Financial constraints	2

7.1. Frustration regarding the profession

This subcategory is formulated from the following direct verbatim quotes:

4A: "It frustrates us at times."

1C: "The principal most of the time is not the principal, but the teacher."

3C: "I think we have a lot to do."

7.2. Emotionally drained/tired

This subcategory is formulated from the following direct verbatim quotes:

3A: "…….and it is very stressful...And it is very hard work for us."

4A: "Like now, I am the principal, I 'm an educator, I 'am a social worker, I 'm .everything."

1C: "So really the situation is difficult?"

7.3. Financial constraints

This subcategory is formulated from the following direct verbatim quotes:

1C: "You have to make sure that everything is in order, use your own car, and spend your own money..."

4A: "...to attend a meeting somewhere, you have to spend from your own pocket. There is no money or no funds.

Category 8: Learners' negative attitude

Category 8	Subcategory		Respondents n = 11
Learners' negative attitude	8.1	Vandalism of school or educators' property	3
	8.2	Practice of bad habits or behaviour	3
	8.3	Learners are not motivated	2

8.1. Vandalism of school/educators' property

This subcategory is formulated from the following direct verbatim quotes:

4A: "At my office there, they came daylight at 2pm, broke the window, went in and did their things there."

2B: "Even the security at the school is not that good because every time they break here at the school and steal some things. No arrests are made."

3B: "...they come again and break the house, looking for money and food."

8.2. Practice of bad habits or behaviour

This subcategory is formulated from the following direct verbatim quotes:

3A: "Too many of our kids leave their homes to come to school and decide to stay at the shop..."

4A: "...we did have a problem of children drinking.....At the end of the day, they are smoking."

3C: "...it seems as if they go with their parents to the drinking places, because you can see them maybe on Monday, sleeping the whole day in class."

8.3. Learners are not motivated

This subcategory is formulated from the following direct verbatim quotes:

3A: "...they leave their homes to school and decide to stay at the shop; they don't care whether they stay there for the whole day."

2B: "They are just staying at home. Some are travelling with their parents."

Category 9: Struggle with helper mothers or mother cooks

Category 9	Subcategory		Respondents n = 11
Struggle with helper mothers	9.1	Shortage of volunteers	2
	9.2	Insufficient payment	2
	9.3	Impact on learners and Educators	2

9.1. Shortage of volunteers

This subcategory is formulated from the following direct verbatim quotes:

4A: "Helper mothers should be appointed to come and cook."

1B: "The school struggle with people who should come and cook."

9.2. Insufficient payment

This subcategory is formulated from the following direct verbatim quotes:

4A: "We were paying them R110. They refuse now; they say it is too little."

1B: "We pay them R110 per month."

9.3. Impact on the learners and educators

This subcategory is formulated from the following direct verbatim quotes:

4A: "If the helper mother is not there, it means learners have to cook for themselves, or you the teacher have to cook."

3C: "It's very hard for us because you have to make sure that the food is prepared. We must make sure that the kids are eating and we have to make a register, how the kids are eating."

ANNEXURE F

CONFIRMATION OF LANGUAGE EDITING

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DECLARATION OF LANGUAGE EDITING

I, Christina Maria Etrecia Terblanche, Id nr 771105 0031 082, hereby declare that I have edited the mini-dissertation of Talita Segale, without viewing the final product.

Regards,

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ANNEXURE G

CONFIRMATION OF TECHNICAL EDITING

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To whom it may concern

Re: Technical editing of the mini-dissertation of Mrs. Mbaco Talita Segale

I hereby confirm that I did the final technical editing of the mini-dissertation of Mrs. Segale.

Kind regards

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ANNEXURE H

CONFIRMATION OF CHECKING OF BIBLIOGRAPHY

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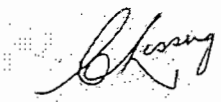
CHECKING OF BIBLIOGRAPHY

Hereby I declare that I have checked the technical correctness of the Bibliography of the M.Ed.-dissertation of Ms Talita Segale according to the prescribed format of the Senate of the North-West University.

Yours sincerely



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