

NORTH WEST UNIVERSITY
FACULTY OF EDUCATION SCIENCES

**Perspectives on the functioning of an effective school
attended by learners from disadvantaged communities**

In partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree Masters in Education
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Submitted by

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July 2008

DECLARATION

I declare that **FUNCTIONING OF AN EFFECTIVE SCHOOL ATTENDED BY LEARNERS FROM DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITIES: INKAMANA HIGH SCHOOL** is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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Finally I would like to dedicate this book to my daughters Tokelo and Pulane.

ABSTRACT

“Education is the guardian genius of democracy. It is the only dictator free people recognize, and the only ruler free people require.”

Mirabeau Bounaparte Lamar.

Since the attainment of democracy in 1994, South Africa has been committed to effectively addressing the problems of poverty and the gross inequality evident in most aspects of South African society, especially in education.

This study explores the functioning of an effective school attended by learners from disadvantaged communities.

Most schools that are attended by learners from disadvantaged communities have not performed well, especially in their Matriculation examinations. Against these great odds some schools attended by learners from disadvantaged communities have functioned effectively and achieved remarkable results over a long period.

Inkamana High School is a school attended by learners from disadvantaged communities. It has maintained a Matriculation pass rate of 100%, since 1979 to date. The general aim of the study is to document the perspectives of learners, teachers, school management, parents and community on the functioning of Inkamana High School as an effective school that is attended by learners from disadvantaged communities.

Research findings were compared with the relevant literature to identify existing information and the possible differences. The findings were then recorded.

The study also showed that an effective functioning of a school attended by learners from disadvantaged communities can be enhanced if schools focus on life skills education, provide a safe and supportive atmosphere and physical environment, maintain discipline and order, dedicated teaching and learning, expectations of achievements and successes. Recommendations for improvement out of the interviews have also been made.

OPSOMMING

“Education is the guardian genius of democracy. It is the only dictator free people recognize, and the only ruler free people require.”

Mirabeau Bounaparte Lamar

Sedert die koms van demokrasie in 1994, is Suid-Afrika verbind tot die effektiewe hantering van probleme soos armoede en die groot ongelykheid wat waarneembaar was in die meeste aspekte van die Suid-Afrikaanse samelewing, veral in die onderwys.

Hierdie studie ondersoek die funksionering van ‘n effektiewe skool wat bygewoon word deur leerders van agtergeblewe gemeenskappe.

Meeste van die skole wat bygewoon word deur leerders van agtergeblewe gemeenskappe presteer nie goed nie, veral in die Matrikulاسie-eksamen. Ten spyte van groot struikelblokke is daar sommige skole wat bygewoon word deur leerders uit agtergeblewe gemeenskappe wat wel goed funksioneer en wat merkwaardige resultate oor ‘n lang tydperk behaal het.

Inkamana High School is ‘n skool wat bygewoon word deur leerders vuit agtergeblewe gemeenskappe. Die skool het ‘n Matrikulاسie-slaagsyfer van 100% sedert 1979 bly behaal. Die algemene doestelling van hierdie studie was om die perspektiewe van leerders, onderwysers, skoolbestuur, ouers en die gemeenskap te dokumenteer oor die funksionering van Inkamana High School as ‘n effektiewe skool wat deur leerders van agtergeblewe gemeenskappe bygewoon word. Navorsingsbevindinge is gekruiskontroleer met relevante literatuur.

Die studie het aangetoon dat die effektiewe funksionering van ‘n skool wat bygewoon word deur leerders uit agtergeblewe gemeenskappe toegeskryf kan word aan die fokus op lewensvaardighede-opvoeding, die verskaffing van ‘n veilige en ondersteurende atmosfeer en fisiese omgewing, die handhawing van dissipline en orde, toegewydheid in onderrig en leer, die verwagtinge van prestasies en suksesse. Aanbevelings vir verdere verbetering soos blyk uit die onderhoude word ten slotte ook gemaak.

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1. Orientation of the research

1.1 Introduction

South Africa has a long history of apartheid and other forms of unfair discrimination in education. Since 1994 when South Africa gained independence, there have been political changes that had implications for almost every sphere of society. This is especially true for education. There can be few, if any, areas of education that have been left untouched by the drive to overcome the legacy of apartheid since 1994. And yet there is a powerful perception that not much has changed and that things may even have become worse (Chisholm, 2004:201). The legacy of apartheid left major inequalities between white and black and urban and rural areas and departments of education. Despite this some of the schools in disadvantaged communities have maintained a high level of performance evidenced by their attainment of a 100% pass rate in the Matriculation examinations. Inkamana High School is one such school. It has maintained a Matriculation pass rate of 100% since 1979 to date.

This study will focus on perspectives on the functioning of Inkamana High School. an effective school attended by learners from disadvantaged communities.

1.2 Orientation, motivation and statement of the problem

The communities within which schools are located strongly influence their development and *vice versa*. The norms and values of the communities are reflected in the school and those of the school are reflected in the community. In disadvantaged communities there is a high incidence of job and income loss and the economic stagnation of the working poor; poverty among young families; single mothers; and homelessness. These trends are highly devastating to learners (Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana, 2002: 160).

Economic loss brings about changes in parental attitude, disposition and behaviour. Unemployed parents are more dissatisfied with themselves and their lives. They feel victimised and are more anxious, depressed and hostile. These changes strain family relationships and exercise a negative

impact on the success of children at school. Dysfunctional families do not provide sustenance, nurturance, support and intimacy to their children (McWhirter *et al.*, 1998: 22).

Hillman (1996), in the British National Commission on Education, maintains that disadvantage in communities both limits access to educational opportunities and reduces the ability of children to benefit from schooling. Unemployment or low income reduces or precludes money being spent by families on learning resources such as books or learning opportunities in the form of excursions. In this regard Monstert (1998: 33) feels that children from middle class families as opposed to those from poor families have more opportunities of undertaking trips and excursions that provide them with broadening experiences. They also have much easier access to books and magazines.

Health problems with their associated effects on the physical and intellectual developments are more likely in disadvantaged communities as are housing problems of overcrowding, bed-sharing and lack of quiet space for home study and a greater chance of household accidents. Parents are likely to have lower levels of education and parenting skills; and are less likely to have knowledge about and confidence in the education service. There is also lack of proper nutrition as meals are unpredictable. In addition a greater prevalence of crime and drugs may occur where adult alcoholism and wife and child abuse are common (Hillman, 1996).

Mayekiso (1989: 65) further acknowledges the negative influence of poverty on school achievement by stating that under-nourishment and overcrowding are common elements of poor home environment. It is further maintained that overcrowding at home may result in worry, fear, anxiety, and these may lead to poor achievement. Monstert (1998: 33) on the other hand observes that the educational level of parents does play a critical role in the educational process and in raising educational accomplishments of their children.

Schools in disadvantaged communities are often poorly served by the education system in South Africa. In these schools there is a high rate of learners dropping out. McMillen, Kaufman and Whitener (1996) believe that learners who drop out of school are likely to be those who are unmotivated by their performance; who have had problems with either the school authorities, the police, or both; who skip classes or are often absent; who have to work to supplement the family income; who fall pregnant or get married; who have drug or alcohol problems; or those who have fallen two or more years behind grade levels. Molebatsi (1992: 2) notes from the responses to a questionnaire sent to grade 12 learners regarding the unsatisfactory performance that

insufficient facilities such as libraries, classrooms, textbooks and laboratories are major factors. In addition the down-spiralling is enhanced by drug and alcohol abuse.

An effective school is, according to Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana (2002: 294), one that provides appropriate education to its learners in the least restrictive environment and that is consistent with the needs of its learners. Such a school meets the principles of efficiency in the achievement of outcomes relevant to the needs and aspirations of learners and society as a whole (Mothata, 2000:60). These schools promote progress and their performance is consistently impressive and improving over time.

Effective schools, according to Druian and Buttler (2001), are those in which all students master priority objectives. These schools have key characteristics that can be organised into three major areas as follows:

Leadership: The role of the building principal is to focus the whole school on instruction and use this focus as a means of establishing and acting upon priorities in the school. The principal and all others know that the school is a place for learning.

Principals do many things for schools to help them achieve success. They

- Shape the vision and mission;
- provide instructional leadership and nurture it in others;
- manage and administer complex organisational processes;
- shape the school culture and climate;
- build and maintain positive relationships with community and parents; and
- lead and support school improvement and change.

If principals do not provide leadership in these areas, the school is at a risk of failure (Peterson: 1999).

Climate: All staff and all students share the expectation that all students can learn. Effective schools exhibit equity in terms of learning. Learning takes place in a safe, orderly environment and students are expected to behave according to established, fairly executed rules of conduct.

Classroom instruction and management: All teachers are highly skilled in and use a variety of instructional methods and techniques, objectives, and there is frequent monitoring and evaluation of student progress towards those objectives.

McWhirter *et al.* (1998: 64) maintain that several elements are common to effective schools and that these elements can be classified into the following general categories:

- Leadership behaviours
Schools deemed effective tend to have autonomous management at the site.
- Academic emphasis
Effective schools provide a curriculum that emphasises academics.
- Teacher and staff factors
Effective schools are characterised by collegial relationships among the staff, encouragement of collaborative planning and low turnover among the staff.
- Student involvement
Students of effective schools tend to have a sense of community, a feeling of belongingness. Student discipline at effective schools is fair, clear and consistent and it is not oppressive or punitive.
- Social capital
This is the network of relationships that surround an individual child and that are important for his or her development.
- Community support
Communities in which effective schools are located have high expectations of the schools and their students.

Weiner (2000) point out that school effectiveness research seeks to examine curricula, pedagogy and management practices, using as its main instrument, taxonomy of 11 (sometimes 12) characteristics of school effectiveness:

- Professional leadership
- Shared vision and goals
- A learning environment (e.g. orderly and attractive)
- Concentration on teaching and learning (e.g. academic emphasis)
- Purposeful teaching (e.g. clear, structured)
- High expectations
- Positive reinforcement (e.g. fair discipline, feedback)
- Monitoring of progress
- Identification of pupils' rights and responsibilities (e.g. raising esteem, control of work)
- Home/school partnership
- A learning organisation (school-based staff development)

In particular school effectiveness research emphasises the key role of the head-teacher in a school's performance.

Even though the general expectation is that schools in disadvantaged communities, as compared to the more affluent schools in advantaged areas, would have poor academic results, there are schools that face difficult challenges and yet defy the odds and perform consistently well despite their situations. After the release of results for the Matriculation class of 2004 in January 2005, Duncan Hindle, the acting director general of the National Department of Education observed that poorer schools were increasingly performing well (Mkhize, 2005).

This is the case with Inkamana High School, which is one of many poor schools with moderate fees that stand alongside more affluent schools. This school is partially subsidised by the government and the fees amounted to less than R60.00 a month per student in the year 2004. The school is based in Vryheid in rural KwaZulu-Natal. The school is situated inside a Roman Catholic Mission and boasts a well administered boarding facility. The boarding facility is run and maintained by the Roman Catholic Mission personnel. Most learners in this school are

boarders. This school had been a ‘mission school’ until the government introduced the transformation of such schools into public schools. The school has however achieved a matriculation pass rate of 100% every year since 1979 (Mkhize, 2005). It is against this background that the school is seen as effective. It is thus necessary to find out from the people involved in the school how this school manages to be so successful. The answer to this question can serve as a framework that will assist schools that are less successful.

1.3 Research question

Based on the above description of the problem in the research, the following question could be identified for this study:

What are the perspectives of the learners, teachers, school management, parents and community on the functioning of an effective school attended by learners from disadvantaged communities?

1.4 Aim of the study

1.4.1 General aim

The general aim of this study was to document the perspectives on the functioning of an effective school attended by learners from disadvantaged communities.

1.4.2 Specific aims

The specific aims of this study included the following:

1. Document the perspectives of the learners on the functioning of an effective school attended by learners from disadvantaged communities.
2. Document the perspectives of teachers on the functioning of an effective school attended by learners from disadvantaged communities.
3. Document the perspectives of the school management on the functioning of an effective school attended by learners from disadvantaged communities.
4. Document the perspectives of parents of learners on the functioning of a school attended by learners from disadvantaged communities.

5. Document the perspectives of the community on the functioning of a school attended by learners from disadvantaged communities.

1.5 Method of investigation

To achieve the goal of documenting the perspectives of learners, teachers, school management team, parents of learners and members of the community a qualitative investigation on the functioning of an effective school attended by learners from a disadvantaged community has been undertaken. This method proved to be more appropriate to the aims of this study since it involved gaining an understanding of a particular phenomenon in question, with emphasis on innovative initiatives. This method of research elicited participants' accounts of meaning, experience or perceptions. It produced descriptive data in the participants' own written or spoken words. It thus involved identifying participants' beliefs and values that underlined the phenomenon (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001: 147, 153; Neuman, 2003: 142, 146).

Semi-structured focus group, and individual interviews with schedules were conducted to gather information required to meet the research aims. These interviews were conducted with learners, teachers, school management team (comprising the principal and deputy principal), parents of learners and the community.

The research question as identified in 1.3 was answered by interpreting responses to the following questions:

- *Do you regard your school as an effective school?*
- *What are the aspects of the school that make it either effective or ineffective?*

Participants gave their own reasons why they regard this school either as an effective or an ineffective school.

- *What conclusions and suggestions can be made to promote effectiveness in schools?*

Conclusions and suggestions ensuing from the research findings concerning what would make a school attended by learners from disadvantaged communities to function effectively were documented.

1.5.1 Paradigmatic perspective

Paradigm

The word *paradigm* comes from Greek and can refer to a model, theory, perception, assumption, or frame of reference (Covey, 1998:23). It is also found to refer in a more general sense to the way individuals view the world in terms of their perception, understanding and interpretation of it and their experiences in the world (Kirsten, 2001:11). This also has a direct bearing on the planning, execution and findings of research.

The researcher's personal anthropology was also of importance in this study, especially because of the qualitative research component. In this qualitative component of the study, the researcher could be seen as a primary instrument (for the gathering and analysis of data). As such the researcher's paradigm, bias, assumptions, preconceptions and values needed to be reflected explicitly in qualitative research. This would add to the consistency of the research and serve to identify potential dangers pertaining to the validity of conclusions made (Maxwell, 1996:26).

At present the researcher is a graduated Mathematics and English teacher at a high school in the Eastern Cape Province. The researcher is currently head of the science department in the same school and has formerly been lecturer at Bensonvale College of Education. Having observed poor performance by most of the high schools in the Eastern Cape Province, especially in the rural areas, the researcher felt it important to find out what other schools attended by learners from disadvantaged communities, such as Inkamana High School did to achieve such good results. Once aspects that contributed had been identified, conclusions and suggestions to promote effectiveness in schools attended by learners from disadvantaged communities would be possible.

1.5.2 Theoretical Assumptions

The theoretical assumption of this study is that there is a gap that is wide and increasing in the educational performance between schools attended by learners from disadvantaged communities and those in schools attended by learners from advantaged communities. This is so because disadvantage not only limits access to educational opportunities but also reduces the ability of children to benefit from the schooling that they do engage in.

1.5.3 Explanation of terms

A cursory explanation will be given of terminology often referred to in this study.

1.5.3.1 Education and educational disadvantage

Education, as in the case with psychology, has the person – and more specifically, the development of the person – as the object of study (Van Niekerk *in* Kirsten, 2001: 20). “*Disadvantaged*” is a relative term - one must be disadvantaged with respect to some condition that could be called advantaged (Cowles: 1967). The term “disadvantage” according to Mortimore and Blackstone (1982:8) is defined as the unfavourable conditions or circumstances, detriment or prejudice. It refers to social and material factors such as income, unemployment, housing, health, and environmental conditions. Similarly “deprivation” is defined as a state of observable and demonstrable disadvantage relative to the local community or the wider society or nation to which an individual, family or group belongs (McIntyre *et al.*, 2000). It refers to the material and social conditions that are experienced by individuals and households, where these conditions are inadequate relative to what is usually available or experienced in society. It is against this background that the terms disadvantage and deprivation may be used interchangeably in this study.

Educational disadvantage therefore means the denial of equal access to educational opportunities, the tendency to leave education at the first opportunity, and the hindrance of achievement by social and environmental factors.

1.5.3.2 Effective schools

An effective school is one where student progress is greater than what would be expected in the light of intake variables (Mortimore, 1991). School effectiveness according to Leonard, Bourke & Schofield can be attributed to variables such as the following:

- Quality educational programmes and curriculum
- Positive ethos and climate
- Effective leadership
- Communication
- Decision making

- High quality teaching
- Access to support services
- Satisfied students
- Low student absenteeism

1.5.4 Procedure

The study was introduced to the school through a letter that was sent by registered mail to the principal. This letter served to seek permission and time to talk to the participants. Another letter seeking the same permission was sent to the KwaZulu-Natal Education Department. Participants were selected randomly with a view to be representative. Five Learners were selected from each of the grades 10, 11 and 12. Teachers were selected from two groups: those who were older and had been teaching for a long time, and those who were young and had been teaching for shorter period of time. The other participants consisted out of school management - the principal and the heads of department, and parents and members of the community in order to form focus groups of five members for each of the constituents. Field notes were made during the engagement process with the school and its constituents and documents were analysed where appropriate.

1.6 The course of the study: chapter division

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

Chapter 2 deals with the research design and methodology. The aim of this chapter is to provide A chain of evidence by means of dense, holistic description of the entire research process, to ensure that if a different researcher should undertake the same study in a similar context, he or she would be able to come up with similar, if not the same, findings regarding reasons why a school attended by learners from a disadvantaged community operates as an effective school.

Chapter 3 focuses on the findings obtained from the interviews and reflects why a school attended by learners from disadvantaged communities can be an effective school.

Chapter 4 deals with literature control on different categories identified from the perspectives on the functioning of an effective school with learners from disadvantaged communities.

Chapter 5 provides a summary of the identified reasons, as well as the way in which these can be used to promote effectiveness in dysfunctional schools. Limitations of the study are presented. Recommendations are given in the form of guidelines in the promotion of effectiveness in schools attended by learners from disadvantaged communities.

2. Research design and method

2.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to provide evidence by means of a holistic description of the entire research process which will ensure that should any other researcher undertake the same study in a similar context he or she would come up with similar, if not the same, findings as to why a school with learners from disadvantaged communities functions effectively.

The purpose of this research was to find out what the perspectives of the learners, teachers, school management, parents, and community of Inkamana High School are on the functioning of this school, that functions as an effective school, even though it is attended by learners from disadvantaged communities.

2.2 Research design

The research investigated with the perspectives of the learners, teachers, school management, parents and the community of Inkamana Secondary School to determine why a school attended by learners from disadvantaged communities functions as an effective school. A qualitative, naturalistic research design was considered to be the most appropriate for this study since it would help the researcher to gain insight into what the learners, the teachers, the school management, parents of learners and the community attribute to the effectiveness of such a school attended by learners from disadvantaged communities.

2.2.1 Qualitative research

This study was concerned with the perspectives of learners, teachers, parents of learners, school management, and the community of Inkamana High School. The main aim was to determine why their school was so effective in spite of its being part of the problems posed by disadvantaged communities. Qualitative research, according to Key (1997), is a generic term for investigative methodologies described as ethnographic, naturalistic, anthropological field, or participant observer research. It emphasises the importance of looking at variables in the natural

setting in which they are found. Detailed data were gathered through open-ended questions that provide direct quotation. The interviewer was an the integral part of the investigation.

Hoepfl (1997) maintains that qualitative research, broadly defined, means ‘any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by any statistical procedures or any means of quantification’. Qualitative researchers seek illumination, understanding, and extrapolation to similar situations. The following prominent characteristics of qualitative research as highlighted by Hoepfl (1997) represent a synthesis of descriptions of qualitative research and are what make it most suitable for this study:

1. Qualitative research uses the natural setting as the source of data. The researcher attempts to observe, describe, and interpret settings as they are, maintaining ‘emphatic neutrality’.
2. The researcher acts as the ‘human instrument’ of data collection.
3. Qualitative researchers predominantly use inductive data analysis.
4. Qualitative research reports are descriptive, they incorporate expressive language and the ‘presence of voice in the text’.
5. Qualitative research has an interpretative character, aimed at discovering the meanings events have for the individuals who experience them, and the interpretations of these meanings by the researcher.
6. Qualitative researchers pay attention to the idiosyncratic as well as the pervasive, seeking the uniqueness of each case.
7. Qualitative research has the emergent (as opposed to predetermined) design, and researchers focus on this emerging process as well as the outcomes or products of the research.
8. Qualitative research is evaluated by using special criteria for trustworthiness.
9. Qualitative research, according to Amber & Adler (1995:882), may also be briefly defined as research that has at its base in
 - (a) oral words, whether in conversations, sentences, or monologues;

- (b) written words in journals, letters, autobiographies, scripts, texts, official reports, and historical documents;
- (c) the recorded field notes of observers of or participants in meetings, ceremonies, rituals, and family life;
- (d) life histories and narrative stories in either the oral or written form; and
- (e) visual observations (whether live, videotaped, or in pictures) or other modes of self-expression such as facial expressions, body language, physical presentation of the self, modes of dressing, and other forms of self-expression such as how one decorates the home.

A qualitative approach to this research is suitable, because it requires that the researcher interpret the real world from the perspective of the subjects of his investigation (Mouton & Marais, 1994: 205). Other motivations for using this method include the following:

- Practitioners have often found that the questions and methods researchers use are irrelevant to the daily concerns faced by teachers, administrators and policy analysts, whereas qualitative research allows for the researcher to refine and recognise his questions as his understanding of the phenomena increases (Modise, 2003:20).
- The approach assumes that for an interpretation, the researcher needs inter-subjective personal knowledge and any attempt to penetrate to the essence of a phenomenon can also be made by means of qualitative approaches (Mouton & Marais, 1994:169).
- One major feature of qualitative research is that it focuses on naturally occurring, ordinary events in natural settings so that a strong indication can emerge of what “real life” is like (Modise, 2003:21). The data of qualitative research are clearly authentic, drawing from the knowledge and perception of the people with whom the researcher is working (Simmons-Mackie & Damico, 2001:32).
- Qualitative research frequently falls within the context of discovery rather than verification (Amber & Adler, 1995:879). The volume of data generated by interviews, journals and anecdotal methods (thus the data generated by qualitative research methods) can be considerable. A large volume of layered data promotes authenticity and helps verify results. (Simmons-Mackie & Damico, 2001:32).

- The criteria for acceptable qualitative methods are primarily authenticity and conformability (Simmons-Mackie & Damico, 2001:32). This differs from the validity and reliability standards of qualitative research.
- Error in collection and interpretation of data is minimised through the method of triangulation. Triangulation involves the collection of data from multiple sources, by means of various data collection strategies. By layering such triangulated data, observations and interpretations are verified and authenticity and conformability are achieved (Simmons-Mackie & Damico, 2001:32).
- Qualitative researchers, according to Heath (1997), also attempt to describe and interpret some human phenomenon, often in the words of the selected individuals (the informants), in this study the learners, teachers, school management, parents, and community of the school under study.

2.3 Research method

The research was conducted in the form of a case study. This, according to Key (1997), is a detailed investigation of individuals, groups, institutions or other social units. The researcher conducting a case study attempts to analyse the variables relevant to the subject under study. The principle difference between case studies and other research studies is that the focus of attention is the individual case and not the whole population of cases. Most studies search for what is common and pervasive. However, in the case study, the focus may not be on generalisation but on understanding the particulars of that case in its complexity. A case study focuses on a bounded system, usually under natural conditions, so that the system can be understood in its own habitat.

This study was conducted in such a way that first-hand information was obtained from the subjects themselves regarding their opinions on such factors as the school's effectiveness can be attributed to. This phase included sampling, data collection, debating the trustworthiness, and ensuring ethical correctness of the research.

2.3.1 Population and selection of participants

An illustration of the target group, the way in which the participants were selected and the criteria for inclusion in this study is provided.

- **Population**

The population of the research consisted of the learners, teachers, school management, parents and the community of Inkamana Secondary School.

- **Selection of Participants**

Participants of the research consisted of individuals who had been randomly selected.

- **Criteria for inclusion in the study**

The criteria for inclusion in the study were that individuals had to be

1. learners currently enrolled at Inkamana Secondary School;
2. the teachers who currently teach at Inkamana Secondary School;
3. the school management of Inkamana Secondary School;
4. parents of learners currently enrolled at Inkamana Secondary School; as well as
5. community members involved in Inkamana Secondary School, willing to participate in the study.

2.3.2 Data Collection

The following measuring instruments were used for investigation:

2.3.2.1 Phenomenological interviews

The broad question that phenomenology interviews want answered is ‘What is the meaning of one’s lived experience?’ The only reliable source of information to answer this question is the person involved. Understanding human behaviour or experience requires of the individual to interpret the action or experience for the researcher, and then the researcher must interpret the explanation provided by the person (Ross: 1999).

Interviewing is a flexible way of gathering qualitative data that are detailed and personal (McLeod, 1996:65). Qualitative interviews place an emphasis on listening and on following the direction of the participant/informant (Law, Steward, Letts, Pollock, Bosch, Westmorland

1998:2). In qualitative studies interviews are used as the main data source, and the researcher has an opportunity to interact with the research participants at a personal level.

2.3.2.2 The researcher's role

The role of the researcher involves the role of the self (2.3.2.2.1), his/her communication techniques (2.3.2.2.2), the creation of a relaxed atmosphere (2.3.2.2.3) and field notes (2.3.2.2.4). These aspects are discussed in detail below.

2.3.2.2.1 Role of the self

A key factor in phenomenological research is that the self has to be used. According to Janesick (1998:61 *in* Modise, 2003:30), one of the amazing strengths of the qualitative researcher is the ability to use all senses to undertake the research act. Face-to-face interviews can promote the building of a “research alliance” between the researcher and the participants, in much the same way as a therapeutic alliance can be built between a therapist and a client (Grafanaki, 1996:331). During the research interviews, the researcher needs to be fully present and engaged in what the other person is sharing with him/her. Qualities like active listening, accurate understanding, warmth, acceptance and genuineness are of major importance in encouraging and promoting a good rapport between researcher and participants (Barreneau & Bozarth, 1989:479; Mearns & McLeod, 1996:66). Empathy and intuition are also deliberately used to assist the interviewer by allowing him to become closely involved with the unique life-world or world experience of the interviewee. This will, according to Burns and Grove (1987:80), help the researcher to remain open to the perceptions of the interviewee, rather than give his own meaning to their experiences.

Thus the quality of the data developed in an interview seems to be dependent on the skill of the researcher, the recollecting and reflective capacities of the participants, and the relationship that is developed between researcher and participant (Polkinhorne, 1991: 163).

2.3.2.2.2 Communication techniques of the researcher

Important communication techniques that are employed by the researcher according to Poggenpoel (1993:8) include the following:

- Reflecting on content and feelings that occur when the researcher communicates to the respondent how he/she understands the perceptions, experiences and feelings of the respondent.

- Paraphrasing, which entails formulating a statement made by the respondent.
- Summarising, which is feedback given to the researcher on the general content of the interview, or part of it.
- A request for clarifications, which is an attempt to obtain greater clarity when the respondent's response is vague, confused or unclear.
- A request for examples and descriptions (Poggenpoel, 1993:8).

2.3.2.2.3 Creation of a relaxed atmosphere

The researcher's environment is very important in contributing and establishing a good interviewer-interviewee relationship. A warm and relaxed atmosphere will establish feelings of comfort and ease that will enhance rapport with the interviewee (Thompson & Rudolph, 1992: 32). It will also eliminate distrust. A trusting relationship facilitates the gathering of data that are authentically rooted in a participant's experience and are thus more complete and rich (Cowles, 1988:170).

2.3.2.2.4 Field notes

Directly after each interview, the researcher records field notes of the interview situation. This ensures that the interviewer is not distracted from the task of observing and listening to the respondent by taking notes during the interview. In these field notes the researcher records notes of the interview situation and of his own impressions of it. Field notes according to Lincoln and Guba (1995: 185) can be divided into four categories, namely:

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

2.4 Data analysis

Qualitative data were collected through transcribed interviews, observations and the researcher's field notes. Such data were integrated with information obtained from the literature study. This research included these steps

Data were then analysed according to a combination of methods used by Kerlinger (1986:479-481) and Giorgi (Omery, 1983:57):

- All the interviews were firstly transcribed from digital audio recorder.
- All the data sources in the data pool were then read through in order to obtain a holistic picture, whilst “*bracketing*” and “*intuiting*” were applied as control measures.
- All the data sources in the data pool were then read a second time (slowly), in order to identify and underline semantic units of words and themes.
- After the themes had been identified, corresponding themes were grouped together into main and sub-categories. These main categories and sub-categories were identified and defined for all data sources in the data pool in order to form a logical chain of evidence and to operationalise triangulation to enhance reliability and validity of the study.
- These categories with their sub-categories were then grouped into their respective and corresponding sub-contexts in accordance with the paradigmatic perspective of this study, as referred to earlier.
- Although themes were divided into main and sub-categories, in order to distinguish between them, these categories cannot really be regarded as separate. A category should therefore not be seen in isolation but as part of the greater “*gestalt*”.
- Correlations between categories are verified by means of method triangulation, and by looking for outliers (Miles & Huberman, 1994:258).
- Lastly, categories were quantified with a view to quantify the results in order to determine priorities and frequencies in the data (Miles & Huberman, 1994:253).

2.5 Trustworthiness

The basic question addressed by the notion of trustworthiness, according to Lincoln and Guba in Hoepfl (1997) is simple: ‘How can an inquirer persuade his or her audiences that the research findings of an inquiry are worth paying attention to?’ Trustworthiness is based on the

researcher's reputation for honesty, his/her social role, sincerity and openness as well as the absence of personal gain (Cormeir & Cormier 1992). Four aspects determine these, namely truth-value (2.5.1), applicability (2.5.2), consistency (2.5.3), and neutrality (2.5.4)

2.5.1 Truth-value

The discovery of human experience as it is genuinely actualised, ensures truth-value (Krefting, 1991: 215). The truth-value of the research thus refers to the trust in the authenticity of the findings from the interviews. Authenticity is the primary criteria for acceptability of qualitative measures and refers to the detailed and credible depiction of natural events as experienced by the participants. Truth-value involves aspects of credibility (2.5.1.1), triangulation (2.5.1.2), peer group evaluation (2.5.1.3), the authority of the researcher (2.5.1.4), and structural coherence (2.5.1.5).

2.5.1.1 Credibility

In qualitative research, data must be auditable, transferable, dependable, and confirmable. The following techniques can be applied to raise the credibility of the researcher:

2.5.1.2 Triangulation

Triangulation involves the collection of data from multiple sources on multiple occasions by means of various data collection strategies. By layering the triangulated data, observations and interpretations are verified and authenticity and conformability are achieved (Simmons-Mackie and Damico, 2001:32). Triangulation is therefore a validity procedure where researchers search for convergence among multiple and different sources of information to form themes or categories in a study (Modise, 2003:42). There are four types of triangulation:

1. By source: data is collected from different sources (different people, resources, etc).
2. By methods: different data collection strategies are used, like participant observation, individual interviews and focus groups.
3. By researcher: this involves the incorporation of more than one researcher to analyse the data, develop and test the coding scheme.

4. By theories: multiple theories and perceptions are considered during data analysis and interpretation (Law et al., 1998: 8).

The first use of triangulation was introduced by virtue of the fact that data concerning the reasons why Inkamana High School, a school in a disadvantaged community can be considered an effective school were collected by means of phenomenological interviews with the participants. The information was recorded on digital audio recorder and expanded by means of direct observations that were recorded as field notes.

The second triangulation measure was applied with the data analysis, where the data were interpreted according to a combination of descriptive and content analyses, as proposed by Kerlinger (1986: 3).

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

2.5.1.3 Peer group evaluation

The input of other educational psychologists provided the researcher with the opportunity to remain open and honest, and in this way to rid himself of emotions and feelings that may have influenced his good judgement.

2.5.1.4 Authority of the researcher

The researcher has completed a B.A. degree at Vista University and a B.Ed degree at the former Potchefstroom University for Higher Christian Education. The researcher has also been a lecturer at a college of education, and after closure of many of such institutions, has been teaching at a high school in the rural district of Sterkspruit in the Eastern Cape Province to date. This is where the researcher started being interested in what schools can actually do to be successful in spite of less favourable circumstances. The school where the researcher was teaching at the time of this study, proved to be one such school. Once the narratives of the learners, teachers, parents of learners, and the community had been heard and analysed, the relevant conclusions and suggestions could be made. This was what inspired the researcher to undertake the investigation on which this study is based.

2.5.1.5 Structural coherence

Consistent focus was placed on a certain group of learners, teachers, management, parents of learners, and community members of Inkamana High School. These participants were identified as representative of the following:

- Learners that were enrolled in the school
- Teachers teaching in the school
- Management bodies
- Parents of learners enrolled in the school
- Members of the immediate community of the school

The reasons for regarding Inkamana High School as an effective school were a point of focus throughout the interviews, coding and data analysis.

2.5.2 Applicability

Qualitative research, according to Smith (1996:23), studies a phenomenon in its unique, natural context, which allows little opportunity for external control of variables. Applicability in qualitative research refers to the degree to which the findings can be applied to other contexts and settings or with other groups (Krefting, 1991: 216). It is for this reason that reference is made to the applicability of findings when dealing with qualitative research.

The control measures to ensure the applicability of the research are sample selection and transferability. This research followed the necessary steps.

2.5.2.1 Sample selection

A purposive sample was selected from the target group, while at the same time it is ensured that each participant duly fulfilled the criteria for inclusion in the research.

2.5.2.2 Transferability

Transferability of the research is the way in which it may be applied to contexts beyond the study situation, as determined by the degree of similarity between the two contexts. The transferability

depends on time and context-bound experiences and not on the researcher of the original study (Krefting, 1991: 216). In order to make the study transferable for other research situations, Smith (1996: 24) suggests that the researcher envisage presenting a sufficient database of the research, including a description of the selection criteria for inclusion in the sample, as well as verbatim quoting from the interview.

2.5.3 Consistency

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

2.5.3.1 Dependability

A sufficient description of the research methodology must be presented to enhance the reliability of the research. The concept of dependability implies traceable variability (Krefting, 1991:216).

2.5.3.2 Step-by-step replication

The second measure of control is step-by-step replication (Krefting,1991:216). To ensure the standardisation in this research, the same steps were followed with each interview, as listed below:

- Written permission to conduct the research was obtained from the District Director of Education and the principal of Inkamana High School.
- Each group of subjects was interviewed.
- The consent of each subject to be interviewed during the research was obtained.
- It was explained to the subjects what would expected of them.
- The central request was presented to each subject in exactly the same words.

2.5.3.3 Coding and decoding procedure

The third and final measure of control is the application of a coding/decoding procedure (Krefting, 1991: 216). This involves that an expert with intensive experience in the field of qualitative research be appointed as an independent coder. This research followed these steps.

After the interviews had been transcribed and coded by the researcher, a protocol of the data analysis was presented to the independent coder, who encoded and categorised the data on his/her own, before meeting with the researcher to discuss the results and to obtain the greatest degree of consensus.

2.5.4 Neutrality

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

2.5.4.1 Conformability

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

2.5.4.1.1 Chain of events

Smith (1996:26) points out that, in order to make a chain of events possible, records of the following must be kept:

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

2.5.4.1.2 Triangulation

Triangulation is also a means of controlling verifiability. This entails the same measures as explained in 2.5.1.2. These measures were applied in this investigation.

2.6 Ethical considerations

This study was done within the ambit of the principles set out in the Ethical Code of the Professional Board for Psychology (Health Professions Council of South Africa, 2002), especially with regard to professional competence, professional relations, privacy, confidentiality and records, and research and publication.

2.7 Summary

This chapter has provided a holistic description of the entire research process, including the qualitative research design and method. The qualitative approach to research was employed, and the method of data collection is through phenomenological interviews, direct observation and records. The data analysis and the method implemented to ensure trustworthiness of the research were also expounded.

3. Perspectives on the functioning of an effective school attended by learners from disadvantaged communities: Inkamana High School

3.1 Introduction

Even though the general expectation is that schools attended by learners from disadvantaged communities would, as compared to the affluent schools with learners from advantaged communities, have poor academic achievement, there are schools attended by learners from disadvantaged communities that face difficult challenges and yet perform consistently well despite their situations. In January 2005, Duncan Hindle, the then acting Director General of the National Department of Education, observed that these schools were increasingly performing well (Mkhize in *The Sunday Times*, January 2005). In the same article Inkamana High School was identified as one of many schools attended by learners from disadvantaged communities with moderate fees that stand alongside more affluent schools. The school is based in Vryheid in rural KwaZulu-Natal, and every year since 1979 has achieved a matriculation pass rate of 100%. It is against this background that the school is seen as an effective school despite debilitating disadvantages of socio-economic as well as environmental nature that the learners in this school are subjected to.

This study was meant to find out from the learners, teachers, parents of learners, management bodies and the community what it was that was being done well in order to maintain the consistency in their academic achievement. By identifying the reasons why this can be considered an effective school it is hoped that this study will eventually contribute in assisting and transforming schools attended by learners from disadvantaged communities into schools that will perform well.

3.2 Data analysis

Data generated through the interviews were analysed as outlined in chapter 2. Categories that were included in the ecological part-system through grouping were in the form of perspectives

on the factors that relate to the effectiveness of the school such as the school's focus on life skills education, the school's ability to provide a good and supportive atmosphere and physical environment, how the school maintains order and discipline, dedication in teaching and learning as well as achievement and successes.

Direct quotations are presented verbatim, without corrections, as part of the explanation of the categories. Occasionally explanatory remarks are inserted in the verbatim quotation by the researcher. The quotations are addressed to the participants in terms of the following symbols:

- (a) 'P' refers to the Principal
- (b) 'D' refers to the Deputy Principal
- (c) 'ET', 'YT' refer to the elderly teachers and the young teachers respectively.
- (d) 'BM1', 'BM2', and 'BM3' refer to the first, second and third boarding masters respectively.
- (e) 'Prt1', 'Prt2' refer to the first and second parent respondents respectively.
- (d) '10L1', '10L2', '10L3', '10L4', and '10L5' refer to first, second, third, fourth, and fifth learner respondents in grade ten.
- (f) '11L1', '11L2', '11L3', '11L4', and '11L5' refer to first, second, third, fourth and fifth learner respondents in grade eleven.
- (g) '12L1', '12L2', '12L3', '12L4' and '12L5' refer to first, second, third, fourth, and fifth learner respondents in grade twelve.

3.3 Findings

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

3.3.1 Category 1: The school's focus on life skills education

Life Skills at Inkamana High School are taught across the curriculum through other subjects (curriculum infusion). The following table shows both the learners' perspectives and also the perspectives of management, teaching and non-teaching staff, and parents on which aspects of life skills relate to the effectiveness of the school.

Table 3.1 School's focus on Life Skills Education

Category 1	School's focus on life skills	Learners' responses N= 15	Management Parents', Teaching and non teaching staff N=10
Subcategory	Children are taught:		
	Discipline	6	7
	Respect	5	2
	Ability to cope	5	2
	Cleanliness	4	2
	Identity	2	1

3.3.1.1 Discipline

The school has a good behaviour policy, which is based on assertive discipline.

Inkamana High School learners are taught how to be disciplined beings, and they behave well because they learn self-discipline and apply self-discipline, thus rendering repetitive efforts to give direction unnecessary.

Learners' responses

(12L5): ' We are taught more about basic life skills and with the nuns at the hostel we are taught discipline'

(12L1): ' they [teachers] teach us that you have to greet a person every time you meet them. Even if you met the person in the morning and you meet them in the afternoon you greet them again... things like that, small things, they can teach you to do bigger things in discipline.'

(12L3): ' ... but I think the first thing we are taught is to be disciplined and automatically if you learn how to act in life you will also automatically know when it comes to academics I must be disciplined.'

Boarding Masters' responses

(BM1): ' ...and you see they [learners] are here under tight control and discipline. Of course for young children it is a burden, but they realize that for good education it is discipline you need.'

(BM2): ‘ ...the main motive for parents to bring their children here is that there is discipline in this school.’

Teachers’ responses

(YT): ‘ They are just well behaved. I want to tell you that’s different from where I used to teach before.’

(ET1): ‘...but what also makes a difference I think, is the whole atmosphere of the school in the sense that, if you have a bad day as a teacher for example, it does not really matter because in the class the discipline is good, so the whole school supports that.’

(ET2): ‘ The school has a hidden curriculum. A hidden curriculum is being on time; discipline; a whole lot of other things outside their academic timetable.’

3.3.1.2 Respect

Both learners and the adults contribute to the success and effectiveness of Inkamana High School and to the mutual respect that one can observe in the school. Learners have respect for themselves, for each other, for their teachers and for the school property at large. This is evident in the way they dress, the way they carry themselves around the school, their clean school premises and buildings with intact windowpanes.

Learners’ responses

(10L3): ‘ We don’t do the academic work only, but also respect how to live.’

(11L2): ‘ The second thing is the way we live together. They respect the teachers. It doesn’t end like at school in the classroom, you take it out, you go with it as you go to the hostels, you shield the sharing, the respect.’

(12L3): ‘ May I say we respect one another; we respect the people who work here around. They respect us too, see it’s family life.’

Teachers’ responses

(YT): ‘ Yes I think it’s a very good school. What I think of my school is there is still so much respect for each other. Not only for student to student but the staff and children.’

School management's responses

(P): ' And respect is non-negotiable on all levels, up and down, so a matriculant must respect a grade 7 and...and the opposite. So they will tell you if I say what is the main rule at Inkamana, it's respect. Respect for yourself, you don't allow yourself to do certain things. Respect for other people; other peoples' property eh! What you say; what you do, you must show respect. And in that thing of respect the whole lot of Life Skills is actually caught into that.'

3.3.1.3 Ability to cope

The school also emphasises that after a child has been through Inkamana High School he or she must be able to cope outside the school. Learners are encouraged to take up responsibility for themselves, which is a cardinal principle because it is a key to their future. This emphasis on encouraging independence and initiative is reflected in the following responses.

Learners' responses

(11L3): ' They [teachers] also teach us how to be the best in our personality, not just academics. They also look at the person to lift their potential. The best that they can do.'

(12L4): ' We can go out there and be able to handle whatever life presents us with.'

School management's responses

(DP): ' One of our main missions is that we don't want to educate the children only for academic field, but also the value of life; of living in society that is not in a good state at all.... We speak openly about sex, about drugs and all the effects of all these things, and if they go out and do exactly the opposite, then it's up to them, but we will have spoken.'

(P): ' So eh! Life skills are for us extremely, extremely important. Small things, big things all over, the kind of thing is the ability to cope with life, that is, if people can cope with life, we really want to send them out.'

3.3.1.4 Cleanliness

Cleanliness seems to be of great importance to the school, especially on the part of the learners who feel it enhances their confidence and self-image.

Learners' responses

(10L2): ' So what I'm saying is we don't achieve good marks and good appearance from trees, we work for it.'

(10L1): 'Here at Inkamana we are taught that we should wear properly to have a positive attitude.'

(12L3): ' We notice the small things like greeting and cutting your nails. The small things and those that count the most.'

3.3.1.5 Identity

A sense of identity is also instilled into the children that they should know their past history and therefore focus on their future.

Learners' responses

(12L4): ' Another thing is ... in a way the school has taught us how to be myself; to know who I am.'

Teachers' responses

(ET1): ' Let me give you an example. In the History class, I don't know if you know the History syllabus, we do a lot of apartheid history, so what I would say is ... I would try to talk about there.'

3.3.2 Category 2: School's provision of a safe and supportive atmosphere and physical environment.

Inkamana High School is situated in a valley about 20 km from the town of Vryheid. From the school there are but a very few visible homesteads. The main road passes about 2 km from the main entrance to the school. The school buildings form part of a Roman Catholic Mission. The main buildings are evidently old but they show that they have been well maintained. The physical environment clearly receives a great deal of attention.

The advantages of a relatively large site with its extensive landscaping, a big dam and the campus-like environment of Inkamana High School are considerable. The current state of the

premises provides the type of physical environment that can assist in the creation of effective schools.

All learners live within the convent grounds where boys occupy dormitories that are separate from those of girls. Each dormitory has a study hall for evening studies. Senior learners supervise these evening studies in collaboration with the Boarding Masters and Mistresses.

From the moment of entry to the school a visitor cannot but be aware of a community of purpose. This is expressed in the tranquillity during classes and study sessions, the genuine habit of greeting which never seems to be dutiful or hollow. This gives an impression of a warm, welcoming and happy community.

Table 3.2 School’s provision of a safe and supportive atmosphere and physical environment.

Category 2	School’s providing a safe and supportive atmosphere and physical environment	Learner’s Responses N = 15	Management Staff and Parents N=10
Subcategory	Ethos: caring; trusting; democratic; and spiritually motivated relationships.	13	8
	Structural safety provided by boarding facility.	7	9
	Empathy.	4	2
	Staff involvement in the lives of learners.	2	4

3.3.2.1 Ethos of caring, trusting, democratic, and spiritually motivated relationships

One of the first things to strike a visitor at Inkamana High School is the evidence of existing ethos of caring, trusting, democratic and spiritually motivated relationships between staff and learners as well as among the members of staff and learners among themselves. This ethos seems to be derived from Catholic and Christian values. This is commented upon by both staff and learners as central to the effectiveness of the school and the basis is to be found in the religious, moral and social values expressed in the following verbatim quotations:

School management's responses

(P): ' This is a Christian school and when you apply...this is a Christian school and they go twice a week to church. They are for all different denominations but we cannot transport children to town to go to different churches. The agreement is that they all join and go to church on school campus twice a week.'

Learners' responses

(12L4): '... because it's a religious school, and most children they think it's sort of boring to go to a religious school, but it's actually nice because it teaches the value of being a human being and we, from what we have been taught here in the school because of the religious affiliation is that we can go out there and be able to handle whatever life presents us with.'

(10L2): ' I mean without God you wouldn't be here, which is another big influence we have here at school.'

(10L4): ' You see that in almost every room in this campus here is a Crucifix, so we also believe that God loves us. Nothing can be possible without God's hand.'

(11L3): ' ... but then prayer. They've taught us how to pray and how to respect God. We give God all respect we have.'

(11L2): ' So I really compliment the school and the teachers are just... they treat us as if we are their children. There is no racism, as far as I can see there is no racism and that's how we just treat each other here at school.'

(11L4): ' ... but here they teach you to pray and work hard and then ask, and not be shy to ask people.'

Teachers' responses

(YT): ' Another thing is that we are Christians. We live this religion in the school and that makes a difference.'

(ET2): 'The general ethos of the school you can say it's Benedictine in the sense that through the ages the Benedictine has kept the education going.'

There is evidence of an open and friendly relationship that exists between staff and learners.

School management's response

(P): 'We've got open relationships...we take stress from them [learners] and they start to trust you and some loyalty develops.'

(DP): ' The former principals were religious nuns. They didn't want us to use sticks but we mould them [learners], we talk to them.'

(P): ' we have always believed in a lot of communication and a lot of discussion about things...we've got children who, you know, absolutely we discuss everything...that's why we discuss daily matters and often ask "what's your opinion?"'

Boarding Masters' responses

(BM3): 'We realize that yah! We are [standing loco parentis]. And it means certain advantages that we have taken interest in each learner in the hostel, and we've got a lot of them. You know there are certain boys that will find any excuse to come to the office just to talk, just to have contact with you.'

3.3.2.2 Structural safety provided by the boarding facility

The safety and sanctuary provided by the boarding arrangement of the school is regarded as one of the determinants of the effectiveness of the school. The following responses are indications that the learners feel happy and secure in the school. They also show that the learners want to be in this particular school rather than in any other school.

Learners' responses

(10L2): 'Looking at other schools during exam time, it's usually like once you've finished you go home. Here you write exams, go back to the hostel for lunch and we come back in the afternoon to study and the supervision that we all study for the following exam. So I don't understand why a person would not get good marks.'

(11L4): ' [It's in the] security that we have here, 'cause when you look at our school it's very, very different from other schools. Totally different and you ask yourself why it is like this, and am I here, and you get all the answers from the whole environment, not just the school, not just the church, the whole environment as a whole.'

(12L5): ‘ But the school, the reason it is successful I think it’s because we’re in a boarding school, we are not in a day school, because you know that at a certain time I must be really in study or may be doing our duties. So we get more time to study not just playing soccer and doing other things. We do get that time but study is more important than other things because we are in a boarding school.’

Teachers’ responses

(YT): ‘ They are really in a safe environment. You can imagine .. talk to other children that’s staying in the rural areas or wherever they stay is not safe when they come back after the holidays with lots of stories telling you what’s happened to their friends that’s there in the town they come from, it’s horrible. They are very safe here.’

Boarding Masters’ responses

(BM1): ‘ I think they feel protected in our boarding school and so often you talk to boys and say “ How’d you enjoy your holidays?” And they’d say half-heartedly “It was okay” and then you dig it further and find that somebody in the family had died and they weren’t there happy.’

(BM2): ‘ ... particularly among the girls I think, ’cause the girls feel particularly threatened in the townships, but here there is enough security for them.’

School Management’s responses

(DP): ‘ ... and they [learners] are protected from all these things that happen outside.’

(P): ‘ ’cause that’s actually crucial that our children are happy, they stay more at Inkamana than home in a year’s time.’

3.3.2.3 Empathy

It is fairly evident that the effectiveness of this school is built upon excellent interpersonal relationships. There is a strong empathy with and an understanding of social conditions, pressures and the problems and needs of individual learners and their families. Learners and staff care for and love each other. Members of staff are committed to the well-being of their learners, hence learners feel loved. This feeling for one another is indicated in the following expressions:

School Management's responses

(P): ' We've got a lot of empathy, but you also build a life despite a fall. It does not help to sit and sulk, but you have to move on and this is the place where we help you to move on, I'm in many family problems.'

(DP): ' ... if for instance there is a death in a family, one member of the family of the child, then if they cannot cope we call a psychologist from the government and they come and help.'

Learners' responses

(10L1): ' so actually the children here, the way they act; the way they care for each other; the way they look after each other, the way they do everything with each other; they love each other; they think for each other.'

(12L4): ' And we care for each other. You can feel that somebody loves you; someone cares. I mean that's why we are able to do anything, maybe it's from supporting another person.'

3.3.2.4 Staff involvement in the lives of learners

At Inkamana High School teachers are seen as key figures in the lives of the children as indicated by the following expressions:

School Management's responses

(P): ' We [management and staff] will eh! In different ways get involved in the family problems. I think we are eh! Very involved in our children's lives, that is maybe one secret here. ... and then there is the register teacher. That person will be involved in the child's life. He can be involved with their problems to some extent and again they report to me. We try hard not to allow small problems to become bigger problems.'

Boarding Masters' responses

(BM2): ' ... and other boys have specific problems and you got to know those problems and these include health problems and it means you've got to be a nurse as well, running around dispensing medicines and stuff like that.'

3.3.3 Category 3: Factors relating to maintenance of discipline and order

The disciplinary system of Inkamana High School works in a quiet and understated way but it is fairly effective. The learners know that infringement of the rules for behaviour and appearance will be systematically followed up and that this follow-up activity will involve their parents or guardians. Both parents and learners know that if they do not cooperate with the school in such matters it may lead to disciplinary measures of different kinds. In most cases these measures are enabled by a system of early identification and intervention. Factors such as the role of religion, involvement of senior learners and prefects, rules, regulations, and punishment seem to play an important part in the maintenance of discipline and order.

Table 3.3 Factors relating to good maintenance of discipline and order.

Category 3	Factors relating to Good maintenance of Discipline and order	Learners' Responses N=15	Management Staff and Parents N=10
Sub-category	Role of religion	8	6
	Involvement of senior learners and prefects	0	5
	The impact of rules, regulations and punishment	3	4

3.3.3.1 Role of religion

Religion seems to play an important part in the moral development at both individual and school levels. Religion is about learners valuing themselves and raising their self-esteem and staff valuing learners as people and forming healthy relationships with them.

Learners' responses

(10L1): ' I mean without God you wouldn't be here which is another big influence we have here at school.'

(10L4): 'You see that in almost every room in this campus there is a crucifix so we also believe that God loves us. Nothing can be possible without God's hand.'

(11L3): ‘ The reason I’m here is because my grandmother was looking for a school like which was Catholic. She wanted to make sure that when I go to school I go to Catholic school and not only for academic but also as a person.’

(11L2): ‘Here they teach you to pray and to work hard.’

(12L4): ‘ He [my father] said I should come here knowing it’s a good school religiously and academically.’

Teachers’ responses

(ET1): ‘I believe God is the person who is running everything.’

Parents’ responses

(Prt1): ‘ The spiritual guidance with the church is very enriching ... you are taught to discipline yourself.’

3.3.3.2 Involvement of senior learners and prefects

Senior learners take an active part in the running of the school not only by being asked to undertake certain tasks but also by using their own initiative. This involvement of senior learners assists in maintaining discipline and order, and gives them a sense of responsibility and also reduces the likelihood of the younger learners being intimidated or bullied in the absence of teachers.

The prefect system is also in action at Inkamana High School. Each class has two prefects, one female and the other male. The prefects also take responsibility for contributing to many features of school life such as supervision and addressing minor conflicts. They report directly to the class register teacher who in turn reports to the principal. The learners, however, were not keen to discuss the role of both senior learners and prefects, but this is what the principal had to say in outlining the responsibilities:

School Management’s responses

(P): ‘ ... and then the seniors take a lot of leadership and that’s not optional, that’s part of what we offer here ... absolutely every senior has a leadership position and that’s also eh! The other children have to respect that. So even the weakest matriculant will take leadership at school. It’s not optional whether he likes it or not.’

With regard to the prefects and their responsibilities this is what she had to say:

(P): ‘ We have a prefect assigned, a girl and a boy assigned to a grade, that is our first level. So that girl must look after that say grade 8 girls in such a way that they trust her and certain things she can solve. Now many of these small concerns a prefect can become involved ... then they are supposed to report to me the moment they think they cannot handle it rather sooner than later ... so the class prefect will in the morning do stationery inspection; that they realize that you really arrive with your pen, pencil, rubber and ruler every day and all your books ... so the prefects will check that they have done their homework before we start teaching.’

3.3.3.3 The impact of rules, regulations, and punishment

The school has adopted a system of assertive discipline by implementing firm rules and regulations; hence punishment is rarely necessary. The learners seem to understand these rules and they do not find them intimidating. Prompt reaction to problems by the school management and staff seems to help in making sure that problems do not get out of hand. This is shown by the following expressions:

Learners’ responses

(10L3): ‘ In the past we’ve had a pupil who tried to turn the school to be chaotic, then the teachers reacted soon.’

(12L3): ‘ Actually what I did was in grade 9, I cannot remember. I had the rules in my pocket file at school and I’d read the rules every time I didn’t want to do anything like study. By the time I got to grade 10 I’d even forgotten they are rules. It was like a normal thing to me.’

School Management’s responses

(P): ‘ I’ve been very long in this school and we never, ever had that [corporal punishment] in the school. It was not necessary. Not even, some schools did it at one stage you know, we talk about it but ... we never, ever had that kind of punishment here. Eh! What kind of punishment do we use? I think the actual answer is we’ve got positive peer pressure. When somebody will do something the other students will say “Wow! That’s not how we do it, why do you do this?” So in a certain way we don’t have to punish them. Okay from time to time, we don’t have angels here, we’ve got one or two children ... so from time to time we’ve got naughty children and sometimes very naughty incidents. If it’s a very serious incidence I’ll not hesitate to pick up a

phone and call a parent. I'll for instance if a child does not do his homework, say one, two, three, the fourth I give punishment, say some work or something like that. So the fourth time I'll, if he's sent to my office, I'll say " phone your parent, tell him I'd like to speak with him" No, no, no, I'll not say that I'll say " and tell him what is the problem today, in English in front of me.'

Boarding Masters' responses

(BM1): ' It depends on what offences. Small offences, generally hostel offences, like untidy lockers or coming late to morning prayers, we give them jobs to do around the hostel and the garden picking up papers, weeding, that kind of thing. For big offences eh! For more serious offences we have a detention system, which means that in the afternoon we give them work to do. It's like detention in the afternoon. But after that anything more serious like drinking [alcoholic beverages], or any major offence like going to the girls' hostel during the night, there's is always automatic suspension and after three warnings it's expulsion. But that does not happen; it happens rarely. Even suspension happens rarely because we manage it before it happens, but of course it happens.'

(BM2): ' Yes! Yes! We notify the parents and the parents have to come definitely, yah! The parents are notified and they come in and the whole thing is discussed with them. This is very important with the new regulations we have now. You can't just suspend or expel students as we used to do in the olden days. We have to go through a whole process. I say parents do have to know and the children have to have something in writing that this is what their children are doing and three warnings is evidence enough, then we can get rid of them because we work with the department.'

(BM3): ' I think with the black students there's quite a lot of discipline from home. You will find that this is probably why parents choose a school like ours, because I know that if I just say that I am dissatisfied with your behaviour and I think I'm going to phone your parent, this has an immediate effect on them. They are very, very afraid of their parents finding out about any misbehaviour, which means that there is quite a lot of discipline from home unlike the white schools where I taught at where they'd say " Oh! Go ahead, I couldn't care" and very often the parent comes in and spoils the child against you the teacher. That really does not happen here.'

3.3.4 Category 4: Dedication in teaching and learning

The Principal and staff of Inkamana High School believe in the capacity of all their learners to learn and make progress. Both teachers and learners have a very clear sense of their school's public image and strive hard to keep on improving it. The quality of teaching and learning at Inkamana High School is enhanced by the dedication that is shown by both teachers and learners.

Table 3.4 Dedication in teaching and learning

Category 4	Dedication in teaching and learning	Learners' Responses N=15	Management Staff and Parents N=10
Sub-category	Dedication in teaching	6	9
	Dedication in learning	4	1

3.3.4.1 Dedication in teaching

Even though a small proportion of the school's teaching was observed, which seemed to be a combination of formal, direct teaching of the whole class and active individual and group work, the impression gained, as supported by all stakeholders is that the school's quality of teaching is high. This high quality of teaching seems to be a supremely important factor relating to the effectiveness of the school. This, on one hand, makes learners feel confident in the ability of their teachers to support their learning. On the other hand since the learners expect good teaching, members of staff are more likely to continue to deliver it and, therefore, to gain more satisfaction in their daily work. This is made evident in the reference to a high degree of dedication of teachers in the interviews:

Learners' responses

(10L4): ' The teachers here are determined and if you don't wanna pass you don't wanna study... we are very honoured to be here at Inkamana, to have teachers like those. It is not easy to get teachers like our teachers.'

(10L2): ' So if one could come here you can see that the teachers work. They're always busy and they're always dedicated to their work.'

(11L3): ‘ The reason being the factors, first it is the dedication that the teachers have, each and every one of them.’

(11L1): ‘ But when you really get to know the teachers, the work they give us, the time they give for us to understand, for us to learn it’s amazing. These teachers they give their time for us. After school, during the periods even on holidays they are always here. So it’s like wow!’

(12L5): ‘ ... and also the academic side the teachers are very dedicated and inspiring.’

Teachers’ responses

(ET2): ‘ And if I talk about the staff I think everyone is willing to give as much as they want and that makes a difference.’

(ET1): ‘ It’s really a matter of I think everybody is loyal and all the teachers are loyal to the school and they do their utmost.’

Boarding Masters’ responses

(BM2): ‘But if you take away the colour they must say our teachers are very dedicated and they don’t rely on colour.’

(BM1): ‘ All these things point that the dedication of teachers is very important.’

School Management’s responses

(DP): ‘ It is [an effective school], and it is because of dedication of our staff.’

(P): ‘ There is eh! Dedicated staff, hard working dedicated staff and that is absolutely one of the factors...they care about the children and they like to teach and it’s not an easy job for them but they get involved. They prepare well enough for the classes. All our teachers are well prepared, and they are willing to go an extra mile.’

3.3.4.2 Dedication in learning

Learners seem to be highly dedicated to the school activities, that is, both curricula and extra-curricula activities. When it is time for studies they commit all their efforts to study and the same applies to extra-curricula activities. The school provides an extensive range of extra-curricula activities at the end of the school day and during weekends, and many learners choose to

participate in them. These include sporting clubs, debate clubs, and music clubs. School clubs involve obligations and expectations, serve as information channels for learners, reinforce school norms. There is also a sense of healthy competition among learners.

Learners' responses

(10L2): ' Looking at other schools during exam time, it's usually like once you've finished you go home. Here you write the exam, go back to the hostel for lunch and we come back in the afternoon to study and the supervision that we all study for the following exam so I don't know why a person wouldn't get good marks.'

(12L2): ' And everybody is willing to do something and you don't just sit there and wait for the teacher to come. The teacher comes and you already have your book in front of you and you are busy trying to carry on.'

Teachers' responses

(YT): 'I think it's just that the teachers and the learners itself, they want to be top. They want to get good results. I mean we all work very hard, we motivate them and I think they want to, they really want to themselves, not to just after school stop, they want to be going to tertiary.'

School Management's responses

(DP): ' and the dedication of the students as well. They are receptive and they know what is expected of them.'

(P): 'Okay! We've got athletics and soccer for juniors and seniors for boys and girls, netball for the girls; we've a chess club that is active...we've got the gardening; we've got the public speaking club, this is the club that won the KZN team competition. Eh! What do we have? We've got the Creative club limited to grade elevens 'cause I say they show too much enthusiasm. Eh! We are in a way special, we've got a canoe club.'

Boarding Masters' responses

(BM3): 'There's public speaking, there's drama society, there's choir, there's golf club, there's chess and we encourage the boys to join up with either one of these societies and of course among them there's football and we have volleyball and we have canoe club as well, so canoeing is here on the dam. And so after school they [learners] would normally go to their societies.'

3.3.5 Category 5: Achievements and successes

At Inkamana High School it is clear that the expectations that are placed on learners are very high. This is evident in both teachers' and learners' attitude towards achievement. The prime conditions of success that are set by the Principal and staff include maintaining very small classes. The biggest had 46 learners and most teachers felt it should be divided into two classes. Achievement is also realised in the high pass rate performance in grade 12 examinations and also how ex-learners do in life after having completed their school careers at Inkamana High School.

Table 3.5 Achievements and successes

Category 5	Achievements and successes	Learners' Responses N=15	Management Staff and Parents Responses N=10
Sub-categories	Grade 12 examination results	8	3
	How ex-learners do in life	5	3

3.3.5.1 Grade 12 Examination Results

The school has over the years maintained a high performance in the matriculation examinations. It has consistently provided a good standard of education and has added significantly to the standard of learners' achievement. From 1979 to date the school has had a 100% pass rate in these examinations. This high performance in examinations seems to be one of the main factors that relate to the effectiveness of the school. This view appears to be shared by many who are involved with the school as it is indicated in the following verbatim quotations:

Learners' responses

(10L4): ' I'd say this is a very effective school. You can see the awards on the walls here. We've got good matric.'

(11L4): ' When I first heard of Inkamana I hated the school but then my father told me about the results and about everything at Inkamana and then he told me he would love me to come here.'

(12L3): ‘ I would say it’s effective comparing it with other schools, not just academically. It’s effective in every way.’

Teachers’ responses

(YT): ‘Okay, the fact that there’s good school results shows that there’s something happening in the school, that when you open a newspaper and look at the results you might think it’s a good school.’

Boarding Masters’ responses

(BM2): ‘ The standard of education is really good and the results speak for themselves and our matric results are the same as those of some of the top private schools in South Africa who have really more facilities than we have.’

Parents’ responses

(Prt1): ‘ I would say more or less it’s the history of the school which is producing good results.’

School Management’s responses

(P): ‘ Most of them like the matric class, 100% will go and study at University. That is a good figure if you can compare with other schools.’

3.3.5.2 How ex-learners do in life

Most of the interviewees seem to share the belief that the effectiveness of their school is the outcome of the legacy of its history. The legacy of Inkamana High School’s history seems to have contributed to its contemporary effectiveness in that most of its former learners seem to be doing well in life after their education at the school. Most of them obtain tertiary education.

Learners’ responses

(10L1): ‘ Well, I mean comparing people who came out of this school with matric to people who went to school that was not effective. Those people there even when they walk, the way they talk, the way they think, it stands out.’

(10L2): ‘ I’ve got a brother, a god-brother who finished matric here. He’s a doctor now.’

(10L3): ‘ I think here at Inkamana we’ve got leaders of tomorrow. Almost every person who’s from Inkamana is something in life. Like my brother matriculated here in 1997 and he’s now doing his doctorate in America. And if a person does not finish here at Inkamana, if he goes to other schools you can see that he’s from this school.’

(11L2): ‘My brother matriculated here, so I saw him, he’s very successful now. It’s a good school.’

(12L2): ‘ And by knowing that the school is good and the former students are doing well then you as an individual you also want to work hard so that you don’t let your school down and yourself down, so you better work hard and achieve what you want.’

(ET2): The chap who was a boy here some time ago, he’s quite high up in the education department in this province. He made this speech and a friend heard him say that he’s from a school with a hidden curriculum and they went “ wow! What could that be?” and he listed all these things [being on time, good manners, discipline, ability to communicate in English].’

Boarding Masters’ responses

(BM1): ‘ I think for the benefit of the country it’s a very effective school because considering eh! The students who come from our school, they are active in social work, in political field and educational field and we’ve got students for the country.’

Parents’ responses

(Prt2): ‘ ... and those that have been through Inkamana, they are really accountable. They are positive; they are so successful.’

School Management’s responses

(DP): ‘ But we have all one aim: education towards students to help them to become people.’

(P): ‘ People always talk about Matric results, but for us the way our former students cope in society and make an impact on society is a better way to judge really whether you are a successful school or not and eh! Yah! The Inkamanas make a difference in South African society...if you come from Inkamana it’s a stepping-stone in South African society...Mr eh! Mkhulisi Nkosi , he graduated in 1989 and he is now minister in KZN ...We have ten-year reunions where 100% of a class has tertiary qualification.’

3.3.6 Category 6: Recommendations for improvement

These entail perspectives from learners, teachers, parents and the community on the actions that can be taken, which are likely to lead to the improvement of the school. It is hoped that these actions will help create an environment that is optimally fit for learning and teaching. The main focus of these recommendations is on infrastructure, extra-curricular activities, and nutrition.

Table 3.6: Recommendations for improvement

Category 6	Recommendations for improvement	Learners' Responses N=15	Management, staff, Parents and Community Responses N=10
Sub-Categories	Infrastructure	7	3
	Activities	4	3
	Nutrition	5	2

3.3.6.1 Infrastructure

Infrastructure refers mainly to the physical layout and condition of the sports fields, buildings, roads and accommodation at the hostels. Buildings used as classrooms and hostels at Inkamana High School are the old ones built by the missionaries. From their sizes it is evident that they were meant for even smaller numbers of occupants. The road that leads to the school from the main road is a bumpy dirt road. There is one sports field for each sporting code and these are fairly looked after. Participants feel that there is need for further development on infrastructure as is evident in the following recommendations.

Learners' recommendations

(10L1): 'Facilities. We do have a lot of things, yes, but we do not have enough, like I'd like our school to be bigger, our laboratories to be bigger, more expanded'.

(10L2): ' Like we want to do swimming but we don't have a swimming pool. It's for the monastery. We 'd like to do Cricket, rugby and all sorts of sports, but we don't have accessories to do those activities.'

(10L3): ‘and as you can see our buildings are very old. We would like to get some support from outside to build new buildings.’

(11L3): ‘Yah! Maybe like the most sports facilities’

(11L5): ‘...those things like tarred road. Those kind of things’.

(12L2): ‘Classrooms to be made bigger, more equipment, more things to use and more sports for entertainment.’

(12L4): ‘ May be making the library bigger.’

Parents’ recommendations

(Prt2): ‘Facilities at the hostel are a little outdated.’

School Management’s recommendations

(P): ‘ ... we say it’s a little dream that one day it will go still down to grade 6, but it is complicated of course. The dream will be to start with grade 0 and then we will produce very good results. But then the matter is do you open a day school or do you build the hostels but anyhow we start at grade 7.’

3.3.6.2 Activities

Most participants were concerned about extra-curricular activities at the school, which seem to be inadequate. They believe that more can be done to improve the school’s level of participation and interaction with other schools.

Learners’ recommendations

(10L2): ‘ I’d say activities. We have the courage to do the activities but we’re short of the accessories to do the activities’.

(10L3): ‘ I think we are not financially rich so we’d like to get some support from outside to help us through the activities’.

(10L4): ‘And come to entertainment, we’d like to experience things outside our school. We’re always like inside locked in here. It’s like we’re locked. So we’d love to have trips going around. Many schools are travelling so it’s so easy for us ’cause we’re used to being together in our

school, so we'd love to go around and experience things, even if it's education, but as long as we travel.

(11L4): 'What I think they should improve is the sports, 'cause there's only like soccer and netball and there's no coaches for soccer and for netball, like the teachers do their work and go home. So what we do, for instance in soccer we help ourselves. We teach ourselves.'

(11L3): '. Maybe we could like play rugby and cricket...hockey, yah!'

(11L1): 'I think the school should have more relationships with other schools from outside because our relationships with other schools from outside are limited, so we need more schools to learn things from them and for them to learn things from us because we know they will learn more things from us.'

Elderly teachers' recommendations

(ET2): 'I would like to have Art and Music.'

(ET1): 'Other afternoon activities than what they are given here. It would be very nice if they could have more things like that.'

Boarding Masters' recommendations

(BM3): '...but we would like to have more African teachers.'

Parents' recommendations

(Prt1): 'School must start from grade one to grade twelve.'

3.3.6.3 Nutrition

The main concern of the participants is around the quality and the amount of food served at the hostels. Most participants feel that their nutritional needs are not being met in that the food rations are small and that most meals are not balanced; and that some vegetables such as cabbage are hardly rotated.

Learners' recommendations

(10L4): 'I'd like to comment about the food. There's good education here and sometimes good food but there are those things that when you just don't feel like a lot, a plate on the table feels

like it's something on the table it's not for a person to eat. So I'm not being nasty but it's like we're the youth so we want nice things, but sometimes eating cabbage on a warm Wednesday! It's not nice.'

Parents' recommendations

(Prt2): 'Food rations tend to remain smaller even though children grow bigger and older.'

3.3.7 Researcher's field notes

The interview situation was quite organised as far as the school was concerned. The arrangement was such that for the interviews that took place during school hours involving learners, teachers, and the school management, accommodation was provided at the school. Interviews with parents and members of the community were conducted at the Abbey. Rooms availed for these interviews were spacious, had chairs for individual interviewees around large boardroom-like tables that allowed the researcher to see the faces of all interviewees, and so could they among themselves.

The atmosphere during interviews was quite informal. There was no language barrier since everyone including learners could use English and hence all interviews were conducted solely in English. It was a little difficult, though, for the learners to out rightly comprehend the questions without further elaboration from the researcher. This was assumed to result from the fact that they had never been interviewed before and that they had not anticipated the line of questioning, but later the discussions proceeded in a relaxed way.

The school management adhered strictly to the school's operational practices by not letting the interviews interfere with the school's time schedules. Each group of interviewees was interviewed when those involved had free time.

The researcher, his assistant, and the supervisors were afforded the pleasure of having informal discussions with teachers during tea breaks. At this time all teachers used to come together to have tea and listen to announcements.

At the beginning of each day learners are given a chance to listen to world news on the radio and take notes on current affairs. A quiz competition is held at the end of each week on world news and prizes are awarded to winners. Learners are quite abreast with current affairs.

During evening studies, which are characterised by remarkable tranquillity, the resident nuns supervise girls while the monks supervise the boys. Students respond promptly to bells. The bell rings several times to signal commencement of different activities such as rising up, going to the dining hall, checking and locking of lockers, and leaving for school. Therefore learners are hardly ever late for classes. The school therefore empowers learners with time management skills that are very important in the life of a learner during school and later in life as adults.

3.4 Conclusion

It is evident from the results of this research that Inkamana High School is successful and effective and that it has succeeded against the odds in an exceptional way. The material and social disadvantages of the learners attending this school have not affected the school's performance. The history of the school shows that it will not in the near future have problems in dealing with challenges that might make it difficult to maintain its performance standards. This is because of its clear and simple philosophy of striving to do the best. Both learners and educators share this philosophy and this makes it easy for the newcomers, be it learners or educators, to be socialised into the norms of the school. These newcomers will in turn share ownership of the way the school functions and therefore this becomes a self-reinforcing system.

3.5 Summary

To sum up, the following themes as relating to the effectiveness of Inkamana High School were identified: the school's focus on life skills; the school's provision of a safe and supportive atmosphere and physical environment; factors relating to good maintenance of discipline and order; dedication to teaching and learning; achievements and successes; and recommendations for improvement.

4. Literature control of the obtained empirical research findings

4.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, the empirical research results were discussed and interpreted in accordance with identified categories (subsequently referred to as themes), which include the school's focus on life skills education, the school's ability to provide a safe and supportive atmosphere and physical environment, factors relating to maintenance of discipline and order, dedication in teaching and learning, and achievements and successes. In this chapter the empirical research results are compared to relevant literature in order to identify existing concurrences as well as possible differences or exceptions. In doing so the themes are placed within their paradigmatic systems.

4.2 Categories

The categories that were identified as the factors that contribute to the school being an effective school despite being a school with learners from a disadvantaged community, are the following:

4.2.1 The school's focus on life skills education

Life skills education according to Vergnani, *et al.* (1998:52) encompasses the teaching of not only skills but also insight, awareness, knowledge, values, attitudes and qualities that are necessary to empower individuals and their communities to cope and engage successfully with life and its challenges in the South African society. Discipline, respect, ability to cope with life after matriculation, cleanliness of self and surroundings and identity are some of the qualities which, when taught to learners, contribute to a school being an effective school.

4.2.1.1 Discipline

As there are discipline problems in society, so there are discipline problems at school, which is a part of society (Mwamwenda, 1989:229). This implies that no matter how small they may be, these discipline problems will show up at one time or another in a school setting.

Van der Westhuizen (1996: 88) maintains that all schools have some kind of discipline. In some cases this discipline has little effect, while other schools have effective discipline. In all cases, the discipline of a school will be a manifestation of the type of organisational culture in the school. Pupils in secondary schools are often very critical about the discipline at their schools. It can be concluded that discipline is a major aspect of a school's culture. A child's experience of discipline in his home will also have an influence on his behaviour at school. In schools with a healthy culture a system of effective discipline will also be revealed.

According to Nelson (2002) whatever the design, effective discipline practices should inspire a climate in which students take responsibility for their own behaviour, treat each other with kindness and respect, and learn the value of productive work and good citizenship.

This corresponds with the empirical research findings that discipline is an integral part of an effective school.

4.2.1.2 Respect

Pupils' learning, according to Macbeath and Mortimore (2001:154), is likely to be enhanced when relationships are based on respect for individuals, that is, all are seen as having something to offer; Respect for the individual is also demonstrated in staff dealings with pupils and parents; Recognition and acceptance of differences and different achievements are highlighted. Diversity is seen as strength and there are high levels of mutual trust.

Respect is further seen by Sijula (2005) as referring to all the following aspects: being caring, generous, sensitive, not being cruel or mean to others, practising fairness, helpfulness, non-discrimination and genuine respect for all other people as persons. Respect entails respect for self (self-respect), and respect for environment (including public property).

It appears that an atmosphere of respect and valuing of all members of the school community is generated when there is genuine professional regard for the abilities and input of those in leadership positions, be it the Principal, teachers, parents or students. Age and experience are not necessarily contributing factors (Telford, 1996:43).

4.2.1.3 Ability to cope

Learners should be prepared for the world beyond the school boundaries, especially after Matric where some would be going to tertiary institutions and others would be looking for jobs to

survive. The only way, according to Cembi (2002: 16), that young South Africans can survive economically is to increase productivity and competitiveness. The responsibility to reach this goal lies with the educator. Healthy competition is the order of the day at Inkamana High School.

Autonomy yields self-confidence in learners. In explaining this Kohn (1996) observes that when one looks inside classrooms of teachers who are less controlling and more inclined to supporting children's autonomy, such as is the case at Inkamana High School, one finds students who are more self-confident. This self-confidence extends beyond the classroom and enhances learners' ability to cope with challenges when they no longer attend school.

4.2.1.4 Cleanliness

Cleanliness of both personnel and surroundings is an important factor for a healthy school climate. A healthy school climate contributes to effective teaching, learning and fewer discipline problems (Nelson, 2002:30). According to Walker (1995) in Nelson (2002:30), getting students involved with beautifying their buildings and school grounds helps create a feeling of school and community ownership.

During the official launch of the Cleanliness of Schools and Beautification Project, the MEC for Education in the Free State Education Department suggested that cleanliness of schools can be determined by a number of factors, which include among others:

- Personnel: Educators, administration staff and factotums are expected to be presentable when they come to school every day.
- Learners: Learners are expected to wear a neat uniform.
- Classrooms including Laboratories, Media Centres, Storerooms, Libraries, Home Economics Centres: The walls and floors have to be clean. The environment should be welcoming. Sitting arrangement should also be compliant with values of gender equity and racial integration including compliance with OBE.
- Administration building: Well maintained and offices well labelled.
- Toilets: These are expected to be clean and safe for both learners and personnel.
- Playgrounds: playgrounds should be safe, neat and well maintained.
- Surrounding environment: The environment must be clean and welcoming and conducive to teaching and learning.

- School environment in general: There must be plantations i.e. trees, flowers, inside the school grounds.
- School environment Committee: Does the school have an environmental committee that deals with school cleanliness and beautification, and so forth?

The empirical research findings reveal that at Inkamana High School, cleanliness is regarded as an integral component of the effectiveness of the school. Teachers were presentable, learners wore neat full uniform and the general surroundings were welcoming.

4.2.1.5 Identity

It is good for learners to know who they are, where they come from and therefore where they are going. In South Africa, as in other parts of the world, the issue of identity (who or what we are), according to Makhalemele (2005), is very important to people's lives. It is also true that most people identify themselves in different ways and some of these identities may have real meaning to people. Teachers at Inkamana are free to talk about the history of South Africa before, during and after apartheid, thereby letting children to know their past history which influences their choices for the future.

4.2.2 School's provision of a safe and supportive atmosphere and physical environment

It is the duty of all stakeholders to ensure that schools are safe. As Oosthuizen (2005:67) puts it, school safety does not happen at its own: it is not the result of some magical trick and no conjurer can accomplish this on behalf of a school community.

In South Africa, many children are exposed to environmental and health hazards in the school setting itself. Schools are often badly designed, poorly equipped and understaffed. Aspects of the school environment such as ventilation, lighting, access to safe water and adequate toilet facilities, appropriate waste disposal mechanisms, and the state of the buildings may be neglected, and in this way a school becomes a setting for the transmission of a wide range of diseases and ill health conditions, particularly if overcrowding occurs. The quality of the school environment and effects on the health of children will exercise a direct impact on their ability to learn (Mathee, A. and Byrne, J: 1996).

As Nutbean and St Leger (1997:19) point out, the contribution to health of a physical environment that is safe, hygienic well illuminated, and that meets the basic comfort necessary for work and play, is considered self-evident, the same seems to apply to Inkamana High School.

According to Reyes (1990: 15), effective teaching is impossible in an atmosphere of chaos. Similarly, the literature on effective schools indicates that schools that have specific goals and an orderly environment perform better than schools without such characteristics. Hillman (1996:359) emphasises this by stating that schools can transform the way in which young people think of themselves and what they are capable of achieving when shared values – of the highest expectations of potential, belief in capacity, and value of cultural difference – are invested in agreed practices of learning and teaching.

The safety and supportiveness of the atmosphere and physical environment at Inkamana High School is enhanced by the ethos of caring, trusting, democratic and spiritually motivated relationships, structural safety provided by the boarding facility, empathy, and staff involvement in the lives of learners.

4.2.2.1 Ethos of caring, trusting, democratic and spiritually motivated relationships.

Van der Oosthuizen (1996:84) maintains that ethos is the image and charisma that an organisation exerts. Ethos is the spirit and attitude in a group of people and acts as basis for their behaviour. Ethos has to do with the trust of the community in the school, because of the image that the school projects. The ethos of a school, that is, the spirit and attitude of those involved, is therefore a contributing factor to the effectiveness of organisational culture. Trust, according to Poo (2006:129), enlarges the scope of action on any playing field and the trusted leader is a great asset in relying on relationships and support.

Relationships that are founded on democracy and spirituality are easy to maintain. Democracy in schools, according to Ngubane (2005:6), is echoed by the Ministry of Education in the White Paper 1 (DoE: 1996:16) which announced that the decision-making authority of schools in the public sector would be shared among parents, teachers, the community and the learners in ways that would support the core values of democracy. This is further supported by Chisholm (2004:220) who observes that, anyone who participates in school decision-making processes and with what effect, has long been seen as critical to democratic schools. So, too, are the pedagogies that maximise student involvement and participation. Learners at Inkamana High School are involved in the decision-making process of the school.

According to Hillman (1996:322) a key aspect of the ethos of the successful schools, and much more important than might previously have been thought, is the creation of an orderly and industrious climate in which effective learning can take place. Good pupil behaviour is seen to be an important precondition for staff motivation for improvement, and early identification of this is crucial.

The above contributions agree with the results of the empirical research which revealed that at Inkamana High School caring as well as affection for students is demonstrated by the management and the staff and hence will naturally be learnt by the students as an important component of making and retaining healthy relationships. These relationships are democratically and spiritually motivated. This shows that good relationships between learners, the administration, and staff have contributed to the effectiveness of Inkamana High School.

4.2.2.2 Structural safety provided by the boarding facility

According to Segoe & Mokgosi in *The guideline for schools in the creation of safe and secure environments*, a document developed to advise schools on creating safe and secure environments and which is in support of the Guidelines on the Development of Safety Policy in Schools, a school's physical plant influences whether crime will occur. Schools can be designed to limit access to unauthorised persons. Schools should be built with security in mind but existing schools can make changes to their buildings to increase safety. The key is to make the school environment safer and to use space constructively without creating a restrictive environment. As Duke (2002:xi) puts it, "School safety is a consequence of reflection, careful planning, systematic feedback, training, data analysis, and continuing evaluation. It is the function of thought and effort."

The empirical research findings show that at Inkamana High School, learners are in a safe environment especially with regard to the boarding facility. Many changes have been effected to the buildings to increase safety and security for all. Access to unauthorised persons is almost zero since there are checkpoints at all ports of entry into the school campus. Signposts guide all visitors to report to the administration block or office of the boarding personnel as a first step after entering the campus.

4.2.2.3 Empathy

The empathy-centred image of teachers focuses on developing human relations, skills and serving students in individual needs. Teachers with this sentiment are also concerned with teachers' status and authority, but desire professional values that promote more personally powerful working relationships between teachers and students (Reyes, 1990: 32). Indeed teachers and students at Inkamana High School show and exercise this sentiment. Learners experience a sense of being valued and respected, and these learners matter to one another and to the teacher. They think in the plural, they feel connected to each other, they are part of an "us". This contributes greatly to the effectiveness of the school.

4.2.2.4 Staff involvement in the lives of learners

The Australian Health Promotion Schools Association in its National Framework for Health Promotion Schools (2000 – 2003) identifies teachers as key figures in the lives of children, youth and local communities and believe that teachers are often in a position to facilitate the development of resilience and can have a favourable impact on the lives of children.

According to Kohn (1996), a school should be treated as a community that could be known as a place in which students feel cared about and are encouraged to care about each other. The staff at Inkamana High School is involved in the lives of their learners even in their hardest times such as bereavements, domestic as well as academic problems.

4.2.3 Factors relating to the maintenance of discipline and order

According to Nelson (2002:2) an effective school discipline practice involves all stakeholders in its design. The principal and the teachers are responsible for carrying out the school discipline practices to foster appropriate behaviour from the students. However parents, learners and the community members should be equally represented in the design of discipline procedures. Administrators and teachers need to have quality professional development opportunities to acquire strategies for classroom and school discipline practices.

Nelson (2002) further maintains that rewarding students for good behaviour and positive contribution is important. Effective discipline practices are built through consistency and teamwork. Evaluation of school discipline practices should be on going, and strategies for reducing school disruptions should be continuously assessed for improvements.

The following were, however, identified as the major factors relating to the maintenance of discipline and order.

4.2.3.1 Role of religion

By encouraging moral and emotional development learners learn to live with each other in a positive way. Spiritual awareness is developed by providing the kinds of experiences, which help children to know and understand themselves (Carnie, 2003:18).

As they are reflected in curriculum proposals, religious values are presented principally as deriving from the organised social practices of religious groups in the society, but with the possibility of broader comparative understanding. Values are associated with human capacities and relations, which transcend the material context of individual and social living. The major emphasis is on the development of personal beliefs and attitudes in the context of specific moral and practical commitments (Duignan & McPherson, 1992:54).

In a major research study of the effectiveness of Catholic schooling in the United States, Bryk *et al.* (1993) in Hillman (1996:257) have concluded that many Catholic schools, such as Inkamana High School, benefit from the presence of an 'inspirational ideology' derived from a Catholic/Christian view of the purpose and values of education. Many children at Inkamana High School believe in God and that He is always there among them to oversee their problems and to help them succeed. They also believe in prayer. These personal beliefs and attitudes help them in their commitment to succeed. This proves to be a very important contribution in the effectiveness of Inkamana High School.

4.2.3.2 Involvement of senior learners and prefects

Hillman (1996:328) observes that pupil involvement in the running of a school is an ambitious objective, but giving such positions of responsibility is an extremely effective way of conveying trust in learners abilities and setting standards of mature behaviour. These types of roles for pupils are often stepping-stones to even greater responsibility.

According to Ngara (2006) schools that have moved away from the traditional prefect system argue that no matter how much they tried to modify the prefect system, the modified structure remained misaligned to servant leadership. The traditional structure seems to have been designed to be an authoritative, exclusive, selective, elitist and privileged body.

Ngara (2006) further notes that when one considers the duties and privileges of prefects, it looks as if schools are moulding bullies without realising it. In many schools the prefect body is perceived as a “top-down” hierarchical system. The prefect system in its traditional sense is to some extent aligned to Macgregor’s theory X. It assumes that people need to be coerced, threatened and directed into a particular direction because left alone they cannot do anything. They therefore need to be policed in order to make sure that all the goals of the organisation are achieved and the rules of the organisation are obeyed. Judy Porter *in* Hillman (1996:329) however, feels that the inclusion of learners in the decision-making process and allowing them to shape both the day-to-day life and culture of the school teaches young people both communication and meeting management techniques normally not experienced at their age, gives young people a sense of responsibility, and a feeling of ownership of both the issues and solutions relating to school life.

In South Africa the right to participate in school governance is afforded to learners by the Schools Act. According to this Act it is the learners’ right to be part of not only the Representative Council of Learners, but also of the School Governing Body (Ooshuizen, 2005:58).

The empirical research results, however, show that at Inkamana High School the Prefect system is used even though it is much more popular with the management than with anyone else. This is evidenced by the reluctance shown by learners to talk about their prefects. Nonetheless, the contribution of the prefects in the management of the school is noticeable and they have proved to be assets in the promotion of effectiveness at Inkamana High school.

4.2.3.3 Impact of rules and regulations and punishment

Rules are, according to Nelson (2002:28), agreements between two parties on the degree of appropriate and inappropriate behaviour conducive to a setting. In a school setting rules often originate from the teachers’ anticipation of problems in the functioning of either the class or the school and hence rules and routines to circumvent their occurrences. Classroom and school rules, as well as consequences for disobeying them should, however, be decided collaboratively with teachers, learners, administration, and parents. Setting rules that are simple, clear, broad, and flexible, explaining the reasons behind the rules, and correcting the situation when rules are violated contribute much to the academic and orderly climate necessary for learning (Davis & Thomas, 1989:103).

According to Van der Westhuizen (1996: 89) investigations by Reynolds, Finlayson, Coughan, and Rafilides and Hay (Reid, Hopkins & Holly, 1987:57) show that the enforcement of rigid rules tends to make pupils negative and to create an organisational culture where pupils do not cooperate. On the other hand, in schools without effective order and discipline, there is very little cooperation between pupils and teachers. Disorder tends to be an integral part of such an organisational culture.

Punishment, however, according to Mwamwenda (1989:227) means being subjected to a painful stimulus or having a pleasant one removed due to engaging in misbehaviour. The types of misbehaviour for which punishment may be justifiably administered are disrespect for teachers or authority, tardiness, vandalism, dodging classes, failing to do assignments, making noise in class, chewing gum in class, not paying attention in class and cheek.

Punishment does not promote self-discipline. It only stops misbehaviour for the moment. Punishment may fulfil a short-term goal, but actually interferes with the accomplishment of the long-term goal of self-control (Vally, 2005). The following table shows the difference between punishment and discipline.

PUNISHMENT	DISCIPLINE
Teaches what a child should not do	Teaches what a child should do
Is a one-time occurrence	Is an on-going process
Insists on obedience	Sets an example to follow
Undermines independence	Leads to self control
Is an adult release and about their power. It is also often about displaced anger. This is when adults are angry about something else but take their anger out on children.	Helps children change
Is negative	Is positive
Thinks for the child	Encourages child ability to think
Defeats self-esteem	Encourages self-esteem
Concerns behaviour	Encourages self-disciplined behaviour

At Inkamana High School punishment is administered carefully within the guidelines provided in the South African Schools Act. It is seen as a creation of negative consequences. The forms of punishment used, as are reflected in Davis & Thomas (1989:105), include withholding privileges or other rewards, using a penalty system, disapproving or criticising, requiring restitution,

assigning additional work, isolating the learner in a stimulus-free area, or detaining. This helps in making children take responsibility for their actions. It further enhances the effectiveness of the school.

4.2.4 Dedication in teaching and learning

At the very heart of the professionalism of the Principal and all other teachers according to Hillman (1996:363) lies that sense of the need to set in motion processes which lead to achievement of a goal: the learning of pupils, and hence growth towards the fulfilment of their true capabilities. This means that teachers should concentrate their efforts in teaching and learners in learning.

The quality of teachers and teacher pupil ratios in classrooms are among the most critical resources for making an impact on teaching and learning in schools (Chisholm, 2004).

4.2.4.1 Dedication in teaching

Teachers like any other employees, have different motives for joining schools. Some still have the internal drive to serve, regardless of work conditions; others join schools because they do not have other alternatives. Some view teaching as a stepping-stone to move ahead or generate a second income, which has little to do with the overall mission of schools. Consequently, teacher commitment to the organisation becomes a critical issue for school administrators (Reyes, 1990:149).

Rosenholtz (1989) describes the effects of several social variables on teacher commitment such as task autonomy, psychic rewards, teachers' learning opportunities and teacher certainty. Accordingly, teacher commitment is enhanced when principals trust faculty with discretionary decisions and give up their need to control.

According to Van der Westhuizen (1996:115) involved behaviour by teachers is characterised by their high morale. The teachers are proud of their school, work cooperatively and support each other. The teachers are not only interested in each other, but also in the success of their students. They are friendly towards the students, trust them and are positive about the abilities of students to attain success.

The following, according to Baloyi (2004:198), are the misdemeanours of which some teachers [who lack commitment and professionalism] were guilty:

- High rate of absenteeism
- Laziness
- Lack of discipline
- Late coming
- Bunking of classes
- Failure to prepare well for classes
- Failure to complete syllabi
- Drug and alcohol abuse
- Sexually abusing children
- Encouraging children to be engaged in drug abuse

The empirical research results show that teacher commitment is high when there is collaboration between teachers and the school administrators.

4.2.4.2 Dedication in learning

Glasgow and Hicks (2003:15) maintain that when students cooperate with other students, they often get more out of learning than they do when working on their own or even when working with their teacher. Additionally, cooperative learning situations motivate students to learn because learning becomes fun and meaningful; it boosts students' self-esteem as they explain content to others and it improves interpersonal relationships between culturally diverse students.

4.2.5 Achievements and successes

Hillman (1996:6) maintains that intakes [at schools] vary enormously, for example, in terms of the academic starting point of the pupils, and the educational background or material well-being of their parents and that these advantages and disadvantages are powerful influences on academic achievement throughout a child's time at school.

Hillman (1996:6) further observes that in most studies, the definition of an effective school is in line with that given by Peter Mortimore: 'a school in which students progress further than might be expected from a consideration of its intake'. In other words, some schools are more effective than others in 'adding value' to pupils' life chances.

4.2.5.1 Grade 12 examination results

According to Van der Berg (2005) the only widely available measure of school outcomes in South Africa remains the results of final matric exams, and that weak matriculation performance is particularly severe in the poorest provinces, which benefited most from resource increases after the political transition.

In the first instance it is clear that the outcome variable, the mean grade 12 pass rate at a school, is significantly lower in former African and Coloured and Indian schools, relative to previously White. The pass rate in the latter schools, at 95% is close to double that of African schools (Bhorat & Ooshuizen, 2006).

Van der Berg (2005), in agreeing with Bhorat and Oosthuizen (2006), further notes that the standard deviation of the pass rate increases further down the socio-economic ladder, indicating a more varied performance in poor schools, and particularly those that are predominantly black. Whilst pass rates in more affluent schools were almost uniformly high – amongst mainly White schools the lowest recorded pass rate was 68%-, predominantly Black schools performed abysmally. Most such schools had pass rates in the range of 20 – 60% and ten per cent had even worse pass rates. In contrast only 3 out of 179 mainly White schools had pass rates below 80%. Resources do matter in this regard, but differentials in efficiency among poor schools may be more important than in more affluent schools.

Contrary to the above, findings have shown that, Inkamana High School, a school attended by learners from disadvantaged communities has obtained 100% pass rate since 1979 to date..

4.2.5.2 How ex-learners do in life

Pityane, the Chairman of the Matriculation Board and the principal of UNISA, according to Baloyi (2004:203), also points out that about 50 per cent of first year university students repeat their courses because they cannot cope with the demands of university education (see *City Press*, 04/01/2004:4). The Minister of Education, Naledi Pandor, said that a failure rate of close to 40 per cent at first year level, especially students from disadvantaged communities, is horrifying (see *City Press*, 26/09/2004:6). A University of Cape Town study also found that more and more first year students, who achieved A and B aggregate in matric, were struggling academically (see Monare in *Sunday Times*, 04/01/2004:1).

To further illustrate the inadequacy of the amount of effective learning that most matriculants acquire, Baloyi (2004:204) further observes that the South African Chamber of Business (SACOB) also complains that many matriculants are “unemployable” as they lack the necessary basic skills to enter the labour market. Many lack basic English skills and they cannot even complete an application form. Companies that employ these functionally illiterate matriculants should, thus, be prepared to invest massive funds to equip them with the most basic of educational skills before job-specific training or fully fledged higher education can start (James Lennox in E-TV News, 20/01/2004; Sikhakhane in *City Press*, 04/01/2004:18). The appalling fact, according to the business sector, is that fewer than 5% of matriculants are ready to be absorbed into the formal sector of the economy (Marshall in *The Citizen*, 30/12/2003). Nielsen’s study (see *Sunday Times*, 12/09/2004:1) indicates that of those who secure jobs, 75% are White matriculants and 18% are Black matriculants – further highlighting a lack of a culture of learning and teaching in historically Black schools.

However, as much as Inkamana High School is a school attended by learners from disadvantaged communities, the empirical research results show that its products are well prepared for tertiary education and that most of them complete it and those who complete have become very important members of society. This has proved to be a great contribution to the effectiveness of the school.

4.2.6 Recommendations for improvement

The participants in the study identified the following aspects of their school as those aspects that need some attention: Infrastructure; activities; and nutrition.

4.2.6.1 Infrastructure

The general school organisation regarding infrastructure, that is, the school buildings and grounds is, according to Piek (1986:154), concerned with the following: the dimensions, general appearance and furniture of the teaching leaders (principal, deputy principal, departmental heads) offices, the classrooms, the laboratories, library, assembly hall, school and sports premises, school grounds, storerooms and if the school has hostels, the kitchen, dormitories, ablution and dining facilities.

4.2.6.2 Extra-curricular activities

According to Piek (1986:83) the value of extra-curricular activities is that they are an integral part of the educational programme whose main aim is to educate the pupils to become responsible adults. The activities also serve as means of preventing juvenile delinquency, preparing the pupil for a democratic way of life, and stimulating a spirit of cooperation among pupils. Extra-curricular activities are also seen by Hillman (1996:367) to broaden pupils' interests and experiences, expand their opportunities to succeed, and help to build good relationships within the school. It is therefore beneficial for learners to engage in activities such as sport activities, cultural activities, debating societies, student religious movements; and youth societies.

4.2.6.3 Nutrition

Good nutrition is an important aspect of the well-being of a learner. It is the responsibility of all stakeholders to ensure that learners get good nutrition before, during and after school hours. Robertson (2007:211) believes that all teachers should have a basic knowledge of nutrition. This information may be used to model proper food selection, create menus to serve to the children or teach nutrition to children and their parents. Food and nutrition should be an integral part of the promotion of health. Teachers need to create nutritional policies that will support the growth, health, and well being of the children in their care. The following are seen as the six major goals for nutritional policies for health and safety:

- Maximising nutritional status
- Minimising nutritional risk
- Using nutritional education as a tool
- Recognising the importance of nutritional guidelines
- Practising cultural competence
- Developing partnerships with families to provide a caring community

A balanced diet consists of foods that contain substances that provide for the growth, development, maintenance and repair of the body.

4.3 Summary

The literature study revealed that the factors that are attributed to the effectiveness of Inkamana High School, a school attended by learners from disadvantaged communities, included the categories such as the school's focus on life skills education, the school's provision of a safe and supportive atmosphere and physical environment, factors relating to the maintenance of discipline and order, dedication in teaching and learning, achievements and successes, and recommendations for improvement. These themes (categories) will form the basis of the recommendations in chapter 5.

5. Summary, limitations of the study, conclusions, and recommendations

5.1 Introduction

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

5.2 Summary

“Disadvantaged” is a relative term - one must be disadvantaged with respect to some condition that could be called advantaged (Cowles: 1967). The term “disadvantage”, according to Mortimore and Blackstone (1982:8), is defined as the unfavourable conditions or circumstances, detriment or prejudice. It refers to social and material factors such as income, unemployment, housing, health, and environmental conditions. Some schools serve learners from disadvantaged communities and as such are not expected to perform as well as their counterparts that serve learners from more affluent communities.

The reality, though, is that there are schools that serve learners from disadvantaged communities that are effective and successful. These schools have, over the years, performed consistently well despite their disadvantage. One such school is Inkamana High School. In the light of the above it was deemed imperative to investigate what the teachers, learners, parents of learners in the school, and the members of the community contribute to the effectiveness and success of the school to.

In chapter 2 a brief description of the qualitative research design was given. This was considered to be the appropriate choice of research since the research was aimed at gaining in-depth insight into the reasons why a school in a disadvantaged community is an effective school.

Chapter 3 focussed on the results and findings obtained from the interviews with the teachers, learners, parents of learners in the school, and the members of the community of Inkamana High

School. The findings from the interviews were such that the following categories were identified as contributing to the effective functioning of the school despite being a school with learners from a disadvantaged community

- The school's focus on life skills education

This category was further divided into the following sub-categories:

- (a) Discipline
- (b) Respect
- (c) Ability to cope
- (d) Cleanliness
- (e) Identity

- The school's provision of a safe and supportive atmosphere and physical environment.

This category was further divided into the following sub-categories:

- (a) Ethos of caring, trusting, democratic and spiritually motivated relationships
- (b) Structural safety provided by the boarding facility
- (c) Empathy
- (d) Staff involvement in the lives of learners

- The factors relating to the maintenance of discipline and order.

This category was further divided into the following sub-categories:

- (a) Role of religion
- (b) Involvement of senior learners and prefects
- (c) Impact of rules, regulations and punishment

- Dedication in teaching and learning.

This category was further divided into the following sub-categories:

- (a) Dedication in teaching
 - (b) Dedication in learning
 - Achievements and successes.
- This category was further divided into the following sub-categories:
- (a) Grade 12 examination results
 - (b) How ex-learners do in life

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

5.3 Limitations of the study

This is a case study research focussing on one school. The aim of the study was to discover “what is going on” and also to investigate why things are happening the way that they are.

During the study the researcher experienced the following limitations:

- All the teachers interviewed except the deputy principal were white. The school has only one black teacher other than the deputy principal, to address vernacular matters. All learners in the school are black.
- Interviewees were encouraged to think freely and behave as they pleased without interruption and without the possibility that their private thoughts or behaviour would ever be misused to embarrass them. Nevertheless, in group interviews people tend to say things that would agree with others especially when the utterance is positive to the image of the school.
- More parents should have been included in this study, but were not available. This is mainly because the interviews took place during working hours and most parents could not turn up, but nevertheless, most of them had indicated their willingness to take part in the study.
- The community was represented by people who worked and lived around the abbey since the school is a bit isolated and the nearest village is more than 20 kilometres away. It would have been more ideal if interviewees from the community were people from outside the abbey.

- The researcher believes that if more schools had been involved in this study, the study's findings would have enjoyed reinforcement and further confirmation.

5.4 Conclusion

The study was aimed at answering the following question: What are the perspectives of the learners, teachers, school management, parents and community on the functioning of an effective school attended by learners from disadvantaged communities?

The concept of school effectiveness seems to have been embraced by most research participants. The participants attributed the effectiveness of the school to a number of factors such as: The school's focus on life skills education, the school's ability to provide a safe and supportive atmosphere and physical environment factors relating to the maintenance of discipline and order, dedication in teaching and learning, and the achievements and successes of the school.

The life skills that the school mainly focuses on include discipline, respect, ability to cope, cleanliness and a sense of identity. Findings reveal that having disciplined learners in a school is a milestone to its effectiveness. Respect for self, others, and property leads to healthy relationships between teachers and learners, which in turn leads to effectiveness of a school. It is also important to prepare learners to be able to cope with life after Matric, such as in tertiary institutions, by encouraging independence. Cleanliness of individuals and the surroundings enhance self-confidence and self-esteem in learners. Cleanliness can also be promoted by insistence by staff and administration upon standards of personal appearance such as wearing of proper school uniform, and courtesy and politeness. Identities of learners are influenced not only by their immediate context but also by the relationships between learners and interests, likes and dislikes of the learners themselves.

A school's ability to provide a safe and supportive atmosphere and physical environment is also an important factor in the effectiveness of a school. A clean and attractive working environment is conducive to learning and teaching, hence would certainly contribute to the effectiveness of a school. The aspect of supportive atmosphere is supported by the ethos of caring, trusting, democratic and spiritually motivated relationships amongst teachers, learners and between teachers and learners, structural safety provided by the boarding facility, feelings of empathy towards each other, and the staff involvement in the lives of learners.

There are various methods that may be used to maintain discipline and order in a school. The study has shown that religion plays an important role in the maintenance of discipline and order. It is also important to involve senior learners in the administration of a school. Giving learners positions of responsibility is an extremely effective way of conveying trust in their abilities and setting standards of mature behaviour. This should, however, be done with caution so as to still promote servant leadership. Rules, regulations and punishment make sure that learners who do not abide by such stipulated rules and regulations are dealt with in a manner that is fair and consistent. It should, however, be made clear that such rules and regulations are basically meant to govern, control, and direct the behaviour of teachers and learners.

The study has also shown that quality of teaching and learning is enhanced by dedication of both teachers and learners to their different responsibilities. Quality staff implies teachers who demonstrate high levels of professional conscientiousness and commitment to the academic interests and well-being of learners. The concept of quality, commitment and dedication should extend beyond teachers to include all learners within a school.

A contributory factor in the effectiveness of a school is also found to be its academic achievements and successes. In striving to maintain their set standards, the morale of both is boosted. The pride of every school lies in seeing its products do well in life, such as occupying key positions in society and also individual successes.

5.5 Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on the research findings and literature control:

- Similar research can be undertaken to find out why things happen the way they do in other effective schools with learners from disadvantaged communities so as to provide guidelines to help dysfunctional schools.
- There is a definite need for more support to be provided to schools in disadvantaged communities. Provincial education departments should provide more staff, funds, infrastructure (especially libraries and laboratories) and staff development programmes to these schools.
- Parents and the community as a whole should be encouraged to be more involved with school activities, so that schools will be better supported and less opposed.

- Schools must implement a disciplinary system that suits them as long as they act within the boundaries of the South African Schools Act.
- School principals should realise the importance of extra-curricular activities in their schools.
- For the promotion of good health to its learners schools should strive to provide learners with a balanced diet as well as relevant information.
- Life skills education should be part of the curriculum that extends from grade R throughout high school.

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