

**AN INVESTIGATION OF FACTORS INFLUENCING PRIMARY SCHOOL LEARNERS' ACADEMIC
PERFORMANCE IN INFORMAL SETTLEMENT AREAS OF WINDHOEK, NAMIBIA**

by

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I declare that the above dissertation 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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ABSTRACT

Learners' academic achievement is a crucial outcome of schooling, also in Namibia. Learners' underperformance in schools in informal settlements is a concern worldwide; hence the need to investigate the factors influencing primary school learners' academic performance in the informal settlement areas of Okahandja Park, Oshitenda and Havana in Windhoek, Namibia. The qualitative study was informed by Classical Liberal theory, Social Darwinism and Social Learning theory. A purposive sample was chosen: three principals, six teachers, three school board chairpersons, three parents and nine learners from three selected primary schools. Data were collected by semi-structured individual interviews and analysed according to themes. Findings indicated that parents' low socio-economic status and education, poor home infrastructure, absenteeism, overcrowded classrooms, inadequate teaching and learning materials, peer pressure and poor parental involvement affect learners' academic performance negatively. Recommendations based on the findings are proposed for schools, government, teachers and parents.

Key words: Informal settlements, primary schools, academic performance, qualitative research, socio-economic status, parental involvement

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DEDICATION

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
KRDP	Khomas Regional Development Profile
NAMPA	Namibia Press Agency
SES	Socio Economic Status
UPE	Universal Primary Education
UNISA	University of South Africa
USA	United States of America

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CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Education for all is an important goal, guaranteed in the Constitution of the Republic of Namibia and central to the national education development strategy of the Government of Namibia, whereby the strategy is to provide free and compulsory education for all children of school age, and achieving that goal will require hard work, effective communication, cooperation and compromises (Toward Education for All, 1993:2). Basic education is a foundation for social-economic and political development of a country (UNESCO, 2010). Thus, if quality education is not offered, schools may not impart adequate skills, knowledge and attitudes to learners which a country requires in its citizens in order to guarantee development (World Bank, 2007).

The Namibian government attaches great significance to the teaching of learners in Namibian schools (National Institute for Education Development, 2010:18). In 1990 when Namibia got its independence, education was the main concern and thus was given high priority (Ministry of Education and Culture, 1993). The main motivation in the struggle for sovereignty was a promise that independence would bring, not only new, but more and better schools which would be free of segregation and education would no longer be a privilege for the few elites but the right of every Namibian citizen (Adere, 2013:1). The government considers education to be a priority for its citizens. Article 20 of the Namibian constitution stipulates that every person residing in Namibia shall have the right to education irrespective of their abilities and disabilities, environmental, cultural or social background (The Constitution of the Republic of Namibia, 1990:14). Despite efforts by the government to ensure that all citizens get quality education, poor academic performance especially among learners in informal settlements is a big challenge. This study investigates factors influencing primary school learners' academic performance in the informal settlement areas of Okahandja Park, Oshitenda and Havana in Windhoek, Namibia. The research seeks to reflect on those factors that negatively impact learners' academic performance in schools.

Un-Habitat (cited in in Gabriel et al, 2016:44) defines an informal settlement as an unplanned settlement and area where housing is not in compliance with current planning and building regulations. Rapid urbanisation and inadequate capability to cope with housing needs of people in urban areas contribute to the development of informal settlements, which create many problems such as health risks, poor sanitation, food shortages, poor facilities, pollution, overcrowding, insufficient educational facilities and violence and crime.

Figure 1.1 shows the fourteen regions of Namibia and the area where the study was conducted. The Khomas Region (see Fig. 1.1) is one of the fourteen regions of Namibia. The Region is named after the Khomas Hochland mountain range near Windhoek. This Region, centered in Windhoek, the capital of Namibia, occupies 4.5% of the land area of Namibia. It has the highest population in the country due to a high influx of people in search of employment, better health facilities, educational institutions and improved living standards in the capital city. The Khomas region has ten constituencies and 121 schools of which 64 are primary, 15 combined and 31 secondary with a total population of 88,429 pupils (Khomas Regional Development Profile [KRDP], 2015).



Figure 1.1: Map of Namibia and its fourteen administration regions (ResearchGate)

Figure 1.2 provides a map of the precise location of the Khomas Region where the study was conducted.

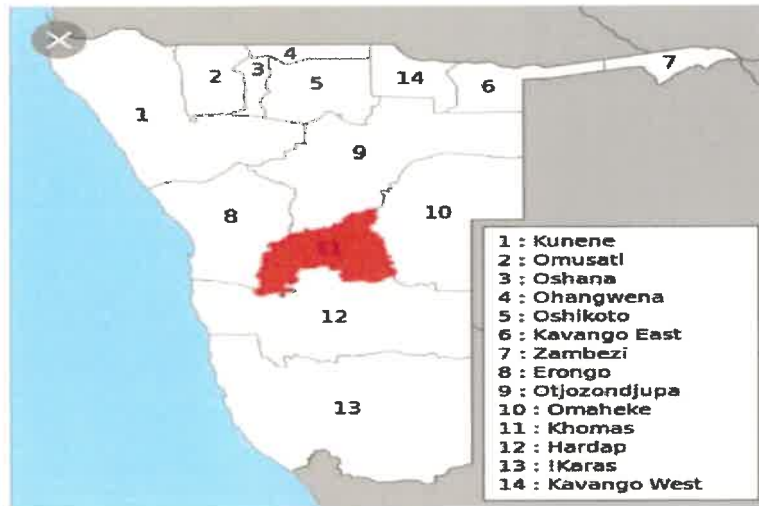


Figure 1.2: Map of Namibia's 14 regions including the Khomas region in red (Svg- Wikimedia Commons)

The influx of people from rural areas to urban areas created a demand for good-quality housing in the Khomas Region of Windhoek. As a result many informal settlements were established which led to higher demand for primary schools (Namibia Press Agency [NAMPA], 2017).

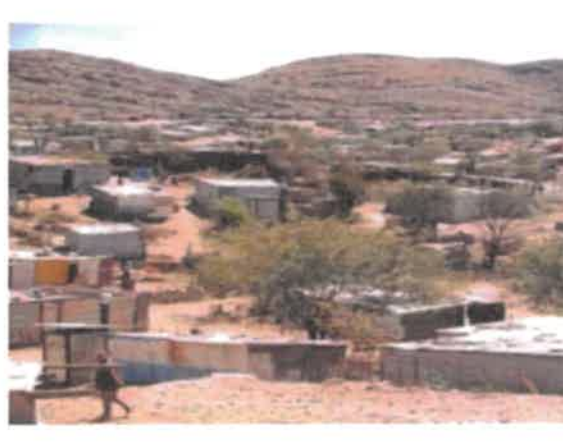


Figure 1.3 Havana structures (an informal settlement area in the Khomas Region)

In his research on a primary school in the Havana informal settlement of Windhoek, Xinhua (2016) observed that a cause of poor academic performance is lack of proper school infrastructure (classrooms). The school consists of tents, which serve as classrooms where teaching and learning is taking place. The school was established due to an influx of many people to Havana informal settlement and the increased demand for schools. According to the principal interviewed by Xinhua (2016), teaching in tents is a challenge, as the area is windy and dusty, and tents are overcrowded; as a result, learners' performance is affected.

In general families living in informal settlements face overwhelming social and economic challenges which, if not dealt with, affect children's academic performance. Okahandja Park, Oshitenda and Havana informal settlements in Windhoek are examples of such areas where learners' access to education is still a challenge due to social and economic factors such as socio-economic status of parents, parents' level of education, bad housing and physical conditions in the home, poor school buildings, small and overcrowded classrooms, learners' anti-social behaviours and lack of adequate teaching and learning materials. Due to the exploratory nature of this study, both home and school environment have been targeted as foci of investigation.

The researcher, a teacher at one of the primary schools located in the selected informal settlements, observed poor academic performance of learners in the seventh grade. The learners do not do homework when given and projects are not submitted according to due dates or not submitted at all. Learners perform poorly in class tests and exams; as a result, they fail their exams and are retained in the same grade. Therefore, it is against this background the researcher sought to investigate factors influencing primary school learners' academic performance in the selected informal settlements.

1.2 SYNOPSIS OF LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Academic performance is affected by many factors, which includes prenatal, natal and postnatal issues of the mother apart from nutritional, socio-economic and environmental factors (Habibullah & Ashraf, 2013:47). The prenatal stage of child development is from conception to birth. The health condition of the mother during pregnancy, her emotional stage, feeding habits, drug usage and living

environment are prenatal factors that could affect the health, mental and physical development of the child including his or her academic performance after birth (Iannucci, 2000). Poor feeding causes mental retardation, which might affect the child's academic performance. Alcohol consumption, cigarette smoking and use of cocaine by expectant mothers can be a devastating prenatal hazard to the unborn child, which might affect their learning abilities in the future (Olson, 2000).

There is a range of other factors that also have an effect on the quality of performance of learners. In this study the factors have been grouped into two major categories: home environment and school environment (Rammala, 2009: 11-12). In the home environment factors such as, socio-economic status of parents, parental level of education, bad housing and physical conditions in the home, distance from home to school, are influential. In the school environment factors, such as poor school buildings, small and overcrowded classrooms, learner anti-social behaviour and lack of adequate teaching and learning materials, have an impact. All these factors will be discussed in detail in chapter two.

A particular theoretical framework underpins this study like any other research. A theoretical framework helps to understand and explain social experience and to determine ways in which to resolve the problems we encounter (Akeri, 2015: 21). This study identifies some of the theories associates with different aspects of factors influencing primary school learners' academic performance in settlement areas, which prevent them from progressing in their studies. This study is informed by Social Learning theory of Albert Bandura and Classical Liberal theory of equal opportunity and Social Darwinism proposed by Charles Darwin. Social learning theory is based on what children learn in the environment as they interact and observe others (Mwamwenda, 1993). Classical Liberal theory states that an individual's Socio-economic Status (SES) is a product of their environment; thus nature and nurture have a bearing on an individual's destiny (Gabriel, Muli, Muasya, Maonga, & Mukhungulu, 2015:47). These theories will be discussed in detail in chapter 2.

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Learners' academic achievement is an important factor in education, and their performance is shown by the examination results at the end of each trimester examination, which is one of the major goals of a school. Regardless of the Government of Namibia's commitment to the provision of Universal

Primary Education (UPE) to all children of school going age, social factors continue to hamper access and participation in basic education. Key among these are the factors affecting children in the informal settlements. Although these challenges also exist in other public primary schools, they are more pronounced in schools located in informal settlements.

In general families living in urban informal settlements face overwhelming social and economic challenges, which, if not well handled affect their children's academic performance (Gabriel et al., 2016: 45). Due to the nature of many informal settlements in Namibia, performance of learners is affected by various challenges, such as long distance from home to school, overcrowded classrooms and lack of adequate teaching and learning materials. All these lead to poor academic performance. Okahandja Park, Oshitenda and Havana informal settlements in Windhoek, Namibia are examples of such areas where learners' academic performance is affected by some of those factors mentioned above.

To the researcher's best knowledge, no research has been done on factors influencing primary school learners' academic performance in informal settlement areas in Namibia. This therefore leaves a knowledge gap that needs to be filled. To address this gap, the current study aims at an in-depth investigation into factors influencing primary school learners' academic performance in informal settlement areas in Windhoek, Namibia.

1.4 MOTIVATION TO CONDUCT THIS STUDY

The researcher works and resides in the same environment where the schools under study are located. The researcher, a teacher at one of the schools in the vicinity of the selected informal settlements, has observed with concern the problems of learners' academic performance in the seventh grade whereby some learners do not do homework, projects are not submitted according to due dates or not submitted at all and class tests and examinations results are below average. The researcher, as a professional educator and member of the community, experienced the need for an investigation to explore contributing factors toward learners' poor academic performance which prevent them to proceed to the next grade.

1.5 AIM OF THE RESEARCH

This research aims to identify and analyse factors that influence learners' academic performance in primary schools in the informal settlements areas of Okahandja Park, Oshitenda and Havana in the Windhoek district.

1.6 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND QUESTIONS

The study has four objectives:

1. To analyse how socio-economic factors influence academic performance in the informal settlements areas of Okahandja Park, Oshitenda and Havana;
2. To investigate which school factors affect learners' academic performance in the informal settlements areas of Okahandja Park, Oshitenda and Havana;
3. To analyse how parental involvement influences learners' academic performance of primary schools in the informal settlement areas of Okahandja Park, Oshitenda and Havana;
4. To make recommendations for practice based on the findings of literature study and the empirical inquiry.

1.6.1 Research question

The main research question in this study is: *How do socio-economic, school and parental factors influence learners' academic performance in primary schools in the informal settlement areas of Okahandja Park, Oshitenda and Havana, in Windhoek?*

1.6.2 Research sub-questions

1. How do socio-economic factors influence learners' academic performance in the informal settlement areas of Okahandja Park, Oshitenda and Havana?

2. Which school factors affect learners' academic performance in the informal settlement areas of Okahandja Park, Oshitenda and Havana?
3. How does parental involvement influence learners' academic performance in primary schools in the informal settlement areas of Okahandja Park, Oshitenda and Havana?
4. What recommendations can be made for practice based on the findings of literature study and the empirical inquiry?

1.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Since there was no extant study done in Namibia on the views regarding factors influencing primary school learners' academic performance in informal settlement areas, it is therefore important to mention that the research findings of this study might help the Ministry of Education especially policy makers to identify causes of poor academic performance of learners in informal settlement areas. The Ministry of Education may find the findings of this study useful in improving the quality of resources as well as the teaching and learning process in the informal settlement schools.

The study will also be helpful to the schools in the sense that the outcomes might assist them on how to guide the learners to perform better. Parents might also benefit from this study to identify factors which negatively influence behaviour of their children, to assist them to monitor their children and help them to understand their responsibilities with regard to learning for better results. The learners might also benefit from the outcomes of this study by understanding factors that they have to avoid and by adopting practices which support good academic achievement. Furthermore, future researchers in education may find the study useful in enriching their literature and carrying out similar research to compare the situation in other informal settlements schools. Finally, the findings of this study will contribute to the body of knowledge and it can be used by scholars and stakeholders interested in the situation of educational standards in the informal settlement schools.

1.8 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

Research methodology in this section refers to specific tools to be used to meet objectives of the research. Research design refers to the 'broader' plan of how the research is going to be conducted. The research methodology and design will be dealt with in detail in chapter 3.

1.8.1 Research methodology

This section dealt with procedures and methods the researcher used to obtain data for the study. The study will make use of a qualitative research approach. This enabled the collection of rich data that contributes to a deeper understanding of the low academic performance in the three selected primary schools (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014:346). Thus, the qualitative research approach will help the researcher to gain insight into how principals, teachers and parents deal with factors influencing primary school learners' academic performance in informal settlement areas of Windhoek.

Denzin and Lincoln (2005: 3) define qualitative research as an interpretive naturalistic approach to the world. It studies things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. Therefore in this study the qualitative research approach was used to gain an understanding of how different factors contribute to learners' academic performance. Further, a case study design was adopted. The case study approach was appropriate for this study because it allowed the researcher to conduct an in-depth investigation of the topic under study.

1.8.2 Research design

The research project was designed to investigate factors influencing primary school learners' academic performance in informal settlement areas, in Windhoek. The researcher investigated factors at home and in the school environment that contribute to learners' poor academic performance in the three selected primary schools.

1.8.2.1 Literature review

The literature review is a summary and analysis of relevant literature about the research problem. It also encompasses related literature enabling the researcher to transform the problem statement into research language (MacMillan & Schumacher 2010). An interpretive review of the literature provides the researcher with greater insight into home and school-based factors influencing learners' academic performance. Maeke (2010) states that parents are expected to create a home environment conducive to children's learning as well as participate in their children's learning activities towards achieving the educational goal. The review synthesises published and unpublished literature on learner performance in informal settlement areas. It includes research reports, government documents, scholarly monographs, books, dissertations, theses, journals and internet-based sources. Literature review and theoretical frameworks grounding this study will be discussed in detail in chapter 2.

1.8.2.2 Empirical inquiry

An empirical inquiry is a way of gaining knowledge by means of direct or indirect observation or experience. In this qualitative study the following are to be discussed:

(a) Sampling

Sampling is a way of selecting a given number of participants from a defined population as a representative of that population (Akeri, 2015: 22). In addition, Maree (2007:79) refers to sampling as a process that is used to collect a portion of a population for the study. In this study purposeful sampling was used by the researcher, whereby three public primary schools situated in the informal settlement areas of Okahandja Park, Oshitenda and Havana were selected for the study. The study consists of 24 participants: three principals, six teachers, three school board members, three parents and nine learners. Sampling procedures used to select the participants are reported in detail in chapter 3.

(b) Interviews

According to Gay, Mills and Airasian (2012:386), interviews are conducted to explore participants' responses and to gather in-depth data about their experiences and feelings. In this study individual face-face interviews were conducted to provide the researcher with in-depth and rich information regarding the factors influencing primary school learners' academic performance in informal settlement areas in Windhoek.

(c) Data analysis

The analysis consisted of coding similar texts from all interviewees and then categorising the data into manageable themes. Neuman (2011) explains data analysis as the way of using content analysis techniques in order to identify patterns, ideas and themes that emerge from the data. In this study the content analysis enabled the researcher to organise data into themes and categories from which the participants' views regarding factors that influence learners' academic performance in the selected primary schools of Khomas Education Region in Windhoek were determined (Upindi, 2012: 45). All these elements are reported in detail in chapter 3.

1.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Before collecting the data, the researcher asked permission from the Ministry of Education in Namibia through the Circuit Director by writing a letter requesting for permission to conduct the study in the Education Region. In this study the researcher obtained permission from the Director of Education in the Khomas Education Region of Windhoek. The researcher also asked permission from the principals of the selected primary schools to conduct the study in their schools. This section has been discussed in detail in chapter 3.

1.10 LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

As with any study, it is also important to outline its limitations:

Due to lack of funds, the researcher limited the research to three schools in the informal settlement areas. Participants might not have answered the questions, truthfully and honestly. Target participants might not have adequate time for interviews due to other commitments.

1.11 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The study was conducted only in the Khomas Education region of Windhoek; financial obligations and time constraints did not allow for a nationwide study. The study was restricted to primary schools located in the selected informal settlements. The study involved only principals, Grade 7 teachers, school board chairpersons, parents and Grade 7 learners of the selected primary schools.

1.12 DEFINITION OF TERMS

Terms may have different meanings in different contexts. In this study the following terms are the key to the study:

- **Learner/academic performance:** is the ability whereby a learner attains success in his/her studies by receiving high marks in the examination (www.yourdictionary.com 2018). Mwetli (2013:9) refers to learners' academic performance as the total score that a learner obtains in an examination. According to Efeza (2011:7), academic performance refers to scores of pupils in school-based examinations, such as end of term and end of year national examinations. Wanjiru (2013:13) defines learners' academic performance as learners' level of achievement.

- **Informal settlements:** are unplanned settlements where housing is not in compliance with the current planning and building regulations (Un-Habitat, 2010). Gabriel et al. (2016:44) define informal settlements as residential areas where groups of housing units have been constructed on land to which the occupants have no legal claim.

- **Parental involvement:** Simon (2004:187) defines parental involvement as an activity occurring between a parent and a child at home or between parents and teachers at school that might

contribute to the child's educational outcomes and development. In addition Mwirichia (2013:7) defines parental involvement as participation of parents in every facet of children's education and development from birth to adulthood. Parental involvement refers to the participation of parents in a wide range of school based and home-based activities in order to improve their children's education (Maluleke, 2014: 3)

- **Primary school:** This is a school for children between 5 to 12 years old (Dictionary of Contemporary English, 2009). Wanjiru (2013:13) defines primary schools as the level of formal education that precedes secondary education.

- **Environmental factors:** These factors refer to those aspects within the learners' surroundings at home and school that influence the teaching-learning process (Mege, 2014:10). Ajayi (2001) is of the opinion that environmental factors are factors within the school that influence the teaching-learning process, such as classrooms, class size, teaching methods and peers.

- **Socio-economic factors:** These refer to social and economic factors that shape and determine the dynamics a society will experience, such as parental income and family size, which affect learners' academic performance (Okore, 2017). Mwet (2013:9) refers to socio-economic factors as aspects related to the family that affect learners' academic performance, such as parental income, parental educational level and parental involvement in education.

1.13 CHAPTER DIVISION

Chapter 1: Background to the study

This chapter focuses on the introduction and background of the research topic, statement of the research problem, the objectives, research questions, aim of the research, significance of the study, limitations and delimitations of the study and definition of terms.

Chapter 2: Literature review

This chapter provides the literature review where the theoretical framework is explored. The literature review focuses on factors influencing primary school learners' academic performance in informal settlement areas.

Chapter 3: Research methodology

In this chapter the methodology is presented. It covers the research design, target population, sampling procedures, research instruments, data collection procedure and method of data analysis.

Chapter 4: Findings

The findings of the study are provided in this section. The discussions and interpretation of the illustrated results are also provided here.

Chapter 5: Summary, recommendations and conclusion

A complete summary of the study as well as the results is provided in this section. Based on the findings, recommendations and conclusions are provided that show how academic performance was influenced by many contributing factors. Suggestions for further research are also presented.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

2.1. INTRODUCTION

Namibia is one of the countries in Sub-Sahara Africa which is experiencing a rapid growth of informal settlements (Haimbodi, 2014: 9). This chapter presents theoretical frameworks and a literature review on factors influencing primary school learners' academic performance in the informal settlement areas. The intention was to determine if socio-economic, school and parental factors influence academic performance of learners and how they relate to the focus of this study.

2.2 LITERATURE REVIEW

This section reviews the literature on the factors influencing primary school learners' academic performance in informal settlement areas of Okahandja Park, Oshitenda and Havana in Windhoek, Namibia, which are linked to socio-economic problems at home and at school. Home and school environmental factors are the focus of the study.

Socio-economic problems do not only happen at home but at school as well, therefore the need to focus the study on the home and school environmental factors that influence learners' performance in informal settlement areas. A range of factors have an effect on the quality of performance of learners as researched nationally and internationally. A study conducted in the United States of America (USA) by Lacour and Tissington (2011) regarding academic performance of students living in informal settlements revealed that the students scored below average in all years and grades tested. Students who lived in poverty-stricken areas scored significantly worse than other students and schools with the high proportion of students from economically poor backgrounds scored significantly worse than other schools. Poverty directly affects academic attainment as a result of insufficient resources. Research conducted by Bashman (2008) in South Africa on high school students living in informal settlements revealed that sexual abuse is rampant in such an environment; the academic achievement of students who became victims of such abuse was negatively affected. In contrast it

has been found internationally that poor academic performance is a problem that manifests itself not only in poor communities but also in countries that are classified as developed.

Researchers at Ohio State University attribute the academic failure to the economic and social conditions while administrators and educators have also developed this mindset (Sam, Mohammad & Leong, 2013). They state that many reasons that cause learners' poor performance include weakness of the curriculum design, lack of qualified teachers in some instances, and lack of learning motivation especially from learners' side. This is accordance with the Social Learning theory which informs this study. Farouk (2013) conducted a study in Ghana among the Zongo communities who have slum-like conditions characterised by poor infrastructure, poor road networks, unavailability of water and low parental income and educational levels. These were the major reasons for low pupil performance within the Zongo communities.

A similar study performed by Nabaseruka (2010) in Uganda found that pupils from slums had low academic achievement; reasons for poor performance were poor nutrition and sanitation that negatively affected learners' academic performance. Research by Nairobi City County (2014) shows that public primary schools in the city on average produce poor results compared to the private schools; majority of these low performing primary schools are located in informal settlements. The report revealed that those schools performed poorly because of under development of physical infrastructures. Another study by Demba (cited in Maina, 2017:3) in slums in Stahere division (Kenya) revealed that children's participation in household chores in slum areas affected their performance, because they were more occupied with household chores and there was no time to study whereby their academic performance was negatively affected.

Studies of this nature have not been conducted in Namibia, focusing on factors influencing primary school learners' academic performance in informal settlement areas. Therefore, there is a need for a research study such as this one to be carried out in Namibia. Various studies have shown that both home and school environments have a strong influence on the academic performance of learners, therefore the need to discuss them in detail. In the home environment the following factors were identified such as socio-economic status of parents, parental level of education, bad housing and physical conditions in the home, distance from home to school and poor parental involvement, while in the school environment the following factors were identified: poor school buildings, small and

overcrowded classrooms, learner anti-social behaviour and lack of adequate teaching and learning materials.

2.2.1 Home environment

The home environment is the immediate surroundings in which learners find themselves. It is also referred to as the physical and psychological conditions that affect children (Ogbemudia & Aiasa, 2013:1). According to Adell (2002:91), the family background is the most important and weighty factor determining the academic performance of learners.

Egunsola (2014:47) states that home environment is the family background of the student, which includes all the human and material resources present at the home that affect the learner's education and living. The home is the basic institution for providing the child's primary socialisation and laying the educational foundation for the child upon which the other agents of socialisation build. He further states that what the child learns at home and how the family motivates the child towards education contributes to the child's success or failure at school. Therefore, in the home environment, the factors that influence academic performance include the following factors as discussed in ensuing sections.

2.2.1.1 Socio-economic status of parents

Due to unemployment, many people in developing countries, Namibia included, experience difficulties in funding education for their children or providing their children with an enabling environment for learning. Some parents cannot afford to buy textbooks, computers and other educational resources because they are unemployed (Shililifa, 2006:12).

According to Avila and Gasperini (2005) and Enos (2007), some learners in sub-Saharan Africa, including Namibia, have to work as labourers to survive and to pay their tuition fees; as a result learners come to school tired and can hardly concentrate on lessons. They also tend to absent themselves from school to work. Usaini and Abubakar (2015) state that there is a correlation between parental income and academic performance. Even in cases where education is free there are expenses the parents are required to meet, such as transport, lunch and buying education materials such as

pens and books. For parents especially, those living in informal settlements whereby the majority live below the poverty line, providing learning resources is a major challenge which affects learners' performance (Maina, 2017:18). Maina (2017:18) adds that families from lower socio-economic status often struggle with providing tutorial support for their children, which might contribute to poor academic performance. Poor parents are not able to provide their children with teaching and learning resources, as they do not have money and as a result their children are unable to complete the school tasks assigned to them in the given subject. Most researchers and experts think that the low socio-economic status negatively affects the academic performance of students and as a result their needs and demands remain unfulfilled (Gabriel, 2015:5).

Katanga (2016:54) states that, due to low socio-economic status of parents whereby they cannot provide adequate food for their children, absenteeism increases in schools. School attendance is poor where hunger is a major problem. Some learners do not have food to eat at home and therefore they do not have energy to go to school. Katanga (2016:19) further states that learner absenteeism has a direct link with socio-economic status of parents. Inadequate access to food makes learners from poor families stay away from school because they are hungry, and parents do not have money to buy food for their children. Mboweni (2014) concurs that due to poverty learners stay away from school, because of poor nutrition. They cannot go to school on empty stomachs, so they stay away from school. According to the Nelson Mandela Research Report (2005), hunger was a contributing factor to learner absenteeism: some learners go to school without having breakfast due to parents not having money to buy food to feed their children. This leads to poor performance in their subjects. Hamunyela (2008:15) notes that socio-economic disparities of parents influence children's academic learning. She further notes that children who are in discomfort pay less attention than children who are comfortable. Solo (1999) cited in Rammala (2009:3) is of the opinion that domestic quarrels by parents especially those who are poor and unemployed result in child neglect and eventually the learner's performance will be negatively affected. He further elaborates that most parents in informal settlements are, single, illiterate and unemployed. Such parents might not be able to provide their children with a balanced meal.

Akinsanya, Ajayi, and Salomi, (2011:16) state that a child from a well-educated family and high economic status is more likely to perform better than a learner from an illiterate family. The child from an educated family has a lot of support such as a decent and good home environment for academic

work, parental support and guidance, enough textual and academic materials and decent nutrition. Such children are likely to be sent to good schools with well-seasoned teachers.

Hugo (2002) states that learners whose parents' socio-economic status is stable and have access to educational materials at home such as television, computers, dictionaries and study rooms are more informed and supported, while those from poor families with no educational resources are not assisted by parents to improve their academic performance. Aming'a (2016:133) states that children raised in poverty tend to achieve less in school. According to Muriungi (2017), socio-economic status contributes greatly to behaviour. Children brought up in poverty do not behave differently by choice but are subjected to overwhelming difficulties that affluent children may never confront; this undermines good performance. Some behaviour challenges that children from poor families have to contend with include emotional and social problems as a result of weak emotional attachments acquired at a tender age. Parents whose income is low are at times overwhelmed by low self-esteem, powerlessness, depression and inability to tackle situations. These feelings are passed to their children by negativity, insufficient nurturing and general failure to provide for the children (Chevalier & Harman, 2013).

2.2.1.2 Bad housing and physical conditions in the home

The home is the potential influence on a child's academic performance, so poor housing and overcrowding can seriously impede the child's homework and academic performance. Physical conditions in the home might create barriers to learning, because there is often no area set aside at home for parents to assist their children with school work. Homes do not have tables where learners can sit and do their homework. There is also no electricity to provide adequate lighting after dark as well as running water in some houses (Pillay, 2004:7-8).

McLoyd and Wilson (1990) state that in all countries, poverty presents a chronic stress for children and families that interferes with successful adjustments to developmental tasks, including school achievement. Rich families have home libraries in their houses and hence children have access to all the books that they may need. Children from poor houses have no access to home libraries. According to Harker (2006:7-8), living in poor or overcrowded housing conditions affects a child's ability to learn, which can have a lasting impact on a child's chances of succeeding in life. Hundreds of thousands of

children are living in homes that are too small to allow them space to sleep comfortably and enjoy normal standards of hygiene and privacy, or even a room to do their homework. Thus bad housing affects children's ability to learn at school and study at home (Harker, 2006:9). Pillay (2017:1) states that most learners who live in informal houses, that is low-cost houses such as a shack in overcrowded conditions, generally perform poorly in their subjects as compared to those learners who live in conventional (brick) houses that are not overcrowded.

2.2.1.3 Parents' level of education

Parents' levels of education play a major role in the education of their children, according to the study conducted by Van Der Merwe and Welshi (1992) in South Africa on student perceptions of employment and education. The findings showed that learners whose fathers attained higher standards of education, for example a degree, showed relatively higher educational aspirations than their peers whose fathers had not received any formal education or had just attained a maximum of primary education.

Castejan and Perez (1999) state that those learners whose parents are not adequately literate are disadvantaged because these days parents are required to assist their children with their assignments and projects at home. If parents are illiterate, they cannot assist their children with homework, because they do not know how.

According to Considine and Zapala (2002:92-93), in their study on the influence of social and economic disadvantage in the academic performance of school students in Australia, families where the parents are advantaged socially, educationally and economically foster a higher level of achievement in their children. These parents provide higher levels of psychological support for their children through environments that encourage the development of skills necessary for success at school. Mbugua, Kibet, Muthaa and Nkonke (2012:90) state that most parents and guardians who did not receive any education above secondary school education may not be good role models for their children in academic matters. This implies that if parents and guardians' education background is lacking, it may influence their understanding of the importance of education. Mwetli (2013:11) is of the opinion that level of education influences parents' knowledge, beliefs, values and goals about child rearing, so that a variety of parental behaviours are indirectly related to children's school performance. For example

higher levels of education may enhance parents' facility at becoming involved in their children's education and enable parents to acquire social skills and problem-solving strategies conducive to children's school success. Thus, students whose parents have higher levels of education may have an enhanced regard for learning, more positive ability beliefs, a stronger work orientation and they may use more effective learning strategies than children of parents with lower levels of education.

2.2.1.4 Distance from home to school

The long distances that learners walk from home to school is another contributing factor that influences their academic performance. Bashaiza (2016:1) found that learners might walk three to five kilometres every day and by the time they reach school, they are tired and cannot concentrate in class. Pillay (2004:6) maintains that some problems encountered by learners in informal settlements are caused by travelling long distances to schools. The schools are located far from where they live and because they often do not have money for transport, they have to walk to school. This makes them late and affects their academic performance.

2.2.1.5 Parental involvement

Parents have different understandings of what their role in the education of their children should be or how they can be involved in their children's education. Engaging parents in their children's education is one of the most effective ways of advancing academic success (Lemmer, 2007). Maluleke (2014:3) refers to parental involvement as the participation of parents in a wide range of school based and home-based activities in order to improve their children's education. According to Menon (2013:1), "parents play an important role in the life of their children, they are considered to be the first teachers in the child's life."

Menon (2013:2) further states that "even if children manage to attend the school, they remain deprived, as they do not receive academic help from their parents, because the parents themselves do not have knowledge on how to assist their children." Jeynes (2007) indicates that involving parents contributes to youth success in academics, because students who previously were not hard working in school may begin to view school as valuable when parents actively endorse the value of school through involvement.

Shililifa (2006:13) is of the opinion that the involvement of parents in their children's education is very important because it encourages learners to work hard and perform better. She further adds that parental involvement includes visiting the child's school, attending parent meetings and helping with school work.

Hamunyela (2008:6) states that parental involvement in children's education is multi-dimensional, ranging from parents directly helping their children with homework to parents establishing high expectations for their children's learning in schools. She further states that parental involvement is rooted in the belief that in order for schools to educate all youth effectively, parents and families should become fully involved in the process of educating learners. The role of parents in the education of the learners as well as relationships between parents and professional educators has long been of interest to researchers and practitioners at all levels of public and private education. Thus home involvement of parents are activities that parents engage in at home and positive attitudes parents have towards their children's education.

Henderson and Mapp (2002:67) are of the opinion that learners with involved parents, no matter what their income or background, are more likely to earn higher grades and test points, pass their classes, attend school regularly and show improved behaviour. On the other hand, Henderson and Berla (2004:2) argue that the most accurate predictor of a student's achievement in school is not income or social status, but the extent to which that student's family is able to create a home environment that encourages learning, expresses high (but not unrealistic) expectations for their children's achievement and future careers, and become involved in their children's education at school and in the community. They further argue that when parents are involved in their children's education at home, they do better in school.

The study conducted by Singh, Mbokodi and Msila (2004:304) in South Africa on the effects of parental participation on the educational success of their children revealed that parental support in provision of a good learning environment, physical facilities and spiritual health is crucial in the success of the learner. Negumbo (2016:43) is of the opinion that a good relationship of parents with the school promotes successful academic performance. When parents participate in decision making, school activities and problem solving and assist their children with homework, their children perform better

academically. She further states that it is important for parents to find the reason for their children's poor performance to come up with good suggestions how to help these specific learners reach their full potential.

Peters (2014:23) explained that parental involvement in school context often requires parents to attend general and specific meetings, meet their children's teachers and be involved in school activities such as sport and fundraising. In addition parents can be considered involved in their children's education if they help their children with homework and monitor their social behaviour.

2.2.2 School Environment

The school is a unit within a community and can only exist through the operation of the school community. Therefore, the establishment of a good community relationship with schools is the key to success (Negumbo, 2016:43).

Research conducted at high schools in South Dakota has shown that all learners are educable, and that the way in which the school is managed is the most critical factor in determining the quality of education for its learners (Rammala, 2009:16). According to Saiduddin (2003:88), educators should create a conducive learning environment for learners to feel at home at school in such a way that they can openly discuss what prevents them from performing to the required standards. In the school environment the following factors have been identified as contributors to poor learner academic performance as cited by different authors in the literature.

2.2.2.1 Poor school buildings

Quality of school buildings promote or hamper learners' academic performance. According to Lowe (1990), teachers in buildings that are in poor condition state that the design and appearance of the facilities have a negative impact upon the learning climate, while teachers in buildings which are in good condition find a positive influence upon the learning climate. Dilapidated schools can affect learners' academic performance (Rammala, 2009:22). According to Ralenala (2003), thousands of schools still have poor physical infrastructure, and many are dilapidated, dangerous and unfit for

human habitation. There is often no water at school or sanitation; such conditions do not only restrict the teaching and learning activities of the school but also threaten the health of learners and educators as well, which could influence absenteeism of both learners and teachers. Decrepit school buildings, broken roofing and toilets are an offensive background for teaching and learning (Tanner, 2009).

2.2.2.2 Small and overcrowded classrooms

Overcrowded classrooms occur when the number of students enrolled in the school is larger than the number of students the school is designed to accommodate (Lewis & friends, 2000:4). Access to education is a human right and therefore, many governments have made provision to provide education to their citizens. In many public schools, learners are enrolled even where the infrastructures are limited, creating overcrowded classes. Classes that are overcrowded may have an effect on the quality of both teaching and learning (Muyoyeta, 2018:22). In overcrowded classrooms, teachers cannot pay attention to all the learners, and are unable to differentiate their attention among learners (Imtiaz, 2014:251). Teachers also lose valuable lesson time in such circumstances, because they spend most of the lesson time trying to control the learners. Little time is left for real teaching (Imtiaz, 2014:251). According to Epri (2016), overcrowded classes lead to teachers who are overloaded with work which makes it difficult to mark learners' work. Learners in overcrowded classrooms do not participate actively because the teachers end up using teacher-centred approaches (lecture method). Thus, due to overcrowded classrooms, teachers fail to support learners with special needs. The high learner to teacher ratio affects teacher efficiency and teachers find it difficult to attend to the individual learners who may need more attention.

According to Legotlo, Maaga and Sebogo (2002:16), overcrowded classrooms in some schools in Potchefstroom create serious problems. They further state that in the North West province in South Africa, class size has been identified as a determinant of and a contributing factor to poor academic performance. It was noted that in some schools there are more than 40 learners in one classroom. These conditions lead to other problems such as unacceptable behaviour, teachers not able to pay attention to each individual learner, and poor discipline in the classroom during the teaching and learning process. Negumbo (2016:41) states that in general in overcrowded classrooms, learners are seated closely together, which restrict teacher and learner movement. Thus, in such conditions teachers are limited in terms of walking around the classroom and reaching out to each learner in the

classroom. Too large class size may cause problems of ineffective classroom management, poor supervision as well as poor discipline in the classroom, while small classroom size is more manageable and allows individual attention.

2.2.2.3 Learner anti-social behaviour

Anti-social behaviour has been one of the top problems confronting the nation today especially among the youth (Chesang, 2013:126). A study conducted by Barley and Beesley (2012) in the USA revealed that where students are well disciplined, there is improved academic performance. Substance abuse, truancy from school and peer pressure are examples of learner anti-social behaviour, which are common in schools. Rammala (2009) defines substance abuse as a social and public health problem in most countries worldwide and in South Africa, the problem of learners abusing alcohol is also an issue that needs serious attention since most rural schools are near liquor outlets. She adds that since marijuana and cigarettes are easily accessible to learners these days, it becomes even more difficult for educators to control learners who use such substances. The abuse of such substances impairs the learner's ability to learn and respond to questions. In most cases where crimes are committed at schools, substance abuse is involved.

Namupala (2013:34) mentions that learners in Namibia abuse alcohol which creates problems in schools, especially those situated in informal settlements. Schools and houses are close to liquor outlets, and almost every third household sells alcohol as a means of income. This needs serious attention.

Mijinyawa, Abubakar and Muhammad (2015) define truancy as the action of staying away from school without good reasons or permission. According to Mijinyawa et al. (2015), truancy is a problem affecting learner success in school. They further note that some learners absent themselves from school due to poor academic achievement. Family conditions such as poverty or bullying at school contributes to truancy and affects academic performance.

Peer pressure is a feeling that one must do the same things as other people of one's age and social group in order to be liked or respected by them. Peer pressure encourages youth to use substances

under the false impression that drugs stimulate appetite for food, increase strength and give wisdom as well as courage to face life (Maithya, 2012:633; Chesang, 2013). Sharry (2004:1-3) mentions that peer pressure results in negative decisions, rebellion and moody behaviour, which in turn results in poor academic performance. Learners who do not cooperate lose quality learning time.

2.2.2.4 Lack of adequate teaching and learning materials

Aikens and Barbarin (2008) note that schools located in low economic status communities are often under-resourced and this may affect the teaching-learning process. Parents from low economic status are unable to afford resources such as books, computers or tutors to create a positive literacy environment.

Legotlo, Maaga and Sebego (2002:15) discovered that lack of educational resources and the availability of educational resources influence the learners' academic performance. Teaching resources are described as methods and materials used in teaching (Owoko, 2010). Lyons (2012) argues that student performance is influenced by the quality and quantity of teaching materials. Lyons (2012) found that institutions with adequate teaching and learning resources such as textbooks, charts, maps, audiovisual and electronic instructional materials such as radio, tape recorders, television and video recorders stand a better chance of performing well in examinations than poorly equipped ones. Therefore, poor academic performance could be attributed to lack of enough teaching materials and equipment.

Arends, Winitzky and Tannebaun (2001) state that learners with access to more educational resources are more likely to perform better than their counterparts that are less resourced. They further state that learners who have access to resources such as books, study desk or tables and electronic resources such as television and computers are at an advantage, compared to those who come from poor families. They note that learners who have access to such resources are more informed about the latest developments in education and this assists them to improve their performance at school, while those from poor families with no resources are not informed about developments in education in their local areas.

Namupala (2013:27) is of the opinion that textbooks are important resources in teaching and learning, therefore a lack affects learners' performance academically. That is why learners' non-exposure to educational resources will affect their performance. Namupala (2013:29) further states that in most cases, schools in informal settlements are not properly resourced with learning materials, due to large class groups and are severely affected by this situation. Learners in some primary schools in the informal settlement areas of Okahandja Park do not have a single textbook in some subjects, and mainly depend on notes provided by the teachers. This shortage of necessary textbooks negatively affects the performance of learners, as learners have nothing to read. Thus, the shortage of resources not only affects learners but also demoralises the teachers.

2.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

As mentioned in Chapter 1, a theoretical framework helps us to understand and explain social experience and also to determine ways in which to resolve the problems we encounter (Akeri, 2015:21). Badugela (2012:11) refers to a theoretical framework as a set of concepts and relationships within which the problem is formulated and solved. It is a concise description of the major variables operating within the arena of the problem to be pursued together with the researcher's overarching view of how the variables interact to produce a more powerful or comprehensive model of relevant phenomena that has not heretofore been available for shedding light on the problem. This section presents theories on which the study has been based. The researcher used Classical Liberal theory of equal opportunity and Social Darwinism as proposed by Charles Darwin and the social learning theory postulated by Albert Bandura as theoretical lenses to explore factors influencing primary school learners' academic performance in the informal settlement areas of Okahandja Park, Oshitenda and Havana in Windhoek, Namibia.

2.3.1 Classical Liberal theory of equal opportunity and Social Darwinism

Classical Liberal theory is used in this study as an attempt to identify socio-economic factors that affect children's schooling in informal settlement areas of Okahandja Park, Oshitenda and Havana in Windhoek, Namibia. According to this theory, an individual's socio-economic status is a product of the environment they live in; thus nature and nurture have a bearing on an individual's destiny (Gabriel et al., 2016:47). Classical Liberal theory asserts that each person is born with a given amount of

capacity which to a large extent is inherent and cannot be changed, therefore whosoever plays the role of education provider, whether it is the state or society, should design the education system in such a way that any or all barriers to socio-economic development of the person from humble background whether geographical, cultural, political or historical are removed. In this study learners from informal settlements are expected to be treated equally just like the learners from good home backgrounds. All children should have access to education irrespective of their race, gender, cultural or geographical backgrounds. Access and participation to education may only be determined by the individual's merit and ability, and not their social, geographical or economic background (Jemutai, 2014:12).

Equal opportunity, in the case of this study, means that all learners should be treated the same (similarly) irrespective of their gender, race and cultural background. They should be unhampered by artificial barriers or prejudice, except when a particular distinction can be explicitly justified. In most instances informal settlements are neglected by the central government in terms of equal opportunities, meaning that the lifestyles of informal settlement children are not the same as the children from normal brick houses or from well to do families. The exclusion of learners from basic amenities, that is, exclusion in terms of social and economic development (no proper housing, no sanitation, no employment on the side of parents, insufficient schools, overcrowded classrooms and lack of educational resources) impacts negatively on their education (Gabriel et al., 2016:47). Many socio-economic factors affect the quality of performance of learners, such as socio-economic status of parents, parental level of education, housing and physical conditions in the home, distance from home to school, classrooms and teaching and learning materials. Low socio-economic status of parents, as well as lower levels of education, poverty and unemployment ultimately affect a society as a whole; in the same vein inequality in wealth distribution and quality of life are increasing in the informal settlements (Gabriel et al., 2016:47). The theory of equal opportunity is lacking in these primary schools; although all children should be treated equally, due to different lifestyles, it is not possible. The children of parents who are not able to finance their children's education are likely to lack most academic necessities and therefore their performance is affected.

Social Darwinism theory asserts that all children should be given, through education, their social status, whereby all school-going children irrespective of the geographical, cultural and historical backgrounds should be treated equally and fairly. Children are free to attend any school of their choice if they perform in their tests and examination (Jemutai, 2014). Social Darwinism theory observes that

provision of formal equity of access to education guarantees fairness in the competition for resources and opportunities (Orodho, 2004:19).

Social Darwinism views education as the great equalizer, whereby opportunities should be available to all learners, no matter where they came from. In this way education would at least provide equality of economic opportunity whereby all classes, races and sexes could benefit economically from excellent academic performance (Sherman & Wood, 1982). If children who live in informal settlements do not receive equal opportunities with regard to education like those from well-established homes, the disadvantage experienced by informal settlement learners will lead to increased dropouts, absenteeism and repetition of grades which will lead to low academic performance in many informal settlement primary schools (Psacharopoulous & Woodhall, 1985). In this study the theory is used to justify the notion that all children should have access to education and they should also be treated equally and fairly with regard to educational resources and opportunities.

Despite education being recognised as a fundamental basic human right, not all children, especially those in the informal settlement areas, have equitable access to it. Thus the study attempts to find out the extent to which the Classical Liberal theory of equal opportunity and Social Darwinism can be applied to socio-economic factors that influence primary school learners' academic performance in informal settlements areas of Okahandja Park, Oshitenda and Havana where inequalities of education provisions are serious (Gabriel, 2015:24). Classical Liberal theory of equal opportunity and Social Darwinism is relevant to this study because education should be accessed by all regardless of their social, economic and cultural backgrounds. It is against this background that this study focused on finding out the factors that affect primary school learners' academic performance in informal settlement areas of Okahandja Park, Oshitenda and Havana in Windhoek.

2.3.2. Social Learning theory

Social Learning theory is an approach to behaviour and personality that attempts to combine the principles of learning derived from behaviourism with the contributions of cognitive psychology (Van Den Aardweg, 1993:226). The theory emphasises the importance of observing and modelling behaviours, attitudes, and emotional reactions of others (Ormrod, 1999). Bandura (1977) claims that much of our behaviour is learned by observing other people and modelling our behaviour after them,

which means from observing others, one forms an idea of how new behaviours are performed. Social Learning theory explains human behaviour in terms of continuous reciprocal interaction between cognitive, behavioural and environmental influences. Efeza (2011:25) posits that the school learning environment, which includes physical facilities, resources and learner behaviour, has an influence on the learning process and ultimately on the achievement of the learners. The absence of adequate physical facilities and resources will negatively affect learners' academic performance.

The theory is based on what children learn in their environment as they interact and observe others (Mwamwenda, 1993). Such learning assists children in becoming socialised, so that what they do corresponds with norms and expectations of society. In this study Social Learning theory is used because it posits that people learn from one another, and may include observational learning, imitation and modelling (Reid, 2007). In this case learners in schools in informal settlement areas will observe and then imitate what fellow learners are doing.

Cherry (n.d.) and Woolfolk (2010) analysed three core concepts of Social Learning theory. The first concept mentions the idea that people learn through observation, which means they learn through watching something with their eyes. The second concept is the idea that internal mental states are an essential part of observation. The third concept recognises that because something has been learned, it does not mean that it will change all learners' behaviours. Bandura (1977:22) points out some of the factors that influence social learning are self-discipline, study and hard work. This implies that for effective teaching and learning to take place, a teacher should be a living example of what he or she teaches, because it is unrealistic to expect learners to be hardworking and studious if their teachers do not do the same or are not hardworking as well. Bandura (1977) mentions that Social Learning theory comprises of four principles, namely attention, retention, reproduction and motivation. Bandura (cited in McLeod, 2016:3) refers to *attention* as the extent to which human beings are exposed to or notice other's behaviour. For a behaviour to be imitated, it has to grab one's attention. Attention is important because it influences how a behaviour is imitated. This means for the learners to imitate the behaviour, they must pay attention to the model. The observer (learners) must pay attention to the model; in this case learners must pay attention to the teacher who is the model during lesson presentation, by listening attentively for them to extract key elements of modelled events or explanations in order to learn something. If they do not pay attention to the model, they will not learn anything. Bandura, Grusec and Menlove (1966) agree that one cannot learn much by observation if one does not attend to, or recognise the essential features of the model's behaviour.

Retention, according to Bandura (as cited in McLeod, 2016:3), means how well the behaviour is remembered. The behaviour may be noticed if it is remembered and this will obviously lead to imitation. It is important therefore that a memory of behaviour is formed in order to be performed later by the observer. This means that the observer must be capable of retaining a memory of the observed behaviour, which means learners must try to remember what they have observed.

The other principle of Social Learning theory worth mentioning is *reproduction*. Reproduction is the ability to perform the behaviour that the model has just demonstrated. The observer must be capable of performing the observed action, which means having seen the model in action, he/she must then be able to remember their behaviour and put it into practice (Bandura, 1977).

The fourth principle of Social Learning theory according to Bandura is *motivation*. Jarvis and Chandler (2001) state that this principle entails the notion that the observer must be motivated to generate the learned behaviour either in return for an external reward or because of some intrinsic motivation generated by the model. Learners must be motivated to remember the various incentives performed by the model for them to achieve success in their studies. Therefore motivation is the will to perform the behaviour. The rewards and punishment that follow a behaviour will be considered by the observer. If perceived rewards outweigh the perceived cost (if there are any), then the behaviour will be more likely to be imitated by the observer (Bandura cited in McLeod, 2016:3). Thus if learners are not motivated by their parents and teachers to study hard, many will not perform well in their studies. Bandura (1977: 27) argues that people learn from observing role models in day-to-day life. He further states that learning would be exceedingly hazardous, if people had to rely solely on the effects of their own actions. Thus for social learning to be effective, teachers in the selected primary schools need to find out what learners' social learning preferences are, whether they prefer working on their own or working with others. Therefore, learners need to be motivated to imitate good behaviours that promote their desire to excel so that they can be successful in their studies and improve their academic performance.

2.4 CONCLUSION

In conclusion the literature review and theoretical frameworks that ground this study have been highlighted. Factors influencing learners' poor academic performance in the informal settlement areas were illuminated in the literature review. This chapter also introduced Classical Liberal theory of equal opportunity and Social Darwinism and Bandura's Social Learning theory.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The study investigated factors influencing primary school learners' academic performance in informal settlement areas of Windhoek, Namibia. In this chapter the methodology is presented. It covers the research design, target population, research participants, sampling procedures, research instruments, data collection methods and procedures, data analysis and ethical principles that guided the study.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

Research design is an outline, plan or strategy one intends to use to seek an answer to a research problem. It focuses on the end-product, the kind of study being planned, and the kind of results aimed at (Johnson & Christensen, 2004:275). Research design is best described as a guideline within which a choice about data collection methods has to be made (De Vos, 2001:80). A research design describes the procedures for conducting the study, including when, from, whom and under what conditions the data will be obtained, analysed and reported (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:20).

In this study the methodology used by the researcher was a qualitative research approach, whereby the researcher aimed to investigate factors influencing primary school learners' academic performance in informal settlement areas in Windhoek, Namibia. This enabled the collection of rich data that contributes to a deeper understanding of the low academic performance in the three selected primary schools (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014:346). Qualitative research approach helped the researcher to gain insight into factors that influence primary school learners' academic performance in informal settlement areas of Windhoek.

Qualitative data is the best method as it is associated with the feelings and opinions of stakeholders with regard to the performance of learners and various issues influencing their performance in the informal settlement primary schools. McMillan and Schumacher (2010:322) state that the qualitative

research approach helps the researcher to gain first-hand information about perceptions of participants and thus understand human and social behaviour from the insider perspective (McMillan & Schumacher (2010:322).

Cresswell (2003) states that the qualitative approach is appropriate because it allows the researcher to conduct an in-depth investigation of the topic under study, taking into consideration the social context. Babbie and Mouton (2006:273) explain that the main aim of qualitative research is to gain an understanding of a particular phenomenon in its real-world context. Thus, in this qualitative study, the researcher has investigated factors at home and in the school environment that might contribute to learners' poor academic performance in the three selected primary schools.

3.3 RESEARCH PARADIGM

Paradigm are frameworks that serve as maps or guides for scientific/research communities, determining important problems, issues for the members to address acceptable theories as well as methods to solve identified problem issues (Le Grange, 2004:2). Similarly Babbie (2004:33) refers to a paradigm as a framework of observation and understanding that shapes both what we see and how we understand it. A paradigm is essentially a whole framework of beliefs and methods within which research takes place.

Wahyuni (2012:69) defines a research paradigm as a set of beliefs about the world and how it should be understood and studied. In this study the researcher is using an interpretivist paradigm. According to Cohen, Manion and Marrison (2011), an interpretive paradigm is an approach aiming at understanding the nature of human experiences and which is concerned with individuals' behaviours, attitudes, beliefs and perceptions during a certain process. The purpose of the interpretive paradigm is "to develop a great understanding of how people make sense of context in which they live or work" (Bertram & Christiansen, 2015:6).

In this study the researcher maintained that the interpretive paradigm was most suitable because it is a belief that reality is constructed by social factors and people's perceptions of them, which means that individuals with their own varied backgrounds, assumptions and experiences contribute to the

construction or reality (Wahyuni, 2012:69). An interpretive paradigm has been selected because the researcher is seeking to investigate social phenomena, in this case, learners' performance, influenced by various external factors. The researcher needs to find out what are those factors and why it happens that way from the different participants in the study. Negumbo (2016:62) explains that the interpretive paradigm offers more flexibility for perceiving and understanding reality, and it allows one to interact closely with the participants. This afforded an opportunity to the researcher to gain better understanding of the possible factors that might have affected primary school learners' academic performance in informal settlement areas of Okahandja Park, Oshitenda and Havana in Windhoek. This paradigm assisted the researcher in gaining insight into how principals, teachers and parents deal with the factors that affect learners' academic performance.

3.4 TARGET POPULATION

Population is described by Best and Kahn (2006:13) as any group of individuals that has one or more characteristics in common and that are of interest to the researcher. Gay et al. (2009:124) define population as the larger group from which a sample is drawn, whereby the researcher can pick a representative sample of the entire population in the given study. Mugenda and Mugenda (2012) refer to population as an entire group of individuals, units, events or objects in the universe of interest for a particular study having a common observable attributes or characteristics.

In this study the population of the study consists of school principals, teachers, school board members, parents and learners from the three selected primary schools. The schools were purposefully selected in order for the researcher to gather more information on the factors that are affecting learners' academic performance. The schools under study were situated in the informal settlements to suit the topic of the research which is learners' performance in schools located in informal settlements.

3.5 SAMPLE AND SAMPLING PROCEDURE

Creswell (2013) defines sample as a set of entities drawn from a population with the aim of estimating the characteristics of the population. A sample is part of the entire population selected for the study to obtain information on the whole set of human participants from the population (Kothari, 2010).

Johnson and Christensen (2004) define a sample as a group of individuals, items or events that represents the characteristics of the larger group from which the sample is drawn.

Sampling is the process of selecting a smaller sample from a larger population group in order to estimate or predict the prevalence of an unknown piece of information or situation within the larger group (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:150). Bertram and Christiansen (2015) refer to sampling as an exercise involving making decisions about participants, settings, events or behaviour to include in the study. It is an exercise in which the researcher has to select the appropriate site and participants for the study that meet the requirements for the study. Another researcher defines sampling as a way of selecting a given number of participants from a defined population as a representative of that population (Akeri, 2015:22). In addition, Maree (2007:79) refers to sampling as a process that is used to collect a portion of a population for the study.

In this study purposive sampling techniques were used by the researcher whereby three public primary schools situated in the informal settlement areas of Okahandja Park, Oshitenda, and Havana were selected for the study. According to Nyagosia (2011:38), purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling technique that is used to select individuals from a given population who have unique characteristics and hold specific information desired for the study. Bertram and Christiansen (2015) define purposive sampling as a means of making specific choices about groups of people or objects to include in the study. Thus, the criterium for the selection of the participants, is that they should be stakeholders in primary schools in the Khomas Education Region of Namibia.

In this study, the sample consisted of 24 participants: three principals, six Grade 7 teachers, three school board members, three parents and nine Grade 7 learners. Three principals were selected one from each selected primary school, in their capacity as leaders of the selected schools in order to obtain their views on the factors that influenced learners' academic performance in their schools. Six Grade 7 subject teachers were selected, two from each selected school. Each of the principals recommended two teachers in their school, teachers who were knowledgeable about education that is provided at the informal settlement areas and who are informed about Grade 7 classroom. Three chairpersons of the school board were selected, one from each selected primary school because school board members represented the interest of the parents and the community and were correctly positioned to deal with major governance issues at their respective schools. Three parents, one from

each selected primary school, were purposively selected, whose children were part of the sampled learners in the targeted schools. Nine Grade 7 learners, three from each selected school were purposively selected. The learners were selected in the following sequences, 1 best performer, 1 average and 1 below average. The sample of Grade 7 learners was purposively selected from other grades because they were the most mature group in the school who were suitable for interviewing and in a position to answer the questions. The purposive sampling method allows the researcher to acquire suitable information from information-rich participants which will allow the researcher to address the research questions (Nyipir, 2010:28).

3.6 RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

This section sought to identify and describe the instruments to be used in the study. The data for the study were collected through individual (face-face) interviews using semi-structured questions as a sole research instrument whereby 24 participants: three principals, six teachers, three school board members, three parents and nine learners were interviewed about the factors that affect primary school learners' academic performance in the informal settlement areas of Okahandja Park, Oshitenda and Havana.

Gay et al. (2012:386) state that interviews are conducted to explore participants' responses to gather in-depth data about their experiences and feelings. This study conducted individual face-face interviews to provide the researcher with in-depth and rich information regarding how various factors influenced primary school learners' academic performance in informal settlement areas in Windhoek. Interviews are one of the most common methods of data collection used by researchers to inform them about social life (Rammala, 2009:38). Koshy (2010) defines interviews as a systematic way of talking and listening to people and is another way of collecting data from individuals through conversations.

In this study the individual face-face interviews were the major data collection method and semi-structured questions were used to collect data. Rammala (2009:38) is of the opinion that when making use of individual face-face interview, the clause of confidentiality is important. Individual interviews assist the researcher to understand the closed world of participants, the factors influencing learners'

academic performance at home and at school, principals, teachers and parents' comments regarding learners' poor academic performance.

The interview questions were open-ended to allow the participants to respond to the questions without being restricted and this allowed them to give enough information (Adere, 2013:28). According to Sem (2010:28), semi-structured interviews enable a researcher to ask specific questions with the aim to obtain detailed and in-depth information from participants. Furthermore De Vos (2001:345) considers the semi-structured interview as appropriate since it allows the researcher to probe and explore participants' experiences and understanding of issues, in this case, issues pertaining to the factors that might influence learners' academic performance.

Questions asked during the interviews addressed the experiences and views of principals, teachers, school board members, parents and learners regarding the factors that might influence learners' poor academic performance in the three selected primary schools.

3.7 PILOT STUDY

A pilot study is a pre-test study, which should be done before actual data collection. According to Dipoy and Gitlin (2011), a pilot study is the way to determine whether the instruments will be understandable and appropriate to the needs of the study in order to make some adjustments or retain them as they were. Babbie and Mouton (2012) define a pilot study as a prior mini-scale study that researchers engage in, to help them decide how best to conduct a large-scale research project. The objectives of a pilot study is to determine accuracy, clarity and suitability of the research instruments. Piloting enabled the researcher to test the reliability and validity of the research instruments. Thus, the pilot study assists researchers to familiarise themselves with administration of the research instrument (Gabriel, 2015:32).

In this study the researcher carried out a pilot study on two teachers and two Grade 7 learners at the school where the researcher is currently teaching, as this primary school is not one of the participating schools in the main study. The study was used for piloting only to determine whether the interview questions were understandable, whether the learners were in a position to answer questions and to

make any adjustments where needed. After conducting the study, the researcher analysed the data to determine which items were needed to be discarded and which to be retained or improved.

3.8 DATA COLLECTION METHODS AND PROCEDURES

3.8.1 Data collection methods

McMillan and Schumacher (2010:322) state that data collection in qualitative research is the way whereby the results are obtained by the researcher from which the interpretations and conclusions are drawn. The data were collected from a total of 24 participants from the three selected primary schools.

During the interviews the researcher used hand written notes to record the conversations of the participants with participant permission in the interests of accuracy. The data collected during the interviews were voice recorded using the researcher's cell phone with the consent of participants in order to record the conversations accurately.

Questions asked addressed experiences of the principals, teachers, school board chairpersons, parents and learners regarding the factors that influence learners' academic performance in the three selected primary schools. Individual face-face interviews were important in this study for all participants because it allowed one to have conversation with participants and also allow them to use their own words and thoughts.

3.8.2 Data collection procedure

Before conducting the interviews and administering semi-structured questions to participants, permission was sought from the Ministry of Education through the Circuit Director by writing a letter requesting for permission to conduct the study in the Education Region. In this study the researcher obtained permission from the Director of Education in the Khomas Education Region of Windhoek to collect data in the three selected primary schools situated in the informal settlement areas of Okahandja Park, Oshitenda and Havana. Furthermore, the researcher asked permission from the

principals of the three selected primary schools in the form of a letter to conduct interviews in their respective schools.

The researcher made an appointment with the three principals to see them personally and explain to them the purpose of the case study and inform them who the participants are in the study. The researcher wrote another letter to the parents of the selected learners to ask permission to interview them and their children. The three groups of adults were given consent forms to complete, while the learners received assent forms for completion. All activities concerning data collection were done after school hours to avoid interference with the normal routine of the school. The duration of the interviews was between 10-15 minutes.

3.9 DATA ANALYSIS

Neuman (2011) explains data analysis as a technique for gathering and analysing the content of the text. It also refers to words, meanings pictures, symbols, ideas, themes or any message that can be communicated. Gay et al. (2009) describe data analysis as a process of summarising data in a more accurate and dependable state that leads to the presentation of understandable findings. In this study data analysis was presented, whereby several factors influencing learners' poor academic performance were highlighted by principals, teachers, school board members, parents and learners. The data were categorised in terms of home and school environment, which directly addressed the researcher's initial aim of the research (cf. Rammala, 2009:44).

Thematic analysis was used to analyse data. Thematic analysis refers to the practice of identification, analysing, and the interpretation of patterns, which make meaning or themes within qualitative data (Clarke & Braun, 2017:297; Efeza, 2011:48; Upindi, 2012: 45). Thematic analysis was appropriate for this study because it allowed the researcher to move back and forth between each stage (Nowell et al., 2017:4). The researcher followed six steps when analysing data in this study, as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2013:122) and Nowell et al. (2017:4). These steps included: familiarising with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes and lastly writing up the data. The six steps are outlined below:

- The researcher familiarised herself with data by reading, checking and re-checking the data. This was the first step to engage and gain insight into data (Terry et al., 2017:29). The researcher read and re-read the transcriptions, reflected on the notes in order to highlight patterns and gained an understanding of the data.
- The second step involved coding. Creswell (2014:247) defines coding as a systematic method of analysing statements and categorising them into themes that embody the topic being studied. The researcher reduced the data to small, meaningful chunks as she continuously revised, revisited and refined the data (Terry et al., 2017: 31).
- The third step entailed sorting and assembling all the relevant codes and excerpts into themes (Best & Kahn, 2006: 270; Nowell et al., 2017:8). The researcher scrutinised the codes, thereafter combining and assembling them into more meaningful and descriptive themes. She provided rich descriptions of how home and school factors influenced learner performance in schools in informal settlements of Namibia.
- The researcher reviewed each theme, during the fourth step, to determine if each theme was clear and valid.
- The fifth step was about establishing “the essence of what each theme is about” (Braun & Clarke, 2006:92). During this step the researcher refined, combined or separated themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006).
- In the sixth and final step, the researcher analysed data and ensured that it was changed into interpretable, rich and convincing excerpts which related to the themes and literature and also answered the research questions (Braun & Clarke, 2006:99). This step afforded her an opportunity to engage in an academic argument that validated the interpretation of the data presented.

The content analysis approach enabled the researcher to organise data into themes and categories from which the meaning of participants’ views regarding factors influencing primary school learners’ academic performance in the selected primary schools of Khomas Education Region in Windhoek were determined.

3.10 TRUSWORTHINESS

Trustworthiness refers to quality, authenticity and truthfulness of findings of qualitative research. It relates to the degree of trust, or confidence readers have in the results (Nowell et al., 2017). The criteria demonstrating trustworthiness of the data include: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability of the study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018:58, 59).

3.10.1 Credibility

It is defined as the confidence that can be placed in the truth of the research findings, whereby it establishes whether the research findings represent plausible information drawn from the participants' original data and is a correct interpretation of the participants' original views (Korstjens & Moser, 2018:121). The data was credible because the researcher ensured that those participating in the research were identified and described accurately. Permission to conduct the research was requested from the relevant authority before the research commenced. To show that the data was credible the researcher used the triangulation method, whereby she used different participants to collect data, in this case, principals, teachers, school board chair-persons, parents and learners. Direct quotations from interview transcripts were used, responses from different participants were jotted down and voice recorded to show credibility. The supervisor of the study reviewed the findings by means of comments on the quality and accuracy of the research process and findings, with the view to improve them.

3.10.2 Transferability

Transferability refers to the degree to which the results of qualitative research can be transferred to another context or setting with other respondents (Korstjens & Moser, 2018:121; Anney, 2014:277). To ensure transferability of qualitative inquiry the researcher collects thick descriptive data that describes the situation in sufficient rich and thick details that readers can draw their own conclusions from the data presented (Anney, 2014). In this case the researcher collected the data from the participants during the interviews and communicated the findings to the readers, whereby the readers draw their own conclusion from the data presented. Therefore, this research report includes a thick description of the inquiry with enough details of people who were in the study and the settings in

which the study took place. Her responsibility as a researcher was to provide a thick description of the participants and the research process, to enable the reader to assess whether the findings are transferable to their own settings.

3.10.3 Dependability

Dependability refers to the stability of findings over time. It involves participants' evaluation of the findings, interpretation and recommendations of the study, such that all are supported by the data as received from participants of the study (Korstjens & Moser, 2018:121). In this study the researcher had to read and re-read the information from the data collected as many times as necessary for her to understand what the data said. She made use of other people to read the analysis for assistance to improve on the shortcomings of the findings. Therefore, the idea of dependability in a study is to emphasise the need for the researcher to account for the ever-changing context within which the research occurs (Mqulwana, 2010:61). In this study she used an audit trail whereby, before conducting the interviews and administering the questions to the participants, she followed the following steps: Permission letters were written requesting authorisation from different entities such as Ministry of Education through the Executive Director, Education Director of the Khomas Education Region, principals of the selected primary schools, and parents of the selected learners. During interviews she used handwritten notes as well as a voice recorder to record the conversations of the participants with their permission.

3.10.4 Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the extent to which the results of the study are evidently derived from the data, that is, the degree to which the findings of the research study could be confirmed by other researchers (Korstjens & Moser, 2018:121). In this study the researcher confirmed the data by using two or more people to go through the data collected, to see to it whether the data collected was accurate and whether the analysis was correct.

3.11 RESEARCH ETHICS

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010:196), ethics are generally considered as dealing with beliefs about what is right or wrong, proper or improper, good or bad. Nkandi (2015:37) defines ethical issues as a way of conducting research in a manner that does not result in harming the participants in one way or the other. To carry out this research, the researcher was guided by the UNISA Graduate School of Education research protocol, which issued an ethical clearance certificate from the College of Education, UNISA (see Appendix A). The following permissions were also obtained:

- A research permit from the Ministry of Education, (see Appendix B)
- Director of Education in the Khomas Education Region of Windhoek (see Appendix C)
- Permission from the principals of the selected schools (see Appendix D)
- Written consent from the parents (see Appendix E)
- Written assent from learner participants (see Appendix F)

The following research ethics were applied during the course of the study:

3.11.1 Informed consent

Informed consent refers to the importance of informing participants of the nature of the research study, whereby participants receive a written letter explaining the nature of the research being conducted (Haimbodi, 2014). Wilson (2010) defines informed consent as the procedures in which individuals choose whether to participate in any investigation after being informed of facts that would be likely to influence their decisions. Thus, informed consent is consent requested from the participants before the study commences.

The participants were presented with an informed consent form to sign before the commencement of the study. Before they signed it, the researcher gave the participants sufficient information about the study so that they understood what was involved, thereby enabling them to exercise their rights

to make a decision whether or not to participate in the study. The researcher also gave the participants an opportunity to ask questions about the study to help them decide about participation. In this study the researcher sought written informed consent from the Director of Education (Khomash Region, Windhoek) to conduct the study in the region (see Appendix C). She also sought permission from the principals of the three selected primary schools. Teachers, school board members and parents were given consent forms as participants in the study, while the learners were given assent forms to give to their parents or guardians for permission to take part in the study. All the forms, consent and assent, were completed after all the participants in the study were provided with all the information regarding the research and expressed their willingness to participate in the research voluntarily. Thus, the participants were informed that participation was voluntary and there was no compensation for their participation, so they had a choice to decide whether to take part or to withdraw from the study any time they wished, as they were not forced to participate.

3.11.2 Confidentiality and Anonymity

The researcher assured the participants that everything was confidential, their rights and identities were protected, and their responses would only be used for research purposes and would not be disclosed to any other people. Thus, participant confidentiality was of utmost importance, whereby the researcher kept the recordings and notes strictly confidential and the names and identities of the participants and research sites were not disclosed in the reporting of the findings (Maluleke, 2014).

The researcher ensured the participants' responses would be anonymous as the names of the participants were not mentioned or recorded. The identities of the participants were protected; their real names and their schools were kept anonymous. This means the names of the participants and that of the participating schools were not mentioned during the interviews, instead they were assigned alphabetical letters for identification.

3.11.3 Privacy

The privacy of participants was guaranteed during the interviews. The researcher respected and valued the participants' privacy; therefore no participant was forced to contribute unwillingly or reluctantly. Codes were used to conceal the names of the participants; in that way personal details of

participants remain anonymous. The use of codes ensured that any person who reads the research report is unable to link the responses to a particular participant. The research findings have been stored on the researcher's private laptop with a password, while hard copies have been stored in a locked cabinet and will be shredded after five years.

3.11.4 Sensitivity: Harm, caring and fairness

The researcher would try by all means not to harm or cause any danger directly or indirectly to the participants; participation is voluntary (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). Therefore, the researcher should protect the identity of the participants and not harm them. Participants may experience harm if their views are known to others; therefore the right of individuals should not be violated in the search for knowledge (Wahyuni, 2012:69).

In this study, the researcher used codes to protect the participants from any harm or embarrassment and ensured that there were no foreseeable risks in participating in the study. The researcher assured the participants that fairness would prevail during the research, meaning all participants would be treated fairly and with utmost respect for the period of the study. No sensitive or personal questions would be asked, only matters concerning the study would be examined. Therefore, the nature of the study conducted would not expose or harm participants to any form, physical or psychological (Adere, 2013).

3.12 CONCLUSION

This chapter provided the research methodology used to collect data from the participants. The following were discussed in this chapter: research design, population, sample and sampling procedures used for the selection of the participants, research instrument used, pilot study and its purpose, data collection methods and procedures, data analysis and research ethics that were taken into account when conducting the research investigation. The next chapter will analyse and present the results of the study.

CHAPTER 4

DATA PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the research results of the study conducted in the Khomas Education Region in Windhoek, Namibia in three participating schools. The results are presented in line with the research questions that guided the study, where it includes information collected using face-face interviews with principals, teachers, school board chairpersons, parents and learners. The main purpose of the interviews was to find out participants' views on factors causing poor academic performance among Grade 7 learners in the three selected primary schools in the informal settlement areas of Okahandja Park, Oshitenda and Havana. The data are therefore presented under categories that emerged from the main and sub-research questions. The research sought to answer these questions:

- How do socio-economic factors influence learners' academic performance in the informal settlement areas of Okahandja Park, Oshitenda and Havana?
- Which school factors affect learners' academic performance in the informal settlement areas of Okahandja Park, Oshitenda and Havana?
- How does parental involvement influence learners' academic performance in primary schools in the informal settlement areas of Okahandja Park, Oshitenda and Havana?
- What recommendations can be made for practice based on the findings of the literature study and the empirical inquiry?

4.2 BACKGROUND TO THE FINDINGS

This section contains the biographical information of the selected schools.

4.2.1 Biographical information of the participating schools

As was mentioned in Chapter 3, participants involved in the sample were: three principals, six teachers, three school board chairpersons, three parents and nine learners, which means a total of 24 participants took part in the interviews. Codes instead of school names were used for ethical reasons.

The schools were referred as school A, B and C. These schools were situated in the informal settlements of Okahandja Park, Oshitenda and Havana in Windhoek. The schools are located in poverty-stricken communities where most people in the community are unemployed.

4.2.2 Biographical information of the participants

This section presents the background and personal information of the participants as mentioned in chapter 3: principals, teachers, school board chairpersons, parents and learners. Participants' personal information or profiles, such as gender, marital status, years of experience, employment history and age are highlighted. All this information is provided in tables 4.1 - 4.3., after which discussions follow. All 24 participants completed their interview process.

Table 4.1. Profile information of principals, teachers and school board chairpersons

Participant's code	Position	Name of school	Gender	Years of experience	Marital status
A	Principal	School A	Male	10	Married
B	Principal	School B	Female	11	Married
C	Principal	School C	Male	14	Married
D	Teacher	School A	Female	23	Married
E	Teacher	School A	Male	6	Single
F	Teacher	School B	Female	10	Single

G	Teacher	School B	Female	12	Married
H	Teacher	School C	Male	7	Single
I	Teacher	School C	Female	24	Single
J	School board chairperson	School A	Female	6	Married
K	School board chairperson	School B	Male	5	Married
L	School board chairperson	School C	Female	5	Married

Note: In the case of school principals the years of experience refers to the years of experience as a school principal excluding the years of teaching experience as a classroom teacher. The data above shows that the majority of the participants were females.

Table 4.2 Profile information of parents

Participants' code	Position	Name of school	Gender	Employment history	Marital status
M	Parent	School A	Female	Dressmaker (self-employed)	Single
N	Parent	School B	Male	Assistant-electrician	Single
O	Parent	School C	Female	Domestic worker	Married

Table 4.3 Profile information of learners

Participants' code	Position	School	Gender	Age	Grade
P	Learner	School A	Female	12	7
Q	Learner	School A	Female	13	7
R	Learner	School A	Male	14	7
S	Learner	School B	Female	13	7
T	Learner	School B	Female	13	7
U	Learner	School B	Female	13	7
V	Learner	School C	Female	13	7
W	Learner	School C	Male	14	7
X	Learner	School C	Male	13	7

The data above shows that female participants were more than males. The learners' age ranges from 12-14 years in all three selected schools.

4.3 PRESENTATION OF THE FINDINGS

This section presents the results obtained from the interviews with the 24 participants. The researcher asked a list of questions to the participants whereby the participants answered them to the best of their abilities. Some questions asked to the participants were similar in the sense that the researcher needed to hear their views on the factors that affect primary school learners' academic performance in the selected primary schools.

The interviews for principals, teachers, school board chairpersons and learners were all conducted in English as all the participants can express themselves in English. On the side of the parents, two of the

participants were interviewed in English as they can speak it well, only one parent was interviewed in a native language, whereby the researcher needed to translate the interview session. The question: What factors do you think contribute to poor academic performance of Grade 7 learners in your school? was posed to learners. The responses were categorised into three broad themes, namely (1) socio-economic background of learners, (2) school factors and (3) parental involvement. See Table 4.4. The themes below are presented with evidence coming from principals, teachers, school board chairpersons, parents and learners.

Table 4.4 Summary of themes and sub-themes derived from triangulated data analysis process

Theme	Sub-theme
Theme 1: Poor socio-economic background of learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poverty • Poor home infrastructure • Absenteeism
Theme 2: School environmental factors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overcrowded classrooms • Inadequate teaching and learning material • Poor school infrastructure and facilities • Bullying
Theme 3: Parental involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of parental involvement • Parent level of education

4.3.1 Theme 1: Poor socio-economic factors

This research theme is linked to the research question: How do socio-economic factors influence learners' academic performance in the informal settlements areas of Okahandja Park, Oshitenda and Havana? The following sub-theme emerged from the main theme.

(a) Poverty

Principals, teachers and learners concur that poverty is one of the factors that contributes to poor learner performance of Grade 7 in the learners of the selected schools. Poverty is defined as a situation in which one does not have enough money to pay for basic needs such as food, clothing, shelter and sanitation (Adoyo, 2015).

Principal A mentioned that, due to the socio-economic status of unemployed parents, they do not have money to buy food so hunger is affecting their household, which is a cause of poor learners' academic performance. Principal A had these to say:

Another influencing factor which led to poor performance is hunger, the parents are poor and unemployed, there is no food to eat at home, no money to buy food and children are going to bed on empty stomach and come the next day there is no breakfast and not even a lunchbox with bread to take to school, which makes it difficult for learners to concentrate in class, therefore their performance is poor and they ended up failing their grades.

Principal B concurs:

Poverty is also one of the contributing factors to learners' poor academic performance because in some homes there is no electricity, so learners had to use candles when studying or doing homework, also learners are always hungry, not enough food, sometimes they go to school without eating anything because parents are unemployed and they do not have money to put food on the table.

Teachers G and H also have the same views as principals that poverty may affect learners' performance. Teacher G responded by saying:

Poverty is the main problem to learners' performance because it affects learners negatively. Some learners drop out of school because their parents or guardians cannot afford school uniforms, textbooks and stationeries because they are unemployed.

Teacher H said:

Poverty affect learners' performance because if parents are poor, they find it difficult to even put food on the table, so children are going to bed on empty stomach and when going to school without eating anything, they are not concentrating, and their brains will not function fluently.

Learners also indicated that one of the factors contributing to poor academic performance of Grade 7 learners in their schools is poverty, as mentioned by learner Q of school A and learner X of school C. Learner Q had this to say:

Most of our parents are staying in the informal settlements and they are unemployed, they struggle to get jobs, therefore they do not have money to buy textbooks, exercise books and other school needs for their children, so they are poor. Money is the problem whereby they cannot even afford to buy bread so many children in the informal settlements go to bed on empty stomach and this affect their concentration in class. As they are hungry they sleep while teacher is presenting a lesson because they do not have energy and as a result their performance is affected negatively.

Learner X said the following:

Poverty is the biggest problem in our community because our parents are not earning enough money therefore they cannot afford to buy enough food for children to eat, so the food that is available at home is not enough for everyone, so as a result some go to bed hungry and when attending classes they cannot concentrate.

During the interviews all three groups of participants, principals, teachers and learners were able to identify numerous factors which they believe had an impact on learners' academic performance. They repeatedly mentioned poverty as the contributing factor to learners' poor academic performance; this is due to unemployed parents. So, unemployment is the biggest problem in the informal settlement. Because parents do not earn salaries, they cannot afford to buy or provide food for their children and as a result children go to bed hungry and when attending classes, they cannot concentrate which results in poor academic performance.

Due to poverty parents are unable to provide enough food for their children because they do not have money to buy food (Odunga, 2015). This study found that unemployment is a problem where parents are unable to get paid jobs, as such it is difficult for unemployed parents to provide adequate food, clothing, learning resources and other necessities. As a result of lack of basic needs, learners' academic performance is negatively affected (Shililifa, 2006). These findings concur with Maina (2016:18) who found that providing learning resources is a major challenge for parents living in informal settlements where the majority live below the poverty line.

This is also in line with Classical Liberal theory that an individual's socio-economic status which is a product of the environment learners live in, has a bearing on an individual's destiny (Gabriel et al., 2016:47).

(b) Poor home infrastructure

Poor home infrastructure was mentioned by parents and learners as one of the factors influencing poor learners' academic performance. If the learning environment at home is not conducive, the learners' performance will be affected in a negative way.

Parent N said the following:

Poor home infrastructure is one of the contributing factors to poor learners' academic performance due to the fact that the majority of our learners are living in the informal

settlements where the houses are corrugated iron houses. The house consists only of one room that serve as a sleeping, living and kitchen, such a house is overcrowded there is no space to do homework, to sit and study, such home condition will affect the learners' performance. Another obstacle for learners not performing is that their houses are surrounded by shebeens where people are drunk and make lot of noise which prevent learners from concentrating, such acts will have a negative effect on the child's performance.

Learner U answered by saying:

Poor home infrastructure contributes to poor academic performance because some of our fellow learners' place of living is not conducive because there is no space where learners could sit and do their homework, the house is small and consists only of one room such home environment affect learners' performance.

Parent N and learner U both mentioned poor home infrastructure as one of the contributing factors towards learners' academic performance. This shows that small and overcrowded homes are not conducive towards learning. The fact that most learners live in informal settlements as mentioned by the participants in the statements above is an indication that the home environment is not conducive to learning, therefore their performance will be affected negatively. Homes surrounded by shebeens are not a safe environment for school-going children and the excessive noise coming from shebeens has a negative effect on their concentration which affects their academic performance. Therefore, there is a need for parents to try their best to provide better and safe homes for their children.

The research has revealed that the school career of children who live in informal settlements is affected by a variety of factors such as poor home infrastructure, small and overcrowded homes, lack of conducive home environment, disturbing neighbourhoods and noise pollution. Such factors will affect learners' academic performance in a negative way.

These findings are supported by Pillay (2004: 7-8), who argues that the home is the potential influence on a child's academic performance. Physical conditions in the home might create barriers because

there is often no area set aside at home for parents to assist their children with school work, as homes do not have tables where learners can sit and do their homework.

These findings concur with the Classical Liberal theory of equal opportunity and Social Darwinism whereby each person is born with a given amount of capacity which, to a large extent is inherent and cannot be changed. Therefore, according to this theory, any or all barriers to socio-economic development of the person from humble background, whether geographical, cultural, political or historical, should be removed (Jemutai, 2014:12).

(c) Absenteeism from school due to poor socio-economic status of parents

Absenteeism can be defined as a situation whereby a learner is not at school for the whole day or many days (Teasley, 2004). Mijinyawa et al. (2015) point out that absenteeism of children from school is a problem affecting learners' success in school that can have a long-term effect on their academic performance.

In responding to the question: What factors contribute to poor academic performance of Grade 7 learners in your school? it became evident that all three principals shared a common understanding about the factors that contribute to poor academic performance of learners, even though they shared different views.

Principal A said:

Absenteeism of learners had a negative influence on teaching and learning in the classroom, some learners stay away from school for no reasons, sometimes they came to school only two or three days a week and the other days they are absent, and when parents are contacted they assumed the learners are coming to school every day because they leave the house wearing their school uniform and carrying their school bag.

Principal A and teacher D have the same view about the factors that affect learners' academic performance. They both mentioned absenteeism as a contributing factor to poor academic performance of Grade 7 learners in the selected primary schools. In this regard principal A had this to say:

Some learners leave without parents or an elder, either the parents are at the village while some learners are orphans, they are heading houses by themselves which can contribute to higher absenteeism rate because there is no one to guide and to supervise, they are all alone, and this will affect their school career in a negative way.

Teacher D share the same sentiments and she said:

One of the influencing factors to poor academic performance is absenteeism, it made learners miss lessons. If learners are not attending school every day they fell behind and that will affect them negatively at the end.

Teacher D further claimed:

Learners who are attending classes on regular basis got higher marks in the examination than those learners who got absent from classes.

During the interviews principal A and teacher D had the same views that absenteeism of learners from school is one of the contributing factors to poor learners' academic performance and it may affect learners' performance. As principal A mentioned that learners stay away from school for no valid reasons. They are not interested in attending school, or they face certain obstacles which prevent them from attending school. Parents are not observant and do not supervise their children to determine if they have homework or not and also to check their books. If they did this, they could find out whether they are attending classes on regular basis.

Learners who live alone without guardians or parents will not perform academically because there is no one to supervise them and to advise them when to study. The response of teacher D is an indication that regular attendance of classes is of utmost important because learners will learn more than those who stay away from school.

Principal A and teacher D agreed that absenteeism affects learners' performance negatively because learners fall behind with their school work, and if proper supervision is lacking by parents and guardians, the learner's school career is going to be negatively affected. These views are supported by Mijinyawa et al. (2015), who found that absenteeism of children from school is a problem affecting learners' success in school that can have a long-term effect on their academic performance. Low socio-economic status of parents contributes greatly to such behaviour. Katanga (2016) states that due to low socio-economic status of parents, absenteeism increases in schools. Mboweni (2014) states that due to poverty learners stay away from school. Where there is no food at home, learners cannot go to school on empty stomachs. As a result they stay away from school. Thus, the low socio-economic status of the parent is one of the causes of learner absenteeism in schools.

The above findings were also supported by data from Social Learning theory which posits that human behaviour is a result of continuous reciprocal interaction between cognitive, behavioural, environmental influences and thus, learners' behaviours influence the learning process and ultimately their achievement (Efeza, 2011:25).

4.3.2 Theme 2: School environmental factors

This research theme is linked to the research question: How do school factors affect learners' academic performance in the informal settlement areas of Okahandja Park, Oshitenda and Havana? The following sub-themes emerged from the main theme.

(a) Overcrowded classrooms

Overcrowded classrooms result when the number of learners enrolled in the school is larger than the number of learners the school is designed to accommodate (Lewis & friends, 2000:4). Principal C and

learner W both mentioned that overcrowded classrooms contribute to poor academic performance of Grade 7 learners' in their school.

Principal C said:

Overcrowded classes affect learners' performance because learners are too many in a class and it is very difficult for the teacher to pay attention to all of them at the same time and as a result he/she could not reach all of them, especially those who are slow in progress will not catch up. When there are more learners in the class as it supposed to be, the more noise they will make and then they will not concentrate on the lesson and as a result their performance will be affected in a negative way.

The views of principal C are supported by Chingos (2013) who is convinced that learners will learn more effectively in smaller classes, because there are more opportunities to receive individualised instruction from the classroom teachers.

Learner W had this to say:

Overcrowded classrooms are one of the contributing factors that affect learners' performance because the learners are a lot in the class and the teacher would not be able to pay attention to each and every learner, especially the poor performers. As the time is limited the teachers cannot give extra attention to those who needed it the most. What I suggest is that teachers should give extra classes in the afternoon for poor performing learners to catch up.

Overcrowding in classes has been identified by principal C and learner W, as one of the factors that contributes to poor academic performance of Grade 7 learners in the selected primary schools. It is difficult for teachers to control and manage overcrowded classes because the time is limited, and the teachers cannot pay attention to every individual learner. As a result slow performing learners will be affected negatively.

The findings in this sub-theme is that overcrowded classes are not conducive for teaching and learning. Larger classes have a lot of disturbances, as teachers find it difficult to control and manage the learners. Slow learners are affected because they do not get enough attention from the teacher to master the subject content. There is a possibility that the teacher will not be able to complete his/her lesson as planned because learners are many and noisy. By trying to control the noise, valuable time is lost and the teacher fails to reach all the learners. Noisy learners disrupt others, and they themselves cannot concentrate and their performance is affected.

The above statements of principal C and learner W concur with Imtiaz (2014:251) who maintains that in overcrowded classrooms teachers cannot pay attention to all the learners, are unable to differentiate their attention amongst learners and lose valuable lesson time because they spend most of the lesson time trying to control the learners and little time is left for real teaching.

The findings in the statements above are also in line with the Classical Liberal theory that indicates that whosoever plays the role of education provider, whether it is the state or society, should design the education system in such a way that there should be no barrier to social economic development of those from humble backgrounds whether geographical, cultural or historical - every person should be treated equally. So in this study the pupils from informal settlements should be treated equal just like the learners from good home backgrounds and be provided with enough classrooms to avoid the problem of overcrowding in informal settlement schools (Jemutai, 2014). In addition Classical Liberal theory indicates that teachers' experiences in overcrowded classrooms are stressful and they face a plethora of barriers, including inadequate space, issues related to safety and health, discipline, emotional and psychological problems, increased workload and inadequate time; all these are contributing factors to learners' poor academic performance (Muthusamy, 2015).

Another theory that supports the above findings is the Social Learning theory of Albert Bandura that views human behaviour, in this case learners' behaviours, in terms of continuous reciprocal interaction between cognitive, behavioural and environmental influences. Therefore in this context, school environment which includes school physical facilities and teachers' motivation is expected to have an influence on the learning process and ultimately on the achievement of the learners. Therefore, teachers should use their own abilities and influence to handle learners in overcrowded

classrooms and motivate them to work hard in their subjects, by being organised and efficient in their work as teachers (Bandura, 1977).

(b) Inadequate teaching and learning materials (textbooks, libraries, computer labs)

Teaching and learning materials are resources used by the teacher during lesson presentation to help him/her to meet his/her basic competencies; they are teaching aids used by the teacher when presenting a lesson.

During the interviews teachers, school board chairpersons and learners mentioned inadequate teaching and learning materials as one of the contributing factors to poor academic performance of Grade 7 learners in their schools.

Teacher F responded to the question by saying:

Lack of study facilities such as libraries and computer labs can affect learners' performance because they assist learners with research when doing their homework or projects and when such facilities are lacking than the learners education are affected in one way or the other. Libraries are needed in our communities especially in the informal settlements because as learners do not having enough space at home to do their homework, libraries are the perfect place where learners can go and do their homework as well as to study for their tests and examination.

Teacher I said the following:

Lack of teaching material such as textbooks, dictionaries, posters and all other important learning aids may be one of the factors contributes to poor learners' academic performance.

School board chairperson K had this to say:

Inadequate teaching and learning materials such as textbooks will affect learners' performance in the sense that the Government is responsible for supplying textbooks to schools, but they (government) failed to supply textbooks to schools even though schools order them, as a result it leads to poor academic performance because learners have nowhere to read or to get information from.

Learner T said:

The factors that contribute to poor academic performance in our school is lack of textbooks. The textbooks in our school are not enough, learners are sharing textbooks which makes it very difficult to do homework at home because if one learner goes with the book today, tomorrow will be another learner with whom you share the book, as a result it delays us to be able to complete our work on time.

Adding to school board chairperson K and learner T's views, Namupala (2013:27) states that textbooks are important resources in teaching and learning, therefore a lack will affect learners' performance academically.

The views of school board chairperson K and learner T are in line with the Classical Liberal theory of equal opportunity and Social Darwinism theory that posit that adequacy of learning and teaching materials or resources influences the quality of education as well as the ability of education to improve life circumstances (Gabriel, 2015:24).

The Social Learning theory of Bandura is also in support of school board chairperson K and learner T's views that lack of physical facilities and resources may lead to learners' poor academic performance (Efeza, 2011: 25).

The data from this sub-theme indicated that another major contributing factor to poor performance of Grade 7 learners in the selected schools noted by the participants was lack of teaching and learning aids, such as textbooks, dictionaries and posters. There is a great expectation that the government should supply enough textbooks to schools. However, participants mentioned that the sharing of textbooks due to inadequate supply is an indication that the government has failed the schools. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the government to see to it that learners receive their textbooks on time. Lack of study facilities in the school environment prevents learners from completing their homework on time as learners do not have a space to do their homework and research their projects. That is why the above-mentioned teaching and learning aids are needed by the learners to improve their academic performance but if those resources are lacking, the learners performance will be affected in a negative way.

The findings in this sub-theme are that inadequate teaching and learning materials make learning very difficult because it hinders effective teaching. Learners will fight for the textbook as everyone wants to own it and no one wants to share. This hinders learners' participation in class. Inadequate teaching and learning materials affect teachers' time and doubles their workload. Instead of teaching and giving homework at the end of the lesson, they have to write summaries on the chalk board because textbooks are insufficient. Therefore lack of textbooks hinders learners' progress.

The above statements of teacher F and teacher I, School board chairperson K and learner T are supported by Aikens and Barbarin (2008) who maintain that schools located in low economic status communities are often under-resourced and this may affect the teaching and learning process. Lyons (2012) is also in line with the participants that learners' performance is influenced by the quality and quantity of teaching materials; institutions with adequate teaching and learning resources such as textbooks, audiovisual and maps stand a better chance of performing well in examinations than poorly equipped ones.

The above statements of the participants are also supported by the Classical Liberal theory that posits that informal sectors are neglected by the central government in terms of equal opportunities which leads to their exclusion in terms of social and economic development (no proper houses, sanitation, insufficient schools and lack of educational resources). Neglect of these needs will impact negatively on the education of children living in informal settlements (Gabriel et al., 2016:47). In addition the

theory of equal opportunity is not applied in these primary schools, although the theory mentions that all children should be treated equally. Due to poor socio-economic factors, parents who are not able to finance their children's education are likely to fail to provide children's academic necessities and therefore affect their performance.

The Social Learning theory of Bandura supports the above findings: the theory posits that the school learning environment (physical facilities, resources and learners behaviour) has an influence on the learning process and ultimately on learner achievement (Efeza, 2011:25). Thus, with lack of physical facilities and resources learners' academic performance will be negatively affected.

(c) Peer pressure

Peer pressure refers to the influence exercised on learners by peers of the same age group whereby they have to do exactly what others are doing in order to be liked by their peers; it does not matter whether it is good or bad influence. Peer pressure is often seen during the adolescence stage when teenagers often seek comfort among their peers and emulate peers without knowing if it is good or bad for them (Moldes et al., 2019).

In this sub-theme three groups of participants mentioned peer pressure as one of the factors influencing poor academic performance of Grade 7 learners in the selected schools. The participants are school board chairperson J and L, parents N and O and learners P, Q and S.

School board chairperson J Stated as follows:

Peer pressure makes learners do bad things just to please others such as substance abuse, absconding of classes, which at the end will affect their academic performance because learners are not interested in their school work. As learners often seek sense of belonging among their peers they tend to do what their peers does even if it is bad they would not know because they just want to be part of the group. That means if learners belongs to a group of peers that bunk classes or leave home with an intention of going to school but ended up

playing in the riverbeds, such learners' performance will be affected negatively because he/she is missing lessons.

School board chairperson L said:

Why some learners do not perform academically is due to peer pressure, why I said so is because learners tend to listen more to their peers than to their parents and teachers. Therefore when a learner is influenced by peers he/she will do exactly as what others are doing because he/she would like to be liked and to be respected by them and it does not matter whether the deeds are good or bad. Bad deeds such as alcohol abuse, smoking and sniffing of glue is very popular among school going boys, so when it happens in schools the learners' concentration is affected very badly and as a result their performance in class is negatively affected.

Parents N and O also mentioned peer pressure as one of the factors influencing learners' academic performance. This is what parent N said:

Peer pressure can affect learners negatively in their school work so that they cannot perform in their examination because they have bad influencing friends that encouraging them to abscond classes or to stay away from school which will result in missing lot of lessons and later will result not performing at all.

Parent O said the following:

Peer pressure is one of the factors that influence learners' academic performance in schools because learners imitate their peers and do what others do, because they would like to be and feel they belong to the same group. Like if others are staying away from school than they will do so also and this acts might hamper their performance in the school.

Learner P said:

The possible factor which influence learners' academic performance in our school is peer pressure. Peer pressure is not good at all because learners do things what they seen their friends are doing even if it is not good things because they are influenced. So when learners are with bad companies of friends it will affect their performance because they are no longer listening to their teachers, they will make noise during lessons and stay away from school without valued reasons because their friends say so, this will result in not performing in their subjects.

Learner Q mentioned the following:

Peer pressure is one of the factors that influence learners' academic performance in our school. Peer pressure made you do things which you in reality do not wanted to do, but you do it only because you would like to be friends with certain people and to be friends with them then you must do what they are doing even if it is bad, otherwise you are not going to be part of the group. Such deeds will have a negative effect on your school carrier.

Learner S answered by saying:

Peer pressure is one of the factors that contributes to poor learners' academic performance because as children grow older the influences fellow peers have upon them increases as well, therefore to be accepted by the group, they have to do what the others are doing such as play and make noise in class without listening to the teacher, absconding classes, stay away from school all these can have a negative effect on their studies.

As indicated above, all three groups of participants (school board chairpersons, parents and learners) mentioned peer pressure as a contributing factor towards poor academic performance of Grade 7 learners in their schools.

School board chairpersons were able to identify that peer pressure made learners behave badly to please their peers and inspire a sense of belonging. Learners in bad company seldom perform in their schoolwork. Learners believe more in peers than their parents and teachers. Peer pressure led to lack of concentration in class, which leads to poor academic performance.

The opinion given by parents is that negative influences from peers such as absconding of classes and staying away from school contribute to poor performance. Lessons missed as a result of not being present in class led to poor performance of those specific learners.

Learners indicated that peer pressure led to bad behaviour among peers. Learners disrespect their teachers and parents; they respect their friends instead. They misbehave to please their peers for acceptance in the group. Noise making leads to class disruptions. This will have a negative effect in the school career of those involved.

The findings in the above statements of school board chairpersons, parents and learners indicate that peer pressure has a negative impact on learners' academic performance in schools. Unruly behaviour leads to poor academic performance. These findings are in line with Sharry (2004: 1-3) who maintains that peer pressure results in negative decisions, rebelliousness and moody behaviour which in turn results in poor academic performance. Learners do not cooperate and in the process they lose lesson time. The findings are supported by the Social Learning theory of Bandura: people, especially children learn behaviour that is modelled to them, through instructions given to them, by observing those around them and by imitating their interplay of positive or negative reinforcement (Bandura & McClelland, 1977).

(d) Bullying

Bullying is a repeated, deliberate behaviour to harm someone emotionally or physically, especially those who are powerless and vulnerable. In this section learners mentioned bullying as one of the factors contributing to poor academic performance of Grade 7 learners in their schools.

Learner P answered the question by saying:

The possible factors influencing poor academic performance in learners in our school is bullying. Some learners are bullying others and it makes those that are bullied not to concentrate during lessons, they live in fear and that made them to stay away from school because they are scared, which will result in missing lot of lessons. As a result, such learners' performance will be negatively affected.

Learner X said:

The contributing factor to poor learners' academic performance is bullying. Bullying and violence are one of the biggest problems in schools and it affect children's lives. Learners who are bullied live in fear, every time the teacher lives the class they are worried because they know that they are going to be bullied even during break time their food may be taken away from them and also after school on the way home, they are going to be beaten up. So those learners their school work are going to be affected, as they are scared of the bullies they will stay away from school and as a result will miss lot of lessons which will result in poor performance. Therefore bullying is the main cause of poor learners' academic performance.

Learners felt that bullying is one of the contributing factors towards poor academic performance of Grade 7 learners in their schools. Bullying creates fear among learners, which affects the victims to such an extent that they stay away from school and as a result miss lessons which has a negative effect on their performance in school. Bullying causes lack of concentration in class, which hampers learners' performance. Learners who have been bullied suffer emotional abuse and some suffer physical abuse as well.

The findings indicate that bullying is the main cause of learners' poor academic performance because it makes learners stay away from school due to fear of being bullied. As a result they miss lessons

which affects their performance. Bullying leads to depression among victims. Schools should see to it that no learner has the right to bully others.

4.3.3 Theme 3: Parental involvement

This research theme is linked to the research question: How does parental involvement influence learners' academic performance of primary schools in the informal settlements areas Okahandja Park, Oshitenda and Havana?

The following sub-themes emerged from the main theme.

(a) Lack of active parental involvement

Mwirichia (2013:7) defines parental involvement as a participation of parents in every facet of children's education and development from birth to adulthood. In this research study lack of parental involvement was mentioned as a contributing factor to poor learners' academic performance, which means parents who do not have an interest in the education of their children. During the interviews four groups of participants (teachers, school board chairpersons, parents and learners) mentioned lack of parental involvement as a contributing factor to learners' poor academic performance in their schools.

Teachers D, E, F and I said lack of parental involvement in their children's education has a negative effect on their academic performance.

Teacher D had this to say:

Lack of parental involvement are one of the causes of poor academic performance amongst Grade 7 learners in our school because parents do not support their children with homework. You give homework to learners and informed them that their parents must sign after

completion but the books come back not signed and homework not done. Therefore learners whose parents are actively involved in their education performed much better in their school work than those whose parents are not involved.

Teacher E said the following:

Lack of parental involvement is a problem in this school because parents do not guide, motivate and assist their children with homework. This means parents do not make time to assist their children with homework, as a result their performance are going to be affected in a negative way.

Teacher F said:

Lack of parental involvement is the contributing factor for Grade 7 learners' not performing in our school because parents are not involved due to the fact that parents are illiterate, they are not educated, there is are communication difficulties as they could not express themselves in English which is the medium of instruction, therefore they are unable to assist their children with their school work.

Teacher I answered by saying:

Poor attendance of parents to their children's school activities is a problem in our school. Parents are not involved at all, most parents do not turn up for parent meetings, parent evenings for them to be told the short falls of their children's performance and how to assist them, this is due to lack of understanding the importance of education, and if this continued the learners of such parents their performance will be affected.

School board chairpersons J and K both mentioned lack of parental support as a factor contributing to learners' poor academic performance in their schools. School board chairperson J stated the following:

Lack of parental support affect learners' performance in the sense that if parents do not supervise, encourage and motivate their children to work hard by always do their homework every day and on time this will lead to poor performance.

School board chairperson K said:

Poor involvement of parents in their children's education is the cause to poor academic performance of Grade 7 learners in our school. If parents do not properly supervise, check their children's books every day to see whether they are progressing or not and also whether they need assistance in their subjects than such children's performance are going to be affected in a negative way, therefore the more parents involved in their children's education the better learners perform academically.

Parents also mentioned lack of parental involvement as a possible factor towards poor academic performance of Grade 7 learners in schools.

Parent M said:

Lack of parental involvement in the education of their children's leads to poor performance because if parents do not motivate and encourage children to study hard, then their performance are going to be affected and they will not progress to the next grade. Therefore when parents are involved learners do better in school.

Learners also mentioned lack of parental involvement as a contributing factor to poor academic performance of Grade 7 learners in their school. The following are the responses of learners about the involvement of parents in their school work.

Learner P, R, T, U and X both confirmed and said:

Yes, our parents do help us with our homework.

Learner Q said:

My parents do help me with my homework but not so often.

Learner S answered and said:

Yes, my parents do help me but not every day may be only twice a week.

Learner V said:

My parents do not help me at all I do the homework all by myself, only when I ask them for something I don't understand otherwise they usually do not ask me about my school work.

Learner V reiterated:

The influencing factor towards poor academic performance of Grade 7 learners in our school according to my opinion is lack of parental involvement because parents do not make time to assist their children with homework. Sometimes they are never home when learners need them the most.

Parents are more interested in their own private affairs, instead of making time and assisting the children with their schoolwork. It is the parents' responsibility to make sure that children attend school regularly, supervise and guide homework. Such involvement can contribute to children's

academic success and if not, learners' performance will be affected negatively. Learner W confirmed and said:

My parent helps me sometimes with homework only when they have time and when they are around.

The information given by the different participants in this sub-theme indicated that lack of parental involvement is a major contributing factor towards learners' poor academic performance of the Grade 7 learners in their respective schools. Lack of support from parents causes poor performance. Lack of guidance and motivation from parents is an indication that parents do not have time or do not make time to help their children with their school activities; they are too busy with their own private doings (Negumbo, 2016).

Communication difficulties due to language barriers is another challenge. Some parents are eager to assist but lack of English proficiency hinders their involvement. Lack of understanding the value and importance of education is also a challenge. Where parents do not appreciate the value of education, they are not eager to participate in their children's activities.

The main emphasis here is for parents to take responsibility of assisting, guiding, motivating and participating in their children's education to promote children's learning. The findings found that lack of parental involvement is the main cause of learners' poor academic performance because parents are the primary educators. Therefore their influence on their children's attitude towards education plays an important role. When parents are involved in their children's education by attending parent meetings, motivating them to study hard and checking their books on regular basis, learners will perform better. If parents are not involved at all, learners' performance will be affected in a negative way.

The views from teachers, school board chairpersons, parents and learners seem to support Shililifa's (2006:13) views as indicated in chapter 2 that the involvement of parents in their children's education is very important because it encourages learners to work hard and perform better.

Henderson and Mapp (2002:67) concur with the views of the participants that learners with involved parents, no matter their income or background, are more likely to attend school regularly and earn higher grades.

The Social Learning theory concurs that when parents are more involved in their children's school work, either through homework monitoring, assisting with homework and attendance at school events, children are more likely to do well in school (Jeynes, 2003).

(b) Parents' level of education

Parents' level of education is the highest grade level completed by a parent in his/her school career. During the interviews teachers mentioned parent level of education as one of the factors influencing poor academic performance of Grade 7 learners in their schools.

Teacher G said:

Parental level of education may cause poor academic performance of learners because if parents are illiterate than they would not be able to assist their children with homework, projects and any activities needed their assistance because they do not know how, as they cannot speak English which is the medium of instruction. As a result due to the language barrier they are unable to help their children with homework and this will result in children not performing because there is no one to guide, and show them how to do difficult homework which they cannot do by themselves. On the other hand parents with high education levels are very much involved in the education of their children, they are eager and willing to assist with homework because they understand the work.

Teacher G further elaborated and said:

The majority of our parents in our school are illiterate, they are not literate enough to assist their children with schoolwork because they cannot express themselves in English, because most of them are only able to communicate in their native languages, as a result they find it difficult to assist their children with homework.

There is an indication that parents' level of education affects learners' academic performance. Where parents' educational level is low, parents are not literate enough to assist their children with school work even though they may want to.

The language barrier is another challenge. Parents are unable to express themselves in English which makes it difficult to assist their children because tasks are written in English. Parents are also reluctant to attend parent meetings because meetings are held in English and they do not understand the discussions at the meeting due to lack of English proficiency. This discourages attendance.

The study found that illiterate parent cannot assist their children with homework because they do not know how. As a result parents' low level of education influences learners' academic performance to the extent that they are unable to pass their grades. The higher the education level of parents, the more likely their children will achieve academic success.

The above statement of teacher G is in line with the views of Castejon and Perez (1999) as reflected in chapter 2 that the learners whose parents are not adequately literate are disadvantaged because parents are required to assist their children with their assignments and projects at home. So if parents are illiterate, they cannot assist their children with homework, because they do not know how.

The above statement of teacher G is in line with the Classical Liberal theory that states that all parents educated or not educated, should see education as a form of empowerment rather than as something done to the learner. They should regard education as an ongoing entitlement with access that is not

restricted by age. Therefore, all parents, educated or illiterate, have the responsibility to assist supervise and monitor their children with homework (Muthusamy, 2015).

4.4 MEASURES AND STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE LEARNERS' PERFORMANCE

This section presents responses from participants on the question: *What recommendations can be made for practice based on the findings of the literature study and the empirical inquiry?*

- (a) Principals' views on what parents can do to improve learners' performance in their subjects

Principal A said:

Our parents should support their children fully in all their endeavours such as to attend parent meetings, fundraising activities, sport events and prize giving ceremonies in that way the children are going to be motivated to work harder.

Principal B said:

In order for parents to assist their children to improve their performance, parents should arrange with the school to have a test time table so that they are always aware when test are written with the aim to encourage the learners to study hard. Parents should also check their children's books regularly, to see whether homework given is completed.

Principal C responded by saying:

Parents should allow learners enough time to study at home and not to overload them, with household chores for them not to get enough time to study.

The above statements of principals indicate that parental support is needed in schools. Parents should support their children fully in all their school activities, such as to attend parent meetings and parent evenings regularly. There should be a good communication between the school and parents whereby parents are free to visit the school at any time with regard to any new development at the school. Continuous monitoring of learners' schoolwork is needed to see whether homework given is completed. Workload of household chores should be minimised so that learners can get sufficient time to study.

(b) Parents' views on what the school should do to improve learners' performance

Parent M said:

I suggest the school should create platforms of learner support for less able learners those who are struggling with reading, whereby they receive extra lessons after school, to practice how to read and spell in order for them to perform better. The school should also invite parents to school for them to be told what to do in order to assist their children with schoolwork at home.

Parent N had this to say:

For the school to improve learners' performance, there should be a teacher/parent relationship, whereby teachers have the parents contact numbers, in case a learner transgress for parents to be informed, or when teachers wants to explain to parents how they have to assist their children with homework, or if any new development arise at school whereby parents needed to be informed in that way if teacher-parent relationship is sound than learners will performed better.

Parent O responded by saying:

I suggest that the school should organise afternoon classes for all the Grade 7's for an hour and half for four days in a week, means from Monday to Thursday, for the learners to be able to complete their homework and projects under the supervision of the teachers, because many times some learners never completed their homework when they are at home so this platform is the best opportunity to assist the learners.

The above statements of parents suggest that learner support programmes are needed in schools for better learner performance. Teacher-parent relationships are needed for future communication whenever there are things parents should know with regard the education of their children. Afternoon studies for Grade 7 learners are needed in schools because it assists them to complete their school activities at school; at home some learners may not get time to complete it.

(c) Teacher strategies that contribute to better learner performance

Teachers D, E, F and G suggested extra classes after school for underperforming learners.

Teacher D answered by saying:

I will arrange extra classes after school, by giving extra lesson to those learners whose performance is not up to standard, whereby learners are going to revise work done already during morning lessons, for them to catch up.

Teacher E said:

The strategy I am going to use is to offer remedial classes for poor performing learners whereby I am going to divide them in small groups of 6 learners per group and give them a timetable which groups is going to attend on which day and so on just to give them enough

attention which I could not give in the morning with the whole class. The other strategy that I am going to use is learner-centred approach whereby learners are sitting in groups and do more work themselves, while I am just observing and give guidance where needed, in that way learners will understand the content better because they are more involved, rather than just listens to the teacher all the time. For learners who struggle with reading I am going to establish a reading corner in the class, for learners to practise reading at all times as it will assist them to read better.

Teacher F suggested:

Extra-classes for poor performing learners, continuous revision after every lesson and before examination and to allow two learners who are neighbours to share a textbook and study together.

Teacher G said:

My strategy is to arrange extra-classes for slow learners.

Teacher H said:

For learners to perform better I am going to involve parents by inviting them to come to school so that we can discuss the progress of their children and also explain to them how to assist the children at home when they have activities to do.

Teacher I said:

One of the strategies we are using at our school, for learners to perform better we give gifts to best performers as an encouragement to work harder at all times.

The findings indicate that most teachers mentioned the arrangement of extra classes as one of the strategies that is needed to improve learners' performance in schools as well as a learner-centered approach whereby learners are more involved rather than the teachers. This inspires confidence in learners to do things by themselves. The establishment of reading corner in class motivates learners to practise reading at all times. Involvement of parents is essential for better performance. Presentation of rewards will motivate learners to work hard for better results.

4.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter presented the views of principals, teachers, school board chairpersons, parents and learners on the investigation of factors influencing primary school learners' academic performance in the selected primary schools situated in the informal settlement areas of Okahandja Park, Oshitenda and Havana in Windhoek, Namibia. The next chapter will provide the conclusion and recommendations based on the findings of the study.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a summary, conclusions and recommendations based on the findings of the study, as drawn from information obtained through interviews. The purpose of this study was to investigate factors influencing primary school learners' academic performance in the informal settlement areas of Okahandja Park, Oshitenda and Havana in Windhoek, Namibia.

5.2 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

This study sought to find out the views of principals, teachers, school board chairpersons, parents and learners on factors influencing primary school learners' academic performance in the selected primary schools. The study also tried to identify measures and strategies that could be used to promote learners' academic performance.

The research study was carried out at three primary schools in the Khomas Education Region. The participants who took part in the study were 24 in total. The study used face-to-face interviews to collect data. The following research questions guided the research study as stated in chapter 1:

1. How do socio-economic factors influence learners' academic performance in the informal settlement areas of Okahandja Park, Oshitenda and Havana?
2. Which school factors affect learners' academic performance in the informal settlement areas of Okahandja Park, Oshitenda and Havana?
3. How does parental involvement influence learners' academic performance in primary schools in the informal settlement areas of Okahandja Park, Oshitenda and Havana?

4. What recommendations can be made for practice based on the findings of the literature study and the empirical inquiry?

5.3 SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

The following is a summary of the major findings of this study. The findings revealed how various factors contributed to poor academic performance of Grade 7 learners in the selected primary schools.

5.3.1 Poor socio-economic status of parents

This research theme is linked to the research question: *How does socio-economic status influence learners' academic performance in the informal settlement areas of Okahandja Park, Oshitenda and Havana?* The participants were of the opinion that the following factors are key socio-economic determinants of how academic performance of Grade 7 learners in the selected primary schools is affected.

(a) Poverty

All three groups of participants revealed that poverty has a negative influence on learners' academic performance. This is due to the fact that parents are unemployed and as they do not earn salaries, they therefore could not afford to buy food, clothing and other necessities for their children. As a result, children go to bed hungry and this affects their concentration in class which leads to poor performance (cf. 2.2.1.1).

(b) Poor home infrastructure

Participants concur that if the learning environment at home is not conducive, learners' performance will be affected in a negative way. Further, they pointed out poor home infrastructure, small and

overcrowded homes, disturbing neighbourhoods and noise pollution affect learning and cause learners to perform poorly (cf. 2.2.1.2).

(c) Absenteeism from school due to poor socio-economic status of parents

Lack of food at home caused learners to stay away from school because they are hungry. Parents who are unemployed do not have money to buy food; therefore learners do not have energy to go to school due to hunger. Households headed by learners contribute to higher absenteeism because there is no adult role model to guide and supervise and this may affect their school career negatively (cf. 2.2.1.1).

5.3.2 School environmental factors

This research theme is linked to the research question: Which school factors affect learners' academic performance in the informal settlement areas of Okahandja Park, Oshitenda and Havana? The study participants believed the following affected academic performance of learners:

(a) Overcrowded classrooms

Overcrowded classes are not conducive for teaching and learning because teachers are not able to pay attention to every individual learner. Overcrowding caused a lot of disturbances in large classes and teachers found it difficult to control and manage learners. This may affect the performance of learners (cf. 2.2.2.2).

(b) Inadequate teaching and learning materials (textbooks, libraries, computer labs)

The participants revealed that insufficient teaching and learning resources affect learners' academic performance. Sharing of textbooks as mentioned by the participants indicates that textbooks are insufficient and that the government failed to supply enough textbooks for every child. Lack of libraries

prevents learners from completing their homework on time as learners do not have a space at home to do their homework. This affects their performance in a negative way (cf. 2.2.2.4).

(c) Peer pressure

The study revealed that peer pressure made learners do bad things in order to please their peers and achieve a sense of belonging. This leads to poor concentration in class, and affects schoolwork. Parents were of the opinion that negative influences from peers such as absconding of classes and truancy contribute to poor performance. Learners indicated that peer pressure encouraged noise making and unruly behaviour to please peers and win acceptance in the group. Such behaviour made learners lose lesson time which results in poor academic performance (cf. 2.2.2.3).

(d) Bullying

Participants found that bullying was problematic among learners. Bullying created fear in victims which made them stay away from school. As a result they missed lessons which had a negative effect to their performance in school (cf. 2.2.2.3).

5.3.3 Parental involvement

This research theme is linked to the research question: How does parental involvement influence learners' academic performance in primary schools in the informal settlements areas of Okahandja Park, Oshitenda and Havana? The participants in the study were of the opinion that the following affects academic performance of learners in the selected schools.

(a) Lack of active parental involvement

In this research study lack of active parental involvement was mentioned repeatedly by teachers, school board chairpersons, parents and learners as a contributing factor to learners' poor academic

performance. Lack of support from parents causes poor performance. The other factor mentioned by participants was that communication difficulties due to the language barrier hindered parental involvement as some parents could not express themselves in English (cf. 2.2.2.5).

(b) Parents' level of education

Parents' level of education may cause poor academic performance of learners. Illiterate parents cannot assist their children with homework or projects. Further, parents cannot express themselves in English which is the medium of instruction.

5.3.4 Measures and strategies to improve learners' performance

This section presents responses from participants on the question: What recommendations can be made for practice based on the findings of the literature study and the empirical inquiry?

(a) Principals views on what parents can do to improve learners' performance in their subjects

- Parents should be active in school activities such as parent meetings, prize giving ceremonies, fundraising activities and sport events.
- There should be good communication between the school and parents.
- There should be continuous monitoring of learners' schoolwork.
- Workload of household chores should be minimised so that learners have sufficient time to study.

(b) Parents views on what the school should do to improve learners' performance

- Learner support programmes are for less able learners and those who struggling with reading and writing.
- Teacher-parent relationship and communication should be improved.
- Extra classes are needed to improve learner performance.

(c) Strategies teachers' use that contribute to learners' better performance

- Arrangement of extra classes was mentioned by the majority of teachers as one of the strategies that is needed to improve learners' performance in schools.
- Learner-centred approaches are encouraged to promote confidence in learners to do things independently.
- Establishment of a reading corner in class is needed because it motivates learners to practise reading at all times.
- Teachers should involve parents in their children's education, as it is essential for better performance
- Presentation of rewards is encouraged in schools as it motivates learners to work hard for better results.

5.4 CONCLUSIONS OF THE STUDY

Based on the data collected from the participants, the main findings of the study have been summarised to answer the four research-sub questions. Based on the findings of this study it has been revealed that poor socio-economic status of parents contributes to poverty, poor home infrastructure and absenteeism from school. This factor affects the academic performance of Grade 7 learners in the selected primary schools.

The study revealed that poverty contributes to poor academic performance of learners. Many parents are unemployed; they do not have money to provide food at home, so hunger affects their households, which is a cause of learners' poor academic performance. Unemployment is the biggest problem in the informal settlement. Because parents do not earn salaries, they cannot afford to buy food for their children. As a result the children go to bed hungry and when attending classes they cannot concentrate which results in poor performance.

Poor home infrastructure as mentioned by the participants is one of the factors influencing learners' academic performance in the sense that if the learning environment at home is not conducive, the learners' performance will be affected in a negative way. Thus the study revealed that children who live in informal settlements are negatively affected by a variety of factors such as poor home infrastructure, small and overcrowded homes, disturbing neighbourhood and noise pollution. Homes are surrounded by shebeens, which is not a safe environment for school-going children and the excessive noise from shebeens has a negative effect on their concentration which will affect their academic performance. Therefore there is a need for parents to provide better and safe homes for their children. These findings concur with the Classical Liberal theory of equal opportunity and Social Darwinism which posit that any or all barriers to socio-economic development of the person from a humble background whether geographical, cultural, political and historical should be removed (Jemutai, 2014:12).

Furthermore it was stated by participants that absenteeism from school has a negative effect on learners' academic performance. Learners stay away from school with no valid reasons, which shows that their disinterest in attending school. As a result they fall behind with their schoolwork whereby their school careers are affected negatively. The views of the participants are also supported by scholars such as Katanga (2016) who states that due to low socio-economic status of parents, absenteeism increases in schools. Katanga (2016) further states that inadequate nutrition keeps learners from poor families from school because they are hungry and parents do not have money to buy food for their children.

Based on the findings the second group of factors contributing to learners' poor academic performance in the selected informal settlement schools is school factors. The school factors affecting

learners' performance include: overcrowded classrooms, inadequate teaching and learning materials (textbooks, libraries, computer labs), peer pressure and bullying.

Overcrowding in classes has been identified by the participants as one of the factors that contributes to poor academic performance of Grade 7 learners in the selected primary schools. The participants indicated that it is difficult for teachers to control and manage overcrowded classes because the time is limited and the teachers cannot pay attention to every individual learner. As a result slow performing learners are affected negatively. Overcrowded classes are not conducive for teaching and learning because large classes tend to encourage disturbances.

During interviews it was revealed by the participants that inadequate teaching and learning materials contributes to poor academic performance of Grade 7 learners in their schools. Insufficient teaching and learning materials such as textbooks, dictionaries and posters make learning very difficult because it hinders effective teaching. It has been revealed by the participants that as textbooks are not enough for every learner, two to three learners are sharing one textbook which leads to conflict. and hinders learners' participation in class. Furthermore, inadequate teaching and learning materials affect teachers' time and creates double work: they have to write summaries on the chalkboard due to lack of textbooks. It was also mentioned by the participants that lack of study facilities in the school such as libraries prevent learners to complete their homework on time as they do not have enough space at home to do their homework or study for tests and examinations.

The study revealed that peer pressure has been found to be one of the causes of poor academic performance of Grade 7 learners' as mentioned by school board chairpersons, parents and learners. Peer pressure encourages bad conduct in order to please their peers and achieve a sense of belonging. This leads to poor concentration in class and affects schoolwork. Participants were of the opinion that negative influences from peers such as absconding of classes and truancy contribute to poor performance. Learners indicated that peer pressure encouraged noise making and unruly behaviour to please peers and win acceptance in the group.

Another factor mentioned by the participants as one of the contributing factors towards poor academic performance of Grade 7 learners is bullying. The participants indicated that bullying creates

fear among learners and as a result victims stay away from school and miss which has a negative effect on their performance in school. Furthermore, the study revealed that learners who have been bullied suffer emotional and physical abuse; therefore, schools should see to it that no learner has the right to bully others.

Thirdly, on the influence of parental involvement in the education of their children, the participants mentioned factors such as lack of active parental involvement and parents' level of education as contributing factors to poor academic performance of Grade 7 learners in the selected primary schools. A lack of active parental involvement causes learners to under-perform because if parents do not monitor, guide and motivate their children to work hard in their studies, their performance will be affected in a negative way. Negumbo (2016) mentions that lack of support, guidance, and motivation from parents indicates that parents do not have or do not make time to help their children with their schoolwork. They are too busy with their own private affairs and as result learners' performance is affected negatively. Participants further revealed that communication difficulties due to language barriers is another challenge whereby some parents are eager to assist their children but lack of English proficiency hinders involvement. Furthermore, the findings of this study revealed that lack of understanding of the value and importance of education is another challenge. Where parents do not acknowledge why education is important, they are reluctant to participate in their children's activities. According to Social Learning theory, when parents are more involved in their children's schoolwork, either through homework monitoring, assistance with homework or attendance at school events, such children are more likely to do well in school (Jeynes, 2003).

Parents' level of education has been mentioned by teachers as one of the factors influencing poor academic performance of Grade 7 learners in their schools. The teachers stated that if parents are illiterate, they are unable to assist their children with homework because they do not know how and they cannot speak English which is the medium of instruction. Therefore, the language barrier results in children not performing because there is no assistance with difficult homework which they cannot do by themselves. The study further revealed that parents with high education levels are very involved in the education of their children. They are eager and willing to assist with homework because they understand the work. Therefore, the higher the level of education of parents, the better learners perform academically.

To answer the fourth research question on the measures and strategies to improve learners' performance, principals felt that parental support is needed in schools, whereby parents should support their children fully in all their school activities, such as to attend parent meetings regularly. Principals also mentioned that there should be a good communication between the school and parents whereby parents are free to visit the school at any time when needed information regarding new developments at the school. Principals also suggested continuous monitoring of learners' work by parents as well as reducing household chores so that learners get sufficient time to study.

Parents also gave their views on what the school should do to improve learners' performance. They indicated that learner support programmes are needed in schools for less able learners and those who struggling with reading and writing. Afternoon study platforms for Grade 7 learners are needed in schools for assist them to complete their school activities because at home some learners do not get time to complete it.

The study revealed that teachers mentioned the following strategies for learners' improved performance: Arrangement of extra classes after school for underperforming learners, the learner-centred approach whereby learners are more involved than the teachers to develop independence, establishment of a reading corner in class to motivate learners to practise reading at all times and involvement of parents in their children education are important for better performance.

The research study concluded that parents' socio-economic status, various school factors and lack of parental involvement in learning activities of learners were the factors influencing learners' academic performance in informal settlements.

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

The section below presents recommendations that could be implemented to improve Grade 7 learners' academic performance. The recommendations are made based on the four sub-research questions.

5.5.1 General recommendations

(a) Poverty

To deal with poverty in order to improve learners' academic performance the following is recommended:

- Schools should establish feeding programmes at school whereby learners received cooked meals during break time especially for those needy learners who come to school without food. The school may ask for food donations from companies or business people in the community to donate to their needy learners.
- The government should provide financial assistance to the orphans and vulnerable children by giving money grants every month so that unemployed parents and guardians can buy food, toiletries, stationery and school uniforms.
- The government should find ways to create jobs for many unemployed parents so that they can provide for the basic needs of their children and learners can attend school regularly.

(b) Poor home infrastructure

The following recommendations are made:

- The government should try to improve the living conditions of those who live in the informal settlements, by providing better living spaces such as good houses and not corrugated iron houses, clean water, sanitation and electricity so that learners are able to study and do their homework.
- The government should encourage private building companies or business people to assist and build low cost houses for people who live in the informal settlements in order to improve the lifestyle of children living in the informal settlements.
- Community members should report noisy and disturbing neighbourhoods to the council or council representatives.

(c) Absenteeism from school due to poor socio-economic status of parents

- School feeding programmes are needed in schools to feed the needy learners to encourage learners to attend school regularly.
- Parent should monitor, supervise and check their children's books on a regular basis to ensure that their children are attending school regularly.
- Parents must communicate with their learners and show them how important it is to attend classes.
- To avoid absenteeism the class teacher should mark the class register every day for better control and monitoring.
- Teachers should contact the parents of absent learners.
- The school should give awards to learners who attend school regularly to motivate them to be present at school every day.

5.5.2 Recommendations on school factors

To overcome the problem of overcrowded classrooms the following strategies are recommended:

- The government should build more classrooms to reduce overcrowding in classes.
- Teachers should give extra classes in the afternoon for poor performing learners to catch up.
- A platoon system should be introduced whereby some learners attend classes in the morning while others attend in the afternoon.
- Teachers should divide learners into groups and use the learner centred approach to keep them busy in order to avoid noise.
- Teachers should keep lesson presentation short because if lessons are too long learners lose concentration.

To overcome the problem of inadequate teaching and learning aids the following is recommended:

- The government should supply enough textbooks to schools for every individual child to avoid learners fighting for textbooks as they do not want to share with peers, as well as to make it possible for every learner to complete his/her homework on time.
- Government should look for donors to donate funds in order to purchase needed learning aids for the learners.
- The Ministry of Education should ensure that schools are equipped with all needed teaching and learning aids.
- The Ministry of Education should build libraries and laboratories in schools for better research.
- The school management should ask private business companies to donate laptops and computers to schools so that the school can set up a computer information centre for research purposes.
- Businesses in the community could establish a library as well as a community centre at the informal settlements so that learners who live in the informal settlements have a suitable place to do their homework and to study.

Based on the findings of the study, the following is recommended:

- Teachers should educate learners to avoid bad company and peers who encourage them to abuse addictive substances or abscond from classes.
- Teachers should motivate and encourage learners to be firm in resisting peer pressure by letting their peers know that they mean it when they say no.
- Teachers should encourage learners to report to teachers when peers force them to do things that could put their lives in danger or that could put them into trouble.
- Teachers should report learners with unruly behaviour to their parents and caretakers.

- Parents should at all times educate their children to always choose the right friends - those who encourage them to study hard and to attend school every day.

To overcome the problem of bullying the following interventions were recommended:

- Learners should be encouraged to report any incident in the school to the teachers especially when they see their peers being bullied.
- Members of the learners' representative council (prefects) should monitor other learners in the school surroundings especially during break time to see to it that no one is being bullied.
- Learners should be encouraged to report any sort of bullying to their teachers, parents or any adult in their neighbourhood.
- The school should inform the parents of the learners who bully other learners to speak to their children to refrain from bullying or risk suspension from school because the school does not tolerate bullying.
- The life skills teachers in the school should educate the learners on the importance of respecting and caring for fellow learners by not harming them physically and emotionally and remind them about the rules of the school that bullying is a punishable offence.

5.5.3 Recommendations on parental involvement

The following recommendations are made based on the findings of this study:

(a) Lack of active parental involvement

- Parents should also be encouraged to attend parent meetings, parent evenings and fundraising activities in order to understand the importance of education and the need for their involvement in the education of their children.

- Parents should be made aware about the importance of parental involvement in the education of their children by assisting with homework and checking supervising and monitoring learners' books in order to improve their academic performance.
- Parent-teacher relationship should be established whereby teachers can invite parents to school to discuss the academic progress of their children as well as other problems experienced by the children.

(b) Parents' level of education

- The school should encourage illiterate parents to come forward and support their children fully in whatever activities they are doing with the assistance of teachers.
- Parents need to improve their level of education in order to improve their children's academic performance by attending literacy classes to improve English proficiency. Schools should introduce adult education programmes in the community whereby illiterate parents are taught how to read and write English.

5.6 CONTRIBUTION TO NEW KNOWLEDGE

In this study the main focus was to investigate factors influencing primary school learners' academic performance in the informal settlement areas of Okahandja Park, Oshitenda and Havana in Windhoek, in the Khomas Region of Namibia. As this study was limited to the Khomas Education Region only, it may serve as a reference for other researchers to inspire them to undertake similar research. In line with the recommendations on how to address the factors mentioned by different participants the researcher has contributed new knowledge on the current topic, since there is limited research in the Namibian context that explores factors influencing learners' academic performance in the informal settlement primary schools. The researcher suggests that future research should be conducted in order to build on what has been researched.

Areas for further research:

- Since the current study was conducted in informal settlement primary schools, similar studies should be conducted in the informal settlement secondary schools in the same region.
- Similar research should be conducted in other regions, as Namibia consist of 14 regions. Data from many schools would help identify many factors influencing learners' achievement and the research findings can easily be generalised to the other educational regions in the country.
- Similar research could be conducted in private schools, since the current research was conducted in public primary schools.
- Similar research could be conducted where more than one instrument is used to collect data such as surveys, observation, and focus group interviews because the current study used only one instrument which is individual face-to-face interviews.
- Lack of parental involvement was mentioned as one of the factors affecting learners' academic performance in the selected primary schools. Thus, the researcher suggests research into how parental involvement in other regions affects the academic performance of learners and how to improve it.

The researcher believes that the study achieved its aim of identifying possible factors influencing primary school learners' academic performance in informal settlement schools of Okahandja Park, Oshitenda and Havana and that similar future studies could assist in improving learner academic performance.

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Appendix A: Ethical Clearance Certificate



UNISA COLLEGE OF EDUCATION ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Date: 2019/10/16

Ref: 2019/10/16/33547300/21/MC

Name: Mrs KF Ipinge

Student No.: 33547300

Dear Mrs Ipinge

Decision: Ethics Approval from
2019/10/16 to 2022/10/16

Researcher(s): Name: Mrs KF Ipinge
E-mail address: 33547300@mylife.unisa.ac.za
Telephone: +264 81 284 4492

Supervisor(s): Name: Prof J Scroto
E-mail address: serafj@unisa.ac.za
Telephone: +27 17 429 4579

Title of research:

An investigation of factors influencing primary school learners' academic performance in informal settlement areas of Windhoek, Namibia.

Qualification: M. Ed in Socio-Education

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee for the above mentioned research. Ethics approval is granted for the period 2019/10/16 to 2022/10/16.

The low risk application was reviewed by the Ethics Review Committee on 2019/10/16 in compliance with the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment.

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

1. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.
2. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee.



University of North-South Africa
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Appendix B: Research Permit



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, ARTS AND CULTURE

Tel: +264 61-2933202
Fax: +264 61-2933922
Enquiries: G. Munene
Email: Gibson.munene@moe.gov.na
File no: 13/2-9/1

Luther Street, Govt Office Park
Private Bag 13186
Windhoek
Namibia

Mrs. Kaino Fudheni Ipinge
P. O. Box 1788
Windhoek
Cell: No. 081 284 4092

Dear Mrs. Ipinge

SUBJECT: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN KHOMAS REGION IN NAMIBIA

Kindly be informed that permission to conduct an academic research for your Master's degree in Sociology of education on "*An Investigation of Factors Influencing Primary School Learners' Academic Performance in Informal Settlement areas of Windhoek in Khomas region in Namibia.*" is hereby granted. You are requested to present this letter of approval to the regional Director of the region you wish to conduct your research in to ensure that research ethics are adhered to.

Further, you are requested to share your research findings with the Ministry after completion of the research project. You may contact Mr G. Munene at the Directorate: Programmes and Quality Assurance (PQA) for submission of a summary of your research findings at the above indicated details.

I wish you the best in conducting your research and I look forward to hearing from you upon completion of your study.

Yours Sincerely,



Sanet L. Steenkamp
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

All official correspondence must be addressed to the Executive Director.

Appendix C: Permission from Director of Education



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA
KHOMAS REGIONAL COUNCIL
DIRECTORATE OF EDUCATION, ARTS AND CULTURE
Tel: (09 264 61) 283 4385 Private Bag 13236
Fax: (09 264 61) 231 367/248 251 WINDHOEK
24 March 2020

P. O. Box 1788
Windhoek
Namibia
Contact: 0612644062

For Attention: Ms. Kano F. Ipinge

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH INTERVIEWS WITH PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN KHOMAS REGION

Your letter dated 12 March 2020 on the above topic is hereby acknowledged.

Permission is hereby given to you to collect data on "An investigation of factors influencing primary school learner's academic performance in informal settlement areas in Khomas Region".

in Khomas Region under the following conditions:

- ◆ The Principal of the selected school to be visited must be contacted in advance and agreement should be reached between you and the Principal.
- ◆ The school programme should not be interrupted.
- ◆ The teachers who will take part in this exercise will do so voluntarily.
- ◆ The Directorate of Education, Arts and Culture should be provided with a copy of your thesis/ findings.

We wish you success in your research.

Yours sincerely

Gerda N. Vines
Director of Education, Arts and Culture

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
ARTS AND CULTURE
PRIVATE BAG 13236 WINDHOEK
24-03-2020
DIRECTOR
KHOMAS REGION

Appendix D: Permission letter to conduct research



PO BOX 1788

Windhoek

Namibia

01 June 2020

Enquiries: Kaino Fudheni Ipinge
Cell: 0812844092
E-mail: ipingek@yahoo.com/33547300@mylife.unisa.ac.za

Dear Sir/Madam

Request for permission to conduct Educational research at your school

I Kaino Fudheni Ipinge, a master degree student at the University of South Africa (UNISA) am doing research under supervision of Prof J. Seroto, a Professor in the Department of Educational Foundations (Sociology of Education). As part of the requirements for the completion of the Master of Education degree, I am required to conduct research.

My research topic is **“An investigation of factors influencing primary school learners’ academic performance in informal settlement areas of Windhoek, Namibia.”**

I am kindly requesting permission to carry out my research study at your school. The aim of the study is to investigate factors that influence learner academic performance of primary schools in the informal settlement areas of Okahandja Park, Oshitenda and Havana in Windhoek district. The study entails to investigate the views of primary school principals, teachers, and schoolboard chairperson’s, parents and grade 7 learners on the factors that might influence learners’ poor academic performance.

The benefits of this study might provide some understanding of factors that might influence learners’ academic performance in the informal settlement primary schools whereby the different stakeholders in the study may get some solutions to assist such learners. The results of the study might contribute

to the knowledge which may be used for by the different stakeholders interested in the situation of education standards in the informal settlement schools. The results of the study might be of practical benefit to teachers, whereby they might improve their teaching styles or methods for learners to performed better. Learners may also make use of the outcomes of this study to improve their performance and learning styles.

Your school has been selected because it is one of the primary schools situated in the selected informal settlements and is closer to the researcher's work place and place of residence. As it was stated in both the letters from the Permanent Secretary and Regional Director (see attached copies), I also would like to assure your good office that no classes will be interrupted during data collection, as all activities will be carried out after school hours. I assured you that the information collected, and research results will be held in strict confidentiality and will not be disclosed to any outsider, it is only for research purposes.

There are no risks involved in the study and participation is voluntary. There will be no reimbursement or any incentives for participation in the research. I am willingly ready to start as soon as possible with the data collection, I am only waiting for your confirmation. Please notify me in writing on the above-mentioned address or by e-mail.

Kindly assist with identifying the teachers and learners who may participate in the study. I am willingly and available any time to give feedback to any participant who needs the feedback of the research results, feel free to request them any time.

Thank you in advance

Yours sincerely

Kaino Fudheni Ipinge (Mrs)

Researcher

Appendix E: Written Consent from parents



PO BOX 1788

Windhoek

Namibia

01 June 2020

Request for Parental Consent for Minors to participate in a Research Project

Dear Parent

My name is Kaino Fudheni Ipinge a master degree student at the University of South Africa (UNISA), currently studying towards a Master of Education Degree in Sociology of Education. Your child is invited to participate in a study entitled: **An investigation of factors influencing primary school learners' academic performance in informal settlement areas of Windhoek, Namibia.**

I am undertaking this study as part of my Master's research. The purpose of the study is to investigate the factors that might influence learners' academic performance, especially the grade seven (7), by preventing them from achieving the required results to proceed to the next grade. The possible benefits of the study are the improvement of their academic results and also for learners to identify learning strategies which could assist them to improve their performance.

I am asking permission to include your child in this study because he/she is one of the selected grade seven learners. The reason why I decided to use grade seven learners, is because they are the mature group in the school to be able to be interviewed. I expected to have eleven (11) other children participating in the study. If you allow your child to participate, he /she will take part in an interview. There learners are 12 in total, three each from the four selected primary schools. The learners are going to be interviewed at their respective schools and it will be conducted after school hours, so that it may not interrupt or interfere with normal classes.

The interviews will be face-face and each learner will be interviewed individually, so that each learner can be free to give their own views without the influence of others. The interviews are going to be conducted in English and will take 10-15 minutes. During the interview I would like to make use of the voice recorder to record our conversation in order not to miss any information given during our conversation and also to remember better, however I would like to first ask your permission whether

it is possible for me to record our conversation with your child and if you are not in agreement with the idea feel free to let me know, definitely I will not do it without your approval.

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and can be identified with your child will remain confidential and will only be disclosed with your permission. His/ her responses will not be linked to his/her name or your name or the school's name in any written or verbal report based on this study. Such a report will be used for research purpose only.

There are no foreseeable risk to your child by participating in the study. Your child will receive no direct benefit from participating in the study, however the possible benefits to education are the information that will be collected from the study will help in the future for implementation of Education policies which aimed at providing quality education especially in the informal settlements and other marginalized areas. The benefit of the study will also be useful to the Ministry of Education as well as other stakeholders doing research on Education in the informal settlements of Namibia. Neither your child nor you will receive any type of payment for participating in this study. Your child participation in this study is voluntary. Therefore he/she may decline to participate or to withdraw from the participation at any time. Similarly, you can agree to allow your child to be in the study now and change your mind later without any penalty.

The study will take place after school, immediately after school in the child's register class so that it may not interfere or disrupt normal classes. The interviews will be done with prior approval of the school and your child's teacher. However, if you do not want your child to participate, an alternative activity will be available, whereby I am going to give him/her the interview questions for you to assist your child to fill them in at home and returned them to school in two-day time. In addition to your permission, you and your child will also be asked to sign the assent form which accompanies this letter. The information gathered from the study will be stored securely on a password locked computer/laptop for five years after the study, thereafter records will be erased.

The benefits of this study might provide some understanding of the influencing factors that affect learners' academic performance in the informal settlement primary schools whereby the different stakeholders in the study may get some solutions to assist such learners especially those who are performing poorly. The results of the study might be of practical benefit to teachers, whereby they will improve their teaching styles or methods for learners to perform better. Learners may also use the outcomes of this research study to improve their performance and learning styles.

If you have any questions about this study I am willingly and available any time, feel free to contact me at the following contact number, +264812844092 or E-mail me at ipingek@yahoo.com/33547300@mylife.unisa.ac.za. The e-mail of my supervisor is serotj@unisa.ac.za

You are making a decision about allowing your child to participate in this study. Your signature below indicates that you have read the information provided above and have decided to allow him or her to participate in the study.

Yours sincerely

Name of Child: _____

Parent/guardian's name (print) _____

Parent/guardian's signature: _____

Date: _____

Researcher's name (print) _____

Researcher's signature: _____ Date: _____

Appendix F: Learners assent form



P O BOX 1788

Windhoek

Namibia

01 June 2020

Requesting Assent from learners to participate in a research project

Dear Learner

My name is Teacher Kaino Fudheni Ipinge and would like to ask you if you can come and take part in an interview about **“An investigation of factors influencing primary school learners’ academic performance in informal settlement areas of Windhoek, Namibia”**. I am doing this study so that I can find out from you what factors do you think might contribute to poor academic performance of learners’ who lives in informal settlements, and also to find ways that teachers and parents can use to assist you to perform better academically. This may help you and many other learners of your age in different schools.

The information that I collect from you may benefit the Ministry of Education to formulate a policy that will aimed to improve the performance of primary school learners in Namibia informal settlement areas as well as the whole Namibian schools at large.

Your participation is therefore, of utmost important and I would appreciate it if you could spare me some of your time to participate in this study. The participation is voluntary, you may withdraw from the study at any time. I will not ask you to do anything that may hurt you or that you don’t want to do. You are not the only learner that I am going to interview, you are twelve learners in total that are going to participate in the study.

I have already asked permission from your parents for you to take part in the study, therefore you have a choice to participate or if you do not want, it is also fine with me. Remember, you can say yes, or you can say no and no one will be upset if you don’t want to take part or even if you change your mind later and want to stop. You are free to ask any questions to get clarity about the study. You may call me at +264 812844092, e-mail ipingek@yahoo.com/33547300@mylife.unisa.ac.za.

Please speak to daddy or mommy about taking part before you sign this letter. By signing your name at the bottom means that you agree to be in this study. A copy of this letter will be given to your parents.

Regards

Teacher Kaino Fudheni Ipinge (Mrs.)

Learner's name Learner's signature Date:

Parent/guardian's name Parent/guardian's signature Date:

Researcher's name Researcher's signature Date: