

**The role of motivation to  
develop self-directed  
learners in lower quintile  
secondary township  
schools**

**T Siziba**



**orcid.org 0000-0002-8153-6055**

Dissertation accepted in fulfillment of the requirements for  
the degree *Master of Education in Curriculum Studies* at the  
North-West University

Supervisor: Prof B W Geduld

Co-supervisor: Prof C Du Toit-Brits

**DECLARATION**

I declare that the work hereby submitted is my own original work and that all other works have been properly acknowledged and referenced in accordance with the requirements of the North-West University. Furthermore, this dissertation has not been submitted to any another institution for another degree or qualification purposes.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T Sibiza', with a horizontal line drawn above the first few letters.

Signed: T Sibiza

Date: 11/23/2023

## **ABSTRACT**

### **The role of motivation to develop self-directed learners in lower quintile secondary township schools**

Numerous researchers have emphasised the critical role of self-directed learning in education, particularly in township schools where academic challenges contribute to high failure and dropout rates. Learners' struggles are often associated with a lack of motivation and self-direction. Recent studies on academic motivation among South African students reveal the adverse impact of low motivation on energy levels, perseverance, and the pursuit of academic goals. In response to the imperative for lifelong learning, researchers advocate for the integration of self-directed learning in classrooms. This research investigates the nexus between motivation and the development of self-directed learners in lower quintile township secondary schools, employing the self-determination theory as a theoretical framework. This theory posits that meeting psychological needs like autonomy, competency, and relatedness enhances intrinsic motivation, academic success, and self-directed learning.

Situated within an interpretivist research paradigm, this qualitative study engages teachers and parents or legal guardians to explore their perceptions of the role of motivation in learners' self-directed development in township schools. Utilising purposive and convenient sampling, ten teachers and ten parents or legal guardians from two schools in Gauteng were selected. Semi-structured face-to-face interviews facilitated data collection, and thematic, inductive analysis was employed.

Findings revealed that parents harbour high expectations for their children's academic success, believing in their children's intrinsic drive and providing comprehensive support. Conversely, most teachers displayed lower expectations, attributing learner demotivation to insufficient parental involvement and contextual challenges. Hindered by factors such as late working hours and limited educational knowledge, parental involvement was constrained. Teacher-learner and parent-child relationships supporting motivation for self-directedness were also lacking. While teachers were familiar with self-directed learning, many lacked pedagogical content knowledge to foster these skills. Their motivational strategies included reward systems, positive reinforcement, one-on-one sessions, and learner-centred teaching methods. The demotivation of teachers emerged as a barrier to learner ownership of education, as observed by both parents/legal guardians and teachers.

Recommendations are proposed for the Department of Education, schools, teachers, and parents/legal guardians to enhance learners' motivation and SDL development in lower quintile secondary township schools.

**Keywords: Self-directed learning, intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, low-quintile schools, township, development, township schools**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the Lord Almighty, without Him, this study would not have been possible.

This study would not have been successful without the involvement and assistance of people around me who supported me and dedicated their time in supporting me throughout this dissertation. This study relied on the guidance and support of all the groups, institutions and all individuals; for that reason, it is my privilege to express my heartfelt gratitude's and appreciation to:

- Gauteng City Region Academy for offering me a bursary to further my studies at North West University.
- The Sedibeng West District 8 for allowing me to conduct this research in schools in the Sedibeng West District 8.
- The principals of the two secondary school for allowing me to conduct this research in their respective schools.
- The teachers and parents from both schools for dedicating their time and their willingness to participate in the research study.
- My supervisor, Professor Bernadette Geduld for her patience, tolerance and strong leadership skills during my study period. She continuously motivated and encouraged me not to give up. She further enhanced my self-esteem and taught me to be critical and pay attention to details. Therefore, Professor Bernadette Geduld, I appreciate your efforts, patience, tolerance, endurance, perseverance, your supervision and the guidance you gave to me throughout this study. May God endlessly bless you Professor.
- My co-supervisor, Professor Du Toit-Brits for her assistance throughout this study.
- I would like also thank Simone Barroso for her time spent on language editing and technical editing. This dissertation would not have been successful without your efforts.
- My partner Jabulile Hlekiso for your unwavering support, love, motivation and space you gave me to do my studies.
- My dear friends, family, colleagues and fellow students for their assistance.

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## **LIST OF ACRONYMS**

<b>AI</b>	Amnesty International
<b>CET</b>	Centre on Education and Training
<b>DoE</b>	Department of Education
<b>DBE</b>	Department of Basic Education
<b>D8</b>	District Eight South Africa Gauteng
<b>FET</b>	Further Education and Training
<b>NSC</b>	National Senior Certificate
<b>NWU</b>	North-West University South Africa
<b>SDL</b>	Self-directed learning
<b>SDT</b>	Self-determination theory
<b>SRL</b>	Self-regulated learning
<b>SW</b>	Sedibeng West

# **CHAPTER 1 ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY**

## **Clarification of key concepts**

The purpose of the following explanations is to clarify the specific terms that will be used throughout the research.

### **Self-directed learning (SDL)**

Knowles (1975) defines self-directed learning (SDL) as a process in which learners take the initiative to formulate their learning, with or without the help of others. These learners also formulate learning goals, identify human and material resources, choose and implement appropriate learning strategies, and evaluate learning outcomes.

### **Intrinsic motivation**

Intrinsic motivation emphasises an inner drive that encourages people to pursue an activity, task, or any challenge that may arise (Chindanya, 2020:96).

### **Extrinsic motivation**

External incentives or rewards drive this type of motivation (Chindanya, 2020:97).

### **Low-quintile schools**

Low-quintile schools are schools designated in the poorest communities that do not have adequate resources for teaching and learning (Department of Basic Education (DBE) 2001:122).

### **Development**

Development is best defined as a process that generates or creates growth, progress, social or additional physical and demographic components (Scott, 2021:52).

### **Township**

A township in South Africa refers to various undeveloped residential settlements or administrative subdivisions, dependent on the government for almost all their services, such as water, electricity and health care (Lester, 2019:12). Schools situated in such residential areas are commonly referred to as township schools.

## 1.1 Introduction and problem statement

The 2020 National Senior Certificate results, disclosed by the Minister of Basic Education, Mrs. Angie Motshekga, highlighted a substantial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on learners from lower quintile schools in townships. These students faced significant challenges during the stringent lockdown, being compelled to engage in independent study (Mahlaba, 2020:122). The pandemic prompted schools to adopt remote teaching and learning, a transition that proved challenging for many students in township schools, primarily due to their unfamiliarity with self-directed study methods. It is plausible to assume that a considerable number of students in lower quintile township schools lack the essential skills for self-directed learning, making it difficult for them to navigate academic tasks without the direct presence and guidance of teachers.

Geduld's findings (2017:6) support this perspective, noting that learners from low socio-economic backgrounds, predominantly represented in township schools, often lack positive role models who exemplify self-directedness and emphasize the value of education. These circumstances contribute to the students' struggle to perceive education as a viable means to escape poverty, aligning with the observations of the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET, 2013:5). The absence of positive role models and limited exposure to self-directed learning further compounds the difficulties faced by learners in township schools, hindering their ability to envision education as a transformative pathway beyond their socio-economic constraints.

I concluded my primary and secondary education at a lower quintile school in a township. During my undergraduate years at university, I observed a notable struggle among students from lower quintile schools to adapt to the university system and embrace Self-Directed Learning (SDL) (Nicholus, 2018:32). Township school students exhibited lower levels of motivation and SDL skills, possibly stemming from a dearth of exposure to self-directed behaviour modelled by their teachers, parents, or legal guardians in their upbringing (Geduld, 2019:61). This notion finds support in Amnesty International's (2020) report, illustrating the challenges faced by township schools in fostering self-directed and motivated learners.

The documented low motivation and insufficient SDL skills among these students adversely impact their academic pursuits, leading to potential demoralisation (Riaan, 2018:59). Interestingly, as students progressed into their second year of university studies, a discernible shift occurred. Many individuals from lower quintile schools began to adapt and assume responsibility for their learning. It appeared that peer influence and the prevailing culture of learning within the university environment played a pivotal role in motivating these students. This realisation prompted me to acknowledge that, for learners in township schools to successfully navigate their studies and

develop self-directed capabilities, they require sustained motivation, possibly fostered by a conducive environment and a supportive community (Kuştepelı, 2017:45).

Moreover, it is widely acknowledged that numerous challenges confront township schools, including insufficient resources such as books, smart boards, and computers, as well as inadequate infrastructures like classrooms and laboratories that are crucial for effective teaching and learning (Geduld, 2017:9). These suboptimal conditions prevalent in many township schools can significantly dampen learners' motivation, leading to academic underperformance, with a notable percentage experiencing failure (Williams & Sanchez, 2011:500).

The role of schools as learning environments cannot be overstated, exerting a profound influence on the academic performance of learners. A conducive environment is pivotal in fostering motivation, wherein the availability of proper resources and infrastructure correlates with heightened motivation levels (Moore-Johnson *et al.*, 2012:28). It is imperative for teaching and learning to transpire in an environment that is supportive and distraction-free, ensuring learners can engage in their studies without hindrance (Labahn, 2019:150). Such a conducive setting not only stimulates learners' interest but also motivates them to give their best, enabling them to manifest their academic capabilities fully. Chindanya (2020:97) concurs, suggesting that exposure to a stimulating classroom environment can yield numerous academic advantages.

Conversely, an unsupportive and discouraging learning environment inevitably manifests in the performance of learners, underscoring the critical connection between the educational setting and academic outcomes. Recognising and addressing these environmental challenges is thus paramount for fostering a positive and conducive atmosphere that enhances learners' overall academic experience and achievement.

The impact of motivation on learning extends beyond well-resourced schools and conducive physical environments, encompassing the pivotal roles played by teachers, parents, and legal guardians. Labahn (2019:154) emphasises that intrinsically and extrinsically motivated teachers find it considerably easier to instil motivation in their learners within the classroom setting. Unfortunately, in many lower quintile schools, teachers often neglect to cultivate self-directed learning (SDL) skills among students, compounding the array of challenges these learners face, including a lack of essential resources such as textbooks and internet connectivity, hindering their pursuit of academic goals (Labahn, 2019:154).

Amnesty International's findings (2020:80) align with this perspective, highlighting that learners in lower quintile township schools struggle academically due to a lack of motivation, stemming from both internal and external factors, including the influence of friends, family, and support structures.

The dearth of support from parents, legal guardians, and teachers contributes significantly to the difficulties faced by township learners in becoming self-directed and autonomous in their studies (Al, 2020:65). The absence of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation poses a particular challenge when these learners transition from school to higher education institutions like universities and colleges, where a heightened degree of SDL is imperative (Nicholus, 2018:32). The overarching implication is that fostering a supportive and motivating ecosystem involving educators, parents, and peers is crucial for equipping township learners with the skills necessary for success in higher education.

While schools, teachers, and parents or legal guardians significantly influence learners' motivation to learn, the intrinsic motivation and self-directedness of learners themselves are pivotal factors in determining academic performance (Geduld, 2017:12). Teachers hold a crucial role in facilitating the transition of learners from a teacher-directed learning approach to a self-directed one, wherein learners assume responsibility for their own educational journey. However, Moore-Johnson *et al.* (2012:25) point out that teachers in lower quintile schools face numerous challenges that impede their ability to support and nurture SDL skills.

Teachers in such schools contend with difficult working conditions and a high shortage of educators, factors highlighted as significant impediments in the study by Moore-Johnson *et al.* (2012:39). The research further illuminates a direct correlation between these challenging conditions and the tendency of teachers to consider resigning. Demoralised by their work environment, many teachers in lower quintile schools lack the motivation needed to foster the development of SDL skills among students (Moore-Johnson *et al.*, 2012:37). The cyclical nature of these challenges underscores the importance of addressing the working conditions of teachers in lower quintile schools to enhance their motivation and, consequently, their ability to guide learners toward becoming self-directed and autonomous in their academic pursuits.

The engagement of parents and legal guardians is integral to the academic progress of learners (Baeck, 2010:549). Parental involvement manifests in various forms, encompassing academic support, such as assisting with homework, and emotional support, evident in regular attendance at school meetings and the encouragement of learners to strive for their educational goals (Baeck, 2010:500). Williams and Sanchez (2011:54) elaborate that both parents or legal guardians and teachers play motivational roles by fostering resilience in learners when faced with challenges at school. Geduld's research (2017:16) further underscores the psychological impact and pressure on learners hailing from impoverished communities marked by crime, alcohol abuse, and a lack of moral guidance and support, hindering their pursuit of academic objectives.

In township communities, a significant proportion of parents or legal guardians lack formal education, limiting their capacity to provide substantial cognitive support to learners (Durisic &

Bunijevac, 2017:135). Consequently, the educational constraints of these parents result in limited involvement in their children's school activities, as they lack the knowledge to offer cognitive support with homework or assistance with learning difficulties (Geduld & Mdakane, 2020:359). Compounding these challenges, Durisic and Bunijevac (2017:132) highlight that parents or legal guardians from lower socioeconomic backgrounds face numerous obstacles that diminish their willingness and capacity to engage in their children's education. These challenges encompass residing in communities with high noise levels detrimental to studying, time constraints due to work responsibilities, and financial constraints impacting their ability to support their children's learning (Geduld & Mdakane, 2020:359).

Amnesty International (2020:80) asserts the pivotal role of motivation in SDL, emphasising its capacity to amplify learners' inclination to engage independently in the learning process. Both extrinsic and intrinsic motivation serve as catalysts, channelling effort and energy towards focused task completion, while also serving as constant reminders of the reasons behind undertaking a particular learning endeavour. Motivation, as further underscored by Amnesty International (2020:58), is instrumental in equipping learners with the necessary tools and support for sustained academic performance. In contrast, learners lacking motivation often encounter difficulties in successfully navigating their studies, relying heavily on teacher or tutor assistance (Nicholus, 2018:90).

Motivated by these insights, I sought to explore diverse perspectives on the role of motivation in cultivating SDL skills among learners in lower quintile township schools within the Sebokeng West district 8 townships in Gauteng. These schools, currently facing significant challenges, particularly in terms of resources like computer and science laboratories, are among the most struggling in the district. Compounded by issues such as load shedding and vandalism during the COVID-19 lockdown, these schools operate with limited resources, relying on the meagre assets at their disposal (DBE, 2020). The socio-economic backdrop of the township community, characterised by high unemployment and crime, further compounds the challenges. The infrastructural damage inflicted during acts of vandalism has resulted in the theft of teaching and learning equipment (DBE, 2020), contributing significantly to the low motivation levels among learners and hindering their academic progress.

A significant number of secondary schools in Sebokeng township are categorised as underperforming, failing to achieve an overall percentage exceeding 60% (Trav, 2020). Addressing the factors influencing academic motivation among South African learners, Yiga, et al. (2019:2) highlighted the detrimental impact of low motivation in these schools. Such low motivation levels were found to diminish learners' energy, decrease their persistence, and undermine their aspirations to attain specific academic goals.

Yiga et al. (2019:3) emphasised the critical role of the home environment in fostering academic motivation. They underscored that the influence of peers and other stakeholders also significantly shapes learners' motivation levels. Peers, both positively and negatively motivated, exert a substantial impact on learners. Positive peer influence can serve as a powerful motivator, propelling learners toward academic excellence. Additionally, role models play a crucial role, often serving as inspirational figures that encourage learners to strive for greater achievements in life (Yiga *et al.*, 2019:3). This multifaceted perspective underscores the interconnected influences that the home environment, peer interactions, and the presence of positive role models collectively wield in shaping academic motivation among learners in Sebokeng township.

## **1.2 Motivation for the study**

This research serves as a valuable contribution to educators' understanding of motivation and SDL. While studies on learner motivation in general and SDL in higher education institutions exist (Masitsa, 2008; Muller, 2017; Kistnasamy, 2014; Govender, 2008), scant attention has been directed toward investigating the role of motivation in nurturing self-directed learners specifically within lower quintile schools in townships (Yiga *et al.*, 2019). Focused on the context of lower quintile secondary schools in townships, this study endeavours to unravel the intricate relationship between motivation and the development of SDL skills.

The primary objective is to provide insights into the influence of motivation on the SDL skills of township learners, drawing perspectives from both teachers and parents or legal guardians. By doing so, this research aims to contribute valuable information that can assist the Department of Basic Education (DBE) in formulating effective strategies to encourage and support students. Furthermore, it seeks to enlighten parents and legal guardians on the pivotal role of motivation in nurturing the growth of self-directed learners. Ultimately, this study aspires to be instrumental in the cultivation of self-directed skills among township learners, fostering an environment that facilitates their academic success and personal development.

## **1.3 Aims and objectives of the study**

### **1.3.1 Primary aim**

The primary purpose of the research is to investigate the influence of the role of motivation in developing SDL in learners in township schools.

### **1.3.2 Secondary aims**

- To understand the influence of motivation on SDL according to literature.

- To investigate how teachers (can/may) support learners to become self-directed in their learning.
- To investigate how parents or legal guardians (can/may) support learners to become self-directed in their learning according to literature.
- To explore teachers' perceptions of the effects of motivation on SDL in township school classrooms.
- To understand how teachers in township schools motivate learners to become self-directed in their learning.
- To determine parents' or legal guardians' perceptions of the influences of motivation on their children's SDL in township schools.
- To recommend strategies for developing township school learners' motivation to become self-directed in their learning.

#### **1.3.2.1 Primary research question**

The primary research question is: What is the influence of the role of motivation in developing self-directed learners in lower quintile secondary township schools?

#### **1.3.2.2 Secondary research questions**

- What influence does motivation have on self-directed learning, according to literature?
- How should teachers support the motivation of learners to become self-directed?
- How would parents or legal guardians support the learners' motivation to become self-directed?
- What are teachers' perceptions of the influences of motivation on self-directed learning in township school classrooms?
- How do teachers in township schools motivate learners to become self-directed?
- What are parents' or legal guardians' perceptions of the influences of motivation on their children's self-directed learning in township schools?
- What recommendations can be made to develop township schools' learners' motivation to become self-directed?

#### 1.4 Preliminary literature review

The theoretical framework for this research is grounded in the self-determination theory (SDT) (Deci & Ryan, 2000:100) and the literature on SDL. Developed by psychologists Edward Deci and Richard Ryan, SDT originated from their seminal work presented in the 1985 book "Self-Determination and Intrinsic Motivation in Human Behavior" (Cherry, 2019:56). SDT posits that individuals are inherently motivated by a desire for personal growth and fulfilment (Ryan & Deci, 2020:63). The theory identifies three core needs that foster human development: autonomy, which involves the desire for voluntary behaviour and a sense of control (Walker, 2017:85); competence, emphasising the need to effectively execute behaviours and feel proficient in daily tasks; and relatedness, highlighting the need for connection, meaningful relationships, and social interaction. These core needs are particularly relevant in an educational context, contributing to the cultivation of self-direction among learners and facilitating their overall growth (Gooch, 2017:47).

Crucially, the self-determination concept inherent in SDT emphasises an individual's capacity to make autonomous choices and take charge of their own actions (Gooch, 2017:47). Within an educational context, SDT perceives learning as an individual construct, endowing learners with increased responsibility for their academic journey. This perspective not only prompts learners to actively participate in problem-solving but also nurtures critical thinking skills, positioning them as dynamic contributors to knowledge creation rather than passive recipients (Gooch, 2017:478). The integration of SDT into this research framework provides a sturdy theoretical foundation for examining the role of motivation in cultivating SDL skills among learners in lower quintile township schools.

Ryan and Deci (2019:171) affirm that self-determination plays a pivotal role in various aspects of individuals' lives; experiencing intrinsic and extrinsic control contributes to increased interest, satisfaction, and passion in their endeavours. Intrinsic motivation, stemming from within, involves engaging in an activity for the sheer enjoyment it brings (Ryan & Deci, 2000:8). In contrast, extrinsic motivation is driven by external rewards, such as gifts, money, or the avoidance of failure (Gooch, 2017:36).

In accordance with SDT, individuals are inherently driven to progress and transform, guided by three universal psychological needs (Cherry, 2019:37). This theory asserts that individuals achieve self-determination when their needs for competence, connection, and autonomy are met. Consequently, intrinsic motivation, marked by engaging in activities for the inherent rewards they provide, plays a crucial role within the framework of SDT (Ryan & Deci, 2019:173).

Li (2021) underscores the necessity for learners to possess both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation for effective SDL. SDL entails more than merely completing schoolwork for an anticipated reward; it involves learners cultivating the inner drive to initiate and reflect on their own learning processes (Johnson, 2020:13). Utilising SDT as a motivational model, this research investigates the role of motivation in fostering SDL skills among learners in lower quintile township schools.

### **1.5 Self-directed learning**

Knowles (1975) defines SDL as a process wherein learners take the initiative to shape their own learning experiences, whether with or without external assistance. These learners are actively involved in formulating learning goals, identifying necessary resources, selecting and implementing suitable learning strategies, and evaluating the outcomes of their learning efforts. SDL in the classroom holds significant importance, fostering independent learning that empowers learners to continue their educational journey beyond the confines of the classroom. The underlying principle of self-direction posits that individuals elevate their learning with the guidance of a teacher, who assumes the role of a facilitator in this context (Petro, 2017).

Johnson (2020:12) asserts that learners may choose to be self-directed driven by a desire to surpass minimum requirements. However, the absence of adequate support or resources to bolster their efforts can impede their capacity for self-direction. Consequently, township learners face challenges in cultivating SDL in conditions that are not conducive to optimal learning experiences.

Labahn (2019:153) asserts that motivation extends beyond learners to include the influence of teachers and parents or legal guardians, all of whom play pivotal roles in shaping learners' motivation to learn. Teachers contribute unique personalities and attitudes to the learning environment, but their numerous administrative and scholarly duties, aside from teaching, can lead to inflexibility and impact their motivation levels (*ibid.*). Research suggests a positive correlation between teacher motivation and productivity, highlighting that more motivated teachers tend to be more efficient in their roles (*ibid.*). Importantly, the psychological state of teachers, whether motivated or not, directly influences their students who depend on them daily (Ryan & Deci, 2017:380).

Deci and Ryan, as cited by Cherry (2021), underscore a robust connection between motivation and SDT. They posit that schools become conducive climates when all stakeholders are intrinsically and extrinsically motivated, fostering determination, particularly among teachers in

the didactic setting (Labahn, 2019:154). The enthusiasm and determination of teachers, according to this perspective, facilitate the development of specific academic skills in learners.

## **1.6 Research design and methodology**

In the realm of research philosophy and paradigms, philosophy refers to the assumptions and beliefs regarding how knowledge is developed (Forsythe, 2018:28). Throughout a study, researchers operate on various assumptions, encompassing epistemological assumptions focusing on human knowledge, ontological assumptions concerning the reality encountered by the researcher, and axiological assumptions reflecting the researcher's values influencing the research process (Broor, 2018:52).

For this research, I adopted the interpretivist paradigm. Within the interpretivist school of thought, the belief is that reality is constituted by people's subjective experiences of the world (Creswell *et al.*, 2010:51). This paradigm emphasises the contextualisation of analysis, seeking to understand the world through the lens of individuals' subjective experiences and realities. Consequently, interpretivism is concerned with elucidating the subjective reasons and meanings behind social action (Hancock *et al.*, 2019:52). The utilisation of the interpretivist paradigm aligns with the primary goal of this research, which is to investigate, interpret, and comprehend the perceptions of teachers and parents or legal guardians regarding the role of motivation in developing SDL in lower quintile township schools.

## **1.7 Research design**

Merriam (2012:201) explicates that qualitative research involves the collection and analysis of non-numerical data to gain a comprehensive understanding of concepts, opinions, or experiences within a specific population. Given its focus on lived experiences, a qualitative research approach was chosen for this inquiry. Hancock *et al.* (2019:52) assert that qualitative research is dedicated to unraveling social worlds through explanations of social phenomena. Groenewald (2018:178) underscores that the primary goal of qualitative research is to comprehend the logical reasons underlying occurrences, particularly within people's social experiences in the world.

The qualitative approach facilitates the exploration of personal experiences and engagements, offering a naturalistic inquiry that allows the study of the natural world as it unfolds organically. It emphasises neutrality and mindfulness (Defranzo, 2011). Employing a qualitative research design and basic qualitative research study as an inquiry strategy (cf. Merriam, 2009) proved suitable for this investigation. This design enabled an understanding of the social experiences and perceptions of teachers and parents or legal guardians regarding the role of motivation in learners' development of self-directed learning within their natural worlds and lived contexts,

specifically township schools. This choice aligns with the design's focus on exploring answers to questions by examining various social settings and understanding how people within these settings make sense of their surroundings through social roles, rituals, and other aspects (Creswell *et al.*, 2010:53). The data collection method involved interviews, allowing participants to share their experiences in a conversational manner, enhancing credibility.

## **1.8 Target population and sampling**

### **1.8.1 Population**

A population refers to the aggregate or totality of all the objects or subjects under consideration in a study (Maree, 2019:33). For this research, the population comprised teachers and parents or legal guardians of learners at the two secondary schools in Sebokeng District 8.

### **1.8.2 Sample**

A sample refers to a group of people, objects, or entities selected from a larger population for measurement (Bhat, 2016:68). Purposive sampling was employed for this research, emphasising a focused selection based on a specific phenomenon or process rather than aiming for a representative sample. Creswell *et al.* (2010:20) explain that purposive sampling is utilised in exceptional situations where the selection is made with a specific purpose. In this research, the sample comprised teachers and parents or legal guardians from the township.

The targeted sample size for this research was ten teachers and ten parents or legal guardians. The selection process began with the teachers, followed by the parents or legal guardians with learners in the identified grades. The chosen population was deemed valuable for its significant contribution to the study – teachers, being directly involved in the daily lives of learners, held a frontline position in teaching and learning, providing insights into learners' motivation and self-directed learning practices. Similarly, parents or legal guardians were actively engaged with their children after school, assisting them with their schoolwork, thereby possessing direct and indirect involvement in their learners' academic lives. This ensured their awareness of motivational factors influencing their children's self-directed learning skills.

## **1.9 Inclusion criteria**

Participants were selected from the Sedibeng West Department of Education District 8. The teacher participants had to be qualified, permanently appointed secondary school teachers teaching grades 10. The parents or legal guardians had to have school-going learners in the FET phase.

### **1.10 Exclusion criteria**

The following exclusion criteria applied to the selection: All other educational districts in Sedibeng besides D8 were excluded. Temporary teachers, as well as unqualified teachers, were excluded from the study. Teachers who are not teaching at the selected secondary schools for this study was excluded. Principals and learners were excluded from participating in the study. Parents or legal guardians who do not have grade 10-11 learners at the selected schools for the research were excluded.

### **1.11 Data collection method**

Data collection involved face-to-face semi-structured interviews with teachers, parents, or legal guardians of secondary school learners in the Sedibeng West District. Each participant underwent one interview session. Semi-structured interviews are characterised by questions that are not pre-structured but emerge spontaneously in a free-flowing conversation, guided by the overarching topic (Creswell et al., 2010). Given the research's objective to delve into teachers' perceptions of the role of motivation in self-directed learning within township school classrooms and to comprehend how teachers motivate learners in township schools to become self-directed, semi-structured interviews proved suitable for gathering in-depth information (Creswell *et al.*, 2010).

Moreover, interviews ensured the acquisition of high-quality data, as the semi-structured format facilitated maintaining focus and understanding participants' perceptions of SDL where they could openly discuss their experiences with the phenomenon. Follow-up questions were incorporated into the interviews to extract detailed responses from participants regarding their experiences related to the research problem. The open-ended questions were guided by the research aims and questions; for instance, teachers were queried about their perceptions of the impacts of motivation on SDL in township school classrooms, while parents or legal guardians were asked about their views on the influences of motivation on their children's SDL in township schools.

The interviews were conducted in secure and convenient locations, either at the school or at a place convenient for the participants, ensuring their comfort and ease of communication. Strict adherence to COVID-19 pandemic regulations was maintained throughout the interviews. Each participant was allocated a single interview session lasting approximately thirty minutes. With the participants' consent, all interviews were voice recorded to ensure accurate capture of the information provided.

## **1.12 Data analysis**

Data analysis is a process that involves bringing order, structure, and meaning to the collected data (Vosloo, 2019:353), encompassing the interpretation and theorisation of the data. In this study, inductive content analysis was employed, a qualitative method often used for theory development and theme identification through document study (Creswell et al., 2010:89). This method relies on inductive reasoning where themes emerge from raw data through repeated comparisons (Creswell *et al.*, 2010:90). This approach was used to derive key themes within the specific area of interest, allowing for the testing of theoretical issues to enhance understanding of the collected data. Inductive analysis, by its nature, provides flexibility and allows research findings to emerge organically from recurring themes. The interviews were recorded and later transcribed to capture all details accurately.

The analysis followed the steps suggested by Leedy and Ormrod (2014:143), as detailed in Chapters 3 and 4.

### **1.12.1 Trustworthiness**

In qualitative research, the concept of trustworthiness refers to the degree of confidence in the data, interpretation, and methods employed by the researcher, establishing the credibility of the research study for consideration by readers (Maree, 2020:56). While debates persist in the literature regarding what constitutes trustworthiness, many qualitative researchers acknowledge the criteria outlined by Lincoln and Guba (1985:25). These criteria include honesty, integrity, and confirmability.

### **1.12.2 Credibility**

In a qualitative study, establishing credibility is the primary criterion for the researcher. Thus, credibility is considered the foundational element for ensuring trustworthiness. To ensure credibility in this study, I, the researcher, maintained persistent attentiveness during interviews and extended the interview duration to foster participant credibility. Additionally, I conducted member checking to validate the accuracy of the findings, aligning with the recommendations of Lincoln and Guba (1985).

### **1.12.3 Integrity**

Research integrity revolves around conducting research in a manner that instils trust and confidence in the study's findings and methods (Heathfield, 2021:18). Maintaining research integrity entails conducting the study to the highest professional and scientific standards, valuing the integrity of study participants (Heathfield, 2021:18). In this study, integrity and respect were

prioritised through the upholding of high ethical standards, carrying out the research with integrity, and implementing of measures to uphold this commitment.

#### **1.12.4 Confirmability**

Maree (2020:56) emphasizes that conformability pertains to how other researchers can confirm the study, implying objectivity throughout phases like data collection and analysis. It involves ensuring that the research study findings are rooted in the participants' narratives and words rather than influenced by the researcher's biases. In qualitative research, conformability safeguards against the undue influence of study participants on research findings (Maree, 2020:56). In this study, I made every effort to avoid any form of bias, whether unconscious or intentional, recognising that biases, even if unintentional, can compromise the study's quality.

#### **1.12.5 Audit trail**

An audit trail serves as evidence of the researcher's decisions and choices regarding methodological and theoretical issues throughout the research, necessitating a concise rationale for such decisions (Lorelli *et al.*, 2017:3). All records of raw data, transcripts, recordings, and field notes related to the study were preserved meticulously to ensure a transparent audit trail.

#### **1.12.6 Transferability**

Transferability in qualitative research refers to the extent to which the research can be used or applied in other contexts or research settings (Lorelli *et al.*, 2017:3). I ensured transferability by thoroughly describing the study context and the assumptions that were essential to the research.

#### **1.13 Researcher's role**

The researcher holds a pivotal role in the research as the custodian of the study. However, participants are equally significant, as it is their thoughts and feelings the research seeks to access. As the researcher, I consistently upheld ethical relationships, avoiding any actions that could compromise the credibility of the study. I developed interview questions, collected data through interviews, and conducted the analysis, ultimately presenting the research findings.

#### **1.14 Ethical issues**

Ethical issues play a vital role in every research, and it is critical to adhere to ethical principles to protect participants' rights and welfare (Maree, 2020:57).

#### **1.14.1 Ethical clearance**

Ethical clearance for this research was acquired from the North-West University EduRec committee. Subsequently, permission was sought from the Gauteng Provincial Education Department and school governing bodies to conduct research involving teachers, parents, or legal guardians of secondary school learners in the Sedibeng district. Upon obtaining all requisite permissions, an independent individual was tasked with recruiting participants. This independent person also obtained informed consent from the participants, receiving detailed information about the study's objectives and the measures in place to address ethical considerations.

#### **1.14.2 Informed consent**

I obtained informed consent from all teachers, parents, or legal guardians who agreed to participate in the study. An independent person provided all participants with a complete consent form to sign. I availed to clarify any queries that arose.

#### **1.14.3 Confidentiality and anonymity**

Participants' identities were kept anonymous, and the research sites were confidential. No one who is not authorised had access to the personal information related to the research.

#### **1.14.4 Voluntary participation**

Voluntary participation refers to a human research subject's exercise of free will in deciding whether to participate in a research activity (Heathfield, 2021:23). I did not force any participant into participating or pressure any participants. Furthermore, participants were participating voluntarily and had the right to withdraw from the research without negative consequences.

#### **1.14.5 No harmful intentions**

The purpose of research should never be to hurt anyone or uncover information at the expense of other people (Maree, 2020:56). Therefore, I aimed at advancing human knowledge without causing any kind of harm to all stakeholders involved.

#### **1.14.6 Honesty and integrity**

Honesty and integrity are pivotal in any scientific study, demanding transparency and respect for the research from all stakeholders, as emphasised by Heathfield (2021:23). I took measures to ensure that participants, regardless of their position, gender, or any other factor, adhered to principles of honesty and integrity throughout the study.

All captured data will be securely stored for a period of five years, with access restricted by a password, as per the requirements of the North-West University Policy. In addition, I acquainted myself with the ethics policy of the North-West University. Raw data, including paper documents and consent forms containing personally identifying information, will be safeguarded in a locked space when not in use by myself or supervisors. Storage devices, such as flash memory devices, were handled exclusively by myself and my supervisors and stored securely, with encryption technologies and robust passwords implemented to prevent any potential data leaks.

### **1.15 Contribution of this study**

The outcomes of this study may provide deeper insights into the motivational influences shaping self-directed learning practices at the individual, group, and class levels. Moreover, comprehending the daily factors and processes influencing learners' ability to self-direct their learning can equip teachers with valuable insights into methodologies for fostering self-directed learning within a classroom setting.

This study aims to contribute to the existing knowledge regarding the roles of teachers and parents or legal guardians in motivating lower quintile learners to become self-directed. Additionally, it seeks to positively impact and expand the current understanding of the role of motivation. An immediate benefit of this research lies in enhancing teachers' and parents/legal guardians' comprehension of motivation's role in developing SDL. Such understanding could potentially lead to the cultivation of more self-directed learners in township schools. Consequently, the research endeavours to validate findings from previous studies concerning the role of motivation in shaping SDL in secondary township schools.

### **1.16 Chapter division**

Chapter 1: Orientation

Chapter 2: Review of related literature on motivation and self-directed learning

Chapter 3: Research Design and Research methodology

Chapter 4: Data analysis and interpretation

Chapter 5: Findings, conclusion and recommendations

## **1.17 Summary**

The introduction in Chapter 1 provides the reader with an overview of what to expect from the investigation and its subsequent findings. Chapter 2 comprises an in-depth analysis of recent literature relevant to the research and its integral components.

## **CHAPTER 2 REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE ON MOTIVATION AND SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING**

### **2.1 Introduction**

Chapter 1 of the study offers a comprehensive overview of the background and problem, purpose, objectives, research approach, and significance of the research. To provide contextual information, the researcher reviewed pertinent literature concerning the impact of motivation on the development of self-directed learners in secondary schools located in lower quintile townships.

The aim of this chapter is to provide a comprehensive literature review on the topic, offering an in-depth exploration of prior scholarly research related to the impact of motivation on the development of SDL abilities in lower quintile secondary township schools. This section outlines the research framework central to the dissertation. The chapter focuses on the concept of motivation (§ 2.2), examining both intrinsic motivation (§ 2.2.1) and extrinsic motivation (§ 2.2.2). Furthermore, it explores the influence of motivation on learners' academic performance (§ 2.2.3). Following this, an analysis of contextual factors influencing learner motivation is presented (§ 2.3).

The chapter proceeds to examine the self-determination theory (§ 2.4), with an in-depth exploration of its three fundamental needs: (§ 2.4.1) competence, (§ 2.4.2) relatedness, and (§ 2.4.3) autonomy. The significance of self-determination for township learners is then discussed (§ 2.4.4). Subsequently, the connection between motivation and the self-determination theory is explored (§ 2.5). The chapter further delves into SDL (§ 2.6), emphasising the importance of self-directed learning for township learners (§ 2.6.1). This section elucidates the impact of SDL on academic achievement, examining the link between SDL and self-determination theory (SDT) in (§ 2.7).

The discussion then moves to (§ 2.8), exploring the role of motivation in SDL. The influence of motivation on academic achievement is addressed in (§ 2.9). Section (§ 2.10) delves into the role of teachers in motivating learners to develop SDL skills, while (§ 2.11) focuses on teaching tactics effective in enhancing SDL. Finally, the chapter concludes with a discussion on the significance of parental motivation in facilitating their children's development of self-directedness.

### **2.2 Motivation**

Tohidi and Jabbari (2011:820) assert that motivation is a process that initiates, guides, and sustains goal-oriented behaviours. It serves as the driving force behind actions, whether striving

for full marks in mathematics research or engaging in reading to acquire knowledge and understanding. Motivation encompasses biological, cognitive, emotional, and social forces that trigger human behaviour (Cherry 2022:16). According to Huitt (2022:4), motivation is an internal condition or state that activates behaviour and provides it with direction. Furthermore, Huitt (2022:4) suggests that motivation is a want or a desire that energises individuals and steers goal-oriented behaviour.

Hurst (2021) explains that motivation involves setting goals and necessitates activity. In this context, goals provide both the driving force and direction for action, with action representing the effort required to achieve or complete an activity. Motivation exerts various effects on learners' learning behaviour. Firstly, it guides behaviour toward specific goals (Hurst, 2021). Secondly, motivation significantly influences the specific goals individuals strive to achieve, directly impacting their choices, such as deciding whether to attend a mathematics class or complete a given task (Hurst, 2022). Thirdly, motivation enhances individuals' energy levels and efforts to reach their goals, as observed when learners increase their exertion upon recognising potential reinforcements or positive outcomes.

Research by Tohidi and Jabbari (2011:820) on the effects of motivation in education highlights the significance of considering that individuals have different motives, categorised as internal and external motives. Motivation motives, either internal or external, come into play before individuals can act on their motivation (Tohidi & Jabbari, 2011:820). Internal motives stem from within individuals, while external motives are driven by factors or rewards external to the individual. The factors influencing motivation differ between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. For instance, an intrinsically motivated learner may read a book for the sake of gaining knowledge, whereas an extrinsically motivated learner might read a book in anticipation of receiving a certificate for completing the task.

Tokan (2019:7) asserts that some learners are motivated by both intrinsic and extrinsic factors. It is crucial to recognise the varied behaviours that motivation can elicit, emphasising the importance of understanding motivation in an educational context (Suhag *et al.*, 2016:101). Findings from Tokan (2019:7) reveal that intrinsic and extrinsic motivation collectively influence learners' motivation and academic achievement. The diverse definitions of motivation provided above underscore its crucial role in guiding and directing individuals' goals. Additionally, these definitions highlight the significance of motivation in aiding individuals in achieving their objectives. The subsequent section will delve into intrinsic and extrinsic motivation.

### 2.2.1 Intrinsic motivation

Intrinsic motivation, as defined by Ryan and Deci (2000:55), involves engaging in an activity for its inherent satisfaction rather than external reasons. When individuals are intrinsically motivated, their drive to participate or act is rooted in the enjoyment or challenge of the activity itself, rather than the anticipation of a reward or external expectations. Token (2019:5) asserts that intrinsic motivation encompasses interests, ideals, and the inner capacity to self-encourage toward achieving the highest academic success. Token (2019:5) also acknowledges that physical and psychological conditions, such as strengths, weaknesses, health, and peace, can influence intrinsic motivation. To foster intrinsic motivation, individuals need to harbour positive feelings about the psychological aspects of their lives, such as being in a good emotional state.

Intrinsic motivation is a pivotal aspect of motivation (Legault, 2016:2), referring to engagement in inherently enjoyable or satisfying behaviours. An intrinsically motivated action is not contingent on any outcome separate from the behaviour itself (Legault 2016:2); the action and the outcome are inherently connected. For instance, a child may play outdoors, engaging in activities like running, skipping, or playing soccer, purely for the joy and inherent satisfaction derived from the activities. Intrinsic motivation is recognised as a natural human tendency, signifying that individuals tend to actively participate in activities they find interesting or enjoyable (Legault, 2016:3). However, for intrinsic motivation to thrive, a supportive environment is essential. The learning environment plays a significant role in influencing intrinsic motivation, impacting a person's perceived autonomy and competence (Deci & Ryan, 2020:62). Although intrinsic motivation is considered the most optimal form of motivation, associated with benefits such as well-being, psychological influence, persistence, and enjoyment, Deci and Ryan (2008:52) found that extrinsic motivation can sometimes complement intrinsic motivation by promoting behaviours for actions that may not be inherently interesting.

Csikszentmihalyi and Nakamura (1989), as cited by Adamma *et al.* (2018:53), contend that intrinsically motivated learners exhibit distinct characteristics such as maintaining a high focus on their activities, demonstrating independent learning, being receptive to new challenges, and frequently seeking to broaden their knowledge through questioning, among other traits. Lancaster's research (2019) on the significance of intrinsic motivation indicates that its impact on engagement surpasses that of extrinsic motivation. Deci and Ryan (2020:4) assert that the positive effects of intrinsic motivation, including improved attitudes toward academics and academic success, are evident in the educational realm. In alignment with these perspectives, Taylor *et al.*, (2014:349) underscore the pivotal role of intrinsic motivation in learners' achievement, emphasising its importance for academic success. The subsequent section will explore extrinsic motivation as another crucial aspect of learners' motivation.

### 2.2.2 Extrinsic motivation

Deci and Ryan (2020:4) define extrinsic motivation as behaviours or actions performed for reasons other than inherent satisfaction. It stands in contrast to intrinsic motivation, which involves engaging in an activity to achieve separable outcomes (Ryan & Deci, 2000:56). In simpler terms, extrinsic motivation refers to completing a task or activity due to external factors, such as expecting a reward or avoiding punishment (Sennet, 2021:21). While extrinsic motivation may prove beneficial in certain situations, such as encouraging learners to work hard for a reward, Meadows-Fernandez (2018:43) emphasises that it is driven by the anticipation of a reward.

Extrinsic motivators encompass rewards like gifts, commendations, good grades, or certificates. Adamma *et al.* (2018:53) argue that extrinsic motivation serves as positive reinforcement for desired behavioural outcomes, encouraging performance and effort. Tokan (2019:5) suggests that external factors, such as the community, school, and family, contribute to extrinsic motivation. A learner's achievement and motivation result from the interplay of various influencing factors, both intrinsic and extrinsic. Positive experiences in external factors are crucial for individual motivation (Tokan, 2019:6), exemplified by a person performing well when aware of the support received from family members.

Extrinsic motivation involves the use of rewards or incentives, such as money, fame, or praise, to encourage the completion of tasks. For instance, being paid for a job serves as an extrinsic motivator, suggesting that while one may eventually develop a love for the work, the primary reason is the monetary reward. The effectiveness of extrinsic motivation depends on the significance of the reward, which should not diminish its impact. On this point, Meadows-Fernandez (2018) notes the over-justification effect, a psychological phenomenon where the value of a reward diminishes if given excessively.

Research by Mulvahill (2018) indicates that in extrinsic motivation, learners choose behaviours not out of love or enjoyment but to avoid negative outcomes like failure or punishment, or to attain positive ones. However, extrinsic motivation tends to yield only short-term results, as highlighted by Princeton University's study (2003:495), which suggests that external incentives are weak reinforcers in the short run and negative reinforcers in the long run. Critics argue that learners may become dependent on negative reinforcers and struggle to set realistic goals without extrinsic motivation. Additionally, there is concern that reliance on extrinsic rewards may lead to over-justification and a subsequent decline in intrinsic motivation (Tohidi & Jabbari, 2011:821). For example, learners promised a gold medal for drawing spent less time engaging in subsequent drawing activities than those not expecting any reward.

Simon (2010:154) recognises the advantages of extrinsic motivation in persuading individuals to complete tasks and acquire new skills. Nevertheless, Singh (2016:202) highlights the concern that extrinsic motivation may cause learners to deviate from their intrinsic goals and rely excessively on external incentives.

The previous section elucidated the concepts of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Considering these insights, learners have the capacity to draw motivation from either intrinsic factors, internal in nature, or extrinsic factors, which are external. Both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations play pivotal roles in education, serving as sources of inspiration for learners. The subsequent section will delve into the impact of motivation on learners' academic performance.

### **2.2.3 The influence of motivation on learners' academic performance**

The school environment plays a crucial role in shaping students' enthusiasm for attending classes. The physical structure and overall appeal of a school can significantly impact students' motivation. If a school lacks an appealing environment and conducive learning conditions, students' motivation to attend may be adversely affected. For instance, Mabena *et al.* (2021:452) emphasise that factors such as the learning environment, educators' attitudes, and learners' attitudes contribute to the difficulty township learners face in finding motivation to study. Contextual challenges, such as lack of electricity, poverty, and excessive noise, further compound the obstacles to studying in such environments.

The classification of schools also plays a role in influencing the motivation of both teachers and learners (Geduld, 2017:8). Schools with a pass rate below 60% are labelled as 'underperforming' by the Department of Education (DoE), impacting the motivation of educators and students alike. Teachers may be motivated to work harder or, conversely, may feel like failures and become less dedicated to their work (Geduld, 2017:2). Similarly, learners may experience demotivation and feelings of failure due to the labelling of their schools. For example, when a learner is motivated, the learner will bring a positive and friendly atmosphere into the classroom; the community may also view the school and its functionality ineffective and dysfunctional as a result of such classifications. Based on Geduld (2017:2), a prevalent issue faced by educational institutions globally is the absence of motivation. When a learner is driven, they are likely to create a good and amicable environment within the classroom. However, it is important to note that such categorisations may lead the community to perceive the school and its operations as inefficient and disorganised. Also, Geduld (2017:2) believes that the issue of insufficient motivation is a pervasive global challenge faced by educational institutions.

Moreover, Tohidi & Jabbari (2011:823) assert that educational motivation influences how learners learn and how they will behave in a particular subject. In other words, motivation can influence learners' behaviour toward the schools' subjects. For example, if learners respect teacher A, their love for the subject taught by teacher A will increase, and their motivation level for the subject will eventually increase. Tohidi and Jabbari (2011:823) further aver that a conducive learning environment improves learners' performance. They believe learners may also need a conducive learning environment and favourable conditions that a teacher creates to motivate learners. Tohidi and Jabbari (2011:823) also believe that in education, motivation eventually increases energy levels and efforts to attain goals. Furthermore, motivation leads to initiating learning activities (reading and studying) and persistently engaging in those educational activities. It also enhances cognitive processes such as attention and perception, thus leading to successful academic performance (Chen *et al.*, 2018:3).

Considering a learner's socio-economic background is crucial when examining the influence of motivation. According to Tokan (2019:2), motivation in education aims to encourage learners to learn and achieve desirable results. Motivation plays a positive role in learning by building learner confidence, competency, and self-esteem, particularly benefiting learners from economically disadvantaged backgrounds who may struggle with low self-esteem (Chen *et al.*, 2018:3). Motivation assists in instilling confidence, fostering a belief in their abilities, and developing learners' self-efficacy beliefs, making them more receptive to challenging tasks (Toka, 2019:2).

For learners in townships facing confidence issues, motivation becomes a guiding force in shaping their lives (Mabena *et al.*, 2021:453). Tokan (2019:2) emphasises that motivation and learning behaviour are pivotal in determining learners' academic achievement, highlighting the critical role motivation plays not only in education but also in cognitive development. When learners are motivated, their cognitive processes develop, enhancing their abilities to comprehend and solve problems (Chen *et al.*, 2018:3). The next section will delve into contextual factors affecting learner motivation.

### **2.3 Contextual factors that influence learner motivation**

Geduld (2017:4) identifies contextual factors such as home environment, family, peers, communities, and home as pivotal elements influencing students' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to learn. Correspondingly, Saeed and Zyngier (2012:10) note that learners with motivated parents and peers tend to enhance their motivation to learn, while those with low-motivation peers and families may struggle to experience an increase in intrinsic motivation. Firdaus (2019:209) underscores several factors affecting learners' motivation to study, including a lack of parental

involvement and support, inadequate study facilities, insufficient infrastructure like electricity, poor socio-economic background, and a lack of positive influence or role models.

Highlighting the social and economic dimensions of education, Hobden and Hobden (2015:1056) stress that access to education intersects with challenges related to socio-economic status and economic inequalities, making it challenging for learners from disadvantaged backgrounds to find the motivation to learn. Children from impoverished socio-economic backgrounds encounter greater obstacles in completing their education compared to their affluent counterparts (Du Toit-Brits & Van Zyl, 2017). Against this backdrop, the White Paper for post-school Education and Training, Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET, 2013:5), asserts that education has been viewed as a pathway out of poverty. However, for many township school learners, realising this dream is challenging due to the harsh conditions that often impede their studies.

Most townships in South Africa face challenges such as high crime rates, inadequate infrastructure, including unreliable electricity, elevated noise levels, and a generally low socio-economic status (DHET, 2013:6). Kistnasamy (2014:384) emphasises the critical role of motivation, particularly for learners hailing from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. The author underscores the profound significance of motivation in shaping a learner's academic journey. However, contextual factors like poverty and high unemployment exert a considerable influence on learners' motivation, hindering their ability to fully benefit from positive motivational influences (Du Toit-Brits & Van Zyl, 2017; Kistnasamy, 2014:384). These factors create challenges for learners in finding motivation to study, especially in noisy and crime-ridden environments (Chen *et al.*, 2018:3).

Moreover, the impact of peers on a learner's motivation is noteworthy. Geduld (2017:5) argues that learners surrounded by highly motivated peer groups and friends tend to elevate their motivation, while the opposite holds true for those with low-motivation peers. Expanding on Geduld's insights (2017:5), it becomes apparent that learners in townships could benefit significantly from motivated friends or peers, potentially amplifying their motivation and drive to study and succeed.

As mentioned earlier, a learner's socio-economic status also significantly influences their motivation level (Firdaus, 2019:210). The socio-economic background is thus crucial and closely linked to the context of the study's phenomena, given that townships and rural areas often exhibit a prevalence of poor socio-economic conditions. The socio-economic status of a learner plays a pivotal role in their academic performance (Chen *et al.*, 2018:3). For instance, learners from affluent backgrounds, with financially stable parents, may have the luxury of dedicating additional time to academics and access extra resources such as tutors to assist them (Chen *et al.*, 2018:2).

On the contrary, learners from low socio-economic backgrounds may struggle to allocate extra time to their studies and lack additional resources to support their academic endeavours. The demands of parenting, as highlighted by Geduld (2017:5), are particularly relevant when exploring motivation theories, including SDT, which will be discussed in the next section. As outlined in chapter one of the preliminary literature review, the study's theoretical framework is SDT, chosen for its potential to shed light on the role of motivation in fostering self-directed learning in learners in lower quintile township schools.

## **2.4 Self-determination theory**

SDT originated from the collaborative work of psychologists Edward Deci and Richard Ryan, who initially presented their concepts in the 1985 book "Self-Determination and Intrinsic Motivation in Human Behavior" (Cherry, 2019:56). According to Deci and Ryan (2000:68), self-determination is an approach to human motivation and personality that incorporates traditional empirical methods within an organismic meta-theory emphasising the significance of humans' evolved inner resources for personality development and behavioural self-regulation. This theory, a complex framework addressing human personality and motivation, is concerned with how individuals interact and depend on the social environment (Legault, 2017:120).

Van den Broeck *et al.* (2016:1197) define SDT as a theory proposing that people are motivated to thrive, grow, and change by three inherent and universal psychological needs. According to Deci and Ryan (2020:3), SDT posits that individuals rely on psychological growth and integration, emphasising connections with others, learning, and mastery. The authors contend that these proactive individual tendencies require a supportive environment to flourish (Deci & Ryan, 2020:3). Numerous influential researchers have incorporated this theory into their studies due to its ability to elucidate human behaviour related to motivation. Some of the researchers who have utilised this theory include Anja Van den Broeck *et al.* (2016), Legault (2016), Cherry (2021), Ryan and Deci (2000), Deci and Ryan (1985), Vansteenkiste, Lens, and Deci (2006), and Brooks and Young (2011), among others.

SDT provides a framework that delineates various instances of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation, illustrating their influence on responses across different life domains and aspects of personality and cognitive development (Legault, 2016:4). The theory posits that the pursuit of growth and advancement in life propels behaviour. While external rewards, such as prizes and money (§2.2.2), act as extrinsic motivation, the self-determination theory emphasises internal sources of motivation, such as the desire for independence or knowledge acquisition (intrinsic motivation) (§2.2.1) (Cherry, 2021:19). Despite the perceived dichotomy between extrinsic and intrinsic

motivations, behaviour is intricate, and individuals are rarely driven by a singular motivation source. People often draw from various motivational sources to achieve their goals.

Instead of viewing motivation as exclusively driven by intrinsic or extrinsic rewards, it is beneficial to perceive it as a continuum ranging from self-determined to non-determined behaviours. Strictly self-determined behaviours are primarily fuelled by intrinsic factors, driven by interest, enjoyment, and satisfaction (Legault, 2007:735). However, in many instances, people's behaviour falls somewhere in the middle of this continuum, incorporating both extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. For example, a learner may initially study with the extrinsic motivation of passing an exam, but the prospect of receiving an award or trophy for academic excellence can further fuel intrinsic motivation. Moreover, individuals often engage in behaviours because they have a certain degree of control over the behaviour, aligning with something crucial for their self-concept (Du Toit-Brits & Blignaut, 2023:56).

As researcher it is my view that self-determination is crucial for learners as it enhances their intrinsic motivation to learn. The core tenet of SDT is that when individuals feel that their psychological needs are met, they are more likely to perceive their actions and choices as self-determined or motivated. Learners who experience a positive balance within their needs are likely to be more self-directed. Various theories, including self-directed learning theories, are crucial for learner development. Research by Legault (2017:124) has indicated a link between motivation and SDT.

SDT further posits that healthy educational development requires support for three fundamental psychological needs (Ryan *et al.*, 2019:90). These critical needs are identified as autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2020:3). It is asserted that personal well-being is directly tied to the satisfaction of these three basic psychological needs (Deci & Ryan, 1991:198). Van den Broeck *et al.* (2021:19) also elucidate that SDT suggests that individuals tend to become more self-determined when their psychological needs for connection, competence, and autonomy are adequately fulfilled. The discussion of these three psychological needs will be presented in the following section.

#### **2.4.1 Competence**

The first psychological need is the need for competence, which is often used to describe individuals possessing sufficient qualities to perform a given task or display enough intellectual capabilities (Van den Broeck, 2016:1197). According to Deci and Ryan (2020:3), competence is cultivated through opportunities for growth, positive feedback, and exposure to optimal challenges. When individuals feel competent, they can freely and actively engage with their

environments, possessing the necessary skills to succeed and achieve their goals. Positive feedback further enhances feelings of competence by providing learners with insights into their performance and areas for improvement (Van den Broeck, 2016:1197). Competence plays a crucial role in motivation, as it encourages individuals to develop, persist, and strive for more. This is especially vital for learners from township schools with low socio-economic backgrounds, as competence-building contributes to enhanced self-esteem, dedication, and determination in their studies (Mahlaba, 2020:65). Township learners need to cultivate a sense of competence to believe in their academic capabilities regardless of their background (Mahlaba, 2020:65). As highlighted earlier, when learners experience the need for competency, they embrace new growth opportunities, enabling them to feel in control of challenging situations and environments (Deci & Ryan, 2020:3). Competence is particularly important for self-determination and SDL, serving as a critical aspect of personal growth and development.

#### **2.4.2 Relatedness**

The second psychological need is relatedness, encompassing feelings of closeness to others and belonging to a social group. It involves a sense of attachment and belonging to people (Van den Broeck, 2016:1197). Deci and Ryan (2020:3) elaborate that conveying respect and care fosters relatedness. Self-determination is challenging without a sense of connection to others, as individuals need to feel loved and attached to people or social groups, such as being part of a team. This need is crucial for motivation, as achieving greatness often relies on the support and interest of others, including friends and family. Without a need for relatedness, individuals may feel disconnected from others (Deci & Ryan, 2020:3). The need for relatedness is particularly vital in the context of this study. It is crucial for learners in townships to feel and experience love and belonging both at school with teachers and fellow students and at home with parents, legal guardians, and siblings. The need for relatedness, in my perspective, is essential as it directs learners' focus away from their socio-economic background, encouraging them to prioritise the sense of belonging and connection in their academic pursuits.

#### **2.4.3 Autonomy**

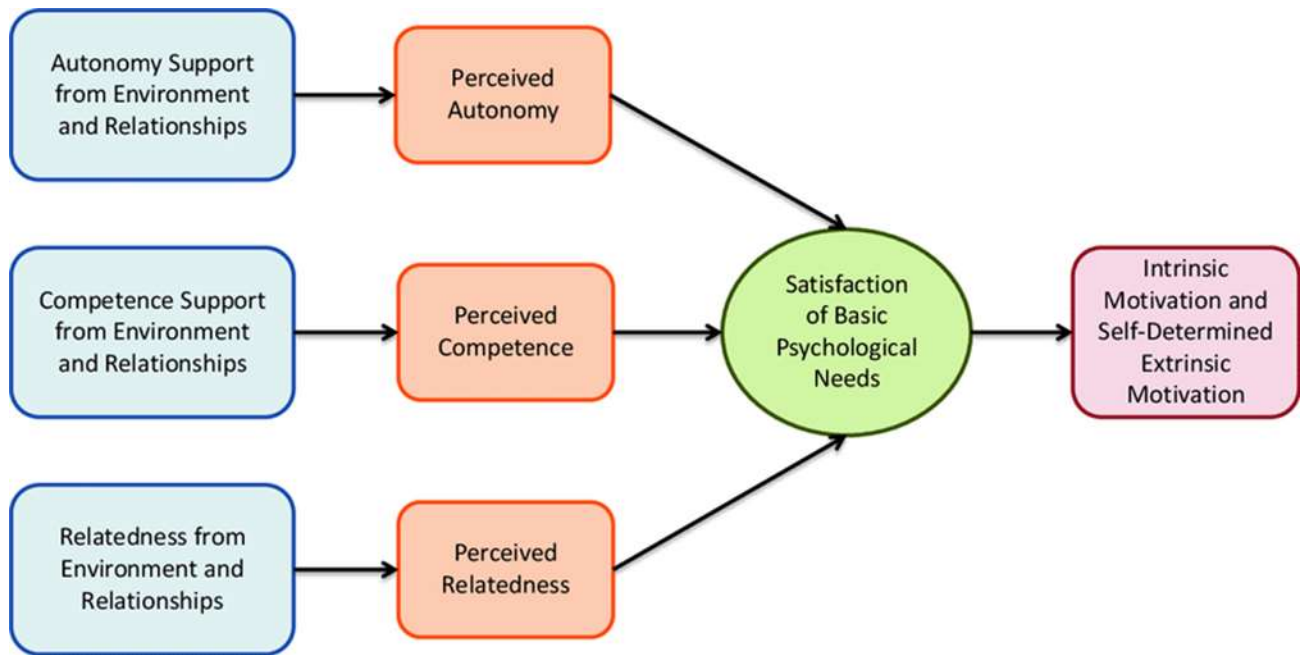
The third and final psychological need is autonomy. Van den Broeck (2016:1197) clarifies that autonomy refers to the ability to feel in charge or in control of one's behaviour and destiny. This involves self-regulation of behaviour and self-initiation (Van den Broeck, 2016:1197). Deci and Ryan (2020:3) assert that autonomy is fostered by experiences of interest and undermined by the experience of being controlled by punishment and rewards. The authors further explain that another factor supporting autonomy is 'choice'. Deci and Ryan (2020:7) elaborate that when learners experience a strong sense of choice, they feel more in control and take ownership of

their work, enhancing intrinsic motivation. Furthermore, Murayama *et al.* (2015:1248) argue that choice can facilitate performance. Feeling in control of one's behaviour is crucial for motivation; individuals are more motivated when they know they control their situations (Van den Broeck, 2016:1197). Without this feeling of control, people tend to become demotivated and may give up. The sense of autonomy, as explained above, is essential, just like the other needs. As stated by Murayama *et al.* (2015:1248), learners need to feel in charge of their destiny. The need to be in control of one's destiny and the situation is particularly important for learners. In my view, it is crucial for learners, especially those from low socio-economic backgrounds, to consistently experience the feeling of autonomy, reassuring them that they are in control of their academic achievements.

It is crucial to recognise that the three psychological needs are interdependent and do not operate in isolation. These needs are interconnected, and an individual must experience all of them to be fully self-determined (Guay, 2021:78). Deci and Ryan (2020:3) assert that if any of the three psychological needs are unmet, motivation and overall well-being are compromised. Guay (2021:80) suggests that learners who experience a positive balance in the three psychological needs also experience the most vitality, positive affect, and the lowest academic stress.

This interdependence of psychological needs is particularly significant in the context of SDT and its relevance to SDL. In the framework of SDT, the satisfaction of these basic psychological needs plays a crucial role in fostering intrinsic motivation, which is foundational to SDL. When learners experience autonomy, competence, and relatedness in their learning environments, it enhances their internal motivation, curiosity, and self-directedness in acquiring knowledge and skills.

Figure 2-1 illustrates the relationship between the three basic needs, emphasising their interdependence. The diagram also highlights how the satisfaction of these basic psychological needs leads to intrinsic motivation and self-determined extrinsic motivation. In the context of this study, the environment refers to the home and school environments of lower quintile township school learners. Understanding and nurturing these psychological needs in learners can contribute significantly to fostering a positive and conducive environment for self-directed learning.



**Figure 2-1: The internalisation continuum**

Figure adopted from (Legault, 2016:4)

Figure 2-1 illustrates the interconnected nature of the three basic psychological needs and their linear effect on intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, including self-determined extrinsic motivation. The diagram highlights how the satisfaction of these basic psychological needs leads to both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, forming a crucial link to SDL.

In summary, SDT identifies various examples of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation, showcasing how these responses influence different life domains and cognitive development (Legault, 2016:4). The theory emphasises the internal sources of motivation, such as the need for independence or knowledge acquisition (intrinsic motivation), and the external rewards that drive behaviour (extrinsic motivation) (Cherry, 2021:19). While these motivations are often perceived as distinct, human behaviour is complex, and individuals draw from multiple sources of motivation. Rather than being solely driven by intrinsic or extrinsic rewards, motivation is viewed as a continuum between self-determined and non-determined behaviours. Strictly self-determined behaviours are primarily driven by intrinsic factors, motivated by interest, enjoyment, and satisfaction (Legault, 2007:735). Understanding this continuum is crucial for comprehending how motivation influences SDL.

Extrinsic motivation can serve as a catalyst for intrinsic motivation. For instance, a student might initially study with the goal of passing an exam (extrinsic motivation). However, the prospect of receiving an award or trophy for being the best learner can provide an additional layer of motivation, contributing to intrinsic motivation. Moreover, individuals frequently engage in

behaviours when they feel a certain degree of control over those behaviours, aligning with an aspect crucial for their self-concept.

#### **2.4.4 The importance of self-determination for township learners**

The SDT holds significance not only as a motivation theory but also as a crucial framework for township learners who navigate various challenges, such as high crime rates, load shedding, and limited parental involvement, disrupting their educational journeys (Mahlaba, 2020:45). Given the multitude of challenges faced by learners in townships, including crime and inadequate educational resources, focusing solely on education becomes challenging. Geduld (2023:50) highlights the additional issue of poorly trained teachers in townships, contributing to low learner motivation. In this context, knowledge of the SDT, especially the three innate needs, is vital for educators in lower quintile schools. Educators, armed with this awareness, can strive to ensure that learners' basic psychological needs, namely autonomy, competence, and relatedness, are met.

Geduld (2023:53) underscores the SDT's perspective that an individual's social context significantly shapes their motivational regulation through the fulfilment of the three innate needs. For township learners in this study, addressing their autonomy, competence, and relatedness needs is crucial to cultivate motivation and instil a drive for academic excellence. The upcoming section will delve into the importance of these three innate needs for township learners, with a focus on the substantial role of fostering competence in helping learners achieve their educational goals.

Deci and Ryan (2020:3) assert that the need for competence is nurtured through optimal task challenges, positive feedback, and growth opportunities. To fulfil this need and recognise its importance, learners must be presented with opportunities that challenge and stimulate their intellectual capacities. Both parents and teachers play pivotal roles in addressing this competence need by offering positive feedback on learners' schoolwork and providing encouragement and support. By creating an environment that fosters competence, learners gain the confidence to interact freely with their surroundings (Deci & Ryan, 2020:3). Educators in schools should consistently provide positive feedback, even when learners exhibit imperfections, as this enhances the sense of competency and helps learners identify areas for improvement (Van den Broeck, 2016:1197).

Geduld (2023:53) highlights that autonomy pertains to the level of choice and control an individual perceives when engaging in an activity and the need to feel that the activity aligns with their values. In the context of this study, it is crucial for township learners to experience a sense of

control throughout their educational journey. This feeling of control, coupled with the recognition that education is a meaningful and value-aligned pursuit, plays a vital role in motivating learners (Du Toit-Brits, 2017:52). Van den Broeck (2016:1199) emphasises that learners' sense of autonomy is fulfilled when they perceive control over their activities and recognise that their tasks align with their life values.

Deci and Ryan (2020:3) argue that self-determination becomes challenging without a sense of connection to others. This implies that township learners also require a sense of connection and affection from others to sustain motivation. Knowledge about the SDT is crucial, as it can instil in learners a drive to achieve greatness. Deci and Ryan (2020:3) further contend that a lack of relatedness may lead people to feel disconnected from others. Considering this information, I believe it is imperative for township learners to feel connected to others, reinforcing the idea that they are not alone in their educational journey and encouraging sustained motivation.

## **2.5 The link between motivation and self-determination theory**

Fernet (2013:25) asserts a strong correlation between motivation and SDT. According to Ryan and Deci (2000:125), SDT serves as a metatheory of human motivation and personal development, indicating that motivation is a prerequisite for self-determination. Evans (2015:73) traces the origins of SDT research to the investigation of the relationship between intrinsically pleasurable or interesting tasks and those performed for reasons other than the inherent appeal of the task itself. Whether intrinsically or extrinsically motivated, both scenarios involve motivation. Intrinsic motivation arises from the inherent interest or pleasure derived from an activity, while extrinsic motivation involves external factors, such as monetary rewards.

Evans (2015:79) further underscores that self-determination demands significant motivational resources, highlighting the importance of balancing the three psychological needs according to SDT. Without this balance, individuals may struggle to maintain motivation. Deci and Ryan (2008:184) assert that SDT cannot be discussed without considering motivation, emphasising the theory's empirical basis in human motivation. The theory places a substantial focus on motivation, particularly how individuals are motivated by their three innate needs. Howard *et al.*'s (2021:1308) research supports the notion that individuals must be motivated to exhibit self-determined behaviour, reinforcing the integral link between SDT and motivation.

In essence, self-determined motivation emerges when individuals engage in activities because they genuinely want to and find personal value in doing so, as opposed to being driven by external rewards or demands. This connection between motivation and self-determination underscores the importance of recognising and nurturing individuals' underlying psychological needs to

facilitate intrinsic motivation and overall well-being (Du Toit-Brits, 2022). Numerous other theories are associated with motivation, including SDL, which will be explored in the following section.

## 2.6 Self-directed learning

The concept of SDL has historical roots dating back to 1800 in England, where terms like self-help, self-education, and self-improvement were commonly used. According to Szalay (2020), Cyril Houle's 1960 publication, "The Inquiring Mind," played a crucial role in bringing the concept of self-directed learning to the forefront. While Houle didn't frequently use the term SDL in his book, his definition laid the foundation for considering SDL a legitimate form of adult education (Szalay, 2020). Houle's work in 1961 paved the way for the term SDL.

To gain a comprehensive understanding of SDL, influential research has been conducted by various scholars, including Knowles (1975), Tough (1966, 1968, 1979, 1982), Hiemstra (1976, 1982, 2002, 2011), Guglielmino and Choy (2001), Hillard and Guglielmino (1978, 1991, 1997, 2013), Houle (1961), Durr (2000), Guglielmino (2007), Kop *et al.* (2011), and Douglass and Morris (2014), among others. While SDL has been defined in various ways, this research adopts the well-known definition provided by Knowles (1975). According to Knowles, SDL is a process in which "individuals take the initiative, with or without the help of others, in diagnosing their learning needs, formulating learning goals, identifying human and material resources for learning, choosing and implementing appropriate learning strategies, and evaluating learning outcomes" (Knowles, 1975:18)

SDL is indispensable for learners to acquire essential skills. Research by Du Toit-Brits (2019:1) emphasises the need for SDL implementation in education to prepare students for lifelong SDL, crucial beyond secondary school. Mahlaba's (2020) research on the importance of SDL in South Africa during the COVID-19 pandemic further underscores its significance. According to Mahlaba (2020:129), self-directed learners perceive learning as a way of life and a survival mechanism, making any change in their normal learning space challenging but manageable.

Merriam *et al.* (2007) outline three main SDL goals. First, to foster transformational learning, emphasising critical reflection as an intrinsic component of SDL that leads to transformational learning (Gibbons, 2020:63). Second, to promote the liberation of learning and social action as integral to SDL. Third, to enhance learners' determination in their studies. These goals are crucial for learners in township schools to set their own objectives, formulate their learning paths, and learn independently. Critical reflection supports the second and third goals and is essential for transformational learning (Gibbons, 2020:63).

Paulo Freire's work (2018) also aligns with the idea that SDL and critical reflection empower learners to equip themselves and take positive actions. Problem-based education recognising the true components of SDL is vital for fostering self-determination and self-direction, ultimately leading to transformational learning.

Furthermore, transformational learning and critical reflection enhance and support the second and third goals (Merriam *et al.*, 2007). These goals, outlined by Merriam *et al.* (2007), are crucial for developing SDL in township learners as they contribute to fostering, liberating, and intensifying learners' abilities to be self-directed. Merriam *et al.* (2012) categorise learning into five approaches: cognitivist, humanist, constructivist, behaviourist, and social learning. Among these, the cognitive and constructivist approaches are related to SDL. In the cognitivist approach, learners develop critical thinking, creative thinking, self-awareness, and self-monitoring, enhancing their learning styles.

The constructivist approach, according to Merriam *et al.* (2012), emphasises SDL as one of its most significant features. Malison (2018:1528) identifies key features suitable for self-directed learners, including the ability to apply knowledge in real life, critical thinking, and accountability for their learning. Suknaisith (2014:1677) adds that self-directed learners are independent thinkers. They perceive learning as an integral aspect of life and development, not confined to specific time periods. Timpau (2015:40) highlights the importance of SDL in cultivating independent thinking, creativity, and problem-solving skills, especially in the 21st century. SDL plays a crucial role in teaching learners how to acquire knowledge independently (Timpau, 2015:41).

### **2.6.1 The importance of self-directed learning for township learners**

SDL has been a subject of increasing interest in recent years, and the COVID-19 pandemic has underscored its critical importance in education. Mahlaba (2020:129) contends that the pandemic has introduced numerous disruptions to people's lives, compelling those in the education sector, particularly South African learners and students, to rely on their capabilities. Remote learning, an unfamiliar concept for many, became a necessity during the pandemic, and Mahlaba (2020:129) suggests that without SDL skills, learners would have struggled to adapt to this new mode of learning (Blignaut & Du Toit-Brits, 2022). Mahlaba (2020:130) further reveals that the lack of SDL skills posed a significant challenge for both learners and teachers during the pandemic, emphasising the crucial role of SDL in navigating unexpected disruptions to education.

In SDL, the onus of learning rests with the learner rather than the teacher (Mahlaba, 2020:129), shifting the focus toward empowering learners in the educational process. Van Zyl and Mentz (2019:102) highlight SDL as an essential skill for 21st-century learners, emphasising the need for deeper learning, competence in interpersonal and intrapersonal domains, and adaptability to various learning modalities, including remote and online learning. Van Zyl and Mentz (2019:69) stress that strong SDL competencies empower learners to unlock their full learning potential. SDL is considered a vital skill in the contemporary world, where individuals must take charge of their learning, adapt to change, and plan for their educational journey in digital environments (Brandt, 2020).

Van Zyl and Mentz (2019:74) highlight that SDL not only enhances learner confidence but also contributes to increased competency. Long (2000:18) underscores that learners are unlikely to be self-directed if they feel incompetent, emphasising the importance of SDL in boosting learners' confidence and fostering critical and creative thinking skills. This highlights the necessity of developing SDL skills for learners, as it not only promotes academic integrity by discouraging cheating but also encourages a thorough understanding of learning activities and assignments (Mahlaba, 2020:129). Additionally, Mahlaba (2020:130) argues that SDL is transformative in how learners perceive learning, helping them recognise the importance of education and, subsequently, the significance of SDL in their educational journey.

## **2.7 The link between self-directed learning and self-determined theory**

Brandt (2020:63) asserts that research studies on SDT have demonstrated that support for learners' psychological needs—such as autonomy, competence, and relatedness—leads to self-regulation, academic achievement, and self-directedness. This support is crucial as it establishes a connection between SDL and SDT, indicating that motivated learners possess self-directedness, self-regulation, and academic achievement. Motivated individuals, in turn, exhibit self-determination, enabling them to acquire SDL skills (Geduld, 2023: 54). Therefore, the realisation and implementation of SDT, particularly the three innate needs, contribute to learners experiencing intrinsic motivation, which positively influences their academic achievement and utilisation of SRL and SDL skills.

Kara (2012:30) emphasises that self-determination entails concepts such as self-regulation, self-driven behaviour, and self-directedness. The idea is that an individual, particularly a learner in the study's context, needs to be self-determined to be self-directed and self-regulated in their learning. Without self-determination, Kara (2012:30) argues that a learner cannot develop SDL skills.

Deci and Ryan (2015:680) state that SDT posits that individuals tend to internalise and accept as their own the values and practices to which they feel or want to feel connected. In the classroom context, Niemiece and Ryan (2009:139) further argue that learners will develop self-directedness and relatedness when they perceive that the teacher values, respects, and genuinely connects with them. This implies that, in the interplay between SDT and the SDL theory, teachers play a pivotal role in classrooms, fostering a love for education among learners. For instance, if a teacher is well-prepared, passionate about the subject, and not overly burdened by administrative duties, learners are more likely to develop an affinity for the subject, thereby enhancing self-directedness.

Li *et al.* (2022:3) argue that self-directed learners engage in positive self-evaluation of their learning skills and, guided by self-determination, set realistic goals for themselves. This perspective aligns with the assertions of Deci and Ryan (1985) in their exploration of SDL. Additionally, Luthans *et al.* (2015:85) suggest that maintaining a positive and healthy mental state is conducive to learners' ability to be self-directed in their learning. Hence, it can be inferred that learners need to be in a positive mental state to develop SDL skills effectively.

Deci and Ryan (2015:681) posit that learners who have acquired SDL skills are inherently self-determined and consequently fulfil their three basic psychological needs. They emphasise the interconnectedness of SDL and SDT, stressing that SDL involves learners taking the initiative for their own learning without external instruction. It requires a voluntary and unpressured willingness to conduct independent learning without relying on educators or adults for guidance. This underscores the idea that learners must be self-determined to willingly engage in their own learning without external instruction. Motivation plays a vital role in SDL, and its significance in the context of SDL will be explored in the subsequent section.

## **2.8 The role of motivation in self-directed learning**

As discussed in the preceding sections of this chapter, motivation in education holds a paramount position in learner development (Regan, 2003:594). Its significance is attributed to the influential role it plays in an individual's life. Regan (2003:534) elucidates that motivation is intricately linked to learning and performance outcomes, establishing a direct relationship between motivation and academic achievement. This connection implies that when learners are motivated, their enthusiasm for learning is heightened, fostering an environment conducive to SDL (Du Toit-Brits & Van Zyl, 2017).

Motivation, as discussed earlier (§ 2.2), is a process that initiates, guides, and sustains goal-oriented behaviours (Tohidi & Jabbari, 2011:820). To cultivate SDL skills, learners need to be motivated. Du Toit-Brits and Van Zyl (2017:50) posit that learner motivation is a driving force behind SDL, underscoring the pivotal role motivation plays in learners' ability to be self-directed in their academic endeavours. This implies that motivation acts as the catalyst for learners to become self-directed, propelling them to work independently, organise their tasks, and exhibit enthusiasm in their academic pursuits (Tohidi & Jabbari, 2011:820).

Research findings by Akbar *et al.* (2017:28) indicate that learners who are academically motivated tend to be more self-directed, while those lacking motivation exhibit lower levels of self-directedness. Their study further highlights the importance of motivation in the learning process, especially when learner-centered approaches provide opportunities for active participation. Akbar *et al.* (2017:30) argue that motivation can serve as a catalyst for students to achieve specific goals, such as enhancing their SDL skills. From my perspective, learners' self-directedness is closely tied to their motivation levels; academically motivated learners tend to allocate time for their studies, demonstrating consistency and persistence in pursuing their educational objectives.

Yilmaz *et al.* (2017:113) conducted an exploration into the factors influencing learners' motivation and achievement, particularly in the successful development of SDL skills. Their study identified several key factors, including parental influence and participation, family history, peer pressure, self-efficacy, teaching styles, and learning strategies, that contribute to learner motivation and SDL skills. The school environment was highlighted as a crucial element, promoting motivation when it is characterised by safety, positivity, empowerment, accessibility, and security (Yilmaz *et al.*, 2017:113). Moreover, motivation plays a progressive role in supporting SDL by enabling learners to cultivate rich, adaptable skills such as critical thinking and problem-solving, surpassing mere memorisation abilities that any learner can possess.

In a study by Khodabandehlou *et al.* (2012:85), a distinction was observed between a teacher-centred approach and SDL, with improved academic performance noted when SDL was implemented in learning environments. Suhag *et al.* (2016:101) elucidate that motivation directs individuals' behaviour towards specific goals, setting targets that individuals strive to achieve. Additionally, motivation amplifies learners' energy and effort, influencing their decision to engage or abstain from a particular task (Suhag *et al.*, 2016:101).

Canvas (2011:31) conducted a study on the motivation of Turkish primary students for science learning, revealing that motivation is indispensable for SDL. Motivated learners leverage previously acquired strategies, skills, and behaviours to facilitate new learning and performance. Without motivation, Canvas (2011:31) explains that learners cannot effectively develop SDL

because instructional teaching alone cannot guarantee SDL. The findings underscore the premise that learners must be motivated first to develop SDL skills, as instructional teaching alone cannot ensure the effective implementation of SDL in learning environments. Therefore, learners need motivation as a foundational element to support the development and implementation of SDL (Du Toit-Brits & Van Zyl, 2017). In the absence of motivation, learners may lack the intrinsic or extrinsic drive necessary for the development of SDL skills (*ibid.*).

It is crucial to investigate the relationship between motivation and self-directed learning (SDL) to determine the role of motivation in SDL. Tohidi, Jamshidi, Ahmadiania, Shahdoust, and Moonaghi (2019:22) posit that a link exists between SDL and motivation, suggesting that learners are likely to acquire SDL skills when motivated. Identifying factors related to SDL is essential for strengthening self-direction in learners (Tohidi et al., 2019:23). This implies the need to identify motivational factors, both intrinsic and extrinsic, and leverage these factors to aid learners in developing SDL. Tohidi et al. (2019:24) further suggest that most learners cultivate self-directedness due to motivation, underscoring the pivotal role of motivation in SDL.

Research by Adib *et al.* (2019:6) on the "relationship between academic motivation and self-directed learning in nursing students" emphasises that learners tend to acquire SDL skills when motivation is present. The authors contend that motivation plays a crucial role in education and is instrumental in helping learners develop SDL. Additionally, Adib *et al.* (2019:4) assert that both extrinsic and intrinsic motivations are connected to SDL, as learners' motivation can stem from various factors. The Universal College of Learning (2013:58) reinforces the importance of motivation for SDL, with their research indicating that motivated individuals are more likely to excel in acquiring SDL skills compared to those facing challenges. This demonstrates a clear link between SDL and motivation, suggesting that motivated individuals are more inclined to be self-directed in their learning.

Motivation holds particular significance for township learners, especially as they strive to become self-directed (Mahlaba, 2020). Examining the relationship between SDL and academic achievement is crucial, and the following section aims to shed light on the impact of SDL on academic success.

## **2.9 The influence of self-directed learning on academic achievement**

Research from various perspectives, including studies by Loveland *et al.* (2004), Cazan and Schiopca (2013), Tekkol and Demiral (2018), Suknaisith (2014), and Malison *et al.* (2018), among others, has consistently highlighted the strong connection between SDL and academic achievement. These studies collectively demonstrate that learners excel in their studies when

they exhibit self-directed tendencies. The findings suggest that self-directed individuals are more likely to achieve remarkable academic success, serving as a predictor of academic achievement in both traditional and distance learning contexts (Cazan & Schiopca, 2014:641). The ability to conduct their own learning is a key factor contributing to the academic success of self-directed learners, as it implies taking accountability for their learning progress (Cazan & Schiopca, 2014:641).

According to Malison (2018:1540), the most important characteristics of SDL include open-mindedness, a desire to learn, self-discipline, and self-management. Malison emphasises that learners must possess discipline, a thirst for learning, and effective task management to achieve positive academic performance. As self-directed learners are responsible for their learning, they need to utilise SDL in a manner that fosters success in their academic endeavours.

I position the impact of SDL on academic achievement as particularly crucial for township secondary learners, given its inherent benefits such as increased confidence and elevated self-esteem. SDL is essential for these learners as it fosters independence in learning activities, reducing their dependence on teachers for tasks related to their studies, including studying and designing learning activities. The achievement of SDL is facilitated by the support learners receive from their parents and teachers. Both of these key stakeholders play vital roles in assisting learners in developing SDL capabilities. Teachers, especially, have a significant impact on learners, and their involvement during the didactic situation is pivotal. The next section will delve into the role of teachers in supporting learners academically.

## **2.10 The role of teachers in motivating learners towards developing self-directed learning skills**

Agustiani (2019:290) emphasises the pivotal role of teachers in influencing learners to engage in the learning process effectively. This underscores the importance of teachers positioning themselves and employing teaching strategies that motivate learners. Additionally, Durisic and Bunijevac (2017:129) highlight the significant impact of teachers in elevating learners' motivation levels, suggesting that teachers directly influence the motivation levels of their students. Johnson (2017:45) contends that a teacher's motivation, enthusiasm, energy, and goal-driven approach contribute to fostering a passion for learning in learners, motivating them to develop the skills necessary for self-directed learning.

Yilmaz, Sahin, and Turgut (2017:113) assert that teachers are integral to the school environment and play a crucial role in optimizing learner motivation. The enthusiasm, qualifications, teaching style, subject knowledge, and methodology employed by teachers are identified by Yilmaz *et al.*

(2017:112) as factors influencing learner motivation. Educated, enthusiastic, and motivated teachers are more likely to produce self-directed learners, as these qualities positively impact the motivation levels of students. Conversely, a lack of teacher motivation or subject knowledge may hinder learner motivation by limiting their exposure to relevant content.

Moreover, maintaining a positive attitude and creating a welcoming classroom atmosphere are crucial aspects of a teacher's role. A positive environment contributes to learners' happiness and enjoyment in the learning process, fostering motivation and enthusiasm for education. This positive influence is particularly significant in lower quintile secondary township schools, contributing to the development of SDL skills among learners. In essence, a teacher's attitude is a key factor in cultivating self-directed learners in the context of lower quintile secondary township schools, encouraging active involvement, motivation, and a positive approach to education.

To facilitate the development of SDL skills in learners, Johnson (2017:47) advocates for teachers to establish a connection between learning and learners' personal experiences. Making learning activities relevant to daily life helps learners perceive the significance of classroom activities in their lives, encouraging them to see the connection between their existing knowledge and areas where they can further develop, ultimately fostering SDL (Johnson, 2017:47). Ferlazzo (2015:25) emphasises the role of teachers in providing positive feedback when learners excel in their studies. Positive remarks serve as encouragement and motivation for learners to continue improving.

Teachers play a crucial role in assigning appropriate responsibilities to learners. Johnson (2017:47) suggests that increasing learners' responsibilities and involvement in their learning, including allowing them to set their own goals and objectives, contributes to the development of SDL skills. Research by Schuitema *et al.* (2016:38) supports this, indicating that a teacher's ability to consistently provide positive feedback and acknowledge learners' efforts influences their performance, emotional well-being, and motivation.

Du Toit-Brits (2019:4) highlights the importance of teachers actively supporting learners in developing SDL. If teachers do not make efforts to facilitate SDL, it may negatively impact both teachers and learners, creating a cycle of challenges in the teaching and learning process of SDL. The research emphasises that teachers need to understand how their expectations influence learners' motivation to become self-directed for effective SDL (Du Toit-Brits, 2019:4). Additionally, Geduld (2017:5) and Tokan (2019:5) argue that teachers, through their quality and competency, significantly influence learners' motivation and behaviour. A motivated and competent teacher positively affects learners, fostering an environment conducive to SDL and influencing learner achievement.

El-Nabawi and Shaalan (2019:551) advocate that teachers play a pivotal role in fostering SDL by adopting learner-centred teaching strategies. Instead of relying on traditional, teacher-centred approaches, teachers can employ methods such as debates, brainstorming, and group work. This shift allows for the cultivation of critical thinking skills in learners and transforms the teacher into a facilitator rather than a dominant figure in the classroom. Hiemstra (1994), as cited by El-Nabawi and Shaalan (2019:551), identifies key roles for teachers to motivate learners toward SDL, namely that of positive attitude generator, creativity and critical thinker stimulator, resource locator, and evaluation stimulator.

These roles position the teacher as a guide and facilitator, empowering learners to take an active role in the learning process. Nevertheless, El-Nabawi and Shaalan (2019:551) stress the importance of establishing boundaries between learners' decisions and choices regarding their goals and the objectives outlined in the teaching plans to ensure that learners adhere to the curriculum and maintain a balance between the excitement of learner-centred approaches and the structured educational framework. For example, setting boundaries prevents learners from deviating excessively, such as insisting on frequent debates or relying solely on group discussions, ensuring alignment with the curriculum.

Agustiani (2019:292) emphasises that teachers must actively support and motivate students to develop and take control of their learning strategies, particularly their metacognitive strategies, which teach them how to learn. Understanding students' activities outside of school and their interests is crucial in determining their engagement with SDL, as highlighted by Agustiani's (2019:293) research on maximising teachers' roles in developing self-directed learners. In the contemporary educational landscape, students bring diverse personal experiences to the classroom, and teachers must leverage this by activating prior learning and encouraging further exploration beyond the classroom (Agustiani, 2019:289).

The recognition of students' existing knowledge fosters enthusiasm and interest in independently learning new things. Teachers should acknowledge and build upon this prior knowledge to create an environment that encourages students to be more self-directed in their learning. In conclusion, it is evident that teachers play a pivotal role in motivating learners to implement SDL, even in the context of township schools. The attitudes, motivation levels, and enthusiasm of teachers significantly contribute to developing SDL readiness among learners in lower quintile township schools. Teachers, along with parents, should model self-directed learning behaviour and employ effective strategies to cultivate SDL skills in learners. The exposure to SDL strategies is crucial especially for township learners, as it not only facilitates the development of SDL skills but also helps them recognise the importance of SDL for their education and equip them with the resilience to overcome the challenges in their environment.

## **2.11 Teaching strategies to enhance self-directed learning**

Lin and Tai (2015:395) trace the origin of the word *strategy* to the Greek term *strategia*, signifying a plan of action to achieve specific goals. In an educational context, Khalid *et al.* (2020:137) emphasise the importance of well-planned teaching strategies that consider the conscious attitudes of learners, such as the incorporation of thought-provoking questions into the curriculum. According to Khalid *et al.* (2020:137), learning strategies play a vital role in helping learners acquire new knowledge and fostering an interest in further learning. This is emphasised through Littlefield *et al.*'s (2004:49) model for intrinsic academic motivation, which outlines various strategies to enhance intrinsic motivation.

The model, initially tested on fourth and fifth graders, aimed to assess its motivational effectiveness. The model posits that children's motivation is organised into three constructs: reflection of interest, the degree of control derived from the activity, and the optimal level of arousal associated with the activity for engagement. The following section will describe this model in detail.

### **2.11.1 A model for strategies to enhance intrinsic motivation**

The following aspects are key considerations for a model intended for enhanced learner intrinsic motivation:

- Initially, when presented with a learning activity, a learner assesses its level of interest. If the learner finds the activity interesting, they will actively engage in it.
- In cases where the learning activity is not inherently interesting, the learner evaluates the activity based on the stimulation it offers (such as curiosity or challenge) and the personal control it provides (e.g., not too difficult).
- If the learner perceives the activity as controllable and stimulating, they will consider it interesting and choose to participate. However, if information becomes insufficient, the learner may disengage unless extrinsic motivations (e.g., rewards or monetary incentives) influence them to continue.
- When an activity is consistently perceived as controllable and stimulating, the learner establishes it as interesting. Consequently, the learner is more likely to engage in the activity consistently over time.

- Conversely, if activities initially deemed interesting provide little control or stimulation over time, the learner will remove them from their mental list of interesting activities, losing interest in those activities (Littlefield *et al.*, 2004:49).

This model of intrinsic academic motivation is crucial for understanding the mechanisms that lead to intrinsic motivation. It highlights the role of interest, stimulation, and personal control in fostering and sustaining learners' intrinsic motivation. Teachers can leverage this model to encourage intrinsic motivation among their students (Littlefield *et al.*, 2004:49).

Various strategies exist for fostering SDL in learners, such as experiential learning. With this learning approach, Douglas and Morris (2014:16) propose that self-directed learners can play a role in teaching their peers by sharing the knowledge they independently acquired. Group work emerges as an example of an effective strategy for enhancing SDL, where learners collaborate to solve problems, thereby enhancing their own learning while gaining new insights (Douglas & Morris, 2014:16). Khalid *et al.* (2020:137) underscore the favourable influence of collaborative learning on SDL, characterising it as an approach wherein a group of learners collaborates to tackle specific problems. This strategy not only fosters creativity, critical thinking, and emotional resilience but also introduces social challenges, collectively contributing to the overall enhancement of SDL (Laal & Mozhgan, 2012:492).

Rampai (2015:800) suggests that utilising social media, such as blogs, and general media exposure, is an effective means to enhance SDL. Social media presence can encode the knowledge of a self-directed learner in a novel way, fostering intrinsic motivation (Rampai, 2015:802). Creativity is identified by Morris (2020:169) as a crucial aspect for fostering SDL, particularly in the 21st century where creativity is essential for learner motivation. Morris (2020:169) advocates for tasks that stimulate creativity and critical thinking, asserting that this approach aligns with the characteristics of SDL.

In summary, these strategies, including collaborative learning, social media exposure, and fostering creativity, contribute to learners' motivation and deeper thinking, thereby promoting SDL. Teachers and parents can play pivotal roles in incorporating these strategies into the learning environment to nurture self-directed learners.

Morris (2020:172) proposes experiential and problem-based learning as teaching strategies to enhance SDL. In the rapidly evolving 21st-century world, individuals need problem-solving skills and the ability to collaborate effectively. Morris argues that the strategies presented above can equip learners with the necessary skills to actively engage and participate in any context. Additionally, studies by Isaak *et al.* (2018) and Scogin *et al.* (2017) on experiential learning reveal

that creative solutions emerge when learners collaborate. Working together not only helps learners build their own motivation but also allows them to be motivated by their peers. Morris (2020:172) also advocates for scaffolding as a strategy to enhance SDL. In this approach, the teacher supports the learner by sharing control of directing the learning process. Scaffolding, rooted in Vygotsky's (1978) *zone of proximal development* concept, empowers learners to take control and responsibility for their learning, ultimately fostering SDL skills.

Similarly, stages or models of SDL by Grow (1991) suggest that a teacher can provide direct instruction to assist the learner, but the teacher's involvement diminishes as the learner becomes more self-directed (Morris, 2020:173). Strategies like group discussions, scaffolding, and problem-based learning enable learners to develop SDL skills and adapt to learning independently without relying on educators. Meta-cognitive strategies, such as critical thinking and problem-based learning, also contribute to enhancing SDL skills in learners. All stakeholders in education, including parents, play crucial roles in supporting learners to become self-directed. Parental involvement, especially for learners from township schools, will be explored in the next section.

## **2.12 The role of parental motivation in supporting their children to be self-directed**

Durisic and Bunijevac (2017:142) emphasise the pivotal role of parental involvement in a learner's educational development. This involvement begins with parents creating a safe and supportive environment for learning at home. Durisic and Bunijevac stress the importance of education extending beyond the school and continuing within the home, where parents provide necessary assistance (*ibid.*). Furthermore, the Center on Education Policy (CET, 2012:1) underscores that extensive research consistently shows a strong correlation between family background factors—such as parents' educational level and income—and learner achievement. This relationship indicates that learner performance tends to improve when parents actively engage in their children's education.

CET (2012:1) further reveals that parental involvement not only contributes to educational development but also fosters intrinsic motivation in learners. Numerous studies, including those by Henderson & Berla (1994), Greenwood & Hickman (1991), Epstein (2009), Rumberger *et al.* (1990), Swap (1993), and Whitaker and Fiore (2002), have demonstrated an increase in learners' academic achievement where parents are actively involved. According to Geduld and Mdakane (2020:359), learners acquire new academic behaviours and skills by observing their teachers, peers, and parents. Parental involvement in motivating children to become self-directed can manifest in various ways. For instance, Geduld and Mdakane (2020:359) suggest that parents

who turn off the television to assist their children with homework are modelling how to structure a learning environment, maintain control, and focus without distractions.

The DoE (2016:6), in its guidelines on parental contribution, emphasises that learners' behaviour and performance are directly influenced by multiple spheres, which includes the relationship with parents or legal guardians and the level of motivation they provide to the learner. Furthermore, the DBE (2016:7) encourages and outlines proactive ways for parents to be actively involved in and motivate their children: Firstly, understanding their children's learning needs is crucial for parents to engage effectively. Parents should foster a positive attitude towards learners, teachers, and school staff. Secondly, parents are encouraged to instil discipline and promote good study routines in their children. Thirdly, parents should consistently encourage learners to study and aspire to achieve greatness (*ibid.*). These guidelines articulate essential expectations for both parents and legal guardians that provide a framework for their involvement in their children's education.

Research consistently demonstrates that children are more likely to succeed and perform well when their parents or legal guardians are actively involved in their education (DBE, 2016:8). By displaying interest in their children's education, learners are likely to develop a greater appreciation for education and understand its significance in their lives. According to the Centre on Education Policy (CET, 2012:1), a strong relationship exists between engaged parents and learners' academic performance. In the context of the study's problem, learners face challenges in finding motivation and developing SDL skills when parents are not actively involved. A lack of parental involvement can impede a learner's progress in developing SDL skills.

The DBE (2017:8) emphasises that parents do not necessarily need formal education to assist their children with schoolwork. Parental support can take various forms beyond academics, including social and emotional support (DBE, 2017:9). This implies that parents can be involved by offering support and demonstrating love and interest in their child's education. Various forms of parental involvement include assisting with homework, attending meetings regularly, and monitoring and reviewing their child's schoolwork (Durisic & Bunijevac, 2017:141).

Durisic and Bunijevac (2017:141) highlight the significance of a teacher-parent relationship in supporting parents in their involvement in their children's education. This relationship serves as a valuable resource for parents to better understand how they can contribute to their children's academic success. Teachers can provide parents with activities that learners can engage in at home, fostering enthusiasm for schoolwork. These activities offer additional support to learners from different perspectives, enhancing their overall educational experience. The collaborative

efforts of teachers and parents create a more comprehensive support system for learners, facilitating academic achievement.

Despite the growing recognition of the importance of parental involvement, several barriers hinder parents from actively participating in their children's education. Baeck (2010:551) identifies factors such as insufficient financial resources, low educational attainment, and busy schedules as impediments to parental involvement. These challenges make it challenging for parents to engage in their children's education. Additionally, some parents may refrain from involvement due to their own negative experiences with education, which may impact their self-esteem (Baeck, 2010:552; Geduld & Mdakane, 2020:330). Akbar *et al.*'s (2017:28) research on variables affecting student motivation based on academic publications further emphasises that a lack of parental involvement negatively affects learners, who could otherwise benefit significantly from active parental engagement.

Parents play a pivotal role in their children's education, and overcoming barriers to their involvement is crucial. Durisic and Bunijevac (2017:146) advocate for schools to establish open and welcoming environments where teachers and staff are responsive to parents. They propose a shift in perspective, urging schools to view parents as partners rather than clients, fostering a collaborative approach to help children achieve their educational goals. Building strong relationships between parents and teachers is essential, therein a supportive network that empowers parents, especially those with limited education, to actively participate in their children's education.

In conclusion, the comprehensive exploration of relevant scholarly sources on motivation, SDL, and SDT underscores the intricate and dynamic relationships among these fundamental components in education and personal growth. Intrinsic motivation emerges as a key driver in facilitating SDL, empowering individuals to take charge of their educational pursuits and personal development. SDT provides a valuable conceptual framework that underscores the core elements of autonomy, competence, and relatedness in understanding human motivation. This body of research essentialises creating educational environments that nurture intrinsic motivation and self-directed learning, leading to heightened learner engagement and personal fulfilment. As education continues to evolve, this knowledge base serves as a foundational resource for educators, researchers, and policymakers committed to enhancing learning experiences across all age groups.

### **2.13 Summary**

This chapter was driven by the findings of a literature review, focusing on the role of motivation in shaping learners' capacity for SDL in low-quintile secondary township schools. It laid the groundwork by delving into two key motivational theories: SDT and SDL theory. Furthermore, the chapter explored the influence of parental motivation in supporting children's development of self-directed skills. Despite indicating that there is ongoing work needed to foster self-directed skills in learners, especially in low-quintile township schools, the literature also demonstrated that achieving these skills and motivation is feasible, even if initially challenging. Chapter 3 will detail the research approach that forms the basis for this study.

# CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

## 3.1 Introduction

In the preceding chapter, an extensive review of prior research and literature pertaining to motivation, SDL, and was presented. This chapter delves into the methodological facets of the study, encompassing the research design (3.2), the strategy of inquiry, the research paradigm (3.4), population and sampling (3.5), as well as the contextual details of the school (3.5.1), biographical information of participants (3.6.2), and the delineation of the research sites (3.6.3). The chapter also elucidates the methods employed for data collection (3.7) and the corresponding processes (3.8). Additionally, the researcher's role is expounded upon (3.9), and the study's adherence to quality criteria and ethical considerations (3.10) is clarified. Finally, a concise summary of the chapter is provided (3.11).

Figure 3.1 provides a synopsis of the research process that was followed for the research.



**Figure 3-1: The research process (Booyesen, 2016:54)**

## 3.2 Research paradigm

Muzari *et al.* (2022:16) define a research paradigm as the foundational framework that underpins any research endeavour, providing patterns of understanding and beliefs shaping the practices and theories of the study (Muzari *et al.*, 2022:16). In this study, an interpretivist paradigm served as the guiding framework. Interpretivism, as explained by Creswell *et al.* (2010:60), underscores

individuals' capacity to construct meaning. Moreover, interpretivists posit that reality is not objectively determined but is socially constructed through human interaction (Creswell *et al.*, 2010:60). According to Kivunja and Kuyini (2017:28), key characteristics of interpretivism include the significance of context in knowledge acquisition, the interdependence of cause and effect, the essential role of contextual factors in knowledge pursuit, and the acknowledgment of multiple socially constructed realities.

These interpretivist characteristics provided a foundation for the study, ensuring focus and alignment with the research problem at hand. Through the lens of interpretivism, the importance of contextual factors in the pursuit of knowledge became evident. This research paradigm was particularly suited to the study's exploration of teachers' and parents' or legal guardians' perspectives on the role of motivation in cultivating self-directed learners in lower quintile secondary township schools, drawing insights from their lived experiences.

Being an interpretivist researcher, I recognise that reality is subjective rather than objective and is socially constructed. Consequently, I opted for semi-structured interviews as the data collection method. This choice allowed me to interpret, comprehend, and enable participants to articulate their understanding of the study's phenomena through their lived experiences, facilitating the expression of their views and experiences freely. Embracing this interpretivist paradigm, I sought to interpret, comprehend, and elucidate participants' perceptions concerning the significance of motivation in shaping self-directed learners. The approach also allowed me to ascribe meaning to the participants' insights, providing a richer understanding of the study's context.

### **3.3 Research design: qualitative research design**

Creswell *et al.* (2018:72) define a research design as a strategic plan that navigates from underlying philosophical perspectives to the selection of participants, data collection methods, and data analysis in a study. This research adopted a qualitative design, which, according to Hancock *et al.* (2019:52), seeks to gather rich descriptive data about a specific event or setting to enhance understanding. Additionally, qualitative research involves systematic data collection and analysis methods, focusing on the methodology, methods, and processes used in a study (Maree, 2020:82).

In the realm of qualitative research, interviews serve as essential tools for data collection (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011:56; Creswell *et al.*, 2010:51). Interviews enable researchers to gather data on social reality from individuals, groups, artifacts, and texts in any medium. Qualitative research, as emphasised by Merriam (2012:201), entails the collection and analysis of non-numerical data to fully comprehend a specific population's experiences, concepts, or opinions. Furthermore,

Hancock *et al.* (2019:52) agree that qualitative research focuses on understanding the occurrences of social worlds through explanations of social phenomena, and its main objectives concern enhancing understanding, particularly regarding why social experiences unfold the way they do in the world (Hancock *et al.*, 2019:52).

Qualitative research was an appropriate methodology for this study as it aimed to explore a complex social construct or phenomenon—in this case, the role of motivation in developing self-directed learners in lower quintile secondary township schools. The specific aim was to delve into the real-life situations of participants, seeking to understand their perceptions of how motivation contributes to the development of self-directed learners in such schools. As Creswell *et al.* (2018:53) suggest, qualitative researchers are interested in how individuals organise their surroundings and make sense of them through social roles, rituals, symbols, and more, which is in line with the aim of this research.

Another characteristic of qualitative research, as highlighted by Muzari *et al.* (2022:15), is its connection to a natural setting as the source of data. This aligns with the approach taken in this study, where data were collected directly from the natural settings of participants. The research ensured that data were obtained in the real context of the situations being studied. Zireva (2013:58) emphasises the humanistic nature of qualitative research, where the human aspect is preserved and represented through the words of the participants. In line with this, the data for this study were transcribed verbatim, and the participants' perceptions were reported accordingly.

The above data concerned selected research participants' perspectives on their reality, which were gathered through verbal interactions in interviews, thus capturing the human aspect of the study. The qualitative research design allowed for the acquisition of descriptive data, focusing on natural settings such as schools, classrooms, and learners' homes, given the significance of parental/legal guardian opinions in the study.

### **3.4 Strategy of inquiry: basic qualitative research**

As previously mentioned, this study employed a basic qualitative research design, as defined by Merriam (2009:3). Merriam (2009:3) characterises basic qualitative studies as rooted in phenomenology, symbolic interactionism, and constructivism. Researchers opt for basic qualitative studies when they aim to explore (a) how individuals interpret their lived experiences, (b) how their worlds are constructed, and (c) the meaning people attribute to their experiences (*ibid.*). The primary goal of these studies is to gain an understanding of how individuals make sense of their lives and experiences. Basic qualitative studies are particularly well-suited for probing educational problems in depth.

In this study, the characteristics of a basic qualitative design were harnessed to extract the perspectives and meanings that participants associated with their experiences concerning the role of motivation in developing self-directed learners in low-quintile secondary township schools. The subsequent section will provide a detailed discussion of the study participants.

### **3.5 Participant selection**

#### **3.5.1 Population and sampling**

Maree (2019:33) defines a population as the aggregate or totality of all objects or subjects in a research study. For this research, the selected population comprises teachers and parents or legal guardians of learners in the two secondary schools situated in Sebokeng District 8.

#### **3.5.2 Sampling**

Bhat (2016:68) defines a sample as a group of people, objects, or gadgets selected from a larger population for measurement. In this study, purposive sampling was employed. Creswell (2018:24) emphasises that purposive sampling is not aimed at providing a representative sample but rather focuses on a specific phenomenon or process. Creswell *et al.* (2020:123) assert that purposive sampling is employed in exceptional situations where the selection is done with a specific purpose in mind. In this research, purposive sampling was chosen as it best suited the study due to the particular purpose in mind for selecting the participants.

The selection of teachers was crucial due to their valuable insights derived from experience in teaching learners influenced by various contextual factors throughout their careers. Parents were chosen for their potential knowledge of factors affecting learners' motivation and SDL behaviours.

The study took place in Sebokeng, Gauteng Province, focusing on two public secondary schools labelled as School A and School B for anonymity. The selection of these schools was based on their status as public schools in the area. As detailed in Chapter 1, ten teachers and ten parents/legal guardians from the same classrooms in Schools A and B were chosen for the study. To avoid complications related to strong academic obligations in higher grades, particularly in preparing learners for their National Senior Certificate final examination, a Grade 10 class was selected in both schools.

Permission to conduct the research was obtained from the Gauteng Provincial DoE. Subsequently, a colleague pursuing a master's degree acted as an independent person to recruit participants. The independent person sought approval from the principals of School A and School B, secondary schools, and explained the study's purpose during a school meeting. The independent person recruited participants, explaining that only permanent Grade 10 teachers

were eligible, with the first ten indicating willingness to participate being selected. The independent person also sought permission to have the school governing body (SGB) represented, as ten parents of Grade 10 learners were expected to volunteer. Parents were informed through the SGB communication channel, and those interested were requested to provide their names to the independent person for easier contact.

Informed consent documents provided to participants outlined the study's purpose and expectations. The study aimed for a sample of twenty participants, including ten teachers and ten parents. The next section will discuss the inclusion and exclusion criteria that guided the research.

### **3.5.2.1 Inclusion criteria**

As outlined in Chapter 1, the study focused exclusively on the Sedibeng West Department of Education District 8. Inclusion criteria involved qualified and permanently appointed secondary school teachers currently teaching grade 10. Additionally, parents or legal guardians with learners still enrolled in Grade 10 were included.

### **3.5.2.2 Exclusion criteria**

The exclusion criteria for this study were as follows: Educational districts in Gauteng outside of Sedibeng D8 were excluded. Temporary and unqualified teachers were excluded. Teachers not currently teaching at School A and School B Secondary School were excluded. Principals and learners were excluded from participating in the study. Additionally, parents or legal guardians without Grade 10 learners at School A or School B Secondary School were excluded from the research.

### **3.5.3 School's contextual information**

Schools A and B are located in the Vaal Triangle within the Sebokeng township. Both schools fall under quintile three. School A has an enrolment of 870 learners, while School B has 1450 learners. Despite high learner enrolment, both schools face challenges related to facilities such as science laboratories, school halls, and classrooms. Both schools encounter issues like power and water shortages, lack of sports facilities, and limited computer laboratories. Common social challenges include gangsterism, high crime levels, and elevated rates of teenage pregnancy. Furthermore, both schools are non-fee-paying and do not accommodate learners with disabilities due to the lack of disability-friendly facilities, including wheelchair ramps and special toilets. The language of instruction in both schools is English, with Sesotho and IsiZulu used as second languages, given that the majority of learners speak Sotho and Zulu. The next section will provide details on the participants' biographical information.

### 3.6 Biographical information of the participants

**Table 3-1: School teachers' biographical information**

Teacher	Gender	Years of teaching experience	Grade	Subject teaching
		10		
Teacher 1	Male	14		Geography
Teacher 2	Male	29		Life Orientation
Teacher 3	Female	40		Sesotho
Teacher 4	Female	32		History
Teacher 5	Male	22		Life Orientation

According to Table 3-1, participants from School A predominantly have experience in teaching in the Further Education and Training phase. The average teaching experience of those from School A who teach Grade 10 was 29 years. Additionally, the study saw more male participants than female participants from School A.

**Table 3-2: School parents' biographical information**

Parent	Gender	Age	Occupation	Relationship with child
Parent 1	Male	52	Teacher	Parent
Parent 2	Male	51	Municipal worker	Parent
Parent 3	Female	48	A general worker at the school	Parent
Parent 4	Male	55	Self-employed (operates a take-away outlet)	Parent

<b>Parent 5</b>	Male	59	General worker (Primary school)	Parent
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Referring to Table 3-2, it is evident that all parents from School A were biological parents and not legal guardians. The table also illustrates the diverse occupations and employment status of parents from School A. Additionally, it indicates that only one parent from School A was below the age of 52, and there was only one female among the parents willing to participate.

**Table 3-3: School B teachers' contextual information**

<b>Teacher</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Years of teaching experience Grade 10</b>	<b>Subject teaching FET</b>
<b>Teacher 1</b>	Female	10	Life Orientation
<b>Teacher 2</b>	Female	14	English First Additional language
<b>Teacher 3</b>	Female	8	English
<b>Teacher 4</b>	Male	7	Life Sciences
<b>Teacher 5</b>	Male	17	English

Based on the information from Table 3-3, it can be concluded that teachers from School B had the least years of experience teaching Grade 10. The average years of teaching Grade 10 was ten years compared to School A. There were also more women than men who participated in the study.

**Table 3-4: School B parents' biographical information**

<b>Parent</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Relationship with child</b>
<b>Parent 1</b>	Female	55	Unemployed	Parent

<b>Parent 2</b>	Female	53	Teacher	Parent
<b>Parent 3</b>	Male	44	Teacher	Parent
<b>Parent 4</b>	Male	46	Unemployed	Legal Guardian
<b>Parent 5</b>	Male	51	Cleaner at the bank	Legal Guardian

Referring to Table 3-4, it is evident that not all parents from School B were biological parents; two of them were legal guardians. Additionally, the table indicates that one parent and one legal guardian from School B were unemployed during the study period.

### **3.7 Data collection**

Data from teachers and parents/legal guardians were collected through semi-structured face-to-face individual interviews. This method is commonly employed in research to gather participants' feelings, thoughts, and opinions on a specific topic (Creswell *et al.*, 2020:93). Teachers and parents were administered different interview schedules. The semi-structured face-to-face individual interviews with teachers and parents were designed to capture their views and perspectives on the role of motivation in developing self-directed learners in lower quintile secondary township schools. These interviews provided a guided platform for parents and teachers to articulate their opinions and allowed for the collection of in-depth information from the participants.

#### **3.7.1 Data collection procedure followed for semi-structured face-to-face individual interviews**

To ensure the acquisition of rich data, semi-structured face-to-face individual interviews were conducted, employing well-constructed questions. According to Creswell (2014:191), various interview types, such as focus groups, one-on-one, internet, telephonic, and face-to-face interviews, are available to researchers. For this study, face-to-face interviews were chosen as the preferred method. This approach facilitated spontaneous and natural conversation during the semi-structured face-to-face individual interviews, contributing to participants' confidence in the research process. Prior to formulating the interview questions, consultation with study leaders and experts in SDL and motivation was undertaken to ensure that questions were accurate and relevant to the study. The construction of semi-structured face-to-face individual interview questions was guided by the research questions to be addressed.

As emphasised by McMillan and Schumacher (2014:7), semi-structured interviews enable participants to express their views and experiences openly, fostering a depth of understanding not achievable through other interview formats. In line with Creswell's (2020:94) recommendation, permission to record the interviews was obtained from participants through an informed consent process. The importance of this aspect of the semi-structured face-to-face individual interview process was emphasised to participants.

Interviews with parents were conducted at the nearest community library, while teacher interviews took place in the school's teacher library. Each participant underwent one semi-structured face-to-face individual interview lasting 30 to 45 minutes, with only the participant and the researcher present during the interviews.

### **3.8 Data analysis**

Data analysis, as defined by Johnson and Christensen (2018:588), involves creating meaning from raw data. Expanding on this definition, Creswell (2018:143) explains that qualitative researchers generate categories, themes, and patterns by organising information into relevant units. Therefore, the study employed an inductive qualitative analysis approach, as recommended by Creswell *et al.* (2010:90). Inductive analysis relies on inductive reasoning, allowing themes to emerge from raw data through repeated examination.

Leedy and Ormrod (2014:143) outline five data analysis steps, all of which were applied in this study.

The first step of Leedy and Ormrod involves organising details logically. I meticulously organised the details, typing up audiotaped recordings and written notes in Word documents. Subsequently, I transcribed each semi-structured interview after thorough listening, involving multiple iterations of reviewing the audiotapes for accuracy.

The choice of inductive analysis was driven by its ability to allow findings to emerge directly from participants, shedding light on frequent, significant, and dominant themes present in the raw data.

In step two of the analysis, I organised the preliminary data chronologically, facilitating easy retrieval when needed. Step three involved identifying preliminary categories likely to aid in coding the data. During this step, I pinpointed potential ways of coding and categorising the data, such as under categories of participants' beliefs, values, emotions, and actions, which contributed to the establishment of preliminary categories.

Using the meaningful bits from step three, step four entailed interpreting the collected data. Again, I interpreted and re-interpreted the data to ensure no data was left out. As a result, the fourth step

entailed identifying patterns, underlying themes, and groupings. At this stage, common themes, categories, and sub-categories were discovered.

Step five concludes the analysis process, encompassing the synthesis, generalisations, and inferences derived from the data. The discussion of the analysed data is presented in Chapter 4.

The role of the researcher will be discussed in the next section.

### **3.9 My role as a researcher**

The researcher holds a crucial role in the investigation as the custodian of the research, but the participants are equally vital. The researcher seeks to explore participants' thoughts and feelings regarding the role of motivation in developing self-directed learners in lower quintile secondary township schools. Hence, maintaining an ethical relationship and avoiding actions that could compromise the study's credibility are paramount. Permission was obtained from various stakeholders, including the Gauteng Provincial DoE, teachers, and parents. The researcher compiled interview questions, collected data through interviews, and analysed the data, ultimately reporting the research findings and recommendations. The quality criteria and ethical considerations that guided the study will be discussed in the following section.

### **3.10 Trustworthiness**

The level of belief in the researcher's results is termed trustworthiness (Litchman, 2013:292). In qualitative research, trustworthiness involves the confidence in the data, methods, interpretation, and procedures employed by the researcher, rendering the research worthy of consideration by readers (Maree, 2020:57). Ensuring credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, along with utilising triangulation, contributes to the trustworthiness of the study, as elucidated in the following sections.

#### **3.10.1 Credibility**

Credibility, defined as the "truth of the findings of particular research" (Moon *et al.*, 2016:17), involves transparently explaining research procedures to participants, making collected data available for reanalysis, acknowledging biases, and devising methods to scrutinise the relationship between evidence and assertions (Starman, 2013:41). Participants were informed about the significance of the research and the need for maintaining a credible presence. To ensure credibility, rigorous analysis and reanalysis of the data were conducted, categorising it in a recurring order.

### **3.10.2 Transferability**

Transferability, as defined by Lorelli *et al.* (2017:3), refers to the applicability of research in other contexts or settings. Korstjens and Moser (2017:121) elaborate that transferability involves the extent to which the results of qualitative research can be applied to different contexts. To enhance the judgment of transferability, a potential user relies on thick description (Korstjens & Moser, 2017:3). In this study, I ensured transferability by providing a rich description, allowing readers to comprehend the context thoroughly. I also presented events with interpretation to ensure a nuanced understanding of participants' perspectives and emotions, capturing them as they are.

### **3.10.3 Dependability**

Dependability, as asserted by Moon *et al.* (2016:2), pertains to the consistency and reliability of research findings, emphasising the thorough documentation of research procedures for external scrutiny, critique, and auditability. The concept also involves assessing whether the research findings would remain unchanged if the study were replicated with the same participants (Moon *et al.*, 2016:2). In this study, dependability was ensured through a meticulous description of the research methods, contributing to the transparency and reliability of the research process.

### **3.10.4 Confirmability**

Confirmability, as elucidated by Korstjens and Moser (2017:121), addresses the extent to which other researchers can affirm the study's conclusions. It emphasises demonstrating that both the data and the interpretations of findings are derived directly from the data, without influence from the researcher's imagination. Throughout the research, conscious efforts were made to avoid bias, ensuring that the study's findings were solely based on the participants' experiences rather than the researcher's preconceptions. Confirmability was maintained by accurately representing the participants' perspectives without personal interpretation.

The study adhered to ethical considerations outlined by the Faculty of Education Ethics (EduREC), ensuring that ethical standards were followed in the research process. Ethical considerations and their pertinent aspects will be discussed in the following section.

## **3.11 Ethical considerations**

Maree (2020:57) emphasises the crucial role of ethical considerations in research, especially the need to adhere to ethical principles to safeguard the rights and welfare of the participants. Approval from the EduREC was obtained, and the study was conducted in accordance with the ethical codes of the Faculty of Education at North-West University (see Addendum A). Additionally, legal permissions were secured from various stakeholders, including the Gauteng

Provincial Department of Education (see Addendum B). Informed consent was obtained from participants(see Addendum C), for the right to conduct interviews (see Addendum D). Key aspects of ethical consideration will be discussed in the following section.

### **3.11.1 Informed consent**

Kang and Hwang (2021:3) assert that informed consent ensures that research participants willingly and voluntarily join the study. They emphasise that researchers are responsible for obtaining participants' consent before commencing with the research and should inform participants that they can withdraw at any time (Kang & Hwang, 2021:3). To safeguard participants' rights, Creswell (2014:258) suggests several measures, including explaining the research objectives, informing participants about data collection and study results, and consistently respecting participants' rights.

In this study, legal permission was sought from the Provincial DoE, Sedibeng West District, outlining all conditions for participation. Participants were explicitly informed that participation is voluntary, and they have the right to withdraw at any time. Full disclosure was prioritised to ensure participants felt comfortable. An informed consent form was provided to all participants before the interviews commenced.

### **3.11.2 Confidentiality and anonymity**

Kang and Hwang (2021:3) emphasise that confidentiality and anonymity involve the researcher being aware of participants' identities but taking necessary measures to protect them from being identified or discovered by others.

In this study, participants' identities and research sites were kept confidential and anonymous. Personal information related to the research was accessible only to authorised individuals. Before initiating the research, participants were assured that their identities would remain private, and the data shared in the study would not be disclosed to anyone. Special attention was given to maintaining confidentiality and anonymity throughout the study. To address potential feelings of judgment from certain interview questions, participants were reassured that the research aimed at creating a non-judgmental environment for mutual learning.

### **3.11.3 Voluntary participation**

Heathfield (2021:23) characterises voluntary participation in research as a process where individuals exercise free will in deciding whether to participate. In this study, no participant was coerced into participating, and each participant was informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any point.

#### **3.11.4 Honesty and integrity**

Heathfield (2021:23) characterises honesty and integrity as fundamental to scientific research. All stakeholders involved in the research must maintain honesty and integrity, treating the research process with respect. In this study, transparency with participants was prioritized, emphasising the importance of honesty and trustworthiness. To secure the data obtained from the study, all relevant materials, including consent forms and documents containing participants' identities, were securely stored with password protection. Adherence to the ethics policy of North-West University was ensured, and encryption technology, with strong passwords, was applied to devices such as USBs and memory cards to prevent data leaks, allowing access only to authorised personnel, including study advisors and the researcher.

#### **3.11.5 Non-maleficence**

According to Maree (2020:56) research should never be conducted to hurt anyone or obtain information at the expense of other people. Participants were informed that the research does not seek to hurt anyone, and they were informed that information would not be obtained at their expense.

### **3.12 Summary**

In this chapter, the qualitative research design and methods employed in the study were thoroughly examined. The interpretivist paradigm, underpinning the research, was elucidated, emphasizing its relevance in exploring the subjective aspects of the participants' experiences. The methodological framework, encompassing the research paradigm, strategy of enquiry, and population and sampling details, was delineated. Comprehensive insights into participants' contextual and biographic information, coupled with a detailed description of the research sites, were provided.

The chapter delved into the intricacies of the data collection methods and processes, shedding light on the systematic approach employed in gathering information. The role of the researcher in facilitating the study and ensuring its ethical conduct was expounded upon, emphasizing the significance of maintaining transparency, confidentiality, and respect for participants' rights.

Moreover, the quality criteria employed to uphold the trustworthiness of the research, including credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, were explained. Ethical considerations, in alignment with the guidelines of EduREC, were highlighted, underscoring the importance of informed consent, confidentiality, and voluntary participation.

This chapter serves as a foundational guide to the subsequent exploration and interpretation of the gathered data in the upcoming chapter.

## **CHAPTER 4 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

### **4.1 Introduction**

In Chapter 3, the research design and methodology implemented in the study were systematically outlined. The chapter covered essential elements, including the research design, strategy of inquiry, research paradigm, and population and sampling details. Additionally, it provided in-depth insights into the contextual information of the schools, participants' biographic details, and a thorough description of the research sites. The discussion extended to the elucidation of data collection methods and processes.

Moreover, Chapter 3 expounded on the pivotal role of the researcher, elucidating the ethical considerations and quality criteria that guided the study. The chapter aimed to establish a robust foundation for the subsequent exploration and interpretation of the gathered data.

Chapter 4 unfolds with a detailed presentation of the data analysis and interpretation of the research study. It encompasses the process of qualitative data analysis (4.2) and a comprehensive discussion of the qualitative data (4.3). The chapter concludes with a concise summary, offering a cohesive overview of the analytical journey undertaken in the subsequent sections.

### **4.2 Process of qualitative data analysis**

I adhered to the data analysis steps outlined by Leedy and Ormrod (2014:143) in examining the data gathered from the interviews. The process encompasses five essential steps, all of which were diligently followed in the data analysis for this research study. These steps are:

- Step 1: Organising the details in a logical arrangement
- Step 2: Organising the preliminary data
- Step 3: Identification of preliminary categories and themes
- Step 4: The interpretation of data and discovery of common themes, categories, and sub-categories
- Step 5: The conclusion of the steps, the syntheses, generalization and inferences generated from the data were all part of this process and concluded.

The initial step involved the transformation of all recorded interviews into typed text, ensuring accuracy and protocol adherence in data transcription. To enhance trustworthiness, as detailed in Chapter 3 (§ 3.9), an independent, qualified individual was enlisted to verify the adherence to transcription protocols. Additionally, participants were given the opportunity to review the transcriptions, promoting dependability (§ 3.8.3).

In the subsequent stage, I systematically organised the transcripts from ten teachers and ten parents. A thorough exploration and repeated reading of the transcripts were undertaken to grasp the nuances and meanings of the data. This was done in line with Maree (2016:59), who states that a proficient analysis requires the researcher's deep comprehension achieved through repeated engagement with the data.

The third phase involved identifying preliminary categories that would serve as useful frameworks for categorising the data. Various coding methods, including participants' views, values, emotions, and behaviours, were employed to establish initial categories.

Step 4 encompassed the interpretation and identification of categories, sub-categories, and themes. Six primary themes emerged: The first theme focused on teachers' perceptions of self-directed learning, while the second explored their perceptions of the effects of motivation on township learners. The third theme delved into the strategies employed by teachers to support their learners in becoming self-directed. The fourth theme revolved around the involvement of parents or legal guardians in supporting learners academically, mentally, and emotionally. Theme 5 illuminated the contextual factors hindering parental involvement in motivating their children to be self-directed. Lastly, Theme 6 addressed contextual influences that facilitate intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in learners.

Table 4-1 below summarises the themes and sub-themes that were inductively created.

**Table 4-1: Themes and sub-themes generated from the semi-structured interviews**

Theme	Sub-themes
Theme 1. teacher-Participants' perceptions of self-directed learning	
Theme 2. Teachers' perceptions about causes for learners' de-motivation.	

	2.1 The perceptions of teachers about their learner's types of motivation
	2.2 Teachers' expectations for their learners' academic success
	2.3 Teachers' perceptions about their learners' goals setting skills
	2.4 Participants' perceptions of reasons why learners do not work in a self-directed manner
Theme 3: Strategies that teachers use to support their learners to be self-directed in their learning	
Theme 4: Parents or legal guardians' involvement to support learners academically, mentally and emotionally	4.1 Academic support
	4.2 Mental and emotional involvement
THEME 5. Contextual factors that hinder parental involvement to motivate their children to be self-directed	
Theme 6. Contextual influences that enable intrinsic and extrinsic motivation on learners.	6.1 Parents' perceptions of whether their children set their own learning goals
	6.2 Parents' perceptions of their learners' academic success at school
	6.3 Parental advice on what teachers at school can do to motivate children to take responsibility for their own learning

The next paragraphs focus on the interpretation and discussion of the qualitative data analysis.

### 4.3 Discussion and analysis of qualitative data

The data gathered from the semi-structured face-to-face interviews with participating teachers, parents, and legal guardians provided a wealth of in-depth information, enabling a profound understanding of their perceptions regarding the role of motivation in developing self-directed learners in lower quintile secondary township schools. As detailed in section 4.1, themes were derived through inductive processes during the coding of the transcribed interviews.

Initially, the presentation will focus on teacher-participants' perceptions of SDL, followed by the exploration of other themes and sub-themes outlined in Table 4.1. To ensure confidentiality and anonymity (§ 3.9.2), I employed codes such as P1S1 to denote Parent 1 of School 1, and P1S2 to signify Parent 1 from the second school coded as S2. Similarly, T1S1 and T2S2 were used to indicate responses from Teacher 1 of School 1 and a second teacher from School 2, respectively. This approach aligns with principles of anonymity and confidentiality, ensuring that participants' identities remain concealed, as emphasised by Kang and Hwang (2021:3).

#### 4.3.1 Theme 1: Teacher-participants' perceptions of self-directed learning

This theme delves into participants' knowledge and comprehension of the SDL concept. Teacher participants underwent a series of questions aimed at assessing their understanding of SDL and the attributes associated with self-directed learners.

The responses varied among participants, with some demonstrating awareness of the SDL concept and the ability to articulate characteristics of SDL (e.g., T1S1, T2S2, T2S1, T2S2, T3S1, and T3S2). For those who were not acquainted with the concept (e.g., T3S1, T4S1, T4S2, T5S2, T3S2), a clear definition of SDL and an elucidation of its components were provided. The ensuing examples illustrate how participants conveyed their perceptions of SDL:

T1S1 responded as follows:

*It is when learner can work on his or her own time and mark his own work.*

Participant T1S1 exhibits awareness of certain characteristics of self-directed learners. T1S1 mentioned a practice in which he provides question papers to learners, allowing some to independently answer the questions and subsequently share their responses during class.

Most participants (e.g., T1S1, T2S2, T2S1, T3S1, and T3S2) characterised SDL as a process wherein learners can work independently, at their own pace, and possess the ability to assess and evaluate their progress. This understanding aligns with Knowles' definition (§2.6), describing

SDL as the initiative taken by individuals to diagnose their learning needs, set goals, identify resources, choose strategies, and evaluate outcomes (Knowles, 1975:18).

Participant T2S1 asserted that not all learners exhibit SDL characteristics, highlighting that the majority lack SDL skills. According to this participant, SDL is evident when learners engage in individual learning efforts. When prompted to elaborate on the SDL characteristics of his learners, T2S1 explained that their learners are not self-directed, as they consistently seek his assistance in reviewing their work.

*No, because they come to me so that I can check their work. This shows that they cannot evaluate themselves. (T2S1)*

T3S1 alluded as follows:

*...it is when the lesson is learner centered, and learners facilitate their own resolutions to problems. When asked if their learners possess any characteristics of SDL T3S1, elaborated: Learners in particularly from FET are not motivated to take responsibility for their work a typical example will be that the majority struggle to hand in their Practical assessment task (PAT) on time and still do not do their homework. ...they only come to school to eat and to see their friends, they do not come for any education related things (T3S1).*

Participants T5S2 and T3S1, for example, underscored that learners often fail to take responsibility for their own learning, relying heavily on the teacher even for tasks they could manage independently. T3S1 expressed the viewpoint that all stakeholders, including learners, teachers, and parents, should be engaged in the teaching and learning process. According to T3S1, when only parents and teachers are involved, learners may not show sufficient concern for their education. Similarly, T5S2 added that certain learners lack motivation to become self-directed learners, leading to a lack of commitment to their studies.

Participants emphasised the importance of teachers' classroom attendance and commitment to their jobs as crucial factors in fostering learners' development of self-directed learning skills. However, there was less emphasis on the active involvement of learners in their own learning process. This is reflected by T2S2, who said, *I think as teachers we must attend classrooms during our periods and stop being absent, this will also help our learners to commit to their studies because currently they are not.*

These participant views align with Mahlaba (2020:129), who emphasizes that the responsibility for learning should primarily rest with the learner, not solely with the teacher (§ 2.6.1). Hence, it is crucial for learners to take charge of their own learning. Additionally, Deci and Ryan (2020:18)

underscore the significance of intrinsic motivation and self-determination for learners to become self-directed. Teacher participants (T2S1 and T3S2) assert that many learners lack motivation and ambition for academic excellence, exhibiting limited intrinsic or extrinsic motivation. Participants T3S2 stated: *I don't think my learners are motivated at all; they seem to have given up on their academics.* All the assertions by the participants suggest that the support and onus of learners' becoming self-directed lies with the teachers and not the learners. This theme also revealed that some participant's (T1S1 and T3S1) understood their role in supporting their learners to be self-directed. For instance, T1S1 explained: *We have a role to guide and to support learners and ensure that they can take responsibility for their learning.*

In the next theme, teachers' perceptions about causes for learners' de-motivation will be discussed.

#### **4.3.2 Theme 2: Teachers' perceptions about causes for learners' de-motivation**

In this theme and the subsequent four sub-themes, the aim was to delve into participants' perspectives on the factors contributing to learner demotivation and whether these factors are distinctive to learners in lower quintile or township schools.

T1S1 expressed the belief that the reasons for demotivation differ in secondary township schools compared to ex-model C schools, which are more well-equipped. The participant elaborated, highlighting that higher quintile schools have modern resources like computer laboratories, smart boards, and overhead projectors, unlike other public schools: *Yes, because at other schools they are able to present topics on screens to make it easier for learners to learn visually, but in township schools we don't have access to resources like that (T1S1).*

Moreover, T1S2 believed that the factors demotivating students are distinct from those in township schools. According to the participant, schools outside townships provide extracurricular activities and curricula that inspire students, unlike township schools, which lack activities such as Olympiads, competitions, or extracurricular sports.

Another participant, T2S1, suggested that unique causes of learners' demotivation in lower quintile township schools include a lack of resources, demotivated and unprepared teachers, and learners who lack confidence in their education. This perspective aligns with literature emphasizing the impact of teacher motivation and a positive learning environment on learners' motivation (Geduld, 2023:53; Deci & Ryan, 2020:3; Mabena *et al.*, 2021:452).

T3S1 identified parents in townships as another contributing factor to learners' demotivation. The participant noted that learners often come from unstable and broken homes that do not encourage their education. The participant explained:

*...From my experience because I have worked at an ex-model C school before, parents there are involved and supportive but since I came to this township, I have noticed that here parents are not involved and do not even attend school meetings. (T3S1)*

This theme highlights participants' perceptions that demotivated teachers, inadequate resources, an unsupportive learning environment, the absence of extracurricular activities, poor parental involvement, and teacher absenteeism are primary factors contributing to learners' low motivation and academic achievement. Demotivated teachers who provide subpar instruction in poorly equipped schools hinder learners' need for competence. According to Deci and Ryan (2020:3), competence is nurtured through opportunities for growth, positive feedback, and exposure to optimal challenges (§2.4.1).

The absence of extracurricular activities and an unfavourable learning environment hinder learners' need for relatedness, as students struggle to feel connected to a school lacking infrastructure and conducive learning environments. This finding aligns with Van den Broach (2016:1197), who defines relatedness as the sense of belonging or attachment to people within a learning or working community.

Moreover, participants' perceptions indicate that learners' need for autonomy is often unmet due to factors such as high teacher absenteeism, poorly resourced schools, and ineffective teaching methods. According to Deci and Ryan (2020:7), a sense of choice and control enhances intrinsic motivation, but the identified hindering factors compromise learners' autonomy. The theme suggests that township learners' basic psychological needs for competence, relatedness, and autonomy are not consistently fulfilled, reflecting the causes of demotivation identified by participants.

The next sub-theme will delve into teachers' perceptions of their learners' motivation.

#### **4.3.2.1 Sub-theme 2.1: the perceptions of teachers about their learner's types of motivation**

In this sub-theme, participants provided varied perspectives on their learners' motivation, with some asserting that their students exhibited intrinsic motivation (T1S1, T2S1, T3S1, T1S2, T2S2, T4S1), while others (T4S1, T5S1, T3S2) believed their learners were primarily extrinsically motivated. One participant articulated their view as follows:

*I think some of my learners are motivated inside and also want to achieve because we do not have any rewards or incentives from this school. (T1S1)*

The above finding is supported by Legault (2016:2), who alluded that intrinsic motivation occurs when individuals are motivated from within without expecting any external reward (§ 2.2.1).

Another teacher participant (T3S2) who uses negative reinforcement such as punishment in form of extra classes to motivate her learners to work hard or face punishment:

*My learners know that if they fail, they will have to stay for extra-classes and also come for morning classes. (T3S2)*

Mulvahill (2018:70) and Deci and Ryan (2020:4) caution that relying on extrinsic motivation, where individuals are driven by fear of punishment or the fear of failure, can be detrimental to the development of self-determination and self-directedness:

*...I wouldn't say some learners are intrinsically motivated, I would say they are extrinsically motivated by maybe failure or maybe they are scared of what their parents are going to say if they fail (T4S1).*

The views that some learners are motivated by fear of failure, punishment or any external reward are supported by Adamma et al. (2018:53; Token (2019:5) and Sennet (2021:21) (see §2.2.2).

In this sub-theme, it became evident that only two participants (T2S2 and T4S1) thought their learners were intrinsically motivated because they were competent in their studies, they felt loved at home and at school, lastly, they felt in control of their academics (cf. Deci & Ryan, 2020:4) motivated:

*I have few learners in my classroom who seem to come from supportive families, these are the same learners who are doing well academically in my classroom (T2S2).*

Furthermore, the sentiments by T2S2 suggests that some learners were intrinsically motivated because they felt in control of their studies (§2.4.3).

Contrary to the above views, some participants (T4S1, T5S1 and T3S2) felt that some of their learners were not intrinsically motivated. The following encapsulates T4S1 and T5S1's views:

*...Some learners have failed many times, I think they feel neglected by us teachers and their parents, even their peers have finished school while they are still here. The situation at home and in the community is still not helpful because these learners are not assisted.*

In summary, T4S1, T5S1, and T3S2 perceive that learners in township schools lack intrinsic motivation due to various factors, including feelings of rejection and abandonment, inadequacy, and resentment from peers, family, and the community. The failure to meet their fundamental psychological needs ultimately results in a lack of intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2020:3; Van den Broeck, 2016:1197). For instance, the responses from T4S1, T5S1, and T3S2 indicate that certain learners in townships lack a sense of being in a healthy emotional state, connected, competent, and in charge.

In the next sub-theme, teachers' academic expectations for their learners will be discussed.

#### **4.3.2.2 Sub-theme 2.2: teachers' expectations for their learners' academic success**

This sub-theme presents participants' expectations for their learners' academic success. Some participants expressed strong beliefs that their learners would succeed (T2S1, T2S2, T3S1, T4S2, and T5S2) based on various factors, which will be discussed in this section. However, other participants held low expectations for their learners to achieve academic success (T1S1, T1S2, and T4S1). Additionally, it became evident that some teachers were uncertain about their learners' academic success (T2S2 and T5S1).

The following encapsulates the views from a participant who believed her learners would succeed academically: *I believe my learners can be successful at school because of solely how I teaches them.* Furthermore, the participant stated she teaches *not just for learners to pass but to ensure that learners gain the necessary skills* (T1S2).

It can be concluded that T1S2 has established a positive teacher-learner relationship with her students, ensuring that they experience a sense of relatedness with their teacher (Deci & Ryan, 2020:3). Additionally, based on participants' perceptions of her teaching style, it can be inferred that her learners may feel competent in their academic work, which can positively influence their motivation to succeed in school.

Another participant alluded:

*...they come from the townships, from the most painful households' sir, I always remind them of where they come from so, I believe that they will make it. I also promise to help with their university applications if they pass well* (T4S2).

Yet another participant believed his learners would succeed at school alluded:

*I think my learners will eventually make it, sometimes I give them money or promise to buy them lunch for achieving a 70% overall average* (T5S2).

It can be concluded that T5S2 used extrinsic motivation to motivate her learners to be self-directed in their learning. The participant used positive reinforcement to encourage her learners to work hard, a point discussed by Sennet (2021:21). These participant's learners may succeed at school because of their continuous support, reinforcement and beliefs in the learners' capabilities, as alluded to by Durisic, & Bunijevac (2017:140).

Meanwhile, other participants have low expectations for their learners:

*I do not think my learners will make it at school because of how they behave and because they do not do their work (T4S1).*

Another participant added:

*...My learners have failed many times, they are also old and I don't think they are interested in school anymore (T1S2).*

The perceptions of these participants suggest that learners might experience demotivation due to feelings of incompetence in schoolwork, repeated failures, and age gaps with other learners at school.

In the following sub-theme, teachers' perceptions of their learners' ability to set their own learning goals will be discussed.

#### **4.3.2.3 Sub-theme 2.3: teachers' perceptions about their learners' goals setting skills**

Many participants (T4S2, T5S2, T2S2, T5S1, T1S1, T1S2, and T4S1) emphasized that their learners struggled to set both distal and short-term goals, as well as targets for their individual subjects. This lack of goal-setting skills is seen as detrimental to learners' academic achievement, as they become less motivated and focused without clear goals to work towards. Some participants were unable to explain why their learners lack goal-setting skills, hinting at a potential lack of close learner-teacher relationships (§ Deci & Ryan 2020:3).

In the next sub-theme, teachers' perceptions of learners' involvement in extracurricular activities will be discussed.

T3S1 expressed:

*Sir, this school is deep in the township, I don't think our learners are motivated to set their goals, maybe some do but learners in my class do not set their goals. I'm really not sure sir.*

It can also be inferred that, according to the participant's perception, there is a lack of relatedness between learners and the teacher, as the participant was uncertain about whether his learners were motivated to set goals or not.

One participant concurred with T3S1 above:

*My learners do not care about their education, they do not set their own goals and I have to constantly remind them about the importance of education, they just don't care sir (T4S1).*

It became evident that only one teacher (T1S1) motivates her learners by guiding them and explaining the importance of having goals to provide direction. T1S1's strategy of helping her learners set their own goals is important because it leads to motivated and self-directed learners and also builds teacher-learner relatedness (Deci & Ryan 2020:3). This support of participants also builds relatedness with the learners, which is beneficial for the autonomy, competence, and relatedness learners will experience when they realise they can take control of their learning by setting their own goals to achieve.

The participant (T1S1) clarified:

*I believe my learners will make it, they do not set their own goals so I always arrange a session with them where I encourage them to set their own goals as that will help them in future.*

Another participant added:

*... Every January, I encourage my learners to set targets for the term and for their year. I don't think they would set goals on their own, but I am still happy I could help (T5S2).*

Another participant expanded:

*I think they do set goals, the problem is that they do not stick to their goals (T2S1).*

T2S1's viewpoint underscores the notion that township learners require regular reminders regarding the significance of goal-setting and the need to achieve those goals. It is noteworthy, however, that most participants emphasised the importance of goal-setting without providing practical demonstrations to guide learners in this process.

In the upcoming sub-theme, the participants' perspectives on the reasons learners do not work in a self-directed manner will be examined.

#### **4.3.2.4 Sub-theme 2.4: participants' perceptions on reasons learners do not work in a self-directed manner**

In this sub-theme, participants' perceptions regarding the reasons why learners do not work in a self-directed manner were explored. This sub-theme is interconnected with the main theme 2, as teacher participants were prompted to elaborate on the factors contributing to demotivation among learners in their classes.

Beyond learners' lack of goal-setting skills, teachers' low expectations for learner success, and inadequate motivation, several participants (T1S1, T2S1, T3S1, T1S2, T3S2, T4S2, and T5S1) highlighted the lack of infrastructure in township schools as a significant factor hindering learners from being self-directed in their learning. These participants also noted that their schools frequently experience load shedding and other electrical failures, adversely affecting teaching and learning. This situation demotivates both teachers and learners for various reasons.

One participant, T4S2, expressed the challenges of limited resources, preventing her from being creative in her teaching approach. Additionally, she felt that her learners were not engaged or interested in her lessons:

*I always have to use a textbook and chalkboard because the smartboards are not working due to electricity issues. I cannot make photocopies as well. It's hard to be creative or even keep my learners focused on the lesson because I also feel as though they do not focus.*

Another participant added:

*Teachers should do not do justice towards these learners; they should regard them as their own and be the teacher that you always wanted to be (T2S1).*

The sentiments expressed by T2S1 are noteworthy, reflecting common challenges in township schools where struggling learners may be overlooked, with more attention directed toward gifted or high-performing students. The participants' perspectives underscore the importance of teachers being present in class, adopting a compassionate attitude towards all learners, and employing effective teaching strategies to foster intrinsic motivation and enhance students' ability for SDL. These responses suggest a perception among participants that some colleagues may not be exerting their best efforts in teaching learners.

Additionally, eleven participants (T1S1, T2S1, T3S1, T4S1, T1S1, T2S2, T3S2, T4S2, T5S2, T1S2, and T5S2) attributed learners' demotivation and lack of self-directedness to insufficient

parental involvement in their children's education. They emphasised the crucial supportive role of parents in their children's academic journey and stressed the need for active parental participation, which is supported by Durisic & Bunijevac (2017:142).

T1S2 illustrated the following:

*In most cases, if the parent does not check home activities of a learner, they get demotivated to do their work because they know that their parents will not even bother to check their books. Parents should always check their children's books on a daily basis, and also engage with them by simply asking "how was school? That could create a huge difference in their motivation.*

T5S1 emphasised that parents should actively engage in follow-ups, visit schools, and inquire about their children's progress, underlining how parental interest in schoolwork fosters a learner's motivation to become self-directed in their learning (§ Durisic & Bunijevac, 2017:142).

Similarly, T4S2 highlighted the crucial role parents play in their children's education, stating that the lack of parental support and involvement serves as a demotivating factor for their children:

*Parents play a major role in their children, some don't participate in helping their children. Parents need to know their children and they need to be part of the lives for their children. They must always check their books, always try to help where they can if they can't seek to someone who can help. They must come to school for the feedback about their children and take action and motivate, encourage them and make sure that they study at home (T4S2).*

Furthermore, T2S1 elaborated that parents of township school learners often let teachers down by entrusting everything to the teachers and neglecting to follow up on the work that needs to be done:

*Parents should be involved in their learners' education. Secondly, parents should not just leave everything in the hands of teachers and hope for a better outcome.*

These participant responses align with existing literature (§ 2.3), which highlights the impact of various contextual factors on learners' motivation toward self-directedness. Moreover, participants (T3S1, T2S2, T3S2, and T5S1) expressed concern that some of their colleagues (teachers) were delivering poorly planned lessons. When discussing what teachers could do differently to help learners develop SDL skills, participants emphasised the importance of thorough lesson preparation, effective teaching methods, and assessments aligned with the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) document. Some participants noted that teachers might assign excessive work due to pressure from the DoE. However, it was argued that this approach does not benefit learners, especially those who may be disruptive and struggle with

an overwhelming workload. Despite these challenges, it is important to note that disruptive behaviour is not solely caused by excessive work; other factors, such as contextual influences and the designation of schools as section-58 schools (underperforming schools), contribute to teachers' demotivation and limited support for learners during teaching and extracurricular activities (§ Geduld, 2017:8).

T3S2 highlighted that at times, the subject content fails to capture learners' interest or motivate them to become self-directed. Learners may adopt a passive stance in the classroom, merely listening to the teacher. T3S2 stressed the importance of teachers delivering lessons in a motivating manner to encourage learners to embrace self-directed learning, aligning with findings from Yilmaz *et al.* (2017:112).

The subsequent sub-theme will delve into the strategies employed by teachers to foster self-directedness among their learners.

#### **4.3.3 Theme 3: strategies that teachers use to support their learners to be self-directed in their learning**

In this sub-theme, participants were asked to elucidate the methods they employ to encourage township learners to become self-directed in their learning. Existing literature underscores the significant role teachers play in motivating learners to embrace self-directedness (Agustiani, 2019:290). Additionally, participants were prompted to detail the initiatives undertaken by their schools to foster self-directed learning among learners.

The following encapsulates views from participants T1S1, T4S2, T4S1 and T2S2:

*I make sure that my learners are motivated by words of encouragement when they did not perform well I tell them that they will make it. (T1S1)*

T3S1 employs the strategy of providing learners with informative feedback and monitoring their progress. This approach aligns with established literature supporting the development of self-directed learning (SDL) skills. Offering positive feedback not only enhances learners' feelings of competency but also helps them identify areas for improvement (Van den Broeck, 2016:1197). Deci and Ryan (2020:3) further emphasise that competence is cultivated through opportunities for growth, positive feedback, and exposure to optimal challenges (§2.4.1).

T2S2 employs one-on-one sessions with learners to understand potential causes of demotivation, tailoring support based on individual needs. This strategy fosters relatedness between the teacher and learners, demonstrating care and appreciation (Deci & Ryan, 2020:3). Recognising the

importance of relatedness, this approach aims to create a sense of connection among individuals (§ Deci & Ryan 2020:3).

In supporting learners to become self-directed, T1S2 utilises diverse teaching strategies that enhance SDL skills. She emphasises social constructivist approaches, including cooperative learning, to facilitate collaborative problem-solving. Collaborative methods like group work contribute to building relatedness, competence, and autonomy, fostering intrinsic motivation (Khalid *et al.*, 2020:137; Mozhgan, 2012:492). Such strategies are recognised for enhancing SDL and boosting learners' academic morale.

T1S2 asserted:

*I use an effective learner centred method because I group them so that they can learn from their peers. This allows some to realise that other learners are progressing with their work, and that gets them motivated to do more.*

Cooperative learning, an effective teaching strategy, finds support in various studies (Khalid *et al.*, 2020:137; Mozhgan, 2012:492). T5S2 adopts this approach by grouping learners, assigning topics for preparation, and implementing a peer-scoring system using rubrics. This strategy aligns with the findings of Douglas and Morris (2014:16). Utilising rubrics enables learners to understand task requirements, plan effectively, and assume responsibility for their learning. The structured nature of rubrics contributes to increased competency beliefs (Deci & Ryan, 2020:3).

The next theme will explore the involvement of parents or legal guardians in supporting learners academically, mentally, and emotionally.

#### **4.3.4 Theme 4: Parents or legal guardians' involvement to support learners academically, mentally and emotionally**

This main theme delves into the participation of parents or legal guardians in their children's education. Parent-participants and legal guardians were queried about their involvement in their children's education, leading to two sub-themes: academic support and mental and emotional involvement. Academic support, as defined by the Department of Basic Education (2016:6), encompasses parents assisting with homework, providing necessary materials, and overall engagement in their children's educational journey. Emotional and mental involvement focuses on safeguarding the psychological well-being of their children (§ 2.12; DoE, 2016:7). The ensuing sub-theme will explore academic support.

#### 4.3.4.1 Sub-theme 4.1: Academic support

When inquired about how they contribute to their learners' academic success, a prevalent approach among participants was the application of positive reinforcement to inspire, motivate, and reward improvement in their learners' learning. Various supportive measures were outlined by the participants. Participants (P1S1, P2S1, P3S1, P2S2, P3S2, P5S1) detailed their provision of school materials, including books, calculators, and Wi-Fi for internet access. Financial support for various needs was emphasised by some participants (P5S1, P5S2, and P3S2), with P5S1 specifying:

*I also make sure that they have whatever that is needed at school if something is needed, I make sure that I get it for them. I try to get a fibre Wi-Fi so they got their laptops to access more information, so the environment is friendly for learning .P1S1 also added that they use incentives in his family to encourage their children to work hard and achieve good academic results.*

Another participant added:

*We have incentives. We say a few let's say for months or whatever you will get a certain thing so she would set a certain target for herself in order for her to achieve whatever goals so yes they do set they own goals (T5S1).*

This participant's response aligns with Meadows-Fernandez (2018:43), who notes that many individuals, including learners, are motivated by extrinsic factors or engage in an activity with the expectation of a reward (§ 2.2.2).

P5S2 expressed the practice of providing airtime and lending a cell phone for educational research, acknowledging the importance of improvising in areas where functional libraries or wireless facilities may be lacking in townships. On the other hand, challenges in financial means were evident among some participants, including the unemployed parents (P5S2, P3S1, P2S1, and P4S1), who struggled to articulate how they supported their children academically.

Additionally, some parents who were educators (P4S2, P1S1, and P4S1) found it easier to support their children academically due to their professions. They emphasised monitoring their children's progress, occasionally checking their books, and signing them. However, it became apparent that the child of P4S1 leaned more on her teacher-mother for support rather than cultivating independent study habits.

P4S1 elaborated:

*I think he relies on me as an educator because sometimes if you don't talk, you don't shout they will just say everything is okay. Now when he sees his results are poor, it's when he's going to pick his socks and want to do better next time.*

Geduld and Mdakane (2020:359) caution against parents taking over the responsibility for their children's learning. They emphasise that while parents should provide support, it is crucial not to assume the learning responsibility, as learners need to develop SDL. In line with this advice, P4S1, who is an educator, shared that while assisting with homework and experiments, they also take the initiative to check their learner's books.

P4S1 also explained her involvement with her child's education:

*Checking his homework, helping him here and there where he needs help. If maybe, I don't have time I hire a tutor.*

Some parents, such as P3S2, underscored the importance of attending school meetings and actively seeking feedback about their children's performance from class teachers as a way to engage academically and support their children. This perspective aligns with the guidance from the Department of Basic Education (DBE, 2016:7), which emphasises that participating in school meetings and consistently seeking feedback from teachers are crucial ways for parents to be actively involved in their children's education.

P3S2 alluded:

*...yes I am involved sir with the help of home works I even go to their school to check, and I sign their books every day.*

Parents play a crucial role in supporting their children academically by ensuring they have essential study materials such as books, stationery, and internet access. Some parents face challenges such as lack of electricity, unemployment, and long working hours, which impact their ability to attend to their children's academic needs. High crime levels were also identified as a contextual factor influencing learners' motivation to be self-directed. The involvement of parents in assisting with homework and seeking help from knowledgeable tutors, neighbours, or relatives was highlighted as a strategy. This aligns with the DoE's guidelines (2016:6) for supporting parental involvement.

The theme emphasises the importance of extrinsic motivation in guiding learners toward academic success and avoiding failure. Here, parental support that satisfies learners' fundamental psychological need for competence is recognised (Deci & Ryan, 2020:3) in

contributing to increased self-confidence and intrinsic motivation for SDL. The next sub-theme will explore parents' mental and emotional involvement.

#### **4.3.4.2 Sub-theme 4.2: Mental and emotional involvement**

Durisc and Bunijevac (2017:146) emphasise that learners with involved parents perform well academically and are intrinsically motivated (§ 2.12). The parents in this study were asked to share their perspectives on whether they could provide emotional or mental support to their children in education. While some parents expressed confidence in their ability to support their children emotionally and mentally, others felt less equipped for this responsibility.

For instance, P1S1 shared their approach of encouraging their child to aim high and fostering self-belief. They observe study habits, promote attendance at extra classes, and motivate the child to set ambitious goals. This illustrates the parent's commitment to motivating the child by instilling confidence and emphasising high aspirations. Such actions align with Deci and Ryan's (2020:4) notion of supporting the child's basic need for competence. Parents like P1S1, who encourage their children to set high goals, contribute to fulfilling their children's basic needs for relatedness and competence.

Another participant highlighted the challenges of providing academic assistance to their child while being unemployed:

*I tried but it gets difficult for a child to be motivated because there are so many unemployed graduates that makes a learner to find it difficult to be motivated at school (P3S2).*

P3S2's perspective indicates that the socio-economic status of the community, including high unemployment rates, affects learners' motivation. It can be inferred that elevated unemployment rates have a detrimental impact on learners' motivation to be self-directed or take responsibility for their learning, shaping their perception of school.

P3S2 added:

*I get from work late sometimes I find the child sleeping and already late.*

P3S2 expressed that work commitments, including long hours and early morning shifts, make it challenging to provide mental support to their child. This aligns with the findings of Firdaus (2019:209) and CET (2012:1), emphasising that parental involvement positively correlates with academic performance and motivation. The participant's limited involvement in their child's education due to work responsibilities is evident (§ 2.3).

Some parents highlighted their role in providing mental and emotional support by encouraging their children to concentrate during study time (§ Geduld & Mdakane, 2020:359). Additionally, P3S2 mentioned seeking assistance from an educated neighbour, illustrating the lengths some parents go to ensure their children receive the necessary educational support and care.

P4S1 elaborated:

*I never find it difficult, because to motivate, when you motivate your child, you want them to be a better person. Responsibility is my job as a parent.*

P5S1 actively motivates and encourages their child to complete daily homework, a practice supported by literature emphasising the significance of parental motivation and encouragement for children to succeed (Geduld & Mdakane, 2020:359).

The analysis underscores that most parents engage in various aspects of their children's education—financially, mentally, and emotionally. However, it is also evident that certain parents face challenges due to their circumstances, potentially leading to undesirable outcomes for learners. These outcomes include poor academic performance, psychological distress, school dropouts, and susceptibility to substance abuse. Lack of parental time and involvement may contribute to demotivation, loss of interest in education, and hinder learners' attempts to become self-directed, ultimately impacting their motivation.

The inconsistent parental involvement observed implies that many township learners lack motivation and fail to develop SDL characteristics. In the absence of monitoring and encouragement, these learners tend to engage in activities other than studying, such as playing and socialising. Participants who actively motivate their children by reminding them to study, encouraging responsibility for their learning, and aiding in goal setting contribute to the development of autonomy in their children. This support addresses the learners' basic psychological needs for competence and relatedness, fostering self-determination and motivation for learning.

The upcoming theme will explore contextual factors that impede parental involvement.

#### **4.3.5 Theme 5: Contextual factors that hinder parental involvement to motivate their children to be self-directed**

Parental participation is crucial, as demonstrated in research chapter 2; learners whose parents are interested in their schoolwork and development are more likely to succeed academically (CET 2012:1). In this theme, the aim was to explore the perspectives of parents or legal guardians on the factors that hinder their active involvement in their children's education. Several parents

identified various issues that impede their participation. One parent (P1S1) mentioned that when their child experiences pressure from school due to difficulty understanding subject content, it creates stress for both the child and the parent. P1S1, who is a teacher, alluded:

*When she feels the pressure from school, she usually complains about homework. When she doesn't understand a particular topic in class, I must now make sure that I teach her and we both get it correct which sometimes I also struggle to get the correct answer.*

The analysis also revealed that certain learners created challenges for their parents' involvement by exhibiting mood swings and negative attitudes towards both their parents and their education.

P1S2 explained as follows:

*I think because he is a teenage boy and you know teenagers go through their own phases and all that, so me trying to be there all the time might not be something that he is very fond of what he wants to do his own things but that's difficult but we do not have time, I would say that's the difficult part him trying to find out his teenage self.*

P1S2 further added:

*At times, remember our kids are rebels especially the older one. I would tell her to work hard whenever she feels that she would and yell me "mom I struggle here" my oldest one the 16-year-old she is a bit of a problem she is much to be honest about school she cares a lot about fashion.*

The following encapsulates views from participants who shared the same sentiments about work and home responsibilities that hindered their involvement and support:

*...I am a single parent, I do not have enough time because I have to cook, clean, wash their school uniforms and still have to clean the house sir (P3S1, P2S1, and P3S2).*

P5S1 expressed that he often feels tired and unable to assist his children, believing that his children understand this fatigue results from his efforts in working to provide for them.

*...I think my children understand that I cannot assist because every time I come from work, I am always tired and cannot even prepare for tomorrow so I do not think I can assist.*

Some parents or legal guardians, such as P2S1 and P4S2, who lacked the educational background to assist their children, advised their children to wait for corrections from their teachers. Several parents cited their own limited academic knowledge as a barrier to helping their children with homework, highlighting the impact of parental educational levels on their ability to support their children in becoming self-directed learners.

The next section will discuss an analysis of the contextual influences that enable parental motivation and assistance.

#### **4.3.6 Theme 6: Contextual influences that enable parental motivation and assistance for self-directedness**

Throughout the interviews, parents/legal guardians shared their perspectives on contextual influences that either enable or hinder parental motivation and assistance. Educated parents or those with a strong educational background, such as P1S1, P5S1, and P4S2, found it easier to support their children due to their knowledge and professional expertise. These participants, being educated or educators, were capable of assisting their children with specific subjects like mathematics and physical sciences, providing valuable guidance on studying techniques, and modelling self-directed learning skills (§ 2.12).

P1S2 stated as follows:

*I think what makes it easy is that he is a very determined child and when it comes to his studies he puts more effort so that makes it easy for me.*

P1S2 also highlighted the importance of providing her child access to a quiet study room, echoing the findings of Labahn (2019:154). Cherry (2021:15) further supports the idea that having a quiet and conducive space for studying contributes to better focus and fewer distractions.

P1S1 added:

*Is she studies and knows the concepts; my help is just to top on that so it is easier for me to help her unlike a person who does not study in their her own study room.*

The participant expressed that assisting a child already actively engaged in their education was more manageable. This might be attributed to the child of P3S1 already exhibiting self-directed learning characteristics, such as the ability to initiate learning independently, understanding concepts, and studying autonomously. In such cases, parental involvement becomes more about nurturing existing SDL skills. Conversely, a child less involved in their own learning may pose challenges for parents seeking to support their education.

Another participant added:

*I think my children only comes to me when they have a problem they start their work; I only assist wherever they want to be assisted. I don't like doing everything for them (P3S2).*

P5S1 added:

*My child only come to me when she struggle not with all their schoolwork.*

The participants' accounts suggest that their children are motivated by a genuine love for learning. These learners exhibit characteristics such as seeking help when facing challenges, persistent effort, and taking responsibility for their work, all of which contribute to their motivation (Adamma *et al.*, 2018:53).

Additionally, P4S2 highlighted the positive relationship their child has with neighbours, indicating that the child feels comfortable seeking assistance from them. Some participants, like P3S2, also mentioned relying on neighbours or their children for help, underlining the importance of community support and relationship-building in the townships. This emphasises the communal spirit, the concept of 'ubuntu,' and the mutual care within township communities, where people come together to help one another.

Furthermore, P1S2 noted that the ease of their involvement was influenced by their child's commitment level. This suggests that learners in townships who demonstrate a strong commitment to their studies make it easier for parents or legal guardians to be actively involved and supportive.

P1S2 elaborated:

*I think what makes it easy is that he is a very determined child, when it comes to his studies he wants more, like he puts an effort so that makes it easy for me because if he is putting in the effort when I come it's like "Oh you had been doing good".*

The findings suggest that some learners exhibit self-directed learning (SDL) skills, such as taking responsibility for their learning and demonstrating a willingness to persist and learn independently. However, it is notable that only a few parents (P1S1, P1S2) explicitly mentioned that their children are dedicated and determined to study without external interference.

In contrast, the majority of parent participants indicated that their children still rely on external regulation, studying only when directed by their parents and taking their education seriously only when prompted. This implies that, for many learners, the development of SDL skills may be a gradual process that is influenced by various factors, including parental guidance.

Furthermore, the theme highlighted the significance of parental education, with parents possessing a higher educational background (tertiary education) being better equipped to assist and encourage their children. This support contributes to fulfilling the psychological needs of

relatedness and competence as outlined by Deci and Ryan (2020:3) and Geduld & Mdakane (2020:359).

The theme underscores the significance of community support, including the role of neighbours and teachers, in enhancing learners' education. While some learners demonstrate certain SDL skills, the theme emphasises the ongoing need for guidance. Additionally, factors such as parental education level, community involvement, learners possessing SDL skills, parents who are teachers with subject knowledge, and financial means all contribute to enabling parents and legal guardians in this study to be involved and support their children's education.

The next section will delve into parents' perceptions regarding whether their children set their own learning goals.

#### **4.3.6.1 Sub-theme 6.1: Parents' perception on whether their children set their own learning goals**

In exploring the aspect of goal setting, parents were questioned about their children's ability to set their own goals. Some parents affirmed that their children are capable of setting and pursuing their own goals (P1S1, P3S1). Conversely, other parents indicated that their children do not engage in setting their own learning goals (P3S2, P4S1, P5S1, and P5S2). Additionally, four parents expressed uncertainty regarding whether their children can independently set goals or not (P1S2, P2S1, P4S2, and P3S1).

The implication is that for those learners whose parents state they do not set learning goals for themselves, motivation might be adversely affected. This is noteworthy as setting learning goals is recognised as a motivational factor that encourages individuals to exert effort towards goal attainment (Deci & Ryan 2020:3).

Moreover, it was observed that some learners lean heavily on their parents for goal setting rather than taking initiative themselves. This dependency on parents could hinder the development of SDL skills and autonomy, as learners ideally need to be in control of their own goals (Deci & Ryan 2020:3).

One participant elaborated:

*My child relies on me much because I am educated, he/she does not set her own goals and I must be the one who helps. (P4S1)*

P1S1 alluded:

*Yes she does, and I try to set my own just to motivate her. When she targets 60% in certain subjects, I target higher and tell her to believe in herself because she is more than capable to achieve higher.*

The statement from P1S1 suggests a dynamic where the parent holds a dominant role in goal-setting, potentially limiting the child's autonomy in determining goals based on their own potential. While this approach may contribute to building the learner's competence and motivation for academic success, it is essential to strike a balance to foster the development of intrinsic motivation and SDL skills.

Goal-setting is indeed a critical element of intrinsic motivation and SDL. Township learners benefit from the ability to independently set their learning goals, contributing to their intrinsic motivation and fostering SDL characteristics (Adamma *et al.*, 2018:53). While parents play a role in guiding their children to set goals, it is crucial for them to avoid dictating goals, allowing learners to develop autonomy in their academic journey. The next section will delve into parents' perceptions of their learners' academic success at school.

#### **4.3.6.2 Sub-theme 6.2: Parent's perception on their learner's academic success at school**

Parents and legal guardians' perspectives on whether they anticipate their children's academic success at school are crucial for understanding their expectations. These expectations, as indicated in the literature (Geduld & Mdakane, 2020:359), can significantly influence learners' motivation. In exploring this, parents were asked about their beliefs regarding their children's potential success in school and the reasons behind their convictions.

P1S1 expressed confidence in his child's ability to succeed at school, even in the face of certain challenges:

*Yes, but for now she's not happy academically because of the Grade 10 workload.*

The following perception encapsulates the view of one parent when asked whether their child made it academically or not:

*Looking at his previous results and the way his not committed in doing his school work I can see that he can be successful academically (P3S2).*

Another participant alluded:

*Definitely, because I am an example to him and also my child likes good things. He is so ambitious, also, he likes money (P4S1).*

The views of P4S1 are also supported by Geduld & Mdakane, (2020:359), who state that learners can learn new academic behaviours and skills by observing their teachers, peers, and parents (§ 2.11).

One parent participant whose child was determined and possessed certain skills of SDL asserted:

*...because as I said I think he is a responsible child, and he is very determined even with difficulties of him being a teenager and all that. But you can see that he is determined to do something with his life and the academics his academics are just superb. (P1S2)*

P5S2, P3S1, and P5S1 believed that their children would be academically successful at school but could not elaborate on why they believe their children would be academically successful at school.

Another participant expanded:

*...they will be academically successful at school because they are smart, they take from me (P4S2).*

P4S2's perspective implies that her children's academic competence may be attributed to the influence she has on their learning. Analysis of the gathered responses reveals a prevalent belief among most parents or legal guardians that their children are poised for academic success in school. This confidence is rooted in various factors, such as their children's contentment at school, positive performance in previous report cards, the determination and focus exhibited by some students, and the belief that they serve as positive role models.

Conversely, it is evident that certain parents hold reservations about their children's academic prospects. This scepticism is often linked to concerns that their children are not sufficiently dedicated to their schoolwork and display a greater interest in fashion and social media than in their education. The forthcoming section will delve into the perceptions of parents and legal guardians regarding their children's happiness at school.

#### **4.3.6.3 Sub-theme 6.3: Parents perceptions of learners' happiness at school**

Recognising whether their children are content at school is crucial for parents, as it engenders their active involvement in ensuring a sense of belonging and relatedness in their children's lives (Deci & Ryan, 2020:3). This awareness can serve as an indicator of the level of motivation their

children have towards attending school. Moreover, understanding the sources of their children's happiness or unhappiness in the school environment is of paramount importance.

P3S1 emphasised that her child's presence at school is primarily influenced by social factors, such as friends and the company she keeps. The participant further disclosed that her child's underperformance in Grade 9 had a consequential impact on her choices of subjects for Grade 10. This highlights the interconnectedness between a student's social experiences, academic performance, and subsequent decisions regarding their educational path. P3S1 elaborated:

*The 16 year old it's more social because she is not doing subjects she wanted to do because she lacked in grade 9 she had then had to choose her second option of subjects but she is not academically entirely happy with the subjects, my youngest one she doesn't like school she knows that she had to but she gets excited to perform somethings or when doing sports but academically my child is an artist so I think she will preferably be an artist.*

P3S2 similarly indicated that his child's contentment at school is solely attributed to the presence of friends. P3S2 *"Well what can I say in most cases he talks about his friends but he doesn't talk about academics mostly so I can say his happy at school because of his friends"*.

Another participant stated: *I think they are because I have never received a complaint, no child of mine has ever came home with a problem (P5S1).*

P5S1 elaborated on the perspective that her children lack happiness at school due to the way they are treated, citing discrimination based on their economic circumstances. The parent expressed concern that her children, who do not come from a financially affluent background and reside in a shack, feel marginalised. However, specific reasons for this perceived discrimination were not provided by the parent.

*No, he is not. My child was sick and I wrote them a letter saying after he's done writing, they must release him. He says he took an hour before they assist him but where others are assisted quickly. They are discriminating, but whether he is happy or not, he must work very hard.*

Some parents opted not to respond to inquiries regarding their children's happiness at school. Uncertainty surrounding their children's emotional state stemmed from limited time spent together and concerns about potential discrimination by teachers. Conversely, those reporting contentment attributed it to positive influences from friends, peers, and the overall school environment, with no grievances reported about school management.

Notably, the paramount need identified was relatedness, encompassing a sense of closeness to others and belonging to a social group, as highlighted by Deci and Ryan (2020:3). This sense of

connection, or attachment, is crucial for children's motivation and overall well-being (Van den Broeck, 2016:1197).

In the subsequent sub-theme, we explore parents' perceptions regarding actions that other parents can take to inspire their children to assume responsibility for their own learning.

#### **4.4 Parents perceptions about what other parents can do to motivate their children to take responsibility for their own learning**

This study revealed that certain parents or legal guardians observed their children displaying a sense of responsibility for their own learning, showcasing SDL skills. To delve deeper into parents' comprehension of their roles in fostering motivation for SDL, I sought their advice for other parents. The subsequent examples illustrate the recommendations they provided:

P4S1 alluded:

*They must follow up on their schoolwork and they mustn't pressurise their kids especially with on their subjects' choice, so allow your children to take something easy that will benefit him.*

Another participant expanded:

*I think parents should try and make their children have positive role models, their children must want to be somebody who achieve a lot, and somebody who is a singer cannot be a child's role model if the child does not have the talent to sing (P5S1).*

The participant further alluded that township learners lack positive role models who have achieved success through education and encouraged parents to advise their children about having role models are educationally orientated.

P3S2 suggested that parents in the township may not afford their children the opportunity to openly discuss their issues with them.

*Some don't participate in helping their children. Parents need to know their children and they need to be part of the lives for their children. They must always check their books, always try to help where they can if they can't seek to someone who can help. They must come to school for the feedback about their children and take action and motivate, encourage them and make sure that they study at home (P1S1).*

Another participant added:

*As a parent you can always give out something like a reward to a child for the achieved results on every term I think that will make the child want to improve more academically (P5S2).*

Based on the aforementioned analysis, participants offered several recommendations for parents seeking to support their children in taking responsibility for their learning. Firstly, they proposed that parents should consistently review their children's schoolbooks—a suggestion endorsed by the DBE (2016:6). Additionally, participants emphasised the importance of allowing children to select subjects based on their individual strengths and weaknesses rather than imposing parental preferences. Although not extensively addressed in existing literature, participants noted that many township learners face challenges when choosing subject streams, often influenced by peer pressure or parental expectations.

Furthermore, participants underscored the significance of parental involvement in their children's education, advocating for attendance at school meetings and the regular acquisition of performance feedback (Durisic & Bunijevac, 2017:142). Another piece of advice was to ensure that children have positive role models, aligning with existing literature that encourages exposure to self-directed role models, including parents and teachers (Tokan, 2019:5). The subsequent sub-theme will explore participants' recommendations for teachers at school to motivate children to assume responsibility for their learning.

#### **4.4.1 Parental advice on what teachers at school can do to motivate children to take responsibility for their own learning**

This section analyses the advice provided by parent/legal guardian participants to teachers on motivating learners to be self-directed in their learning and take responsibility for their own education. The following is an example of the recommendations they offered:

P4S1 suggested that teachers should engage in ongoing assessment of learners, provide training, and emphasised that achieving the desired results may take time but is attainable:

*....As a teacher, you must keep on assessing your learners, it trains them to be used to studying you cannot assess them once in a month, you must do it continuously because they forget. Also show them their results at the end of the day so that they can be motivated (P4S1).*

P5S1 recommended that teachers establish emotional connections with their learners. The participant also proposed that teachers share positive stories about individuals who achieved greatness through education. The belief is that such narratives could inspire learners to work diligently and foster a sense of self-direction in their learning.

P5S1 elaborated:

*I think teachers have to try and come to the level of learners sometimes tell them stories of people who achieved something through education. I think by that some of learners might change their attitude, some learners can start to understand that education can help them to achieve whatever they want.*

This participant's suggestion holds particular significance for township learners who require role models, positive narratives, and motivation to persevere in their studies. P5S1 highlighted that teachers should serve as inspirations for learners, particularly if academic success is the goal. The participant emphasised the importance of teachers being aware of their learners' performance to effectively provide motivation.

*If you need every learner in your class to pass, you should inspire them. You must also know the performance of your learners and try to motivate them.*

P3S2, P1S2, P3S1, P5S2, and P2S2 collectively recommended that schools institute a system of rewarding hardworking learners. Specifically, P3S2 suggested honouring and providing incentives for top achievers, proposing a system where the top 10 achievers per term are recognised in order to instil motivation in learners. This aligns with the understanding that extrinsic motivation, involving rewards for achieving desired results (§ 2.2.2), can effectively encourage learners to exert effort.

Additionally, P2S1 proposed that schools should impart the skill of creating study timetables to learners. The participant, acknowledging personal limitations as an uneducated parent, emphasised the importance of teaching students how to manage their study schedules, as parents may only be able to monitor whether the child is engaging in studying or not:

*I think the school must help us by ensuring that our children have study timetables and adhere to it, I am not educated and therefore cannot understand some of these things (P2S1).*

This sub-theme brought to light several key recommendations from parents, emphasising the significance of continuous assessment, positive reinforcement, teacher encouragement, providing positive feedback to learners, and offering practical guidance in creating study timetables. Participants also stressed the importance of teachers knowing and understanding their learners, fostering personal connections with them, and serving as sources of inspiration and motivation. In the context of township learners, motivation holds particular importance in shaping their educational journey.

Mahlaba (2020:130) further supports the assertion that SDL is transformative for learners, altering their perception of learning, instilling an understanding of the value of education, and

subsequently cultivating SDL skills (§ 2.6.1). Viewing education through a positive lens is crucial for township learners, fostering enthusiasm for learning and the acquisition of SDL skills.

The implementation of positive reinforcement, including rewards and certificates, serves as an initial step in cultivating intrinsic motivation and fostering a sense of responsibility for learning. Recognising the collaboration needed between parents and teachers, particularly in creating study timetables, is crucial for supporting, encouraging, and monitoring children's learning. The subsequent section will compare and discuss the perspectives of teacher-participants and parent/legal guardian-participants.

#### **4.5 A comparison between teacher-participants and parent/legal guardian participants' views**

While the primary aim of the study was not to compare participant views, certain notable similarities and differences emerged between teacher and parent/legal guardian participants.

Similarities were evident in the perception of both groups regarding the potential academic success or failure of their children/learners. Both parents and teachers expressed a spectrum of beliefs, acknowledging that some children/learners would excel academically, while others would face challenges. Additionally, both parents and teachers observed that some children/learners did not establish goals for themselves.

Furthermore, both groups shared common views on various factors contributing to learners' demotivation in townships. Notably, both parents and teachers identified demotivated teachers as a significant factor hindering learners from taking responsibility for their own learning.

However, notable differences were observed between teacher-participants and parent/legal guardian participants. While most parents expressed optimism about their children's academic success, a contrasting perspective emerged from most teachers who believed their learners were unlikely to succeed academically. Parental involvement in their children's education was emphasised by parents, but teachers, on the other hand, largely perceived a lack of parental involvement. Another distinction arose in the expectations for academic achievement, with most parents holding high expectations for their children, whereas teachers generally expressed lower expectations, anticipating academic challenges for their learners.

#### **4.6 Summary**

This chapter has presented a thorough analysis of qualitative data, specifically exploring teachers' perceptions of motivation and parents' perspectives on motivation in the context of developing self-directed learners in lower quintile secondary township schools. The findings indicate that

while most participants possessed knowledge of SDL skills, there were limitations in their pedagogical content knowledge to effectively cultivate these skills. The overarching consensus among participants was the recognition of motivation as a crucial factor influencing human behaviour and its potential to inspire learners to take responsibility for their own learning.

While many participants claimed involvement in their children's education, a substantial number struggled to articulate the specifics of their involvement. Furthermore, the analysis revealed a lack of robust teacher-learner relationships and limited parent-learner connections among the participants. Factors impeding parental involvement included long working hours, the busyness of single parents, and some children resisting parental assistance.

In the subsequent chapter, the research questions outlined in Chapter 1 will be addressed, drawing insights from the data analysis. Additionally, recommendations will be proposed based on the findings to contribute to the understanding and enhancement of motivation in the development of self-directed learners.

## **CHAPTER 5 SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1 Introduction**

In the preceding chapter (Chapter 4), an in-depth examination of the research study's qualitative data was presented through an inductive analysis. The discussion delved into the identified themes and sub-themes. This chapter is structured as follows: § 5.2 provides a summary of the research, while § 5.3 presents the findings aligned with the primary research question, which investigates the role of motivation in the development of self-directed learners in lower quintile secondary township schools. Subsequently, in § 5.4, recommendations are proffered to assist teachers in fostering motivation and nurturing self-directed learning skills in their students. The limitations of the study are acknowledged in § 5.6, and suggestions for future research are outlined in § 5.7. The study concludes in § 5.8.

The next section provides a summary of the research.

### **5.2 Summary of the study**

This section aims to offer a comprehensive overview of the study by highlighting the significance of each chapter. The following paragraphs present a summary of the key content covered in each chapter.

Chapter 1 initiated the study by delineating its purpose: to investigate the role of motivation in developing self-directed learners in lower quintile secondary township schools. The chapter commenced with an introduction and background, establishing the context for the research study. A preliminary literature review highlighted pertinent keywords. The chapter then delineated the research questions, aims, and objectives, followed by a discussion of the theoretical perspective underpinning the study. Additionally, the research methodology, design, population, and sample were described, including details about the sampling method employed. The chapter concluded with insights into data collection methods, data analysis, trustworthiness, ethical considerations, and a brief summary.

Chapter 2 undertook a comprehensive review of literature pertaining to the role of motivation in cultivating SDL skills among learners in lower quintile secondary township schools. It commenced by delving into the nuanced concept of motivation, subsequently exploring the distinctions between extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. The chapter scrutinised the influence of motivation on students' academic achievement and delved into contextual factors, such as the roles of teachers and parents, that shape learners' motivation. The discussion further elucidated the three psychological needs of competence, relatedness, and autonomy according to SDT. Significantly,

the literature review expounded upon the relevance of self-determination for township learners, establishing a link between SDT, motivation, and SDL. The chapter also provided an extensive overview of SDL, strategies for teachers to foster SDL skills, and emphasised the importance of SDL for students in townships and its impact on motivation to learn.

Chapter 3 meticulously outlined the research design and methodological intricacies of the study. It addressed essential details such as the population, sample, research paradigm, study design, and inquiry strategy. Biographical information about the participants and background details of the involved schools were presented. The data collection methodology involved semi-structured face-to-face interviews conducted with ten teacher participants and ten parent/legal guardian participants. Chapter 3 also delved into considerations of trustworthiness criteria, the researcher's role, and the ethical standards upheld throughout the study, concluding with a succinct summary.

In Chapter 4, the gathered data underwent analysis and interpretation, employing the theoretical framework and literature discussed in Chapter 2 as a lens. Themes and sub-themes derived from the semi-structured interviews were outlined, followed by a detailed discussion elucidating the revelations of each theme and sub-theme. The qualitative data discussion was divided into two sections: an exploration of teacher participants' perceptions regarding the role of motivation in developing SDL in lower quintile township schools, and a parallel exploration of parents' or legal guardians' perceptions of the same. The chapter concluded with a brief summary of the data analysis.

Chapter 5 synthesises the research findings, offering recommendations, and acknowledging the limitations of the study.

### **5.3 Findings of the research study**

The research questions are answered and contextualised in the discussion below. The main research question of the research study was:

- What is the role of motivation in developing self-directed learners in lower quintile secondary township schools?

Secondary questions were created to aid in answering the primary research question (§1.4.1.2). The secondary questions will be answered in the subsequent sections.

Note the first three secondary research questions were answered by means of a literature review in Chapter 2 but are briefly answered below:

### **5.3.1 Findings with regards to first secondary question (§ 1.4.1.2):**

**What influence does motivation have on self-directed learning, according to literature? (§ 2.2, 2.5-2.8).**

Motivation serves as a pivotal catalyst in the cultivation of self-directed learners, fostering attributes such as independent work, organisational skills, and heightened enthusiasm for academic tasks. The correlation is evident: educationally motivated learners tend to exhibit greater self-directedness, while a lack of motivation is associated with diminished SDL. The role of motivation becomes particularly pronounced in learner-centric approaches, wherein learners actively engage in the didactic environment.

Various factors contribute to learner motivation and the development of SDL skills, encompassing influences from parents, family background, peer dynamics, self-efficacy, teaching methodologies, and learning strategies. A school environment characterised by safety, positivity, empowerment, accessibility, and security plays a pivotal role in nurturing motivation, progressively supporting the evolution of SDL. Motivation is indispensable for SDL, serving as a catalyst that integrates previously acquired strategies, skills, and behaviours into the acquisition of new knowledge and performance. In the absence of motivation, the efficacy of teaching alone is insufficient to ensure the development of SDL. Recognising the interconnected nature of SDL and motivation, researchers emphasise the importance of identifying factors linked to SDL as a means to fortify the cultivation of self-directedness in learners.

The influence of SDL on academic achievement has been extensively researched from various perspectives. Studies consistently demonstrate that self-directed individuals can attain remarkable academic achievements, with a higher likelihood of success when they take accountability for their learning progress. Key characteristics of self-directed learning include open-mindedness, a desire to learn, self-discipline, and self-management.

### **5.3.2 Findings with regards to the second secondary question (§ 1.4.1.2)**

**How should teachers support the motivation of learners to become self-directed? (cf. 2.10-2.11)**

In literature, the pivotal role of teachers in influencing learners and fostering their motivation is widely emphasised. Teachers are encouraged to strategically position themselves and adopt teaching strategies that motivate learners, recognising that motivated, enthusiastic, and goal-driven educators significantly contribute to the development of high motivation levels among students. Various factors such as a teacher's enthusiasm, qualifications, teaching style, subject

knowledge, and methodology play essential roles in shaping learners' motivation levels. The attitude of teachers is particularly crucial in guiding learners toward the development of SDL skills. A friendly and welcoming classroom environment further enhances SDL in lower quintile secondary township schools. Connecting learning to personal experiences, making activities relevant to daily life, and offering positive feedback for academic achievements are essential strategies for teachers.

Teachers play a crucial role in fostering learners' responsibilities and engagement by encouraging them to set personal goals and objectives. The academic performance, emotional well-being, and motivation of learners heavily rely on teachers consistently providing positive feedback and recognising their efforts. In the absence of active teacher support for SDL, both the teaching and learning processes may face challenges. Teachers, cognisant of the impact of their expectations on learners' motivation to become self-directed, significantly influence learners' behaviour and the overall quality of their learning experiences.

To effectively facilitate SDL development, teachers are encouraged to adopt learner-centred teaching strategies such as debates, brainstorming, and group work. Establishing clear boundaries between learners' decisions on goals and objectives and the structured teaching plans is vital. Literature underscores the importance of teachers understanding learners' interests and experiences beyond the classroom, as this knowledge aids in fostering SDL skills. Acknowledging and incorporating learners' prior knowledge not only enhances enthusiasm but also stimulates independent and interest-driven learning.

### **5.3.3 Findings with regards to the third secondary question (§ 1.4.1.2)**

**How could parents or legal guardians support the learners' motivation to become self-directed? (cf. 2.12).**

Parental involvement is pivotal for a learner's educational development, creating a secure and nurturing environment that fosters learning. Research underscores a robust association between family background factors—such as parents' educational level and income—and learner achievement. Actively engaged parents contribute not only to educational development but also stimulate intrinsic motivation. Literature consistently affirms that children are more likely to succeed, and their performance improves when parents or legal guardians are actively involved in their education. By expressing interest in their children's academic pursuits, parents instil a profound appreciation for education and its significance in their children's lives.

It's essential to note that parental involvement need not be contingent on formal education; parents can provide valuable social and emotional support. Involvement may manifest through assisting with homework, regular attendance at school meetings, or monitoring their child's academic progress. Establishing a robust teacher-parent relationship is paramount, enabling parents to comprehend how best to intervene and support their children.

Despite the undeniable benefits of parental involvement, several barriers may impede participation, including limited financial resources, educational attainment, and busy schedules. Some parents may refrain from involvement due to past experiences of academic challenges, potentially affecting their self-esteem.

To surmount these barriers, schools must cultivate an open and inviting environment where teachers and staff are responsive to parents. Viewing parents as indispensable partners in realising children's educational objectives fosters a positive parent-teacher relationship. Such a relationship empowers parents and promotes their active involvement in their children's education.

The study will further address secondary research questions through empirical research findings.

#### **5.3.4 Findings with regards to fourth secondary question (§ 1.4.1.2)**

##### **What are teachers' perceptions of the influences of motivation on self-directed learning in township school classrooms?**

Among the teacher participants, only a minority perceive their learners as intrinsically motivated, with the majority expressing a belief that their students lack drive and proficient goal-setting abilities, leading to demotivation. In a few instances, participants noted extrinsic motivation, negatively impacting their learners' SDL abilities. Only two teachers identified intrinsic motivation in their students, attributing it to feelings of competence, love, and a sense of control over their academic pursuits. Participants commonly attribute their learners' lack of intrinsic motivation to the instability of families and communities, as well as their own perceived inadequacies and underperformance in school (cf. 4.3.2).

Identified factors contributing to low learner motivation include demotivated teachers, under-resourced schools, unfavourable learning environments, a dearth of extracurricular activities, poor parental involvement, and absenteeism (cf. 4.3.2.4). These factors impede learners' fundamental psychological needs for competence, relatedness, and autonomy, thereby hindering intrinsic motivation and the development of SDL skills. Competence, fostered through growth opportunities, positive feedback, and appropriate challenges, is often lacking in the home, school,

and community environments these learners inhabit. The absence of extracurricular activities and non-conducive learning environments further erodes the learners' sense of belonging in township schools. Autonomy, a crucial component enhancing intrinsic motivation, is also compromised due to these factors. Consequently, the psychological needs of township learners for competence, relatedness, and autonomy are frequently unmet, impacting their motivation to become self-directed.

Participants consistently emphasised that learners' demotivation stems from insufficient parental involvement in their education. The primary influences contributing to learners' demotivation and reduced self-directedness, as identified by participants, include ineffective teaching strategies, teachers' low morale due to departmental pressure for high matric pass rates, continual departmental monitoring influencing the limited support teachers provide to struggling learners, negative attitudes and low enthusiasm among some teachers, insufficient resources, and a curriculum overload that leaves minimal room for the development of SDL skills. Participants perceive learners to be demoralized, reflecting the demoralisation experienced by teachers under departmental pressures and heavy workloads (cf. 4.3.2.4).

Furthermore, it becomes evident that inadequate resources have a detrimental impact on teaching and learning, prompting teacher participants to revert to traditional teaching methods such as using textbooks and employing lecture-based approaches due to the inability to integrate technology in their classrooms. These traditional methods not only constrain teacher participants negatively but also impede learners' interest, engagement, and the cultivation of SDL skills. Participants also highlighted the challenge of learners having to share textbooks without the ability to take them home, hindering self-directedness as learners cannot study independently when textbooks are confined to the school premises.

A subset of teacher participants perceives that their personal involvement and motivation positively influence their learners' self-directedness. Their commitment is reflected in the establishment of high academic expectations for their students, fostering a positive impact on learners' motivation and self-directed learning. These teachers actively engage in motivating their learners by assisting them in setting learning goals, providing additional resources, and offering guidance with study timetables. One-on-one sessions are employed by some participants to address impediments to self-directedness within their learners, showcasing a proactive approach.

Additionally, positive reinforcement strategies are embraced by certain teachers to incentivize self-directedness, recognising the constructive influence of motivation on their learners' autonomous learning. Conversely, another group of teacher participants appears to lack robust teacher-learner relationships, maintains low academic expectations for their students, and

displays uncertainty regarding the motivators for their learners. This disconnect adversely affects the motivation and self-directedness of their learners (cf. 4.3.2.1).

### **5.3.5 Findings with regards to the fifth secondary question (§ 1.4.1.2)**

#### **How do teachers in township schools motivate learners to become self-directed?**

Various strategies employed by teacher participants were identified to support the development of SDL skills in their learners. Some teachers utilise extrinsic motivations, including positive reinforcement through rewards and encouragement, to foster learners' responsibility for their academic performance. The role of motivation, whether intrinsic or extrinsic, is recognised as crucial, satisfying learners' needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness, ultimately promoting self-determination and SDL (Deci & Ryan 2020:3).

Collaborative learning emerged as another strategy, involving grouping learners to solve problems collectively. This approach aligns with research supporting the idea that collaborative and cooperative learning enhances motivation and encourages deeper problem-solving thinking among peers, fostering competence and relatedness (Khalid *et al.* 2020:137; Laal & Mozghan 2012:492).

One-on-one sessions were highlighted as an effective strategy, with teachers engaging in personal discussions to identify factors contributing to learner demotivation. This approach helps build rapport and motivation SDL. Scaffolding and feedback were also mentioned as strategies, with teachers advised to provide consistent constructive feedback. However, it is noted that while participants verbally encourage goal setting and planning, there is a lack of practical demonstration in teaching learners how to set goals, manage study and leisure time in a timetable.

Interestingly, while participants could articulate SDL characteristics and skills, there is a noticeable gap when it comes to practical implementation in the classroom. Few teaching strategies were mentioned, and there was a notable absence of discussion on developing specific SDL skills such as task analysis, help-seeking, time management, and various learning strategies.

Khalid *et al.* (2020:137) emphasise the importance of teachers integrating diverse teaching strategies that cater to visual, auditory, and kinaesthetic learners in their lessons. Additional strategies, not explicitly mentioned by township teachers, include open-ended questioning, where teachers pose thought-provoking questions to stimulate critical thinking among learners (Douglas & Morris, 2014:16). Another effective strategy is the mix-match approach for struggling learners, enabling teachers to adapt pedagogical strategies based on learner needs and cognitive capacities (Douglas & Morris, 2014:16).

However, it became apparent that some teacher participants, due to low expectations for learner success and their own demotivation, were not actively motivating their learners to become self-directed in their learning. This underscores the need for these teachers to employ diverse and inclusive teaching strategies to address the varied learning needs within their classrooms.

### **5.3.6 Findings with regards to sixth secondary question (§ 1.4.1.2)**

#### **What are parents' or legal guardians' perceptions of the influences of motivation on their children's self-directed learning in township schools?**

The research findings highlight a prevalent positive attitude and belief among parents regarding their children's potential for success in school. Parents expressed confidence in their children's motivation to complete their academic journeys, attributing this motivation to positive outcomes such as self-directedness in learning. Notably, parents who perceived motivation as positively influencing their children's learning were those actively ensuring the fulfilment of their children's basic needs—autonomy, relatedness, and competence—and fostering positive parent-child relationships.

Furthermore, parents who held the belief that motivation positively impacted their children's self-directedness were characterised by their proactive efforts to expose, support, and maintain high educational expectations for their children. These parents consistently affirmed their children's strengths and competence in the classroom, emphasising the pivotal role of support, motivation, parental beliefs, and ongoing involvement in shaping learners' motivation and SDL skills (Geduld & Mdakane, 2020:359).

Most parents and legal guardians perceive their academic and emotional support, as highlighted in the sub-theme 4, to serve as a significant motivational factor for their children. Participants actively seek assistance from tutors and knowledgeable individuals within their communities to motivate and support their children, aiming for success in school.

Conversely, a few participants acknowledge the impact of socio-economic factors, such as unemployment and financial constraints, coupled with the challenges of meeting the cognitive demands of their children's schoolwork due to job responsibilities. These contextual factors are identified as affecting their children's motivation to learn. In such cases, these parents rely on teachers to guide, motivate, and provide support to their children.

However, it was observed that some parents did not believe that motivation positively influenced their children's self-directedness. Notably, these parents were also uncertain about whether their children were intrinsically or extrinsically motivated. The data collection process further revealed instances of limited or no child-parent relationships, negatively impacting the fulfilment of the children's three innate needs (Deci & Ryan, 2020:3). This underscores the importance of a positive parent-child relationship in fostering motivation and SDL skills in learners.

### **5.3.7 Findings with regards to the seventh secondary question (§ 1.4.1.2)**

#### **What recommendations can be made to develop township schools' learners' motivation to become self-directed?**

##### **5.3.7.1 Recommendations to teachers**

Continuing education and training are vital for teachers to enhance their professional development and effectiveness in the classroom. This ongoing process involves improving teachers' knowledge, skills, and competencies through diverse learning opportunities and experiences.

Specific recommendations for supporting teacher professional development include (cf. 4.3.3):

1. Training: Provide teachers with continuous professional development opportunities that specifically focus on the importance of learner motivation, SDL, and innovative pedagogical strategies tailored to the contexts of lower quintile township schools.
2. Mentoring: Establish mentorship programmes that pair teachers with experienced mentors who have demonstrated exceptional competence in fostering SDL and implementing teaching strategies that emphasise the development of SDL skills.
3. Project-focused learning: Integrate project-based learning techniques into teaching practices to encourage learner autonomy and instil a sense of responsibility in their educational pursuits.
4. Inquiry-based learning: Utilise inquiry-based instructional strategies to foster intellectual curiosity and develop critical thinking skills among learners.

By implementing these strategies, teachers can enhance their skills and establish a more supportive learning environment for learner motivation and the development of SDL skills. The following key recommendations emerge (cf. 4.3.3):

1. Choice and autonomy: Foster a sense of mastery over their educational experience by empowering learners to make choices. This can involve allowing them to select learning resources, topics, or projects, providing them with a sense of ownership.

2. Recognition and rewards: Establish a system of incentives that recognises and reinforces self-directed acts, such as academic accomplishments or participation in community activities, to motivate learners.
3. Academic competitions and challenges: Implement programmes that enable learners to participate in academic competitions and challenges, aiming to boost motivation and foster an environment that values healthy competition.
4. Increasing participation from parents and the community:
  - Encourage parental participation: Organise regular parent-teacher conferences and educational seminars in township schools to promote parental involvement in their child's education.
  - Community partnerships: Cultivate collaborative partnerships with local community organisations to enhance learner support and expand the availability of supplemental resources.
  - Communication abilities: Emphasise the importance of strong communication abilities, both oral and written, with parents, legal guardians, and learners to facilitate a collaborative and supportive educational environment.

#### **5.3.7.2 Recommendations to the Department of Education**

Implementing a comprehensive strategy that addresses all facets of a learner's educational journey is crucial to fostering self-direction in those attending township schools. This holistic approach is essential for encouraging learners to take responsibility for their own learning. The following recommendations are proposed:

Creating an atmosphere that is adaptable to new information:

- a) **Fostering healthy relationships between learners and teachers:** Cultivate positive connections between teachers and learners across all instructional levels. Promote the development of an approachable and beneficial mentorship dynamic among teachers (cf. 4.3.2).
- b) **Fostering a sense of worth and acceptance through safe and inclusive spaces:** Develop a learning environment that prioritizes safety and inclusivity, fostering a sense of worth and acceptance among learners in lower quintile township schools.
- c) **Encouraging collaboration and peer support:** Foster a sense of community among learners by encouraging collaboration and peer support.

The combination of innovative practises and efficient use of available resources involves the following (cf. 4.3.2.4):

- a) **Ensuring access to technology:** It is crucial to provide learners with essential resources such as computers and internet connectivity, enabling them to engage in self-directed learning beyond the confines of traditional classroom settings. This can be achieved by guaranteeing learners' access to technology.
- b) **Digital resources:** Facilitate easier access to online educational resources and platforms, contributing to the enhancement and promotion of self-directed learning.

A number of recommendations were made by the teacher-participants to improve the development of SDL in township schools not just in the areas where the study was conducted. The following are the proposed recommendations by teacher participants in their respective categories/sections.

#### **5.3.7.3 Recommendations to the Department of Basic Education**

The following are the recommendations to the Department of Basic Education (cf. 4.3.2.4):

- It is imperative to ensure that all educational institutions, particularly those located in townships, provide operational infrastructure that includes classrooms, smart boards, libraries, and computer laboratories. This provision is crucial in facilitating the requirements of teachers in cultivating self-directed learners.
- Develop and execute a range of instructional interventions and initiatives that centre on SDL and its significance for both teachers and learners (cf. 4.3.3).
- It is imperative to provide ongoing support and mentorship to teachers in order to facilitate the attainment of their teaching and learning goals.
- Introduce capacity building initiatives and workshops that specifically target the development of SDL skills among learners residing in townships.

The workload and overloaded curriculum should be reconsidered.

#### **5.3.7.4 Recommendations to Local Department of Education (District)**

The following are recommended to the local DoE (District) (cf. 4.3.2.4):

- a) Verify appropriate allocation of resources:

Ensure that resources in township schools, such as computer laboratories and school libraries, are allocated and utilised effectively.

b) Implement training programmes:

Implement a variety of training programs focused on self-directed learning (SDL) and its role in learners' education.

c) Address textbook distribution:

Address the shortage of textbooks by ensuring an equitable distribution in the majority of the district's township schools.

d) Invite experts for educator training:

To equip educators with the knowledge of fostering SDL, invite specialists from the DBE's headquarters or external experts in the field of SDL.

### **5.3.7.5 Recommendations to teachers**

The following recommendations are made for teachers (cf. 4.3.2.3 and 4.4.1):

a) Transform the classroom environment:

Prioritise the transformation of the classroom into an environment that supports learning and encourages academic growth.

b) Embrace innovation in teaching:

Be innovative in diverse settings to ensure that lessons are engaging for learners, fostering excitement for independent learning.

c) Utilise diverse teaching strategies:

Employ a variety of teaching and learning strategies to meet the needs of a diverse range of students, demonstrating value and respect for each learner.

d) Provide timely and constructive feedback:

Oblige to give timely and constructive feedback to students.

e) Maintain a supportive demeanour:

Foster a positive atmosphere conducive to learning by maintaining a supportive and cheerful demeanour in the classroom.

### **5.3.7.6 Recommendations to parents**

These recommendations were made by the teacher-participants for parents and legal guardians (cf. 4.3.4 and 4.3.4.2):

a) Active parental involvement:

Active involvement in their children's educational experiences is essential for parents and legal guardians.

b) Encourage independence:

Encourage children by guiding them on the right path without attempting to micromanage their lives. Building a relationship with their children's teachers is the best way for parents and legal guardians to learn about their children's education and discover methods to get more involved.

c) Prioritise mental and emotional well-being:

Prioritise and encourage the mental and emotional well-being of their children.

d) Regular monitoring and follow-up:

Monitor children's progress at school and maintain regular communication with teachers and learners.

e) Seek support when needed:

Seek assistance when working long hours or being compelled to stay at work. The mental and emotional health of one's children should always have the support of their parents.

## **5.4 Recommendations by parents**

The following section will discuss recommendations made by parent and legal guardian participants for other parents and teachers (cf. 4.4.1).

### **5.4.1 Parents**

- Parents should consistently check their children's books to ensure they are keeping up with their studies and are well-prepared for their academic tasks.
- Parents should allow their children to choose subjects based on their strengths and weaknesses not based on what parents want for their children.

- Parents should be involved in the education of their children, attend school meetings and constantly obtain feedback about the performance of their children.
- Parents must ensure that their children have good positive role models who have succeeded through education.

#### **5.4.2 Teachers**

- Parents advised teachers to continuously assess learners.
- Parents also advised teachers to use positive reinforcement, giving positive feedback to learners and motivate their children.
- Help learners with their study timetables and advice parents on how to be involved in the education of their children.

#### **5.5 Limitations of the study**

The purpose of this research study was to investigate the role of motivation in developing self-directed learning learners in lower quintile secondary township schools.

- The study was conducted in two schools in the Vaal triangle in a township called 'Sebokeng'. The sample for the study was small number due to logistical reasons.

This research was conducted by a novice researcher with more practice yet to gain in qualitative data collection methods.

#### **5.6 Recommendations for further studies**

The study recommends several directions for future research. Firstly, it suggests extending the investigation to a more extensive array of township schools in Gauteng or South Africa to gain a more comprehensive understanding of how motivation influences self-directed learners. In addition, future research endeavours should consider increasing the sample size to provide a more thorough exploration of perceptions and experiences among both teachers and parents/legal guardians. It is also proposed that future studies include learners as participants to gain valuable insights into how motivation shapes their experiences with SDL. Furthermore, focusing on strategies to address the challenges identified in this study could be a fruitful avenue for research, contributing to the creation of a more supportive educational environment in township schools. Lastly, there is a suggestion to conduct research on how South African teachers, especially those in township schools, can be better supported in cultivating self-directed

learners. This could involve exploring initiatives such as professional development programmes, mentorship opportunities, or resource allocation. These recommendations collectively aim to advance our understanding of motivation's role in developing self-directed learners, particularly within the context of lower quintile secondary township schools.

## **5.7 Conclusion of the study**

The study concentrated on exploring the role of motivation in fostering self-directed learners in lower quintile secondary township schools. The findings underscored a noteworthy disparity between parental and teacher perspectives. Parents generally held high expectations for their children's academic success, perceiving them as motivated learners, and offering substantial support in various dimensions. Conversely, many teacher-participants displayed lower expectations for learner success, attributing demotivation to diverse contextual challenges in lower quintile township schools.

The study further uncovered a gap in teacher understanding of SDL concepts, despite some participants recognising the characteristics of self-directed learners. It was evident that certain teachers lacked comprehensive comprehension of SDL, and a substantial number had no established teaching strategies to foster their learners' acquisition of SDL abilities. According to existing literature, learners proficient in SDL skills may owe their success, in part, to parental or guardian motivation, be it intrinsic or extrinsic.

The results underscored a critical need for interventions to enhance teacher awareness of SDL and its educational significance. Proposed initiatives include organising training programmes, seminars, or workshops tailored to equip practicing teachers with SDL development strategies. Additionally, making relevant SDL literature readily available to teachers could prove instrumental in bridging the knowledge gap. The study highlighted a pressing necessity for interventions to address the limited understanding and strategies among teachers, ultimately fostering an environment conducive to the development of self-directed learners in township school classrooms.

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**ANNEXURES**

## Annexure A: Ethical approval



Private Bag X1290, Potchefstroom  
South Africa 2520

Tel: 018 299-1111/2222  
Fax: 018 299-4910  
Web: <http://www.nwu.ac.za>

**Senate Committee for Research Ethics**  
Tel: 016 103 4440  
Email: [Feziwe.Mseleni@nwu.ac.za](mailto:Feziwe.Mseleni@nwu.ac.za)

### ETHICS APPROVAL LETTER OF STUDY

Based on approval by the **Education Sciences Research Ethics Committee (EduREC)** on 24 November 2022, the Education Sciences Research Ethics Committee hereby **approves** your study as indicated below. This implies that the North-West University Senate Committee for Research Ethics (NWU-SCRE) grants its permission that, provided the special conditions specified below are met and pending any other authorisation that may be necessary, the study may be initiated, using the ethics number below.

<b>Study title: The role of motivation in developing self-directed learners in low quintile secondary township schools</b>			
<b>Study Leader/Supervisor (Principal Investigator)/Researcher: Prof B Geduld</b>			
<b>Student / Team: T Siziba (MEd student – 26716526), Prof C du Toit-Brits</b>			
<b>Ethics number:</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>U</b>
	<b>-</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>
	<b>-</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
	<b>-</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>2</b>
	<small>Institution</small>	<small>Study Number</small>	<small>Year</small>
			<small>Status</small>
<small>- Status: S = Submission; R = Re-Submission; P = Provisional Authorisation; A = Authorisation</small>			
<b>Application Type: Single study</b>	<b>Risk:</b> <span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">Low</span>		
<b>Commencement date: 24/11/2022</b>	<b>Expiry date: 24/11/2023</b>		
<b>Approval of the study is initially provided for a year, after which continuation of the study is dependent on receipt and review of the annual (or as otherwise stipulated) monitoring report and the concomitant issuing of a letter of continuation.</b>			

#### Special in process conditions of the research for approval (if applicable):

<p><b>General conditions:</b></p> <p>While this ethics approval is subject to all declarations, undertakings and agreements incorporated and signed in the application form, the following general terms and conditions will apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The study leader/supervisor (principle investigator)/researcher must report in the prescribed format to the ES-REC: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>annually (or as otherwise requested) on the monitoring of the study, whereby a letter of continuation will be provided, and upon completion of the study; and</li> <li>without any delay in case of any adverse event or incident (or any matter that interrupts sound ethical principles) during the course of the study.</li> </ul> </li> <li>The approval applies strictly to the proposal as stipulated in the application form. Should any amendments to the proposal be deemed necessary during the course of the study, the study leader/researcher must apply for approval of these amendments at the ES-REC, prior to implementation. Should there be any deviations from the study proposal without the necessary approval of such amendments, the ethics approval is immediately and automatically forfeited.</li> <li>Annually a number of studies may be randomly selected for an external audit.</li> <li>The date of approval indicates the first date that the study may be started.</li> <li>In the interest of ethical responsibility, the NWU-SCRE and ES-REC reserves the right to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>request access to any information or data at any time during the course or after completion of the study.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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- to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modification or monitor the conduct of your research or the informed consent process;
- withdraw or postpone approval if:
  - any unethical principles or practices of the study are revealed or suspected;
  - it becomes apparent that any relevant information was withheld from the ES-REC or that information has been false or misrepresented;
  - submission of the annual (or otherwise stipulated) monitoring report, the required amendments, or reporting of adverse events or incidents was not done in a timely manner and accurately; and / or
  - new institutional rules, national legislation or international conventions deem it necessary.

The ES-REC would like to remain at your service as scientist and researcher, and wishes you well with your study. Please do not hesitate to contact the ES-REC or the NWU-SCRE for any further enquiries or requests for assistance.

Yours sincerely



Prof CP van der Vyver  
Chairperson NWU Education Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Original details: (22351930)C:\Users\22351930\Desktop\ETHICS APPROVAL LETTER OF STUDY.docm  
8 November 2018

Current details: (22351930)M:\DSS\195336\Monitoring and Reporting Cluster\Ethics\Certificates\Templates\Research Ethics Approval Letters\9.1.5.4.1 ES-REC Ethical Approval Letter.docm  
5 December 2018

File reference: 9.1.5.4.2

# ADDENDUM B LEGAL PERMISSION PROVINCIAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



## GAUTENG PROVINCE

Department: Education  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

8/4/1/2

### GDE RESEARCH APPROVAL LETTER

Date:	14 February 2023
Validity of Research Approval:	08 February 2023– 30 September 2023 2023/41
Name of Researcher:	Siziba T
Address of Researcher:	62411 Sebokeng Unit 17
Telephone Number:	0611862582
Email address:	
Research Topic:	The role of motivation in developing self-directed learners in low quintile Secondary schools
Type of qualification	Masters
Number and type of schools:	2 Secondary Schools
District/s/HO	Sedibeng West

#### **Re: Approval in Respect of Request to Conduct Research**

This letter serves to indicate that approval is hereby granted to the above-mentioned researcher to proceed with research in respect of the study indicated above. The onus rests with the researcher to negotiate appropriate and relevant time schedules with the school/s and/or offices involved to conduct the research. A separate copy of this letter must be presented to both the School (both Principal and SGB) and the District/Head Office Senior Manager confirming that permission has been granted for the research to be conducted.

The following conditions apply to GDE research. The researcher may proceed with the above study subject to the conditions listed below are met. Approval may be withdrawn should any of the conditions listed below be flouted:

Making education a societal priority

#### Office of the Director: Education Research and Knowledge Management

7<sup>th</sup> Floor, 17 Simmonds Street, Johannesburg, 2001

Tel: (011) 355 0488

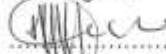
Email: Faith.Tshabalala@gauteng.gov.za

Website: www.education.gpg.gov.za

1. The letter would indicate that the said researcher/s has/have been granted permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct the research study.
2. The District/Head Office Senior Manager/s must be approached separately, and in writing, for permission to involve District/Head Office Officials in the project.
3. **Because of the relaxation of COVID 19 regulations researchers can collect data online, telephonically, physically access schools, or may make arrangements for Zoom with the school Principal. Requests for such arrangements should be submitted to the GDE Education Research and Knowledge Management directorate.**
4. **The Researchers are advised to wear a mask at all times, Social distance at all times, Provide a vaccination certificate or negative COVID-19 test, not older than 72 hours, and Sanitise frequently.**
5. A copy of this letter must be forwarded to the school principal and the chairperson of the School Governing Body (SGB) that would indicate that the researcher/s has been granted permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct the research study.
6. A letter/document that outlines the purpose of the research and the anticipated outcomes of such research must be made available to the principals, SGBs, and District/Head Office Senior Managers of the schools and districts/offices concerned, respectively.
7. The Researcher will make every effort to obtain the goodwill and cooperation of all the GDE officials, principals, and chairpersons of the SGBs, teachers, and learners involved. Persons who offer their cooperation will not receive additional remuneration from the Department while those that opt not to participate will not be penalised in any way.
8. Research may only be conducted after school hours so that the normal school program is not interrupted. The Principal (if at a school) and/or Director (if at a district/head office) must be consulted about an appropriate time when the researcher/s may carry out their research at the sites that they manage.
9. Research may only commence from the second week of February and must be concluded before the beginning of the last quarter of the academic year. If incomplete, an amended Research Approval letter may be requested to conduct research in the following year.
10. Items 6 and 7 will not apply to any research effort being undertaken on behalf of the GDE. Such research will have been commissioned and be paid for by the Gauteng Department of Education.
11. It is the researcher's responsibility to obtain written parental consent of all learners that are expected to participate in the study.
12. The researcher is responsible for supplying and utilising his/her research resources, such as stationery, photocopies, transport, faxes, and telephones, and should not depend on the goodwill of the institutions and/or the offices visited for supplying such resources.
13. The names of the GDE officials, schools, principals, parents, teachers, and learners that participate in the study may not appear in the research report without the written consent of each of these individuals and/or organisations.
14. On completion of the study, the researcher/s must supply the Director: Knowledge Management & Research with one Hard Cover bound and an electronic copy of the research.
15. The researcher may be expected to provide short presentations on the purpose, findings, and recommendations of his/her research to both GDE officials and the schools concerned.
16. Should the researcher have been involved with research at a school and/or a district/head office level, the Director concerned must also be supplied with a summary of the purpose, findings, and recommendations of the research study.

The Gauteng Department of Education wishes you well in this important undertaking and looks forward to examining the findings of your research study.

Kind regards



Mr. Gumani Mukatuni

Acting CES: Education Research and Knowledge Management

DATE: 15/02/2023

2

*Making education a societal priority*

**Office of the Director: Education Research and Knowledge Management**

7<sup>th</sup> Floor, 17 Simmonds Street, Johannesburg, 2001

Tel: (011) 355 0488

Email: Faith.Tshabalala@gauteng.gov.za

Website: www.education.gpg.gov.za

## ADDENDUM C INFORMED CONSENT FORMS



Private Bag X6001, Potchefstroom  
South Africa 2520

Tel: 018 299-1111/2222

Web: <http://www.nwu.ac.za>

(Recipient name)

(Recipient address)

(Recipient address)

(Recipient address)

**Faculty of Education**

**Research Unit for Self-directed learning**

Tel: 0611862582

Email: [tebohosiziba@gmail.com](mailto:tebohosiziba@gmail.com)

Date 11 October 2022

### PARTICIPANT INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM FOR TEACHERS

I herewith wish to request your consent to participate in this research, which involves an interview of approximately 30 minutes with the researcher. Before you give consent, please acquaint yourself with the information below.

The details of the research are as follows:

#### TITLE OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT:

The role of motivation to develop self-directed learners in lower quintile secondary township schools

#### ETHICS APPLICATION NUMBER

xxx

PROJECT SUPERVISOR: Professor B W Geduld  
CO-SUPERVISOR: Professor C Du Toit-Brits  
ADDRESS: School for Professional studies in Education  
Building B11  
Potchefstroom  
2531  
Contact Number: 018 299 4583/ 0648254617

MEMBER OF PROJECT TEAM MEd-Student: Tebogo Siziba  
ADDRESS: 62411 Sebokeng 1983  
CONTACT NUMBER: 0611862582

#### FACULTY OF EDUCATION RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

Contact person: Ms Erna Greyling, E-mail: Erna.Greyling@nwu.ac.za, Tel. (018) 299 4656

This study has been approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Education of the North-West University and will be conducted according to the ethical guidelines of this committee. Permission was also asked from the provincial Department of Basic Education/other relevant body (please describe) as well as the school principal (if relevant).

#### **What is this research about?**

The aims of this research are:

The aims of this research are:

The primary purpose of the research is to investigate the role of motivation to develop self-directed learning in learners in township schools. The secondary aims are:

- To understand what influence motivation has on self-directed learning according to literature.
- To investigate how teachers (can/may), support learners to become self-directed in their learning

- To investigate how parents or legal guardians (can/may) support learners to become self-directed in their learning according to literature. To explore teachers' perceptions of the effects of motivation on self-directed learning in township school classrooms.
- To understand how teachers in township schools motivate learners to become self-directed in their learning.
- To determine what parents or legal guardians' perceptions of the influences of motivation on their children's self-directed learning in township schools.
- To recommend strategies that can develop township school learners' motivation to become self-directed in their learning.

### **Participants**

- The participants will be ten teachers teaching Grade 10 or Grade 11 and ten parents or legal guardians of learners in Grade 10 or 11.

### **What is expected of you as participant?**

You will be expected to participate in an interview of approximately 30 minutes with the researcher.

teachers and parents will be expected to participate in an interview of approximately 30 minutes. Firstly, teachers are expected to explain how they (can/may), support learners to become self-directed in their learning. Secondly, teachers will be expected to share their views of the effects of motivation on self-directed learning in township school classrooms. Thirdly, teachers are expected to explain how they motivate township school learners to take responsibility for their own learning and also recommend strategies that can develop township school learners' motivation to become self-directed in their learning.

### **Benefits to you as participant**

There are no direct benefits for you as a participant. There are indirect benefits for society at large and for the researchers and the institution. You can add value by creating a better understanding and impacting future directions and research on motivation and self-directed learning. Findings from this study can serve as an instrument for reflection and it may offer some ideas for changing practice. Insight into your own beliefs about township school learners' self-directed learning skills and motivation for learning can give priority to the development of such practices in their classrooms. The indirect benefit will be that schools can become spaces in which learners learn effectively and do well.

### **Risks involved for participants**

There are no physical risks in this study. The only foreseeable negative consequence that might emanate from participation in the research is one of inconvenience as participants will have to spend time to participate in the interviews. The psychological risks participants might experience in this study is frustration due to the time that they lose due to participation.

No economic risks are anticipated, since participants do not have to travel or spend money on any activity.

To ensure no legal risks with leaking of confidential information the researcher will transcribe the recorded interviews and will also sign an agreement not to discuss what has been said in the interviews. When the researcher analyses the data, a code will be used to refer to participants so that people cannot make a link between their identities and what they have said. All the data that the researcher stores electronically will be protected by a password known only to the researcher. Hard copies of data will be kept safe in the office of the researcher while the research is in progress. On completion of the research the data will be stored with all hard copies in the researchers' office for a period of 5 years.

There are no social, dignitary and community risks in this study.

### **Confidentiality and protection of identity**

No participant's identity will be made known during the research process. Everything you will remain confidential, and your identity will be protected throughout the research process. The data will be disseminated anonymously. Pseudonyms will be used to store and discuss the information you provided.

### **Dissemination of findings**

The findings of the research will be made available to the participating teachers on their request after the study has been completed.

If you have any further questions or enquiries regarding your participation in this research, please contact the researchers for more information.

Yours sincerely

Mr Tebogo Siziba

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**DECLARATION BY PARTICIPANT:**

By signing below, I ..... agree to take part in a research study entitled:

**[Enter title here]**

**I declare that:**

- I have read this information and consent form and understand what is expected of me in the research.
- I have had a chance to ask questions to the researcher and all my questions have been adequately answered.
- I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary and I have not been pressurised to take part.
- I may choose to leave the study at any time and will not be penalised or prejudiced in any way.
- I may be asked to leave the research process before it has finished, if the researcher feels it is in my best interests, or if I do not follow the research procedures, as agreed to.

Signed at (place) \_\_\_\_\_ on (date) \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/20\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Signature of participant**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Researcher**

## ADDENDUM D TEACHERS AND PARENTS INTERVIEW SCHEDULES

### PARENTS:

**Semi structured individual Interview questions: Parents or legal guardians**

**Title: The role of motivation to develop self-directed learners in lower quintile secondary township schools**

Questions	Aims of the questions
1. Are you involved in your child's education? If yes or no, please explain how you are involved.	To determine if parents or legal guardians are involved in the education of their children or not and in what way are they involved.
2. Do you feel you are able to motivate your child with his or her schoolwork? Why do you feel this way?	To determine how parents or legal guardians are involved in supporting their learners mentally, emotionally and academically.
3. What makes it difficult for you to motivate and to assist your child with schoolwork?	To explore contextual influences that hinder parents from motivating and assisting their children with schoolwork.
4. What makes it easy for you to assist your child?  Follow up question if the question is not answered well.  Is there anything that you do at home to make it possible and easy for your child to do homework?	To explore contextual influences that enable parents from motivating and assisting their children with schoolwork.
5. Does your child set his or her own learning goals?  Please explain.	To determine if parents or legal guardians are aware of self-directed learning skills learners might possess.
6. Do you think your child takes responsibility, or not, for his or her own learning? Please explain why you believe that?	To determine if parents or legal guardians are aware of self-directed learning skills learners might possess

7. What do you and your child do when he/she struggles because the schoolwork is too difficult to do?	To determine parents or legal guardians' perceptions of learners self-directed learning skills that motivate them.
8. Do you think your child can be successful in school?	To explore parents or legal guardians' perceptions of their children's' competence according to the Self-determination Theory.
9. Why do you think your child is happy at school or not? Please explain your answer	To explore parents or legal guardians' perceptions of their children's' relatedness according to the Self-determination Theory.
10. Why do you think your child can make his or her decisions when it comes to how, when and where he/she wants to learn.	To explore parents or legal guardians' perceptions of their children's' autonomy in learning according to the Self-determination Theory.
11. What do you think other parents can do to motivate their children to take responsibility for their own learning?	To ascertain what recommendations parents or legal guardians have to develop learners' motivation to become self-directed.
12. What do you think teachers at school can do to motivate your children to take responsibility for their own learning	To ascertain what recommendations parents or legal guardians have to develop learners' motivation to become self-directed.

## TEACHERS:

### Semi-structured individual interview questions: Teachers

**Title: The role of motivation to develop self-directed learners in lower quintile secondary township schools**

Questions	Aim of question
1. Are you familiar with the concept of 'self-directed learning'? Please explain what self-directed learning means to you.  An explanation will be given if participants do not understand the concept.	To determine if educators are familiar with the concept of SDL.
2. Do you think the learners in your class have self-directed learning skills? Please explain why you think so.	To determine teachers' perceptions of learners' self-directed learning skills.
3. Do you think the learners in your class do not have self-directed learning skills? Please explain why you think so	To determine teachers' perceptions of learners' self-directed learning skills.
4. Do you think the learners in your class are motivated to take responsibility for their own learning and learn in a self-directed manner or not? Please explain your answer.	To determine teachers' perceptions of learners' motivation to be self-directed.
5. Do you think the learners in your class are motivated to set personal learning goals not? Please explain your answer.	To determine teachers' perceptions of learners' motivation to be self-directed.
6. What factors do you think cause the learners in your class to be motivated and to learn self-directed to perform academically?	To determine teachers' perceptions of contextual influences on learners' motivation to be self-directed.
7. What factors do you think cause the learners in your class to be de-motivated and less self-directed to perform academically?	To determine teachers' perceptions of contextual influences on learners' motivation to be self-directed.
8. Do you think the causes for learners' de-motivation, if any, is unique to lower quintile or township schools?	Do you think the causes for learners' de-motivation, if any, is unique to lower quintile or township schools?

9. What do you do during teaching to positively influence learners towards taking responsibility for their own learning?	To determine if teachers are aware of the characteristics of SDL and if teachers can identify learners who are self-directed in their classrooms.
10. How do you support and motivate your learners to take responsibility for their own learning?  11. Teachers will be asked to elaborate with examples on their responses for this question.	To determine with practical and real examples if teachers do support the motivation to become self-directed.
12. What teaching strategies if any, do you use in your classroom help unmotivated learners to take responsibility for their own learning? Please explain	To determine if teachers have strategies in place to promote and motivate learners to become self-directed.
13. Would you say your learners are intrinsically motivated to achieve academic success in school? Please explain	To explore teachers' perceptions of the motivational sources of learners' according to the Self-determination Theory.
14. Would you say your learners are extrinsically motivated to achieve academic success in school? Please explain	To explore teachers' perceptions of the motivational sources of learners' according to the Self-determination Theory.
15. Do you think your learners can be successful in school?	To explore teachers' perceptions of their learners' perceptions of competence according to the Self-determination Theory.
16. Why do you think your learners are happy at school or not? Please explain your answer	To explore teachers' perceptions of their learners' needs for relatedness according to the Self-determination Theory.
17. Do you think your learners can make their decisions when it comes to how, when and where they want to learn? Please explain your answer.	To explore teachers' perceptions of their learners' needs for autonomy in learning according to the Self-determination Theory.
18. What do you think parents can do to motivate their children to take responsibility for their own learning?	To ascertain what recommendations teachers, have for parents or legal guardians

	have to develop learners' motivation to become self-directed.
19. What do you think teachers at school can do to motivate learners to take responsibility for their own learning?	To ascertain what recommendations teachers, have to develop learners' motivation to become self-directed.



## ANNEXURE E PROOF OF LANGUAGE EDITING

### Language Editor's Declaration



■ Language Matters Pty Ltd  
■ info@languagematters.co.za  
■ 082 920 2991  
■ www.languagematters.co.za

Language editing – Translation – Transcription – Simultaneous interpreting

info@languagematters.co.za

156 O R Tambo Street

Miederpark

Potchefstroom

2531

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**Manuscript title:** The role of motivation to develop self-directed learning learners in lower quintile secondary township schools

**Author(s):** T Siziba

**Date Issued:** 22 November 2023

**Issued by:** Simone Barroso

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BA Hons Language Practice (NWU, 2011)

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