

**A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF THE COVERAGE OF THE LOW
MATRIC PASS RATE IN RURAL EASTERN CAPE: THE CASE STUDY OF THE
*DAILY DISPATCH***

BY

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DECLARATION

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ABSTRACT

Matric learner's poor academic performance is one of the main challenges that South Africa is faced with, particularly, in the Eastern Cape. In this study, the coverage of the *Daily Dispatch* newspaper on the low matric pass rate in rural Eastern Cape communities between 2015 and 2019 was identified, described, and examined. Quintile one (1) to three (3) schools in the Eastern Cape were the subject of this thesis as they constantly receive the lowest performance ratings.

The qualitative research method was used to respond to this study's research questions and investigate the reasons behind the representation of the low matric pass rate in rural Eastern Cape.

The findings revealed that the *Daily Dispatch* covers the low matric pass rate unfavourably with no coverage of how, by whom, or when the matric pass rate can be improved. The reasons for the poor matric pass rate in quantile 1-3 schools are not sufficiently covered, and the majority of the relevant sources were not included in the articles. It was also discovered that the ownership of the *Daily Dispatch* impacts the quality of news produced.

This therefore goes against the media's role which includes offering the public concise, unbiased, and comprehensive news alerts to ensure that the society is made aware of the world they live in, especially on their issues of interest.

KEYWORDS: Matric, pass rate, low matric performance, poor performance, learners, media, media coverage, news stories, students, education, educators

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

EC	Eastern Cape
SAHRC	South African Human Rights Commission's
CPEM	Critical Political Economy of the Media
SOUP	Sociology of News Production
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
SABC	South African Broadcasting Corporation
ICASA	Independent Communications Authority of South Africa
SADTU	South African Democratic Teachers' Union
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
DA MPL	Democratic Alliance Member of Provincial Legislature
MEC	Member of Executive Council

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This study employed a qualitative research design as it was aimed at identifying and interrogating the coverage that was granted by the *Daily Dispatch* newspaper to the low matric pass rate in the rural areas situated in the Eastern Cape between 2015 and 2019.

This is to uncover whether the newspaper abides by the media's ideal role, which is to provide society with news, that is succinct, and impartial and sounds an alarm when decadent dealings are undertaken. This includes assisting the public with making informed decisions and providing the public with information about what is happening in their surroundings (Curran, 2011; Happer & Philo, 2013; Ayodeji-Falade & Osunkunle, 2019).

The media report on the low matric pass rate in rural areas, but it should be questioned whether all concerned sources are included in the coverage. In addition, does the coverage justifiably provide all the possible causes for the low pass rate in rural areas?

This question must be asked because, during apartheid, some media outlets were manipulated and co-opted by the apartheid apparatus to represent various issues in a manner that favoured the status quo at the time (Bird & Garda, 1997).

This means that the media can be biased and unfair in the coverage and representation of societal events, which is unfair as media remain the most significant way that the public throughout the world generate opinions on reality outside of their individual experiences and so, it is imperative to ensure that the main problems that the world is faced with, are addressed accurately (Hardy, 2014).

This study selectively focused on the poor academic performance of the matric learners in the rural Eastern Cape, particularly quintile 1-3 schools situated in this province, which is being covered extensively in the news media as the worst-performing constituency in the Republic of South Africa.

1.1.1 South African school quintiles

The level of education varies to some extent across the various races and provinces in South Africa. The quintile classification of public schools and the associated funding has been a strategy used by the government since the beginning of democracy in 1994 to close the gap. The socioeconomic standing of the neighbourhoods where the schools are based is used to classify the schools into quintiles (Ispa-Landa & Conwell, 2015; Ogbonnaya & Awuah, 2019).

Fiske and Ladd (2004) refer to quintile 1-3 schools as those located in the most financially disadvantaged (poorest) geographic locations that do not pay fees and are schools that receive greater government money per student than quintiles 4 and 5, while quintile 5 schools are those located in the wealthiest geographical locations.

In contrast to schools in lower quintiles, the latter are fee-paying institutions, assuming that parents have the means to pay tuition and they also require less government assistance. In general, it is believed that the schools with the same quintet ranking should have equivalent socioeconomic standing and academic standards across the nine provinces (Hall & Giese, 2009).

1.2. THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

The matric results in South Africa are a news event and they draw attention from all spheres of the society. Therefore, the media has a role to educate and analyse these results for the public, as well as raise awareness of the debacle on the low matric pass rates (Happer & Philo, 2013).

1.2.1 Background and context of the study

The poor performance of matric learners based in rural areas of the Eastern Cape is a continuous predicament since the new democratic dispensation in 1994. This poor performance of matric learners in rural Eastern Cape is covered frequently by the media, as it provides insight into the state of public schooling in South Africa; hence, it is irrefutable that the matric results are of “national interest” and in the “public interest”. This research was conducted to examine the news coverage provided by the *Daily Dispatch* on the low matric pass rate in rural Eastern Cape, whether it is fair and comprehensive of all angles that can lead to a nuanced understanding of the main causes of the bad performance.

1.2.1.1 *Daily Dispatch*

The *Daily Dispatch* newspaper is a print publication situated in Beacon Bay, East London. The history of the *Daily Dispatch* dates to 1872. On September 10, 1872, the *Daily Dispatch* newspaper began publishing in East London (Eastern Cape Province).

In its centennial year, the *Daily Dispatch* became South Africa’s first daily to provide colour facilities to its publicists and the public. This paper was sold to *Times Media* in 1997 formerly known as Tiso Blackstar Group and is now called Arena Holdings. In the same year, the *Daily Dispatch* launched *Dispatch Online*, the newspaper’s online counterpart. This newspaper was the primary daily newspaper to be published and

sold in 1898 and from 1906 the newspaper started circulating its papers to a wider rangel (Daily Dispatch, 2017).

The introduction of online media has had an impact on print media, causing companies to struggle to maintain their revenue stream as more consumers sought their news online. The global financial crisis in 2008 aggravated the situation, and daily newspaper circulation declined by an average of 5.5% every year (Daniels, 2013).

During this time, the *Daily Dispatch* was under outrageous tension from financial variables, especially the necessity to contend in a cutthroat broadcasting climate with newspapers including the *Daily Sun*, which was causing disturbances countrywide as far as high dissemination numbers trading over 500 000 copies on daily basis and this converts into 4 700 000 normal people reading the papers (Ward & Wasserman, 2010). This was because tabloids were making money off of their sensitisation, and that media houses are mostly influenced by making (Lunga, 2011).

Because of the necessity to make a profit, editors relied on spectacular news with alarming leads in order to ensure that their papers sell, and while exploratory reporting predominated, newspaper editors relied on how stories are reported. Newspapers frequently print a story based on the editor's opinion of a story without ensuring that there is objectivity to increase ratings and advertising rates, news reporters sensationalise stories (Myers & Caniglia, 2004).

This is accomplished through addressing issues that are relevant to people's daily lives, which causes certain media outlets to not comply to the concept of discussion and reporting on issues that affect the public (Ward & Wasserman, 2010).

The South African Human Rights Commission's (SAHRC) Inquiry Report on Racism in the Media (2000) discovered that sensationalisation was caused by the fact that the

bulk of print newspapers are owned by a limited and exclusive group of people. Even when editors have appropriate degrees of editorial freedom, this concentration of ownership has the ability to smother media variety and prevent the media from accurately representing South African reality, making it impossible for reporters to report without leaving any facts out.

Curran (2011) concurs with the SAHRC results and claims that media owners affect the material produced. This is due to the expansion of media ownership corporations, which means that media house shareholders have the right to control what happens in the media, including granting authority to journalists over what they should and should not report on.

1.2.1.2 Possible causes of the low matric pass rate

Unlike urban schools, rural schools are faced with numerous challenges, which are the root causes of low academic achievement. In a study intended at discovering what causes the low matric pass results in one of the underprivileged districts in the Eastern Cape, Nkanzela (2015) argues that major contributors to low academic performance include children not getting support from their parents, poor roads, a shortage of physical facilities as well as qualified educators. Rammala (2009) concurs and states the causes for the low matric pass rate vary from student to student.

He continues to say that the causes include issues that are regarded as extremely sensitive issues such as divorce, death of parents, or substance abuse by parents resulting in learners who are heading homes, and these learners end up failing their studies because they are traumatised, and they lack parental involvement in their studies. The level of contribution of parents in the studies of their children is directly connected to the way in which a student performs academically. Children who have

parents that are visibly involved in their studies have good academic results compared to those who have parents who are not involved (Topor, Keane, Shelton & Calkins, 2010).

Topor et al. (2010) continue to say parents are expected to encourage and support their children with their homework, as learners that do not have their parents' support end up failing. This then shows the educators the kind of attitude that is displayed by parents towards education. These attitudes are revealed in how the child behaves in the classroom, as well as in the relationship teachers have with the learners and their parents.

Research conducted by Ipinge (2021) concurs and reveals that parents from underprivileged, rural, and poor areas are mostly unable to help their children because of low level of education. The research also shows that these parents do not normally show interest in the studies of their children or in attending parent's meetings called by the school as they feel small in those meetings. Nkanzela (2015) adds that these circumstances have an effect on how a learner performs at school as some go to school on empty stomachs and as a result, they do not concentrate on their work.

1.2.1.2 Media Representation

News is manufactured by journalists, this however, this does not allow for journalists to be biased and disregard values that are related to news. These values offer journalists and newspaper editors with a set of guidelines that they can use towards planning and executing the content that they publish (Cohen & Young, 1973; Schudson, 1991).

However, Schudson (1991) also states that as much as journalists have these set rules, they tend to not follow them and refer to them as gatekeepers as they decide

which piece of prefabricated news goes to the public as a means of reducing the amount of information influenced by owners of the publication through choosing what they would like to be published depending on their interests as media owners.

Happer and Philo (2013) concur with the above stating that the media decides to ignore certain issues to limit the variety of arguments and perceptions that form the public debate, influenced by Agenda Setting Theory. Agenda Setting Theory is a philosophy that argues exactly how the mass media makes an issue, a public agenda (Littlejohn & Foss, 2009).

This then gives an idea that the media represent issues that are convenient to their specific media houses, meaning that they tend to be subjective, and report based on their opinions and emotions instead of reporting on a sensible approach, without deliberately departing from facts that are part of the story whether by falsification, overstatement or distortion, information exclusion or summarising (Schudson, 1989).

1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the study were exploratory and descriptive, namely;

- To examine how the low matric pass rate in rural Eastern Cape is covered by the *Daily Dispatch* newspaper.
- To explore the ways used by the newspaper to report on the causes of the low matric pass rate in rural Eastern Cape.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study was guided by the following questions:

- How is the low matric pass rate in rural Eastern Cape covered by the *Daily Dispatch* newspaper?

- In what ways does the *Daily Dispatch* newspaper report on the causes of the low matric pass rate in rural Eastern Cape?

1.7 CHAPTER OUTLINE

This study consists of six chapters: i) Chapter 1 provides the introduction and a brief research and contextual background; ii) Chapter 2 presents the literature review and theoretical framework of the study; iii) Chapter 3 discusses the research methodology; iv) Chapter 4 presents data representation and analysis; v) Chapter 5 presents the conclusion of the study and recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This section effort on two key areas: the literature examination which contextualised the research problem and the theoretic framework that underpinned this study. In the literature, the concept of representation is broadly discussed. Subsequently, media representation and stereotyping, the role that the media played during apartheid and in democratic South Africa along with the representation of race in the media. Lastly, in the literature, educational impediments that result in the low matric pass rate are discussed.

The last section of the chapter speaks to the Critical Political Economy of the Media (CPEM), which is a broad theoretical approach that is inclusive of the Sociology of News Production (SONP). In addition, it discusses Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as a theoretic framework that also buttresses the study.

2.1.1 What is representation?

According to Hall (1997), representation is how parts of society are presented to audiences. It is regarded as the production and exchange of meaning using language, symbols, and imageries by describing or symbolising something for the audience to understand it in a particular way as arranged by the announcer and sometimes influenced by the audience's interpretation of the representation.

These symbols and signs are a vital part of our daily lives and can be created in any form of medium. The signs and symbols that are normally represented by the media in media texts can present sexual category, age, culture, ethnic group, regional identity, community issues, and occurrences (Hall, 1997; Brooks & Hebert, 2006).

Media texts are believed to be powerful in shaping the knowledge of its audience' as well as understanding of the above-mentioned vital topics. This therefore makes media texts powerful with regards to influencing the audience's ideas and attitudes as they allow the audience to understand what happens around them and subsequently inform what people communicate about (Diedre, 2003; Fu"rsich, 2010).

In a book seeking to explore how representation shapes the way we see our lives and other people's lives, Orgad (2012) argues that media representation is the process of producing meaning, constituted by issues that are present, issues that are absent, and issues that are different in the text provided to the audience. The texts can include images that are circulated in the mass media carrying symbolic content. These can be news articles with photographs, advertisements, radio programmes, YouTube Videos, or social media posts representing a particular meaning.

Representation is, therefore, how meaning is attributed to the media texts that are published for public consumption. Subsequently, representation is mainly what is meant by perception and how this is presented through language, assuming that it is circulated and is comprehensive to those who receive it (Diedre, 2003; Fu"rsich, 2010; Orgad, 2012).

Hall (1999) explored the process of meaning production in three theories that assist us in understanding representation. These three theories are frequently used in cultural studies to clearly describe the idea of representation. The three theories are reflective, intentional, and constructionist and are explained below:

2.1.1.1 The reflective approach of meaning

According to Hall in Ige (2016), the idea of reflectiveness was derived from "mimesis", which is a Greek word. Mimesis describes the way in which language copies nature.

Basically, this reflective representation approach suggests that language basically reflects or imitates an immovable-reality within the world and reflects it in the actual world.

Hall (1997) suggests that the reflective method functions like a mirror. It manifests by means of taking something in its true nature and recreating it for the public, by imitating the meaning of the person or object that is being represented. In the case of an event, the representation gives us the exact meaning of what is happening.

Bernstein (2002) agrees with Hall (1997) as he discusses representation as a presentation of semblance or imitation, which then puts an emphasis on the idea that for one to perfectly define representation, there must be an understanding that it is a societal concept aimed at portraying numerous things or themes in each and every society.

This then gives the idea that, in this approach, we are exposed to genuine information that is a true reflection of what is happening in our daily lives through different types of media. In other words, the reflective approach states that there cannot be representation of something that does not exist, which then sells us an idea that all the news makers publish something that is true and reconstruct it for the (Costa, 2012).

2.1.1.2 The Intentional Theory of Representation

Contrarily to the reflectionist approach, the intentional approach articulates a different view from the reflective theory and contends that the newsmakers or writers or anyone that communicates shares information and gives meaning to it based on language (Hall, 1997).

Ige (2016) argues that the intentional theory suggests that the producers of media texts use language to resolutely inflict meanings into media texts. The media texts

published for public consumption by producers of media texts reflect exactly and only what the producers wanted them to mean. He goes on to say that the intention theory implies that the orator or the writer imposes his or her exceptional sense on the globe through the use of language and this is usually founded on a set of ideas or ideology that is being conveyed, like the free market economy.

The deliberate method to representation highlights the intent of anyone that creates the information that is represented. This therefore implies that the newsmakers or representors deliberately creates the representation based on particular meanings, meanings that they comprehend and subsequent to that impose those particular meanings to the public who will consume the representation (Costa, 2012).

Hall (1997) indicates that writers of articles can produce their privileged linguistic or methods of communication. However, the fundamental nature of language evenly relies on mutual language rules and mutual codes rooted within organisations to be shared and understood. For representation to be published and understood these guidelines and conventions must be adhered to (Hall, 1997).

2.1.1.3 The Constructionist Approach

According to Hall (1997), the construction theory of representation is based on the argument that things do not mean and that meaning is based on what the media customs to embody their ideas and that media makes use of symbols to represent everything that exists in the world as well as reference to fantasy or conceptual ideas.

This therefore means that for any representation that is published or communicated to have meaning it is reliant on what a particular image, or an event that is represented stands for. The meanings that people make out of representative functions differ based on everyone's cultural background. In other words, the meaning depends on what

people make of it as informed by their societal background, cultural classifications, and different experiences (Ige, 2016).

Tan (2008) demonstrates this, using the Mona Lisa portrait, arguing that it is highly possible if the painting could be given to two people from completely different backgrounds, their interpretations would differ given the differences in their backgrounds.

While admitting the presence of the material world, this approach believes that sense is composed by us, utilising representative techniques, well-known as conception and symbols. Connotation and idea together with their related symbols are allocated indiscriminately with its real association. The constructionist approach gives us an opportunity to make up our particular meanings of what is being presented or provided to us based on our own experiences (Ige, 2016). Representation cannot be explicitly explored when the concept of stereotyping is omitted.

2.2 MASS MEDIA REPRESENTATION AND STEREOTYPING

2.2.1 Mass media representation

Mass media means publication of communication aimed at reaching significant audiences. Mass media can be explained as channels that transmit mass communication and mass communication can be whichever method of communicating by means of channels that spread to a large number of people (Wimmer & Dominick, 1994). Channels are modes of dispensing television shows, newspapers, songs, novels, internet services movies, video games, and many others (Campbell, Martin & Fabos, 2011).

Mass media has come to be a part of the public's lives. Of the time the public spends on mass media, one-third approximately encompasses simultaneous connections with

two or more other media channels. All this comprises going through a newspaper with one ear listening to the radio, tuning to a television programme with the other ear and at the same time surfing the internet (Vivian, 2012).

Mass media plays a role that is fundamental in advising the audience about what transpires around the world, mainly in those areas where the public lacks valid information and depends on media for information.

However, we must be considerate of the fact that the media tends to not represent the world as it is; rather, they contribute to its construction and maintenance by representing specific meanings and understandings of “reality” (Gorham, 1999; Happer & Philo, 2013).

Happer and Philo (2013) further argue that as much as these people depend on the media for information, they do not always absorb what the media says without analysing it, meaning that the media does not articulate what people should believe but rather influences their thinking.

This requirement should not be understood as if it implies that every person possess distinctive knowledge of every circumstance; after all, we experience our surroundings the same way as others do. It is logical to suppose that people with similar experiences and backgrounds will have similar worldviews and thus will perceive texts in similar ways (Gorham, 1999).

Florescu (2014) agrees and says mass media influences society through all channels that are there, and it should relay all the information for the consumer to either decide to reject or decode the information. Mass media is important in setting agendas and directing the public to have an interest in a specific subject, which automatically

influences the number and quality of topics that the members of the public debate (Happer & Philo, 2013).

In a report aimed at evaluating the representation of others by mass media, Fußsich (2010) states that mass media is an integral agent that assists the public in the process of comprehending, challenging, or continuing with the public knowledge on societal issues and international understanding as well as help inform the public on issues of public interest.

McCombs and Shaw (1972) agree with the above statements and further indicate that the mass media have the power to direct attention towards and away from public issues, which technically informs which challenges will the society taken into consideration or ignore, as only the issues that happen to gain publicity could make people think about societal and political consequences outside their direct knowledge and provoke political awareness.

Fußsich (2010) states that over hundreds of years, the media, including newspapers, played a vital role in informing and demonstrating the state in Europe and in America as well as in post-colonial countries where the mass media were used as a significant tool in the efforts towards building nations. This was informed by Agenda Setting Theory, which is a theory that discourses on how the mass media influences the public in making a certain subject the public agenda as well as influence how reporters choose to relay news (Lippmann, 1922).

2.2.1.1 Agenda-Setting Theory

According to Ige (2016), before publication media texts are constructed, selected, and edited as per the media house's preferences, informed by the desired type of message to be communicated to the audiences and sometimes informed by the type of meaning

that the media house wants the public to perceive about the mass media text and this is Agenda Setting Theory.

Agenda-setting occurs when the author desires the readers to comprehend a particular issue in a specific way or be able to construct a storyline about it. The conventional hypothesis of influence and attitude change research is discussed along with the paradoxical results of often poor connections between media coverage measurements and attitude alteration. Newsroom employees or editors typically perform a significant function in forming or reproducing realistic stories when choosing stories. Through the amount of information, they receive, readers not only acquire knowledge but also develop an understanding of how to value stories (Zain, 2014; Magade & Mazwai, 2019).

Agenda Setting Theory was developed in 1922 when Walter Lippmann described it as one of the critical roles that mass media plays in persuading how people set certain images in their minds (Lippmann, 1922).

While trying to show how mass media persuades the public's mind, Lippmann gave an example of people who could have been enemies as their countries were at war. Those people managed to live pleasantly on an island instead of becoming enemies. This was because they did not have media to inform them about the war. Lippmann (1922) explains how mass media can set an agenda that can influence the way the public thinks and acts.

According to Littlejohn and Foss (2009), Agenda Setting Theory entails the relations among the issues the media put emphasis on as well as how the public or the media audience reacts to that issue. Littlejohn and Foss (2009) further explain that Agenda Setting Theory is a philosophy that argues exactly how the mass media make a

particular issue a public agenda. The public agenda is the core focus, which the public society is concerned about (Mc Combs & Shaw, 1972).

The public depends on the media for information; therefore, the media should not be selective when reporting on issues, especially issues that have an impact on the future (Moerdyk, 2012).

According to Littlejohn and Foss (2009), Agenda Setting Theory explains the relationships among the issues that the media put emphasis on and how the public or the media audience reacts to that issue. This means that the media reports on issues that they believe will likely make a public agenda or issues that the public will give attention to, and this is influenced by the effect of stereotypes.

2.2.2 Stereotypes in the media

Stereotypes refer to expectations that certain people have about people of particular societal groups or even individuals. Stereotypes categorise beliefs about the characters, traits, and capabilities of people in different societal groups influenced by the information stored in our minds. (Lippman, 1922; Ashmore & Del Boca, 1981).

Stereotypes are frequently considered as erroneous over-generalisations perpetuated by generally leading groups about generally underrepresented populations, due to the fact that they have been widespread within the media to various extents for several years, they are typically viewed as such (Stroman, Merritt & Matabane, 1989). Stereotypes are classified into two basic categories: identifying and ascribing. This indicates that stereotypes are formed as a result of how we identify specific groups and situations, as well as what we believe is linked with those groups and situations (Ashmore & Del Boca, 1981).

Popova and Balezina (2015) add that stereotypes come in a variety of forms, namely, political stereotypes, which influence how people view nations or their leaders, ethnic stereotypes which are a reflection of both the emotional and judgmental attitude towards ethnic group members and the actual knowledge of this group and gender stereotypes where concepts of feminine and masculine social duties are created.

Stereotypes can also differ and vary from individual to individual or from one societal group to the other. These expectations about personalities, preferences, or abilities, and it is always assumed that these stereotypes are true. However, these stereotypes may sometimes be incorrect depending on the circumstances of each and every individual they are applied on. They also lead to categorisation based societal standards, which tends to result to prejudice (Ashmore & Del Boca, 1981).

This also affects news production and distribution, as evidenced by a variety of groupings in our communities that have been represented due to how they have been categorised and based on labels that certain mass media houses have propagated about such individuals (Seiter, 1986; Popova & Balezina, 2015).

There have been many instances where the media would decide to write or film a particular person on the basis that they heard about them on the radio or read about them without verifying the context of the story they are writing about because stereotypes are more rooted in persons who do not have the information on a particular issue (Littlejohn & Foss, 2009; Popova & Balezina, 2015).

The style of writing and reporting of certain topics in the mass media influences how the public relate to those reported topics. According to Ana (2002), how people think depends on what pictures and metaphors their minds are familiar with. These pictures and metaphors build in people's minds the way in which they will see and comprehend what happens in the world.

Prasad, Balraj, and Beng (2016) argue that this makes it easy for individuals to spot stereotypes when they are published in the media as stereotypes first occur in our communities before the media can recreate and publish them. Selekane (2014) adds that the media publish these stereotypes based on the knowledge that the public is attracted to issues they might have already heard about; this then warrants them to buy the content published.

A study undertaken to evaluate the influence of media stereotypes on views and outlooks towards the Latinos in America established that mass media messages have a considerable stronger effect on destructive stereotypes (Manzano & Reny, 2012). A large number of people were exposed to negative information compared to those who received good information about Latinos in all media venues.

The media mostly reported about Latinos being involved in criminal activities, families being too large, and reported stories giving impressions about Latinos being illegal immigrants, promoting the idea that they are associated with a culture of crime and gangs (Manzano & Reny, 2012).

2.3 SOUTH AFRICAN MEDIA AND APARTHEID

This section offers an insight into the antiquity of South African news media in the epoch of apartheid. This era was crucial to this study as it helped to trace the genealogy that is predominantly deployed to represent black people. It also helped the researcher trace the inception of certain stereotypes that are continuing and comprehend which ones have been discontinued.

During apartheid, the press that was created for black people was not given a chance to grow due to rules that were meant to limit media from broadcasting on politics of black people as well as covering vital political issues and developments, that occurred in areas meant for black people (Hadland, 2007).

According to Lloyd (2013), the mainstream media were accused of reporting the government unfavourably during apartheid. There were four big publication houses that were owned primarily by those that owned the mining houses and all of them had control of the press that reported in the English language or business interests in Afrikaans.

These businesses were precipitously incorporated where printing and distribution were involved in instructing what to be printed and which areas must the publications be distributed in. Broadcasting was mainly operated by the government with the broadcaster that was state-owned, the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC), which was working as a misinformation arm for the state (Lloyd, 2013).

This was challenged in the 1980s when several anti-apartheid newspapers were launched and funded by funders from outside the country. These were established by prominent reporters who happened to be disturbed due to the fact that newspaper that were on the mainstream could not write about how brutal the then government was, and these were published weekly (Alhadeff, 2018).

Alhadeff (2018) continues to say more newsletters and independent newspapers started to publish targeting to inform South African audiences of the issues that were neglected by existing media houses. These newspapers and magazines started to report and distribute in rural areas. During this time, the apartheid government had put in place a system of laws that governed and restricted what could be published in the media and what was supposed to be reported.

Lloyd (2013) adds that the ruling government during apartheid was threatened by the publications as they were mushrooming. The publications were banned by the apartheid government and most of them were banned for long periods with some editors detained as well as journalists who were working for those publications.

By mid-1987, emergency laws were imposed on eight journalists who were put under detention. However, this was publicly announced as they were in detention for their writing that contributed to the unrest and not for their journalism or owning these publications (Lloyd, 2013).

Vic Alhadeff states that (as someone who was employed as a leading sub-copy reader of *The Cape Times*, which was the daily paper that was published in Cape Town),

functioning as a head of a publication that was unrepentant in publishing anti-apartheid news was a persistent trial as they exposed the evils of the apartheid system and informed the communities about what was happening. He continues to say they were only able to publish those stories because the government was respectful of the rules of the whites (Alhadeff, 2018).

According to Bird and Garda (1997), the media were not allowed to be seen promoting the missions of the banned organisation or even reporting what was said by a banned media outlet, even publishing photos of those that were banned was prohibited. The media were not allowed to publish rallies that were to be hosted by Nelson Mandela as that would be promoting the works of a banned person or organisation. They were only publicly referred to by government ministers as communists and terrorists.

Whilst it was known that unlawful acts developed due to Soweto uprisings, instead of focusing on the protesting pupil's rights to education that were violated, the media paid attention to the unlawful, revolutionary, and disruptive behaviour of criminals (Bird & Garda, 1997).

Television in South Africa arrived in the 1970s and during that time, different media houses with different purposes were already dominating the world but in South Africa, they did not have an opportunity to broadcast as technology was not yet given a chance to converge due to the apartheid laws that were still ruling the country (Hadland, 2007).

The effects of apartheid were still showing in the country as significant investments from outside South Africa were not allowed until 1993, which left a huge division between different newspapers, especially those that wrote in English and Afrikaans as

they were the only newspapers in the country that were allowed to report freely (Kolbe, 2005).

Media, knowingly or unintentionally, frequently played a huge part in trying to make apartheid legit as well as change how apartheid operated. Even so, the English and Afrikaans newspapers operated inversely when it came to this as they failed to satisfactorily contest the mechanisms, strategies, and actions of the state that was ruling during that time (Wasserman & De Beer, 2005).

Media houses that reported in Afrikaans supported the state during both periods by devotedly covering news in a way that braced apartheid. It was seldom for media houses who reported in Afrikaans media to criticise how the government performed and one could never find in their stories an indication where it would be stated that the ruling state was wrong. The rules that were put in place to make sure that black-dominated newspapers did not broadcast gave a platform for Afrikaans newspapers to support the apartheid system (Bird & Garda, 1997).

However, media houses that reported in English were often against the administration on its ethnic rules, they challenged the state through stories they published. Even so, that did not fully change the rules that were set by the administration. The English press also commonly banned protests as well as the liberation struggle. The English press would also report on the then government in a polite manner, however, they in some instances reported in a manner that provides a bit of balance and in a way that provided informative news (Tomaselli, 2004).

In all the English-language reporting newspapers, there was a government appointed spy who would be a member of the staff who worked for the Bureau for State Security (BOSS). This was not a secret as everyone in the media houses who their BOSS agent

was. These agents would inform the Magistrate's Office of stories that would be published, the day before publishing. The Magistrate would place a ban on publishing a particular story and ordering media houses to pull the story out (Alhadeff, 2018).

Lloyd (2013) asserts that the first exploratory moves towards the birth of black press relied on solely publishing religious content, recording the system on how people could write and spell African words that were never put on record before. A Xhosa magazine *Ikwezi* (Morning Star) was established in 1844 followed by *Indaba* (The News) in 1862.

In 1857, the primary genuine newspaper that was aimed at informing Bantu people emerged as the Sechuana publication *Molekudi ua Bechuana*, followed by the Transvaal, *Moshupa-Tsela* (The Guide), and *Mahoko a Becwana* (The Bechuana News). The raging expansion of black media, which was mostly autonomous of spiritual and other government influences, commenced in 1884 with *Imvo Zabantsundu* (African Opinions) which was reporting in an African language. This newspaper was based in Ciskei, founded by Jo Tengu Jabavu (Lloyd, 2013).

2.4 POST-APARTHEID MEDIA

The media were the first sphere to experience the transformations with the deregulation of the state monopoly in the run-up to the 1994 election, as with the introduction of democracy, there was immense change in the broadcasting landscape, and different structures were developed to regulate the media in South Africa (Hadland, Louw & Sesanti, 2008).

However, this was a struggle with political interference and censorship in a racially biased country. This stems from the multifariousness of colonial dispensation dating back to European imperialism with Britain and Netherlands by colonizing South Africa from the mid-16th century (Kolbe, 2005).

There have been enormous variations despite the interferences as there had been noticeable changes in the media space, the use of tabloids, the way the internet has grown, and substantial changes in media house ownership shows enough evidence that there has been transformation (Hadland, 2007).

The Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (ICASA), which was formed by the merger between the telecommunications regulator in 2000 and the Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA), has issued licenses to more than two hundred (200) local radio stations and five(5) local television stations, profitable broadcasting stations reporting in various towns and cities, including one(1) nationwide free-to-air private television station. The SABC was announced as a public broadcasting agency which meant that its board members would be nominated openly and would account to Parliament (Lloyd, 2013).

On 27 April 1994, South Africa formally moved from being a controlling country and became a democracy. The negotiation for a free country started in 1990 and these ended decades of oppressive rules that restricted media from reporting news objectively. This transition brought rights that gave the media freedom to report freely. This is stated in the Constitution of South Africa where it also states that everyone has the right to express themselves without fear as well as have access to information (Hadland et al., 2008).

The Bill of Rights is the paramount legislative transformation influencing how the media houses operate in democratic South Africa (Wasserman & De Beer, 2005). The changes influenced by the constitution relating to the everyone's rights to freedom of expression and the freedom provided to the media matched the reconfigurations that the media space was already practising. This includes deviations in patterns in who

owns the media. Enforcing these improvements influenced the individuality of the media houses from administration and an environment where the media would operate freely (Jacobs & Johnson, 2004).

However, in the ensuing debates about the role played by media in our communities, it was clear that different people understood the responsibilities of the media differently and in those debates, there was a variety of views on what issues should the media show interest in and what role should media play in our society (Hadland, 2007).

2.5 RACE AND MASS MEDIA

The media in the mainstream have always struggled with prejudice, lack of empowerment, and discrimination in terms of race. This happened in various areas which include news reporting. These racial seclusions were a contentious subject from the beginning of broadcast media, and this commenced in 1939 when television was being introduced with (Gay, 2014).

Peffley, Shields, and Williams (1996) discovered the capacity of stereotyped portrayals on television to influence subsequent behaviour by manipulating the racial standing of a featured suspect in a story that is televised. Peffley et al. (1996) used real news reporting on a prostitute that was murdered, and the accused was a white male who was 36 years of age. The story showed a video that was seven seconds long with the suspect being brought with handcuffs. The story was seen by half of the subjects and the remainder of the subjects were shown a video with the same concept but with a black man.

Everyone that saw the videos got a chance to discuss whether the suspects were guilty and what could be an appropriate penalty for each. Peffley et al. (1996) discovered that not just the suspect's race, but also the subject's biased level

influenced guilt assessments. That is, participants who viewed the news item with the black man significantly believed the black man was guilty of the offence than those that viewed a video showing the white man.

An inquiry report by the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) on Racism in Media (2000) found that the idea that all black people are dishonest, and incompetent is frequently spread by news articles and opinion pieces. Blacks and whites are handled differently, and this is due to the fact that media ownership is still primarily white. As a result, white men continue to dominate public opinion on all contemporary topics, whether they be political, social, economic, or educational in character. The report also found that the media reject letters written by black people in response to pieces in which they are criticised.

Wasserman, Bosch, and Wallace (2016) concur and argue that the South African media lack representation of the underprivileged and that when the media report on issues that affect the poor directly, their opinions are not prioritised. Protests frequently receive negative coverage and are reported only because they inconvenience the middle-class audience, such as informing them where traffic may be disrupted. This is proven by the fact that even though the actions of protesters are being reported, they are never interviewed, and the reporting frequently lacks depth and context to explain the underlying issues that lead to the protests.

Stereotypes that occur in mass media have a potential to reinforce unfair, detrimental, and ruling considerations of race through persuading how individuals perceive the media by doing so again and consistently. This happens whether the individual involved is aware of such or even agrees with the stereotype (Magade & Mazwai, 2019). Racial stereotypes are operationalised myths that are framed as beliefs that

are realistically occurring in our societies founded on affiliation of groups (Gorham, 1999).

2.5.1 Class and the media

Inequalities based on class and race are an aspect that has been a part of South African life starting from when the Dutch landed in 1652 at the Cape of Good Hope. Throughout the 1950s, the news media focused on educated whites while ignoring the majority of impoverished and uneducated blacks. As time went by prosperous black readers mushroomed and the media houses could not offer a special incentive to allow for a newspaper dominated by semi-literate and poor blacks (Kolbe, 2005).

This was also the case in other countries as well as issues that were highly discussed likely reflected what the dominant groups were interested in and this was based on the orders of corporations that were powerful at the time. While insignificant gatherings held by poor people who are ethnic minorities were in danger of being devalued and generalized in the media (Schudson, 1990).

Society's dominant understandings often correspond to the dominant understandings of its social groups. Classist prejudices about poor people's traits and behaviour are widespread. Those in positions of authority have the potential to define prevailing understandings and, as a result, have a huge ability to make their beliefs appear normal (Gorham, 1999).

The media promote this view by demonstrating the wealthy's interests as general issues while diminishing structural financial concerns of those who are working-class as well as poor (e.g., job security, income), and emphasising collective concerns (e.g., safety, crime). By toning down financial instability the media encourages working-class individuals to classify with a politically neutralised worldwide medium class. This

strategy is vividly shown by the extensive media coverage of the improved economy and affluence linked together with sector specialising in information technology sector (Bullock, Fraser Wyche & Williams, 2001).

The underprivileged would be described as “outcasts” who stray from the middle-class does things and this then causes the media to devote limited airtime on radio, TV and print for privileges relating to class, differences in power as well as inequalities. The same category of people is degraded to people that are invisible or described using defects surrounding them and these normally include abuse, criminality, violent behaviours (Sidel, 1996).

Compared to fictitious characters, you only get to see people that earn minimal incomes in midafternoon chat shows and in programmes that broadcast stories that are based real life programmes to talk about crime. However, in both kinds of programming, the low-income class are shown using a skewed and unfavourable light. The pictures and words presented on talk shows, which are among the few public forums where the perspectives of people that earn minimal incomes are heard on a national level; sadly, focus on unhealthy relationships, adultery, and rebellious, promiscuous young girls.

These representations support the idea that people that earn minimal incomes women are insignificant role models and unreliable parents to their children (Bullock et al., 2001).

This also affects how the low matric pass rate is represented in the media. The media solely reports on how incompetent the matriculants are in the rural areas and leaves out the causes for the low matric pass rate (Equal Education, 2017). These causes are discussed in the section below.

2.6 CONTRIBUTING FACTORS TO THE LOW MATRIC PASS RATE AS INFLUENCED BY APARTHEID

It is undeniable that even though South Africa has been a democratic state for over 20 years, the former Model C schools and those that served mainly learners of colour during the apartheid are still efficient regardless of the fact that the schools now accommodate learners across races. However, the greater part of the ones that cater for learners that are black are still not functioning well and they do not successfully convey and provide required literacy and mathematical skills to its learners (Kallaway, 1997).

These differences in South African schools are due to apartheid, which ensued when British settlers arrived and claimed South Africa as if it belonged to them. Before the arrival of these settlers, all students, regardless of ethnicity, were welcomed at schools that were funded by the government (Fredickson, 1981).

According to Phillips (1999), free blacks and whites including slaves that had an opportunity to have their education paid by their owners had the same quality of education. No one was given precedence depending on the colour of their skin or the caliber of their education. However, the schools that the government started to build in 1822 tended to turn away non-white students but this was not an official policy. The tuition at these institutions merely rose beyond what blacks could afford. Many mission schools were therefore established to accept black students to address the need for accessible, cheap education.

Bonner, Delius, and Posel (1993) argue that this was not a sufficient fix as the majority of children in metropolitan areas could not be reached by mission schools, depriving the vast majority of black youths of a fair opportunity to pursue an education. Crime

rates thus reached unprecedented heights. Because the government was powerless to overpower perceptions that would be planted to them as a result many educators and administrators started to worry that this trigger mobilisation of politics. As a result, the government instituted a Bantu education policy.

Bonner et al. (1993) continue to say that four years of study was viewed as sufficient to educate pupils for semi-skilled labour at the commencement of the Bantu Education Act that was aimed at restricting heights to which black men may ascend in the professional and educational world and was a tool for apartheid. Only those who were familiar with the educational system and its problems could see that they were being conned and started protests against the Bantu Education system.

Spaull (2015) argues that the Bantu Education era passed following the protests; however, the effects of the apartheid still exist as a result poor students in South Africa perform poorly in their academics, especially from the primary grades as grades one (1) to three (3).

Spall (2015) continues to say, this is due to the fact that the syllabus is all about pushing learners to learn to read and from grades four (4) upwards, the syllabus is all about pushing learners to read to learn which means that pupils that find it difficult to read confidently and effortlessly when they finish grade four(4), they will not participate in the remainder of their syllabus in the way that they should.

A pre-matric results media statement published on 04 January 2017 by Equal Education (2017), reflects that the media reports on the performance of the learners that did not quit school during the prescribed twelve years and ignores the number of those that dropped out, the poor matric performance is also caused by this.

A study led by McMillan and Schumacher (2001) stated that lack of intelligence could not be the only cause for poor learner academic performance. The study stated that low academic achievement has root causes, there might be causes such as their daily lives and socio-economic elements that might also cause an intelligent pupil to perform poorly.

Nkanzela (2015) states that major contributors to low academic performance include inability for parents to support their children, dilapidated roads, and inadequate number of qualified educators and physical facilities. These causes and other issues around education need to be reported.

Rammala (2009) explains that poor academic performance is also caused by issues like divorce and death, which are regarded as extremely sensitive matters to deal with. He also explains that the causes vary from student to student. Some of the major causes are listed in the paragraphs below and these are the discourses that should always be in the media on the issue of matric results.

2.6.1 Learners that are heading homes

Learners who are heading home due to death, substance abuse by parents, or absence of parents that are in another town for job opportunities fail their studies because they are traumatised and are responsible for a lot. Parent contribution to their children's learning has been found to be undoubtedly connected to the way a pupil performs academically. Children who have are fully supported by them happen to have good academic results compared to those who have parents who are less involved (Topor et al., 2010).

2.6.2 Parents' level of education

Nkanzela (2015) highlights that a parent's level of education influences learner performance, as parents are expected to encourage and support pupils with their school work. Pupils who are not supported by their parents' end up failing their grades.

Topor et al. (2010) add that parents have a way of expressing their attitudes towards education to their children at home. These attitudes are revealed in how the child behaves in the classroom and the relationship teachers have with the child and the parents. What parents do at their homes and school and the attitudes parents have on their child's education have been defined as parents' contribution.

Some of the issues that prevent parents from assisting and supporting their learners include being uneducated due to some parents dropping out of school early and some not attending school which means that they illiterate, non-attendance school meetings due to shame as well as not being efficient in English. This then causes parents to be unwilling to support their children with schoolwork or even attend meetings (Ngcongco, 2016).

2.6.3 Socioeconomic Issues

A study conducted by Arnold, Newman, Gaddy, and Dean (2005) discovered that the apartheid created inequality in income and also created spatial exclusion of certain population groups and this was revealed by the level of education that was offered in public schools post the apartheid regime in South Africa.

Rural schools have different challenges than urban schools and this is because of geographic isolation. Geographical location becomes important in situations where dissemination of access prospects is not equal. An example of this is when schools that are good are established in areas that are urban which then requires the students

that want this quality of education to leave their homes and move closer to the schools. This was more prevalent during apartheid in South Africa where apartheid guidelines resulted to people being separated and placed in different areas which indirectly meant that these people were not getting the same level education or even access thereof (Yamauchi, 2011).

As much as some of the rural schools have overcome these challenges, some still experience them, with one of these being English language proficiency, which causes students to misunderstand examination questions (Arnold et al., 2005).

Nkanzela (2015) adds that learners are also faced with poverty. The research states that most learners come from homes that are poverty-stricken and go to school with empty stomachs. As a result, they do not concentrate on their work.

2.6.4 Absenteeism by Educators

A good relationship between a student and a teacher is a result of closeness, dependency, and lack of conflict and this results in good results. As a result, absenteeism by educators, new curricula that educators must learn, as well as excessive workloads, cause learners to fail (Topor et al., 2010).

Schools can get positive results when teachers understand what they teach and when teachers are not absent and are close to their learners, as learners mostly depend on their teachers. Closeness is how much warmth there is and free communication between a learner and a teacher, dependency is relying fully on the teacher as a basis of support, and conflict is how much friction there is between teacher and learners when interacting (Topor et al., 2010).

2.6.5 Lack of educators

In a study conducted by Ngcongco (2016), the lack of educators was found to be one of the causes of low matric performance. It was also found that South Africa is faced with a serious concern with regards to the available educators versus the students especially in underprivileged areas of demarcation as most educators do not want to work in these areas. In addition to that, many educators transfer to urban from rural schools, which leaves a serious lack of teachers in the schools they leave. This badly affects rural schools, mainly in the subjects that are considered to be scarce such as Mathematics and Science (Nkanzela, 2015).

2.6.6 Lack of physical facilities

The lack of learner support materials and facilities like libraries and laboratories has been found by many scholars as one possible contributor to poor academic performance (Fan & Chen, 1998). Nkanzela (2015) agrees that a lack of libraries causes low matric performance, as teachers and learners struggle to get the prescribed books.

Several studies conducted in South Africa revealed that excessive dissimilarities in the level of support provided to different schools situated in different areas which indirectly affects the passing rate in these schools. A survey that was conducted on general households also revealed vast inequalities with regards to matric pass rates which translate to only 44% black and coloured students while white students translated to 88% and 83 % Indians.

This simply means that these inequalities between relate to the backgrounds of the pupils as the well performing pupils were likely to come from wealthy families and those that underperform come from poor families. This is due to the fact that the level

of education provided to underprivileged areas from as early as primary school is not the same as the one provided to schools that are based in urban areas. This means that the children in rural areas miss the basics of education, and this affects how these learners comprehend once they get to high school (Spaull, 2015).

2.6.7 Re-admission of Grade 12 failures

Nkanzela (2015) found the system of admitting grade twelve failures to be one of the causes of low matric performance as it increases the numbers in classes. Shortage of furniture and classrooms disallows newly admitted grade twelve learners from getting individual attention. This also results to futile schooling as it becomes difficult for learners to do classroom-based activities well.

2.6.8 Promotion of pupils

The promotion of pupils that are doing Grades 10-12 can be promoted from grade to grade until grade 11, given that they have obtained and finished the required assessments. This cannot be done for pupils to get the final certification in Grade 12, as pupils have to study and pass their examinations to comply with the certification requirements. This is one of the issues that cause a learning backlog as the pupils are promoted to Grade 12, but do not make it to passing Grade 12 (Spaull, 2015).

2.7 CRITICAL POLITICAL ECONOMY OF THE MEDIA AND THE SOCIOLOGY OF NEWS PRODUCTION

Media companies deliberately set up conditions in democratic societies where the media have no choice but to abide by the standards and guidelines established by the supra-financial authorities. In this manner, the media certainly take the root of enslavement against the huge amount offered by the corporation (Golding & Murdock, 2000).

Critical Political Economy studies the way the media houses' s political and economic organization affects how production and circulation of news unfolds as well as how political economy affects the construction of meaning in the mass media. It also connects the circulation of representative and physical resources that help the public comprehend, interconnect, and react amongst other people (Hardy, 2014).

The critical political economy is more concerned about the structure of media creation, as well as the results that result from financial availability and authority influence. It is a critique of the ownership and funding concepts characterized by being historical, comprehensive, and moralistic. The analysis of content consumption to production, as well as its ownership and use of resources, aids in understanding why things are the way people see them (Hesmondhalgh, 2002).

Golding and Murdock (2000) further add that Critical Political Economy uses the Marxist approach when studying media and while studying media several questions arise, including the question of who owns the media, understanding which classes of economy get to access the media as well as investigate how media content is affected by commercial proprietorship as well as whether the owners of the broadcasting houses are open to publishing various opinions without having to influence them.

CPE allows one to understand how owners of media houses affect the way which news are produced and broadcasted in their media houses everything as well as everything that is involved in the production of news and everything that takes place in newsrooms when news is being created (Hardy, 2014).

The main activity of mass media is reporting on events without leaving out any facts. When media houses report they need to state who is involved, what transpired, where

it occurred, why it occurred, and how it occurred, and clearly state the impact and influence that issue has, but without infringing anyone's rights (Happer & Philo, 2013).

Selekane (2014) adds that media owners do not just handle their media houses, they are also investors in different organisations outside the media industry, which has changed media ownership completely. The material that the various media outlets generate is then impacted since the media owners have a say in what should and should not be published depending on their interests and the interests of the organisations in which they have invested.

2.8 SOCIOLOGY OF NEWS PRODUCTION: NEWS VALUES AND JOURNALISTIC BIAS

The concepts of how news is produced give an insight into what unfolds when news is created. The sociology of news production, which is an essential fragment of Critical Political Economy, contributes to offering an understanding on what influences the creation of news stories and what journalistic values are used to give guidelines on how the news should be produced. One of the factors is that news is what the newsmen make, depending on the methods employed by journalists (Schudson, 1989).

2.8.1 News values and journalistic bias

Media houses should report the news as unbiased as possible and not leave out some information or fabricate information as it is an obligation for the media to report news honestly, precisely, and fairly. News broadcasted by a media house that upholds news values is broadcasted in context and a sensible approach, without leaving out information deliberately by means of distortion or summarising the story (The South African Press Code, 2012).

Hall (1983) argues that news ethics have become the modern world's ambiguous systems as few journalists are able or ready to recognize the values and define them, despite the fact that all certified broadcasters should practice upholding these news values. Hall (1983) continues to say news values are a structure that is supposed to be used as a device to select news that should and should not be broadcasted but still journalists do not uphold news values.

Schudson (1989) states that news is chosen by journalists who are gatekeepers that decide which piece of prefabricated news goes to the public as a means of reducing the amount of information published. It is no secret that there are a number of events that occur on a daily basis throughout the globe, but it is just a small percentage of them ever come to light and get to be broadcasted or published and whenever these are broadcasted, they are broadcasted as though they are the only news that were worth publishing on that particular day (Hall,1983).

This is influenced by the owners of the publication who choose what they would like to be published depending on their interests as media owners, including the interests of those advertisements on the publication, as the interaction of officials from a certain news bureaucracy and those that advertise on a publication influences news generation intersect (Schudson, 1989). Harcup and O'neil (2017) argue that in some instances, the authority given to a journalist that decides what becomes published is dependent on the publication that the journalist works for, the type of news they produce, and the level of that particular publication.

This then gives an idea that the media represent issues that are convenient to their specific media houses, meaning that they tend to be subjective, and report based on

their opinions and emotions instead of reporting on a sensible approach (Press Ombudsman, 2019).

2.8.2 Advertising influence on the media

Curran (1996) indicates that advertisements make up part of the media, including news, so much that one would believe that media and advertising are a bundle. Media organisations use advertisements to collect revenue from advertisers while advertisers use media organisations to attract customers to buy their products, services, and brands.

Advertising is a hidden funding scheme for the mass media and various media and news organisations contest want to get support from the publicists and these publicists only want to attract their customers and they do this by advertising their products or services in established publishing or broadcasting entities (Curran, 1996).

It is unfortunate that advertising revenue has become the main source of income for media houses and this assists the media houses as advertisers sometimes advertise regardless of whether their customers will see or hear the advert but with the hope to get to attract new customers and they are usually willing to pay more as long as they are going to reach the desired audience (Lauerer, 2019).

According to Wasserman and de Beer (2007), the interests in advertising impact media reporting, especially news organisation in diverse ways and up to various levels as advertisers often have an influence on the topics that are selected for publishing as well as how media texts are constructed in attempts to blend advertising and editorial content.

Wasserman & de Beer (2005) continue to state that this is due to the fact that the management of media organisations gets to have pressure to generate income, which

sometimes becomes an offset in a journalist's vow to professional writing. This is because journalists can be sometimes asked to deliberately shun information and subsequently protect the media organisation's investors.

2.8.3 Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

The main goal of CDA is to locate the rhetorical determinants of authority, inequality, bias, and power through research and text analysis of both spoken and written texts. It investigates how certain social, political, and historical circumstances maintain and replicate these discursive sources (Tenorio, 2011).

Similarly, Fairclough (1995) defines CDA as a method of discourse analysis that seeks to methodically investigate the generally translucent causal relationships and the determination within social, linguistic, and cultural structures. This is to investigate how such take place and how they are shaped philosophically by connections to power. This helps clarify links that could be ambiguous to a layperson between language customs, societal customs, and social frameworks.

CDA is essential for understanding how the world is perceived, understood, and interpreted, whether there is any information excluded. Exclusion of information can include the use of persuasive terminology, which can sometimes intentionally or unintentionally mislead the audiences as well as promote domination and power abuse (Burcu & Okan, 2017; Gorrham, 1999).

Rashid (2020) refers to CDA as an excellent technique for uncovering power abuse as it exposes how powerful groups' beliefs are more dominant than less privileged groups' views in the same community.

In CDA, analysis can be done top-down or bottom-up, with the beginning point being the linguistic detail. The top-down analysis starts with an analyst's understanding of

the content. However, in actuality, both of them are combined. An analyst searches for the meaning that is embedded in phrases and how it interacts with context to produce impact. In this sense, an analyst is just acting like a standard reader, but with a higher understanding of the comprehension processes, their potential effects, and how they relate to a larger body of prior information than the typical reader may consider to be pertinent (Tenorio, 2011).

For this study, CDA was used to provide a theoretical lens on the coverage of the low matric pass rate and investigate whether any information was omitted by analysing and identifying the sources used by the *Daily Dispatch* when reporting on the low matric pass rate in quantile 1-3 schools in the Eastern Cape, as well as to evaluate whether comprehensive coverage is granted.

2.9 CONCLUSION

This chapter concentrated on two major topics: the literature review that contextualised the research problem and the theoretical framework that supported this investigation. The concept of representation was widely debated in the literature. Following that, the role of media outlets during the time South Africa was under the apartheid and in democratically governed South Africa, as well as race representation in the media, and the contributing causes to the low matric pass rate and CDA as the theoretical framework, were explained.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The approach used for this investigation is presented in this chapter. It also provides insight into the research methodology, sampling techniques, data gathering techniques, and analysis techniques used for this study. It is also detailed how Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) was utilised to analyse the data gathered for this study.

3.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM

According to Rahi (2017), the research paradigms serve as the theoretical foundation of a study and offers a structure of presumptions and understandings upon which the hypotheses and methods of the research investigation are founded. Rahi (2017) continues to say that a research paradigm comprises a variety of elements, including ontology, epistemology, and research methodology. According to Al-Saadi (2014), these factors help uncover distinct philosophical stances and discussions regarding the essence of truth and knowledge, and as a result, different strategies and approaches should be employed when conducting a study.

Snape and Spencer (2003) indicate that for a researcher to be able to choose a methodology and frameworks for a study they are about to conduct, ontological and epistemological assumptions must be uncovered. In other words, one's ontological premises and arguments should guide and be understood through the data gathering, analysis, and interpretation procedures that are adopted.

3.2.1 Ontology

Crotty (1998) defines research ontology as the investigation of being and their relationships. It can also be described as something that reflects an explanation of what constitutes a fact and is simply the study of the things believed to be real (Snape & Spencer, 2003).

3.2.2 Epistemology

Epistemology refers to people's beliefs about knowledge and how they may acquire information about the world around them (Richards, 2003). Crotty (1998) defines epistemology as a method of understanding the world around us and how to view it. It entails understanding and represents a certain vision of what such knowledge entails.

According to Cohen et al. (2007), epistemology is concerned with one's assumptions about the fundamental underpinnings of knowledge, how it comes into being and form, how it can be attained, and how it is transmitted to other humans.

A major philosophical question is raised by the study's onto-epistemology. It calls to question whether the public's subjective assessment of the low matric pass rate in the rural Eastern Cape relates to factual truth. It raises the question of whether or not the general public is always constrained by the *Daily Dispatch's* vision and interpretation in the representation of the low matric pass rate in the rural Eastern Cape. It goes on to question whether the representation of the low matric pass rate reveals its causes as they are?

3.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research technique, according to Leedy and Ormrod (2010), is a systematic approach of collecting, examining, and interpreting information to strengthen the available knowledge about a particular issue that the researcher is interested in knowing about. Cibangu (2010) agrees and articulates that research methodology is a methodical approach to discovering study inquiries through information, statistics scrutiny, or sampling techniques.

To explain research methodology further, Rajkumar (2015) indicates that research methodology is considered a set of rules, values, philosophies, and prescribed settings that guide a methodical analysis to arrange and intensify the information people have about a particular phenomenon.

In order to determine a research methodology for a study, a research philosophy must be ascertained, and this can be done by choosing the study's research paradigm. There are two main research paradigms namely, positivistic paradigm and the phenomenological (or interpretivist) paradigm (Collis & Hussey, 2003).

Positivistic paradigm is concerned with creating a comprehensive social structure that uses the scientific method to examine people using the quantitative method while phenomenological paradigm seeks explanations of the social reality using the qualitative method (Crotty, 1998).

The figure below shows the features of these paradigms:

Concept	Positivistic Paradigm	Phenomenological Paradigm
Data collection technique	Quantitative	Qualitative
Epistemology	Objectivist	Subjectivist
Practice	Scientific	Humanistic
Research philosophy	Experimentalist, Traditionalist	Interpretivist
Sample size	Large samples	Small samples
Research approach	Hypothesis testing	Generating theories
Collected data	Highly specific and precise	Rich and subjective
Location	Artificial	Natural
Reliability	high	low
Validity	low	high
Generalizability	Generalises from sample to population	Generalises from one setting to another

The Features of the Main Research Paradigms (Collis & Hussey, 2003)

Figure 1: The features of the main research paradigms

In this study, a phenomenological paradigm was chosen to conduct the qualitative study of the subjective knowledge and realities that directly affect the coverage granted by the *Daily Dispatch* newspaper to the low matric pass rate in quantile 1-3 schools situated in the Eastern Cape between 2015 and 2019.

3.3.1 Qualitative methodology

The aim of qualitative research is to generate knowledge that may advance the research topics.

Qualitative inquiry is any type of inquiry that yields conclusions that cannot be achieved through quantitative analysis or other methods of quantification.

Researching people's lives, experiences, performances, sentiments, and feelings is an example of qualitative inquiry (Hopkin, 1992).

Dellinger and Leech (2017) agree with the aforementioned assertion and claim that qualitative research does not rely on employing numbers or measures and instead focuses on situations that cannot be sufficiently explained by statistics.

Strauss and Corbin (1990) add that, qualitative research has three components, which include:

- data that are derived from a variety of sources; for example, interviews and documents;
- procedures used to deduce and arrange data as well as
- Written and verbal reports, which are articles.

According to Hopkin (1992), the methodology for qualitative research is about details and the processes of education; hence, it provides education with a functional and valuable research method. It raises the need to ascertain more about how the subjects of research feel about the information itself and that the qualitative research method was imagined to steadily provide responses to the questions that a particular study is seeking to respond to.

3.4 DATA COLLECTION METHODS

Draugalis and Plaza (2009) add that it is impossible to conduct this kind of sampling on a population that is too general; hence, a category has to be found. In this study, the category was *Daily Dispatch* articles that report on the low matric pass rate in quantile 1-3 schools of the Eastern Cape between 2015 and 2019. For this study, four (4) *Daily Dispatch* articles with information on the low matric pass rate in quantile 1-3

schools of the Eastern Cape between 2015 and 2019 were selected to gather information to respond to critical research questions.

The *Daily Dispatch* was chosen because it is located within the Eastern Cape, covers Eastern Cape topics, and has a higher likelihood of having articles relating to the study question.

East London's Beacon Bay is home to the *Daily Dispatch*, a kind of print journalism. The late Steve Biko, a pioneer of the Black Consciousness Movement, was a friend of this newspaper's editor Donald Woods from 1965 until 1977. Woods supported Biko through his editorials (Daily Dispatch, 2017).

The Daily Dispatch offered full-colour options to its readers and advertisers during its 100th anniversary and was the first publication in the country to provide such (Daily Dispatch, 2017).

News stories were sourced on *Dispatch Live*, which is an online newspaper for the *Daily Dispatch*. The search terms were “Matric pass rate in Eastern Cape” and “Eastern Cape Low Matric Pass Rate”.

The search outcomes were 241 000 and upon receipt of the articles, an online randomizer tool¹ was used to select the four articles as the research paradigm employed in this study allows for small sample sizes. This is also known as probability sampling where some form of random selection is used. This sampling method allows every single article from the world to have the same level of consideration for the

¹ <https://www.randomizer.org/#randomize>

sampling or the study as all sampled units are given the same weight (Etikan & Bala, 2017).

This tool, like the majority of computer-based “random number generators,” is best referred to since the numbers are produced by the use of an intricate algorithm (seeded by the computer’s clock) that creates the illusion of unpredictability. The technique used by Research Randomizer to produce its random numbers is the “Math.random” method found in the JavaScript language of programming.

The news articles analysed were all included in this study. The articles were copied into a Word document format and were attached.

3.5 DATA ANALYSIS

This study aimed to analyse and identify the sources employed by the *Daily Dispatch* in the stories relating to the low matric pass rate in quantile 1-3 schools for schools situated in the Eastern Cape and to evaluate whether extensive and comprehensive coverage is granted.

For the analysis of the chosen news articles for this study, Fairclough’s CDA was used. Instead of viewing language usage as solely an individual activity or the outcome of contextual factors, Fairclough (1995) views it as a social practice. This results in the definition of several consequences, including discourse as both a mode of activity and a method of representation.

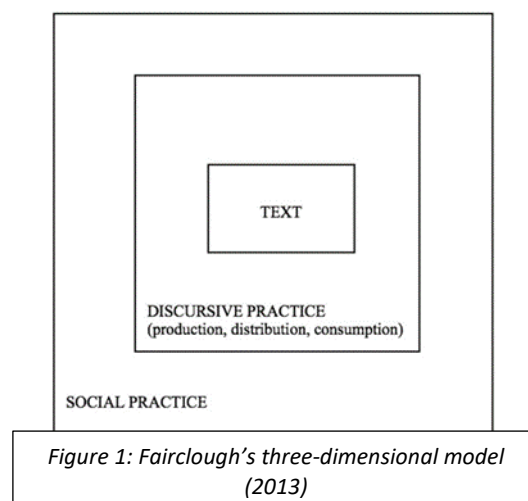
Similar to this, Gee (1999) asserts that language is inextricably linked to issues of politics, society, and power.

This suggests that language can be directed in a certain way to control how recipients interpret the signals that are sent.

These ideas play a significant influence in how a discourse affects society, such as their capacity to increase gender inequality and to develop an ethnic or cultural majority or minority (Wodak & Meyer, 2009). As a result, CDA seeks latent ideologies found in common ideas represented through various analogies and metaphors.

According to Van Dijk (2001), the most prevalent issues mentioned in CDA are 'authority,' 'supremacy,' 'global dominance,' 'philosophy,' 'sexual identity,' and 'ethnicity.' Power is symbolised by social organisations' power over the public and influence over the people's minds, which results in the replication of domination and supremacy.

Below is the Fairclough's three-dimensional framework model for CDA as well as its explanation.



Fairclough (1992) refers to text as the examination of either spoken or visual text, or both. The text encompasses images, sounds, colour, songs, and other elements in addition to linguistic constructions like clauses and sentences. Text analysis focuses in both the forms and the text's meaning. Rashid (2020) asserts that analysing the

meaning of a text is an extremely complicated task because it is inconclusive and open to multiple interpretations.

As indicated above, the following steps were undertaken to analyse the vocabulary, grammar, cohesion, and text structure of the article:

- Texts for analysis were chosen, comprising written content and illustrations in the form of images.
- By examining the tone of each of the articles, an exercise was conducted to find phrases and words that indicate the text's attitude toward its subject to figure out whether or not this was deliberate.
- Texts have the ability to make its readers believe what the reader wants them to believe, this is done by using precise language to make readers feel included and understood, such texts were identified.
- Textual biases about the topic matter of the article were detected in areas where language, tone, and phrase selections were used.

The second dimensional approach that was employed is the discursive practice. Rashid (2020) describes the discursive practice as the steps taken in creating and analysing the text. The following inquiries are necessary for that reason: "Who produced the object?", "What is the objective of its production?" This component also concentrates on the connection between the authors of the texts and the environment in which they were produced as well as what the reader thinks of the text.

Rashid (2020) continues to say the discursive practice can also recognise a person's or a group's social identities and that the understanding of the text is controlled by the discourse context. These were identified using the following steps:

- Identification of who produced the articles including the ownership of the media house;
- The level of accessibility of the articles was examined including textual biases (the language used, tone of the articles, and sentences).
- Sources in the form of who was quoted in the articles were also analysed.

The third dimensional approach employed was the socio-cultural approach. Fairclough (2013) refers to sociocultural practice as the circumstances that control socio-cultural practices as a component of a socialisation. Specifically, the social customs, and the social and historical factors influencing the processes of creation and reception.

This component also demonstrates how discourse ideology and power are related. Philosophies are markers of reality that are connected to the social realm, interpersonal relationships, and social identities. As a result, they have an impact on how reality is created and perceived as well as establishing dominance and power.

These were identified using the following steps:

- Texts were studied to ascertain standards and principles of the newspaper investigated.
- Texts were compared to identify the variations in the articles' social cultures.
- analysis to determine the group's intended readership and the likelihood that this readership will find the materials.

3.6 CONCLUSION

The study's methodology was presented in this chapter. It also included information about the research methodology, sampling techniques, data gathering techniques and analysis techniques used for this study. The approach used to analyse the data gathered for this study, Fairclough's CDA, was also explained.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA REPRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter serves as a presentation of the qualitative data that was derived from the analysis of news articles published by the *Daily Dispatch* on the low matric pass rate in quantile 1-3 schools situated in the Eastern Cape from 2016-2018.

Fairclough's CDA (1992) was applied as means of analysing the contents of each of the four analysed articles, its headlines, subheadings, and the content of each news article, photographs; captions as well as paying attention to who is saying what, how, and why. The analysis of these articles was undertaken in three steps: textual description, interpretation, and explanation as suggested by Fairclough (1995).

The analysis of the qualitative data acquired from the articles was aimed at answering the following research questions:

- How is the low matric pass rate in quantile 1-3 schools situated in Eastern Cape covered by the *Daily Dispatch* newspaper?
- In what ways does the *Daily Dispatch* newspaper report on the causes of the low matric pass rate in quantile 1-3 schools situated in the Eastern Cape?
- Are all sources concerned included in the coverage?

The analysis was conducted on four (4 newspaper articles listed in the table below) and these articles were published by the *Daily Dispatch*, which is a digital and print newspaper company.

4.2 DESCRIPTION

Tables 1 and 2 below describe the articles analysed in this chapter. According to Fairclough (1992), textual description refers to the assessment of spoken, visual, or both types of text since “text” encompasses more than just language constructions like phrases and articles. It also covers things like visuals, audio, colour, and sounds. Both the shape and the text’s literal meaning are topics of text analysis.

Fairclough (1992) further states that analysing the meaning of a text is a challenging procedure because the results are ambiguous and open to many interpretations. He continues by stating that “vocabulary,” “grammar,” “cohesion,” and “text structure” are the four main components of text analysis.

Sample	Newspaper	Date	Headline
1	<i>Daily Dispatch</i>	06 January 2017	No pass for two Eastern Cape schools
2	<i>Daily Dispatch</i>	04 January 2017	EC is still at bottom of 2016 class
3	<i>Daily Dispatch</i>	06 January 2016	EC braces for poor results
4	<i>Daily Dispatch</i>	05 January 2019	EC’s improved pass rate masks lost numbers

– Table 1: Samples in the study



Sample	Caption	Picture
1	<p>FUTURE HOPE: Top achievers met Education MEC Mandla Makupula, right, and his deputy director-general Themba Kojana at the East London ICC yesterday</p>	
2	<p>ANXIOUS WAIT: Mduduzi Ntongana, from left, Ziphozihle Hlwati, Viwe Twenani, and Sibusiso Bokveldt wait apprehensively for their matric results yesterday.</p>	

Table 2: Pictures and captions

4.3 INTERPRETATION AND MODALITY OF WORDS

Fairclough (1992) explains wording as a phenomenon that is more than just vocabulary and grammar and is an essential aspect of people's lives and that it is used frequently by the majority of individuals in society. This conviction has led to the linguistic theory's influence on Fairclough's work. Fairclough in his book *Language and Power* (1989) aimed at investigating the connection within power in social-systems and language.

Heargues that terminology may be used to develop, alter, and maintain power relations in current society. He continues to say, that a social approach to the study of texts requires that we examine not just the texts themselves but also the interacting meaning-making process of which they are a part.

According to Orgad (2012), a meaning-making process is informed by what is existing, what is non-existent, and what is different in the text provided to the audience. The texts can include images that are circulated in the mass media carrying symbolic content that carries meaning.

4.2.1 Analysing wording used in Sample 1

Only two schools in the entire Eastern Cape province had no passes, according to the headline in sample 1, but more than 30% of students who registered to take the matriculation exam failed. The headline minimizes the real situation of the Eastern Cape's matric pass rate.

"Two" is a low quantity that should not be concerning. Two is a natural number that occurs before three and after one. Since it is the only even prime number and the smallest, anything related to the number two is thought to be minimum. In reference

to the second, the Miriam Webster Dictionary likewise agrees and states that two is “a *small approximate number of indicated things.*”

This conveys the message that the Eastern Cape is not in a dire situation with a high percentage of low matric pass rates. If someone were to read the headline without knowing the context of the matric pass rate situation in 2017, they would read the article and conclude that the Eastern Cape is doing well as only two schools had no pass rate.

This approach does honour to the administration as it sugar-coats the troubling scenario of low matric results in the Eastern Cape Province. The headline is dramatic and fails to convey the genuine core of the story. While shielding the Daily Dispatch's proprietors, the government, the language and tone employed suggest an attempt to sow disinformation and, in part, to hide important informationⁱ (Enikolopov & Petrova, 2015).

The headline suggests that the story is about the two schools in the Eastern Cape that did not receive a passing grade, while all other schools in the region received a passing grade. This indicates that the Agenda Setting Theory was used by the author of this article as there is a correlation between the way the media accentuates a given topic and the audience's response to it (Littlejohn & Foss, 2009).

The author of this article continues to attach a picture of smiling pupils captioned, “*FUTURE HOPE: Top achievers met Education MEC Mandla Makupula, right, and his deputy director-general Themba Kojana at the East London ICC yesterday*”.

In the picture, we see smiling pupils, the MEC for Education, and his Deputy Director General, and the picture alone gives the reader an idea that the issue of “only two schools with no pass” is not a matter of concern for the Department of Education as

management is spotted in a celebratory mode at one of the well-known hotels. This is confusing and takes the reader away from the reality of the situation the Eastern Cape was in.

According to Merriam-Webster,² the future refers to something that will happen or exist while hope is desiring with expectation of or contentment. This was painting a different picture as opposed to the state that the Eastern Cape was in. Further confusing the audience is that a picture of smiling pupils together with high-ranking officials in the Department of Education in the Eastern Cape is published, which again presents a narrative that seeks to make the reader believe that in actual fact, the Eastern Cape is doing well.

In line with this analysis, Diedre (2003) contends that the media can shape how people understand and internalize the information that is presented to them. This, in turn, gives the media the ability to determine how people view the outside world and can indirectly affect the topics that people choose to discuss.

In order to further persuade the reader, the author of the article goes on to say that a zero-pass rate is not a cause for alarm. This is supported by the MEC's remarks, which suggest that the issue of zero passes in these schools is less significant as the two schools that had zero passes were smaller. *“Makupula said the impact on the overall matric pass rate was less significant as the two affected schools were smaller.”*

In this statement, the MEC utters a phrase that indicates clearly how un-concerning the issue of a zero-pass rate is in these schools and for the Department of Education. The phrase is made of two words “less” and “significant”, less refers to a relatively

² [Future Definition & Meaning - Merriam-Webster](#)

more modest sum, amount, or degree and can be utilised as a qualifier, descriptive word, or thing. Less has a few different faculties as an intensifier, descriptive word, thing, and a relational word.

According to the Oxford Dictionary,³ less is a relative type of the word close to nothing, with the word least being the standout. On the off chance that something is portrayed as less, it is “all the more little” than something different. In particular, less without help from anyone else frequently implies a more modest number or sum as opposed to the actual size.

While significant refers to something that is important, worthy of consideration, and something that has an impact. The MEC’s statement therefore indicates that the zero-pass rate in the two schools meant nothing to the Department of Education and has no impact as the two schools had few pupils registered for writing Grade 12. The MEC continues to emphasise how the zero matric pass rate in these schools is less significant.

“In Msobomvu, only eight matrices sat for exams and only four sat at Middle Zolo. What I am trying to explain is that fewer pupils have been affected by this poor performance. The question we need to ask ourselves is why we allowed a situation wherein only four pupils sit for exams because that means if one of the four pupils fails, the school will register a 75% pass rate and if two fail, half the class has failed. That impacts negatively on the image of the school,” he added.

³ <https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/less>

In this statement, the MEC implies that it is acceptable for a school with few pupils to get a zero pass at the end of the year and it also implies that the zero matric pass rate impacts negatively the image of the school and not that of the Eastern Cape Department of Education at large.

The story continues to brag about how the Eastern Cape Department of Education supported other schools and not the ones with a zero matric pass rate. However, there is no indication of how that support helped improve the matric pass rate in those schools. There is also no indication of the reasons why these schools were given this type of support.

The story does not allow a comment from the schools that recorded a zero-pass rate, a comment that would give an insight to the reader and a picture of the situation in which the schools are located.

This is a confirmation of the statement by the Press Ombudsman (2019) that the media tends to represent issues that are appropriate for their specific media houses, which causes them to be subjective and report based on their opinions and emotions instead of reporting in a sensible approach.

4.2.2 Analysing wording used in Sample 2

The headline in sample 2 talks about poor results that the EC was supposedly bracing for, but it does not clearly state what these poor results are for. This is somewhat indicating that as much as the publisher wants to report on the low matric pass rate in the Eastern Cape, it also does not want to align the poor results with the Eastern Cape's poor matric results. As a result, someone who reads this headline in passing is likely to miss the details of what results this article is reporting.

Turha and Okan (2017) explain that exclusion of information from media texts includes the use of certain terminology that has a potential to mislead the audiences and further emphasise the importance of CDA as means of asserting whether there is missing information from published media texts.

As part of the story or article, a picture showing three boys and a girl who are supposedly waiting anxiously for their matric results is featured. However, the picture does not look genuine as the characters in the picture seem to have been requested to pose in a certain manner so as to portray or send a particular message.

It is as though the newspaper assumed that the public wanted to see stories of sad matriculants waiting for their results and the photographer asked them to pose in the way they were captured.

Littlejohn and Foss (2009) argue that this happens when the media uses stereotypes to ensure that their stories are based on what the public already knows and are attracted to. This is done to attract the public to read or buy into a particular story and ensure that they buy the paper should a similar story be published.

The first section of the article confirms what has been argued in the analysis above that the author just wanted to report what people wanted to hear without getting and confirming all the facts before publishing. The headline already indicated that something bad was about to happen but then, when the author writes the first section of the article, it appears that there is no assurance, or rather, the writer is not sure about the poor results claimed in the headline.

“The Eastern Cape may have recorded a drop in its matric pass rate. This comes after Umalusi, the body responsible for quality assurance in the education system,

announced at a media briefing in Pretoria last week that the class of 2015 had fared worse than those of 2014.”

The ‘may’ in the paragraph extracted from the article clearly states that the headline and this story are based on assumptions and predictions. This paragraph indicates m, but this does not specify which province had fared worse and yet the headline already talks about EC bracing itself for poor results.

This is one of the stereotypes discussed in the previous chapter. Seiter (1986) asserts that in many instances one, the media go on and publish or film a certain story based on what they heard without authenticating the background of the story they are writing about due to stereotypes that are more fixed in people about a particular issue.

It is safe to say that this story was based on hearsay coupled with stereotypes as no official communication was made to the headline’s effect and below are the quotes extracted from the article in this regard:

- 1. The Daily Dispatch has learned from sources within the education department that the province’s pass rate has dropped to 56.8% from 65.4% in 2014.*
- 2. “At the time of writing yesterday, Basic Education Minister Angie Motshekga had not officially announced the provincial and national results.”*
- 3. The Daily Dispatch was unable to reach education MEC Mandla Makupula and his acting HoD, Sizakele Netshilaphala, at the time of writing.*
- 4. Kupelo said the pronouncement of the results would be made officially by provincial authorities today.*
- 5. ANC provincial spokesman Mlibo Qoboshiyane said he would comment once formal confirmation of results had been received by the MEC.*

6. *“The minister is to deliver the national results later today. Surely any drop signifies serious and surgical introspection and to deal decisively with factors.”*

All of the above quotes are proof that the story was not based on any official communication. Following these quotes is more hearsay,

1. *One source said: “It’s the last performing province. It recorded 56.8%.*

2. *“Another official said only the Western Cape had done well.”*

3. *“That’s what I understand, and other provinces have done poorly. I don’t expect the Eastern Cape to be different.”*

The last few lines of the story cover the causes of the poor matric pass rate,

1. *“Van Vuuren said a lack of teachers at schools, especially for critical subjects, was among challenges facing education.”*

2. *He said some schools had no teachers for subjects that were offered as part of the curriculum.*

3. *UDM MPL Thando Mpulu said the dismal matric pass rate was a serious problem.*

4. *“This cannot be cracked anytime soon. You cannot have a school offering accounting but there are no teachers but hope and trust that children are going to pass.*

5. *“Our education system needs to be overhauled because it has collapsed.”*

6. *Mpulu said a lack of well-trained teachers was also a challenge.*

7. *“Some teachers do not fully understand what they are teaching pupils”.*

The above quotes give the reader some food for thought and something to base their analysis on the poor results. However, due to the fact that the mass media are

swarming with stereotypes and control from its owners, which causes media houses to report on certain issues in a certain manner that would not contradict with the standards of its owners.

Due to these stereotypes and control from its owners, the author did not feel the need to qualify the allegations heard, either by sourcing information from the affected pupils or confirmation from the Department of Education. There is not even one comment from the pupils that were reported as anxiously waiting for their results and I believe the writer could have done justice to this story by covering the thoughts of these pupils and the Department of Education. In that way, at least, the story would carry all the facts and would be balanced.

4.2.3 Analysing wording used in Sample 3

The headline in sample 3 clearly states what the reader should expect when reading it, the fact that the story is about the Eastern Cape being at the bottom of 2016. It is quite evident that the *Daily Dispatch* here wanted to highlight or rather bring the attention of the reader to just the fact that the EC is at the bottom of the 2016 class.

The headline also seeks to highlight that the EC is consistent with being at the bottom of the matric class. This is brought to light by the “still” in the headline. According to Cambridge Dictionary (2022) the word “still” refers to remaining in the same position and not moving. This headline does not indicate which level of the class of 2016 the Eastern Cape is consistently failing in.

The first line of the article repeats what has been already indicated in the headline; however, there is now new information that gives the level of education on which the story is based, which is matric. The first line also reveals new information that relates

to the EC doing well as the article now reports on an improvement that the EC was able to attain compared to the previous year 2015.

“Eastern Cape matrics remain at the bottom of the 2016 class despite registering a remarkable improvement compared with the previous year.”

This statement is now shifting the reader’s attention from the reality by introducing something different the headline. McCombs and Shaw (1972) indicate that this is due to the fact the media have the power to direct attention either towards or away from certain issues.

According to the article, this improvement was announced by the Basic Education Minister Angie Motshekga, *“Basic Education Minister Angie Motshekga announced the official results last night which confirmed that 59.3% Eastern Cape matrics passed, compared with the previous year’s 56.8% pass rate.”*

This is a measure put in place to tone down the issue of EC being in the bottom by highlighting that the said improvement was announced by the Minister. As the article progresses, the focus shifts to, *“Indications the province would remain at the bottom of the 2016 class were there as early as June last year when a 6% drop was recorded from the first quarter to mid-year exams.”*

This then clearly shows that the *Daily Dispatch*, through this story, was determined masking the dire situation, because this important information would have been one of the opening lines. The following quotes are also hidden in the middle of the article, *“The second top performer is the Western Cape at 85%, followed by Gauteng. At the bottom is Eastern Cape followed by Limpopo, Mpumalanga as well as Northern Cape at position seven, compared to other provinces, Motshekga announced last night.”*

The *Daily Dispatch* further highlights the comment by the education portfolio committee head at the Bhisho legislature Fundile Gade who instead of highlighting the negative chose to speak the positive and made it known to the *Daily Dispatch* that, the more important thing and something that everyone must be focusing on was the fact that the Eastern Cape had improved.

“I understand that four provinces, including Limpopo, are on a downward trend but the Eastern Cape is among those that have improved. That’s significant,”

Following this, there was a comment on the measures the Department had in place to ensure that the bottom spot would not be occupied by the EC for the following year.

The South African Democratic Teachers’ Union (SADTU) provincial spokesperson, Sindisile Zamisa, expressed the union’s frustrations with regard to the EC being at the bottom. He further mentioned a few things believed to be among the causes of a low matric pass rate, *“Zamisa said there was an ongoing dispute over the number of vacant posts and a meeting to resolve those disputes would only be held today at Stirling teachers’ centre.”*

“That is what is at the heart of this province’s poor performance. I’m not saying that’s the only root cause, but there can’t be learning if there is no teacher to teach.”

This is a very important part of the article where one of the issues believed to be among the causes is reported publicly to ensure that the public is exposed to information that is enlightening and gives a picture of the situations that these matriculants are taught under.

The article further reports on another possible cause for the low pass rate by quoting remarks made by Equal Education, a Non-Governmental Organisation dedicated to addressing education-related challenges, *“Rural provinces such as the Eastern Cape,*

KwaZulu-Natal and Limpopo recorded pass rates well below the national average compared with Gauteng and the Western Cape because they had the most under-resourced and poorest schools.”

“The Eastern Cape is a large predominantly rural province with most of its schools from the former homelands of Transkei and Ciskei,”

The last lines of this article are two-toned, at one level, it can be encouraging to those learners who did not pass, *“It is not all doom and gloom for those who do not appear in the Daily Dispatch today, reports Mbali Tanana”*. This is to encourage those who did not make it and for them to know there is something positive that they can do.

“National matric examiner and education specialist Dr Bukiwe Mbilini-Kuze said many artisans who failed matric, went on to earn good wages or even run their small businesses.”

“Many economically secure or even wealthy plumbers, electricians and mechanics, had not needed a matric pass to get the skills they needed to do well.”

This statement indirectly insinuates that matric is not a key requirement that one needs to have, which could have an impact on how readers perceive the need to obtain matric qualification. This statement is manipulative to the reader and power is used to manipulate the reader as this statement is made by an educational specialist.

According to van Dijk (2009), manipulation is the use of power to influence the beliefs and decisions of others to attain specific goals. In other words, people manipulate others to act or behave according to their desires and for their gain.

This is manipulative and discouraging even more, as said by an education specialist, especially because there is no statement she makes to encourage those who passed

or those who are still to write their exams. It is as if the education specialist manipulates the matriculants into failing and opting for other options to equip themselves.

4.2.4 Analysing wording used in sample 4

The headline in sample 4 gives the impression that the EC's pass rate has been improved; however, there is missing information. The headline has a subheading that implies that there are opposing views to EC's improved pass rate, as indicated in the headline and that the information to the public is not a true reflection of what is happening, "*Opposition parties and Equal Education point to large dropout rates and 'culling'*".

This is exactly what McCombs and Shaw (1972) talk about in a journal article seeking to address the Agenda-Setting Function of Mass Media. They argue that the media have the power to direct attention towards and away from public issues, which technically informs, which challenges will the society taken into consideration or ignored.

Even though there was good news to tell the public, the first line of the article in sample 4 is written a way that confirms what is indicated in the headline and sub-headline, that though there was an improvement in the matric pass rate and people were celebrating, there were also people with opposing views.

"Both celebratory fanfare and an outcry have followed the announcement that the Eastern Cape matric pass rate has shot up 5.6% from 65% to 70.6%. A jubilant newly appointed MEC of education, Mlungisi Mvoko, however, demanded more, saying the department had to target an 80% pass rate."

The article then continues to the line where the opposition parties accuse the Department of Education of omitting information, "*But opposition parties and influential*

education NGO Equal Education accused the education department of hiding huge numbers of pupils who were victims of administrative ‘culling’ or ‘gatekeeping’.”

The reader’s attention is drawn back to the positive part of the story, *“He said for the first time since the introduction of the National Senior Certificate (NSC) 10 years ago, the class of 2018 had managed to break into the 70% range. He said no school in the province had received a 0% pass rate, as in the past.”*

“Some of the top 50 schools which recorded a 100% pass rate included Ulwazi High in Mdantsane, Clarendon High in East London, and Mzamowethu High in Mzamomhle Township in Gonubie.”

Immediately after the foregoing remarks, quotes from the Equal Education follow:

“The provinces that reflected the largest improvements in their 2017 pass rates – Eastern Cape, Limpopo, and KwaZulu-Natal – were also the provinces with the biggest decrease in pupils who wrote the matric exams.

“This points to a worrying practice commonly associated with high-stakes testing, often referred to as ‘culling’ or ‘gatekeeping’.

“Teachers or principals sometimes hold pupils back in grade 11 or encourage them to take different subjects to improve pass rates,”

Eastern Cape DA MPL Edmund van Vuuren said that of the 106,599 pupils in the province who enrolled for matric at the start of 2018, only 65,733 wrote their final exams.

“What happened to the other 40,866 pupils? Were they culled to boost the final pass rate?” he said.

These give a clearer explanation of the accusation imposed on the Department of Education and perhaps a separate article in this regard would be perfect because these views are just put here and might not get the necessary reach that it would get if this was a standalone article.

The Department of Education responded to the allegations made above, *“In his response, education superintendent-general Themba Kojana said the department could not solely be blamed for the high drop-out rate, saying it was also a “societal matter”.*

“For instance, 13% of the pupils who started in school in 2004 had already left the school system in 2005 due to various societal challenges, such as death.

“It is unfair to throw this at the department, but what we can do is to work with other departments such as Home Affairs to trace down those pupils to see what happened, and where they are,”

The provincial education spokesperson, Malibongwe Mtima, said the 40,866 pupils were progressed pupils who registered as part-time candidates and who were given multiple examination opportunities.

All of the above quotes indicate that the article was more about reporting on the pupils who did not sit for examinations and not the improved pass rate. The Department of Education do not oppose the accusation, however, there is no indication of how the percentage will be recalculated to give the correct percentage.

4.4 INTERPRETATION

Fairclough (1992) views interpretation as the steps taken to create and interpret the text. The following inquiries are necessary for that reason: “Who produced the object?” and “What is the goal of its production?”. The relationship between the text’s authors and the setting in which it was produced is another emphasis of this dimension as well as what the reader thinks of the text. It can also recognise a person’s or a group’s social identities.

The articles that are being investigated in this study were published by the Daily Dispatch newspaper situated in urban East London and is owned by Arena Holdings whose headquarters are in Johannesburg (Arena Holdings, 2023). Arena Holdings is a prominent English-language news publisher in Africa, owned by Lebashe Investment Group (Lebashe Investment Group, 2023).

The privilege of print ownership is still reserved for the following groups: the elites of politics, which includes state and trade union investment corporations; the black elite; the significant corporate elite; and the global media moguls (Govenden, 2019). This is evident in the ownership of the *Daily Dispatch* as the board of directors of Lebashe Investment Group are political elites, business experts, and political principals (Lebashe Investment Group, 2023).

McQuail (2005) claims that these large corporations or businesses are interested in possessing a large portion of the South African press in order to gain profit while escaping the accountability of press watchdogs.

In the pursuit of profit, editors tend to rely on dramatic news with frightening leads and news reporters tend to sensationalise stories and print articles based solely on the editor's opinion, lacking objectivity which should include ensuring that all affected

parties are included in the stories (Myers & Caniglia, 2004). This has a negative impact on media content variety, public interest, and democracy and can put pressure on journalistic professionalism (Hallin & Mancini, 2004).

While analyzing the samples, it was discovered that there was missing information, particularly relevant sources and this is against the South African Press Code (2012). The Code states that media are obliged to report the news honestly, precisely, and in a fair manner and that news should be broadcasted in context and a sensible approach.

This basically means that the media should report news as unbiased as possible and not leave out some information or fabricate information and that all sources that are directly affected by the topic reported on, be included. Sources that should be considered when writing and publishing a media text, include human beings, informative documents, audio, and videos.

The table below illustrates the sources included in the articles being investigated in this study and clearly shows that the *Daily Dispatch* was selective when publishing these stories and that it was interested in quoting sources related to the ownership of the publication. Below are the descriptions of categories/ word classes employed in the tables below:

-Government Official- This refers to someone who is an employee of the government.

-Organisation- This refers to someone commenting on behalf of an organisation.

-Other media official- This refers to someone who also works in the media space.

-Politician- This refers to someone that is commenting on behalf of a political organisation.

Sample	Source	Category
1	<i>Education MEC Mandla Makupula</i>	Government Official
	<i>Senior education official Ray Tywakadi</i>	Government Official
2	Education director-general Matanzima Mweli	Government Official
	Education portfolio committee head at the Bhisho legislature Fundile Gade	Government Official
	South African Democratic Teachers' Union (Sadtu) provincial spokesman Sindisile Zamisa	Government Official
	A non-government organisation focused on education challenges, Equal Education,	Organisation
	Mbali Tanana	Other media official
	National matric examiner and education specialist Dr. Bukiwe Mbilini-Kuze	Government Official
3	DA MPL Edmund van Vuuren	Politician
	Provincial government spokesman Sizwe Kupelo	Government Official
	ANC provincial spokesman Mlibo Qoboshiyane	Politician
	UDM MPL Thando Mpulu	Politician

4	Equal Education spokesperson Leanne Jansen-Thomas	Organisation
	MEC of education, Mlungisi Mvoko	Government Official
	Eastern Cape DA MPL Edmund van Vuuren	Politician
	Provincial education spokesperson Malibongwe Mtima	Government Official

Table 3: News sources included in the samples

Word class	Frequency
Government Official	9
Organisation	2
Other media official	1
Politician	4

Table 4: Word class for news sources included in the samples

Ige (2016) discusses that before publication, media texts are constructed, selected, and edited as per the media house's preferences, informed by the desired type of message to be communicated to the audiences and sometimes informed by the type of meaning that the media house wants the audience make out of the media text.

This then gives an idea that in many cases, before media texts are published, they undergo the stages discussed above and media houses decide on what the audience

must be told either with sufficient or with minimal sources to ensure that certain information is kept or published.

This is in the pursuit of profit, news reporters tend to sensationalise stories and print articles based solely on the editor's opinion, lacking objectivity. Editors tend to rely on dramatic news with frightening leads (Myers & Caniglia, 2004).

4.5 EXPLANATION

According to Fairclough (1992), explanation refers to the parameters that control the above processes to be a form of social action, namely, the social and historical processes that have an impact on the creation and reception the social practices. This component also demonstrates how discourse ideology and power are related. Ideologies are markers of reality that are connected to the social realm, interpersonal relationships, and social identities. As a result, they have an impact on how reality is created and perceived, establishing dominance and power.

These ideologies are interconnected to language and power. Fairclough (1989) illustrates that power and authority are reinforced in the mainstream media, such as television, radio, movies, and newspapers against people without their knowledge as it is frequently nuanced and not always obvious to everyone.

This is something that stems from the apartheid epoch as there were media houses that belonged to certain businesses, and these businesses had control of the press. They were directly involved in the production of news, printing, and distribution (Lloyd, 2013).

While analysing the articles, it was discovered that the coverage of the *Daily Dispatch* does not necessarily serve to inform, entertain and educate its audience. It is evident that the *Daily Dispatch* entertains its owners (the government and businesses) by

reporting in the manner that will sugar coat the causes of the low matric pass rate in the rural Eastern Cape. The causes of the low matric pass rate in the rural Eastern Cape are discussed in Chapter 1 and most of the causes are as a result of lack of provision of basic needs like lack of physical facilities.

While it was obvious that the low matric pass rate in the rural Eastern Cape was due to poverty and state of being underprivileged, the media chose to focus on the low matric pass rate and not its causes.

This is due to the inequalities of the class and media which highlights general interest while downplaying the structural financial worries of the working class and the impoverished (Kolbe, 2005). The language that is used to publish these stories is also a cause for concern and clearly proves that that the stories were meant for the privileged members of the public that can read the English language.

4.6 CONCLUSION

In this chapter the qualitative data that was derived from the analysis of news articles published by the *Daily Dispatch* on the low matric pass rate in quantile 1-3 schools situated in the Eastern Cape from 2016-2018 was presented.

Fairclough's CDA (1992) was applied as means of analysing the contents of each of the four analysed articles, its headlines, subheadings, and the content of each news article, photographs; captions as well as paying attention to who is saying what, how, and why. The analysis of these articles was undertaken in three steps: textual description, interpretation, and explanation as suggested by Fairclough (1995).

The analysis of the qualitative data gathered from analysing the articles was aimed at responding to the research questions below:

- How is the low matric pass rate in quantile 1-3 schools situated in Eastern Cape covered by the *Daily Dispatch* newspaper?
- In what ways does the *Daily Dispatch* newspaper report on the causes of the low matric pass rate in quantile 1-3 schools situated in the Eastern Cape?
- Are all sources concerned included in the coverage?

The following chapter gives an overview of how this study answers these questions and gives recommendations for this study.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study was aimed at identifying, describing, and interrogating the coverage that was granted by the *Daily Dispatch* newspaper to the low matric pass rate in rural areas of the Eastern Cape between 2015 and 2019. This study focused on quintile 1 to 3 schools situated in the Eastern Cape as they are the schools that are mostly reported as the least performing schools.

This study was conducted based on the idea that the coverage of the low matric pass rate in rural Eastern Cape is not fair and not comprehensive of all angles that can lead to a nuanced understanding of the main causes of the bad performance.

It has been discovered that from all the texts selected, the coverage of the *Daily Dispatch* is influenced by its owners and neither socio-cultural commitment determines its background. It was discovered that the owners of the *Daily Dispatch* do not just manage the media company but also invest in various non-media companies. This causes the media owners to use their personal interests and the interest of those organisation they represent to decide what should and shouldn't be published, who and who should not be quoted and the way in which the articles should be written to send a specific message across. This is further explained in the pointers below:

- **How is the low matric pass rate in quantile 1-3 schools situated in Eastern Cape covered by the *Daily Dispatch* newspaper?**

The examination of the newspaper articles revealed that the *Daily Dispatch* reports on the poor matric pass rate in the Eastern Cape in addition to the low matric pass rate in quantile 1-3 schools. The investigation also discovered that there is no coverage of how, by whom, or when the matric pass rate can be increased; instead, it is published in a way that will safeguard the *Daily Dispatch's* owners, the government.

This was demonstrated in Sample 4, where the title purports to show an improvement but provides the sense that there were missing figures, making the improved pass rate seem phony as there are opposing opinions about EC's better pass rate. The sub headline further suggests that the information provided to the public may not be an accurate representation of the situation, "*Opposition parties and Equal Education point to large dropout rates and 'culling'*". This is reported yet there is no indication or call for the Eastern Cape department of Education to remedy the situation and have the percentage recalculated.

•In what ways does the newspaper report on the causes of the low matric pass rate in quantile 1-3 schools situated in the Eastern Cape?

This study found that the reasons for the poor matric pass rate in quantile 1-3 schools are not sufficiently covered. Only samples 1 and 3 provided an explanation for the low matric pass rate. In both samples, these causes were listed at the bottom.

This suggests that the articles were prepared in the style of inverted pyramid journalism(see Figure 3 below) , which originated in the American War of Secession and was utilized to provide daily news updates about the fight. To preserve fair transmission conditions, it was decided that each would send out the first piece of their essay before sending out the remaining portions because the technology was not totally dependable (Canavilhas, 2007).

This writing style places the most important information of a tale in the lead paragraph and places all other information in the following paragraphs to make the story easy to read and suitable for traditional readers who skim the paragraphs (Scanlan, 2003).

The authors of the articles decided to place the causes of the low matric pass rate at the bottom of their works, indicating that, among those who must have read the

articles, some regular readers may have missed learning about the causes of the low matric pass rate because of the way the articles were structured. This is done to mask the state of affairs while protecting those that are in power.



Figure 3: Inverted pyramid (UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA LIBRARIES, 2016)

•Are all sources concerned included in the coverage?

None of the following groups of people were interviewed for any of the examined articles: community members, parents, teachers, members of the school governing bodies, or students taking these examinations.

According to Hadland et al. (2008), media freedom was granted to South Africa following its democratic transition. Still, there are still a number of areas where racial discrimination, disempowerment, and bias plague mainstream media (Gay, 2014).

This affects how the low matric pass rate is portrayed in the media. In addition to highlighting how incompetent matriculates are in rural regions, the media ignores the

reasons behind the low matric pass rate and fails to include important sources that may provide a picture for the public of what it's like to attend low quantile schools (Equal Education, 2017).

The sources that were excluded from the samples and that are directly impacted by the low matric pass rate are shown in the table below. Given that the authors of these publications employed prejudices, it is clear that stereotypes persist in modern society. Because citing the sources below would convey a distinct message, the authors omitted these sources and made sure that they gave their audience information that they were already familiar with and would remember while protecting those that are in power (Popova & Balezina, 2015).

Sample	Headline	Sources left out
1	No pass for two Eastern Cape schools	1. Teachers from the schools
2	EC is still at bottom of 2016 class	
3	EC braces for poor results	2. Learners from the schools
4	EC's improved pass rate masks lost numbers	3. Parents 4. Members of the school governing bodies, 5. Members of the communities

Table 5: Sources left out from the analysed articles

5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

The researcher suggests that reporting on the pass rate at primary and junior secondary schools in the Eastern Cape be a part of future research. This is due to the fact that certain factors, including geographic isolation, which have been mentioned and shown as contributing to the low matric pass rate, are problems that persist even in early childhood education.

5.3 LIMITATIONS

Participation in the current study was restricted to senior secondary schools, which was the only band included. Primary and junior secondary schools were not included in the study. Due to the CDA, which necessitates a thorough examination that includes elucidating the connections between linguistics, cultural, and social structures, the research study was limited to four news stories; as a result, many samples could not be employed.

The researcher suggests conducting additional research on the reporting practices of basic and junior secondary schools in the media. It would be helpful to do research on readers' opinions of the *Daily Dispatch* in order to determine whether or not readers are content with the way the newspaper currently presents the poor matric pass rate in quintile 1-3 schools in the Eastern Cape.

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