

**INVESTIGATING FACTORS THAT LEAD TO CONTRASTING  
READING PERFORMANCES OF GRADE FIVES  
IN THE EKURHULENI DISTRICT**

**by**

**NHLANHLA ERIC NKOSI**

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**SUPERVISOR: Doctor L.M. Luvalo & Dr KJ Maluleka**

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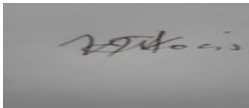
Name: NHLANHLA ERIC NKOSI

Student number: 42436699

Degree: MASTER OF EDUCATION (COMPARATIVE EDUCATION)

Title: INVESTIGATING FACTORS THAT LEAD TO CONTRASTING READING  
PERFORMANCES OF GRADE FIVES IN THE EKURHULENI DISTRICT

I declare that the above dissertation is my work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged using complete references.

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Nhlanhla Eric Nkosi".

29 JULY 2024

## **Dedication**

This dissertation is dedicated to all that supported and encouraged me to keep on compiling it. To my very close relatives, friends, colleagues, and neighbours I say thank you very much for not discouraging me in this project. Not forgetting the learners who are long-life learners and willing to be optimal learners. May the grace of the Lord be with you through your journeys of life. THANK YOU.

## **Acknowledgments**

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## **Abstract**

Having adequate reading skills is a catalyst for other spheres of life. This dissertation dealt with a contrast in reading that is experienced by learners in the same grades. It is always confusing that learners in the same grade depict differing reading abilities. This dissertation investigated this phenomenon, and various variables were determined and addressed. Through qualitative data-generating instruments, the participants were able to respond regarding their perceptions, knowledge, experiences, and emotions about the research phenomenon. The sample was selected purposively, which denotes that the researcher utilised the purposive sampling approach to select the participants. The researcher investigated the phenomenon of reading contrast because he acknowledges the importance of learners' acquisition of learning and reading knowledge and skills. The research aimed at identifying the contrasts that occur when learners manifest their reading skills where some learners outperform others in this regard. Some of the objectives of this study were to eliminate the gaps regarding reading differences and to provide strategies to elevate the reading and learning performances of learners. The sample was selected purposively since were acquainted and experienced the reading occurrences in their schools. Utilising qualitative data-generating instruments, namely, interviews, observations, and questionnaires, the research results were generated and transcribed, and the recommendations were reported which were determined by the findings. Based on primary data and secondary data that contributed to this project, one can be assured that the learning and reading of learners will be optimised. Every school year end, learners are expected to accumulate their learning and reading knowledge and skills. Therefore, stakeholders involved in the education system must ensure that learners are motivated and supported to develop their literacy skills since there is no doubt that this skill oversees other subjects across the curriculum.

**Key Terms:** Reading, comprehension, parent involvement, learning theories, school performance, social learning theory (attention, retention, reproduction, and motivation), purposive sampling approach, phenomenological research method

## **List of Tables**

**Table 2.1:** 2019-2024 Medium-Term Strategic Framework (MTSF) outcome statement

**Table 2.2:** Four components of social learning theory

**Table 2.3:** Modelling in social learning theory

**Table 3.1:** Factors contributing to low reading and learning performance in Ekurhuleni schools

**Table 3.2:** Reading Instruction Strategy Objectives

**Table 3.3:** Three guiding principles Underpinning reading.

**Table 3.4:** Five strategies to enhance reading

**Table 4.1:** Aims of the qualitative method

**Table 4.2:** Different types of populations

**Table 5.1:** Development of themes

**Table 5.2:** Interview of learners

**Table 5.3:** Interview of teachers

**Table 5.4:** Observation analysis

**Table 6.1:** The importance of parental involvement

## **List of Figures**

**Figure 3.1:** The channel between the sender and receiver of messages

## List of Abbreviations

CAPS	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement
COLTS	Culture of Learning, Teaching Services
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DBST	District-Based Support Team
EGRA	Early Grade Reading Assessments
EGRS	Early Grade Reading Study
GPLMS	Gauteng Primary Literacy and Mathematics Strategies
ISP	Individual Support Plan
LNS	Lit Num Strategy
LOLT	Language of Learning and Teaching
MTFS	Medium-Term Strategic Framework
NCS	National Curriculum Statement
NRS	National Reading Strategy
OBE	Outcomes Based Education
PIRLS	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study
RNCS	Revised National Curriculum Statement
SANLI	The South African Literacy Initiative
SAPS	South African Police Service
SASA	South African Schools' Act
SBST	School-Based Support Team
SIAS	Screening, Identification, and Support
SMT	School Management Team
TPR	Total Physical Response

## Table of Contents

Contents	Page
Declaration .....	i
Dedication .....	ii
Acknowledgments .....	iii
Abstract .....	iv
List of Tables and Figures .....	v
List of Abbreviations .....	vi
Table of Contents .....	vii
<b>Chapter 1: Introduction and Background of the study</b>	
1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.2 Rationale of the Study.....	2
1.3 Factors leading to poor reading in primary schools.....	4
1.4 The effect of poor reading on learner’s performance.....	4
1.5 Possible strategies to rectify the reading challenges in primary schools.....	5
1.6 Statement of the problem .....	7
<i>1.6.1 The research questions.....</i>	8
<i>1.6.2 The aims and objectives of the study.....</i>	8
1.7 Research design.....	8
1.8 Sampling.....	8
1.9 Instrumentation and data generating techniques.....	9
1.10 Data analysis and interpretation.....	9
1.11 Reliability and validity/ credibility and trustworthiness.....	10
1.12 Research Ethics/Ethical Consideration.....	10
1.13 Limitations and delimitations of the study.....	11
<i>1.13.1 Limitations.....</i>	11
<i>1.13.2 Delimitations.....</i>	11
1.14 Definitions of the concepts in alphabetical order.....	11
<i>1.14.1 Conceptual definitions.....</i>	11
<i>1.14.2 Operational Definitions.....</i>	13
1.15 Summary.....	14
<b>Chapter 2 Theoretical Framework</b>	
2.1 Introduction.....	15
2.2 The origins and the definition of social learning theory.....	21
2.3 The rationale for choosing the social learning theory.....	25
2.4 The role of social learning theory in this study.....	28
2.5 The implications of social learning theory on this study.....	32
2.6 Summary.....	36



### **Chapter 3 -Scholarly Literature Review**

3.1 Introduction.....	40
3.2 Factors that lead to contrasting reading performances of grade five learners in the Ekurhuleni District.....	42
3.3 Factors that lead to poor reading in primary schools.....	44
3.4 Ways in which poor reading Affects the performance of Learners.....	49
3.5 Strategies that can be implemented to rectify the reading challenges in primary schools.....	54
3.5.1 Summarising.....	61
3.5.2 Inference.....	61
3.5.3 Predicting.....	62
3.5.4 Questioning.....	63
3.5.5 Clarifying.....	63
3.5.6 Monitoring.....	64
3.5.7 Skimming.....	64
3.5.8 Scanning.....	65
3.6 Summary.....	66

### **Chapter 4 - Research Design and Methodology**

4.1 Introduction.....	69
4.2 Research Design and Methodology.....	70
4.3 Qualitative Research Approach.....	76
4.4 Population and Sampling.....	77
4.5 Data generating Technique.....	82
4.5.1 Questionnaires.....	83
4.5.2 Interviews.....	84
4.5.3 Observation.....	85
4.6 Summary.....	86

### **Chapter 5- Research Findings and Analysis of Results**

5.1 Introduction.....	89
5.2 Coding participants.....	90
5.3 Interviews on learners.....	93
5.3.1 Availability of Reading Books.....	93
5.3.2 Visiting the home and the school library.....	94
5.3.3 Classroom reading groups.....	95
5.3.4 Literacy activities in the classroom.....	96
5.3.5 Parents or Home motivation to learn.....	96
5.4 Interviews of teachers.....	99
5.4.1 Regular reading activities.....	100
5.4.2 Learners' comprehension and strategies.....	100
5.4.3 Recording and communication of reading assessment results.....	100
5.4.4 School library visit.....	101
5.4.5 Reading groups as a strategy to enhance reading.....	101

5.4.6 Parent motivation.....	101
5.5 Observation.....	102
5.5.1 Level of comprehension.....	102
5.5.2 Level of fluency.....	103
5.5.3 Motivation to read.....	103
5.5.4 Active involvement.....	104
5.5.5 Learning environment .....	104
5.6 Summary.....	106
<b>Chapter 6 – Summary, recommendation, and conclusion</b>	
6.1 Introduction.....	108
6.2 Summary of the findings.....	109
6.3 Recommendations.....	111
6.3.1 Availability of literacy material.....	111
6.3.2 Classroom activities of reading.....	112
6.3.3 Public and School Libraries.....	113
6.3.3.1 School library.....	114
6.3.3.2 Public libraries.....	115
6.4 Communication of results.....	117
6.5 Parent's motivation.....	119
6.6 Summary.....	121
List of References.....	124
Appendices.....	137
Appendix A Assent letter to the learner.....	137
Appendix B Focus group questions.....	138
Appendix C consent letter to the participant.....	146
Appendix D permission request to the SGB.....	141
Appendix E permission request to the Circuit.....	142
Appendix F Permission Request to the District.....	143
Appendix G permission request to the Principal.....	144
Appendix H Consent to the parent.....	145
Appendix I Questionnaire for the interview of learners.....	147
Appendix J Questionnaires for teachers.....	149
Appendix K Interviews for teachers.....	151
Appendix L Checklist for observation of learners.....	154
Appendix M Fieldnotes for the observation of learners.....	155
Appendix N Research ethics clearance .....	157

# Chapter 1

## Introduction and Background

### 1.1 Introduction

Reading is a factor that must not be underestimated and, as pronounced by scholars, is indispensable, especially in children's schooling through to adulthood. Spaul and Pretorius (2019:2) state that reading for meaning and pleasure is arguably the most important skill children learn in primary school. Thus, reading is a skill that is a catalyst in various entities from schooling to the academic stage and other various spheres of mankind. Jamadar (2022:217) further articulates that reading is essential for lifelong learning and ought to be infused effectively to have a lifelong impact. Therefore, it is indisputable that reading is a fundamental tool for all future learning.

According to Motala and Dieltiens (2009:6), in the south of Ekurhuleni, 1,566 learners dropped out of school in the year 2007, including 51 who were in Grade Five, representing 10% of the total learner population of Ekurhuleni. Apart from a high dropout rate, the reading performance of learners in some schools in Ekurhuleni seems to be superior to that of their counterparts in other schools.

Mullis and Martin (2012: 2) mention that the results of reading performance provide overwhelming evidence that learners who are in Grades four and five in public schools in South Africa struggle with reading comprehension. There are multiple and complex reasons that can explain this trend; importantly, it needs to be fleshed out (Pretorius & Klapwijk, 2016:5). In addition, Mullis, and Martin, (2022:1) in PIRLS 2021 assert that in 2021 81% of Grade Four learners could not read for meaning, compared to 2016. In contrast PIRLS 2021 Mullis and Martin (2022:2) averred that despite the significant decline in reading performances, some provinces did not depict a severe decline between 2016 and 2021. Thus, one can deduce that should we utilise effectively and efficiently the strategies of teaching reading, there will be an improvement in reading performance. All in all, the results from PIRLS show that there is a decline and this phenomenon has to be dealt with effectively through extensive research and availability of conducive teaching methods. As mentioned by Qasim and Hafeez (2022:3), parents who read books to their children tend to take them to libraries and buy books for them and, in turn, these learners usually perform better scholastically than those learners whose parents do not get involved in their scholastic activities. Learners whose parents are hands-on, show improvement in their reading and learning performances. So far, there is little information that explains why there are contrasts in the reading performances of learners of Grade Five. Whatever the case, the issue necessitates the need to do research and ascertain the causative factors and relevant strategies to rectify the crisis of reading problems.

According to Durisic and Bunijevac (2017:140), parental involvement starts at home where parents assist learners with their learning activities, arranging, and giving time for learners to read and learn. The learners copy their motivation and interest in literacy and get encouraged in their scholastic activities. It is not clear whether the discrepancies in reading performances among learners of Grade Five are a result of the home setting or the environment in which they are raised. Normally, learners from rural and township areas rarely seem motivated to read and learn, especially during the early years of their learning. In some cases, the lack of motivation to read is caused by a lack of effective teaching of reading by the teachers. Ameyaw and Anto (2018:3) state that the outcome of students' failure to read properly manifests in poor performance in the final examination. Based on this scholar's view, reading skill is an important element that enables the learner to comprehend the tasks on their summative assessments and their schooling. Therefore, failing to infuse the reading skills in the early years has consequences in that such learners do not achieve better results, especially in later grades and at tertiary levels. In this chapter the researcher will discuss briefly the literature, the research approach, sampling, instrumentation, data analysis and interpretation. All these aspects will be articulated briefly which will then be discussed extensively in Chapters 2, 3 and 4.

## **1.2 Rationale of the study**

Pretorius and Klapwijk (2016:3) state that the poor reading outcomes are an indication that even in early education, reading knowledge and skills are not taught properly and, as a result, the effect is at great cost to learners' ability to "read to learn" and subsequently their academic performances. In other words, in early education, that is, the foundation phase, reading must be instilled in learners to such that by the intermediate phase they have a vast knowledge of reading components such as comprehension, fluency and accuracy.

Another factor that might affect the reading performance of the learners is the deficit of literacy resources in their households; such resources might be books, literacy videos, language games and lack of access to the internet to acquire literacy skills and knowledge. This is substantiated by Motala and Dieltiens (2009), when they note that 66% of parents in the south of Ekurhuleni assert that they have no books and other relevant resources at home. Another one of the factors that contribute and act as a barrier to learning progress is poor reading. For instance, learners who are poor readers tend to acquire low marks at the basic education as well as the tertiary level. As mentioned by Marutlulle (2017:3), the basic service delivery in Ekurhuleni is stagnant. One of these services is the delivery of adequate schools, and a large number of learners are from informal settlement and are poverty stricken. This might also be a contributing factor to the contrasting reading and learning performances in such schools. Having been an educator for a while, I have observed and experienced that learners

have serious challenges when it comes to reading for understanding. From my perspective, the challenge with reading surfaces more at the intermediate phase, and it is an ongoing challenge.

In the District of Ekurhuleni, some public schools in the intermediate phase have learners whose reading performances and skills are inadequate. Hay, Malindi and Makhalemele explain (2021:113) that 80% of Grade Five learners in the Ekurhuleni district were unable to read fluently around the year 2012. The above statements by the scholars necessitate the need to further make research in determining and identifying the hidden assumptions regarding the inadequate reading performances of learners in Grade Five in the Ekurhuleni district.

The poor reading of learners in Grade Five implies that they find it hard to comprehend instructions being written on an assessment script. According to Bokser (2014:1), reading literacy can be regarded as one of the most important abilities learners require as they progress through their early school years. Children need stimulation that prepares them for further successful schooling and adequate adulthood.

Without a doubt, it is crucial to ensure that children, especially in their mid-schooling years, that is, Grade Five, can read optimally. Jamadar (2022:216) explains that learners who are exposed to reading materials and have access to libraries are inclined to perform adequately in their scholastic and academic life. Undoubtedly, reading is imperative in facilitating any subject one may think of. A smooth change is required in procurement and distribution of resources, particularly that aimed at teaching reading in classrooms if the purpose is to achieve the relevant levels of achievement. Children that are vulnerable and/or victims of deprivation usually are at risk of their needs not being met.

To sum up, the core purpose of this study was to explore factors that lead to varying reading performances within Grade Fives in the Ekurhuleni district. Some schools tend to outperform other schools with regard to reading in the Ekurhuleni South district. In the next paragraph, the focus is on the views of various scholars that concurred with the phenomenon of reading problems and the theory that is in the fore when the discourse of reading contrasts is dealt with.

According to de Carvalho and Ossorio (2021:12), Bandura focused on several concepts regarding social learning theory which regulate the way people behave, that is, conditioning, reinforcement, punishment and reward. The behaviour in a classroom setting is conditioned and regulated by the educator and reinforcement occurs. In such instances, punishment will discourage the unwanted behaviour and reward will motivate the desired behaviour. Therefore, in social learning theory, a behaviour is modelled in a classroom setting, learners are expected to be attentive and retain the

behaviour' then if the desired outcomes are not produced. the educator must reinforce the behaviour to produce the desired outcomes.

In his theory, Bandura included four processes, namely, attention, retention, reproduction, and motivation (Kay & Kibble, 2016:19). Attention entails the process to recognise what is observed and retention is the retainment of knowledge. Reproduction is the implementation of the learned behaviour and, lastly, motivation which implies that the learner must in one way or the other be motivated to retain and reproduce the desired behavioural outcomes. In addition, Ralph and Petrina (2018:2) state that Bandura's social learning theory consists of a series of processes by which we learn and learn how to behave. As mentioned above, conditioning, reinforcement, punishment, rewarding, attention, retention, reproduction, and motivation are all the processes that are infused in Bandura's social learning theory. Such processes when implemented adequately will determine how people behave and regulate their behaviour to desired behavioural outcomes.

### **1.3 Factors leading to poor reading in primary schools**

As explained by Durisic and Bunijevac (2017:140), the involvement of parents in the learning life of a learner starts with providing conducive space, adequate learning experiences, motivation and encouragement regarding reading and learning. Therefore, there is a need for learners to be motivated in reading from the home setting. All in all, if learners are not motivated to read at home, that can contribute to their poor reading performance.

Mohamed and Amponsah (2018:275) mention that the inability to memorise is another factor that contributes to pupils' low reading abilities. This indicates that a low working memory can be a contributing factor to a learner's inadequate reading performance. If a teacher does not teach learners memorisation skills, that can contribute to poor reading performance of learners. To sum up, learners who lack memorisation skills can become poor readers as they are unable to recall what they have read.

### **1.4 The effect of poor reading on learners' performance**

When learners have barriers to reading, their reading proficiency become thwarted and consequently their academic life is hindered. According to Pretorius and Klapwijk (2016:3), an associated assumption is that when learners have difficulty using reading as a tool for learning, then their comprehension problems are a product of limited language proficiency. Those learners, according to the above explanation, who have difficulty in reading can be labelled as illiterate and their reading proficiency can be hindered. These learners find it hard to learn any subject because they are unable to read any texts. Therefore, they tend to exhibit poor language proficiency because of having reading

difficulties. In this study the researcher explored the differing reading performances and identified ways to rectify this problem.

Undoubtedly, a learner cannot understand the purposes of written texts if he or she cannot read properly. As explained by Akbasli and Yaykiran (2016:109), students' reading ability and their academic achievements in maths (and presumably also their achievement in science) are somehow related. Being unable to read has a negative effect on learners' learning of other subjects. Therefore, if they struggle to read, they will struggle to succeed academically. All in all, learners who have poor reading ability tend to have difficulties in achieving academically. The more learners have reading difficulties, the more learners do not succeed academically.

No one can question that being illiterate results in further learning barriers on learners' academic life and consequently they become uneducated adults. Phala and Hugo (2022:6) state that educators must be more knowledgeable on how to devise lesson plans that cater for the various needs of learners. This requires dedicated educators to ensure that they design lessons that are conducive to the learners' needs and these lesson plans must be facilitated effectively and efficiently. Another effect of poor reading is that when learners are unable to read, they believe that reading is not necessary. Hulme and Snowling (2016:6) substantiate this by stating that for those who struggle to read, there is a risk that the main purpose of being able to read becomes lost. Learners with reading problems tend to think that reading is not important for life and that reading is not for them. Normally, learners have a desire to acquire the skill of reading, whether it be learning to read or reading to learn, but if they struggle to exploit it, their level of desire to read decreases. Most learners are keen to read, but if they are unable to read, the motivation to read gradually diminishes.

Therefore, the acquisition of reading skills is indispensable in every learner's schooling life. The main objective of my study was to investigate factors that lead to contrasting reading performances and to determine the strategies to elevate the capacity of reading of learners in Grade Five in the district of Ekurhuleni.

### **1.5 Possible strategies to rectify the reading challenges in primary schools**

Spaull (2016:4) states that the ability to read aloud with speed, accuracy, and expression is called "oral reading fluency" and is one of the building blocks of early reading instruction. Learners must be allowed to verbalise loudly what they are reading. Oral reading at an early schooling stage of learners is imperative since as they read, they listen to what they are verbalising as well. Oral reading is one of the early stages of learning to read and therefore learners must be given ample opportunities to practise oral reading for them to acquire the skill of reading. As substantiated by Hulme and

Snowling (2016:14), the more learners read, the greater their chances of automatically recognising frequently occurring words. The implication is that learners must be allowed enormous opportunities of reading so that their reading capacities can be enhanced. As learners read, they learn common words which are developmentally appropriate, and they use these words in their daily communication. Therefore, daily reading is important for them to learn and acquire words that are frequently used in that language.

Smith, Snow, Serry, and Hammond (2021:891) explain that some of the best strategies to improve comprehension is by summarising, self-questioning, and visualising. Learners must be encouraged to summarise, design questions, retell and draw pictures about the setting of the story because such methods determine whether they have comprehended a text or not. In simplest terms, learners must read a story and then they can be given an opportunity to draw a picture about a setting in that story, retell the story verbally and make questions about the story. By so doing, a teacher can detect whether or not learners have understood the story.

According to Almutairi (2018:67), when summarising, a reader reads the text and verbally summarises what they have read. Summarising is a very effective method of detecting the level of comprehension. Learners must be given ample opportunities to summarise what they have read. Summarizing is ranked among strategies that are effective in determining the level of comprehension of any learner. When summarising through the use of this method, individual learners read the whole story twice or more, then they have to summarise it to show their understanding of it. In other words, summarising is one of the strategies that can elevate the level of literacy in any learner.

Pretorius and Klapwijk (2016:9) affirm that there can be no comprehension without decoding, so decoding is a necessary component in constructing meaning. Learners must hear themselves or the story reader well when a story is read. Learners tend to find it impossible to understand written text if they do not listen or hear what they are reading or what is read to them. Also, when an educator reads a story to learners, he/she must be audible enough for them to hear clearly. Learners cannot understand a story without having read it or if the teacher has not read the story to them before they can read it for themselves. Therefore, stories and other articles must be read at various opportunities so that learners can comprehend them. Hulme and Snowling (2016:16) confirm findings that indeed regular assessment and ongoing monitoring of learners' literacy achievement is associated with positive outcomes. When teachers teach reading and activities concerning reading take place, assessment and recording of assessment results should be done effectively. Assessing and recording reading activities is essential and enable teachers to monitor and identify learners who make progress and those who struggle and therefore need intervention.



Assessing of reading activities is one of the effective strategies that enhance the reading capacities of learners. When assessing reading activities, educators can know the differing abilities of learners especially that which concern their reading performances and, consequently, learners know their level of reading performance and can be encouraged to improve. As a teacher assesses reading activities, it becomes easy for them to design other complex or simple reading activities based on the assessment results. Therefore, assessing and recording reading activities is imperative on its own.

## **1.6 Statement of the problem**

In the Ekurhuleni district, there are Grade Fives that have reading problems, while other Grade Fives from other schools in the Ekurhuleni district have good or normal reading performance. In earlier sections of this chapter, challenges that affect the reading comprehension of especially primary school learners have been discussed and it is emphasised that if not mitigated, it will end up affecting the scholastic performances of learners. Reading performance does not only affect them in languages but in other subjects as well.

In the Ekurhuleni district, some schools in the intermediate phase have learners whose reading performances and skills are inadequate. Hay et al. (2021:113) assert that in the *Mail and Guardian* published on the 8<sup>th</sup> of April 2011, it was confirmed that 80% of Grade Five learners in the Ekurhuleni district are unable to read fluently. This present study assessed the origins of challenges experienced by primary learners in reading and provided strategies with the aim of assisting teachers to remedy the situation. It is envisaged that findings of this study can help benefit educators and learners with strategies that could lead to improvement of reading in general.

Matters pertaining to addressing challenges that concern reading comprehension of learners ought to be given attention at an early stage of their educational journey. If not given attention, the deficiencies tend to reflect as learners proceed to further grades of their schooling. This study is intended to contribute knowledge on how challenges experienced by primary school learners on reading can be dealt with. Its findings can guide schools, teachers, learners and parents on how they can improve their teaching and/or learning of reading; therefore, there would be more skilled teachers and learners on the concept of reading.

### ***1.6.1 The research questions***

Main question:

- Investigating factors leading to contrasting reading performances of Grade Five learners in the Ekurhuleni District.

Sub-questions:

- Which factors lead to poor reading in primary schools?
- How does poor reading affect the learning performance of learners?
- Which strategies can be implemented to rectify the reading challenges in primary schools?

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

- To determine factors that lead to contrasting reading performance in Grade Five learners in the Ekurhuleni District.
- To determine factors that lead to poor reading in primary schools.
- To explore the way in which poor reading affects the performance of learners.
- To determine strategies that can be implemented to rectify the reading challenges in primary schools.

## **1.7 Research approach**

This research used a qualitative study approach since it focused on how learners experience and understand the way they learn to read. As described by Cropley (2019:5), the qualitative method focuses on the way the world is understood in the researcher's mind, usually using abstract scientific concepts and terminology. The phenomenological research method was used in this study because it strives to identify the phenomena based on how the people around those phenomena experience it. As articulated by Taherdoost (2022:56), the phenomenological approach focuses on extracting data using the participants' perceptions of the phenomenon within the 60 to 120 minutes of the interview. The purpose of the phenomenological approach is to illuminate the specific, to identify phenomena through how they are perceived by the actors.

## **1.8 Sampling**

For this study, the researcher utilised the purposive sampling method to select a sample from the population. Among advantages of this method of sampling is that it enables the selection of participants with in-depth understanding, knowledge, and perceptions of a research phenomenon. This sampling method ensures that each element of the sample assists with research since each element fits with the population parameters of the study (Pascoe, 2014:143). The site location in which this study took place was a public school and a private school in the Ekurhuleni District. The sample consisted of two language teachers (one from the public school and one from the private

school) who had been teaching Grade Five English language for five years. Ten Grade Five learners were selected purposefully from the Ekurhuleni District as a sample, five learners from the private school and five learners from the public school were selected and also two parents one from each school.

### **1.9 Instrumentation and data generating techniques**

Researchers have used multiple techniques to generate data to obtain the desired knowledge and understanding. The use of multiple methods in research is to overcome the weakness or bias of a single method (Mapotse, 2014: 162). This study used questionnaires, observation and interviews to generate data. As explained by Kabir (2016:204), questionnaires are a list of questions to which participants provide answers and include closed and semi-closed questions. Given that this study was conducted during the outbreak of COVID-19, it was important to abide within its regulations to avoid contamination. Thus, the researcher had to comply with the schools' perceptions on the pandemic. The questionnaire, which was made up of closed and open questions, was administered, first, to determine the challenges that teachers may have been experiencing. Open and closed questions require a yes or no answer and allow participants to further explain their answers. Structured interviews were conducted with these teachers because more information was needed from them to assist learners who cannot read fluently. As described by Taherdoost (2021:18), structured interviews are interviews with questions that are predetermined prior to the interview session. This kind of interview has a fixed set of questions that the participants have to respond to. Through using interviews, a researcher is able to seek and acquire answers to the challenges reflected by the questionnaires. In addition to questionnaires, face-to-face structured interviews were used to generate data from the one language teacher from the private school and the one language teacher from the public school.

### **1.10 Data analysis and interpretation**

According to Lester, Cho and Lochmiller (2020:98), the importance of data analysis is that it creates insight for both the researcher and other stakeholders, especially those who interact with the findings. It gives meaning to data and gives broader understanding and representation of data by conducting different types of analysis. Thematic data analysis was used as the analysis for this study because it emphasises the identification of patterns of meaning within qualitative data. Various methods of data presentation have been provided as evidence of the data generated (Neuman, 2014:243). A detailed description of how the data were summarised is shown in Chapter 4 (Research design and methodology) under each presentation so as to give more interpretation and theoretical meaning of the findings. All data were analysed and processed qualitatively.

### **1.11 Reliability and validity, credibility and trustworthiness**

Strategies that the researcher used to ensure trustworthiness were prolonged engagement, persistent observation, and member checks. Lester et al. (2020:102) mention that in qualitative research credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability are achieved by the utilisation of prolonged engagement. DeJaeghere, Morrow, Richardson, Schowengerdt, Hinton and Boudet (2020:61) note that in prolonged engagement, participants gain trust, which is important for attaining dependable and credible results. In prolonged engagement, it was ensured that the process of generating data allowed participants sufficient time to respond. In persistent observation, the researcher ensured that observations were conducted thoroughly to avoid missing any piece of information. In member checking, it was ensured that the participants were the relevant sample for the set interview, observation, or questionnaire. By prolonged engagement, the researcher adapted the same questions in terms of grammatical order and some words were alternated using synonyms to check whether the responses were still the same. Both interviews and questionnaires were used to ensure that data were reliable and trustworthy. Bak (2015:43) states that if research involves the use of a questionnaire, a researcher needs to address the same questions as those for interviews. Therefore, for this study, the researcher ensured that all the information was valid by constituting both the interview and the questionnaire to ensure that the response from the sample was valid and reliable.

### **1.12 Research ethics/ethical considerations**

Prior to the generating of data, the researcher ensured that learners received the assent forms to mutually accept to be involved in the data generating process. The assent forms appear in the appendix section of this study. The use of consent forms is a prerequisite for all research involving identifiable subjects except in cases where an ethics committee judges that such consent is not possible and where it is felt that the benefit of the research outweighs the potential harm. As explained by DeJaeghere et al. (2020:58) the consent form is a way to agree or disagree about being the participant in a study. The researcher used pseudonyms and initials to ensure confidentiality and privacy. The consent forms ensured that the participants were willing to participate and their identities were not revealed. The researcher ensured that all data were treated with a high level of confidentiality and privacy. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2014:134), confidentiality means that no one has access to individual data or the names of the participants except the researcher(s) and that the subjects know before they participate who will see the data. The digital devices such as PC and smartphones were password secured. According to Macdonald and Headlam (2014:61), bias is a loss of balance and accuracy in the use of research methods. For this research, it was ensured that the study was without any form of bias, for example, all genders of a sample participated.

### **1.13 Limitations and Delimitations of the study**

Research is declared as one task that is not easy to constitute, most especially if it is not well planned. The process seems simple enough as a research project asks questions, compiles responses, and codes those that answered the three central questions. But, unlike teaching, research has more ethical challenges and more formal ethical standards must be complied with.

#### ***1.13.1 Limitations***

According to Theofanidis and Fountouki (2019:2), limitations are constraints that are largely beyond the control of a researcher and could affect the outcome of a study. Therefore, limitations are hindrances that a researcher cannot overcome and which can impact negatively on the research. As mentioned by Machtants and Thogmartin (2018:1), a limitation is a systematic bias that a researcher does not or could not control which could inappropriately impact research process. All in all, the limitations of a study concern issues that a researcher cannot overcome such as the regulations of the COVID-19, social unrest, or very high level of truancy in the school on both learners and educators. These limitations, should they surface, could impact a study negatively. And, if a school does not have telephones or other means of contact to arrange the visit, that could also be a limitation.

#### ***1.13.2 Delimitations***

Machtants and Thogmartin (2018:1) state that delimitation is a systematic bias intentionally introduced into the study design or instrument by a researcher. Delimitations are changes that a researcher can overcome, and they are part of the research programme, for instance the changes of dates of some activities such as interviews etc. Delimitations are more comprehensible and possibly rectifiable because they are issues that are part of the study, for instance, questions of the study, objectives, variables, data generating tools, and the timeframe of the study. Therefore, the delimitations are issues that one can overcome and are within the research design.

### **1.14 Definitions of key concepts**

#### ***1.14.1 Conceptual Definitions***

All the definitions of the concepts have been taken from McMillan, J. and Schumacher, S. 2014. *Research in Education Evidence based Inquiry*. Seventh edition. Pearson New International Edition.

*Bias*: A loss of balance and accuracy in the use of research.

*Confirmability*: The level of confidence that the researcher must ensure trustworthiness through data being generated from the participants' narratives or words.

*Constructivism:* The researcher uses systematic procedures while ensuring multiple socially constructed realities in the study.

*Credibility:* The extent to which the results of a study approximate reality and are thus judged to be trustworthy and reasonable.

*Data:* Information that has been gathered by research where interpretations and conclusions are drawn.

*Data transcription:* The process of taking notes and other information and which is converted to the format that will facilitate analysis.

*Dependability:* It is a detailed description of how the study was conducted and analysed so that the study could be replicated.

*Hypothesis:* A conjectural statement that is a prediction which is made before data is generated.

*Industry vs Inferiority:* It is Ericson's stage of development between the ages of five to twelve, where a child must learn to feel competent, or he/she will have feelings of inferior when failing.

*Interpretivism:* An approach that emphasises the need to understand or interpret the beliefs, motives, and behaviour of social beings.

*Interview:* When people are asked questions about their opinions and behaviour for the purpose of gathering data.

*Lexical:* Concerning the meaning of the word or phrase in a language.

*Literacy:* The ability to read and write.

*Literature:* Data published by other scholars that is relevant to a research question.

*Observation:* The act of carefully watching something, someone or some people for a period of time.

*Ontological Rationale:* Refers to one's personal justification for the research based on one's experienced reality of a problem.

*Oral Reading Fluency:* Ability to read text promptly, adequately, and meaningfully.

*Phonemic:* Referring to differentiating the distinctive speech elements of a language.

*Population:* A group of individuals or events from which a sample is drawn.

*Probability sampling technique:* A sampling in which the subjects are drawn from a population in known probabilities.

*Qualitative Research:* Method of gathering data about a phenomenon; the data is descriptive, based on people's direct experiences and is in the form of words.

*Quantitative research:* Method of gathering data, where the emphasis is on measuring, and describing a phenomenon; data is in the form of numbers, statistics etc.

*Questionnaire:* A written set of questions or statements that is used to assess attitudes, opinions, beliefs, and biographical information.

*Sample:* A group of subjects from which data is generated.

*Semi-structured interview:* An interview that does not follow a set of questions, but it follows a framework to address key themes.

*Sensory Representation:* Denotes the meaning acquired through the different sense organs.

*Standardised open-ended interview:* Participants are asked the same questions in the same order.

*Structured interview:* It follows a set of questions which are worked through systematically.

*Transactional Reading:* When both readers and text play a vital part in the formation of meaning.

*Transcription:* Is the process of taking notes and other information and converting them into a format that will facilitate analysis.

*Transferability:* Same methods are being used on another sample.

*Unstructured interview:* A method of interview that does not follow any predetermined pattern of questions or themes.

### ***1.14.2 Operational Definitions***

*Causative factors:* Object followed by one another, and where all objects similar to the first are followed by objects identical to the second one (Pearce & Vandenbroucke, 2020:1).

*Comprehension:* The act of acquiring and solidifying meaning while interacting with written text. (Butterfuss, Kim and Kendeou, 2020:1).

*Reading literacy:* The ability to read written texts (Rachmat 2020:1).

*Schooling:* It is a way of providing education to learn (Adesemowo & Sotonade, 2022: 1).

*Summative assessments:* It assess learners'/students' learning comprehension, skills, knowledge and success at the end of the learning term (Bhat & Bhat, 2019:779).

### **1.15 Summary**

In this chapter I highlighted some issues that need to be attended to with regard to imbalances between reading performances of the learners of Grade Fives. This study has ensured that it generates as much data as possible to ensure that all learners acquire necessary reading skills. As other authors have mentioned in previous sections of this chapter, there is a lack of reading motivation.

The data generating techniques have assisted in generating enough data about the reading problems, then all learners will be able to access reading with understanding without being unmotivated to read. In the next chapter, that is, Theoretical Framework, the researcher will discuss issues that evolve around social learning theory and other literature from various scholars.



## **Chapter 2**

### **Theoretical Framework**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, the researcher discusses the theory that is associated with reading and its complications. According to Kivunja (2018:45), a theory is a set of connected concepts that present a systematic view of a phenomenon by mentioning correlation within variables with the aim of describing a phenomenon. A theory creates the path in which a study flows. To learn meaningfully, learning should be interwoven with theory. Collins and Stockton (2018:2) state that theory provides guidance to make meaning of what methods assist in solving a phenomenon. This statement substantiates the fact that theory must be somehow related to a phenomenon that is being studied.

A theory makes it possible to define a research question and to define the roots of a phenomenon. It is therefore imperative to infuse theory when any phenomenon is explored. As mentioned by Tlale (2021:2), in South Africa, students in higher education possess capacity but some lack the literacy skills that equate to their academic levels. This phenomenon of deficiency of language skills invites researchers to explore the causative factors especially from the primary school level. Therefore, through integrating theories, the researcher in this study paved a path to determine the causative factors of the contrasting reading performances of the learners and to identify possible strategies to elevate this phenomenon of reading contrasts.

Collins and Stockton (2018:3) state that theories attempt to explain phenomena in a cohesive and meaningful way. Based on this study, the phenomenon concerns the contrasts that exist in reading ability of learners in Grade Five. The problem of poor reading might be a consequence of the lack of resources in the homes where learners reside. According to Motala and Dieltiens (2009), a large percentage of Ekurhuleni South parents asserted that they had reading materials at home. Among factors that hinder learning progress of learners is poor reading. For instance, learners can acquire low marks on their summative assessments results and at tertiary level as well because of the lack of proper reading skills. They further state that most school-going children in South Africa cannot read at the end of Grade Three and this impacts the rate of their academic life. The above articulations necessitate the need for research that determines and identifies hidden assumptions regarding the inadequate reading performances of learners in Grade Five.

For this research, the theory endeavoured to explore and analyse this phenomenon with the purpose of rectifying and elevating reading performances of learners. The phenomenon is empirical, meaning it is practical, it is happening physically within the Grade Five learners and can impede the learners'

reading skills as well as their further education and academic lives. Thus, the researcher's objectives were to explore this phenomenon, and determine the causative factors and strategies to alleviate the reading problems.

A large population of learners across South Africa find it difficult to read with comprehension in the early grades. There is therefore a great need for research to be conducted to alleviate this phenomenon of reading deficiency. Biesman-Simons, Dixon and Pretorius (2021:3) state that the impossible factor for the transformation of learning performance is the inadequate reading with comprehension where a very low percentage of learners can read with comprehension when they enter Grade Four. The first grade of intermediate phase is Grade Four where learners are expected to have acquired the reading skills that fit the grade but, according to the scholars, learners enter Grade Four with below average performance of reading with comprehension. This shows that there is still much work to be done and adapted to rectify this phenomenon of inadequate reading performance. Theories such as the social learning theory can be used, among other strategies, to rectify these reading problems.

According to Hall, Sambu, Berry, Giese and Almeleh (2017:34), many learners, especially those from poor backgrounds, enter school having not acquired the quality education that they ought to have acquired. This denotes that these learners would not have acquired early education in daycare centres, or they would not have attended any form of early education. Therefore, such learners are not in possession of adequate prior knowledge of learning and skills that are necessary for formal schooling. It is then the task of researchers and educators to close the gap between adequate learning performance and lack of previous learning knowledge. Researchers must explore the root causes of problems related to reading and learning and recommend strategies that can address and enhance the performance of learners on reading so that educators would begin to adapt their teaching methods in order to raise reading and learning performance.

Researchers concur that many students in their first year at tertiary level do not present the reading performance that is relevant to that level of education. Such students mispronounce written text, or they read without adequate comprehension of the text. For instance, Tlale (2021:1052) states that in a study that was initiated by the Unit for the Development of Language, it was identified that 2 000 out of 6 000 students had the language ability of Grade Seven learners. There are various factors that led to the poor reading and learning performances. One might think of COVID-19 or socio-economic background or inadequate teaching methods, but as of now we as researchers have to explore and utilise better teaching methods to be used by teachers in schools. These changes should be implemented promptly before the problem of reading and learning is worsened.

Social learning theory is regarded by the researcher as one theory that can provide solutions to the challenge of poor reading and learning among learners since social learning theory emphasises learning that is acquired by observing. This is supported by Lind, Ghirlanda and Enquist (2019:2) as they state that social learning theory is when an individual learns from the stimuli that is being modelled by the other individual, through observation and retention, learners learn the desired learning outcomes. Therefore, social learning theory encourages the usage of a variety of models and media to enhance learning since learners must learn by observing and retention of knowledge. The researcher discusses social learning theory extensively from section 2.2 onwards where information such as the origins of social learning theory and its meanings are discussed.

Where learning is implemented, care must be taken to ensure the balance between theory and practice. Theory is believed to shed light on the phenomenon and create the direction which should be taken to elevate the reading and learning phenomenon. According to Maddock and Maroun (2018:210), designers of Outcomes Based Education (OBE) at school level should create a balance between theory and practice if learning is to be effective and successful. If the school level of education can be combined with theory and not only practice, learners can also attain more knowledge and comprehension in any learning that is taught at any school. Social learning theory is one of the theories that can be effectively implemented to enhance learning and comprehension of reading.

In addition, Phala and Hugo (2022:4) state that in South Africa, most learners are not taught in their mother language and this trend causes challenges. Such learners find it impossible to hear and understand the instructions and messages being passed by the teacher during the reading lessons. Thus, they acquire the least knowledge during any period of teaching because they are taught in a language that is not their mother language. Again, social learning theory creates a balance between the LOLT (language of learning and teaching) and mother tongue by modelling the learning in a variety of strategies which has to be implemented by the educators. Social learning theory has shed light on how learners ought to learn using observational learning and modelling (Horsburgh & Ippolito, 2018:2). Therefore, one can assume that social learning theory can narrow the gap between LOLT and mother tongue, using methods like Total Physical Response (TPR) and regular verbalisation of language in conjunction with relevant body language.

In South African schooling, the Department of Basic Education has encouraged inclusive education where all learners, regardless of their conditions, must be accommodated and supported. Phala and Hugo (2022:2) state that inclusive education refers to schools where learners with intrinsic and extrinsic barriers are catered for and motivated, and such learners must require a low-level need of support such as psychosocial, auditory and visual impairments. It is to be expected that learners

experience emotional instability based on the family setting; experience impairments on a personal level or they might experience barriers, which are within the infrastructure of the school. Therefore, a school ought to be inclusive, that is, it must be able to cater for a variety of barriers that might be hindering learners from accessing education.

Professional development of teachers is also essential when it comes to the implementation of strategies that enhance learners' performance. Teachers need to be knowledgeable of how to effectively accommodate a learner with impairments and barriers. Lapp, Wolsey, Grant and Karkouti (2019:5) maintain that educators need to have relevant knowledge with regard to how to accommodate learners with or without barriers. Teachers must acquire knowledge of how to convey reading instructions and be able to adapt their methods of teaching in their classrooms. Since Social learning theory is based on observation and retention where educators are the models of learning, educators must be equipped with relevant knowledge and skills to accommodate learners and enhance learning.

Educators must ensure that they equip learners with necessary reading and learning skills so they would be able to fit into academic education. According to Mulcahy, Bernades and Baars (2019:5), the ability to read can affect learning performance across all subjects and there is a relationship between reading performance and academic achievement. When learners have difficulties in reading at the intermediate phase of their schooling, their entire schooling is affected negatively in almost all their subjects. Poor performance in reading manifests later at the tertiary level when they cannot interpret the written text to knowledge. Consequently, more dropouts occur, and society has fewer skilled people. So, if reading problems affect learners at school and tertiary levels, then the educators must adapt their strategies at school and classroom levels, to ensure more skilled and knowledgeable adults.

The deficit of reading skills can result in an inability to learn and result in dropouts at schooling and tertiary levels. When a learner cannot read, he/she cannot extract meaning from the text, eventually deciding that reading and learning are inadequate activities.

The Department of Education and Training of the State of Victoria in Australia (2021:8) states that literacy is vital for constructing knowledge and skills and language is used to communicate and fit the societal challenges. That is, learners who are illiterate tend to lack confidence when communicating and also cannot acquire skills that society demands since most skills are delivered in written texts. The more learners drop out, especially from tertiary education, the more societies have unskilled members. Therefore, reading skill is the most important skill one may possess in order for

one to possess other skills. It is then up to schools and educators to impact societies in a positive manner partly by adapting to strategies pertaining to teaching of literacy as well as reading.

South Africa's Department of Basic Education has implemented a variety of initiatives and organisations which are aimed at improving the level of reading skills among the learners. Tlale (2021:1053) explains that the Department of Basic Education has established several campaigns with the aim of improving the reading performances of the learners. These campaigns are: Ithuteng "ready to learn campaign", the "Culture of Learning, Teaching, Services (COLTS)", "The South African Literacy Initiative (SANLI)", Masifunde Sonke and the National Reading Strategy (NRS). These initiatives are among those that the South African Department of Education use to elevate the reading and learning performance of learners across schools in South Africa. Therefore, one can determine the importance of enhancing reading skills of learners as reading skills oversee scholastic and academic success.

According to Maddock and Maroun (2018:194), the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) is aimed at excellence, knowledge of subject matter, and optimum level of students' performance. When teachers implement CAPS adequately during daily teaching, the performance of learners will improve. Yet one can assume that if CAPS were to be used within the context of social learning theory, improved learning performance would occur. Importantly, learning must not be passive where teachers are the transmitters of knowledge and the learners are the recipients of knowledge. Learners need to observe and retain the subject matter from the model and that is what implies the social learning theory, which will be discussed in detail in section 2.2 onwards. In addition, Gustafsson, van der Berg and Burger (2022:14) explain that the language and non-language subjects taught to learners must concur with the regulations of CAPS. All lessons being planned by the educators must be within the CAPS policy and the South African Schools Act (SASA) of 1996 (Republic of South Africa [RSA], 1996).

The Department of Basic Education - Annual Report (2021:48) states the five outcomes which will improve the education of learners. The five outcomes are laid out in the table below and labelled as 2019-2024 Medium-Term Strategic Framework (MTFS) outcome statement.

**Table 2.1 2019-2024 Medium-Term strategic Framework (MTFS) outcome statement**

Outcome 1	Improve the school readiness for learners
Outcome 2	10-year-old learners enrolled in publicly funded schools must be able to read for meaning
Outcome 3	Youths better prepared for further studies and the world of work beyond grade 9
Outcome 4	Youths leaving the school system more prepared to contribute towards a prosperous and equitable South Africa
Outcome 5	School physical infrastructure and environment that inspires learners to learn and teachers to teach.

The outcomes described in Table 2.1 indicate that the national level of education has ensured that all is in place to elevate the learning performance of learners and education at large. It is therefore schools and educators that ought to ensure that all strategies are implemented to optimise the education of the learners.

Reading and literacy skills are not impossible to attain only if the procedures to teach them are followed accordingly. Educators must acknowledge the components that engulf literacy without forgetting the usage of social learning theory when these components are taught. Mulcahy et al (2019:3) assert that components that are very important to develop reading skills are phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, comprehension, vocabulary, and writing. When learners are abreast with these components, they become competent and skilled in literacy. Social learning theory can be used when these components are taught only to enhance the retention of learning. By using the social learning theory when these components are taught, learners observe and retain the modelled literacy skill. In other words, social learning theory complements the lesson for the enhancement of knowledge and acquisition of learning.

As it has been discussed earlier, reading is one of the most essential aspects of literacy. The ability to read seems to be the mother of other language components and subjects. According to Mulcahy et al. (2019:4), the ability to read automatically determines whether a learner can identify letters, recognise words, discriminate words, and meaningfully comprehend the text itself. For instance, learners are rarely able to discriminate between words without the prior knowledge of reading. As they read aloud, for example, they also extract meaning out of the text that they read. Therefore, reading is undoubtedly the most important skill in the entire literacy programme, yet social learning theory makes it possible for literacy to be taught with understanding as learners will observe the modelled learning outcomes.

The possession of a skill in reading does not only enable a person to read but other beneficial effects are associated with the reading skills. For instance, students and learners who have adequate reading skills can manage their own learning. The Department of Education and Training in the State of Victoria in Australia (2021:8) states that being literate affords learners an ability to not only acquire knowledge and skills but become confident and inspired and they use their skills across all the societal demands. Such learners also acquire skills of working collaboratively, sharing different views about a given topic, and making informed decisions about written text. In addition, Tlale (2021:1) warns that the reading skill is not an innate behaviour such as speaking, but reading is a skill that must be learned and success in schooling depends on the ability to read. Therefore, a learner can find it impossible to be successful in other subjects if they cannot acquire the literacy skill of reading.

The importance of acquiring the skill of reading cannot be overemphasised. In fact, authors have confirmed that it is the most important skill one can acquire. As Abu Abeeleh, Al-Ghazo and Al-Sobh (2021:6) explain, reading ranks among essential skills needed globally, especially when it comes to being able to grasp concepts and express oneself at the basic and tertiary education. There can be no effective schooling or academic success if learners lack reading and literacy skills. As mentioned earlier, the theory that the researcher focussed on is social learning theory and is discussed extensively in this section. The theory always makes it feasible to identify the origin and the progress of a particular phenomenon. Theories not only imbue the instruments of empirical social research, but the theory also informs the social world that the researcher is studying (Joas and Knolb 2014:3). The importance of theory cannot be underestimated. Theories shed light on issues that create confusion to concerned individuals and through theory, all issues become definable. The theory that the researcher chose to analyse the phenomenon of reading performances of Grade Fives in the Ekurhuleni District is social learning theory. The next section investigates social learning theory in depth while discussing the phenomenon.

## **2.2 The origins and the definition of the social learning theory**

According to Nabavi (2016:3), social learning theory was first founded by Albert Bandura who was born on the 4<sup>th</sup> of December 1925 in Canada where he was later known as the father of social learning theory. Johnson and Johnson (2018:3) briefly describe Albert Bandura's experiment in which children were shown a film where adults reacted violently to a Bobo doll which was inflated. After watching the film of an adult interacting violently with the bobo doll, children were grouped and played the film, then children started to imitate the observed behaviour. Children started to punch and kick the doll.

The social learning theory, according to Joseph (2021:1), was first introduced in 1971, by Albert Bandura and he posited that it was intended to reveal that aggression is a consequence of learning. Most aggressive behaviour is a result of a learned behaviour. People and learners begin to be aggressive after they have observed other people being aggressive to them or others. People and learners observe and retain what is being modelled to them and they tend to reproduce that behaviour. Joseph further states that when learners grow in a violent environment, they assume that aggression and violence are acceptable behaviours. They view such behaviour as appropriate and take it that it is acceptable to use aggression to rectify any challenges that they encounter. Likewise, in the experiment of Albert Bandura, learners watched a bobo doll being treated violently and they began to reproduce the exact behaviour of violence.

According to de Carvalho and Ossorio (2021:12), Bandura focused on several concepts regarding the social learning theory, particularly those which regulate the way people behave, that is, conditioning, reinforcement, punishment, and rewarding. The behaviour of learners in a classroom is determined by the educator and reinforcement occurs—the punishment deters the unwanted behaviour and the rewarding motivates the desired behaviour. Therefore, in social learning theory, a behaviour is modelled in a classroom setting, learners are expected to be attentive and retain the behaviour, then if the desired outcomes are not produced, the educator must reinforce the behaviour to produce the desired outcomes.

Social learning theory motivates learning acquired through observing a modelled behaviour, yet this theory has processes that are interconnected that enable the learners to acquire learning so that they reach their learning potential Kay and Kibble (2016:19) explain that Bandura, in his theory, included four processes, namely, attention, retention, reproduction, and motivation. Attention entails the process to recognise what is observed and retention is the retainment of knowledge, reproduction is the extraction of the learned behaviour and, lastly, motivation, which implies that a learner must in one way or the other be motivated to retain and reproduce the desired behavioural outcomes. In addition, Ralph and Petrina (2018:2) state that Bandura's social learning theory comprise a series of processes by which we learn how to behave. As mentioned above, conditioning, reinforcement, punishment, rewarding, attention, retention, reproduction, and motivation are all processes that are infused in Bandura's social learning theory. Such processes when implemented adequately will optimise the learning of learners.

Edinyang (2016:41) also substantiates that in Bandura's famous Bobo doll experiment, children observed an adult interacting aggressively with the Bobo doll. When these children were later placed in a room with a doll, they began to act violently towards the doll. This experiment of Bandura implies



that when learners observe a particular behaviour constantly or regularly, they are likely to replicate the same observed behaviour. Consequently, the experiment by Albert Bandura was then called the social learning theory since children learnt the behaviour in a social context through observation of others.

In the context of schooling, the social learning theory, also known as the social cognitive theory, focuses on the way in which learners acquire knowledge of learning and how they process it in their thinking patterns. According to Jenkins, Fuchs, Van Den Broek, Espin and Deno (2018 :1), social learning theory / social cognitive theory which was developed by A. Bandura in the 1970s onwards, is derived from psychology that describes how learners in the social context process the multitude of human behaviours which include the retainment of knowledge. This theory elaborates how learners attain the knowledge of learning from an educator. The social learning theory illustrates that observation and retainment are psychological entities that require the brain to facilitate the observed knowledge.

In addition, Von Schönfeld, Tan, Wiekens and Janssen-Jansen (2020:414) aver that Bandura's social learning theory in a cognitive context pays attention to how learners learn to behave in a particular way that can result in a negative or positive outcome based on the expectations. When learners observe, retain, and interpret the information negatively, failure can be a consequence; similarly when they retain and reproduce the information positively, inclusion can be the consequence. In the context of schooling, failure can be associated with punishment and inclusion can be associated with rewards.

As learners acquire knowledge and norms in their social environment, they are vulnerable when only negative behaviours are being modelled by the adults. According to Telzer, van Hoorn, Rogers and Do (2018:220), Bandura's social learning theory also emphasises that social settings influence adolescents when they are exposed to differing behaviours and values of others. The community has a task to shape and redirect the norms and values of their youths and this task belongs to adults or the seniors of that community. Adults can only shape their youths through modelling the expected observation, then the youth is likely to become responsible adult citizens. In the school context, learners constantly observe and retain the adequate observation as educators are extensively infused with knowledge, skills and values that are suitable for adulthood. When the majority of society constantly depicts antisocial behaviour, it is because of what they have observed being modelled by the others.

According to Abdullah, Hassan, Abdelmagid and Ali (2020:198), Bandura's theory emphasises that the behaviour of humans in a society determine the way the society exists. Social learning theory has

an enormous impact when society must be shaped and redirected. In essence, members of society have to learn and acquire behaviour of others and begin to reproduce the same behaviours; therefore, the way in which the society lives depends on the behaviour of others in their social context.

The social learning theory alone cannot adequately impact the upbringing of a human being. Some elements of being human must be involved sufficiently for a human being to grow and become an adequate human being. Cilliers (2021:1) states that Bandura's social learning theory emphasises that learners are not passive receivers of knowledge, but cognition, environment, and behaviour must function interactively for learning knowledge acquisition to occur. The cognitive process of the learners must be willing and able to attain the knowledge being portrayed by the educator, also the environment in which the learner acquires this knowledge must be conducive to learning, that is, there should be a physical atmosphere that encourages learning in that environment. Most importantly, the already internalised behaviour of the learner must be a behaviour that is modified for learning. One must keep it in mind that during learning in a social learning classroom, attention must be activated. So, those learners whose behaviour is not conducive for learning must first be adapted to the learning environment.

One of the vital elements of Bandura's social learning theory is self-efficacy, which emphasises persistence and confidence (Locklear, 2020:2). Learners who benefit from the implementation of social learning theory in their daily learning are persistent and confident. One has to keep in mind that when using social learning theory, the learners learn by observing and reproducing, which implies that the learning is interactive but not passive. Therefore, during the social learning theory, learners in a classroom learning session not only attain the knowledge of learning but they also acquire skills of being confident and persistent.

Bandura's social learning theory believes that people in their social spheres develop knowledge and values through one another by learning from each other. According to Von Schönfeld et al (2020:413), human individuals share and distribute knowledge collectively as they interact, this includes knowledge, skills, values, and social norms. In social learning, knowledge is disseminated across all those involved, learning from each other. In this way, the culture is formed, and the social behaviour is directed. Therefore, it is imperative for society to acculturate its members according to desired expectations because that culture being acculturated might be in existence for centuries. Locklear (2020:6) substantiates that by stating that Bandura's social learning theory believes that humans are the product of the constant interaction with the environment. Therefore, the way the society behaves is the consequence of the behaviour being infused between one another within the society.

Johnson and Johnson (2018:2) maintain that social learning theory comes into effect when we learn by emulating or observing others. They further state that learners learn by watching the actions of other students and adults. According to Lyons and Berge (2012:1), social learning theory occurs when learning takes place through observation and is imitated by those who are observing. It is therefore clear that social learning occurs when a learner behaves according to their own observation on a particular social context. In the next section, the researcher discusses social learning theory in the context of reading, learning, and schooling.

### 2.3 The rationale for choosing the social learning theory

The social learning theory is said to be the most effective for implementation when learning has to occur. Table 2.2, below, illustrates the importance of social learning theory being used with learners. According to Kay and Kibble (2016:19), social learning can be effectively and efficiently implemented utilising four components, that is, attention, retention, reproduction and motivation, as depicted on the following table. In a classroom setting, learners can intensively observe the educator, peer or any model such as picture slides with narration, then they will be able to acquire that knowledge and extract it when required to do so.

**Table 2.2 Four components of social learning theory (Kay & Kibble, 2016:19)**

<b>Process</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Possible example</b>
<b>Attention</b>	This is when the learner attentively observes the desired outcome from the educator or the model incentive.	The educator or the peer can demonstrate the desired outcome of a particular lesson on reading and the learner will have to observe attentively.
<b>Retention</b>	The learner acquires and assimilates the knowledge that is being demonstrated or modelled.	During the lesson of reading learners will assimilate and accommodate the read texts so they will be able to extract it when required to do so.
<b>Production</b>	The learner is expected to demonstrate his understanding of the observed behaviour on his own.	During the lesson of reading and learning, the learner will recite or replicate what he has observed from the educator or model.
<b>Motivation</b>	The learner has to show some level of encouragement to demonstrate the learned behaviour during the lesson.	During this instance the learner must show the motivation of demonstrating what he has learned from the educator or model.

Kay and Kibble (2016:19) also state that learners tend to gain adequate memories of the modelled learning and are able to appropriately translate those outcomes on their own. Learners would be able

to reproduce the learning content, which was physically demonstrated to them, which they have acquired through their observation from the educator or model. According to Ralph and Petrina (2018:2), learners may have acquired the skill of reading and learning previously, but still depend on modelling and cues to extract the desired outcomes. It is imperative for learners to observe the expected outcomes of any learning and their memory span would retrieve the knowledge rapidly if it was acquired through observation.

As mentioned by Joseph (2021:8), researchers posit that in social learning theory, observation does not have good impact if the attention, retention, reproduction, and motivation are not equally implemented. In any classroom of learning, these four components must be equally activated for the observed or modelled learning to be acquired properly. It is therefore the task of any educator to ensure that among the four components, not even one is disregarded; consequently, learning will become meaningful and successful. Attention and reproduction are imperative during social learning theory as learners observe attentively from the educator or the model and they reproduce this observation which is related to learning outcomes and objectives. The components complement one another. For instance, if retention is not ensured during the modelling of learning, reproduction cannot occur.

According to Alshobramy (2019:14), new patterns of behaviour can be attained by merely observing and imitating the behaviours of others mostly if there are rewards that are the consequence of such observed behaviour. Learners can only observe and absorb depicted behaviour that is positive and connected to the learning outcomes. Attention and reproduction are imperative during social learning theory as learners would observe attentively the educator or the model and they would reproduce this observation which is related to learning outcomes and objectives. Deaton (2015:3) states that social learning functionalises successfully when learners are engaged in exchanging knowledge on a social group. This scholar maintains that social learning theory is one of the theories that makes learning successful. If learners are set in their collaborative groups and given sufficient opportunities and resources to share their knowledge and understanding of a particular learning content, their acquisition of knowledge regarding that learning content will be enhanced.

Alshobramy (2019:14) avers that observational learning through social learning theory enables learners to improve their learning skills and their positive attitudes and confidence towards their learning. One can deduce that the implementation of social learning theory in any session of learning is imperative to such an extent that learners constantly depict adequate levels of attainment of knowledge and their motivation to learn is unhindered. Deaton (2015:4) states that it is impossible for learners to emulate learning when social interaction is impeded. Learners must be allowed to

demonstrate the given topic of learning. Such social interaction enhances the level of knowledge acquisition to any learner.

As Miguel and Tollefson (2018:67) explain, learners develop their self-efficacy through observation of others. When learners assume that they have the knowledge of a particular task in their knowledge reservoir, their self-efficacy is developed when they acquire the same knowledge from their observation of their educator. Therefore, observation on the social learning theory is indispensable in developing one's efficacy. Hill, Song, and West (2009:89) assert that from social learning theory, knowledge is acquired when learners are interacting on a given activity. When learners work in collaborative groups about a particular learning content, they tend to acquire more knowledge than when they learn solitarily. During social learning confidence, efficacy, and knowledge reservoirs are developed.

Social learning theory can also be incorporated through the usage of social media, which implies that learners can learn successfully using the various platforms of social media. According to Deaton (2015:1), at any level of learning content, social media can be useful to acquire learning and can also be useful to develop learners' thinking span. Learners can learn through the acquisition of knowledge from social media rather than being the passive receivers of knowledge from the educator. Social learning theory is so broad that one can incorporate the usage of social media to acquire and extract knowledge. Therefore, even learners in Grade Five can adapt their social activities and make these learning social activities on Facebook. In this digital era, one must realise that learning can shift from classroom to online learning where resources can be obtained. According to Hill et al. (2009:89), a vast amount of knowledge has been studied in online learning and is referred as the catalyst to a successful learning experience. Online learning can be administered as a tool to learning where learners interact within the parameters of the given learning content.

One of the components of social learning theory is that of modelling, which is an example that illustrates how to execute a certain task (Hill et al., 2009:89). Learners learn more easily when they observe the model. Some learners are visual learners - a learner is considered a visual learner when they benefit from the method of modelling where a model is placed in front of a group of learners, and they emulate what the model is demonstrating. Raspopovic, Cvetanovic, Medan and Ljubojevic (2017:143) state that during social learning processes, learners share messages related to their learning tasks and learn the strategies on how to solve a given learning task. Therefore, learners on social learning theory can administer a vast array of online tools to learn such as Google, YouTube, etcetera. Students might see the necessity of attaining ample information with regard to a particular subject matter; therefore, making use of online learning will bolster his knowledge reservoir.

## 2.4 The role of the social learning in this study

According to Nabavi (2016:5), social learning theory emphasises that learners learn from their interaction with others in a social context, and people who are observed are models, and the operation of demonstration is called modelling. This implies that through their observation, learners begin to emulate what they have observed from the models. Nabavi (2016:9) has distinguished the three types of modelling, namely, live model, verbal instructional model, and symbolic model which are illustrated on the following Table 2.3.

**Table 2.3 Modelling in social learning theory (Nabavi, 2016:9)**

<b>Model</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Possible example</b>
<b>A live model</b>	An actual person is demonstrating a task.	The educator/peer is demonstrating the appropriate method of reading to the learners.
<b>A verbal instructional model</b>	When the task is verbally described and explained.	The educator is giving verbal instructions to the learners on a written text.
<b>A symbolic model</b>	This is a fictional character that portrays a learning task.	The educator can use pictures, film, television programme or online media to administer a lesson.

The above table illustrates how models and modelling of social learning theory can be implemented in the classroom setting.

Social learning theory postulates that learning occurs ultimately in social context when imitation, observation, and modelling are administered adequately. When learning occurs within the social learning theory, the acquisition of learning content is adequate since social learning theory has a variety of strategies such as modelling, observation, and imitation. In addition, Cilliers (2021:1) mentions that the social learning theory focuses on learning on social media platforms where observation is an essential tool for learning. Therefore, one can deduce that the social learning theory can occur in different settings such as the physical setting and the digital setting.

During social learning there is a change in intellectual processes that enable a learner to portray different outcome because of his or her observations (Johnson 2015:2). When learning is facilitated through observation, learners adapt their thinking patterns about the learning outcome and extract newly acquired knowledge based on their observations. Observation and imitation require learners to be active receivers of learning, not passive receivers of learning. Edinyang (2016:43) avers that motivation and self-regulation are developed during social learning theory when learners set their

goals, monitor their comprehension, and evaluate the efficiency of their efforts. After learners have observed a task being modelled, they make the effort to emulate the task, then they become self-regulated, and their self-efficacy develops.

According to Alshobramy (2019:20), social learning theory develops creativity, the ability to learn and focus. As the learners study together learning task, a variety of skills are acquired. It might be that they are studying in a group discussion or online learning or observing a model; during those settings they learn skills such as interpersonal skills, tolerance, attention, analysing etcetera. Cilliers (2021:2) supports this by stating that social media can be used to motivate learning as well as critical thinking in learners. Therefore, learners can implement that knowledge learned using digital media based on the vast array of differing learning styles of individual learners. Thus, the social learning theory seems to accommodate almost all learning styles in one setting. As a result, all learners benefit and acquire knowledge in an even manner. The researcher assumed that the implementation of the social learning theory and its various components could improve the reading performances of learners in Grade Five in the Ekurhuleni district.

In contemporary digital era, most learners are fascinated with the usage of digital resources such as online learning tools and social media platforms, and this enables the facilitators of learning to employ social learning theory, which makes learning interesting since most learners are fascinated with digital resources. Hill et al. (2009:91) state that learners exhibit enormous social interaction when sharing online messages. One can then deduce that social learning theory and online learning may have an adequate effect in the reading and learning performance of the learners since learners show great fascination and improved skills of being creative, analysing, and interpersonal skills.

According to Attwood (2020:104), schools and physical classrooms have always been imperative in the holistic development of children during social learning through observation of others. Nowadays online learning is working parallelly to administer any learning session. One can notice that there is an interlink between physical classrooms and online classroom, and both these classrooms enhance social learning and the acquisition of knowledge, skills and values. Like classroom programmes, online programmes are demonstrating the precise methods of reading and learning and thus learners' acquisition of knowledge develops.

Zhou and Brown (2016:19) state that the social learning theory accentuates what people learn from other people or models as it encourages memory, attention, and motivation. Learning from the model is found to be interesting by learners, therefore making the acquisition of knowledge possible. Similarly, with modelling, which is one of the characteristics of social learning theory. Modelling

develops a wide variety of skills and knowledge about learners as they attentively observe the model. The distinction between the model and an instructive educator is that teachers give passive instructions, but the model demonstrates the learning.

In contrast, Joseph (2021:7) refers to Bandura's theory as how learners can depict aggressive behaviour when it is constantly observed. This denotes that as educators equip learners with the learning knowledge and skills through teaching, educators have to ensure that they model the knowledge that is appropriate as the learners are learning through observation. Edinyang (2016:40) corroborates this by asserting that learners can acquire new behaviours by observing others. Learners are in a stage of acquisition of knowledge and skills which entails that any modelled behaviour that is displayed, they absorb and learn. Weder, Yarnold, Mertl, Hübner, Elmenreich, and Sposato (2022:2) agree, stating that the social learning theory assists in analysing and determining the causes of certain phenomenal behaviours. Through social learning, a path can be paved regarding how human behaviour operates. In simplest form, one can be directed to behave a certain way through social learning and its elements such as observation and modelling. One has to keep in mind that learners absorb and learn what is modelled.

According to Kumar (2018:99), social learning theory accentuates that learners learn from others through the usage of observation, imitation, and modelling. Social learning theory seems to be the core approach when teaching is facilitated. Most of the learning sessions across all the subjects and curriculum occur within the parameters of social learning theory. When the social learning theory is implemented in a classroom setting, learners have to observe the educator attentively and strive to imitate what was observed and, importantly, the educator ought to reinforce the desired behaviour when motivating learners. The educator who adopts the social learning theory tends to regulate learners in the classroom and reinforces the desired behaviour. Therefore, dedicated educators can upgrade the reading and learning performances of Ekurhuleni Grade Fives when they adequately implement the social learning theory approach.

Cilliers (2021:1) states that the social learning theory is a process where learners learn both new learning behaviour and new social behaviour. He further states that learning is a cognitive process facilitated in the social context and it happens through observation, verbal instructions, and imitation. This denotes that learners come to school or to a new grade with different social and learning minds, then they begin to acquire new learning and social behaviours from the educator who uses social learning theory to model the desired behaviour. When learners observe attentively and imitate what they observe, their cognitive capacities are also developed. Therefore, one can deduce that the



implementation of the social learning theory in any classroom setting develops learners holistically (physically, cognitively, emotionally, aesthetically etc.).

Schools and communities have the potential to redirect the behaviours of learners through the social learning theory. Weder et al (2022:5) state that the social learning theory is described as how people want to behave; it is the process of transcending norms and values. Its usage can contribute to the cultivation of good manners in communities and schools. In the context of this study, educators, through the social learning theory, direct the behaviours of learners towards the desired outcomes. It must be kept in mind that learners observe and acquire behaviour that is modelled. Therefore, learners in Grade Five at schools within the Ekurhuleni district can show adequate learning behaviour if educators reinforce and model the desired learning behavioural outcomes. It is then up to the educators to redirect the learning behaviours of the learners towards the positive expectations.

According to Berge (2012:4), in social learning theory, learning occurs in a social context where observation and imitation play an enormous role. If learners have to reach their self-efficacy observation and imitation, both observation and imitation should be implemented adequately. Likely, when attention, retention, reproduction, and motivation are below the standard level, learners will not be able to reach their self-efficacy. Most educators must motivate learners towards the desired behavioural learning outcomes. Learners can observe the modelled behaviour, but if they are not motivated, they rarely reproduce the modelled behaviour. Therefore, in social learning theory, the four components are indispensable, namely, attention, retention, reproduction, and motivation, where motivation is seen as the catalyst of cultivating the learning behavioural outcomes.

Deaton (2015:2) articulates that the social learning theory believes that the behaviourist approach and cognitive approach are interdependent during any learning in the classroom. When learners observe and accommodate the new learning behaviour, their cognitive patterns are also modified. As new knowledge enters the brain through observation, their cognitive potential is enhanced. One has to bear in mind that when learners enter a grade classroom, their brains are a tabula rasa with regard to the learning outcomes of that particular grade. Learners possess knowledge acquired from previous grades or experiences and an educator is expected to infuse new knowledge using social learning theory.

The articulation of Kumar (2018:101) reveals that in social learning theory the consequences can be measurable, where there is an increase in desirable behaviour and a decrease in undesirable behaviour. As learners observe and imitate the modelled behaviour, they transcend to desirable outcomes from that considered undesirable. Yet, it is also the task of the educator to model the desirable outcomes

and motivate the learners to reproduce these desirable behavioural outcomes. This denotes that learners in the Ekurhuleni district can have their behaviour changed from that considered undesirable to that accepted as desirable. One can assume that through the proper implementation of the social learning theory, modelling, and reinforcement, even an unruly learner can be adapted to become a well-behaved learner and begin to manifest desirable behavioural learning outcomes.

In the next section, the researcher discusses the implications of the social learning theory, focussing on the importance and the benefits of social learning when implemented in Grade Five learners of the Ekurhuleni District.

## **2.5 The implication of the social learning theory on this study**

Joseph (2021:8) avers that the social learning theory encourages the implementation of virtual peers' interaction and its impact considering attention, retention, reproduction, and motivation. As illustrated in Figure 2.1, attention, retention, reproduction, and motivation are very important when learning of reading is facilitated in conjunction with the social learning theory. These components are interdependent. Since the social learning theory accentuates the usage of models and online learning, it fascinates learners and therefore improves their learning performance and motivation.

As Horsburgh and Ippolito (2018:1) assert, learning from role models in the form of the social learning theory has been proved to be an effective strategy when knowledge of reading is to be attained. During social learning, when learners enjoy the full involvement of the teacher, they acquire the skills to extract the knowledge of reading and learning. As they work independently, their self-efficacy is developed, and their self-awareness and self-concept are activated. Xiaoyi (2019:77) further explains that during social learning, learners' learning depends entirely on the adequacy of their mental state. Through the guidance of the teacher, learners must learn to self-regulate themselves with regard to learning of reading. Therefore, the educator in the social learning environment must ensure that she/he monitors that the adequate outcomes and objectives are met.

According to Hurst, Wallace and Nixon (2017:376), students learn more when they have ample opportunities for involvement and become active participants during social learning. As learners exchange ideas regarding the given learning task, their acquisition of knowledge is appropriated. One must keep it mind that when learners are involved in social learning, plenty of ideas and skills are manifested from one learner to the next and simultaneously they are learning from each other. In contrast, Kumar (2018:99) states that learners emulate the actions, manners, the art of presentation, classroom movements and the interpersonal skills being portrayed by the educator. Horsburgh and Ippolito (2018:2) support this view by stating that learners need to be motivated for them to emulate

the behaviour that they have observed. Learners learn by what they observe and hear, then they extract such knowledge and skills when needed, but the imitation has to be intertwined with motivation. That is, when the modelled behaviour does not fascinate the learners or when the modelled behaviour is not within their level of interest, they do not emulate it until they are motivated.

Hammond, Austine, Orcutt and Martin (2019:127) assert that one strategy to evaluate students' learning is by orchestrating the environment for discussions and listening to learners' articulations. With this method of discussion, the educator can detect learners' level of understanding and then use guidance and follow-up activities on what has been read and learned. Social learning theory also applies to educators in various ways. For instance, educators mostly learn by collaborating with one another with regard to subject matter implementation. According to Hurst et al. (2017:391), social learning develops problem solving skills and critical thinking. As learners manipulate the reading task in a collaborative setting, their ability to think and solve problems is developed.

Martin et al. (2019:127) explain that the purpose of creating a discussion is to move learners from having naïve understandings to more sophisticated and ultimate understandings. During the discussions of social learning, learners acquire skills of thinking and solve problems in more adequate ways and their skills of reading and writing are perfected. Hurst et al. (2017:379) note that teachers learn by doing, reading, evaluation as well as collaborating with other teachers. Similarly, to learners, teachers must make use of models and online learning mostly during the professional development programmes. By doing so, educators acquire more knowledge of the subject matter rather than making solitary efforts to administer the curriculum.

According to Bissessar (2021:3), learning that occurs through social learning uses more interconnected opportunities for learning with optimal contents and improved teaching and learning. During social learning with components, namely, attention, retention, reproduction and motivation, a vast number of opportunities to develop the reading and learning performance are extracted and utilised and also the learning environments and the processes are optimised. Social learning theory is a very useful method, mostly when learners are infused with prosocial behavioural skills (Attwood, 2020:104). When desired behaviour is exhibited to learners, social learning theory may be indispensable to enhance the desired behaviour.

Bissessar (2021:3) further suggests that learners should be provided with opportunities to establish their own professional learning communities for the purpose of developing their interpersonal skills regarding learning. This implies that schools must encourage learners to assign time and collaborate for peer learning, that is, more knowledgeable learners must conduct lessons after school hours with

the aim of developing those that are lacking, thus helping to develop one another. Peer learning should not only occur in the classroom, but with motivated and dedicated learners, peer learning can occur at any conducive time and place beyond school hours.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, new conditions were adapted to, such as masking, social distancing etcetera, and social learning had a vital role when such adaptations had to be administered (Weder et al. 2022:2). As has been asserted previously, through social learning, learners can acquire knowledge and skills and therefore change the behaviours. COVID-19 brought changes to the lives of communities when they began to adjust to masking and sanitisation which would have been considered a strange behaviour pre-COVID-19. Most communities (young and old) learned to adapt to these changes through the social learning theory from schools, communication media, social media etcetera. Therefore, one can deduce that the social learning theory is not only confined to pedagogic knowledge, social learning theory functions even in the broad social life.

During the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic, social media platforms played a vital part in facilitating learning. According to Cilliers (2021:2), social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn were referred to as effective social learning tools for learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, learners were able to connect to social media, acquire, and share information regarding their reading and learning. Learners were forming WhatsApp groups to proceed with their learning. It is now reasonable to say social media platforms are part and parcel of social learning theory. Educators also were forming WhatsApp groups to share teaching tools and information. In contrast, Attwood (2020:103) states that the rapid infusion of some technological media to facilitate learning hindered the physical socialisation of people. This implies that when learners depend on digital media technologies to learn, their opportunities to physically interact and socialise become limited. That is, skills such as interpersonal skills are impeded when social learning online tools are extensively implemented to learn. Attwood (2020:103) further states that an increasing usage of digital learning media platforms in schools to administer learning impacts student learning and socialisation. Therefore, one can realise that during such digital media lessons, some learners are unable to observe and absorb any behaviour being modelled by the educator and/or others.

Horsburgh and Ippolito (2018:2) assert that social learning theory creates a foundation to determine how learners acquire reading knowledge through observation and modelling. Social learning is infused in every teaching that occurs in any learning classroom. For instance, when learners must observe the modelled behaviour of learning from the educator, they have to apply the components of attention, retention reproduction and the educator has to ensure that he/she motivates learners. In this

instance, one can conclude that the social learning theory, whether implemented digitally, physically or on social media, can have a positive impact on learners in the Ekurhuleni district to elevate reading and learning performance.

According to Cilliers (2021:1), social learning theory is a cognitive process that occurs in a social sphere through observation and/or instructions. During any learning in a social learning classroom, the mind of a learner is expected to function and respond to the modelled behaviour given instructions. In this instance, learners receive the knowledge through observation and/or instructions and use their cognitive potential to interpret, accommodate and assimilate the knowledge. The implementation of social learning theory in any learning of reading is impossible if learners have a deficit of attention, retention, reproduction, and motivation. The fundamental task of the educators is to motivate the learners to absorb knowledge and extract it when required to. Therefore, when social learning theory is implemented in an active learning classroom, it can be relatively successful.

Social learning theory believes that there is a vast amount of behaviour that must be observed by learners and, given that, learners do not retain everything that they observe, they tend to retain important knowledge regarding the learning of reading (Horsburgh & Ippolito, 2018:3). An educator can portray a variety of postures and gestures and verbal cues intentionally or unintentionally, but learners will not retain all that is being modelled but only that considered meaningful to what they are learning during that period of learning. For instance, if an educator is conducting a lesson about learning to read, learners ought not to focus on all other unnecessary gestures and postures and utterances, rather, be attentive (attention) to only the observation that is linked to what they are learning in order to avoid them being overwhelmed with so many things to retain (retention).

Social learning theory also applies in the home setting. When learners observe the constant behaviour of their parents, they begin to emulate those behavioural patterns. As mentioned by Joseph (2021:8), learners who are constantly harmed by their parents can at times behave aggressively as well since they would have learned such behaviour from their parents. Therefore, one can suggest that also parents need to be reminded not to act negatively in the presence of children because a child can retain and reproduce that behaviour, in some cases, throughout their life. It is different with educators in a school setting because they have acquired relevant knowledge, skills, and values and therefore they seldom misbehave or illtreat their learners.

According to Weder et al. (2022:2), the social learning theory assists in determining the causative factors of behavioural patterns of the learners. In the context of this study, educators can determine why the learner/s behave the way they do by implementing the social learning theory. Educators can

detect deficiencies in the learning and/or performances of learners and thereafter implement intervention strategies to assist learners that struggle to reach their self-efficacy regarding their learning performances. That is, when learners struggle with reading skills, an educator can detect that deficit through observation and begin to redirect and motivate learners to adjust and modify their learning of reading so that they reach their self-efficacy.

Based on the various scholars' views regarding the implementation of social learning theory, one can be assured that social learning theory can in many ways improve and develop the reading performances of learners in the Ekurhuleni District. In the previous sections, the researcher discussed and ascertained that the social learning theory, if implemented efficiently and effectively, can change learners' performances.

## **2.6 Summary**

In contemporary society, learning and reading skill is essential for all learners when they enter the age for schooling as it is needed for acquiring learning. When learners have difficulties in learning how to read and write, they rarely experience success in their schooling career, which is also reflected during adulthood. School-going learners in the Ekurhuleni District should not only possess the skill of reading, but they must also possess comprehension ability, since comprehension is the main purpose for reading.

There are learners who are mildly intellectually impaired, commonly known as slow learners, and these learners remain undetected in the classroom. These learners do not probably need special education and special schools and they are not severely intellectually impaired; these learners simply need extra time to learn, which is commonly known as extra lessons in ordinary schools. In other words, these learners have a capability of learning anything based on their level of development, they just need a longer time to learn it. Most schools have programmes of extra lessons which are readily devised for slow learners. Learners do benefit from such programmes. It is also the task of a dedicated teacher to implement these programmes of extra classes. Should programmes that focus on extra classes be implemented adequately, learners shift swiftly from being poor readers to being average readers.

Reading is a process comprises various cognitive-linguistic skills, consequently deficiency in cognitive ability, which is essential to comprehend, is that children with decoding problems manifest more recognition of words than their comprehension. Such learners can read the passage on, for instance, a book but without any understanding of the content. Reading without comprehension could result in an unsuccessful schooling life. This phenomenon of being able to read without

comprehension can lead to a series of misinterpretations that will lead to failure. When reading is taught, it is imperative that the educator develops the level of understanding of the learners by motivating them which is one of the elements of social learning theory.

Learners with reading problems read less, have little interaction with reading materials and consequently have a low reservoir of vocabulary knowledge. Such learners gradually become illiterate when enrolled in a normal school. Based on the fact that they struggle to read, they detach themselves from any reading resource. In other words, they become reluctant to practise the skill of reading and slowly become demotivated to read which then leads to becoming dropouts from schooling. Learners with reading difficulties are inclined to psychosocial problems such as school abandonment, poor academic, career and socio-emotional development; however, through the social learning theory, such problems can be eliminated. Learners with reading problems can also be involved in antisocial behaviour such as substance abuse, suicide and sexual activities, negative self-concept, low self-esteem, and distracted family relationships. Yet through the proper implementation of social learning theory where learners observe and retain desirable outcomes, most of the societal problems will be eliminated.

Based on the classroom setting, if a teacher does not encourage or provide ample opportunities for reading, the reading capacity for learners can be poor. Classrooms that are not print rich contribute to poor reading performances of learners. A teacher who does not plan lessons to teach reading in classrooms also contribute to learners' poor reading performance. Poor working memory is another factor that contribute to pupils' low reading abilities. It is a known phenomenon that learners do not learn at the same pace and their learning styles differ. If a learner has a deficiency in memorising skills, his reading performance would be degraded, but if the behavioural learning outcomes are modelled adequately, all learners will reach the level of comprehension. Therefore, educators must ensure that they skill learners with memorising skills and regularly evaluate whether the skill has been infused to the learners.

Bandura invented the social learning theory where he explains modelled behaviour as watching the conduct of others. Reading is a skill that enables learners to develop the way they perceive language, as they observe the reading activity from the model, they identify and recognise a variety of grammatical concepts and vocabulary, and consequently they find it possible to utter what they regularly read. Therefore, it is important that they devote plenty of time for ample reading, being guided by the observation. Reading is an interactive process between the reader and the written text whereby the reader has to manipulate and extract the meaning on the text. Therefore, teaching of reading should be constant in any learning environment where the desirable learning outcomes will

be modelled. This chapter has been an extensive discussion of social learning theory that is affiliated with learning and reading problems and a variety of scholars were introduced in this chapter to substantiate the phenomenon of reading problems. The following chapter, Chapter 3, is titled 'Scholarly Literature Review'. Here all the views of various scholars are infused with more focus on reading problems and the factors that can be implemented to rectify this phenomenon. In the next chapter the researcher will discuss various factors that contribute to reading discrepancies and also the ample strategies that can be implemented to elevate reading performance of Grade Five learners in the Ekurhuleni district.



## **Chapter 3**

### **Scholarly Literature Review**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

In the previous chapter, a variety of issues were raised with regard to the social learning theory, for instance, the four components of social learning theory—attention, retention, reproduction, and motivation. These components are recognised as indispensable when the social learning theory is implemented in any process of reading and learning. Another imperative issue that was articulated in the previous chapter was modelling in social learning theory. Nabavi (2016:9) cited the three models of social learning theory, that is, live model, verbal instructional model, and symbolic model. He asserts that infusing these models in any session of learning is the catalyst of adequate acquisition of the knowledge of learning.

In this chapter, the researcher inserts literature and the views that other scholars have regarding the reading discrepancies that prevail among the learners. According to Ameyaw and Anto (2018:1), reading fluently is essential to knowledge acquisition, it depends on how the individual interprets the written text and reading is also a door to all the knowledge and skills. The research question was the investigation of factors that lead to contrasting reading performances of the Grade Fives in the Ekurhuleni district. The research question was endeavouring to explore the reading phenomenon and identify the factors which would help to eliminate the reading problems in Grade Five learners. The skill of reading is indispensable for a human being to exist and survive the contemporary challenges of life. Therefore, when learners are not in possession of this skill, they are often seen as unfit to face the societal demands and trends.

Biesman-Simons et al. (2021:3) explain that learning to read is complex and determines how learners acquire the skill of reading. As mentioned, one of the aims of the research was to explore and identify the possible strategies that elevate the reading performance of learners. There must be the optimum methods that modify the way educators teach reading, and that is mostly possible through research. Educators need to be equipped with current strategies of teaching reading or learners will proceed from grade to grade without the proper possession of reading skills. As mentioned by Tlale (2021:1052), in South Africa, there is a large percentage of students in tertiary level who do not show literacy skills that are consistent with their tertiary level. This entails that more research has to be done in order to determine the better ways of teaching reading at primary school level. It is not necessary to have adults who are skilled yet lack the literacy knowledge.

CAPS was designed for South African education to ensure that knowledge acquired by learners enables them to be knowledgeable across all learning programmes, that is, Literacy, Numeracy, and Life Skills.

The education minister (2012, in Maddock and Maroun, 2018:194) states that CAPS's aim is to provide adequate opportunities for future academic students to ensure human rights and elevate the quality of life of all South Africans. Therefore, CAPS is designed to ensure that by the end of the schooling age of each learner, they are able to adapt to tertiary education and automatically face the contemporary societal challenges. It is then up to educators as to how they implement the CAPS document, but it is undoubtable that if CAPS is implemented properly, the desirable behavioural learning outcomes will manifest among the learner population.

Phala and Hugo (2022:3) mention that learners grow up under differing situations; in some instances, these environments may have a negative or positive effect on their ability to learn to read or read to learn. These environments might be the home, the school, and the society. The fundamental environment in which a learner grows and learns behaviour is the home. That is, the home has to be the first environment to cultivate the motivation to read at the very early age of the learner. By so doing, one can assume that by the time a learner enters formal schooling, he or she will have a good foundation of literacy. To simplify, parents have the task to contribute to the social learning theory by modelling the desired behaviour and motivating the learners to be fascinated by reading and learning.

Most learners are unable to fluently read and write and, consequently, they find it difficult to comprehend written texts. Such learners find it challenging to handle their grades due to a deficiency of literacy; as a result, they diverge and become dropouts. Abu Abeeleh et al (2021:7) state that researchers have identified that students who are weak in literacy, especially in the skill of reading, cannot comprehend a large amount of written text. When a learner lacks comprehension skills, they are inclined to experience failure during most of their time at school. Reading skills need to be infused at an early stage, and it is educators that must ensure that they teach comprehension skills to learners. A variety of strategies must be implemented to teach reading and comprehension and, for the contemporary reading strategies to be availed, more research must be conducted on the reading deficiency phenomenon.

One cannot only shift the blame to the learners; educators too must ensure that they apply the strategies that fit the infusion of the reading skills on learners. Researchers believe that there is a need for educators to receive more training to be equipped with relevant skills to teach reading. Lapp et al. (2019:5) state that educators need to be knowledgeable about all the skills of teaching reading and

must use these skills to adapt their teaching methods. Teachers are regarded as the models of learning and are therefore expected to model the desired behavioural learning outcomes and learners are expected to observe and retain their observation. When teachers lack the necessary skills to deliver proper teaching of reading then, learners consequently will not acquire the skills of reading and, gradually, they become illiterate.

According to Mulcahy et al. (2019:3), the effect associated with not being able to read for meaning affects all subjects since reading is essential to learn all the subjects in the curriculum. It is a clear and well-known fact that most of the knowledge across all the subjects in the curriculum are acquired in the form of written text, which necessitates that one is in possession of reading skills. When a learner has a deficit of reading skills, he/she is inclined to find it difficult to comprehend and interpret the learning contents of any subject and consequently he/she will not proceed to the next grade. Therefore, reading is the most important skill that any learner must attain in order to acquire the knowledge of other subjects across the entire curriculum. This places the challenge on the educators to strive and ensure that they teach LOLT which is familiar to the learners so that the learners are able to attain the learning contents.

### **3.2 Factors that lead to contrasting reading performances of Grade Five learners in the Ekurhuleni District**

Researchers have identified reading problems in some schools within the Ekurhuleni District. Such reading problems include the individual support plan (ISP) that teachers implement which seems to be ineffective and inefficient. According to Ngcezula (2012:16), schools in the Ekurhuleni District use ISPs that do not fully meet learners' literacy needs. Therefore, educators are not using methods of teaching learning that adequately enhance the language development of learners in the Ekurhuleni District.

Another factor that contributes to the contrasts of reading and learning performances in the schools in Ekurhuleni is that there is no effective infusion of CAPS document when lessons are devised. Van der Berg, Gustafosson and Burger (2018:14) state that the language and non-language subjects taught to learners must take place within the parameters endorsed by CAPS, but there are variations in the implementation of CAPS among the schools. The results show that schools in the Ekurhuleni district are not effective in implementing the instructions that are contained in CAPS. Therefore, researchers believe that the ineffectiveness in the implementation of CAPS might be a contributing factor towards the low reading and learning performance of these schools.

According to Maja and Motseke (2021:3), educators that mostly teach in townships schools are not properly qualified due to the fact they were trained more than two or three decades ago. Most educators that are seen as highly experienced commenced their teaching careers numerous years ago and whose training do not equate with the contemporary educational demands. Such educators' competence is bolstered by professional development programmes that are designed by the Department of Basic Education. In cases where some educators fail to attend these workshops, they automatically miss the skills and knowledge being administered on that day and, consequently, learners acquire inadequate knowledge of reading and teaching.

In South African township schools, there is a high level of learner dropout, which is one of the factors that contribute to the low reading and learning problems among these schools. UNICEF South Africa (2017:4) asserts that in 2014, only 40 % of learners matriculated and 60% had no qualification after Grade Nine because of crises such as bullying and sexual abuse within schools. Social crises such as bullying and sexual abuse might result in learners dropping out of school, increasing the number of illiterate youths. Such learners drop out and miss one or two years, and when they return to their schools, they find it hard to fulfil the learning outcomes after wasting some years with no schooling. As a result, such learners are categorised with learners who experience reading and learning difficulties.

Low reading levels in languages in schools in the Ekurhuleni District exist because of the deficiency of cohesiveness between language policy and literacy outcomes. (Biesman-Simons et al., 2021:9). Some educators have no solid foundation of language policy on which they teach reading. They further assert that a very limited percentage of learners in Grade Four possess adequate comprehension skills. This denotes that learners are taught reading in a haphazard fashion which in turn is detrimental to the learners' acquisition of literacy skills. One might make a conclusion that teaching of reading does not occur consistently in the classrooms.

According to Hay et al. (2021:113), 80% of Grade Five learners are unable to read fluently. They further state other factors that might be contributing to inadequate literacy performance; these are illustrated in the Table 3.1:

**Table 3.1 Factors contributing to low reading and learning performance in Ekurhuleni schools (Hay et al., 2021:114)**

<b>Negative factor</b>	<b>Description</b>
Lack of resources	There is insufficient availability of books, charts, posters etc. to facilitate reading and learning.
Overcrowded classrooms	The teacher –learner ratio in classrooms is beyond the limit. Learners exceed the normal numbers in classrooms.
Insufficient skilled teachers	Educators are not well equipped with knowledge and skills to teach reading.
Learning and assessment practices	Learning and assessment practices are administered in an illogical fashion.
Inflexible curriculum	The conduct of lessons is not constant and regular.
Long delays in assessment of learners	There is no reliable and valid schedule for assessment, and then assessments occur haphazardly.

Based on the above scholars' views, schools in the Ekurhuleni District, in one way or the other, encounter problems that concern reading and learning which require rapid intervention. In the next section, the researcher discusses factors that lead to the poor reading and learning performance of Grade Five learners in the Ekurhuleni District.

### **3.3 Factors that lead to poor reading in primary schools**

In this section, the researcher discusses in detail factors that lead to reading problems in primary schools. Based on a classroom setting, if a teacher does not encourage or provide ample opportunities for reading, the reading capacity for learners can be poor. Classrooms that are not print rich contribute to the result of poor reading performances in learners. A teacher who does not plan and design lessons to teach reading in classrooms also contributes to learners' poor reading performance. Poor working memory is another factor that contributes to pupils' low reading abilities (Mohammed and Amponsah, 2018:275). Normally, learners do not learn at the same pace and their learning styles differ. If a learner has a deficiency in memorising skills, their reading performance tends to be weaker.

According to Rany (2013, in Mohammed and Amponsah 2018:275), the deficiency of vocabulary in learners acts as a hindrance to the learners' reading performance, and this deficit makes it impossible for educators when teaching reading. The vocabulary of learners and the previous reading knowledge of learners must be on the same level as the level of language for that particular grade. When they enter the grade with limited vocabulary, they encounter problems to comprehend any written text. Similarly, when the learners are not adequately capacitated regarding vocabulary, educators find it impossible to administer their reading lessons successfully. It is therefore essential for educators to

ensure that they equip learners with the necessary language vocabulary to eliminate low reading performance.

The mother tongue has been listed by researchers as among the most efficient and effective language to enhance the reading performance and comprehension of the learners. When learners receive knowledge and are being assessed in a language that is their non-mother tongue, they tend to encounter uneasiness when they have to reproduce the knowledge that has been given to them. Vos and Nadine (2021:2) state that 59% of South African learners are taught and assessed in a language that is not their mother tongue and this reduces the level of their acquisition and comprehension of language knowledge. This implies that learners must first have a vast of knowledge of their mother tongue before they are taught in the non-mother tongue. In addition, Stott and Beelders (2019:2) state that South African school-going learners are not knowledgeable in LOLT to such an extent that they require the guidance of the skilled educator immediately using the code-switching strategy to explain the subject matter. Undoubtedly, learners must be knowledgeable about the language in which they receive learning and that is the main task of the educators. Thus, LOLT must be taught more efficiently and effectively so learners would understand the instructional methods delivered by the educator.

As Torres (2019:10) states, the majority of learners by the age of ten are expected to possess reading skills that are fluent and proficient. If they fail to achieve that goal, their academic life becomes thwarted and obsolete. He further explains that when society is literate, it experiences faster development, adequate operating institutions, and reduced levels of societal crisis and conflicts. Among the main tasks of educators is to ensure that learners are equipped with the adequate reading and learning skills by Grade Four. Most learners who are inclined to struggle in their tertiary education are assumed to have not acquired adequate literacy skills during their early education. Likewise, this deficiency of reading skills usually results in an array of societal problems.

Nowadays, most learners undergo the foundation learning skills such as Grades R to Three. These learners do not encounter any hardships when it comes to reading and comprehension because they acquire the necessary literacy skills in their foundation level of schooling. Researchers have realised that if learners do not receive the foundation of literacy sufficiently, they might encounter difficulties during the reading and learning sessions. Torres (2019:7) further states that when prior knowledge, motivation, and comprehension are deficient in a learner, his/her reading skills become thwarted, and they encounter difficulties in further grades. The basic literacy skills at the foundation phase are indispensable; these skills form the foundation of all lifelong learning of the learner. Wutthisingchai and Stopps (2018:34) maintain that fewer learners possess optimum reading skills, and this deficit

negatively affects their being literate. Without the adequate acquisition of reading skills at early grades, learners encounter difficulties throughout their entire schooling.

Another factor that results in poor reading performance by learners is the fact that some do not devote enough time to a reading activity; rather, they only read in their classrooms with their educators. Poor readers dedicate very limited time to practicing reading and therefore they develop limited comprehension and language knowledge (Qarqez and Ab Rashid, 2017:423). Failing to practise the art of reading within and outside schooling premises hinders learners' reading performance. One has to keep in mind that reading is a lifelong activity that needs to be activated constantly. Schleicher (2018:4) states two factors that contribute to low levels of reading performances by learners: firstly, an inconducive environment does not motivate learners to be readers and learners and, secondly, an inadequate foundation of literacy and numeracy infused to learners hinder the acquisition of language knowledge. For instance, if a school does not administer good methods to motivate reading in learners, such learners encounter hardships when they have to use the literacy skills. Similarly if classrooms are not print rich and the educator assigns very little time for reading, these also contribute to poor reading performance by learners.

When educators lack adequate training to administer teaching and learning of reading, this contributes to their inadequate reading and learning performance. Elleman and Oslund (2019:4) note that when learners can decode a written text linguistic comprehension, they are depicted adequately. In addition, Fesi and Mncube (2021:2) state that poorly trained teachers and poorly operating schools also contribute to the inadequate literacy knowledge acquisition. This implies that teachers must first be knowledgeable with the literacy and then ensure that learners are able to read from phonics, semantics to syntax then learners will be able to extract meaning on the written text. However, it all relies on the knowledge ability of learning content of the educator.

According to Maharaj, Nkosi and Mkhize 2016 in (du Plessis and Letshwene, 2020:80), educators are not adequately trained to implement CAPS, or the conditions to implement CAPS are not conducive. The inability to administer CAPS is also a hindrance to learners' self-efficacy regarding their reading and learning performance. When an educator is not knowledgeable with regard to the usage of CAPS, he/she finds it difficult to conduct any lesson, including the teaching of reading. Most educators are in possession of CAPS, being readily available in their classrooms but, according to these scholars, they do not have adequate skills to administer CAPS. This phenomenon of inability to implement CAPS results in poor learning sessions and limited knowledge being acquired by the learners.

To grasp the skill of reading efficiently and effectively, schools and teachers must cultivate the sense of willingness and motivation to learners. A learner might not understand the importance of acquiring skills of reading and learning, but an educator that is dedicated must infuse the sense that being literate is vital for future learning and studying. Mohammed and Amponsah (2018:275) state that several learners have poor reading and learning performance as a consequence of deficiency in effective learning methods, being uninterested and demoralised to learn to read or read to learn. The acquisition of reading and comprehension skills is a process that requires a high level of dedication and focus. But, by logical thinking, no one can be dedicated to a given task without being motivated either intrinsically or extrinsically. Most strategies that are implemented by educators, if not adequate and effective, the strategies do not have a good effect on learners.

According to Hickman (2018:7), a large percentage of learners in South Africa's public schools are attending to school, but simultaneously are not learning. This is due to the lack of relevant resources such as books and other relevant reading materials. There cannot be adequate acquisition of reading and learning skills where there is no relevant reading equipment. A learner needs to interact with written text in order to achieve the optimum acquisition of the skill. Failing to do so, there are high levels of illiteracy, and learners struggle to comprehend any subject matter during their time at school. The availability of developmentally and interest-appropriate books enhance the learners' knowledge and skills regarding reading and learning. The ineffective procurement of literacy equipment in schools results in illiterate learners. Therefore, schools and their educators must ensure that there is sufficient reading material and ample opportunities for learners to explore their skills in reading and learning.

Another factor that might contribute to learners' poor literacy skills is educators' limited methods of teaching language. Most educators put more emphasis on teaching phonics and letters at the early learning stage of the learners. Educators do not extensively teach as far as semantic, syntax and comprehension of the text of literacy. Learners that are only taught letters and their sounds exhibit language skills that are limited and irrelevant for forthcoming grades. Hickman (2018:7) substantiates that by stating that surveys of literacy programmes in the foundation phase identified that teachers only focus on educating learners with the individual letters instead of the interpretation of the entire text. When learners read a written text there is little focus on the comprehension and vocabulary. This phenomenon acts as an impediment in developing the learners' literacy skills and this hindrance is mostly depicted in further grades in the intermediate phase.

Torres (2019:2) asserts that educators must infuse a bottom-up theory where letters are first identified then words, phrases, sentences, and the comprehension of the entire written text. For learners to grasp



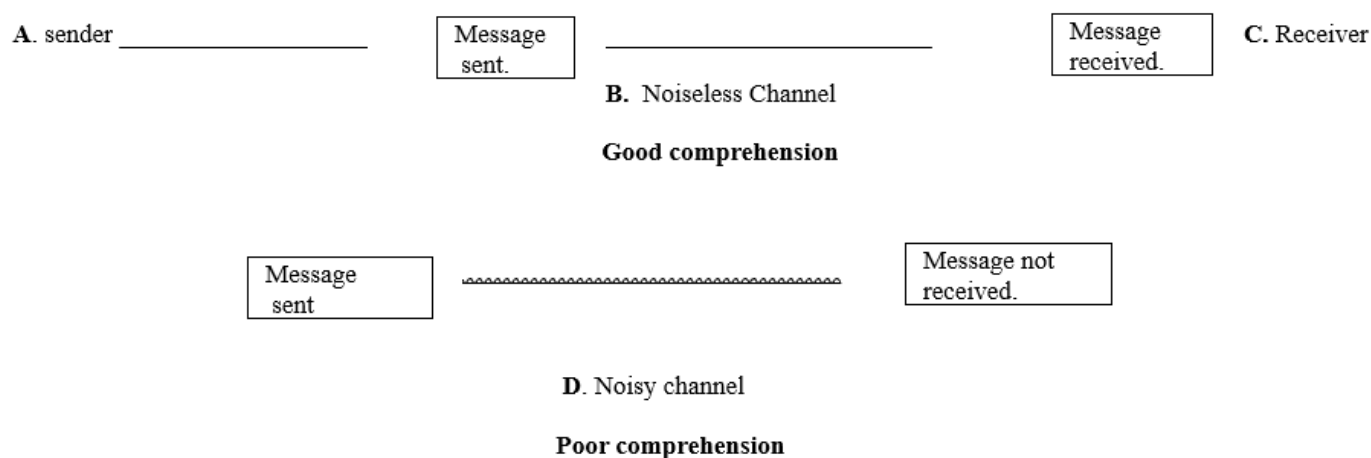
an effective foundation of literacy, educators must confine their methods to the bottom-up theory rather than only focusing on letters and sounds. By so doing, the learners' acquisition of knowledge of learning and reading become adequate and therefore they are able to cope with the forthcoming grades. In addition, Schleicher (2018:4) states that the environment in which a learner acquires the basic skills of education must be modified for adequate acquisition of reading and learning skills; failing to fulfil that will thwart the learner's self-efficacy. In other words, schools and classrooms must be conducive and enhance the literacy development of learners to prepare them for the next grades.

According to Maddock and Maroun (2018:196), any learner that manifest no effort in his learning but has been progressed from one grade to the next rarely becomes a thinker of knowledge. Learners must be actively engaged in their learning of reading for them to grasp enormous literacy knowledge. Educators seem to assume that the learners are abreast regarding the literacy without allowing the learners to manifest their efforts in the knowledge of literacy. Learners must learn and be allowed to extract meaning out of the written text before they are declared as knowledgeable with regard to the text. These learners hardly become critical thinkers if they are not allowed an array of opportunities to interact with written text and reproduce the meaning and the content of the text. Such learners, especially those progressed from one grade to another without acquiring efficient and thorough literacy knowledge, remain unfit for further grades.

Learners who do not enrol in early learning tend to become contributors to societal illiteracy. Such learners are said to have hardships in later schooling, they become unfit for their grades and drop out as a result. The World Bank (2019:6) states that more than 260 million children in the early childhood do not attend any form of formal schooling globally, which results in illiteracy in further schooling. When international states do not endeavour to ensuring that all learners attend school, mostly at early learning, those states impede the development of learners and the society at large with regard to literacy which is the foundation of skilling people to build affluent countries. It is therefore important to ensure that learners attend school from an early education stage.

There is a variety of factors that can affect the decoding and comprehension of language literacy. For instance, when an educator reads or tells a story, the environment in which the story is told must not be too noisy and the learners must be cognitively capable of decoding the articulated knowledge. As mentioned by Marhaeni (2016:208), the channel between the sender and the receiver is a process of transaction and the extraction of meaning. In this case, the sender is the educator, and the receiver is the learner. If this channel is distracted by, for example, noise pollution or deficiency of

comprehension skills or the deficiency of prior knowledge, the meaning cannot be produced, or it can be undesired meaning.



**Figure 3.1 The channel between the sender and receiver (Marhaeni. 2016:208)**

The above figure illustrates the flow of a message from the sender to the receiver, where A is the sender, B is the successful transaction of message, C is the receiver of the message in the form of reading or listening and D is the transaction that is unsuccessful. According to this diagram of information flow, the reader reads the text at point A, and then the message is successfully received based on the relevant prior language knowledge at point B. At point C, the message is received, and the meaning is produced. Point D is contrasting point B. The zigzag lines symbolise that transaction is not successful and so the meaning cannot be produced. Therefore, the transaction stage is important and successful if the reader has the prior knowledge of language. The interpretation that a reader makes depends on the experience or knowledge he has, and this linguistic knowledge provides the reservoir from which to pick up what is needed for making the interpretation.

As mentioned by Iqbal, Noor, Muhabat and Kazemian (2015:5), learners become used to cramming the learning and written text with the main aim of acquiring pass marks. In other words, when the learner has a low self-concept and a lack of confidence, he or she is likely to perform very low scholastically; thus, deciding to cram instead of comprehending the subject matter. It is then the task of the educator to motivate the learner so that he/she gains confidence. Then his/her scholastic behaviour will be in line with the expectations of the grade.

### **3.4 Ways in which poor reading affects the performance of learners**

Reading is a process consisting of various cognitive processes and linguistic skills. Spencer and Wagner (2018:368) mention that children with decoding problems manifest more recognition problems with words than their comprehension. Such learners can read the passage in, for instance, a book but without any understanding of the content. They further explain that reading comprehension requires the learner to focus on basic features of text such as letters and words, which leads to other aspects of text such as syntax and semantics in order to be able to construct the meaning of what is written. When learners read without comprehension, that could result in an unsuccessful school life. This phenomenon of being able to read without comprehension can lead to a series of misinterpretations that will lead to failure. When reading is taught, it is imperative that the educator evaluates the level of understanding of the learners. When there is a deficit of comprehension and interpretation of text, reading does not serve the expected purpose.

Baulo and Nabua (2019:13) state that learners with reading problems read less, have little interaction with reading material and consequently they have a poor reservoir of vocabulary and knowledge. Such learners gradually become illiterate when enrolled in a normal school. Since they struggle to read, they detach themselves from any reading resources and activities. According to Garefalaki, Malegianaki and Kosmidis (2018:2), learners with reading difficulties are inclined to psychosocial problems such as school abandonment, a poor academic career and socioemotional problems.

Learners with difficulties in reading and learning are more inclined to emotional and behavioural problems than those without reading problems. Most parents have high expectations about their children, which might be socially and/or scholastically, and when these expectations do not equate the depictions extracted by a learner, interpersonal conflict may begin. Such parents begin to rebuke the child because the child finds it hard to meet the parents' expectations. Parents begin to handle matters of scoring below the expectations in an impolite manner, and the learner develops a belief that he is not fit for scholastic performance and gradually begins to be reluctant regarding schooling.

Learners with very low reading skills often depict very low levels of writing skills. Such learners hardly comprehend any passage of a written text. Learners with low reading performance find it difficult to articulate written text as fluently as possible. According to Mohammed and Amponsah (2018: 273), when learners' reading performance is inadequate, it is likely that their comprehension and writing skills will also be inadequate, which has a negative effect on knowledge of all the subjects. Undoubtedly, reading is the foundation of all other learning activities during schooling and post-schooling. It then depends on the educators' efforts to elevate the reading performance of the learners which automatically enhance the entire learning performance of the learners across all the subjects.

In addition, Tlale (2021:1051) states that the deficiency in reading skill has a disastrous consequence on the lives of learners and their families as well as their socio-economic communities. Being illiterate results in many personal and societal crises. Illiterate learners are automatically excluded from health, cultural, social, political enrichment etcetera. Such learners become the victims of social inadequacies such as drugs, reckless sexual activities, delinquencies, and antagonism. Similarly, Reimers (2022:1) states that the COVID-19 pandemic impeded normal proceedings of schooling and problems such as food instabilities, family conflicts and other societal crises exacerbated the inadequate levels of literacy, and 1.6 billion learners were affected by the catastrophe. One must keep it mind that learners did not attend normal full notional hours and, as a result, their self-efficacy was negatively affected, and their knowledge reservoirs were not fully infused with the necessary reading and learning skills.

An estimated 80% learners in South Africa who attended deprived schools rated below in international tests of literacy comprehension and science, assert Stott and Beelders (2019:1). Such learners do not fit in the global scholastic expectations being drafted because of their deficiency in literacy skills which is a consequence of inadequate schools and schooling. The low ranking internationally surely ruins the reputation of the country in a global sphere. Such learners become demotivated and demoralised in continuing to participate at international levels where comprehension and science are evaluated and consequently their self-concept and self-esteem are reduced.

Mullis and Martin (2017 :2) revealed that 78% of South African Grade Four learners were below the expected average with regard to reading performance during the literacy assessment. Reading problems have a huge effect locally and internationally. Such learners do not perform in reading on the level of their grades; they depict the performance of previous grades. PIRLS further states that the programme that was called The Diagnostic Review and was established by the National Planning Commission, detected that a larger number of Grade Three learners were performing as Grade One learners who are still not ready for formal schooling. These results from PIRLS and The Diagnostic Review reveal that the reading and learning performance of South African learners is still not adequate and that there is more research that must be conducted to explore the reading and learning problems in our learners.

The Department of Education (2015:29, in Hugo, 2019:2) detected that literacy in South African schools was below the expectations and the levels of the learners' grades which then required the DBE to invent Outcomes Based Education (OBE), the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS), the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) and the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS). All these curriculum transformations are the DBE's endeavours to elevate the reading and learning levels of South African schools. There is no doubt that the low reading and

learning performance of learners negatively affect them in a variety of ways and this phenomenon requires a vast array of research to be conducted to rectify the reading and learning performance of learners.

According to Mohammed and Amponsah (2018:276), when learners are in possession of inadequate reading and learning skills, they develop very low self-confidence, low self-esteem, and low self-concept. Learners become withdrawn and covert when they feel that their learning and reading performance is low. They do not feel that they fit with other learners in the same grades. Confidence is one element that every learner needs to fulfil their activities with success. When a learner has a deficiency in confidence because of the deficiency in scholastic performance, that learner is inclined to have a perception that all scholastic activities are inadequate for him, and scholastic fascination might decline in that learner. In addition, Tlale (2021:1054) notes that learners with poor reading performance do not attain similar reading ratings as those of their peers and they feel degraded as they do not reach the expected levels of reading performance. Such learners during the programmes aimed at assessing reading usually perform far below the expectations. As a result, they become demotivated to participate in such programmes in the future.

Learners who show reading deficiencies from early education (foundation phase) usually make it impossible for educators at the intermediate phase to teach reading with success. Such learners are not on par with intermediate literacy ability as they lack the literacy knowledge of foundation phase. According to Fesi and Mncube (2021:1), educators that conduct reading lessons in intermediate phase often encounter hardships from learners who have not attained the necessary abilities of literacy in their early education. Such learners likely to have low reading and learning performance for most of their schooling years because of a deficiency in literacy. As teachers encounter hardships from such illiterate learners, teachers find themselves having to explore beyond strategies and methods of teaching reading. One can assume that as educators search for innovative strategies to teach learners with reading discrepancies, time allocated for completing a curriculum is ruined because some of it is spent exploring and implementing strategies to teach reading to the learners with reading problems.

Most learners who have problems with reading usually read text without any comprehension, that is, they do not understand what they are reading. They can read an entire passage of approximately two pages but without understanding the content or main ideas of that passage. Stott and Beelders (2019:2) avers that the inadequate readers mainly decode the written text without any insight of what is in the text. Such learners do rote reading, but the interpretation of the text is very limited. Learners who read without proper interpretation of the text find it difficult to succeed in other subjects because they lack the literacy skills to understand the instructions and contents of the subject. He further explains

that learners with below expectations of reading performance levels require more than limited attention from the teacher to develop their ability to extract meaning from the text. As a result, other learners whose literacy is average or optimum get bored as these learners with limited literacy skills are receiving most of the attention. that is beyond.

Early reading failure leads to later reading failure (Spaull, 2016:78). This scholar's statement denotes that learners that do not possess adequate literacy skills are inclined to experience constant failure in their years of schooling. In addition, Fesi and Mncube (2021:12) aver that learners with very low reading performance have a tendency to despair easily on a given task; they have difficulty in completing any literacy task. One must keep it in mind that in the foundation phase learners are learning to read but at the commencement of Grade Four onwards, learners are reading to learn. Thus, when the stage of learning to read was not cultivated optimally, then the stage of reading to learn hardly manifests according to expectations. One can make a deduction that literacy is a catalyst of all learning during the schooling age and beyond. It is therefore essential to properly cultivate literacy skills intensively during the years of schooling so that learners do not encounter problems at the academic stage. Learners with inadequate literacy skills during their schooling age do not fit in the literacy of their academic years.

Some researchers have detected that learners with inadequate reading skills rarely possess the proper cognitive skills that are required of a learner. Such learners cannot think creatively, and they find it impossible to solve any given problems. According to Schoeman (2019:12), adolescents who read regularly and who are fascinated with the art of reading depict skills such as critical thinking, problem solving, social awareness, courage, and confidence in life. In other words, as learners read a variety of texts, they are gradually informed and skilled in a variety of strands. In addition, Joynes, Rossignoli and Amonoo-Kuofi (2019:10) maintain that being illiterate hinders a person from acquiring skills such as communication skills, leadership skills, collaboration skills, cultural awareness skills, and global awareness skills. By looking at all the skills that scholars mention, one can deduce that lacking such skills as an adult determines that one is in a social crisis sphere.

A deficiency in reading skill results in the deficiency of language skill. For instance, learners who have a deficit of reading and language skills find it hard to express their thoughts and views in writing, they also cannot comprehend most written texts, and they are also not good at communicating or listening to others. Pretorius and Klapwijk (2016:7) state that learners with inadequate reading performance always manifest inadequate phonemic awareness, word recognition and their reading and articulating skills are not fluent. One can deduce that the shortage of phonemic awareness, word recognition, and oral reading and expression result in a learner being unable to extract and construct

meaning in either a written text or a verbally articulated instruction. As a result, this inability to extract meaning results in a variety of scholastic crises such as dropping out, recurring failure, bullying, and feelings of learning helplessness. Such crises require an immediate intervention by means of research to rectify them before they rise to a level where they cannot be eliminated. In the next section the researcher provides an extensive discussion on strategies that can be adopted to rectify reading problems.

### 3.5 Strategies that can be implemented to rectify the reading challenges in primary schools

The main aim of reading is to comprehend the text that one is reading. Educators who teach reading have to implement a variety of techniques to help learners acquire the reading and comprehension skills. Madikiza et al (2020:76) provide a table of four strategies which educators can implement to enhance the comprehension and reading skills of learners.

**Table 3.2 Reading instruction strategy objectives (Madikiza et al., 2020:76)**

Strategy	Possible elaboration of a strategy
1. Questioning methods	The educator has to ensure that open and ended questions are used to evaluate the level of comprehension from the learners with the application of Bloom's Taxonomy.
2. Provision of feedback	Learners have to be informed about their performance on a reading activity or assessment and be guided towards the desired outcome. The educator has to use assessment results to adapt his/her teaching of reading.
3. Modelling	The educator has to model the reading skills to the learners so the learners will observe and reproduce such reading skills.
4. Provision of hints	The educator has to provide hints/clues rather than actual answers. Hints enable the learners to think critically about the given hint.

In addition, Haupt (2020:3) mentions three basic strategies that can assist in enhancing the reading performances of learners: (i) Educators have to regularly read aloud to learners so learners will grasp the language skills being articulated by the educator. (ii) Every classroom must establish a classroom library with developmentally appropriate materials. (iii) The SMT must motivate and establish ways to commemorate special days such as World Book Day and schools' SMT ought to create reading challenges programmes. By implementing the abovementioned strategies, a school can improve its learners' reading and learning performance. For instance, a classroom library is essential but needs intensive supervision so learners would not misuse books, but learners would benefit knowledge and skills from a classroom library. Abdulatief, Guzula, Kell, Lloyd, Makoe, McKinney and Tyler

(2018:4) state that the whole language approach requires a vast array of books and classroom libraries on print rich classrooms. Schools and schools' managers should ensure that they find opportunities for learners to read and explore their potential concerning reading skills. By so doing, learners' self-concept and self-awareness will be enhanced and consequently they would be motivated with regard to reading and learning.

Educators must be engaged in professional development with regard to teaching of reading. Such programmes are indispensable when it comes to equipping educators with relevant skills and knowledge on teaching reading. Stewart and Modiba (2019:148) suggest that schools' managers must invite intervention programmes to schools to model desired strategies that are affiliated with teaching of reading and whose aim is to assist educators in the acquisition of teaching of reading skills. Researchers have determined that some deficiencies of literacy derive from inadequate methods that are implemented by educators. Olifant et al. (2020:75) state that educators do not emphasise adequate reading strategies and that it is imperative that educators' reading instructional strategies are adapted timeously to elevate the learners' needs for reading. The way some educators teach reading seems to be ineffective and inefficient, so inviting some programmes of skilling educators to teach reading would be one method that would benefit educators and consequently learners. One might think that such programmes are meant to undermine the skills and knowledge of educators but that is not the case; such programmes are aimed at upgrading the skills of educators as such skills need to be upgraded timeously.

Basic reading skills are the prerequisite for academic studying and economic enhancement where learners participate effectively in the labour market. It is unfortunate that the deficit of literacy skills can result in unsuccessful academic life and inequitable employment opportunities. Govender and Hugo (2020:1) aver that for learners to be able to read and write, they must acquire lower-level skills such as decoding to higher level skills such as semantics, syntax, and discourse in order to be included in higher platforms of economies. Therefore, the future of any learner is determined by his/her level of reading and learning performance. It is then the task of all educators that learners are equipped with relevant literacy skills by the end of each grade of schooling. One can deduce that when learners exit every grade of schooling with inadequate literacy skill, that phenomenon can hamper them at a later stage, academically and economically.

The South African Department of Basic Education (DBE) (2021:12) suggests that the Screening, Identification, and Support (SIAS) policy framework ensures that educators and schools identify learning needs and support for all learners to enhance their reading and learning. Most South African schools implement the programme of screening at the beginning of the year. Screening assists in



determining and identifying the deficiencies of learners before they are declared fit for that particular year and grade. Educators must be aware of learners who are capable of reading and learning and those who are incapacitated regarding reading and learning. Once the educator is informed of weaknesses of learners, the educator will be able to devise intervention strategies to rectify the learning barriers. Therefore, the programme of screening cannot be disregarded as it assists in identifying the gap between the capable and incapable learners.

In addition, when most strategies seem to be ineffective in enhancing reading and learning, such schools might need an expert who will be regularly on the premises of the school to equip and model the sophisticated methods of teaching reading to the educators. According to Taylor, Cilliers, Prinsloo, Fleisch and Reddy (2017:13), the Early Grade Reading Study (EGRS), in affiliation with the DBE, have determined that learning programmes and the educators, reading books, flash cards and posters can be more effective if they are used in conjunction with on-site coaching. Such coaching personnel might assist in modelling the adequate methods of teaching of reading in schools. The on-site coaching is believed to elevate and rectify the reading and learning performances of learners whose educators are unable to reach the outcomes of reading or such educators are not adequately knowledgeable and skilled to conduct successful reading and learning sessions.

In contrast, educators must be abreast with the implementation of the curriculum to ensure that teaching of literacy is properly administered. Lessons that are interdependent to the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement are inclined to reach the desired outcomes of literacy learning. As articulated by Moopelwa and Condy (2019:3), the process of reading and learning integrates prior knowledge and language acquired during socialisation, and it is encouraged that schools and educators be knowledgeable and implement the CAPS document before administering any session of learning to learners. In other words, researchers have identified that most educators conduct lessons without referring to the CAPS document. This phenomenon of disregarding CAPS in every lesson in South African classrooms might be one of the causal factors that hinders the enhancement of literacy on learners. Therefore, the usage of the CAPS document is highly recommended when the purpose is to equip learners with relevant and grade-appropriate knowledge and skills of literacy.

Learners who have barriers to reading must be allowed ample opportunities to practise and acquire the literacy skills. One must keep it mind that not all learners learn at the same pace, some might be slow, and some might be fast in acquiring the knowledge of reading and comprehension. Masalesa (2019:68) suggests that during the teaching of reading, learners who struggle must be given extra time to acquire the reading skill, such lessons must flow from simple to complex and the classroom must be print rich. Most South African schools have programmes such as extra lessons where learners

who require more time to learn are accommodated. During extra lessons, a dedicated teacher can teach reading to struggling learners so that those struggling learners can catch up to the learning and reading performance of fast learners in the classroom.

Learners need to be skilled to exist in an environment where they will be able to exercise being responsible within an interactive and mutually supportive relationship. Schleicher (2018:5) speaks of the learning framework called co-agency that assists learners to reach their learning goals. He asserted two factors, that is, (i) A modified learning environment that encourages and motivate every learner to nurture his/her passions for learning; (ii) The environment where language proficiency and numeracy is prioritised. Every learning environment must be designed within the parameters of these two factors where reading and numeracy are highly motivated and encouraged. Such learners will hardly encounter learning barriers across their schooling age and beyond. Some learners exit the intermediate phase without accorded literacy and numeracy skills and that is because most of their schooling was administered in an environment that was not conducive for learning. It is therefore essential for school leaders to modify the environment so it will motivate learners to learn.

According to Spaul and Pretorius (2019:6), there are three guiding principles underpinning reading developments that encourage and enhance reading and learning. These principles are illustrated in the Table 3.3, below.

**Table 3.3 Three guiding principles underpinning Reading (Spaul & Pretorius, 2019:6)**

<p><b>1. Bidirectionality of language and literacy</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Oral language and literacy development are inextricably linked through effective bidirectional ties.</li> <li>- Language proficiency is foundational to learning to read.</li> <li>- Reading skills influence language proficiency which provides a strong sense for new learning.</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. Language is acquired, reading is taught</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Learners acquire language in their indigenous environment but they learn to read when they are taught.</li> </ul> <p>The ability to read depends on how well they are taught to read and the opportunities they are given to read.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Learners do not just reproduce the reading skills as they produce the oral skills.</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. Environmental inputs matters</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The language being acquired at home and the language used at school affect language and literacy development.</li> <li>- Socio-economic factors of learners can affect the quality of language of learners.</li> </ul>

	- Deprived learners need more time in their early acquisition of language skills than those who commence schooling with high level of language skills and vocabulary.
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Researchers have detected that learners are bombarded with text that has no meaning to them based on the environment in which they live and which might have a negative effect in their acquisition of literacy skills. It has to be kept in mind that there is no single universal literacy acquisition, but different types of reading material are available and effect differently from learner to learner. Abdulatief et al. (2018:6) assert that it is important that educators identify the kinds of reading material learners need to learn in order to be successful during schooling and academic eras. This entails that reading material must equate learners’ level of development and level of interest. That is, learners must read about things that they can affiliate themselves with; the contents of the reading books must not be strange in learners’ minds. One can make a deduction that if the main ideas in the text are strange with regard to learners’ thinking patterns, those ideas might be easily forgotten.

Fesi and Mncube (2021:4) have determined five strategies to enhance reading. The strategies are illustrated in Table 3.4 below in the form of a mind map.

**Table 3.4 Five strategies to enhance reading (Fesi & Mncube, 2021:4)**

**Strategies to improve reading**

<b>1. Reading strategies</b>	Educators have to choose the most effective methods of teaching reading.
<b>2. Reading aloud</b>	Educators must read the text aloud to model reading regarding the text.
<b>3. Silent reading</b>	Learners must be allowed to read silently on demarcated times of school days.
<b>4. Cognitive reading</b>	Learners must read with comprehension and be able to recall the contents.

## 5. Metacognitive strategy

Learners must read in a manner that improves their reading process.

Fesi and Mncube (2021:4) explain that South African learners have literacy problems in Grade Four which lead to learners having problems comprehending any written text. One may assume that in order to rectify the reading problems phenomenon, educators must be equipped with relevant knowledge and skills to apply in their classrooms with the purpose of improving the reading and learning performance of learners. The diagram above, if implemented effectively and efficiently, can assist the Grade Fives in the Ekurhuleni District.

Some learners who experience reading difficulties require specialised attention to ensure the acquisition of literacy. They might not feel comfortable showing reading problems in classrooms among their classmates, but they might easily assimilate the reading skills during the specially designed periods in the absence of the rest of the group in the classroom. According to Mphahlele and Nel (2018:4), teachers can use the method called the “withdrawal method” where a learner/s are removed from the group during a specialised period and be taken to a library or an available room to teach them reading. The withdrawal method might be helpful to learners with reading problems. Such learners feel degraded when they struggle in front of their peers as a result, they become demotivated in the entire activity of reading. However, when they are separated with the group, they gain their focus and attention; consequently, their acquisition of reading and learning develops.

Researchers concur that teachers have to demonstrate reading; they have to read adequately to learners so learners will develop their fluency through observation of their teachers. The Department of Higher Education and Training (2021:7) states that learners require models of optimum fluency and expression which must be done by teachers, that is, educators themselves must be good articulators of reading. One must keep in mind that learners learn through observation, then they reproduce what they have observed. This implies that educators ought to be the first to accurately model the adequate ways of reading. If an educator as the one who conducts the teaching of reading is unable to utter the written text fluently and clearly, learners are also hampered from acquiring adequate fluency of reading. It is also stated in the social learning theory that modelling the desired behaviour of learning is indispensable for learning improvement. As mentioned by Lind et al. (2019:2), social learning theory occurs when an individual learns from the stimuli that are being modelled by the other individual, through observation and retention; learners learn the desired

learning outcomes. In other words, educators must also evaluate their methods and behaviour of teaching reading if optimal reading outcomes are to be achieved.

All schools are required to have a School Based Support Team (SBST). This team is tasked with ensuring that teaching and learning are adequate within that school. Masalesa (2019:67) asserts that there should be training specifically designed to train the SBST to support teachers whose learners encounter reading and learning problems and assist teachers with creative methods to devise resources and sophisticated teaching of reading methods. This implies that the task of the SBST is to assist educators with adequate methods to elevate the reading and learning performances of their learners. When the school's SBST is neither able to intervene nor knowledgeable concerning the strategies of teaching reading, the teacher population of a school becomes ineffective in finding adequate methods of teaching reading. Therefore, the District Based Support Team (DBST) must train the SBST so that the SBST, in turn, would periodically train educators of their schools across the grades. By doing so, one can deduce that literacy and numeracy performance of learners will be elevated.

In addition, Schleicher (2018:7) maintains that educators must be empowered to implement their professional knowledge, skills, and values to effectively interpret the curriculum. This denotes that some educators are uncertain about how and what they must teach on a school day. Factors that might contribute to such uncertainties might be scarcity of CAPS documents, lack of contemporary skills to administer the subject matter as well as the lack of relevant knowledge that is needed to conduct a particular lesson. Training that can be acquired by educators from the SBST can equip educators with skills that are required on daily basis.

If the phenomenon of reading problems must be eliminated, learners have to be given ample and a variety of contexts and opportunities to interact with various reading texts. Researchers agree that if reading activities could occur in a manner that is regular and constant, learners would exit each grade with a vast knowledge of decoding skills, comprehension skills, and vocabulary. Spaul and Pretorius (2019:5) explain that the reading and learning performance of learners is determined by how they are taught and the availability of opportunities to interact with written texts. Educators, as managers of their classrooms, must plan daily reading activities where they would ensure that learners can recognise letters and words, comprehension, and vocabulary. According to these scholars, when teaching of reading can occur daily providing ample opportunities, learners would acquire literacy skills holistically or in totality which will make these learners literate from one grade to the next. Abdulatief et al. (2018:12) substantiate this by saying that learners must be exposed and be encouraged to comprehend a vast number of texts that they would come across during their schooling

and beyond. This entails that every end of the school year, educators must ensure that learners are infused with enormous literacy skills and knowledge.

To elevate the reading and learning performance of learners, educators must be knowledgeable about a variety of strategies. Reading skills are not acquired using a prescribed method. Learners acquire learning differently from one another. Various authors have provided sophisticated strategies to enhance the knowledge acquisition of learners

### ***3.5.1 Summarising***

According to Madikiza, Olidfant, Cekiso, Tshotsho and Landa (2020:6), summarising occurs when a learner utters his own words to retell the read text. Learners must be able to depict their level of understanding. We all read text with the purpose of understanding and making meaning of what is in the text, then summarising is said to be the method that can assist learners to bolster their level of comprehension. Summarising also encourages the learners to be attentive and focused, knowing that they will have to summarise the text either verbally or in written form. Jones (2021:7) asserts that using Bandura's experiment learners will work in groups summarising what has been read. In other words, an educator will read an article and thereafter allow learners to discuss, in summary, the contents of the article, be it through writing or in an oral form.

According to Nafa (2022:14), the brain activates the links to extract meaning by implementing summarising to interpret the decoded information in conjunction with learners' schemata. Prior knowledge of literacy assists learners to make meaning of the text and then they can summarise the text. Without the language knowledge such as phonemic, semantic, syntax and vocabulary, summarising the text may be impossible. Sua (2020:236) maintains that if a learner uses summarising, they grasp written text with ease. Summarising is one preferred method to make meaning of the text, and one can deduce that summarising the text increases the memory span of the learner. A learner might pretend they understand the information, only to find that they are daydreaming. Therefore, summarising ensures that a learner forms the meaning of the text. Madikiza et al. (2020:5) explain that summarisation occurs during the post reading stage where learners endeavour to interpret the text by summarising. It is then important for educators to implement summarisation as a strategy to evaluate the level of comprehension from their learners.

### ***3.5.2 Inference***

Making an inference requires a learner to be in possession of effective prior knowledge of language so they can merge this prior knowledge with the newly acquired knowledge to infer the occurrences on the text. Almutairi (2018:24) speaks of a top-down model that emphasises making of inferences

from the text. In other words, learners can extract the meaning of the text by simply reading certain words and sentences in the text. Madikiza et al. (2020:6) define inference as when learners apply their prior knowledge and make judgements of what might happen next in the article. In simplest terms, inferring is to speculate and guess what might occur next as they read the story or article. One can assume that inference is another effective method that requires the learner to think about the given text or article; such learners rarely find it difficult to comprehend the text as they infer the content of the text on their own.

In addition, Sonsona and Occena-Albia (2021:14) contend that one of the strategies used in reading comprehension is inference and it is a method used to monitor learners' level of understanding. In order to evaluate the comprehension level of learners, educators must not think that learners have understood the article but task learners to make inferences. From this it can be determined whether learners understand the passage of the article. Nafa (2022:3) says that reading ability entails making inferences from written text and identifying the writer's purpose, methods, and tones in the text. Any literate reader can determine the author's aim in the text by simply manipulating certain sentences and vocabulary in the text through inferring. Learners need to be taught such skills to enhance their comprehension. One must keep in mind that learning is not passive, it has to be active, where learners are actively involved in problem solving. One can deduce that when learners are receivers of knowledge with the teacher as the transmitter of knowledge, there is no assurance that transmitted knowledge is understood. But by implementing strategies such as inference, an educator can be assured that learners have comprehended the content of the article.

### ***3.5.3 Predicting***

Learners' comprehension may be enhanced when an educator tasks them to guess the forthcoming plots in the article. The learners may analyse and interpret ideas of the plot and the characters and be able to assume what will happen in the story. Madikiza et al. (2020:5) describe the prediction strategy as when the learner guesses about what will occur next in the text. They can also use clues to predict the words, keeping it in mind that most predictions might be true. Sonsona and Occena-Albia (2021:10) concur by stating that intellectual pleasure is experienced from the situation when learners find answers to a question by using the prediction strategy. When learners are actively involved in the process of reading, an educator has to draw their attention by applying strategies such as prediction. As the learners predict the next event or the word correctly, their self- efficacy will be developed and consequently their fascination about reading with comprehension will be enhanced.

When a learner is in possession of language knowledge, such as phonemic knowledge, semantic knowledge, and syntax knowledge, it tends to be possible to make predictions regarding the entire

text in an article. Rodriguez (2021:237) avers that making a prediction is when a learner is thinking about what will happen next and makes a prediction using the language knowledge they possess in conjunction with titles, subtitles, and pictures. In other words, a learner must first and foremost be able to identify basic texts and ideas in the article, then they are able to make a prediction. Therefore, the basic previous language knowledge is a prerequisite for making predictions in the written text. During the reading stage, an educator must stop learners and encourage them to predict the next part of the article (Nafa. 2022:18). Prediction develops learners' level of attention and concentration as they must think about what they have read and predict what might occur next.

#### ***3.5.4 Questioning***

Questioning and other comprehension strategies should be taught to learners and be implemented before, during, and after their reading of an article (Almutairi, 2018:42). This comprehension strategy helps enormously in developing their ability to comprehend the content of the text. Learners should be regularly asked questions about the text during both the pre-reading and post-reading stage. Their attention and concentration are motivated and their curiosity to know what will happen next in a story is aroused. Madikiza et al (2020:10) assert that when learners correctly answer the questions based on the text, their confidence is bolstered. Their self-efficacy develops when they realise that they have a good understanding of the contents of the text. Questions should be structured in such a way that there are closed and open-ended questions, which means that some questions must simply require one-word answers while other questions must require a detailed explanation.

According to Sonsona and Occena-Albia (2021:7), after a teacher has modelled the questioning strategy to learners, learners can apply questioning as they work in small groups. Learners can be given the opportunity to work in groups and explore their leadership skills by devising the questions and expecting the correct answers from their peers. Group work is a very active and interactive strategy and learners are not passive receivers of knowledge. Nafa (2022:13) avers that educators can design a series of questions, or they can task learners to use their critical thinking to devise their own questions about the article. As they generate their own question and answer methods, one can deduce that information can be assimilated and integrated cognitively.

#### ***3.5.5 Clarifying***

Clarifying deals with equipping learners with decoding the letter order in a word and word order in a sentence. According to Khadim and Abdulsahib (2022:56), clarification focuses on identifying, clarifying the incomprehensible, uneasy, and unusual words and phrases in an article. When learners implement the strategy of clarification, they may make use of dictionaries or a thesaurus to acquire



full meaning of unfamiliar words or text. Such learners will reread the text and analyse the difficult aspects of the text to extract the meaning.

Similarly, clarification can be used by educators to elaborate contents of text that learners do not comprehend. It is the task of the educator to ensure that learners reach an understanding of what is read before proceeding to the next aspect of teaching of reading and learning. O'Hare, Stark, Cockerill, Lloyd, Mcconnellogue, Gildea, Biggart, Connolly, and Bower (2019:22) state that teachers must teach learners to ask questions and help them by clarifying aspects of the text that are difficult to understand. Clarifying refers to thinking about how and what learners read during reading and in the post-reading stage with the aim of understanding the text and clarifying the incomprehensible passages in the text (Agha, 2021:5). Educators must guide learners to clarify vocabulary and strange issues in a text whether in small groups or in whole class teaching.

### ***3.5.6 Monitoring***

According to Almutairi (2018:11), teachers might allow learners to read a passage but must monitor the learner's meaning construction on the passage. Learners might conclude with varying meanings of the text, but the educator must guide learners to desired outcome of the text. By using question and answer methods, the responses of the learners can be monitored. In contrast, Sonsona and Occena-Albia (2021:33) explain that in a physical classroom, it is easy to monitor numerous groups simultaneously, but on Google classroom an educator can only monitor one group at a time while others are not monitored. All in all, monitoring is one strategy that ensures that all learners will reach the comprehension of the text.

Skilful readers can vary their speed by monitoring and guiding themselves while they have to reread the text when they come across new and unfamiliar text (Nafa. 2022:7). Therefore, learners can also apply the monitoring strategy to guide their own reading. By monitoring, they reread the text, skim and scan the passages to extract meaning. Self-monitoring by learners requires learners who have adequate reading skills but who have challenges with meaning and vocabulary. According to Rodriguez (2021:235), to be an optimal reader, learners must understand and practise strategies such as monitoring their reading and become entirely involved with the process of reading. By manipulating each text, familiar or unfamiliar, learners' ability to read and comprehend will be developed and optimised.

### ***3.5.7 Skimming***

Yusuf, Yusuf, Yusuf and Nadya (2017:47) describe skimming as a type of reading that requires speed four times faster than that of normal reading, where readers have to focus only on the important ideas

rather than the entire article. During skimming, learners have to be quick in determining the main ideas of an article. By so doing, the development of their reading and comprehension is enhanced. Yepez and Andres (2022:44) elaborates on the advantage of skimming by stating that skimming helps learners to read the article promptly with the aim of extracting the main idea of the text. The educator can provide 5 minutes for learners to read and extract meaning from the article which cannot be read in 5 minutes, then applying skimming can be a good strategy for learners to identify the main ideas of that article.

Skimming is a reading technique that focuses on identifying only main or general ideas in a text without reading the entire text word by word (Agha, 2021:15). Learners read only essential information, not everything that is on the text. One may deduce that skimming is related to the top-down theory where they have to look for key words in a text in order to attain comprehension. According to Luzuriaga (2020:8), skimming is a strategy of identifying main ideas in a text in a very short space of time. Skimming differs from normal reading as it is done faster as compared to normal reading. The application of skimming as a strategy to enhance comprehension requires a quick reader who has a vast amount of literacy and vocabulary in his/her knowledge reservoir.

### ***3.5.8 Scanning***

Scanning, as reading strategy to extract meaning, differs slightly from skimming because scanning only focuses on the specific information in a text. According to Yusuf et al. (2017:47), in scanning, the learners must identify specific details in a text such as places, dates, names etcetera; the aim of scanning being to acquire target information without reading the entire text. They further explain that scanning is to move the eyes quickly through the page searching for a particular detail. During scanning, a reader moves the eyes to look for a clue in a text and after getting the clue, they read that passage to acquire detailed information. Yepez and Andrés (2020:10) state that scanning is reading rapidly to identify specific information; it is reading quickly without reading the entire page. During scanning, there is no time wastage; the reader scans the page to find a clue and, thereafter, they can read to be informed about the clue.

Scanning and skimming operate interchangeably in the sense that they complement one another in such a way that once the word is scanned, a brief reading might follow. Luzuriaga (2020:8) states that scanning is a reading strategy that assists the learner to identify the important words before skimming the whole passage. For instance, Grade Fives can answer questions from the comprehension passage by simply scanning the key words in a passage. According to Fauzi (2018:107), scanning is essential for learners to identify specific information to acquire answers from the question during the formative or summative assessment. This method of scanning is a time saver during an examination. Learners

do not need to read and waste time, they only scan for key words and start skimming that passage of the text. Similar to skimming, one can deduce that scanning is affiliated to top-down theory since the reader must look for the key word before acquiring the detailed information about the text.

In this section the researcher has been discussing various strategies that educators and learners can implement in order to enhance their teaching and learning of reading. Various scholars' and researchers' views have been used in an endeavour to determine the strategies of enhancing literacy performance in Grade Five learners in the Ekurhuleni district. The next section is the summary of the chapter where the researcher will discuss briefly the contents of the chapter.

### **3.6 Summary**

In the previous sections of this study, the researcher discussed various factors that show that there is still unevenness in the reading and learning performances among South African learners. Literacy is the ability to collaborate letters to decode and comprehend words and sentences. This is the skill that learners need to possess to be declared skilled and knowledgeable in reading and learning. During the 2016 Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) assessment, 80% of learners were not able to manifest the average acceptable rate of reading. This means that South African learners did not equate the literacy performance on an international sphere. It is then imperative that adequate strategies to elevate the level of literacy must be explored and implemented. For learners to be able to read and write, they must be developed from lower level of decoding to higher levels of skills such as semantics, syntax, and discourse in global platforms. The ability to be literate revolves around such skills, so if these skills are not infused adequately in learners the phenomenon of illiteracy can amplify.

When learners have a deficiency in literacy, their schooling across all subjects is negatively affected. Such learners experience recurring failure because of their inadequate reading skills. Learners' negative literacy efficacy affects their performance in all subjects. Scholars have mentioned that reading is primarily a life skill and a catalyst for being successful academically and in life generally. Thus, when learners have a deficiency of literacy skills and knowledge, they are inclined to social crises such as unemployment, domestic violence, extreme drug addiction, unwanted and premature pregnancies, and life that is stagnant. Unlike speaking, the skill of reading is not innate but a skill that has to be purposefully taught and learned. When one considers that a reading skill is a catalyst of all schooling and academic successes, one will realise that educators have a critical task in equipping learners with enormous literacy skills.

Dedicated educators in the foundation phase and below must establish a very strong foundation of literacy if the literacy crisis is to be eliminated during the schooling and academic years of pupils. Educators in the pre-school do not only have to focus on identification of letters and phonics, but they must also infuse the reading skills of simple sentences and basic elements of syntax. Reading material must consist of a variety of appropriate texts that can be used by the learners and educators must model reading themselves. One must keep it in mind that most learners learn by observing their educators and assimilate the observed desired outcomes.

The availability of resources must be equivalent to the implementation of such resources at school levels. As stated by scholars, the most effective way of enhancing reading and learning performance of learners is by access to highly optimised teaching and learning resources. Learners must be taught by both adequate human resources (educators) and adequate physical resources (learning materials). The crucial goals of Grades R to 12 are to generate graduates that will be acknowledged for their skills, knowledge, and values, contribute to economic growth and be competent in their field of specialisation. The learners must be taught from elementary stage to achieve such goals. One must keep it in mind that learning is not instantaneous; it is a gradual process that must begin at Grade R towards the exit grade. This denotes that skilled and competent persons are only attained through learning and learning requires basically literacy and other skills. It is therefore important to ensure that each grade teacher puts all his/her endeavours into ensuring that by the end of each grade, learners have acquired all the necessary skills that would make him/her fit into the next grade.

Various research has identified that there is a deficiency in reading skills in South African primary schools. This research suggests that the curriculum must be implemented effectively, and that is one of the essential outcomes of the DBE. Learning must take place within the framework of the curriculum in order to achieve the desired learning aims. Documents that are designed and distributed by the DBE such as CAPS, the Annual Teaching Plan, etcetera must be used effectively and efficiently by educators. In this chapter, the researcher has discussed extensively the factors and strategies to elevate the performance of reading and learning among the learners of Grade Five. The next chapter (Chapter 4) is titled Research Design and Methodology. The researcher will have a thorough discussion about the research design and the techniques that were used to generate data.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Research Design and Methodology**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, the researcher discusses the methodological concepts and the research design of this study which endeavours to investigate the factors that lead to contrasting reading performances of Grade Five learners in the Ekurhuleni District, which was the research topic of this study. The qualitative method was used for this study. In other words, this study was developed by using the qualitative method. Cropley (2019:5) mentions that the qualitative approach focuses on the way the world is understood in the researcher's mind, usually using abstract scientific concepts and terminology. In the context of this study, the aim was to investigate, explore and determine variables that might be affiliated with the differing reading performances of the Grade Fives in the Ekurhuleni District. Asenahabi (2019:81) maintains that qualitative methods allow a researcher to have a broad insight regarding the phenomenon by literally extracting data from the sample of the population. Therefore, the qualitative method endeavours to explore the way the participants perceive the subject (research question) being studied. Various scholars have detected that the reading performances of Grade Five learners vary from one learner to another yet they are in the same grade in the same educational system.

Dawadi, Shrestha and Giri (2021:26) state that qualitative research employs techniques such as interviews, questionnaires, and observation to comprehend the causative factors of the phenomenon being studied and advocate the research result by implementing the interpretivism paradigm which believes that reality is a consequence of how humans interact with the world. In the context of this study, three data generating techniques were implemented, that is, interviews, questionnaires, and observation. The usage of these techniques enabled the researcher to acquire the crux of the particular problem and be able to interpret the causative factors. One can then deduce that data were generated in a more precise way and the findings were accurate.

Flick (2014: 5) explains the aims of the qualitative data which the researcher has illustrated in Table 4.1.

**Table 4.1 Aims of the qualitative method (Flick, 2014:5)**

<b>Aim</b>	<b>Description</b>
To <b>describe</b> the phenomenon in a more comprehensible way	This focuses on the individual or a group of people which aims at how people experience the phenomenon that is being studied.
To <b>compare</b> the individuals or a group of people based on the phenomenon.	Samples can be compared on whether they have similar traits or differences regarding the research question.
To <b>identify</b> the nature of similarities or differences within the samples.	The qualitative method endeavour in detecting whether samples have differences or common traits and where these differences derived from.
To <b>develop</b> a theory regarding the study based on empirical findings.	After the findings have been explored, a deduction can be conclusive based on the generated data.

As the table above illustrates, the aim of qualitative method is to describe, compare, identify and develop a theory. This study detected the reading differences in the Grade Five learners and the researcher compared the samples from School A and School B. In this study, both similarities and differences were identified, and the findings were transcribed.

#### **4.2 Research design and methodology**

Researchers define qualitative research in a variety of ways, but all these definitions are aimed at determining the scientific and practical data. This study used qualitative research. As defined by Taherdoost (2022:54), a qualitative study generates primary, first-hand textual data and interprets this data utilising various data generating methods. The aim of this study was to explore factors that revolved around the phenomenon being studied. In the context of this research, the contrasting reading performances of Grade Fives in the Ekurhuleni district were investigated.

The researcher chose the phenomenological approach for this study since it focuses on population and its interaction with the problem. DeJaeghere et al. (2020:14) describe the phenomenological approach as an essential approach when investigating the groups of participants and their perception in relation to the research question. Casteel and Bridier (2021:342) state that the phenomenological approach generates data being experienced by the population as they live around the phenomenon. It was then appropriate that the phenomenological approach was relevant for this study as this study endeavoured to extract the factors that revolved around the differing reading performances of the Grade Five learners.

The participants of this study were selected purposively since they had better perceptions of the phenomenon being studied; thus, this sampling method was a purposive sampling method. As stated by Andrade (2021:89), participants of a purposive study are persons who have characteristics that are of particular interest to the study. Etikan, Musa and Alkassim (2016:1) further state that in purposive sampling, a researcher has a research question and the participants that are being selected are relevant for the objectives of the study. Such participants have adequate insight regarding the research phenomenon being investigated.

Lester et al. (2020:98) explain the seven phases which the research must follow during the analysis of data after data have been generated. These phases are:

*(Phase 1) Preparing and analysing data for analysis.*

In qualitative research, vast data is generated through the utilisation of various data generating tools such as interviews, observation, and questionnaires. Utilising a variety of instruments denotes that data is fragmented in a variety of forms such as interview documents, observation templates, fieldnotes, documents etcetera. Data that are generated through such methods need to be merged and constructed in a structure that is understandable. Therefore, before analysis, the data have to be prepared. Documents containing data need to be scanned and kept in an electronic format, for example, MS word or Adobe PDF. In the context of this study, the researcher ensured that all data that were generated from samples of School A and School B, were kept, and saved.

*(Phase 2) Transcribing Data*

When transcribing, the researcher noted all the data that were generated through conducting the interviews on participants on their perceptions regarding the phenomenon, on an interview template. To ensure confidentiality and privacy, the researcher used coding and pseudonyms to identify the participants. In this phase data were gathered, for instance, after the interview, data were categorised in accordance with the differing themes. Thereafter data were ready for further analysis.

*(Phase 3) Becoming familiar with the data*

The researcher must have sufficient insight regarding data that is generated in a study. Once data are generated and documented, a researcher must review the information that is extracted during the interview, observations, and questionnaires. This is, the researcher during this stage, must precisely understand the perceptions, thoughts, and feelings of the participants regarding the research phenomenon. Also, during this stage, the researcher must determine where the limits occurred during

the process of generating data. As limits that may not have been envisaged, they become knowledgeable as to how to conduct further methods in any further research.

***(Phase 4) Memoing the data***

This phase entails the researcher compiling memos of any occurrences that would have prevailed during the process of generating data. This data referred to as memos is data that occurred randomly but also contributed to the research study. Such memos contribute more insight to the researcher regarding the research phenomenon, the participants, and other items. For instance, such memos might be documents or statements that have occurred during the generating of data. The researcher must then make memos of such statements. In the context of this study, the researcher ensured that all the memos occurred during data generating were documented and attached on the fieldnotes template. Such memos are occurrences that were not envisaged by the researcher or were not in the checklist of items that the researcher needed to observe.

***(Phase 5) Coding the data***

This phase involves the researcher writing a short descriptive word which represents a complete concept. Codes are utilised in three phases. The first phase is when the researcher identifies important statements, experiences, and reflections. The aim of coding is to minimise the size of data corpus. The second phase is for the researcher to make additional codes. Codes at this phase start to move to a higher level of inference. The aim of this phase is to connect statements, experiences and reflections that are articulated by the participants. The third phase is when the researcher makes explicit connections to the study's conceptual and theoretical ideas. In this phase, coding reaches the highest level of inference. At this phase, codes connect the statements, experiences, and reflections in the research study. In the context of this study, entitled "Investigating factors that lead to contrasting reading performances of Grade Five learners in the Ekurhuleni District", the researcher used a variety of codes to explain certain concepts regarding the study. Such codes are (sc- school) (L-learners), (t-teachers) (p-parent) etcetera.

***(Phase 6) Moving from codes to categories and categories to themes***

In this phase, codes are applied, categories are developed, and themes are produced. Categories merge various codes that are interrelated conceptually in the study and consequently the themes are formed. The themes are named, and they must align with the aims of the study.



### *(Phase 7) Making the analytical process transparent*

In this phase, data must be presented in a transparent and verifiable manner. The researcher must develop a detailed audit trail that explains the connections between data sources, codes, categories, and themes. The researcher can present data in the form of a table. This approach ensures that the interpretation of the data is transparent to the reader and consequently trustworthiness is developed. These seven phases endeavour to illustrate the flow of data analysis after it has been generated. By implementing these seven phases, the researcher accomplishes the aims of the research study and focus.

Boru (2018 :2) defines research design as the procedure that is used to gather and analyse data so that findings can be extracted from the participants. This means that research design identifies the approach to be implemented in order to extract data from the participants based on the research study phenomenon. This study was qualitative as it strived to determine factors that caused reading differences within the learners of Grade Five in their daily schooling. The approach that the researcher utilised was the phenomenological approach which endeavoured to explore the particular problem that was envisaged by the scholar. Flick (2014:143) avers that when using the phenomenological approach, it is the participants' utterances that are indispensable during the generating of data. He further states (2014:184) that the phenomenological approach in a qualitative study is aimed at explaining a variety of factors that revolve around the phenomenon. Therefore, one can deduce that this study used the phenomenological approach as it aims to explore the phenomenological issues that evolve around the reading performances of Grade Fives in the Ekurhuleni district.

The phenomenological approach mostly endeavours to extract the problem facts from the participants as they are constantly interacting with these problem facts. Asenahabi (2019:83) states that the phenomenological method of research is a qualitative method of research in which the researcher determines the gist of the phenomenon being experienced by the population. In this instance, the learners and the educators interactively engaged with the researcher regarding the phenomenon of reading differences where they had to share their views in this regard. Jacobs and Cornelius (2022:112) maintain that the phenomenological approach studies the phenomenological occurrences that prevail in a particular population to supplement the broader phenomenon. Therefore, the phenomenological approach was the adequate method for this study as it intended to explore the phenomenon being experienced by the learners of Grade Five.

The University of Johannesburg (2020:297) describes the phenomenological strategies as efficient in extracting the facts and information being experienced by the population and how they perceive such experiences. One of the aims of this study was to explore the reading phenomenon of the Grade

Five learners. Researchers determined the variances with regard to reading performances of some learners in the Ekurhuleni district. It is then the task of researchers to conduct research with the aim of elevating the reading performances in the Ekurhuleni district to a highly satisfactory level. As uttered by Boru (2018:5), the phenomenological method strives to extract meanings and insights on what is taking place and reach a conclusion through the qualitative approach. This implies that the phenomenon is studied through data generating methods such as interviews, questionnaires, and observation until the crux of the phenomenon is explicitly comprehended. Then the problem would be established and the ways to address these discrepancies would be ensured.

In this study, the sample was ten learners, two teachers, and two parents. Castel and Bridier (2021:355) state that phenomenological scholars recommend six to ten participants as an adequate number from whom the data is generated. This study strived to adhere to the requirements of the phenomenological approach since the researcher ensured that the sample did not exceed the required number of participants. Taherdoost (2022:56) explains that the aim of a phenomenological approach is to get an insight into the participants' point of view regarding the phenomenon that they are interacting with from time to time. The aim of the researcher in this study was to acquire comprehensible data on factors regarding the deficits in the reading performances of Grade Five learners. Therefore, the usage of such approach assisted the researcher to acquire in-depth data regarding the participants' perceptions on the phenomenon.

DeJaeghere et al. (2020:13) explain that the phenomenological approach turns to be a catalyst when groups of individuals and their experiences are studied and interpreted. Any phenomenon that might occur within a population needs to be studied and understood accordingly. The researcher has to determine where the phenomenon derives from and also the level of impact being experienced by the humans that are affected by the phenomenon. Once the phenomenon has been determined and defined by the researcher, it becomes possible to rectify the phenomenon and eliminate the negativities that are being experienced by the population around the phenomenon. In the context of this study, the researcher determined the phenomenon of reading contrasts and also the researcher interacted with the population from which the sample that was selected. Through research procedures of data generating, the researcher was able to determine the deficits and the level of impact being experienced by the Grade Fives in the Ekurhuleni District.

During the process of data generating, the interviews did not exceed the contact time being declared by the phenomenological approach, that of not conducting the interview for more than two hours. Casteel and Bridier (2021:355) articulate that in a phenomenological approach, the interviews must last for a minimum of 90–120 minutes. The interviews with the participants of School A and School

B in the Ekurhuleni district lasted for an hour. The researcher would have perhaps exceeded the 120 minutes if he was conducting multiple interviews, but because only three interviews per school were being conducted, the interviews did not exceed the phenomenological approach's suggested length of interviews. The interview questions are attached in the appendices - Appendix I is a list of interview questions for learners and Appendix J is a list of interview questions for language educators.

According to Taherdoost (2022:56), in the phenomenological approach, the study starts with limited insight and ends with the emergence of factors extracted during the process of data generating. This entails that as the participants interact with researcher, the participants' factors that evolve around the phenomenon are explored and emerge and then become comprehensible findings. As the participants respond to the interview questions, some factors that may cause the phenomenon are interlinked which then allows the researcher more insight with regard to the phenomenon. Asenahabi (2019:83) explains that the phenomenological approach has an effective philosophical underpinning, and it involves administering interviews. Thus, an interview is one of the data generating instruments that is implemented during the process of gathering data in the phenomenological approach. Therefore, one can conclude that the crux of the phenomenon can be understood by the usage of instruments such as interviews in a phenomenological approach.

The phenomenological approach intends to explore and articulate the indispensable characteristics of a phenomenon as they precisely occur and are experienced by the population. The most important aim of data generating is to explore the elements that might contribute to the existing phenomenon as it is envisaged by the researcher. In addition, one cannot underestimate the importance of data generating instruments such as questionnaires, observation, and interviews. As a result, the researcher in this study ensured that he made use of such data generating instruments as they appear in the appendices section.

In this study, the researcher implemented the interview data generating technique as one of his instruments to generate data. The structured interview approach was conducted between the researcher and the participants. The researcher selected the structured interview approach because it facilitated the set of questions that regulate the interview. Simister (2017 :1) explains that the structured interview is based on a fixed list of questions which are consistently asked in the same sequence. The interview questions were set and prepared by the researcher to ensure that the phenomenon was explored and solutions were suggested. Canals (2017:397) explains that structured interviews follow a very precise order and the questions are the same and unchanging to all the participants. The participants of School A and School B were asked the same order of questions by

the researcher as they were predetermined by the researcher. In the next section the researcher briefly discusses the qualitative approach as the core approach regulating the study.

### **4.3 Qualitative Research Approach**

This study was a qualitative research project as it strived to explore the phenomenon of contrasting reading performances of the learners in the Ekurhuleni district interactively through the participant. As noted by various scholars, a qualitative study endeavours to explore the phenomenon that revolves around a population, in this instance, the reading performances of Grade Five learners in the Ekurhuleni District. DeJaeghere et al. (2020:4) explain that qualitative research engages with humans' experiences and perceptions of the environment based on the research topic. Chivanga and Monyayi (2021:11) note that one element of qualitative research is the phenomenological approach which strives to explore the phenomenon and its effects. As the researcher stated in section 3.2, in this study the research design approach was the phenomenological approach which strived to extract the factors that influence the phenomenon. One can deduce that qualitative research and the phenomenological approach strategy are interrelated - the phenomenological approach tends to bolster the research processes in the qualitative research study.

The researcher chose the qualitative method because of its principles such as acquiring answers from questions and producing findings from the phenomenon. One of the aims of this study was to determine factors that lead to contrasting reading performances of Grade Five learners in the Ekurhuleni District. Implementing the qualitative research was indispensable in determining such factors. In contrast, Taherdoost (2021:29) states that the quantitative data method focuses on numerical data such as statistics, census etcetera. For instance, the quantitative data generating method intends to quantify variations and uses closed ended questions through instruments such as surveys. In addition, the quantitative research method, as stated by Casteel and Bridier (2021:347), is used while intertwined with the probability sampling approach. In this study, the researcher used a purposive sampling approach which was interrelated with the qualitative research method.

The researcher used a variety of data generating strategies which included structured interviews. According to Canals (2017:398), interviews are indispensable when qualitative data is generated, and they tend to take longer while enabling the researcher to extract ample information effectively and efficiently. Taherdoost (2021:11) explains that qualitative data comprise three categories, namely, observation, questionnaires, and interviews. Since this study was qualitative research, the researcher used the instruments recommended by the qualitative method.

### **4.4 Population and sampling**

## *Population*

As defined by Shukla (2020:2), population is the total set of units from which research data can be acquired and analysed. In the context of this study, the population were the Grade Five learners in the Ekurhuleni District. Casteel and Bridier (2021:343) also describe population as consisting of individuals, dyads, groups, organisations which the researcher needs to understand and from which the findings may be analysed. A population is a wide group of people that are involved in a research phenomenon, and the sample is selected from this population. It is the target population from which the research study is conducted, and findings would be analysed. Naseri and Rahmiati (2022:709) also note that the target population is a group of individuals or occurrences that a researcher needs to understand being guided by the aims of the research study. In this study, the population was the learner population of Grade Fives in the Ekurhuleni district, and the sample was selected purposively in the two schools of this district. Over the years, I have observed and experienced that learners have serious challenges when it comes to reading for comprehension. From my perspective, the reading challenge manifests more at the intermediate phase, and it is an ongoing challenge.

In the Ekurhuleni District, some schools in the intermediate phase had learners whose reading performances and skills were inadequate. According to Hay et al. (2021:113), 80% of Grade Five learners in the Ekurhuleni District are unable to read fluently.

This study looked at the origins of challenges experienced by primary learners in reading and strategies that can assist the teachers to remedy the situation. Based on the findings of this study, it is envisaged that the educators and learners would benefit from the strategies that would eventually lead to improvement of reading in general.

The Grade Fives of the Ekurhuleni District became the target population to explore the phenomenon of contrasting reading performances. The research question was: **Investigating factors that lead to contrasting reading performances of Grade Fives in the Ekurhuleni District.**

The aims of the research were:

- To determine factors that lead to poor reading in primary schools.
- To explore the educators' perspective regarding the source of challenges and possible strategies
- To explore the way in which poor reading affects the performance of learners.
- To establish learners' perspectives on their reading challenges.
- To determine strategies that can be implemented to rectify the reading challenges in primary schools.

The researcher's aim was to explore the phenomenon from a learner population of Ekurhuleni.

District and acquire a better understanding about the problem. According to Nasiru (2022:91), qualitative research focuses on a broad population and identifies the phenomenon that impacts the entire population. As this research was a qualitative study, it intended to determine the phenomenal problem of the population, gather data with regard to the phenomenon and make an informed analysis.

Shukla (2020:5) differentiates between the various types of population. These types of population are illustrated in Table 4.2.

**Table 4.2 Different types of populations (Shukla, 2020:5)**

<b>Population type</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Finite population</b>	The populations whose number of participants can be accurately counted.
<b>Infinite population</b>	The population whose number of participants cannot be accurately counted.
<b>Homogenous population</b>	The population whose traits are identical
<b>Heterogenous population</b>	A population whose traits differ entirely from one individual to the other.
<b>Existent population</b>	This population has physical existence
<b>Hypothetical population</b>	This population does not have a physical existence, but their existence is assumed or acquired through statistical methods (statistical population)
<b>Known population</b>	This population is when their average marks can be calculated and known
<b>Unknown population</b>	This population is when their average marks cannot be calculated and therefore are unknown.

In the context of this study, the researcher is of the view that a population that can be described in a variety of descriptions based on the variables that encompasses the population, according to Shukla's differentiation of populations. The population of the study was the Grade Five learners in the Ekurhuleni district. These schools are regulated by the Gauteng Department of Education. All the statistical data was captured accordingly, for example, the total number of learners per school and the average pass rate per school. All the data were captured as per the qualitative procedures. Therefore, this study can be described in the following types of populations.

1. This population in the Ekurhuleni District can be described as a **finite population** since the number of learners of teachers and learners in the Ekurhuleni District can be counted.
2. This population can also be described as a **homogenous population** since the learners and teachers have good understanding of Grade Five and also the teaching and learning of reading. This population comprise learners and teachers of the same district; thus, they have identical characteristics.
3. This population also can be described as an **existent population** since the entire population is situated in the Ekurhuleni District. It is not impossible to locate them regarding their existence.
4. This population can also be described as a **known population** since their average marks can be calculated. Through the statistical data that has been captured one can determine the average marks and also the pass rate of the learners in the Ekurhuleni District. Therefore, it is a known population.

According to Casteel and Bridier (2021:340), describing the concept of population might be challenging and inadequate based on the differing traits, so it is the researcher's task to select the relevant group for the study. In this study, the population can be described based on the similar traits possessed. The learners, teachers and parents of the population had identical characteristics in terms of teaching and learning. In addition, Naseri and Rahmiati (2022:709) explain that the target population is the total number of individuals, occurrences and other units from which the researcher explores the phenomenon. In this study, the target population was the learners, teachers and parents in the Ekurhuleni District where the researcher conducted research regarding the contrasting reading performances of the Grade Five learners.

A researcher must ensure that participants of a study are people who serve the interests of the study. These participants must be relevant to the study. The researcher had to purposively select the sample that meets the needs of the research. The population and sample were learners in the Ekurhuleni District who had complete insight into schooling and learning of reading, therefore they were adequate representatives of the study. The researcher ensured that he approached Grade Five learners, teachers and parents so they could respond accordingly to the research study. Taherdoost (2021:33) maintains that in data generating the researcher must decide how and what data need to be generated from the sample that has been selected from the population. The researcher was well prepared with the instruments to generate data such as questionnaires, interviews, checklist and fieldnotes template.

The researcher has detailed the population of the study and where it was located. The researcher has also distinguished between a variety of types of populations. In the next section, the researcher discusses the sampling of the study.

## *Sampling*

Shukla (2020:5) briefly describes sampling as the procedure to extract a sample from the larger population. Sampling cannot occur without first identifying a population. The sampling process is administered from a population. It is the process of extracting the units from the population and from these units the data is generated. Casteel and Bridier (2021:345) explains that sampling is the exact group of individuals that are requested to be the participants in a study. During sampling, the researcher selected the individuals that became participants in the study. The selected individuals needed to be relevant and abreast with the research phenomenon that was dealt with in the homogenous population.

Sampling, as described by Naseri and Rahmiati (2022:709), is a process of choosing the representatives that are called a sample from which data generating process is administered. In the context of the study, the researcher sampled participants through processing with the learners of two schools in the Ekurhuleni District where five learners from each school were selected to participate in the study. In addition, DeJaeghere (2020:41) explains that sampling in any qualitative study must be equated with the aims and design of the study. The sampling process is not done using any units, but units are selected because they meet the needs of the study. The participants who are referred to as a sample must have some knowledge or experience regarding the phenomenon being studied. The learners and teachers in the Ekurhuleni District had their perceptions and thoughts about the contrasting reading performances.

According to Nasiru (2022:91), a qualitative study utilises the purposive sampling approach when participants are selected with the aim of acquiring extensive insight regarding the focused phenomenon. In this study, the researcher generated data from the sample purposively because the participants had insight and experience about the teaching and learning of reading. Casteel and Bridier (2021:350) describe purposive sampling as purposeful selection of the participants because of the traits and knowledge they possess regarding the phenomenon being investigated. The researcher made sure that the sample from whom data was generated was abreast with the effect of the reading phenomenon in the schools. One can deduce that purposive sampling is a self-descriptive concept where the sample is selected intentionally as they have sufficient insight regarding the phenomenon.

This study did not utilise the random sampling; the sample was selected purposefully. Boru (2018:39) states that in purposive sampling, the participants are individuals who can certainly contribute adequately to the study; hence, the study is purposive and not random. For this study, the sample was not selected randomly but it was selected based on their knowledge and insight regarding the



phenomenon. In contrast, Etikan et al. (2016 :3) state that random sampling methods do not focus on a sample that has the same characteristics and who respond adequately to the investigation, rather, they are selected randomly irrespective of age, gender, culture and knowledge about the phenomenon. The sample from the Ekurhuleni schools was selected purposively based on the participants' knowledge and experience about teaching and learning of reading. School A had five learners and a teacher and a parent and School B had five learners and a teacher and a parent, all of which formed the sample. Parents were also part of the study where they were interviewed on their perceptions regarding the reading performances of learners. The study took place on the research sites which were the schools. This sample had sufficient knowledge about the reading performance that they experienced on a daily basis. The sample was not selected randomly but it was selected because, firstly, teachers conducted reading lessons with the Grade Five learners and learners learn to read. Therefore, both learners and teachers had the insight and experience regarding the teaching and learning of reading in their respective schools.

As articulated by Andrade (2021:88), random sampling believes that every member has an equal opportunity to be selected. This denotes that random selection is not based on the knowledge, insight and experience regarding the phenomenon that is being studied. In the present study, all the procedures were conducted in an acceptable manner. Firstly, the researcher applied for Ethics clearance from the College of Education of the University of South Africa and the ethics clearance certificate was attained. The clearance certificate is attached as Appendix N in the appendices section. Christensen and Johnson (2020:200) explain that the aim of the ethics approval is to permit the researcher to generate and record data in accordance with the phenomenon.

Appendix E is the letter to the Gauteng Department of Education to request permission to conduct research in the schools in the Ekurhuleni District. The researcher was granted this permission. Then the Ekurhuleni District office granted permission to conduct research in the school. The school management teams of the schools were requested to grant the permission to collect data in their school. The parents, teachers, and learners were given the consent forms and assent forms respectively to allow the generating of data. The governing body of the schools were also requested permission to conduct research in the schools. These consent and assent forms are attached in the Appendices section. Since this study was a qualitative study, it strived to explore and identify the factors that were linked with the contrasting reading performances of the Grade Fives in the Ekurhuleni District. As mentioned by Casteel and Bridier (2021:350), the purposive sampling method is mostly intertwined with qualitative studies since participants are selected because they have perceptions and understanding about the phenomenon being investigated.

According to Kabir (2016:225), in purposive sampling methods the candidate must receive the consent or assent forms to participate in research a few days before the actual day or days of generating of data. Teachers, learners and parents of Schools A and B received the consent forms to sign and agree with the participation. These consent forms were disseminated to the participants one week before data generating date. The consent form stated clearly that all the information that would be gathered during the generating of data would be handled as confidentially as possible. The participants were also informed that they had the right to withdraw at any stage during the process of generating data if they so desired.

Roller (2020:11) notes that consent forms must clearly state the purpose of the research, the confidentiality of the sensitive information, that the participants' real names would be replaced with pseudonyms and that the participants are allowed to withdraw from the study at any moment should they want to. All information that the learners, teachers and parents in Schools A and B of the Ekurhuleni District gave was treated with confidentially and mostly during the generating of data their names that were in the generated data were not real but were pseudonyms in order to protect their privacy. As mentioned by Goebel and Maistry (2022:120), participants were allowed to choose pseudonyms to identify them which ensured their confidentiality and privacy. By using different names to refer to the participants, the researcher was securing the privacy of the participants, and the participants would provide information regarding the phenomenon being investigated knowing that their identity was secured.

#### **4.5 Data generating techniques**

Qualitative data utilises interviews, questionnaires and observations to generate in-depth information from the selected sample. During this research, the researcher infused a variety of data generating instruments which included the structured interview. According to Canals (2017:398), interviews are important during the process of generating data and these interviews allow the researcher to acquire extensive information. Substantiating this statement is Taherdoost (2021:11) who asserts that qualitative data consists of three categories: observation, questionnaires, and interviews. The researcher utilised these recommended instruments. In the next sections, the researcher discusses the instruments that were used to generate data.

##### **4.5.1 Questionnaires**

Christensen and Johnson (2020:183) state that questionnaires are a deliberately compiled data generated document which has to be completed by the participants during the process of generating data. Questionnaires are utilised by the researcher to gather extensive information with regard to the

perceptions, knowledge, experience and insight of the participants about the phenomenon being studied. Researchers perceive that questionnaires extract ample information in a qualitative study being conducted. A questionnaire is a form with a series of questions that are disseminated to the sample (Simister 2017:2). Questionnaires were structured and designed by the researcher to gather a variety of factors that contribute to the reading contrasts of the Grade Fives in the Ekurhuleni district. These questionnaires were then disseminated to the participants to explain their perceptions and knowledge with regard to the research topic.

The researcher visited the data generating sites to conduct the data generating process; thus generating the primary data from the participants. As explained by Dawit (2020:2), primary data is information such as captured picture, films, that are gathered by the researcher for the first time. Such information might comprise interview data, questionnaire data, observation data. Secondary data is commonly described as data that has already been generated and the researcher is utilising it to gather information. Taherdoost (2021:12) explains that literature review is secondary data and is an important part of the research that assists in acquiring information from previous scholars' views.

The questionnaires that were compiled by the researcher were both close-ended questions and semi-closed questions which required the participants to answer, "yes" or "no" and provide an explanation. These types of questions allow the participants to further explain his/her views and perceptions regarding the research phenomenon. Kabir (2016:208) explains that in qualitative research a questionnaire comprises a list of questions which are aimed at gathering information from the participants. Such questions might be close ended or semi closed questions which enables the participants to give detailed information regarding the research study. The questions on the questionnaire aimed to gather the information regarding the contrasting reading performances of the Grade Fives in the Ekurhuleni district. The questions that were asked on the questionnaires were:

Do you read books at home? Yes [ ] No [ ]

If no, explain .....

Do you teach reading regularly in your classroom? Yes [ ] No [ ]

If no, explain.....

As appear in the appendices section, the questionnaires have a series of questions which intend to acquire the detailed perceptions of the learners and teachers regarding their teaching and learning of reading.

According to Simister (2017:2), in questionnaires data is gathered and recorded consistently which allows the researcher to merge the research results and findings. In the context of this study, schools were visited and data were generated then the research findings were generated while adding together every input and articulations that were made by the participants. As explained by Christensen and Johnson (2020:183), researchers utilise questionnaires to determine the differences and the similarities between the items. The questionnaires were important when data was generated as they assisted the researcher to determine similarities and the paradoxes between the schools of Ekurhuleni District and the reading performance of Grade Five learners.

#### ***4.5.2 Interview***

Since this study involved qualitative research, it utilised instruments such as interviews and other data generating methods instruments. An interview was also utilised to generate data. As described by DeJaeghere et al. (2020:22), an interview is an instrument used to gather data by means of verbal interaction between the researcher and the participants with the aim of acquiring their views, experiences, perceptions, and knowledge. The interview is facilitated by the researcher conversing with the participants and this conversation must revolve around the precise phenomenon/phenomena. In addition, Christensen and Johnson (2020:189) maintain that the interview is a data generating strategy where the researcher asks questions from the participants while he ensures rapport during the conversation. The interview was conducted in a very relaxed manner and participants were allowed to articulate their views without any pressure.

DeJaeghere (2020:22) describes an interview as a method implemented to gather information through verbal interaction regarding the insights and perspectives of the participants and schools that the researcher visited, the interviews were acquired through asking questions and listening to the responses. As substantiated by Taherdoost (2021:17), interview is a strategy of interaction where questions are asked, and information is constructed by manipulating the information that has been acquired. The interview process is social since it requires individuals to exchange views and perceptions verbally. As the researcher was discussing with the teachers and Grade Five learners in the Ekurhuleni district, he mutually interacted verbally with the participants. The researcher regulated the interview to ensure that rapport prevailed during the process. Learners, teachers and parents were allowed to express their views and experiences regarding their perceptions on teaching and learning of reading.

As explained by DeJaeghere et al. (2020:22), the aim of the interview is to give direction to the research so the participants would respond to the required data. During the interview, the researcher

mostly listens to the participants without distracting them from explaining their views. The participants from both the schools in the Ekurhuleni district expressed freely what they perceived about the learning and teaching of reading.

In this study, the researcher utilised the structured interview which was one of the types of interviews. The interview template is attached in the appendices, the interview document consists of a series of questions which were predetermined for the interview process. Taherdoost (2021:18) explains that in a structured interview the participants respond to a set of open-ended questions which are precompiled before the commencement of the interview. The questions of the interview were both close ended and open ended, which enabled the participants to express extensively about their perceptions and insight regarding the phenomenon. The questions of the interview were very interlinked with the topic of the study (Investigating factors that lead to contrasting reading performances of Grade Five learners in the Ekurhuleni District). The questions required responses that were based on the topic, and that enabled the participants to respond without any ambiguities. Kabir (2016:212) avers that to compile interview questions requires a researcher's thorough understanding of the study and that enables the participants to effectively explain their perceptions. There were some variances between the topic of the study, interview questions and responses of the participants. In that sense, the information gathered through the interviews was very vast.

#### ***4.5.3 Observation***

In addition, the researcher utilised the data generating method of observation to ensure credibility and reliability in the generated data.

According to Simister (2017:1), observation includes looking at the interaction of objects or humans and then recording the data being acquired through this observation. The researcher had instruments such as observation template, checklists, and fieldnotes in order to gather a vast amount of data from the participants. Kabir (2016:240) mentions the two types of observations, that is, casual observation and scientific observation:

(i) Casual observation includes looking at the right item, at the right moment, at the actual time and environment by fortune or by chance. This observation is not on the researcher's observation design, but it occurs coincidentally but contributing to the research study that is being conducted. This type of data is not on the researcher's checklist or on the observation template.

(ii) Scientific observation utilises the observation instruments to determine the information that the researcher needs to extract. Such instruments are checklists, observation templates, and observation fieldnotes. One can be assured that casual observation is indirect observation whereas

scientific observation is direct observation. In the context of this study, both types of observation were used since there were some data that were acquired without being predetermined by the researcher.

During the process of generating data, the researcher administered observation as one of the qualitative study data generating instruments. This type of observation was a structured observation since the researcher followed a well scheduled checklist with the series of factors that he wanted to observe. Simister (2017:1) states that the process in which observation is recorded on a predetermined checklist is referred to as structured observation. School A and School B had the same observation checklist being designed and prepared by the researcher. In the appendices section the checklist is attached as Appendix L. For instance, during the process of generating data, the researcher had predesigned the checklist with items. As mentioned by Simister (2017:1), there are various kinds of observations, yet structured or direct observation is conducted utilising the checklist. During the observation process, the researcher utilised the checklist to extract data from the participants. The use of checklists was additional to other instruments and it contributed to acquiring enormous information regarding the research phenomenon. Questions that were the contents of the checklist were as follows:

Were there sufficient books for the learners? Yes [ ] No [ ]

Were they all involved in the reading activity? Yes [ ] No [ ]

As explained by Christensen and Johnson (2020:198), fieldnotes are any unforeseen occurrences that are jotted on the template by the observer. These notes are very important and contribute to the phenomenon that is being studied. DeJaeghere (2020:27) explains that one of the methods to conduct observation is to take down fieldnotes such as efficient descriptions, drawings, images, photos and videos. The fieldnotes were imperative in gathering the information that happened randomly but contributed to the study.

#### **4.6 Summary**

In this chapter “Research Design and Methodology”, the researcher discussed extensively the approaches that he utilised to design and conduct the research. It is the collaboration of various approaches that the researcher believes fulfils the task of generating data. This study was qualitative as it strived to explore and determine the factors around the phenomenon of contrasting reading performances of Grade Five learners. During the data gathering stage, the researcher ensured that names and other sensitive information of the participants are kept in a confidential manner. The researcher ensured rapport during the process of data gathering and assured the participants that they are not compelled to utter any information that they do not want to utter.

Asenahabi (2019:78) explains that the objectives of the research design were to convert the phenomenon into data so that the findings would emerge. In this research, the researcher constructed building blocks as research instruments to ascertain that the answers for the research phenomenon are acquired. This research study has used instruments such as observation, interviews, and questionnaires to gather research results. This qualitative study did not implement only one instrument because the researcher has envisaged that using one instrument would not extract extensive and reliable data. Thus, the instruments that were utilised to conduct research in a qualitative study were efficient when data had to be generated. As illustrated in Figure 4.1 by Flick (2014:5) that the qualitative approach has main aims that must revolve around the phenomenon, namely, describe the phenomenon, compare the individuals, identify differences and similarities within the phenomenon and the population and, lastly, develop the theory. This shows that the researcher in this study has developed the theory from a relevant sample in an accorded research study.

This study, since it was a qualitative study, the recommended sampling method that was administered was the purposive sampling approach. The sample that is selected according to the purposive sampling approach are those who have full perceptions, experience, and insight with regard to the phenomenon being studied. Teachers, learners and parents of Schools A and B in the Ekurhuleni District were up to date with regards to the reading phenomenon since they were involved with teaching and learning of reading on day-to-day basis. The researcher believed that the participants' responses in the study would contribute interesting information, hence they were selected purposively.

A variety of data generating instruments were utilised to ascertain that extensive information regarding the contrasting reading performances of the Grade Fives in the Ekurhuleni district was acquired. Teachers and learners were interviewed using the document Appendix I for learners and Appendix K for educators. Such interviews enable the participants to utter every perception that he/she has regarding the phenomenon while the researcher ensures that no participant is compelled to utter any sensitive information that they do not want to share. They were also assured that their identity and utterances would be kept confidential without being exposed, yet the essence of generating data was not very sensitive, so it was unlikely that it would result in insecurities.

The structured interview was used to conduct this research because one of its principles is to utilise questions which were predetermined by the researcher. The only stage when the participants gave in-depth knowledge about their perceptions was when they responded to the open-ended questions, or

semi-closed questions. Questionnaires were also utilised in the gathering of data as the researcher had envisaged that questionnaires would provide extensive information when data were generated.

The questionnaires were indispensable when data were generated as they assisted the researcher to determine similarities and the paradoxes between the schools in the Ekurhuleni District and the reading performance of Grade Five learners. Both interviews and questionnaires were utilised, and they both had more or less the same effect and also contributed efficiently to the study. Utilising the interviews and questionnaires, the participants were at ease to articulate their insights, thoughts, and perceptions regarding the research phenomenon.

Observation was utilised by the researcher to ensure that he acquired data that was valid and reliable. Observation is factual since it is observed during the activities that the sample were involved in and therefore it ensured reliability and credibility.

School A and School B had the same observation checklist which was designed and prepared by the researcher. In the appendices section the checklist is attached as Appendix L. A checklist can be facilitated using rating scales to measure the extent to which the items are implemented by the sample. The checklist template is attached in the appendices section. The checklist has predetermined items that the researcher wants to observe from the sample.

The researcher had to ensure that he did not record unnecessary data during field notes for data generating, only data that might be essential to the study was generated. It is therefore important to ensure that the researcher had good insight into the research phenomenon so that he would be precise about the data that he needed to acquire. To sum up, research design and the process of generating data was administered in successfully since the researcher endeavoured to comply with all the procedures and data generating instruments in conducting his research. In other words, the use of the phenomenological approach and the utilisation of the purposive sample selection method was the catalyst of the data generating process in order to determine the variables that are intertwined with the contrasting reading performances of Grade Fives. In the next chapter, the researcher discusses the analysis of data of the study which includes the responses of the participants, the findings, and the results of the research.



## Chapter 5

### Research Findings and Analysis of Results

#### 5.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter (Chapter 4), the researcher discussed the methodology and the research design of this study entitled, ‘Investigating factors that lead to contrasting reading performances in Grade Five learners in the Ekurhuleni District.’ He also described a research approach that was used in conducting the study. This denotes that this study is qualitative, as mentioned by Cropley (2019:5) that a qualitative study emphasises the manner the world is understood by the participants with the researcher’s perception using abstract scientific concepts and terminology. In the context of this study, the main purpose was to identify and determine variables that might be affiliated with contrasting reading performances of Grade Fives in the Ekurhuleni District. Asenahabi (2019:81) states that qualitative methods allow a researcher to have a broad insight regarding the phenomenon by literally extracting data from the sample of the population.

In the methodology section of this study, the researcher utilised the purposive sampling approach. The motive for choosing this method was to select participants that had insight, experiences, and relevant views regarding the research phenomenon. According to Casteel and Bridier (2021:350), purposive sampling is a purposeful selection of participants because of their similar characteristics and knowledge in relation to the research study being investigated.

In the previous chapter, the researcher also discussed the design of this research study. The phenomenological approach was selected because it endeavours to extract the problem facts from the participants as they constantly interacted with these facts. In other words, the phenomenological approach strives to acquire the origins of the phenomenon and the factors that revolve around that phenomenon. As explained by Asenahabi (2019: 83), the phenomenological method of research is a qualitative method where the researcher determines the gist of the phenomenon being experienced by a population. The researcher also utilised data generating instruments such as interviews, questionnaires, and observation where data were generated from a purposively selected sample. Teachers, learners and parents of Grade Fives were the participants of the study and therefore contributed to the data generating.

In this chapter, the researcher describes how analysing of the findings of the study was done but first he describes how the participants were coded, as shown below:

1. School A = Sc. A
2. School B = Sc. B
3. School A learner = Sc. A L
4. School B learner = Sc. B L
5. School A teacher = Sc. A T
6. School B teacher = Sc. B T
7. School A parent = Sc. A P
8. School B parent = Sc. B P

The themes were generated from the categories, followed by codes that were affiliated to the research question. Roller (2020:2) states that a researcher has to be abreast of the phenomenon of a study and endeavour in creating codes, categories, and themes in order to acquire meaning and the integrity of results or findings of a research study. Samples from School A and School B participated and contributed to the data of this research study, which were later analysed. Bhatia (2017:166) avers that the main purpose of data analysis is to adapt the gathered information to a structure that there is more comprehensible and constructive information regarding the research phenomenon. Gathering data from the participant schools in the Ekurhuleni District took the researcher a reasonable period of time until all data were constructed. Indeed, a variety of data generating methods were implemented to generate data; such methods were, interviews, questionnaires, observations, checklists, and fieldnotes.

The main research question was: Investigating factors that lead to contrasting reading performances of Grade Fives in the Ekurhuleni District. This research question strived to explore the causative factors in the uneven reading performances of the Grade Five learners, eliminate the low performances and avail the elevating strategies to bolster the reading and learning performances of learners.

The objectives of the study were fulfilled in accordance with the research phenomenon. They were to:

- Determine the factors that might contribute to the contrasting reading performances of the Grade Five learners in the Ekurhuleni District.
- Determine the impact of these discrepancies on learners.
- Identify the factors that will contribute to the improvement in the learners' reading performance.

## **5.2 Coding of participants**

Names, surnames, dates of births, and identity document numbers are of utmost sensitivity when it comes to confidentiality and privacy. Flick (2014:479) mentions that researchers must ensure that they avoid harm or limit hazards by providing adequate consents and protecting the participants' confidentiality and privacy. The participants have the full right not to allow their personal information to be exposed to any published document. It becomes the researcher's task to cooperate with the

desires of the sample. Taherdoost (2021:15) explains that it is imperative that the researcher protects ethical concepts such as confidentiality and privacy. Since data is later made available to the public through digital and/or printed media, it has to be ensured that no sensitive information is available to anyone. The South African Police Service (SAPS) (2021:61) explicitly states that “When we contract the third parties, we impose adequate security, privacy and confidentiality to ascertain that personal information is protected”. The issue of securing the self’s and others’ personal information is obligatory and practised by almost all sectors.

In 2020 the Republic of South Africa stipulated the Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA). This act aimed at the protection of personal information. According to SAPS (2021:4), the POPIA promotes the protection of personal information, while creating a balance between the right to privacy and the need for the dissemination and access to information and regulates how personal information is processed. Therefore, based on the POPI act and the ethical procedures, I cannot disclose any person’s information. The sensitive information must always be kept confidential.

During the process of generating data in the schools in the Ekurhuleni District, the researcher ensured that the participants’ personal information was protected and informed consents were disseminated. Information that was protected were names, surnames. identity document numbers, ages, residential areas, and any sensitive information which might be misused by anybody or any unauthorised entity.

During the process of generating data, the researcher approached two schools which are referred as School A and School B and the participants were coded as follows:

School A learner (Sc. A L)	School B learner (Sc. B L)
School A teacher (Sc. A T)	School B teacher (Sc. B T)
School A parent (Sc. A P)	School B parent ( Sc. B P)

In both schools, I coded learners as learner 1, learner 2, learner 3, learner 4, and learner 5. The schools were from the same district, that is, the Ekurhuleni District. In each school, five Grade Five learners, their language teachers and a parent were the sample. During the interviews, participants from both schools were interviewed regarding their reading performance and their perceptions about the teaching and learning of reading in their schools. The researcher generated codes, categories, and themes to analyse data. These themes were generated based on the aims of the study as they appear in the introduction section. As explained by Flick (2014:147), thematic analysis focuses on the approach of determining the themes which fit with the definition of the research phenomenon, and which can interrelate with other themes based on the phenomenon being investigated. DeJaerghere et al. (2020:33) states that thematic analysis is utilised to determine the sequences within the generated

information with the relevant themes. The researcher has illustrated the Development of themes in Table 5.1

**Table 5.1 Development of themes**

<b>Codes</b>	<b>Categories</b>	<b>Themes</b>
<b>Comprehension</b> • <b>Fluency</b>	<b>Learners' behaviour on learning</b>	- Acquisition of comprehension - Level of fluency
• <b>Motivation</b> • <b>Participation</b> • <b>Concentration</b> • <b>Attention</b>		- Level of motivation to read - Learners' active involvement in reading activity
• <b>Parents' involvement</b>	Parents' approach to learners' reading	- Motivating parents on reading - Discussion with parents on reading
• <b>Reading assessments</b> • <b>Interventions</b>	Administering and recording of reading assessment results	- Frequency of assessment activities - Communication of assessment results - Recording of reading assessment results - Teachers' strategies to improve learners' reading assessment results - Creation of class reading groups - Regular reading activities
• <b>Classroom environment</b>	Suitability and conduciveness of the classroom regarding literacy	- Availability of reading books in the classroom in the bookshelves - Availability of print- rich materials on the classroom walls - Ample opportunities for learners to access books
<b>Library</b>	Home and classroom library	- Availability of the school library - Availability of the home library - Regular visits to libraries
<b>T</b>	Teachers	Representation of teachers' concept
<b>L</b>	Learners	Representation of learners' concept
<b>Sc</b>	School	Representation of schools' concept
<b>P</b>	Parent	Representation of a parent

The table above strives to analyse precisely what was being investigated in the schools in the Ekurhuleni District. The table has codes that cover the main concepts to be investigated and themes

that are determined by the codes. In the next section, the researcher endeavours to analyse the data that were generated during the learners' interviews.

### **5.3 Interviews with learners**

In this section the researcher discusses the various aspects that were investigated during the interviews and the actual utterances by the interviewees are indicated in the form of verbatim quotes. The samples were purposively selected to participate in the interviews based on their perspectives and experiences regarding the teaching and learning of reading. According to Castel and Bridier (2021:348), in purposive sampling, participants are selected based on perceptions and experience that are of interest to the researcher. The researcher envisaged that the samples have sufficient knowledge and experience regarding the research study since they were members of the schools. This nonprobability approach contributed to the acquisition of data, which was necessary for the study.

#### ***5.3.1 Availability of reading books***

When the researcher generated data regarding the frequency of reading activities in the learners' classrooms, he had to generate information related to the availability of reading books. Abdulatief et al. (2018:6) explain that it is essential that educators provide ample developmentally appropriate reading material which are necessary for reading and learning. There must be non-limited access to resources in any learning environment. Failing to ensure this, learners' acquisition of language knowledge and skills can be hindered. Henriques and Madeira (2017:2490) affirm that reading and learning is not a passive process but requires active interaction so knowledge will be extracted and constructed. Any learner requires reading skills for them to make meaning of any written text. Such skills are mostly acquired through the consistent interaction with text therefore, literacy material must be provided for learners to attain this knowledge and skill.

As Mohammed and Amponsah (2018:274) explain, learners may have inadequate reading skills because of schools that do not strive to provide relevant books to practise reading and classrooms that are overcrowded and noisy, which hinder the acquisition of reading and learning skills. Schools are obliged to ensure availability of reading material across all grades and make sure that the learning environment is conducive for learning. When the researcher enquired whether the classrooms had sufficient books for learners to engage in any reading activity, a variety of responses were provided. At School A, all learners concurred that their classrooms had a variety of books in a variety of genres and in accordance with their level of development as Grade Five learners. Sc. A, L 1 mentioned that *"Our classroom has books in various types and during reading activities our teacher gives us books to read."* This statement asserts that the classrooms of School A do not experience a deficiency with

regard to the availability of books. In contrast, responses of participants from School B regarding the availability of books in their classrooms varied and differed. During the interview with School B learners, learners 1, 2 and 3 explained that *“We do have books in our classroom that we use when it is reading activities.”* Learners 4 and 5 from School B explained that *“There is a scarcity of books in the classroom; at times we share the books.”* Out of the five samples from School B, two of them assured the researcher that they did not have sufficient books in their classrooms. This uneven distribution of books in the schools might contribute to the contrasting performances with regards to the reading performances.

### ***5.3.2 Visiting the home and school library***

Firstly, one can infer that visiting and reading sources in a library rank among factors that contribute to the enhancement of reading skills and knowledge of any human being. Secondly, the establishment of libraries in schools as well as at the classroom level become a catalyst for the acquisition of reading and learning skills. As confirmed by Haupt (2020:3), every school and classroom should establish a library that has appropriate materials meant to contribute to the development of learners. Such libraries must be functional in the sense that learners must be given ample opportunities to visit them and access books. According to Vasudevan (2017:308), slow learners are not special education learners, but they are part of learners who struggle to learn, which might be caused by the unavailability of facilities such as libraries. This denotes that the availability and the functionality of public and school libraries might contribute to the enhancement of reading and learning performances of the learners. As Ampofa (2019:14) affirms, it has been identified that learners seldom visit libraries to read their notes and prescribed reading materials; they only visit libraries just before the exam period commences. Learners originate from different family settings; some families are not suitable for sitting down and concentrating on the books or notes. Going to the library and reading literacy material might be a good method for learners to ensure that they grasp the knowledge that is necessary for their learning.

Should there be libraries in schools and in the public, learners must make that their task to periodically visit such libraries. According to Mwoma (2017:351), this requires that guardians and educators must motivate learners to utilise libraries so they will develop their efficacy with regard to literacy. The schools need to assign a time where they would orientate and assure learners that regular visit to libraries is one strategy to improve especially the reading and learning skills of learners. Like the home setting, guardians have to be motivated to remind learners to visit libraries. Schools can create a programme where learners attend the school library sequentially. Ameyaw and Anto (2018:17) suggest that schools ought to have a policy that pertains to rewarding learners as this contributes

towards motivating them and getting them to read adequately. There must be different ways used to lure learners to libraries rather than addressing them verbally.

During the interviews, the responses from both schools differed slightly from one another. The sample from School A asserted that they visited the library on a regular basis. Sc. A L2 explained, *“My parents usually take me to the library on Saturdays to read books.”* With regard to the school library, School A has a library conducive for learners to acquire books for reading. The librarian of School A assured the researcher that: *“In our school there is a programme where every morning, groups of learners are taken to the library for their reading sessions.”*

The responses from School B varied from one learner to the next. Not all of them visited the library either on Saturdays or in the afternoons. Sc. B L2 affirmed that: *“Most of the afternoons and Saturdays I spend time with my friends, I have never thought that I have to visit the library at times.”* These responses show that some learners create more chances to interact with the written texts than other learners. School B had a library, but it was not welcoming and was not functional. Sc. B L2 asserted that: *“It has been a while since we went to the school library.”* The discussion that the researcher held with the participants suggests that the concept of a library visit was not highly motivated on the other schools and that could contribute to hindrances in acquisition of literacy skills. According to Kayuni (2017:57), library visiting develops reading habits, yet in some societies the libraries are non-existent, or they are not adequately functional. In situations where libraries are not available, it is the duty of the state to ensure that in every school, there exists a tiny or a huge library. In a situation where libraries are not functional, it is the educators’ responsibility to motivate learners.

### **5.3.3 Classroom reading groups**

Reading groups have been identified as one of the strategies to enhance the reading performances of learners and to easily detect inadequate manifestations from other learners. As explained by the National Education Psychological Service (NEPS) (2019:146), evidence-based intervention has been determined as being efficient when reading groups are created and for those learners who struggle to acquire reading and learning skills. Teaching reading to fewer (grouped) learners is not less effective than whole class teaching. When learners are grouped in 5s/6s/7s, they tend to comprehend the matter more effectively than the whole class teaching. Educators need to vary methods that they use to teach reading, particularly that aimed at elevating the knowledge and skills of literacy.

As explained by Biesman-Simons et al. (2021:3), low acquisition of comprehension skills results in learners possessing inadequate language skills which will affect all the subject in their schooling age. There is no doubt that reading is a skill that is fundamental and indispensable that learners should

possess in order to afford subjects across the entire curriculum. Possession of reading knowledge and skills is a catalyst of schooling and academic success. Learners who do not have these become illiterate and unfit in various societal entities.

Out of the sample from School A, 60% agreed that they had reading groups in their classrooms and 40% of the sample from School B affirmed that they had reading groups. This denotes that there was unevenness in facilitating the learning methods at classroom levels in both the schools. Sc. B L3 explained that: *“No, in our class we do not have groups, we usually and only read together in a class.”* Most of the classes in school B facilitated reading activities only on “shared reading”, however, the “group guided reading” was scarcely practised.

#### ***5.3.4 Literacy activities in the classrooms***

Reading is a skill that needs to be learned and practised on a regular basis. Abdulatief et al. (2018:12) say that learners must be equipped with skills to comprehend a vast amount of written text during their schooling and beyond. The skill of reading can be facilitated using various methods at the classroom level. For example, Spaul and Pretorius (2019:2) explain that learning holistically depends on the basic understanding of the relation between printed and spoken text. Language skills are the catalyst of school efficacy. When we strive to establish a literate society, reading and learning skills are imperative to achieve that goal.

A variety of reading methods can be utilised by language educators to enhance his/her learners' reading performances. Such methods are independent reading, paired reading, shared reading, group guided, etcetera. Samples from participants of School A and School B affirmed that they have reading activities in their classrooms with their educators, the only difference is the consistency. Therefore, one can deduce that in both schools reading activities which were facilitated in classrooms differed regarding the methods they used to facilitate these activities.

#### ***5.3.5 Parents or home motivation to learn***

The home environment of the learners seems to have a good effect with regard to their scholastic performance. According to Phala and Hugo (2022:3), the environment in which the learners are reared and grow can adequately or inadequately affect their schooling and/or behaviour. Parents or members of a family need to be fully involved in the scholastic life of learners. When parents of the participant schools were interviewed, their views differed regarding the concept of reading:

Researcher: ***“Do you have books in your home for learners to read?”***

Sc.A P: *“Yes we have a variety of books in different genres for them to read at home.”*



Sc.B P *“There is a scarcity of books; sometimes they bring books, sometimes they rarely bring books.”*

Learners need to be motivated to learn from the home setting because some learners might not see the importance of learning if their parents and other members of the family do not motivate them. Mart (2019:79) explain that researchers have determined that reading literature is a process where learners must be motivated to read with the intention of comprehending the written text. Also, a home setting ought to motivate learners to perceive that reading ranks among the most important skills and is needed for further learning.

The School A sample responded with agreement that they got motivated on a regular basis at home to learn. In the contrast, some learners from School B explained that the level of motivation from home was minimal. This shows that even if the learners might have been in the same grade, their level of motivation that they received from their households or homes differed.

Table 5.2 illustrates the proceedings of the interviews of the learners from School A and School B.

**Table 5.2 Learners’ interview**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Sc. A L</b>	<b>Sc. B L</b>
<b>Availability of material</b>	Mostly available	Least available
<b>Frequency of reading activities</b>	Most frequently	Least frequently
<b>Communication of results</b>	Most frequently	Least frequently
<b>Library visit</b>	Mostly	At times
<b>Reading groups</b>	High availability	Low availability
<b>Home motivation</b>	Highly motivated	Low motivation

By looking at the responses of both samples from School A and School B, it is clear that the responses differed. The literal interview that was conducted on learners was as follows:

1. Researcher: *“Are the books sufficiently available for you to read in your respective classrooms?”*
2. School A learners all concurred: *“We have many books in our classroom and we read them during reading activities.”*
3. School B learners concurred: *“We do not have many books in our classroom, we sometimes share a book.”*

1. Researcher: ***“Do you have reading activities daily in your classroom?”***
2. School A learners all agreed that *“Every morning we go to the school library and also in our classroom we have reading activities daily.”*
3. School B learner 1 and learner 2 explained that *“We do not have reading activities every day, we only have reading activities during the reading assessments.”*

1. Researcher: ***“Do you and your teacher make communication regarding your reading assessment results?”***
2. School A learners 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 all agreed that *“Our teacher always inform us about the results and we make revision of every reading activity.”*
3. School B learners 4 and 5 explained that *“We usually receive the assessment report; there is no communication regarding the assessment results on reading.”*

1. Researcher: ***“Do you have reading groups in your classroom?”***
2. School A learners explained that *“There are reading groups in our classrooms and at times the groups attend the school library.”*
3. School B learners 1 and 3 explained that *“We do not have reading groups in our classroom.”*

1. Researcher: ***“Do your family members motivate you to read and attend libraries?”***
2. School A learners 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 explained that *“At home they buy books for us and on weekends they take us to libraries and allow us to visit libraries in the afternoons.”*
3. School B learners explained that *“At home we do our homework and there is not much motivation regarding reading.”*

By reviewing the responses sourced from interviews conducted with learners from both schools, in School B L1 learners mentioned that they did not visit the library to cultivate their reading skills, while on the other hand, learners from School A averred that they regularly visited their school library and local library. Such discrepancies might result in differing reading skills and comprehensions. Sc. B. L2 asserted that they were not encouraged and did not discuss reading skills at home, while learners from School A agreed that they were most encouraged at home about their reading skills. This denotes that the manner in which both samples approached the learning of reading was not identical.

With regard to having reading groups in their classrooms, the researcher was informed that some learners from School B did not have reading groups in their classrooms whereas learners from School A and some learners from School B mentioned that they have reading groups in their classrooms. The fact that some classes facilitated reading groups while other classes did not facilitate this method of creating reading groups might create disparities in learners' acquisition of language skills. Abu Abeeleh et al. (2021:6) explain that reading is a skill and is obviously one of the essential elements globally, especially when it comes to schooling and academic levels of the learners. There is rarely schooling or academic success without the acquisition of reading and literacy skills as a starting point.

In the case of this study, there was a deficiency in consistency when it came to imparting reading skills to the learners and, in the long-term, this factor might hinder their reading skills and knowledge. The Department of Education and Training in the State of Victoria in Australia (2021:8) maintains that being literate is beyond just the acquisition of knowledge and skills, but learners become confident and inspired and they use their skills across all the societal demands if they are literate. In order to develop the learners' self-efficacy with regard to reading, ample opportunities have to be created to learn and practise reading skills.

#### **5.4 Interviews with teachers**

Lapp et al. (2019:5) state that educators need to be knowledgeable about all the skills of teaching reading and use them to adapt their teaching methods. When educators are not well equipped with the necessary skills to teach reading, in most cases learners become illiterate. Olifant et al. (2020:75) stressed that educators must firstly accentuate adequate reading strategies and, secondly, update these strategies regularly to enhance learners' knowledge and skills of reading and learning.

The concept of lifelong learning denotes that educators must constantly be equipped with the necessary and relevant knowledge and skills. The teachers of language at the schools were also interviewed with regard to their perceptions in teaching and learning of reading in their schools. These teachers were selected because they taught the English language as a subject in Grade Five at their respective schools.

Their responses did not severely contrast one another. They did not show extreme discrepancies in any categories that were discussed. In the next sections, the interviews and responses of the educators are analysed.

##### ***5.4.1 Regular reading activities***

The language teacher selected from School B asserted: *“Every day I facilitate the reading activities with the learners,”* while the teacher at School A affirmed, *“Yes we read every day and at times we have a Drop and Read time of the day and to add we have a programme in our school where different groups of learners are taken to the library on different days.”* Findings from learners of School A and School B concerning their experiences of learning reading showed differences. Learners from School A show the use of a variety of strategies to improve the learners’ reading performances. Ameyaw and Anto (2018:1) explain that reading fluently is essential to knowledge acquisition, it depends on how the individual interprets the written text and reading is also a door to all knowledge and skills. The scholars elaborate that reading deficiency can impede the literacy skills of a learner even at tertiary level. It is therefore essential to use methods that can effectively and efficiently impart skills to learners, particularly those concerning reading knowledge.

With regard to the utilisation of various reading methods in their classrooms, both teachers from Schools A and B responded that they administer group guided, paired, individual and shared reading as methods of reading in the classrooms. The only difference is with the effectiveness of administering those reading activities as it appeared from their interviews that School A has a variety of strategies and programmes to administer reading to the learners of Grade Five.

#### ***5.4.2 Learners’ comprehension and strategies***

Educators evaluate the learners’ level of comprehension regularly and devise intervention strategies to improve the level of performances of their learners. Teachers at School A and School B responded that they devise strategies regarding the reading assessment results. Sc. A T 1 explained that, *“We support our learners in a variety of methods such as regular reading activities, Drop and Read programme and school library programme.”* On the other hand, Sc. B T 1 explained that, *“I usually allow them to read the text to comprehend the matter and ask questions to evaluate the level of comprehension.”* Teachers from School A and School B stated that they devise strategies to improve their learners’ learning performances, however, the strategies were not precisely the same between the schools.

#### ***5.4.3 Recording and communication of reading assessment results***

Every assessment conducted in schools has to be recorded and communicated to learners, then intervention strategies can be designed. The responses of the educators of School A and School B were similar in that they record the assessment results regularly after the reading assessments and they communicate results and implement intervention strategies, as explained in section 5.4.1 and 5.4.2

#### ***5.4.4 School library visit***

When the educators were interviewed regarding utilisation of the school library, they responded as follows. School A has a programme where learners are taken to the library to enhance their reading and language skills. They utilise this programme in the form of a cycle. The library at school B is seldom visited and is not conducive to functions of a library. School B needs to revamp the library and ensure that learners visit it on a regular basis. As mentioned by Mphahlele and Nel (2018:4) that educators can separate the learners with reading problems to another room with the aim of availing opportunities to practice reading. The utilisation of a school library is important as it bolsters the acquisition of language skills and knowledge in learners.

#### ***5.4.5 Reading groups as a strategy to enhance reading***

The two participant educators of School A and School B explained that they implemented the method of reading groups in their classes. This method of groups seems to not have been implemented effectively since some learners affirmed that there were no reading groups in their classes. Therefore, the educators will have to implement this strategy effectively so they can detect the deficiencies among their learners and implement strategies to improve reading and language skills.

#### ***5.4.6 Parents' motivation***

To involve parents in learners' learning is one of the innovative methods any teacher can utilise. Parents have the strength to motivate their learners, but they need to be kept up to date about their learners' learning. Both educators from School A and School B responded similarly to this question, stating that they inform the parents about the learners' learning. One educator from School B mentioned, *"I usually invite the parents to school to discuss the learner's performance."* The educator from School A mentioned that *"We sometimes have meeting with parents, sometimes we use emailing and phone calls to discuss the learners' learning performance."* The responses from both educators indicate that they are familiar with the concept of parental involvement, and they ensure that they implement this method. It only differed with the level at which it is facilitated. The brief discussion of educators during interviews is illustrated in the following table.

**Table 5.3 Interview of teachers**

<b>Category</b>	<b>T1. Sc. A</b>	<b>T1. Sc B</b>
<b>Classroom teaching of reading</b>	High frequency	Mild frequency
<b>Learners' comprehension</b>	High capacity	Mild capacity
<b>Recording and communication of result</b>	High frequency	Mild frequency
<b>School library visit</b>	High frequency	Mild frequency
<b>Reading groups</b>	High availability	Mild availability
<b>Parents' motivation</b>	High frequency	Mild frequent

## **5.5 Observation**

Taherdoost (2021:23) explains that observation is a method used to gather first -hand information while a researcher observes the behaviours and interactions of participants. One of the methods that the researcher utilised during the data gathering in the two schools in the Ekurhuleni District was observation and involved the researcher observing the participant learners during their reading sessions. Two samples of five learners each were given the opportunity to read books with the aim of observing their ability to read. According to Biesman-Simons et al. (2021:3), learning to read is complex and determining how learners acquire the skill of reading requires the review of research that shows the methods of teaching reading. As mentioned, one of the aims of the research was to explore and identify the possible strategies that elevate the reading performance of learners. The concept of observation is discussed in various themes in the next sections.

### **5.5.1 Level of comprehension**

As explained by Mulcahy et al. (2019:3), the effect of reading problems affects all the subjects since reading is essential to learn all the subjects in the curriculum. When learners have a deficiency in comprehending written text, there is a probability that this lack of comprehension might hinder their learning performance in other subjects in their schooling age. It is therefore important that learners are skilled to comprehend written text as they read. The researcher's observation during the reading session did not detect enormous differences between the learners of School A and School B. Both samples showed differing levels of comprehension. As they articulated the texts, they generated meaning in differing levels. The researcher allowed the learners to read, then the researcher began to ask questions based on the read text. The two samples depicted mild discrepancies in their level of comprehension. This was revealed when they were asked questions based on the material that they were reading. School A had an adequate level of comprehension with very fluent and expressive

answers, while learners from School B struggled to respond to some of the questions. Only Learners 3 and 4 from School B had fluent answers, while the sample from School A all had fluent answers.

The researcher detected some discrepancies in School B's reading comprehension, while School A was outperforming in their reading comprehension. Wutthisingchai and Stopps (2018:34) explain that a very low percentage of learners possess optimum reading skills, and this deficit negatively affects their being literate. This creates a challenge for teachers to redesign their methods of teaching reading in an efficient and effective manner. All learners in a grade must be able to fluently comprehend written text as they ought to acquire reading skills in the same way as others.

### ***5.5.2 Level of fluency***

Fluent reading is one element of being literate when it comes to interaction with text. Spaul (2016:4) states that the ability to read aloud with speed, accuracy, and expression what is called 'oral reading fluency'- and is one of the building blocks of early reading instruction. Fluent reading signifies the highest level of comprehension and certainty of learners. As they read fluently, there is assurance that they possess optimal reading skills and therefore comprehension. Mulcahy et al (2019:3) aver that components that are very important to develop reading skills are phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, comprehension, vocabulary, and writing. When learners have all the components of reading skill, they can be declared as skilled readers, then their efficacy is ensured and leads to scholastic and academic success.

When the participant learners were observed for fluency, those from School A were fluent as they demonstrated the ability to read at the same pace without staggering. On the other hand, the sample from School B also depicted some level of fluency but, out of five learners, only three had absolute fluency and at least two of them had mild staggering during reading. Fluency with a mild staggering was detected in learners from the School B sample. This places a challenge to the teachers to make more effort in skilling learners to read fluently since fluency is one of the components of being a skilled reader.

### ***5.5.3 Motivation to read***

Mart (2019:79) explains that it has been determined that reading literature is an exploration in which readers must be emotionally motivated to read with the intention of constructing the meaning. Any reader cannot construct meaning on a written text if they have a deficiency in reading. When a learner is unmotivated to read, they can read several paragraphs and become demoralised and, consequently, abandon the text incomplete and the result is they are unable to construct meaning. It is of utmost importance for a learner to be motivated to read from both the school and home settings. When the

Grade Five learners from School A and School B were observed by the researcher, they were, to a certain extent, motivated. While learners from School A showed an adequate level of motivation, those from School B did not show adequate levels of motivation, rather, they were not confident and did not exhibit fluent reading, as shown in section 5.3.1, 5.2.2, and 5.3.3. It is evident that some participants from the sample were not motivated adequately to read.

Being unmotivated to read is affiliated with a societal crisis such as illiteracy, dropping out from school and unsuccessful career development. It is the task of the educators to infuse this passion and motivation of reading and learning to learners. This implies that educators ought to devise programmes aimed to bolster the passion and motivation of their learners.

Learners who are not motivated to learn are more inclined to view reading and learning as an unimportant aspect of life. Therefore, learners have to be motivated in a variety of ways, so they do not generate an illiterate society. Baulo and Nabua (2019:1) maintain that if a learner is ready for connection, learning is enhanced, if not, learning is inhibited. One must assume that being ready and motivated to read and learn are interlinked for any successful scholastic and academic efficacy.

#### ***5.5.4 Active involvement***

During the observation process, the sample from School A and School B depicted identical levels of participation on the reading activity. Both samples endeavoured to dedicate their concentration and attention to the reading activity. Yet there were minor variances between the two samples in terms of their reading performances as it is shown in sections 5.4.1 and 5.4.2. All in all, the learners from School A and School B portrayed identical levels with regard to active involvement during the reading activity, which shows that the learners do have the capacity to read they only need to be adequately skilled in this regard. When looking at the causative factors of reading discrepancies in this study one can determine that the deficit of active involvement of learners during any reading and learning activity might contribute to reading problems.

#### ***5.5.5 Learning environment***

Any learning environment has to be conducive to the concept of learning. There has to be sufficient learning and reading material and the walls have to be print rich. Abdulatief et al. (2018:4) state that the whole language approach requires a vast array of books and print rich classrooms. While learners can possess the capacity to read and learn, if there is a lack of reading and learning resources, their reading and learning performance can be impeded. The acquisition of language knowledge and skills has to be complemented by a vast availability of relevant resources. One can deduce that the availability of resources is one of the strategies that can eliminate the decline in levels of literacy in



any learning environment. During the observation of School A and School B, both samples' learning environments were equipped with the reading material and were conducive to administer the learning process, yet the degree of availability of reading material varied from one sample to the other.

The learning environment of School A was adequately favourable in the sense that reading and learning material was available and the walls were adequately pasted with a variety of resources for reading and learning. In contrast, the learning environment of School B was conducive but not adequately conducive in the sense that there was not a variety of reading material and the walls were sparsely pasted with the resources. This implies that the learning environment of School B has to be equipped with a vast array of reading and learning material in order to bolster the learning and reading performance of the learners.

Learning efficacy for learners can be elevated by establishing the learning environment that adequately supports learning. Therefore, learners' efficacy and adequate environment are intertwined when learning performance has to be bolstered. Below is a brief illustration of the observations conducted by the researcher. In this table, the researcher briefly illustrates and analyses the data that were generated during the observation of learners when they were engaged in a reading activity.

**Table 5.4 Observation analysis**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Sc. A</b>	<b>Sc. B</b>
<b>Comprehension acquisition</b>	Mostly acquired	Mildly acquired
<b>Fluency</b>	Mostly depicted	Least depicted
<b>Motivation to read</b>	Mostly motivated	Mostly motivated
<b>Active involvement</b>	Mostly involved	Mostly involved
<b>Learning environment</b>	Mostly conducive	Mildly conducive

Apart from using an observation template, the researcher utilised a checklist, among strategies that were adopted to facilitate observations. Simister (2017:1) states that the process of observation is recorded through the use of a predetermined checklist and is referred to as structured observation. The type of checklist used for that purpose is also known as direct observation and comprises a list of items that contribute information that the researcher needs based on the research phenomenon. Utilising the checklist as a strategy of observation, the researcher acquired a lot of information and perceptions from the samples from School A and School B.

The checklist that the researcher utilised had a list of items that, if responded to correctly, would contribute adequately to the research topic. Consequently, the researcher acquired a vast amount of

information during the observation, aided by the use of the checklist. Apart from the checklist, the researcher implemented the observation strategy commonly known as the field notes document where all randomly observed occurrences were jotted down.

According to Lester et al. (2020:99), in a qualitative study, various methods are implemented, and these include interview documents, observation templates, checklist templates, fieldnotes, etcetera. Since the researcher varied the instruments of observation, this denotes that the data were vast, reliable, and trustworthy. In a fieldnote, the researcher gathered all the data that were not predetermined before the commencement of the data generating process. Data that were generated through using a fieldnote relate to and contribute to the research study. All in all, observation, questionnaires, and interviews used as a triangulation method generated the data that were required by the researcher.

## **5.6 Summary**

In this study, the researcher used qualitative methods to acquire information from participants. There is no single instrument that can be used to generate data in a qualitative study and that leads to the generating of data that is fragmented and requires a researcher to analyse and merge this information into solid findings.

The researcher generated data through various methods to form the findings of this dissertation. As a researcher, it was my task to inspect, filter, transform, and model data with the aim of determining important information that is interlinked with the research phenomenon. In this chapter, the researcher ensured that he mentioned that he visited two schools in the Ekurhuleni District with the aim of exploring their reading performances. The researcher utilised data generating methods such as interviews, observation, questionnaires to gather information and perceptions about the research phenomenon. The methods used to generate the data are attached in the appendices section.

The schools that participated in the research were in the Ekurhuleni District and therefore they were the target population, and the samples selected were two primary schools within the district. The samples, as has been mentioned in previous sections, were selected by means of a purposive sample method. This implies that the samples were envisaged to have accurate knowledge, perceptions, and understanding regarding the research phenomenon being studied. These samples were nonprobability since the data that were generated were intertwined with the population. Therefore, the samples were adequate for the research since they were members of the schools and had knowledge and perceptions that were of interest to the study.

As the procedure, the researcher underwent all the necessary phases to acquire permission to generate data in the schools, from getting permission from the University of South Africa, acquiring ethics clearance from the Gauteng Department of Education, acquiring permission from the Ekurhuleni District to conduct research in the schools to getting permission from the SMTs of the schools. The researcher also ensured that he provided the teachers and parents with consent forms, and gave assent forms to learners so they could participate in the data generating process. Participants were not compelled to participate in the study and they were informed that should they not feel comfortable about other issues of the research, they would be permitted to immediately exit the research process.

Both schools showed that they were functional, with learners who were dedicated. Findings of the study revealed some discrepancies that were identified by the researcher during the data generating processes. The structured interviews used by the researcher comprised a set of predetermined questions that the participants needed to respond to. The questions for School A and School B were the same, yet the participants were allowed to extend their responses should they wished to do so. The utilisation of closed and semi-closed questions resulted in the researcher acquiring extensive information with regard to the research phenomenon.

The schools' samples were presentable and cooperated adequately with the research process. School B, as compared to School A, had some deficiencies with regard to reading and learning. Such discrepancies were not severe and could be eliminated following the recommendations that the researcher identifies in the next chapter. Some factors affecting these discrepancies were linked with the operation of the school and educators' methods of teaching. All in all, both samples were literate and demonstrated that they were Grade Five learners. One must keep it in mind that the samples were selected purposively using the purposive sampling method. There were only minor variables that the schools had to change so their learning and reading performance would be elevated to the highest levels as expected by the Department of Education. In the next chapter, the researcher extensively discusses the findings and recommendations that the schools must utilise for the aim of reading and learning efficacy of the learners.

## **Chapter 6**

### **Findings, Recommendations, and Conclusion**

#### **6.1 Introduction**

In the previous chapter, the researcher described how data were gathered as well as how the findings were described. In the chapter, he explained each of the methods that he utilised, particularly regarding how he strategised the codes, categories, and the themes. As mentioned by Lester et al. (2020:98), the importance of designing data analysis is that it provides a comprehensible structure especially for a researcher conducting a qualitative study and the reader. Utilising data analysis made it possible for the researcher to transcribe the research findings and as well as allowing the reader to acquire an insight into the research phenomenon. The results that were found during the generating of data were merged into constructive findings.

As explained by Shava, Tlou, Hleza and Shonhiwa (2021:553), qualitative data analysis focuses on classifying texted or verbalised segments into definable categories of identical patterns. In this study, the researcher utilised the triangulation of observation, interviews and questionnaires. These three data generating instruments were structured, which denotes that they followed a predetermined set of questions that were to be answered by the participants. The interviewer attained the verbalised information while the questionnaires extracted the texted perceptions of the participants and the observation as a data generating method acquired observed data. All data were transcribed and analysed through the utilisation of thematic analysis. Roller (2020:2) states that the researcher has to be abreast of the study phenomenon and endeavour to create codes, categories, and themes in order to acquire meaning and the integrity of the research results.

During the process of generating data in this study, the results of the schools had some discrepancies with regard to varying variables. For example, School A and School B both made a contribution to the study but it was determined that School B still needed to improve the designs and methods that they utilised with regard to the teaching and learning of reading. Such methods include that used by educators, availability of libraries, availability of reading materials, etcetera. As explained by Casteel and Bridier (2021:341), findings determine the entities' differences and/or similarities, and these results are then accorded to the population being represented by the samples. As explained in the previous chapter, the tables illustrated that there was improvement that ought to be implemented in the schools in the Ekurhuleni District. As the main question of the study entailed, there was a contrast in reading by the learners in Grade Five in the Ekurhuleni District samples that were selected by a non-random method. They were of interest to the researcher as the participants had perceptions and

experiences regarding the research phenomenon. The data were generated in fragments as a variety of instruments - interviews, questionnaires, observation (checklist, fieldnotes etc) – were utilised. All the data were then merged into constructive findings of the study being transcribed by the researcher.

## **6.2 Summary of the findings**

According to Henriques and Madeira (2017:2489), the philosophy of “school for all” has been broadly and empirically implemented; yet, it remains the task of the schools to normalise, elevate and ensure that every learner acquires similar knowledge and skills in that schooling year while utilising similar teaching methods. With regard to the availability of literacy material, the researcher identified that this concept was uneven. School B had a mild deficit in the availability of reading material. Learners had access to limited number of books, charts, posters, etcetera. The shortage of literacy material might contribute to the inadequate acquisition of reading and learning skills. One must keep it in mind that learners have to be allowed access to an ample and vast capacity of material and opportunities to facilitate their reading performance. No learner can reach his or her efficacy without being equipped with relevant material. School A showed that there was ample and vast availability of material which manifested in their adequate skills and knowledge of literacy.

School A, according to the research findings, used opportunities to teach reading on most frequent occasions as compared to School B. They had several periods in each school day for teaching and learning of reading and they facilitated programmes for learners to access the school library. School B, in contrast, seemed to be using reading periods in an uneven pattern and the library was not conducive and not effectively utilised by the learners to elevate their acquisition of language skills and knowledge. Such problems might be derived from factors such as overcrowding and unconducive classrooms for learning.

It is important to inform learners about their learning results. For every reading assessment, learners must be informed of their reading assessment results. School A has the most frequent programmes of giving results to learner and this approach leads to a situation where strategies are implemented immediately so that learners who are experiencing difficulties in acquiring reading skills and knowledge can benefit. School B informs the learners in terms of reading assessment results but, based on the interviews, it seemed it was not as frequent, which denotes that some learners are largely uninformed, and the school has no immediate interventions that are implemented.

One can make inferences that learning does not start and end at the school; visiting and reading literacy sources at a public library can improve the knowledge and skills of a learner in any subject. In this regard, based on the process of generating data, learners from School A concurred that they

visit libraries to bolster their skills and knowledge. Such learners visit the libraries either in the afternoons or during the weekends. In contrast, learners from School B revealed that only some of them utilise the concept of library visits. Some learners spend their afternoons and weekends doing other activities. Therefore, not all learners from School B visit the library frequently and it can be assumed that visiting of a library might be a contributing factor to the contrasting reading and learning performance.

Every learner needs motivation at home for them to elevate their academic performance. Based on the data received, it can be seen that learners from School A, categorised as a private school, are extensively motivated from the home setting to take their schooling seriously. School B was categorised as a public school and the learners received mild motivations from their homes to take their schooling seriously. Some learners asserted that they were motivated from home, but some explained that they were rarely motivated by their families. Such problems might arise from dissimilar family structures and various variables that happened from the home or the community.

Educators of the schools also had their perceptions concerning the teaching and learning of reading. With regards to classroom teaching of reading, the researcher identified that the participants from School A concurred that the reading activities are most frequently utilised across all classrooms of School A. This indicated that reading activities and opportunities to access reading material occurred most frequently in School A. In contrast, reading activities in School B occurred, but not extensively and efficiently. The Sc. B T confirmed that the reading activities are facilitated in their school during a regular timetabled period. The utilisation of various methods of teaching reading was uneven from School A to School B. The learners concurred with School A educator that almost all the methods such as independent, group guided, paired and shared reading were facilitated, thus making it evident that all methods were utilised and therefore this data is reliable and valid. Methods used to facilitate reading at School B seemed incomplete. For instance, group guided reading was facilitated in School B, but this was a rare occurrence. Some learners explained that they had groups in their classes, but during interviews and interactions, some assured the researcher that they did not have groups. One must keep it mind that groups are very effective to identify learner who need assistance and immediate intervention rather than the whole class approach.

Every school need a conducive and functional library for learners to improve their ability with regard to reading and learning. School A learners and educator responded similarly regarding the availability of a library in their school. They concurred that the school library was utilised most frequently and efficiently by the learners. That is, the library at School A was conducive and well functional to accommodate the school's learners. In contrast, the library at School B needs to be well equipped in

order to be beneficial and functional. Based on the interviews and questionnaires, the library at School B was not utilised frequently as a method to elevate the learners' learning efficacy. Taken from the literature in the previous chapters of this study, it is evident that effective utilisation of school libraries can make a noticeable improvement in the learners' scholastic performances.

Based on the interviews, both schools explained that they encourage parental involvement, although the methods implemented to facilitate this concept varied from School A to School B. While School A applies almost all the methods, for instance, parents' meetings, emailing systems, SMSing, telephonic communication, school diaries and such methods, the other school seemed to omit some of these methods which are needed to communicate with the guardians of the learners. Some parents seemed unmotivated to be involved in matters concerning the learners' schooling. Some parents, based on the varying methods of motivation, were involved in the matters of learners' learning. When a parent is motivated, consequently their learner child tends to be motivated to take their schooling seriously.

To sum up, the data that were generated in the two schools in the Ekurhuleni District revealed that the schools, educators, and learners are scholastically capable but mild implementations need to be administered in order for the entire learner population to reach their learning efficacy adequately.

### **6.3 Recommendations**

Dawit (2020:23) describes recommendations as that part of a report in a study where the researcher suggests strategies that can be implemented. Also, recommendations can include a series of opinions that claim to elevate the research phenomenon. Therefore, this section discusses extensively strategies that the schools in the Ekurhuleni District can utilise to elevate the reading and learning performances of their learners. Based on the findings, the researcher has recommended the factors that, if they are effectively utilised, the reading and learning performance of learners can be elevated. Roller (2020:3) asserts that the researcher should keep the generated data during the process in mind when the results are analysed and when the findings and recommendations are reported.

#### ***6.3.1 Availability of literacy material***

According to Kongo, Ngao, Rop and Nyongesa (2015:135), schools that are well equipped with a vast quantity of literacy material manifest good scholastic performance as compared to schools that are sparsely equipped. This denotes that the SMTs of the schools in the Ekurhuleni District must ensure that there is ample material for learners to access and interact with. The availability of vast literacy material is believed to be one of the most efficient ways to elevate the learners' efficacy in any given subject at a particular school. As mentioned by Smith et al. (2021:891), reading efficacy is

improved by utilising a series of developmentally levelled reading materials that are of varying levels of complexity. This denotes that there must be many books which vary in their level. Okongo, Ngao, Rop and Nyongesa (2015:134) further explain that to administer efficient teaching and learning, books and learning resources are considered as components that are vital, and their unavailability results in teachers conducting their teaching in an inadequate manner. Teaching and learning are thwarted when there is a deficiency of reading and learning materials and that results in poor scholastic performances of the learners. At classroom level, there has to be no hindrances when books are selected by the teacher to facilitate their reading activities through vast amounts of books to choose from. It is suggested by UNICEF (2022:18) that schools must form committees that will determine gaps and deficiencies in learners' reading performances and address such issues. There must be persons at school level, selected across all the grades, to ensure that regular reading occurs, and progress is recorded in a visible and evident manner. One can deduce that the establishment of such committees will develop the reading and learning efficacy of learners in any school. Wood, Clark, Teravainen-Goff, Rudkin and Vardy (2020:3) further explain that devising reading activities can motivate learners with regard to books in a way that will develop their reading and writing. One must keep it mind that a reading skill is indispensable across all curriculum subjects as well as academically. Therefore, the more books that are available, the more books must be used.

To sum up, schools with a shortage of reading and learning materials must ensure that there is optimal quantity and quality of books that are readily available for learners to frequently use. To achieve this the SMT, reading and literacy committees and educators must ensure that they regularly table such issues and submit their requests to their District offices to ensure the adequate availability of reading and learning materials.

### ***6.3.2 Classroom activities of reading***

Walker (2020:22) explains that educators must adapt instructional methods and classroom designs to align the types of learners they serve. The schools must design activities that precisely meet the learners' levels of needs. It is therefore the educators' task to have good insight into their learners' needs and begin to design appropriate activities. According to Almutairi (2018:1), learners need reading skills to reach the learning outcomes, and these skills are mostly acquired in the classroom environment,

Almutairi (2018:5) further states that (i) educators must identify the most adequate methods (ii) Learners' most learning efficacy is developed during classroom lessons. It is the task of educators to create vast opportunities for learning reading in their classrooms. To ensure this, the educator must determine the best instructional methods, resources, and interventions. This denotes that schools must



make classroom activities more frequent and constant across grades' classrooms. There must not be an unevenness in teaching reading; all classrooms must experience frequent and constant learning of reading evenly. Educators must devise reading groups in their classrooms; this method has been detected by most scholars to be effective when it comes to comprehension and fluency. As mentioned by Smith et al. (2021:891), classrooms that focus on comprehension and fluency mostly utilise group methods to reach their outcomes optimally. Grouping learners into reading groups enables the educator to detect struggling learners and adapt strategies to elevate their performances. Every classroom must have reading groups grouped according to their levels of performance, which makes it possible for educators to elevate all the learners' learning and reading performances.

UNICEF (2022:21) states that schools must adapt classroom instructions through new innovative methods which are determined to accelerate learning. It further mentions methods such as targeted instruction which entails grouping learners based on their learning performance and focusing on that targeted group to elevate and improve their reading and learning performance. It is therefore important to vary the methods of teaching reading in classrooms to ensure that learning is bolstered and elevated. One can deduce that classroom activities are the most effective settings that are necessary for most learners if the acquisition of reading and learning skills is the purpose. Therefore, educators must allow vast and ample opportunities for learners to engage in reading and learning activities.

Most of all, classrooms should be conducive to learning, this means that classrooms must be attractive and encourage the learners' motivation to learn. As explained by Kongo et al. (2015:135), learning efficacy is developed when there is proper quantity and quality of reading and learning material and that unattractive school buildings, and non-aesthetic and overcrowded classrooms can contribute to preventing the acquisition of optimal efficacy in learners. In learning classrooms, there should be neatly packed bookshelves, reading corners, and print-rich walls, all neatly arranged. By so doing, researchers believe that learners' motivation to learn to read and read to learn would be elevated to the extent that all learners will reach their learning and reading efficacy. All in all, when the classroom is untidy and not well arranged in terms of resources, learners become discouraged from fully participating in any lesson and, consequently, their performance is hindered.

### ***6.3.3 Public and school libraries***

Libraries are said to be very effective when learners must fully acquire their reading and learning skills and knowledge. Jamadar (2022:216) mentions that learners' reading skills are important for their scholastic success and such skills can be acquired by enabling learners to visit libraries regularly.

One must keep it in mind that learners have access to two types of libraries, that is, school libraries and public libraries. In the next section, the researcher discusses these two types of libraries.

### *6.3.3.1 School library*

According to Kirkland (2020:1), the core objective of the school library is to develop the readers and their reading and learning performance. It is the task of every school to ensure that there is at least one library that is functional and well-resourced for learners to develop and elevate their literacy skills and knowledge. Okongo et al. (2015:134) aver that the deficiency of textbooks and libraries can hinder the education of learners from replying more fully to learners' scholastic needs. All learners can reach their potential but that is mostly determined by the availability of facilities such as libraries at the school level. As mentioned by Wood et al. (2020:2), school libraries are essential not only for learners' acquisition of reading skills but also for fascination, motivation, reading fluency, and writing skills. The library as the school's entity is imperative for various components that are necessary to develop the learners' skills and knowledge.

Jamadar (2022:215) suggests the aims of school libraries, are to:

- (i) provide documents for pupils and teachers;
- (ii) elevate and promote reading;
- (iii) encourage research and study from many information sources;
- (iv) emphasise the pedagogical principles of self-education for further individuals.

Looking at aims three and four, one can assume that the availability of libraries in schools does contribute to improving the academic capabilities of learners so they can be lifelong researchers and scholars. Referring to the data that were generated from the schools in the Ekurhuleni District, it is determined that some schools do not utilise their libraries effectively or the libraries are barely functional. It is recommended that schools begin to take the concept of the school library seriously as it is a catalyst in building the learners' scholastic and academic progress. Librarians and educators within the school must work interactively in utilising libraries to help learners reach higher levels of reading and learning.

Nalisa, Chataa and Maermeko (2019:33) in their study mention that the deficiency of libraries and such facilities in a school contributes to reading difficulties among learners. The functionality of the school library is a method that needs urgent attention if the purpose is to reach optimal levels of literacy. Such libraries must be equipped with books and electronic materials for learners to explore and acquire adequate knowledge and skills. Ampofu (2019:27) notes that educators must devise programmes such as guidance, tasks, materials, and library programmes. As mentioned in the

previous sections, every school must have a programme that ensures that libraries are utilised to the best level. The schools must have committees to facilitate such programmes ensuring that learners' efficacies are reached evenly across the learner population of the school.

Research has identified that it is mostly female learners who are more motivated to visit and utilise libraries than male learners. As explained by Mwoma (2017:349), female learners read a variety of materials and utilise libraries more frequently than male learners. This shows that there is unevenness when it comes to motivation to read and utilise libraries. It is the schools' task to ensure that both genders are encouraged and motivated to utilise libraries through the programmes that can be devised by schools. Such learners should be introduced to the concept of a library from the beginning of the school year. Ameyaw and Anto (2018:10) maintain that the shortage of libraries, qualified librarians, books, and motivation from teachers are the most contributing factors to the inadequate reading performances of learners. The library cannot function in isolation, there must be skilled or qualified persons to facilitate such services. Such a person must work interactively with the committee and educators to facilitate such programmes which are aimed at elevating the reading and learning performances of the learners.

Kayuni (2017:57) explains that libraries are very important in developing reading skills, but some libraries are non-functional, or they do not serve as expected. Most schools have libraries, but such libraries are not utilised fully. Based on the interviews and observation, some schools need to redesign their libraries and rely on them as the schools' entities that will contribute to the acquisition of literacy skills and knowledge. As mentioned by Oyewole (2017:95), libraries assist learners in developing the necessary critical and creative thinking through a broad utilisation of resources accessible in the library. It is therefore evident that creating vast opportunities for learners to interact with the library would develop their critical and creative thinking which will then produce researchers and scholars at an early stage. Therefore, the school must ensure that the libraries are functional and utilised effectively and efficiently.

#### *6.3.3.2 Public libraries*

As explained by Jamadar (2022:216), public libraries have age-appropriate materials based on intense subjects such as maths and science in such a way that when the learner is motivated at an early stage the passion and interest in such subjects will be bolstered instead of being discouraged. Any learner has one or two subjects that he or she is fearful of. Researchers have determined that learners who take library visits as one of their hobbies find it easy to learn any subject without being scared. Learners must be encouraged from home or school settings to visit their public libraries frequently. The knowledge acquired in the public library is additional to what is learned during the normal

classroom routines and the learner absorbs vast knowledge of the subject matter. Mwoma (2017:351) notes that parents and educators are required to motivate learners to visit public libraries to develop their reading and learning ability. Parents must be alerted to the importance of encouraging learners to visit the public library in an orderly fashion, and this must be transmitted by the school through various forms of gatherings and communications.

The public libraries must be equipped with all the necessary literacy resources and subject materials; this equipment must be able to accommodate all age groups from the childhood stage to the academic stage. As mentioned by Kayuni (2017:56), an effort should be made by various stakeholders and educational systems to promote reading and the first initiative to achieve that is by equipping public libraries. A library cannot serve its purpose without being equipped with the relevant resources. Therefore, stakeholders, including other affluent persons must be urged to support the equipping of libraries and such resources must be kept safe. Based on the interviews and questionnaires in this study, the findings suggest that there is still a strong need for learners and parents to be motivated regarding the concept of public libraries.

According to Oyewole (2017:99), professional librarians in both public and school libraries must be employed to ensure adequate service within the libraries. Such persons are skilled and knowledgeable, and they have innovative ideas concerning the programmes that might be implemented within the library to bolster the reading and learning efficacies of the learners and/or users. NEPS (2019:22) have suggested the five factors that must be ensured in order for reading and learning skills to be improved.

- (i) A classroom library with approximately fifteen books per learner.
- (ii) A well-stocked school library.
- (iii) Public libraries stocked with up-to-date books that lure learners and adults.
- (iv) Encourage active participation in the public libraries.
- (v) Offer a range of books at different levels of complexity.

Looking at points (iii) to (v) it is not surprising that public libraries are indispensable and make an important contribution when the aim is to elevate the learning and reading ability of all learners. Researchers have determined that a lower percentage of learners and societies at large are oriented to utilise public libraries in order to develop literacy, scholastic and academic performance. It turns out to be the schools' task to infuse this trend to the learners and the parents as the members of the society. As mentioned by Jamadar (2022:215), when learners are motivated to use libraries, the passion of reading will be developed. Such libraries must be well equipped with digital and printed media to

accommodate the varying needs of those who visit them. One can deduce and recommend that the learners must be informed and encouraged to visit their community libraries for them to not only develop their reading skills but also to administer other subjects' activities.

Torres (2019:21) explains that parents who read to their learners, take them to public libraries and buy books for them as gifts, stimulate the importance of reading. Some learners learn by observing others, so parents have to be encouraged to depict the passion of reading in various ways, one of which is to take a learner to the public library or encourage them to visit a library more frequently. Reading and learning is a phenomenon that involves various spheres of the learner's life, and the home setting has a role to play in this regard. Learners learn through observation according to social learning theory as it appears in Chapter 2 of this study. When parents show a passion for literacy and are readers, then the learners will develop passion and believe that reading is an important habit in life.

#### **6.4 Communication of results**

Learners must be informed of their assessment results so they can adapt their approach to reading and learning. Rivera, Todd and Oliveri (2021:326) explain that to disseminate adequate results, it should be aligned with the learning outcomes of the assessment. In this instance, the learners must be informed precisely of areas in which their performances are not satisfactory and of what they ought to have done on that assessment. Such an approach alerts learners to have better knowledge of their weaknesses and they tend to strive to do better in the next sessions. If they are not informed, they rarely know the concepts to improve on and how. Similarly, learners who perform optimally in the classroom assessments must be informed of their good performance and also be informed of the concepts that still need to be improved. Locklear (2020:6) explains that Bandura's social learning theory believes that being human is the product of constant interaction with the environment. This denotes that educators can redesign the learners' scholastic life through the way they interact with learners on a day-to-day basis. The aim of communicating must not be that learners humiliate or degrade their self-concept; but it must be to redirect them to desirable outcomes.

The aim of communication of assessment results is to determine the strengths and weaknesses, which result in elevated assessment results for the school and the learners. As explained by Al-Tayib Umar (2018:15), feedback helps learners to improve their sense of self-reliance and self-monitoring while ensuring self-corrections. Giving feedback to learners makes them aware as to where and how they can adapt and modify their manner of approach towards their learning. It is therefore imperative that educators from time to time give feedback to the learners. Assessment feedback is aimed at avoiding

wasting time with regard to making corrections on learners' mistakes. Assessment feedback is also useful to help the teachers to adapt their instructional methods to improve learners' reading and learning performance.

Tosuncuoglu (2018:164) states that the dissemination of assessment results to the learners can develop the way they acquire the subject matter. The educator ought to give feedback to learners and also provide the best ways to answer such questions. This will help learners to write very accurate answers in the forthcoming assessment. He further suggests the five principles of assessment, that are:

(a) Assessment positively influences what and how teachers teach and how learners learn.

The nature of assessment will regulate what to be taught and to be learned.

(b) Assessments suggest that learners must have a chance to prepare.

The educator must announce the assessment several days before the actual date of the assessment so that the learners will have sufficient period to get themselves ready for such assessments.

(c) Give learners feedback so to evaluate language achievement.

By giving feedback, the achievement of the learners is evaluated, and necessary interventions must commence immediately.

(d) Assessment provides conditions for peak performance by the learners.

After disseminating assessment results, an educator should provide the possible and best strategies to rectify the learning poor performances.

Similarly, Yambi (2020:2) mentions the four basic components of assessment feedback, that is:

(i) Measuring improvement over time.

(ii) Motivating learners to study.

(iii) Evaluating the teaching methods.

(iv) Ranking the learners' capabilities concerning the whole group evaluation.

The educators must utilise this concept of communicating feedback to both learners and parents as it contributes to elevating the scholastic performance of the learners. Learners become ignorant about their learning performance if the feedback is not communicated and the perception of their teacher regarding their performance is thwarted. Mostly on the concept of reading skills, the learner must be informed whether he practises this skill according to the expectations or there are still some aspects of reading that he needs to correct. If he is not informed of his performance, he will assume that he is doing the task of reading accurately and properly. Based on the data that were generated in this study,

it was determined that feedback was done but not as effectively and efficiently as it should be conducted. This concept of communicating the assessment results must be taken seriously and be conducted most frequently by educators.

Giving feedback is entirely the task of the subject teacher and this task also affects his or her ways of administering the instructional methods. As Green, Garcia-Milan and Lucendo-Noreiga (2022:16) mention, educators acquire the opportunity to redesign their instructional methods based on the feedback. In this sense, the educator will identify the effectiveness of teaching methods on a daily basis. Teachers must also comprehend the results, whether desired or undesired, so that they will consider new methods of instructions that would alleviate the gaps that the learners might be experiencing. This means that an educator must have the objectives on their planning and focus on whether the objectives and desirable outcomes have been fulfilled or not.

Assessing learners constantly regarding their level implies that feedback that they attain is a determining factor that motivates them to match themselves with other learners. Communicating assessment results enables learners to better monitor their scholastic performance and begin to adapt their learning behaviour. It is therefore recommended that schools ensure that learners are informed of their assessment results and utilise necessary strategies that must be implemented to improve their scholastic performance.

## **6.5 Parental motivation**

Parental involvement is one element that is essential when learners' scholastic performance must be modified. Parents play an important role in learners' education as they can motivate learners towards their learning. Green et al. (2022:10) mention that the interaction between school and parents regarding learners' scholastic issues will elevate the learners' learning performance. Scholastically, learners are guided by parents and communities through their involvement and contribution to the learners' schooling. Based on the social learning theory, the home setting can contribute towards learners' learning development through modelling the passion and interest on reading and learning.

Children are reared in varying situations and such situations have positive or negative effects on the schooling of the learner. As Phala and Hugo (2022:3) mention, the parent must be willing to assist the learner in his acquisition of reading skills and parents have a role in motivating learners concerning their reading and learning behaviour. Schools have the task of having constant communication with parents in different modes to remind them to encourage and model the desired behaviour regarding learning. Parents have to be kept abreast of how to assist learners in their scholastic activities. One must keep it in mind that the contemporary curriculum differs slightly as

juxtaposed with ancient ones. The educators must arrange gatherings with parents and inform them about how to assist the learners regarding a particular subject concept. As mentioned by Almutairi (2018:17), it is essential to inform the parents of strategies they might utilise to improve the learners' schooling performance.

Based on the data generated in this study, the researcher determined that the interaction between School B and the parents seldom occurred. It is therefore recommended that the schools must utilise the concept of parental involvement as it is one of the elements that contributes to the learners' scholastic development. Teachers must ensure there is an atmosphere of rapport between themselves and the parents. Researchers have determined that some educators are difficult to parents and such educators are unapproachable. As explained by Sapungan and Sapungan (2014:44), the main challenge that hinder parents from being actively involved in their learners' scholastic issues is the teachers' manners towards the parents. Some parents feel inferior when approaching the teacher who is not kind to them. They sometimes feel that it is wrong to contact or approach the teacher in the first place. Educators have to be orientated in terms of the interpersonal skills that they have to show when interacting with learners' parents. Below is the table that illustrates benefits that are attained through the concept of parental involvement.

**Table 6.1 The importance of parental involvement (Sapungan & Sapungan, 2014:46)**

<b>Learners' benefit</b>	<b>Parents' benefit</b>	<b>Educators' benefits</b>	<b>Schools' benefit</b>
Better scholastic achievement	Inclined interaction and discussion with learners	Higher morale	Better reputation
Better school attendance	More confident	Earn respect	Better community support
Motivated to complete homework	More affection and less punishment	Improved communication	
Developed self-concept and self-esteem	Understanding of the operation of the school	Knowledge of different families	Higher quality programmes
Declined punitive measures	Willing to assist the learner	Inclination in job satisfaction	
Reduces special needs learners and remedial classes	Knowledgeability regarding the school policies		
Lower dropout rate	Become abreast of the schools' occurrences		



Various factors revolve around the concept of parental involvement, but the most important factor is an improvement of learners' scholastic performance. It is therefore recommended that this concept of parental involvement be taken as indispensable when scholastic issues are to be elevated.

To sum up, as explained by Qasim and Hafeez (2022:3), learners whose parents are constantly involved in learners' scholastic issues manifest more adequate scholastic performance than those learners whose parents are scarcely involved. One can deduce that the concept of parental involvement is one of the catalysts when reading and learning efficacy must be elevated. Looking at the findings and the recommendations of the study, one can deduce that the learners' acquisition of reading and learning skills will be elevated. This study did not encounter any delimitations as it was well designed following the data gathering instruments and purposive selective approach. This study will, without doubts, be helpful to other researchers whose focus is on such research phenomenon. The next section the researcher is reviewing the chapters of the study.

## **6.6. Summary**

In this dissertation, the researcher discussed reading problems that are experienced by various learners from various schools. From Chapter 1 which served as an introduction to this study, the crux of this study was to explore the discrepancies in reading performances and determine the strategies to elevate such discrepancies. Teachers must ensure that they provide learners with essential reading and learning skills so they can keep up with schooling and academic education. According to Mulcahy et al. (2019:5), reading performance can make an impact on the learning performance throughout the curriculum and reading performance and achievement are interrelated. The schooling life of any learner becomes negatively affected if they are illiterate as they exit the intermediate phase of schooling. The inadequate literacy capability manifests itself at the academic level when they find it impossible to interpret the written text. This results in a variety of dropouts and illiterate societies. It is therefore the task of the educators to ensure that they adapt their instructional methods to reach the desired outcomes.

In Chapter 2, the researcher described the theoretical framework, and the focus was on the theory being affiliated. The social learning theory was chosen for this study because it focuses more on the behaviour that is learned through modelling and observation. In this instance, the educators are expected to model the behaviour through action, verbalisation, dissemination of written texts, dissemination of digital media etcetera. In contrast to social learning theory, the learners acquire knowledge through the retention of various knowledge by observing and listening to the one who is modelling the desired behaviour. As mentioned by Lind et al. (2019:2), social learning theory is when

an individual learns from the stimuli that are being modelled by the other individual, through observation and retention, learners learn the desired learning outcomes. Therefore, the social learning theory encourages the usage of a variety of models and media to elevate learning since learners must learn by observing and retention of knowledge.

In this theory, some essential concepts were discussed which are the core elements of this theory and its phases when applied in the classroom setting. According to Joseph (2021:8), researchers have detected that in social learning theory, observation does not have a good impact if attention, retention, reproduction and motivation are not equally implemented. These components are interlinked to one another. In this instance, learners must be attentive to the lesson, assimilate all that is modelled then reproduce what has been modelled, and must to be motivated. The researcher then discussed various scholars' views that focus on the research phenomenon.

Biesman-Simons et al. (2021:3) state that some learners exit Grade Seven with limited language and literacy skills. Researchers have identified that most learners do not possess reading proficiency during Grades Five to Seven. This has evoked the need to research this issue. One must keep it in mind that this was a qualitative study and, as substantiated by Cropley (2019:5), a qualitative study emphasises the way the world is conceptualised in a researcher's mind usually using abstract scientific concepts and terminology. This study aimed to investigate factors that lead to contrasting reading performances of Grade Fives in the Ekurhuleni District.

At the commencement of the data-generating process, all the necessary procedures were fulfilled, and the samples were chosen from the target population. The purposive sampling method was utilised to select the samples as participants in the study. As described by Castel and Bridier (2021:348), purposive sampling is when participants are selected based on qualities and experience that are of interest to the researcher. Such participants are believed to have perceptions, knowledge, and experiences regarding the research phenomenon being studied. Data-generating instruments were utilised to generate data, such instruments were interviews, questionnaires and observation which included checklists, fieldnotes and observation templates. These instruments appear in the section of appendices.

When the data was generated and analysed, the researcher identified a need for some schools to improve their ways of approaching teaching and learning. As mentioned in Chapter 5, some schools have a lack of literacy material. They also unevenly deliver learning of reading. There is little communication of results, whereas the theory asserts that communication of results is one of the catalysts when scholastic performance must be elevated. Another element that was identified was the

concept of library visits, which might be school or public libraries. The researcher has detected that most learners are not motivated to utilise the libraries - neither the public nor the school library.

Such variables were addressed in the section of recommendations that schools must motivate both learners and parents about this concept of library visits. Studies have substantiated the importance of public and home libraries. This necessitates the schools to implement the concepts of visiting libraries to the learner population. The researcher then, based on the findings gathered during the generating of data, extracted the recommendations that when utilised effectively and efficiently the reading and learning performance of learners can be elevated.

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**Appendix A**

Assent letter to the learner

Dear learner

Date \_\_\_\_\_

My name is Teacher Nkosi and would like to ask you if I can come and listen how you read. I am trying to learn more about how children read with their teachers as well as when they play with friends.



If you say YES to do this, I will come and watch you when you are with your teacher doing reading as well as when you play on the playground. We will do a fun game where you have to answer some questions for me. I will also ask you to do some activities with me. I will not ask to you to do anything that may hurt you or that you don't want to do.

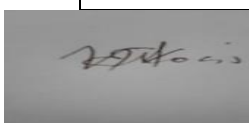
I will also ask your parents if you can take part. If you do not want to take part, it will also be fine with me. Remember, you can say yes or you can say no and no one will be upset if you don't want to take part or even if you change your mind later and want to stop. You can ask any questions that you have now. If you have a question later that you didn't think of now, ask me next time I visit your school.

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

Regards

Teacher Nkosi

<b>Your Name</b>	<b>Yes, I will take part</b>	<b>No, I don't want to take part</b>
		
<b>Name of the researcher</b>	<b>Nhlanhla Eric Nkosi</b>	
<b>Date</b>		
<b>Witness</b>		



Signature

## **Appendix B**

### **Focus group questions**



Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Title: Investigating factors that lead to contrasting reading performances of Grade Fives in Ekurhuleni District**

#### **DEAR PROSPECTIVE PARTICIPANT**

My name is Nhlanhla Nkosi and I am doing research under the supervision of Dr. L.M. Luvalo, a lecturer at the University of South Africa in the Department of **Educational Foundations** towards a M Ed at the University of South Africa. We have funding from South African Department of Education for a Research study. We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled **Investigating factors that lead to contrasting reading performances of Grade Fives in the Ekurhuleni District**.

#### **WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?**

This study is expected to generate important information that could explore the reading problems and elevate the reading performances of learners.

#### **WHY AM I BEING INVITED TO PARTICIPATE?**

You are invited because your school has Grade Five learners.

I obtained your contact details from the Ekurhuleni District offices. There is another school that has been selected in addition to yours. In your school five learners and five teachers will be selected as a sample for the research project and other school the selection will be conducted in a similar manner as your school.

#### **WHAT IS THE NATURE OF MY PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY?**

The study involves observation, questionnaires and interviews. This study comprises closed-ended questions on the questionnaires and open-ended questions in the interviews. This study will take a duration of 1 day on 30 mins per session.

#### **CAN I WITHDRAW FROM THIS STUDY EVEN AFTER HAVING AGREED TO PARTICIPATE?**

Participating in this study is voluntary and you are under no obligation to consent to participation. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a written consent (adult) / assent (participant younger than 18 years old) form. You are free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

#### **WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?**

The benefit of this study will be the recommendations that will elevate the reading performances of the learners.

**ARE THERE ANY NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES FOR ME IF I PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH PROJECT?**

No potential hazards or discomforts are envisaged on this study; however, the participants and the parents of the participants will be issued with indemnity and consent forms for participation.

**WILL THE INFORMATION THAT I CONVEY TO THE RESEARCHER AND MY IDENTITY BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?**

The study will use pseudonyms instead of actual names of the participants and the data being generated will be kept on a password accessed computer. The hard copies from this study will be kept in a lockable cupboard.

**HOW WILL THE RESEARCHER(S) PROTECT THE SECURITY OF DATA?**

The generated data in hard copies will be filled and kept in a lockable cupboard for a period of five years and the digitally generated data will be stored on a password accessed computer that is protected by cables.

**WILL I RECEIVE PAYMENT OR ANY INCENTIVES FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY?**

Well, no payments or incentives will be received on this study; however, the elevation of reading performance of the learners may be regarded as the benefits of the study.

**HAS THE STUDY RECEIVED ETHICS APPROVAL?**

This study has received written approval from the Research Ethics Review Committee of Unisa. A copy of the approval letter can be obtained from the researcher if you so wish.

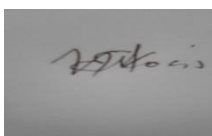
**HOW WILL I BE INFORMED OF THE FINDINGS/RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH?**

The researcher will arrange with the principal to discuss the research findings with the participant if so required.

Alternatively, the researcher can be contacted: Mr. Nhlanhla Eric Nkosi on 0768756199 or email [nhlanhlankosi58@yahoo.com](mailto:nhlanhlankosi58@yahoo.com). Should you have concerns about the way in which the research has been conducted, you may contact Dr. LM Luvalo on 0124292541.

Thank you for taking time to read this information sheet and for participating in this study.

Thank you.



Nhlanhla Eric Nkosi

**Appendix C**

**Consent and confidentiality response**

**CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY (Return slip)**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet.

I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable).

I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings, but that my participation will be kept confidential unless otherwise specified.

I agree to the recording of the interview and questionnaire.

I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Participant Name & Surname : \_\_\_\_\_

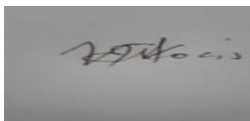
\_\_\_\_\_

Participant Signature

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

Researcher's Name & Surname NHLANHLA ERIC NKOSI



\_\_\_\_\_

Researcher's signature

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix D**

**Permission from the SGB of a school**

Request for permission to conduct research at School

Title of the title of your research: **Investigating factors that lead to contrasting reading performances of Grade Five in schools in the Ekurhuleni District.**

Date : 07/03/23

Dear SGB chairperson and the members

I, NHLANHLA ERIC NKOSI, am doing research under supervision of DR L. LUVALO, a senior lecturer in the Department of Educational Foundations towards a MEd at the University of South Africa. We have funding from the South African Department of Education for a Research project. We are inviting your school to participate in a study entitled **Investigating factors that lead to contrasting reading performances of Grade Fives in schools in the Ekurhuleni District.**

The aim of the study is to explore the reading problems and elevate the reading skills and knowledge.

Your school has been selected because it has Grade Five learners.

The study will entail observation, interviews and questionnaires, where five learners of Grade Five and language teacher/s regardless of gender, will participate in the generating of data.

The benefits of this study are that reading problems will be eliminated and strategies to elevate the reading performance will be availed.

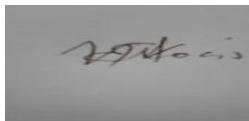
Potential risks are: There will be no risks.

There will be no reimbursement or any incentives for participation in the research.

Feedback procedure will entail the participants being able to telephonically call the researcher if they need to be informed about the findings.

Yours sincerely

Nhlanhla Eric Nkosi (0768756199- nhlanhlankosi58@yahoo.com)



\_\_\_\_\_ Chairperson's signature

Researcher's signature

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix E**

**Permission to the circuit**

**Request for permission to conduct research at a school**

Title of the research: **Investigating factors that lead to contrasting reading performances of grade fives in schools in the Ekurhuleni District**

Date: 07/03/23

Dear Sir/Madam

I, NHLANHLA ERIC NKOSI, am doing research under the supervision of DR. L. M. LUVALO, a senior lecturer in the Department of **Educational Foundations** towards a MEd at the University of South Africa. We have funding from University of South Africa for a research project. We are requesting permission to conduct research at a school, namely, ..... The title of the research is **Investigating factors that lead to contrasting reading performances of grade fives in schools in the Ekurhuleni District**.

The aim of the study is to explore the reading problems and provide possible strategies for the challenges.

The study will entail observation, interviews and questionnaires during a school day where five learners of grade five and language teacher/s, regardless of gender, will participate in the generating of data.

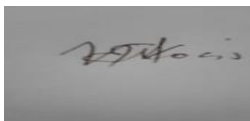
The benefits of this study are identifying factors that lead to reading challenges and possible strategies to enable learners to read for understanding.

Potential risks are: There will be no risks.

There will be no reimbursement or any incentives for participation in the research.

Feedback procedure will entail the participants can telephonically call the researcher if they need to be informed about the findings.

Yours sincerely



Nhlanhla Eric Nkosi (0768756199- nhlanhlinkosi58@yahoo.com)

Educator & Student & researcher

**Appendix F**

**Permission to the Ekurhuleni district**

**Request for permission to conduct research at a School**

Title of the research: **Investigating factors that lead to contrasting reading performances of grade fives in schools in the Ekurhuleni District.**

Date: 07/03/23

Dear Sir/Madam

I, NHLANHLA ERIC NKOSI, am doing research under supervision of DR.L. M. LUVALO, a senior lecturer in the Department of **Educational Foundations** towards a MEd at the University of South Africa. We have funding from University of South Africa for a research project. We are requesting permission to conduct research at a school, namely, ..... The title of the research is **Investigating factors that lead to contrasting reading performances of grade fives in schools in the Ekurhuleni District.**

The aim of the study is to explore the reading problems and provide possible strategies for the challenges.

The study will entail observation, interviews and questionnaires during a school day where five learners of grade five and language teacher/s, regardless of gender, will participate in the generating of data.

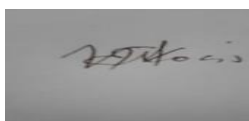
The benefits of this study are identifying factors that lead to reading challenges and possible strategies to enable learners to read for understanding.

Potential risks are: There will be no risks.

There will be no reimbursement or any incentives for participation in the research.

Feedback procedure will entail the participants can telephonically call the researcher if they need to be informed about the findings.

Yours sincerely



Nhlanhla Eric Nkosi (0768756199- nhlanhlinkosi58@yahoo.com)

Educator & Student & researcher

**Appendix G**

**Permission from the Principal**

**Request for permission to conduct research at a School**

Title of the title of your research: **Investigating factors that lead to contrasting reading performances of grade fives in schools in the Ekurhuleni District.**

Dear Principal

I, NHLANHLA ERIC NKOSI, am doing research under the supervision of DR. L. LUVALO, a senior lecturer in the Department of **Educational Foundations**, towards a MEd at the University of South Africa. We have funding from the South African Department of Education for a research project. We are inviting your school to participate in a study entitled **Investigating factors that lead to contrasting reading performances of grade fives in schools in the Ekurhuleni District.**

The aim of the study is to explore the reading problems and rectify.

Your school has been selected because it has grade five learners.

The study will entail observation, interviews and questionnaires where five learners of Grade Five and language teacher/s, regardless of gender, will participate in the generating of data

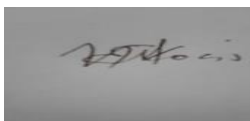
The benefits of this study are that reading problems will be eliminated and strategies to elevate the reading performance will be availed.

Potential risks are: There will be no risks.

There will be no reimbursement or any incentives for participation in the research.

Feedback procedure will entail the participants can telephonically call the researcher if they need to be informed about the findings.

Yours sincerely



Nhlanhla Eric Nkosi (0768756199- nhlankosi58@yahoo.com)



## Appendix H

### **Consent from the parent**

#### **Dear Parent of a School**

Your son/daughter/child is invited to participate in a study entitled **Investigating factors that lead to contrasting reading performances of grade fives in schools in the Ekurhuleni District**.

I am undertaking this study as part of my master's research at the University of South Africa. The purpose of the study is to explore the reading discrepancies and elevate where there is a need. The possible benefits of the study are the improvement of reading skills and knowledge in schools. I am asking permission to include your child in this study because he/she is a grade five learner. I expect to have four other children participating in the study.

If you allow your child to participate, I shall request him/her to:

- Take part in an interview that will occur in the school during the school day.
- Take part in the reading activity where observation will occur during the school day where five learners of grade five and language teacher/s, regardless of gender, will participate in the generating of data.

During the interview, learners' answers will be recorded but confidentiality will be ensured.

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

There are no foreseeable risks to your child by participating in the study. Your child will receive no direct benefit from participating in the study; however, the possible benefits to education are to elevate the reading skills and knowledge in schools. Neither your child nor you will receive any type of payment for participating in this study.

Your child's participation in this study is voluntary. Your child may decline to participate or to withdraw from participation at any time. Withdrawal or refusal to participate will not affect him/her in any way. Similarly, you can agree to allow your child to be in the study now and change your mind later without any penalty.

The study will take place during regular classroom activities with the prior approval of the school and your child's teacher. However, if you do not want your child to participate, an alternative activity will be available.

In addition to your permission, your child must agree to participate in the study and you and your child will also be asked to sign the assent form which accompanies this letter. If your

child does not wish to participate in the study, he or she will not be included and there will be no penalty. The information gathered from the study and your child's participation in the study will be stored securely on a password locked computer in my locked office for five years after the study. Thereafter, records will be erased.

The benefit of this study is to elevate the reading skills and knowledge in schools.

There will be no potential risks during the research.

There will be no reimbursement or any incentives for participation in the research.

If you have questions about this study please ask me or my study supervisor, Dr Luvalo, Department of Foundational Education, College of Education, University of South Africa. My contact number is 0768756199 and my e-mail is nhlankosi58@yahoo.com The e-mail of my supervisor is luvalm@unisa.ac.za. Permission for the study has already been given by principal, SGB and the Ethics Committee of the College of Education, UNISA.

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

Name of child:

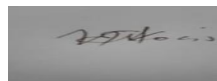
Sincerely,

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Parent/guardian's name (print)

Parent/guardian's signature:

Date:



NHANHLA ERIC NKOSI

Researcher's name (print)

Researcher's signature

Date: 07/03/23

**Appendix I**

**Interview Questions for Learners**

Do you discuss about books at home? Yes [ ] No [ ]

If no, please explain.

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Have you ever received a book as a gift from your family members? Yes [ ] No [ ]

Are you often encouraged to practice reading at home? Yes [ ] No [ ]

Does your family enjoy reading? Yes [ ] No [ ]

Do you periodically go to your local library? Yes [ ] No [ ]

If no, please explain.

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Does someone in your family read a story for you? Yes [ ] No [ ]

Do you enjoy when someone reads a story for you? Yes [ ] No [ ]

If no, please explain.

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Do your teachers teach you how to read? Yes [ ] No [ ]

Explain your thoughts.

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Do you have reading periods in your classroom with your teacher? Yes [ ] No [ ]

Do you have enough reading books in your class? Yes [ ] No [ ]

Explain your views.

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Does your teacher allow you to have and read different books in your class? Yes [ ] No [ ]

Do you have reading groups in your class? Yes [ ] No [ ]

Do you regularly have reading assessments? Yes [ ] No [ ]

Does your teacher inform you about the reading assessment results? Yes [ ] No [ ]

Do you read at school in a language that you normally use at home? Yes [ ] No [ ]

Do you think your teacher is teaching reading properly? Yes [ ] No [ ]

Explain your views:

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Do you see improvement on your reading performance? Yes [ ] No [ ]

Explain your views:

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**Appendix J**

**Questionnaire for the teachers**

Do you regularly teach reading in your class?    Yes [  ]    No [  ]

Do you allow learners to have and read books?    Yes [  ]    No [  ]

Explain you view.

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Do you have reading groups in your class?    Yes [  ]    No [  ]

Do you vary the methods of teaching reading in your class?    Yes [  ]    No [  ]

Explain your views.

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Do you have enough books for learners in your class?    Yes [  ]    No [  ]

Please explain your views.

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Do you make ways to acquire the level of comprehension from the learners?    Yes [  ]    No [  ]

Please elaborate.

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Do you encounter any impedes when it is time to teach reading? Yes [ ] No [ ]

Please explain.

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Do you implement any intervention strategies for reading activities? Yes [ ] No [ ]

Do you teach reading in learners' mother tongue? Yes [ ] No [ ]

Do you regularly assess reading and communicate the reading assessment results to learners?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

Do you discuss with parents regarding the learners' reading performance? Yes [ ] No [ ]

Do you encourage parents to encourage reading to the learners? Yes [ ] No [ ]

Do you record the reading assessment results? Yes [ ] No [ ]

Do you adapt your teaching methods based on the reading assessment results? Yes [ ] No [ ]

Do you attend workshops designated for teaching of reading? Yes [ ] No [ ]

**Appendix K**

**Interview Questions for teachers regarding teaching of reading**

Do you feel motivated and skilled to teach reading? Yes [ ] No [ ]

Do you regularly teach reading in your class? Yes [ ] No [ ] If yes, how often?

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Do you allow learners to have and read books? Yes [ ] No [ ] If yes, how?

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Do you have reading groups in your class? Yes [ ] No [ ]

Do you vary the methods of teaching reading in your class? Yes [ ] No [ ]

If yes, please mention the methods.

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Do you have enough books for learners in your class? Yes [ ] No [ ]

Do you make ways to acquire the level of comprehension from the learners? Yes [ ] No [ ]

If yes, how?

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Do you encounter any impedes when it is time to teach reading? Yes [ ] No [ ]

If yes, please elaborate.

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Do you implement any intervention strategies for reading activities? Yes [ ] No [ ]

If yes, how?

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Do you teach reading in learners' mother tongue? Yes [ ] No [ ]

If no, please explain.

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Do you regularly assess reading and communicate the reading assessment results to learners?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

Do you discuss with parents regarding the learners' reading performance? Yes [ ] No [ ]

If yes, how?

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Do you encourage parents to encourage reading to the learners? Yes [ ] No [ ]

Do you record the reading assessment results? Yes [ ] No [ ]

If yes, how?

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Do you adapt your teaching methods based on the reading assessment results? Yes [  ] No [  ]

If yes, please name the methods.

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Do you attend workshops designated for teaching of reading? Yes [  ] No [  ]

Do you feel motivated and skilled to teach reading? Yes [  ] No [  ]

If yes, please elaborate.

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**Appendix L**

**Checklist for observation of learners**

<b>Observation question</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<p>1. Did learners receive reading materials evenly?</p> <p>This question intends to explore the pattern in which the learners receive books.</p>		
<p>2. Was the environment (classroom) chaos-free?</p> <p>This question explores the self-conduct of the learners during the reading session.</p>		
<p>3. Was the classroom management ensured by the educator?</p> <p>This question evaluates the level of the educator's classroom management.</p>		
<p>4. Was the environment print rich?</p> <p>This question asks whether there are reading materials pasted on the walls of the classroom.</p>		
<p>5. Were the learners able to read fluently?</p> <p>This question asks the level of reading fluency of learners in that particular period.</p>		
<p>6. Did all learners participate in the reading activity?</p> <p>This question asks the learners' level of cooperativeness and interaction during the reading session.</p>		
<p>7. Did the educator guide the reading activity?</p> <p>This question intends to explore the mediation and guidance of the educator during the reading session.</p>		
<p>8. Did the educator implement shared reading as a reading method?</p> <p>This question asks whether the educator varied the methods of reading in the classroom.</p>		
<p>9. Did the educator implement the group guided reading as a reading method?</p> <p>This question asks whether the educator varied the methods of reading in the classroom.</p>		

<p>10. Did the educator implement paired reading as a reading method?</p> <p>This question asks whether the educator varied the methods of reading in the classroom.</p>		
<p>11. Did the educator implement independent reading as a reading method?</p> <p>This question asks whether the educator varied the methods of reading in the classroom.</p>		
<p>12. Did all learners participate in a reading activity?</p> <p>This question asks whether the learners were interactively involved during the reading session.</p>		
<p>13. Did the learners show enthusiasm during a reading activity?</p> <p>This question asks whether the educator ensured that there was no boredom during the reading session.</p>		
<p>14. Did the learners show adequate comprehension in a reading activity?</p> <p>This question asks whether the learners were able to extract meaning and comprehension in the reading material.</p>		
<p>15. Did the reading activity occur constantly with learners?</p> <p>This question asks how often the reading activities occur in the classroom.</p>		
<p>16. Did they vary the books and genre on the reading activities?</p> <p>This question asks whether the educator varied the types of books disseminated to the learner such as fiction, drama, folklores etcetera.</p>		
<p>17. Did the educator articulate the reading results?</p> <p>This question asks whether the educator communicated the reading performance of learners and made adjustments based on those reading results.</p>		
<p>18. Did the educator administer and implement varying intervention strategies?</p> <p>This question asks whether the diagnostic strategies were being implemented by the educator after a reading activity.</p>		



**UNISA COLLEGE OF EDUCATION ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE**

Date: 2022/11/09

Ref: 2022/11/09/42436699/51/AM

Name: Mr NE Nkosi

Student No.:42436699

Dear Mr NE Nkosi

**Decision: Ethics Approval from  
2022/11/09 to 2025/11/09**

**Researcher(s):** Name: Mr NE Nkosi  
E-mail address: 42436699@mylife.unisa.ac.za  
Telephone: 0768756199

**Supervisor(s):** Name: Dr. L M. Luvalo  
E-mail address: luvalm@unisa.ac.za  
Telephone: 0738035736

Name: Dr. K.J.Maluleka  
E-mail address: Malulkj1@unisa.ac.za  
Telephone: 0828364299

**Title of research:**

**Factors that lead to contrasting reading performances in grade five learners of Ekurhuleni District.**

**Qualification:** MEd Comparative Education

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee for the above mentioned research. Ethics approval is granted for the period 2022/11/09 to 2025/11/09.

*The medium risk application was reviewed by the Ethics Review Committee on 2022/11/09 in compliance with the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment.*

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

1. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to the relevant guidelines set out in the Unisa Covid-19 position statement on research ethics attached.

