Grade 12 learner achievement in Business Studies in working-class communities in two schools in the Western Cape, South Africa

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of master's in education in the Department of Educational Studies in the Faculty of Education, University of the Western Cape

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this dissertation: *Grade 12 learner achievement in Business Studies in working class communities in two schools in the Western Cape*, South Africa is my own original work that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted at any university or for any degree.

Signature: **Date: 10 March 2025**

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KEYWORDS

Case study

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Teaching and learning

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Abstract

The researcher was concerned about the underachievement of Grade 12 learners in Business Studies, particularly, in schools in working-class communities in the Western Cape. The research was presented as a case study of the learners and the teachers to learn more about factors that possibly contributed to the lack of success in Business Studies in the 12th grade. According to the National Senior Certificate results, the Education District categorised schools into groups. It was clear that many schools from the ex-House of Representatives, ex-House of Delegates and Department of Education and Training (DET) were at the bottom half with reference to the results and should receive high-priority intervention from the district level. Learners from new Western Cape Education Department (WCED) schools in specific areas also underperformed in the subject. The study sought to identify the reasons for this underperformance and made recommendations to ensure improved performance. The objectives of this investigation were, therefore, to define performance and underperformance, to determine the effect of learners' socio-economic circumstances on their ability to succeed, and to investigate how changes in the curriculum influenced the knowledge and methodology of the Business Studies teacher.

Conceptually, the study drew on understanding the term underperformance or underachievement. A review of the literature included the historiography of curriculum changes in the Business Studies curriculum over the past twenty years and the extent to which teachers were prepared for these changes. Other factors considered in the teaching and learning process were the relationship between socio-economic circumstances and academic achievement and the availability of quality learning spaces that are conducive to academic success. In this regard, the researcher reviewed similar studies in the literature.

The research focused primarily on the learners' and teachers' perceptions of why learners underperform in Grade 12 Business Studies. To be able to make meaning of the phenomenon of underperformance, a qualitative research methodology was used in association with an interpretive approach. The instrumental case study (Stake, 2005:445), as a qualitative research design, was used to enable the researcher to facilitate understanding of the problem of underachievement of high school learners in Grade 12 Business Studies. A purposive sample consisted of learners, Business

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Study teachers, and the subject heads at the two schools in the Western Cape. Data collection included journal entries made by the researcher from observations at the school; semi-structured questionnaires and interviews; observations; and document analysis of the WCED Grade 12 Business Studies results. Permission was obtained from the WCED to embark on the study and ethical clearance was granted by the University of the Western Cape

The interpretive phase of the qualitative data analysis focused on the research participants' accounts of the teaching and learning of the subject. Identifying general categories and developing themes assisted in determining the value, conclusions, and recommendations of the case study.

This research study concluded that achievement and underachievement are dependent on student motivation which could be affected by external factors. These factors include the socio-economic circumstances of learners, and the school culture which is determined by the teacher's knowledge and motivation.

There were, however, limitations to the study which represented a sample of two schools and was deemed insufficient to make generalisations regarding the socio-economic circumstances of learners. Learners were found to be loyal toward their school and teachers which were not reflected in the Business Studies results. The changes in the subject and assessment practices within the subject provide an opportunity for further research.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATION

CAPS	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement
CED	Cape Education Department
CEMIS	Centralised Education Management Information System
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DET	Department of training
DH	Departmental Head
DoE	Department of Education
ED	Education District
FET	Further Education and Training
HoD	House of Delegates
HoR	House of Representatives
HSIP	High School Intervention Programme
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council
LoLT	Language of learning and teaching
LPG	Learning Program Guidelines
LTSM	Learner and teacher support material
MNED	Metro North Education District
NCS	National Curriculum Statement
NECC	National Co-ordinating committee
NEPI	National Education Policy investigation
NETF	National Education and training forum
NPA	National Protocol on Assessment
NSC	National Senior Certificate
NSLA	National Strategy for learner attainment
OBE	Outcomes-Based Education
RDP	Reconstruction and Development programme

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RNCS	Revised national curriculum statement
SAG	Subject Assessment Guidelines
SMT	Senior Management Team
WCED	Western Cape Education Department

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION, OVERVIEW AND CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

The underachievement of Grade 12 learners is a phenomenon which needs sustained inquiry if a change is to be achieved. Often a Grade 12 certificate is perceived as a passport to tertiary education and the minimum requirement to enter the world of work. Despite its importance, many students do not reach this milestone in South Africa. It was important to find out why so many students still fail despite the transformation in the education system in the post-apartheid era, Nkosi, (2017:1598).

According to Thaba-Nkadimene and Mmakola (2019:170), learner performance is influenced by teacher preparedness, which means inadequate preparation of teachers equates to poor learner performance. Apart from the teacher's preparedness, other factors such as lack of content and pedagogical knowledge can also be attributed to the poor performance of learners. Certain contextual factors relating to learners play a role in poor learner performance. Thaba-Nkadimene and Mmakola (2019:179) mention that certain contextual factors contribute to poor learner performance. The contextual factors can be divided into resources at the school level as well as factors at the learners' home such as poverty and their socio-economic circumstances. These studies will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Two, Section 2.6.

Despite interventions such as the National Strategy for Learner Attainment (NSLA) by the Department of Basic Education (DBE) and the High School Improvement Programme (HSIP) by Provincial Education Departments, as well as various Grade 12 tutoring sessions supported by the various District Offices to improve learner performance, the performance in the final examination of certain schools remains below 60%. The NSLA was introduced by DBE in 2007 to assist schools with a pass rate below 60%. The DBE provides material and funding to provincial departments to assist these schools with extra classes and tutoring in subjects where learners underperform. The HSIP is a similar programme initiated by provincial departments of

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education in 2010 where material and tutors are supplied to assist with the improvement of results in underperforming subjects.

The academic performance of schools with low academic achievement has not been stable regardless of the intervention programmes. The academic performance of some of these targeted schools would change from year to year. One year they would achieve a high pass rate and the next year they would again have an overall pass rate below 60%.

This chapter introduces the topic of underachievement in Grade 12, especially learners from poor socio-economic backgrounds. The background to the study highlights the curriculum changes in post-apartheid South Africa and the statistics, i.e. learner numbers and pass rates of Business Studies pre- and post-Apartheid. The main research question and subsidiary questions would provide details on factors which could impact learner performance in these communities. This chapter includes the rationale for this research, aims and objectives, significance of the study and a literature review and concludes with trustworthiness, ethical considerations and the outline of the chapters.

1.2 Background to the study

1.2.1 Introduction

This section provides background to the education system before our democracy, followed by the changes in curriculum policy during the democratic era with specific reference to Business Studies**.**

1.2.2 Education system before democracy

South Africa's democratic government inherited a divided and unequal system of education. Under apartheid, South Africa had nineteen different educational departments separated by race, geography, and ideology. This education system prepared children in different ways for the positions they were expected to occupy in social, economic, and political life under apartheid. In each department, the curriculum played a powerful role in reinforcing inequality. What, how and whether children were

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taught differed according to the roles they were expected to play in the wider society Department of Education, (2002:4).

Before 1994, the South African education system was governed by nineteen different education departments. Each of the coloured, Indian and black racial groups had their own national education department as well as an independent education department for private schools. Education for whites was administered by four education departments in each of the four provinces before democracy in 1994. At this time the subject was known as Business Economics and only offered on the Standard Grade. Standard Grade refers to the type of questioning within the subject. Business Economics was a subject which required only regurgitation of facts or knowledge from learners. Learners were not required to analyse or evaluate their knowledge.

1.2.3 Curriculum Policy Changes during the post-apartheid Era

What follows are the curriculum policy changes during different eras during the inception of our democracy starting from the 1990s. As a result, the Business Studies curriculum for FET, particularly, for Grade 12 also underwent changes which are discussed in more detail in Chapter Two.

i. Curriculum 2005 and Outcomes-Based Education - Minister of Education, S Bhengu: 1994 – 1999

The present government within the democratic era introduced a variety of policy initiatives to transform education. According to Jansen (1997:2) and Chisholm (2003:1), the year 1990 is significant because of the changes in the political landscape in South Africa with the unbanning of political movements and release of political prisoners. This necessitated thinking of curriculum changes after the first national, non-racial democratic elections. The purpose of this process was mainly to lay the foundations for a single national core syllabus. In addition to the rationalisation and consolidation of existing syllabi, the National Education and Training Forum (NETF) curriculum developers removed overtly racist and other insensitive language from existing syllabi.

After the elections in 1994, the new Department of Education saw its role as developing national frameworks, norms and standards, while provincial Departments

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of Education were tasked with the implementation of these policies as well as to carry the costs incurred Weber, (2006:8).

If social transformation is to be achieved, all South Africans must be educationally affirmed through the recognition of their potential and the removal of artificial barriers to the attainment of qualifications, DoE, (2003:2). In line with the social transformation ideology of the democratic government, Curriculum 2005 (C2005) was implemented in January 1998 with an Outcomes-Based-Education (OBE) approach as its foundation. According to the Department of Education, OBE forms the foundation for the curriculum in South Africa. “It strives to enable all learners to reach their maximum learning potential by setting the Learning Outcomes to be achieved by the end of the education process. OBE encourages a learner-centred and activity-based approach to education” DoE, (2003:2). Unfortunately, the implementation of this complex system without proper resources and training was very ambitious and was doomed to fail (Jansen, 1998; Chisholm, 2004; Weber, 2006).

ii. Revised National Curriculum Statement - Minister of Education, K. Asmal: 1999 - 2004

There was an outcry from teachers that the curriculum was too vague, and that the depth of content should be provided. Pressure from the wider society, business and many academics forced policy changes in education. The transition from the Curriculum 2005 (C2005) to the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) was a significant educational reform that aimed to address various issues and improve the quality of education. C2005 was reviewed to provide clarity and to make the curriculum more understandable in the classroom. The RNCS sought to address the issues of developing critical thinking, problem-solving, and practical skills by highlighting OBE and focusing on the development of skills and competencies. The RNCS placed a greater emphasis on a learner-centred approach, aiming to engage students actively in the learning process, encourage self-directed learning, and accommodating different learning styles. These changes formed part of South Africa's ongoing efforts to transform its education system to better meet the needs of its diverse student population.

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iii National Curriculum Statement - Minister of Education, N. Pandor: 2004 – 2009

After the failure of C2005, the RNCS the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) was approved on 15 April 2002 and implemented in 2004 by the DBE. There was confusion, especially regarding the depth and breadth of content. This consequently inspired a review of the curriculum to provide clearer specifications of what is to be taught and learnt on a term-by-term basis DBE, (2011).

iv. Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement - Minister of Education, A. Moshega: 2009 – current

Lastly, the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) was implemented in 2012. CAPS, however, is not a new curriculum, but an amendment to the NCS Grades R-12 which was refined and repackaged into the CAPS. The CAPS specify for each subject the teaching time, content, skills, Learning and Teaching Support Materials (LTSM) needed, and the assessment weightings and prescriptions DBE, (2011: 23). For this study, the data used is based on the NCS and CAPS which was implemented in 2012 in the Further Education and Training (FET) band. The FET band consists of Grades 10, 11 and 12 learners.

The teachers have the benefit of containing all requirements in one document, namely the CAPS document. The key changes brought about by the CAPS are that there should be less administrative burden for teachers, clearer specifications of subject content and stronger teaching and assessment methods. Business Studies as a subject has changed with the introduction of the NCS by the DBE, implemented in 2006.

A document analysis of the CAPS Business Studies, Grade 12 curriculum provides an understanding of the changes within the subject during the above-mentioned phases of curriculum implementation post-apartheid.

1.2.4 Statistics of Business Studies in the post-apartheid era

Having reflected on the curriculum policy changes in the post-apartheid era, it is imperative to provide the statistics of Business Studies as a school subject in the FET

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band with specific reference to the throughput rates of Grade 12 during the past nine years.

Historically, most learners from the ex-model C schools or Cape Education Department (CED, (White) offered Business Economics Higher Grade and the former House of Representatives, (HoR), (Coloured), House of Delegates (HoD), (Indian) and the Department of Education and Training (DET), (Black) offered the subject on the Standard Grade. Figure 1.1 indicates the number of candidates offering Business Economics Higher and Standard Grades in 2004 in the Metro North Education District. Although we were in a new dispensation (democracy) with one single education department, the WCED reflected the statistics according to the old dispensation. The DET had no higher-grade learners. Only a small percentage, 12,5% of learners offered Business Economics on the Standard Grade. According to Figure 1.1, only a small percentage of learners from the HoR offered the subject on the Higher Grade and many learners offered the subject on the Standard Grade.

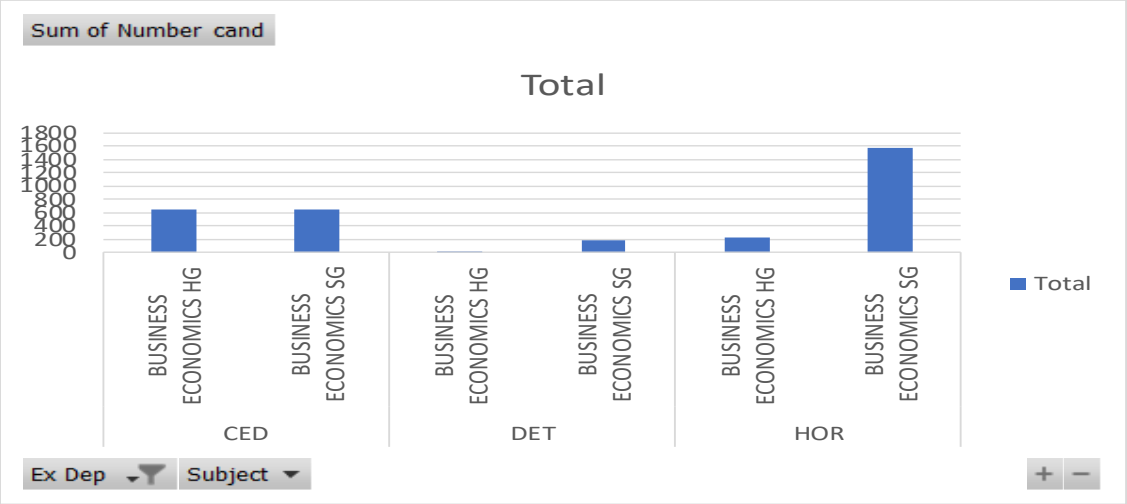

Figure 1.1: Number of learners offering HG and SG grouped according to Education Departments

WCED CEMIS 2007

Business Economics Higher Grade, on the one hand, was aimed at learners' higher cognitive ability. Question papers would therefore pitch specifically to learners' ability to solve complex business problems and to apply their knowledge to solve these problems. Standard Grade, on the other hand, focussed on testing mostly knowledge and learners' ability to regurgitate this knowledge. Business Studies encompasses both the cognitive expectations of the Higher Grade and the Standard Grade.

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Business Studies is regarded by the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) as one of the core subjects because Business Studies is on the Department of Basic Education's list of 29 designated subjects in the FET band. This means that the subject allows learners to qualify for a bachelor's degree. The list of 29 subjects has, however, been revoked by the DBE in Circular S8 of 2018. Business Studies is currently one of the most popular subjects in the Western Cape, as illustrated in Table 1.1. Business Studies forms part of the Business Commerce and Management subject which consists of Business Studies, Accounting and Economics. Business Studies were offered in more streams at schools, not only in a pure commerce stream. In 2019, the number of learners who applied to write the subject in the senior certificate was more than 20 000 WCED, (2019). Despite the poor results obtained by Grade 12 learners, the number of learners electing to offer the subject, remained constant as shown in the Table 1.1 below.

Table 1: 1 Number of learners offering Business Studies since 2011

Year			Number of learners			
	National	Pass Rate	Provincial	Pass Rate	District	Pass Rate
2011	187 677	78.6	16 650	83.4	3 281	86.7
2012	195 507	77.4	18 300	74.2	3 471	80.0
2013	218 914	81.4	20 122	89.7	3 797	91.8
2014	207 659	77.9	19 962	82.2	4 135	82.7
2015	247 822	75.7	22 797	82.7	4 231	86.1
2016	234 894	73.7	21 463	82.5	3 559	86.9
2017	204 849	68.0	20 369	71.4	3 436	76.9
2018	192 139	64.9	21 267	64.7	3 660	71.7
2019	186 840	71.0	21 152	69.1	3625	78.1

WCED, 2019

There was a steady increase in the number of learners offering Business Studies from 2011 to 2013 at the national, provincial and district levels. The sharp increase in the

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number of learners offering Business Studies between 2013 and 2015 is inexplicable as the pass rate in the subject showed a steady decline. From 2016 to 2019, the number of learners offering the subject declined at an alarming rate. This could be a result of the steady decline in the pass rate of that particular year. The number of learners offering Business Studies at the provincial and district level has been stable over the last 9 years. The provincial pass rate was below the national pass rate for 3 out of the 9 years studied (2012, 2018 and 2019). The district in which the two schools reside, however, achieved above the national and provincial pass rates in the years of the study.

1.2.5 Context

The two schools chosen for this study were situated in a previously disadvantaged "coloured" township. The schools' immediate surroundings were low-cost housing and municipal flats. The schools were identified because it was situated in working-class communities. Both schools had Afrikaans as their language of learning and teaching (LoLT). The one school, however, changed the LoLT to dual medium, meaning they offer all their subjects in both English and Afrikaans. Both schools were regarded as small schools because they had an enrolment of below 700 learners in 2017. Because of the low enrolment of learners, both schools' establishment was small. This situation caused real challenges to the school as teachers were not specialists in all the subjects the schools offered. Teachers were, therefore, forced to teach unfamiliar subjects. This could be detrimental to the achievement of learners in some subjects.

1.3 Problem statement

Learner underperformance in Business Studies is a grave concern not only in the Western Cape Province but throughout the country. According to Table 1.1, one can deduce that there was initially a steady increase in the number of learners offering the subject nationally from 2011 to 2013. Since 2015, these numbers have declined significantly. In contrast, the picture in the Western Cape is slightly different as the numbers offering the subject in the Western Cape average above 20,000 learners. Despite the big numbers, the results of the subject have declined since 2012 until 2018. The underperformance of learners in Business Studies can be attributed to various factors which will be researched and discussed in this study.

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1.4 Aim and objectives

1.4.1 Research aim

The aim of this study was to investigate the underperformance of Business Studies learners in Grade 12 from two secondary schools in a working-class community in the Western Cape.

1.4.2 Research objectives

The objectives of this investigation are therefore to:

- Define underperformance and to identify factors which contribute to this phenomenon;
- Establish to what extent a learners' socio-economic circumstances contribute to their ability to achieve;
- Investigate how curriculum policy changes influence the teaching practices of the Grade 12 Business Studies teachers and resultant learner performance;
- Outline the extent to which the availability of physical resources contributes to learner performance or underperformance; and
- Identify the kind of support provided by the Departmental Head and/or Subject Heads in promoting teaching and learning in Grade 12 Business Studies.

1.5 Research questions

1.5.1 Main research question

The main research question is: "Why are learners from working-class communities in two secondary schools in the Western Cape under-achieving in Grade 12 Business Studies?"

1.5.2 Subsidiary research questions

The subsidiary research questions are:

- What is learner achievement and what is meant by under-achievement?
- How do socio-economic circumstances impact on learner achievement in Business Studies Grade 12?

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- How do curriculum policy changes influence the teaching practices of Grade 12 Business Studies teachers and learner performance?
- To what extent do availability of physical resources contribute to learner performance or underperformance?
- What kind of support, provided by the Departmental Head and/or Subject Head, play a significant role in promoting teaching and learning in Grade 12 Business Studies?

1.6. Rationale/ Motivation for the research

As a Subject Adviser for Business Studies, I am concerned about the underachievement of Grade 12 learners in the subject, especially in working-class communities and seek to find reasons and make recommendations to minimise this problem. The Business Studies results have fluctuated since the inception of the NCS in 2006 with the first National Senior Certificate (NSC) examination in 2008. In analysing the results, most of the learners achieving A-aggregates for Business Studies are from private schools and ex-Model C schools. The results from working-class community schools are bottom-heavy, and these schools produce minimal A-aggregate learners in Business Studies. Having taught Business Economics for twenty years and as a Subject Adviser for the last sixteen years, I have experienced the changes in the subject and the subsequent decline in the results of the subject over the last sixteen years. Many studies have been conducted on underachievement or underperformance in various fields, i.e., language education, mathematics, and sciences, however, very little is known about this phenomenon namely, underachievement in Business Studies.

The Education District (ED) categorises schools into groups according to the National Senior Certificate results and from this, it was apparent that many schools: ex-HoR designated for Coloured people, ex-HoD designated for Indian people and ex-DET selected for Black people were at the bottom half with reference to the results and should receive high priority intervention from district level. It is, however, also true that learners from new WCED schools in working class communities also underperform in the subject. My study seeks to identify the reasons for this underperformance and make recommendations to ensure improved performance. Good performance in

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Business Studies can help learners obtain a bachelor's pass and, therefore, university entrance.

1.7 Significance of the research

Firstly, this research will add to the existing knowledge base regarding the underachievement of learners from poor communities and the establishment of a support policy for underachievers. This is especially important to bridge the gap between the more affluent communities and the communities where learners' socio-economic circumstances are difficult, and the support they receive from parents is non-existent.

Secondly, this study may add to the contextual understanding of the processes of sustaining a teaching and learning culture that would hopefully have positive outcomes regarding students' achievement in Grade 12 Business Studies.

Thirdly, this study will generate information that may be used by curriculum planners, educational leaders, educational managers, and lead teachers to design implementation strategies for teacher development, especially regarding teachers' content knowledge of the changed curriculum and methods to teach this curriculum with its high expectations.

Lastly, this research will add to the South African research literature regarding underperformance in Business Studies. Numerous studies within the South African context have researched underperformance, but most studies focussed on History and Mathematics.

1.8 Theoretical framework

1.8.1 Introduction

A theoretical framework as described by Adom, Hussein, and Adu (2018:438) is a "framework based on an existing theory in a field of inquiry that is related and/or reflects the hypothesis of a study. It is a blueprint that is often "borrowed" by the researcher to build his/her own house or research inquiry."

> ... a theoretical framework provides a structure for what to look for in the data, for how you think of how what you see in the data fits together, and helps you to discuss your findings more clearly, in light

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> of existing theories. A conceptual framework and a theoretical framework can therefore be regarded as “good variables which are used to inform a study to arrive at logical findings and conclusions Mensah, et.al. (2020:53).

1.8.2 Characteristics of a theoretical framework

Adom, et.al. (2018:438) posit that the theoretical framework guides and should resonate with every aspect of the research process from the definition of the problem, literature survey, methodology, presentation, and discussion of the findings as well as the conclusions that are drawn. Furthermore, Adom, et.al. (2018:438) state that the theoretical framework thus aids the researcher in finding an appropriate research approach, analytical tools and procedures for his/her research inquiry.

1.8.3 Difference between a conceptual framework and a theoretical framework

According to Adom, et.al. (2018:440), the difference between a conceptual and a theoretical framework is illustrated in Table 1.2 below:

1.8.4 Critical social theory as theoretical framework

This study is underpinned by the critical social theory which focusses on how the learners’ social circumstances impact on their ability to achieve using specific concepts (see Chapter Two) to illuminate the factors which cause this phenomenon.

Freeman (2010) and Schugurensky (1998) highlight important issues from Freire’s book “The pedagogy of the oppressed”. “Freire labelled the education system banking education where the teacher is the subject of the learning process, and the learners are its objects; the role of the teacher is to deposit contents in the mind of the learner as if it were a tabula rasa to be filled with information” Schugurensky,(1998:19).

In opposition to the banking model, Freire (1971) proposed a liberal or emancipatory system, based on a performative relationship between teachers and learners on critical thinking and on social transformation. Freeman (2010:187) states that it is thus unsurprising that critical pedagogy is not a unitary set of texts, beliefs, convictions, or assumptions, and some scholars may prefer the plural, critical pedagogies as the field has undergone many transformations. Critical social scholars have installed new strategies to confront changing social and historical circumstances.

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This thesis draws on Freire's (1971) theory of critical pedagogy to examine the impact of socio-economic circumstances on learning and the role of South African teachers in low-income schools to encourage students to act to improve issues of inequality, violence, and insecurity.

According to Cappy (2016:120), in a context of high levels of inequality and racism, South African education has been publicly tasked with promoting social justice, democracy, and social cohesion. Cappy (2016:123) states that:

> While curricula and textbooks were re-written after apartheid to reflect the values of the new country, teachers play an oft-underappreciated role in fostering social change. Teacher agency may be constrained or facilitated by their environment, including class size, violence, low wages, educational curricula, political agendas, and exclusion or inclusion from decision-making concerning educational policies. These historical and contemporary structures restrict or enable certain options available for teachers to enact their agency.

Ngwenyama (1997:151) posits that traditional social theorists see themselves as observers of social situations whose research is completed when they achieve a sound explanation or understanding of it. Traditional social theorists can, therefore, be regarded as mere observers of a social situation. Critical social theorists, however, believe that they cannot be mere observers, but influencers of the social system they are studying and can be influenced by these systems. Ngwenyama (1997:151) further suggests that for critical social theorists, the responsibility of a researcher in a social situation does not end with the development of sound explanations and understandings of it but must extend to a critique of unjust and inequitable conditions of the situation from which people require emancipation.

According to the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC), poor performance can be attributed to the lack of content specification and the low overlap with international curricula. Reddy in Fleisch, (2008:12) ascribes "poverty, resources and infrastructure, low teacher qualifications, poor learning cultures and poor language proficiency" as the major factors contributing to low scores in assessment, which results in low achievement.

This study focussed on some aspects listed by Cappy (2016), i.e. violence which is embedded within the gangsterism which was rife in the communities in which the two schools were situated. In addition, the continual changes in the curriculum since 1994

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and the educational environment which includes the context of the schools and the context of the school community play a pivotal role in the underachievement of learners are also focus areas.

1.9 Literature review

1.9.1 Introduction

The method I used to review the existing literature was to engage in a broad search for related literature using Google Scholar and the electronic database called Ebscohost and Sage Journals Online using the keywords: Western Cape Education Department; Grade 12 learners; Business Studies results; Outcomes-Based Education; Business Studies curriculum; curriculum changes; teaching and learning; case study; underperformance; underachievement.

To find the relevant information required to organise the study, I accessed various documents namely: The NCS, the National protocol on Assessment (NPA), Learning programme guidelines (LPG), National Assessment Guidelines, the Subject Assessment guidelines (SAG), CAPS and the examination guidelines. Using these data-basis I could access various documents relating to the study and could use them to conduct the literature review.

In this section, I provide a brief account of the main issues, namely achievement and underachievement, the relationship between socio-economic circumstances and learner achievement; the Business Studies teacher and the curriculum; physical resources and teaching and learning; and the support of the Departmental Head, which are elaborated upon in Chapter Two.

1.9.2 Achievement and Underachievement

The terms underachievement and underperformance are used interchangeably in educational literature. Inglish and Aers (2008) define achievement as the sum total of human experience, judged against predictions based on prior attainment. Underachievement is not meeting these predictions, while underperformance is deviating from expected norms (Fleisch, 2008).

Rimm (1997) defines underachievement as a discrepancy between a child's test scores and their ability, or between school performance and ability. Plewis (1991)

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distinguishes between sociological and psychological perspectives: sociologists view underachievement as a group phenomenon, while psychologists see it as an individual issue.

Smith (2003) notes that underachievement is often defined by grades lower than the norm, but this doesn't consider factors like social class and attitude.

The concept of underachievement remains ill-defined, as it often relies on the discrepancy between predicted and actual grades. Different types of achievers and educational climates need to be studied for a more meaningful understanding.

The WCED defines any school or subject with a pass rate of less than 60% as underachieving.

1.9.3 Relationship Between Socio-Economic Circumstances and Learner Achievement

Poor performance can be attributed to learners' socio-economic circumstances and culture. Students from diverse social and political backgrounds may lack motivation due to non-academic disruptions, especially in township schools during the struggle for democracy (Masitsa, 2008).

Many learners live in overcrowded communities, facing issues like disease outbreaks, unemployment, and exposure to gangsterism, drugs, and alcohol. Lack of parental supervision and support, often due to parents' illiteracy or need for children to work, further hampers their education.

Cultural practices like circumcision and coming of age also disrupt schooling, making it hard for learners to catch up. Overloaded curricula and overcrowded classrooms prevent teachers from giving personal attention, leading some learners to drop out rather than repeat a year.

1.9.4 Business Studies Teacher and the Curriculum

Teachers are crucial to any educational system and must be well-equipped with knowledge, skills, and tools. Ogunbanjo (2001) highlights that many South African teachers are underqualified, often products of poor schooling themselves. This lack of knowledge and methodology leads to poor learner performance. Teachers often teach beyond their qualifications, resulting in high failure rates and low-quality passes. Many

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are demotivated due to limited career advancement and lack of support from the Senior Management Team (SMT), parents, and the education department. Rigid teaching methods, like the lecture method, can lead to learner boredom and poor performance.

1.9.5 Physical Resources and Teaching and Learning

The relationship between physical and financial resources in schools is crucial for quality education. Under-resourced schools struggle with inadequate physical resources, while well-resourced schools can provide a supportive environment. Efforts to bridge this gap involve additional funding to ensure equal access to quality education (Weber, 2006).

Physical resources include textbooks, furniture, laboratories, references, and classrooms. Human resources refer to the number of qualified teachers. Apartheid policies left a legacy of unequal resource distribution, with formerly black areas having significant infrastructure backlogs compared to well-equipped formerly white schools. The Department of Education (DoE) has developed policies to make resource provision more equitable (Gibberd, 2007).

The lack of resources is a legacy of past unequal spending on education. For example, in 1975/76, the apartheid regime spent significantly more on white pupils compared to African pupils.

1.9.6 Support of the Departmental Head

The Departmental Head (DH) is part of the School Management Team (SMT), which includes the principal, Deputy Principals, DHs, and Senior Teachers Government Gazette, (1999); SACE, (2018). According to the South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1966, the SMT's main role is to administer school activities. The principal oversees overall administration, while the DH monitors learner registration, coordinates management systems, mediates between educators and the SMT, and oversees teaching and learning Maake, (2013).

The DH's role, as outlined in the PAM document Government Gazette, (1999), includes teaching, ensuring the department functions effectively, organizing extra-curricular activities, and promoting education. DHs collaborate with colleagues to maintain teaching standards, inspire administrative efficiency, and develop their

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departments. They engage in initiatives, maintain open communication with stakeholders, and support colleagues Tapala, Mentz, & Fuller, (2021). Their duties also involve assisting teachers with methodology and new assessment practices.

1.10 National and Provincial Policy Frameworks for Learner Achievement

1.10.1 Department of Education's Framework/Policy for Support for Learner Achievement

The High School Intervention Project (HSIP) supports schools with pass rates below 60% and those at risk with pass rates below 70% in subjects like Business Studies. This program Support includes school visits, on-site assistance, regular subject group meetings, and systemic interventions. Teacher professional development is provided through regular training sessions by the District Office and Head Office. A comprehensive tutoring program was implemented, encompassing Saturday sessions as well as winter and spring schools, aimed at supporting students with challenging material and preparing them for examinations. It's crucial to identify factors at school and in the community that impact learner achievement.

1.10.2 Studies Conducted in the South African Context for Business Studies and Other Related Subjects

Numerous studies on learner performance in South Africa focus mainly on sciences, with few addressing commerce, particularly Business Studies.

Acharya (2017): Identified factors influencing learning difficulties in Mathematics, including student-related factors e.g., anxiety, prior knowledge, lack of support, teacher-related factors, and environmental factors. Maemeko, Nkengbeza, Ntabi (2017): Examined teachers' perceptions of poor academic performance in Grade 12, citing lack of discipline, motivation, resources, poor learning environment, and unqualified teachers.

Thaba-Nkadimene and Mmakola (2019): Studied teacher graduates' performance in Limpopo, highlighting teacher competence, school, and home contextual factors as major contributors to poor performance.

Nkosi and Farhangpour (2017): Investigated inner (school-related) and outer (home-related) factors affecting Grade 12 learners' performance in Mpumalanga, noting the

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impact of socio-economic circumstances, parental status, school management, teaching language, teacher preparation, resources, and class sizes.

These studies consistently show that both internal and external factors influence learner performance.

1.11 Research Methodology

A detailed discussion is in Chapter Three.

1.11.1 Methodological Paradigm

The research primarily uses a qualitative method to study the impact of circumstances on learners and teachers, focusing on how these factors affect learner achievement. Literature was reviewed to compare observations with existing research on underachievement.

Qualitative research explores complex phenomena to describe and understand them from participants' perspectives. It is also known as the interpretative, constructivist, or post-positivist approach Leedy & Ormrod, (2005:94). Researchers start with general questions, collect verbal data from a few participants, and classify this data to understand the studied situation.

This approach was suitable for studying the academic underachievement of Grade 12 Business Studies learners in specific schools. There is limited literature on this specific issue, though much exists on underachievement in other subjects. Data was gathered through questionnaires, observations, interviews, and past senior certificate results.

Qualitative researchers seek to understand intricate situations, often using observations and research to describe occurrences from participants' viewpoints. They write detailed descriptions and interpretations, entering situations with an open mind and interacting with participants. Data and patterns emerge from the research, which is content bound. Both verbal and non-verbal data are used, with inductive reasoning and subjective analysis. Researchers construct interpretive narratives and often include participants' language and perspectives.

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1.11.2 Research Approach: Interpretive

Qualitative data is collected through observations, interviews, and documentary evidence. While applicable to real-world settings, it lacks internal and external validity, limiting generalizability. Data interpretation is more subjective.

In contrast, the positivist approach views reality as objective and knowable, based on observations rather than beliefs (Babbie, 2008:36; Henning, Van Rensburg & Smit, 2004:17; Costley, Elliot, & Gibbs, 2010:84). Positivist researchers aim to verify hypotheses and predict phenomena, relying only on observable and measurable knowledge.

1.11.3 Research Design: Case Study

Case studies are a common qualitative research method that optimize understanding by addressing scholarly questions and gaining credibility through triangulation Stake, (2005). Triangulation uses multiple perspectives to clarify meaning and verify observations, helping to identify different realities.

Case studies provide in-depth ethnographic details often lost in large-scale statistical investigations Jansen, (2002). I used an instrumental case study to understand the underachievement of high school learners, focusing on two underperforming schools and their contexts Stake, (2005).

1.11.4 Research Instruments and Data Gathering

I used classroom observations, semi-structured interviews with teachers, journal entries, questionnaires for learners and teachers, document analysis, and literature review. Observations were unstructured to allow flexibility, though this can lead to irrelevant data collection and altered subject behavior (Leedy & Omrod, 2005; Kelly, 2006). Observation sheets helped assess how teachers adapt their methods.

Interviews, both unstructured and semi-structured, provided valuable data but varied responses can hinder comparisons. Semi-structured interviews helped focus on research questions and probe deeper meanings.

I kept a journal for reflections and used previous research to develop questionnaires. Data collection in qualitative research can take various forms, including statistical data.

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1.11.5 Sampling

The sample included learners, Business Studies teachers, and DHs at two schools, using purposeful sampling. This non-random method selected:

- Three top-performing learners, three average learners and four low-performing learners.

This provided insights into the impact of various factors on learner performance within a specific socio-economic context.

1.11.6 Data Analysis

Qualitative data analysis was used, involving the following steps Lacy & Luff, (2009):

- Familiarisation with data, Transcription of recordings, Organisation and indexing, Anonymising sensitive data, Coding, Identification and re-coding of themes, Development of categories, Exploration of relationships, Refinement of themes, Theory development and testing, Report writing with data excerpts.

Triangulation, a multi-method approach, was employed, using data triangulation to enhance the study's validity.

1.11.7 Trustworthiness and Validity

Pratt, Kaplan, and Whittington (2020) state that trustworthy research ensures replicability and allows readers to assess the honesty and reasonableness of the research process and conclusions. O'Kane, Smith, and Lerman (2021) reference Denzin and Lincoln (1994) and Lincoln and Guba (1985), defining trustworthiness through credibility, confirmability, dependability, and transferability. McGinley, Zhang, and Zheng (2021) outline these criteria:

Validity refers to the extent data allows meaningful and defensible conclusions, distinguishing between internal and external validity. Using various methods and resources, I ensured informed conclusions. For external validity, I used a representative sample of learners and teachers from disadvantaged backgrounds and sought feedback from colleagues to verify conclusions.

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1.12 Ethical Considerations

Ethics in research is guided by four principles:

Informed Consent: Participants must be fully informed about the research and agree voluntarily without coercion. They should know the duration, methods, risks, and purpose of the study Soble in Christians, (2005).

Honesty: Misrepresentation of information is not tolerated.

Privacy and Confidentiality: Participants' identities and research locations must be protected, with data made public only under anonymity Christians, (2005).

Accuracy: All collected and reported data must be accurate.

Ethical clearance was obtained from the Humanities and Social Science Research Ethics Committee of the University of the Western Cape and the WCED. Permission was granted to use Grade 12 results and CEMIS information.

Participants' consent was obtained, ensuring their privacy and confidentiality. No participant was exposed to harm. Written permission from school principals was secured for observations and interviews.

1.13 Structure of the thesis

The structure of the thesis is organised in six chapters, each with a specific purpose.

Chapter 1: Introduction, background, and context

This chapter provides the introduction, background, and context to serve as a basis for developing the problem statement, the resultant purpose, aims and objectives of the study which inform the research questions. These research questions focus on the actual phenomenon, which is constructed as a case study representing a qualitative research design. Chapter 1 also includes the research methodology which encapsulates the methodological paradigm, the research approach, the research design, research instruments, sampling, data analysis, trustworthiness and validity of the research and ethical considerations.

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Chapter 2: Literature review and conceptual framework

This chapter reviews the conceptual framework, the theoretical framework the phenomenon of underachievement of high school learners living in certain communities, the relevance of the Business Studies curriculum and the support structures at schools, curriculum policy changes and physical resources and the impact on learner achievement.

Chapter 3: Research methodology and research design

This chapter provides the research methodology, research approach, methodological paradigm, the research design and sampling, the research instruments to be used as well as the ethical considerations and trustworthiness of the study. The qualitative data analysis, demarcation of the study and storage of data concludes this chapter.

Chapter 4: Presentation of data

In this chapter I provide a description of the sampled schools. The responses of learners and teachers are discussed. This discussion is divided into biographical information of the respondents and their responses regarding their socio-economic circumstances and their behaviour towards the subject. The semi-structured interviews were analysed using the qualitative design. The questionnaires were analysed using the quantitative design. DBE and WCED documents regarding the results of Grade 12 Business Studies, were studied.

Chapter 5: Analysis and interpretation of data

This Chapter discusses the foundation for analysis to explain the method of enquiry. Furthermore, it provides an analysis and discussion relating to the questionnaires and focus group interviews. Qualitative analysis and interpretations of data according to categories and themes.

Chapter 6: Summary, Findings and Recommendations

This chapter provides a summary and findings of the research. Recommendations are made based on the findings of the research. This chapter indicates the limitations of the study and possible avenues for future research.

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1.14. Conclusion

The academic underachievement of learners in our schools is a big concern for everybody in educational circles. This research aims to investigate the causes of under achievement in Grade 12 Business Studies, and how this problem can be lessened. A study of this nature would benefit all teachers and learners, not only learners in working class communities as learner achievement or underachievement in Business Studies is not unique to underperforming schools or working-class communities. There is a general lack of a culture of learning at schools, which can be because of a lack of proper structures such as a code of conduct for learners and teachers in most of the township secondary schools. A lack of discipline is rife in most township schools.

The next chapter reviews the literature on the topic and presents the theoretical and conceptual frameworks of the study.

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CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

In this section I describe the methodology used to review the literature underpinning this study, the conceptual and theoretical frameworks and review the literature that relates to the study.

This chapter explores various concepts originating from literature that inform achievement and performance of learners in Business Studies in Grade 12. An understanding of achievement, underachievement and underperformance within various contexts and societies is crucial for this study. The literature review conducted for this study and presented in this chapter serve multiple functions as suggested by Delport and Fouché (2005). This includes the need to present assumptions underlying the broad research question, to demonstrate the researcher's knowledge of the field of study and to identify key debates and gaps in previous research.

This chapter, therefore, consists of five sections, namely the introduction; definition and purpose and methodology of a literature review followed by an illumination of the conceptual framework that provides an overview of literature on underperformance and related concepts. It also describes the characteristics which influence the performance of learners in specific communities. This study presents an overview of the South African National Curriculum, with particular focus on the Business Studies Curriculum. The changes in the curriculum, since 1994, consist of the curriculum known as the NATED 550 which was the interim curriculum, followed by curriculum 2005, the RNCS and NCS, followed by CAPS. CAPS is, however, not a new curriculum, but rather an extension of the NCS.

This overview is an important basis for achieving the primary aim of the research, which is to explore and examine the reasons for the underperformance of Business Studies learners in Grade 12.

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2.2 Definition, purpose, and methodology of literature review

2.2.1 Definition and purpose

A literature review is defined by Fry, Scammel, and Barker (2017:1) as:

> ...a literature review constitutes an integral part of the research process in both the qualitative and the quantitative paradigm, given that it serves to inform the researcher of the present state of knowledge on the topic to be investigated. It also provides the researcher with valuable information regarding the methods used in previous studies that might influence the present approach and locates the proposed inquiry within the context of previous research.

According to Rhoades, (2011:61), “A literature review can be defined by its guiding concept or topical focus: an account of what was previously published on a specific topic. The literature review can take on different forms, i.e., narrative, systematic, and meta-analytic reviews”. This study uses the narrative form for the literature review as it summarises different views of the topic researched.

Paul and Barari (2021) mention that any new study should build on previous findings to contribute to new knowledge formation. They further state that a literature review is a qualitative process assembling, arranging, and assessing existing literature in a research domain which provides a comprehensive picture of what is known and proposing directions for future research based on the unknown in that research domain. This allows for the research topic to evolve and allows a researcher to provide a current view of what is known and define the future direction of the research domain. A literature review includes all types of relevant studies from high-quality journals through subjective selection and interpretation of data to synthesize the findings of prior studies in a systematic manner. The literature review process includes defining a research question, data collection, data preparation, data analysis, and reporting.

“The primary purpose of a literature review is to support readers in understanding the research on a topic and informing readers on the strengths and weaknesses of studies within the study” according to Rhoades, (2011:61).

2.2.2 Methodology

I started the research by defining the topic “learner achievement in Business Studies in working class communities” which I planned to explore. The research questions

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streamlined and strengthened my literature search as the use of keywords emanating from the title and each research question enabled me to find relevant sources which assisted me in conducting the study. I used a variety of sources such as Google Scholar, Ebscohost and Sage Journals through the UWC online library where I could access documents relevant to my study. Various books on the topics were consulted. My literature research was always guided by the main research question and subsidiary questions using keywords such as achievement and underachievement, socio-economic circumstances, curriculum change, NCS, OBE, WCED, DBE, resources and teacher support.

2.3 Conceptual framework

2.3.1 Introduction

According to Mensah, Agyemang, Acquah, Babah, and Dontoh (2020), the theoretical framework is drawn from existing theoretical literature whereas a conceptual framework includes all aspects of the research. The conceptual framework can therefore be described as “the big picture or vision, comprising the totality of the research”, according to Mensah, et.al. (2020:53).

The conceptual framework clarifies the conceptual meaning which the study adopts which includes the concepts studied in this research. The conceptual framework discusses and describes underachievement and underperformance and the impact of social and societal circumstances which impact on learning. It also discusses the South African Business Studies curriculum and how changes in the curriculum influenced the methodology of teachers and thus the performance of learners.

2.3.2 Characteristics of a conceptual framework

This research was based on a conceptual framework, although some researchers use the terms theoretical framework and conceptual framework interchangeably. Holiday (2001) describes a conceptual framework as covering the main features of a research design.

Tamene, (2016:51) defines a conceptual framework as “a network/interlinked system, or relationship of assumptions, expectations, beliefs. It is a tentative theory that guides the research”. Tamene (2016) concludes that a conceptual framework is the result

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joining several related concepts to explain or predict a broader understanding of the phenomenon of interest. In this study, the phenomenon under investigation was the underachievement or underperformance of Grade 12 learners in Business Studies.

Table number 2.1: The difference between theoretical framework and conceptual framework

Theoretical Framework	**Conceptual Framework**
It provides a general or broader set of ideas within which a study belongs	It refers to specific or narrower ideas a researcher utilizes in his/her study
It is based on existing theory/theories in the literature which has been tested and validated by other scholars.	It is based on the concepts which are the main variables in a study
It is in the form of a model that pivots a study, with its exponents and the results of their studies	It is a researcher's own constructed model that s/he uses to explain the relationship that exists between the main variables in his/her study. It can also be an adaptation of a model in an existing theory which a researcher adapts to suit his/her research purpose
It is well developed designed and accepted	Its design is not accepted, but it's a proposal of the researcher's answer to the research problem s/he has defined
It offers a focal point for approaching the unknown research in a specific field of inquiry	It is the framework that shows logically how the research inquiry is to be undertaken
It consists of theories that seem interrelated with their propositions deduced	It consists of concepts interconnected to explain the relationships between them

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	and how the researcher assets to answer the research problem defined
It is used to test theories, to predict and control the situations within the context of a research inquiry	It is aimed at encouraging the development of a theory that would be useful to practitioners in the field

Adom, et.al (2018:440)

2.4 Concepts: Literature review

2.4.1 Underachievement or underperformance

"Underachievement" can be defined as the degree to which a pupil could be expected to achieve based on prior attainment, or in comparison with another group, such as children from more prosperous homes. Quality of education, or achievement is determined by the national rate of education, academic quality, extra education, and graduate potential, according to Mahal (2021).

Gallagher, (2015:26) defines underachievement as “the difference between potential and actual output”. Underachievement can therefore be defined as the difference between expectations and performance compared to learners in the same age group. Delisle (1992) in Gallagher (2015:27), however, maintains that: “Underachievement is perceived through the eyes of the observer who is influenced by predetermined expectations.” If underachievement is, therefore, defined in direct relationship to achievement, then underachievement is seen as a failure to meet certain criteria.

According to Gallagher, (2015:27), “...an alternative interpretation of underachievement is to regard achievement, according to Sternberg’s Successful Intelligence Theory (2011) as a learner’s inability to transfer skills and knowledge which they have mastered when they are required to do so”. Strictly speaking, these are measures of low achievement rather than "underachievement", and where reference is made to underachievement in this investigation, it refers to low attainment in comparison to peers.

Vang, (2005:10) states that “Researchers have linked academic underachievement to the lack of academic language”. Subject specific terminology is used in Business Studies and certain cognitive verbs are used in assessing Business Studies.

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Language deficiency, therefore, leads to low academic achievement and low-test scores. Second language learners are, therefore, at a higher risk of underachieving academically. In South Africa, the Language of Learning and Teaching (LOLT) of most of the township learners is English, which is not their mother tongue and could impact their studies negatively.

Renzulli, Baum, Hebert, McCluskey (1999:220) suggest some factors contributing to underachievement of students, i.e.:

- Emotional issues, including dysfunctional families, depression, perfectionism, and the students' extraordinary need for attention.
- Social and behavioural concerns. Included in this category were the influence of an inappropriate peer group, questioning of accepted values, and lack of internal controls and social skills.
- Inappropriate curriculum. Many of the students simply were not motivated by their regular schoolwork. Some believed that the material presented no challenge; others preferred different styles of learning; and
- Learning disabilities and poor self-regulation. The presence (or suspicion of the presence) of a learning disability contributed to underachievement in many cases.

From the above-mentioned, it is clear that various factors impact on the academic achievement of learners. These factors are influenced by learner motivation. The dictionary defines motivation as the reason or reasons for acting in a particular way. In a school context, motivation can be regarded as the single most important factor which influences learner performance. Motivation within a school context can, therefore, be defined as a learner's resolve or intention to work hard at their studies. Motivation can be divided into intrinsic motivation, which refers to the learner's desire to achieve and is encouraged by their interest in the subject matter, extrinsic motivation where external factors such as parent or teacher approval is at play and competence motivation which refer to a learner's desire to achieve.

Karaduman and Ali, (2013:165) define underachievement as "a discrepancy between ability and performance that persists over time." These authors state that underachievement may occur at any intellectual ability, from learners with superior intellect to learners with mild to severe learning problems. They also state that "if the

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child is not making appropriate efforts, for example, in schoolwork completion and study, the child is underachieving. Thus, if the process of learning is not taking place the child must be underachieving and that underachievers fail to meet the demands of the school situation" Karaduman and Ali, (2013:165).

Jones and Myhill, (2014:531) state that underachievement is concerned with potential, not lack of ability, while high and low achievement are concerned with performance. In an article by Chere and Hlalele (2014), various opinions and definitions were quoted from numerous authors, some authors define underachievement as learners or students performing below their potential, while others defined it as a discrepancy between ability and achievement. It seems that there is little consensus on how best to define underachievement.

Chere and Hlalele (2014) further state the conclusion could be that learners lack motivation, but in fact extracurricular factors could distract learners and influence their interest in academic achievement. Middleton, Ricks, Wright and Grand (2013:1), however, state that: "Learning styles can also be related to attitude, especially, if course instruction is being conducted in a manner that is opposite a student's learning style. This could make the student uncomfortable and disinterested in the subject" which could be regarded as lack of student motivation rather than a disjuncture between learning styles and methodology.

Colangelo, Kerr, Christensen, and Maxey, (1993:155) purport that "educational researchers are in conflict about whether underachievement actually exists". Colangelo, et.al. (1993) defines underachievement as a situation where a learner's academic performance is much lower than prediction in achievement test scores, IQ, or past academic performance. Underachievement can, therefore, be defined as achievement by students lower than their expected performance.

Jones and Mayhill's (2014) views are that underachievement is more concerned with unrealized potential rather than any lack of ability. They distinguish between the sociologist and psychologist definition of underachievement. According to Jones and Myhill (2014), the sociologist defines underachievement by comparing a learner's achievement to that of a group while the psychologist is more concerned with individual achievement.

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According to Ziegler, (2012:3), it is apparent that “researchers do in fact agree that underachievers perform at a level, below that of their actual potential”. Kluz (2021) concurs with this statement, stating that underachievement is the discrepancy between a student’s ability and their actual achievement.

Prashnig, (2006:1) states that this inability to succeed in school is often accompanied by behavioural problems in class and at home, which lead to truancy, criminal records, involvement with gangs, alcohol, drugs and antisocial behaviour towards others and themselves.

The terms under achievement and under performance are used to address the same phenomenon; it is, therefore, used interchangeably in educational literature. Inglish and Aers, (2008:14) define achievement as “the sum total of human experience, but states that in academic circles achievement is judged against a prediction”. Predictions are set according to a pupil’s prior attainment. Standards, however, are being set according to national averages. Underachievement can, therefore, be defined as not meeting prior attainment.

Underperformance can be described as the deviation from the expected norm. Underperformance can, therefore, be described as not reaching the required “levels of academic mastery” and the achievement of learners to a particular benchmark Fleisch, (2008:15).

According to Rimm, (1997:18), underachievement can be defined in terms of a relationship between two scores; children’s achievement test scores are below what their Intelligence Quotient (IQ) scores would predict. Rimm (1997:18) also defines underachievement as the discrepancy between a child’s school performance and some index of the child’s ability. If children are not working to their ability in school, they are underachieving.

Jones and Myhill (2004) posit that underachievement is concerned with potential rather than lack of ability, while achievement, high or low refers to performance. Underachievers are, therefore, regarded as those learners whose mean achievement falls below that of a specific reference group. Psychologists, on the other hand, ascribe underachievement to the individual, stating that underlying intelligence can be measured independently from that of knowledge and educational potential. Some

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teachers have implied that achievement and ability are not necessarily the same thing. Kluz, (2021:33) concurs with this statement stating that underachievement can be defined as the “discrepancy between a student’s exceptional ability and their actual achievement in school.” Underachievers are therefore described as those learners whose ability is not reflected in their performance.

The term underachievement has been used by politicians, journalists, academics and practitioners to describe relatively poor academic performance from a nation to and individual, Smith, (2003:576). Smith, (2003:576) also states that previous work on defining underachievement was mostly based on “the psychologists’ definition of underachievement”. This definition is based on the learner’s performance measured by grades which is substantially lower than the norm. She argues, however, that this definition does not consider other factors, such as social class and pupil attitude towards schooling which are widely acknowledged to contribute to academic achievement. Dawal and Mangut, (2021:124) state that “underachievement is the process by which the curriculum objectives are not acquired by the learners by way of poor achievement or other demonstration of lack of skills acquisition after a period of instruction”.

Allen, (1971:529) states that one should distinguish between different types of underachievers. One should not merely use the discrepancy between predicted results and earned results. He describes different types of students, the student with new directions, the anxious achiever, and the all-round ineffective student. He further states that the trouble with current research on underachievement is that:

> ...researchers are glutted with bias on the one hand, toward easy quantifiable and on the other hand towards the assumption that grades are the desiderata of education. Underachievement, therefore, carries the implication of personal failure, defiance, emotional disorder, and irresponsibility Allen, (1971: 529).

The WCED describes any school or subject with a pass rate of less sixty percent as an underperforming school or underperforming subject at the school. The norm of 60% pass rate is an indication of acceptable standard within the WCED. These schools could therefore not meet the set norms.

According to Barnes, (2014:4), the problem of learner underachievement or underperformance can be eliminated by making sure that the best teachers and

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subject leaders are employed to work in our schools. Finally, Jha and Kelleher (2006: xiv) state that it is generally accepted that a child's achievement at school will be determined by factors both inside and outside the school environment.

Student achievement can, therefore, be influenced by circumstances and factors within the school as well as outside of the school community.

It is clear from the above definitions that scholars do not agree on what underachievement or underperformance is, but that underachievement is caused by various factors and can lead to diverse behavioural tendencies in learners. All learners thus do not react in the same way to under achievement.

2.5 Working class communities, socio-economic circumstances, and academic achievement/performance.

2.5.1 Introduction

In the education sphere the occurrence of learners from specific social standing who are not achieving to a said norm or standard is cause for serious concern. The national pass rate in the National Senior Certificate (NSC) examinations was 72.5% in 2016, Department of Basic Education DBE (2016:7). This percentage is based on the minimum requirements, i.e. learners must attain a pass rate of 40% in three subjects, 30% in three subjects and 0-29% in one subject, National Policy pertaining to Programme and Promotion Requirements of the National Curriculum Statement Grades R-12 (NPPPPR, 2011:21). This result is an indication that 27.5% of the 610 178 learners who wrote the national senior certificate examination failed the examinations. These results are important to this study as the 2016 cohort was used as subjects in this research. Analysing these statistics, everyone in the educational sphere should be concerned about these learners failing to achieve at this minimum level. This study which investigates the underperformance of Grade 12 Business Studies learners emerged from the enquiry to understand the reason or reasons why learners from certain communities fail to achieve at an acceptable level. The minimum pass rate for Business Studies, which is one of the elective subjects is 30%. In 2016, only 73.7% of the learners offering Business Studies at national level attained a pass percentage of 30%, indicating an underachievement of 26.6% DBE (2016:5). This occurrence is not limited to South African society. In 2013, the British Education

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Department investigated the underperformance of white working-class learners. The "Ofsted's report Unseen Children: Access and Achievement 20 years on" concluded that white British children eligible for free school meals were now the lowest-performing children at age 16, with only 31% of this group achieving five or more subjects at A- level to C-level including English and Mathematics in the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE).

2.5.2 Defining working class and socio-economic circumstances.

The Collins Dictionary of Sociology defines working class as: manual workers, i.e., those who labour primarily with their hands, rather than with their brains. Socio-economic status can be defined as an individual's achievements in education; employment and occupational status; and income and wealth, according to Considine (2002). It is, therefore, clear that socio-economic circumstances can be defined as an individual's ability to provide or not provide for his social and economic needs.

2.5.3 The relationship between socio-economic circumstances and academic achievement

Numerous factors contribute to the educational performance and achievements of learners. These factors include socio-economic status, family structure, parenting style and peer influences.

The Ofsted Report U.K. Parliament (2014) reiterated that social standing can be compared to poverty and that poverty does not impede learning, but it has many characteristics which impacts on the learners' willingness to achieve.

> Of course, how much money a child's parents earned last year (the qualifier for the lunch program) does not itself impede learning. But poverty is a good proxy, sometimes, for lower class status because it is so highly associated with other characteristics of that status. Lower class families have lower parental literacy levels, poorer health, more racial isolation, less stable housing, more exposure to crime and other stresses, less access to quality early childhood experiences, less access to good after school programs (and less ability to afford these even if they did have access), earlier childbearing and more frequent unwed childbearing, less security that comes from stable employment, more exposure to environmental toxins (e.g., lead) that diminish cognitive ability, etc. Each of these predicts lower achievement for children, but none of these (including low

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> income) itself causes low achievement, and lower social class families don't necessarily have all of these characteristics, but they are likely to have many of them.

The Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL) in the Ofsted Report U.K. Parliament (2014) argued that home and family influences on underachievement were particularly significant because young people spend most of their lives outside of school. The following factors were described as of particular significance to learner achievement: aspirations, expectations, access to social capital, parental engagement, and time spent doing homework, use of tutors, and parenting skills.

All children when they are younger have high aspirations and expectations, but this diminishes as they grow older. Certain factors within the society can be held accountable for this decrease in expectations, such as siblings completing Grade 12 being unemployed. The unemployment rate of the youth in South Africa is currently 47.6%. According to tradingeconomics.com, 2017, the "Youth Unemployment Rate in South Africa decreased to 47.60 per cent in the third quarter of 2016 from 53.70 per cent in the second quarter of 2016. Youth Unemployment Rate in South Africa averaged 51.14 per cent from 2013 until 2016". Although the unemployment rate of the youth has decreased in the third quarter of 2016, it is still almost 50 % of the youth of South Africa who is unemployed.

Knapp (2001); Thomson and Harris (2004) in Leithwood, (2010:26) state that "while the general attainment levels of poor children have improved over time, the gap between the majority of children from low-income families and their more affluent peers has widened". In South Africa, however, where parents from lower income groups are employed and can afford the fees in the ex-model C schools, formerly known as the white schools or schools in formerly white "areas", they tend to enrol their learners in these schools. It is also clear that many of these learners then perform at a better level than their peers who live in the same circumstances but attend schools in the areas or communities where they live. This occurrence, the achievement of learners according to their abilities, is therefore a clear indication that poverty should not be regarded as a factor that influences learner achievement.

Moloi and Kamper (2010:259) reveal "...three themes which are of particular relevance for creating a supportive teaching and learning environment for socio-economically

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challenged learners, namely school-parent partnerships, teacher leadership and value systems". Moloi and Kamper (2010:261) further propose: "...that schools must therefore find ways in which principals, teachers, parents and the surrounding community make educational sense of their lives within a highly challenging socio-economic context". This could be achieved by the principal's understanding of how to mobilise the surrounding community to co-create a supportive teaching and learning environment, the teacher's ability to employ the cultural wealth learners bring from the community within which they live. Leithwood (2010:25), however, states that "there are common factors that make turnaround difficult and render some schools, in certain contexts less able to raise the performance of their students." It is quite clear that many scholars agree that parental involvement and interest plays a significant role in learners' aspiration and expectations and, therefore, in their willingness to achieve. It is, however, not always possible for parents in townships in South Africa to play a significant role as circumstances beyond their control hinder them from playing an active role in their child's school career. Circumstances such as leaving home before learners to go to school and arriving late from work due to the poor public transport system in South Africa can be accredited as contributing factors to parents' inability to be involved. Grobler and Mestry (2009) concur, stating that learners from low socio-economic status lacks parental involvement and encouragement to complete their schooling.

Leithwood (2010:27) alludes to the fact that governments persist in tackling this phenomenon of underachievement or underperformance with a one size fits all approach by imposing standardised models of improvement on failing schools, and not considering the impact of other elements such as poverty on flailing achievement.

According to Leithwood (2010:29), schools "are able to overcome the negative influences of social disadvantage through a variety of strategies, approaches, and interventions, all centrally and persistently aimed at improving teaching and learning". Bayat, Louw, and Ravinda (2014) agree with this statement affirming that:

> Principals working in socio-economically disadvantaged areas with poor parents who do not have the resources to engage with the school as actively as those Principals in former model C or private schools, they are however able to produce thriving schools. This attests to not only their personal traits but to the exceptional examples of leadership displayed by these individuals.

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Kamper and Moloi (2010:262), in their study of two schools in South Africa, found that principals' main reason for success is the "...outstanding corporate relations, within the school and with the community" and "the key aspect of our success in this school is discipline".

Lenssen (2011:35) alludes that the social environment "continues to be a key predictor of both academic success and the nature of an individual's subsequent professional career." Accessibility to education plays a leading role in learners' career choices. A major factor that hinders accessibility to education in South Africa is funding. South Africa is currently in a crisis regarding higher education where students are demanding "no fee" university education. Although bursaries and loans are available demands for funds are much higher than the supply thereof. This indicates that many students would not be able to attend higher education institutions because of a lack of funding. Students would, therefore, be compelled to choose a career which is affordable and not necessarily their career of choice.

A student or learner regarded as "at risk" can be defined as a learner who is at risk of academic failure. Vang (2005) mentions limited language proficiency, poverty, economic disadvantage, or specific race or geographic location as factors which could lead to academic failure.

Wright (2013) regards the socio-economic status of learners as an important factor for predicting student achievement which influences a child's life inside and outside of the classroom. Academic achievement is influenced and impacted by several other factors, namely parenting, motivation, and peer influences. Bayat, Louw and Ravinda (2014) concur that the lack of parental involvement and interest in their children, in their general wellbeing as well as their schoolwork is a major contributing factor in low achievement of learners from poorer communities.

Wright (2013) cites that children experiencing pervasive poverty from a young age are at the highest risk for low academic achievement and deviant behaviour problems. However, socioeconomics does not solely affect a student's future success. Wright (2013), Price (2008) also states that minorities and children from low socio-economic backgrounds show lower levels of motivation than their white, counterparts from higher socio-economic backgrounds.

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Much attention is paid to socio-economic status regarding children's educational achievement. The socio-economic group in which a child grows up plays a profound role in the child's educational attainment and may have lasting effects. The influence of socioeconomics on success is up for debate as there is conflicting research concerning what role it plays in a child's ability to learn and be successful. Some argue it is a leading factor in a child's overall attainment, while others argue that a strong curriculum or the home environment may ease the effects of socio-economic circumstances.

2.6 Curriculum policy changes

Some scholars, like Professor Diane Reay, Dr Chris Wood, and Professor Becky Francis in Ofsted (2014) are of the opinion that the relevance of the school curriculum can influence learner achievement as the learners' interests and passion should be considered when offering school subjects. In contrast to these views, Dr Kevan Collins (Chief Executive, Education Endowment Foundation) in Ofsted (2014) argued that: "pedagogy trumps curriculum every time. It is very clear that the way you teach and how you teach is always more powerful than just changing the curriculum".

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation in Ofsted (2013) mentioned that "Schools do make a difference to outcomes. While students' social and economic circumstances are the most important factors explaining their educational results, they have found that about 14% of the incidence of low achievement is attributable to school quality".

Several researchers, Majola (2020), Moolman, et.al. (2020) reported that when underachieving students completed a meaningful project, positive gains in self-esteem, academic self-efficacy, and overall motivation occurred. This is an indication that when learners find the content to be interesting, they might achieve on a higher level. Learners, who find schoolwork tedious, are more likely to be prejudiced by the abler learners than the less able ones. In classrooms where a single curriculum is covered by all learners, some of these learners may find school restrictive, frustrating, and uninspiring. Although the South African curriculum includes many subjects, schools tend to streamline their curriculum by placing certain subjects into certain "blocks", and in the process, exclude some learners from certain subjects. At many

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schools' learners are excluded because some subjects, for example, Consumer Studies, can only be offered to a certain number of learners because of the lack of human and other resources. Wright (2013) duly states that teachers play an important role in creating a learning environment that supports and promotes learners' innate curiosity which increases motivation. Many researchers do attribute some effects on educational outcomes to socio economic standing, even if they do not consider it the single most important factor. Bayat, et al. (2014) concur that the relationship between education and affluence meant that poorer learners perform worse academically that wealthy learners. Van der Berg and Gustafson (2017:4) mention that:

> Inequality in cognitive test performance is large whether one analyses performance by socio-economic status, language, or population group. Typically, the richest 20% of the school system greatly outperforms other schools, amongst whom differences are quite small.

However, according to Chere and Hlalele (2014:828), "other factors such as inflexible curricular requirements, age-grouping, and lack of acceleration opportunities are also cited in reference to underachievement." This is apparent in South African education policies such as the promotion and progression requirements referring to the progression of learners with their age cohort regardless of their ability to master the content as stated in the National Policy Pertaining to the Programme and Promotion Requirements (NPPPPR) of the National Curriculum Statements Grades R-12 DBE, (2011:17). Learners are progressed without achieving the basic requirements of a phase or grade which leads to underperformance in subsequent grades.

Rahal (2010:11) states that "as state and federal mandates have increased the demands regarding what children should know and be able to do at each grade level, teachers are forced to put more focus on covering content and meeting defined objectives". The Business Studies teachers tend to teach towards meeting the requirements of the school-based assessment tasks which should be completed during specific weeks of the term. For example, control test 1 should be completed during week 9 or 10 of the first term as stated by the Business Studies CAPS document DBE, (2011).

Dawal and Mankilik (2021:127) conclude that "researchers found that overloaded curriculum content of basic science and technology led to underachievement of

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students in Basic Science and Technology, this makes teachers to rush to cover the syllabus".

Lorenza (2018:8) established that: "Internationally, as governments replicate each other's' curriculum policy modification, they simultaneously demand greater accountability from educators through standardised testing in core subject areas, resulting in a string of policy initiatives defined, developed, and thereafter renegotiated in implementation." Rahal (2010) agrees stating that the shortcoming of striving to complete the curriculum and achieve set standards is that learners are not taught the skills to organise, study, and cooperate. He re-iterates that as underachievers lack the skills to organise themselves and that adults (teachers and parents) must take the responsibility for teaching them organisation and self-discipline.

As stated by Lavoie (2007) in Rahal (2010:3),

> There are students who struggle in a subject and, as a result, withdraw during a lesson or demonstrate a reluctance to learn anything new because past experiences have revealed that they cannot be successful in this discipline. Such students assume that failure is inevitable and unavoidable.

This is especially true of the Grade 12 Business Studies curriculum which is loaded with content learners need to know and apply in their final examination. Apart from content, which is prescribed for Grade 12, it is expected from learners to "re-cap" content from previous grades for example the human resource function, CAPS page 34, forms of ownership, CAPS page 41 and presentation of business information CAPS page 42 which is repeated from Grade 10 and 11 (Provide the reference -author and date).

2.7 Cycles of policy change since 1990

There have been some commendable changes in the education landscape in South Africa since 1994. One can start with the interim curriculum known as NATED 550 also known as (Report 550). The subsequent changes are set out in the CAPS document as follows:

> In 1997, we introduced outcomes-based education to overcome the curricular divisions of the past, but the experience of implementation prompted a review in 2000. This led to the first curriculum revision:

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> The Revised National Curriculum Statement Grades R – 9 and the National Curriculum Statement Grades 10 – 12 (2002).
>
> Ongoing implementation challenges resulted in another review in 2009 and we revised the Revised National Curriculum Statement (2002) and the National Curriculum Statement Grades 10 – 12 to produce this document.
>
> From 2012, the two National Curriculum Statements, for Grades R-9 and Grades 10-12, respectively are combined in a single document and will simply be known as the National Curriculum Statement Grades R-12. The National Curriculum Statement for Grades R-12 builds on the previous curriculum but also updates it and aims to provide clearer specification of what is to be taught and learnt on a term-by-term basis" (DBE: 0).

(a) Changes in the Business Studies curriculum

The Business Studies changed with the introduction of the interim curriculum known as Report 550. This interim curriculum comprised of the following topics: Forms of ownership, Marketing, Financial function, Production function, Administrative function, General management and the Environment. The NCS, however, featured four main topics namely, Business Environment, Business Ventures, Business Roles and Business Operations. The business functions which consisted of 80% of the Report are: 550 Business Economics syllabus, which forms part of the main topic called Business Operations, and Forms of ownership forms a minute part of the main topic named Business Ventures. Most of the content of the Business Environment and all the content of Business Roles is new content in Business Studies.

Since 2015, an examination guideline for Business Studies (Grade 12) was introduced to accompany this CAPS document. The aim of the Examination Guidelines was to:

- Outline the format/structure of the Grade 12 question papers for Business Studies.
- Provide clarity on the depth and scope of the content to be assessed in the Grade; 12 National Senior Certificate (NSC) Examination in Business Studies.
- Assist teachers to adequately prepare learners for the examinations; and
- Serve as a guideline for the setting of various types of questions/formulation of questions when assessing the four main topics of Business Studies as stipulated in the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements/CAPS DBE (2021:3).

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According to CAPS, DBE (2011:8), the purpose of Business Studies is to ensure that learners:

- Acquire and apply essential business knowledge, skills and principles to productively and profitably conduct business in changing business environments.
- Create business opportunities, creatively solve problems and take risks, respecting the rights of others and environmental sustainability.
- Apply basic leadership and management skills and principles while working with others to accomplish business goals.
- Are motivated, self-directed, reflective lifelong learners who responsibly manage themselves and their activities while working towards business goals.
- Are committed to developing themselves and others through business opportunities and ventures; and
- Can secure formal employment and are in a position to pursue sustainable entrepreneurial and self-employment career pathways.

From the above, Business Studies aims to provide knowledge and skills to equip learners and to ensure that government's aims of economic growth are achieved.

(b) Changes in the teaching and learning practices of the Business Studies Teacher

Murphy and Meyers (2008) in Leithwood (2010:28) mention that apart from external factors, many internal school factors can contribute to poor performance of learners. These factors are different dimensions of poor teacher quality, such as poor classroom instruction, inadequate teacher knowledge and skills, limited teacher experience, teachers assigned to subjects for which they are not trained, high teacher turnover, and low teacher morale.

Rusli, Meizatri, Jasrial, Rusdinal (2021:206) postulate that "the teacher is the main factor in realising quality learning and that the quality of the process and learning outcomes are directly proportional to the quality and competence of the teacher".

Teachers should have broad-based knowledge of the content to impart knowledge well to the learners to increase the academic performance of learners. Holt and Kysilka (2006:7) state: "When you have knowledge of subjects you are expected to teach; you are better equipped to help students learn." Good teachers recognize that every learner is unique and deserves and requires special attention and adaptation of the

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learning experience. Good teaching is about recognizing and selecting instructional patterns that match the context for learning and the students being taught Holt and Kysilka, (2006:22).

Vang (2005: 9) believes that “quality teachers who deliver meaningful instruction have great influence on student learning and success”. Teachers should know the characteristics of “at risk” learners and understand that learners have different learning styles and should cater for these differences by using various teaching methods.

Rusli, et.al, (2021:210) purport that: “Successful learning and efforts to increase student achievement must start from efforts to increase teacher awareness in carrying out tasks”. Renzulli (2021:153) believes that: “The Enrichment Triad Model was designed to transform students from lesson learners and consumers of facts to producers of new knowledge”. The Triad Model is constructed on ways in which people learn in a natural setting rather than the artificially planned environment that typifies most classroom learning surroundings. People develop an interest in a subject through external stimulation, internal curiosity and necessity or a combination of these three factors. Teachers can arrange visits to business, for example, a factory for learners to experience how mass production or jobbing takes place in its natural setting. Teachers can also invite businesspeople to visit the school and speak to learners about the importance of and how to compile a business plan. To spark learners’ interest, a competition could be arranged where learners present their business plans. This competition could take the form of the “shark tank” which learners should be familiar with.

Renzulli and Reis (2021:4) provide an explanation of the purpose of the Triad Model:

The Triad Model is designed to encourage creative productivity on the part of young people by:

a) exposing them to various topics, areas of interest, and fields of study,
b) teaching them how to integrate advanced content, thinking skills, and
c) investigative and creative problem-solving methodology to self-selected areas of interest, and

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d) providing them with the opportunities, resources, and encouragement to apply these skills to self-selected problems and areas of interest.

Teachers are, therefore, expected to adapt their teaching approaches and methodologies to accommodate the differences in learning styles of their learners. Teachers should thus re-think their roles and conform from controller of the learning process to facilitator, mentor and confidante of learners, learning more about their learners' frustrations, personal lives and circumstances and their dreams and in this manner, motivate learners to achieve. The Business Studies content and assessment lends itself perfectly to this model as creative thinking and problem solving is part of the Business Studies curriculum in Grade 12, and the presentation and project as part of the assessments necessary to complete the year. Leroy and Symes (2001) emphasise that one single factor cannot be the only contributor to student achievement. Wright (2013) highlights the importance of educators knowing each of their students so that educators implement the most effective methods to reach each child, according to Lindsey, Jungwirth, Pahl and Lindsey (2009). It is, therefore, imperative that teachers are not only knowledgeable in their subjects, but also in didactics. Teachers should show an interest in their learners' circumstances at home because this would impact on the learner's willingness and motivation to learn.

After the family, the other major context for children's' development is the school. From this perspective, a mismatch between the needs of the child and the environment of the school are implicated in the problem of learner underachievement. Chere and Hlalele (2014:828) posit that "'inflexible curricular requirements, age-grouping, and lack of acceleration opportunities are also cited in reference to underachievement".

Chere and Hlalele (2014) contend that a positive classroom environment has an influence on learner motivation, similarly a negative environment has a negative effect on learner motivation, and therefore, learner achievement. A positive classroom environment is one that equals the learner's needs and values. A positive school environment would therefore enhance learning and achievement. Teachers play a vital role in a learner's motivation to learn and is ultimately imperative to their success.

Rusli, et.al (2021) state that teacher commitment is dependant of job satisfaction. Job satisfaction could therefore be related to the teacher's level of commitment and efforts

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to provide the maximum level of service to student learning. Vang (2005) stresses the importance for teachers to realise that some teaching practices may suppress academic achievement. In addition, if teachers use effective culturally accessible pedagogy, they show cognisance of how ethnically diverse students learn.

Chere and Hlalele (2014) quote Law and Glover, (2000:170-171) by stating that "when instructional styles that do not match learning styles, academic underachievement might occur". This emphasises that a poor match between teaching strategy and learning style(s) can inhibit student achievement, provoke misinterpretation about potential and encourage behavioural problems. As said by Fine and Pitt (1980) in Colangelo et.al, (2014:5): "Children learn in different ways. When the way they are taught does not match the way they learn best it is difficult for them to use their skills and to show their abilities". As a result, many children either accept and live up to lower expectations or stop trying to learn. Some even drop out of school and therefore Prashnig (2006:1) says that:

> However, a school system, which is based on analytical teaching methods, forces young people to do all their learning analytically (as this is the preferred teaching style, especially in academic subjects in most of our high schools) the result is that such a system sets students up for failure. Another factor which contributes to the mismatch between teaching and learning styles is the well-researched fact that teachers are strongly analytical in their approaches, more so in high schools than in primary schools (and even more in tertiary education) and cannot imagine that their specific subject area could be studied and presented holistically, in a more right-brain way. It is just not in their thinking! Such teachers also seem to have great difficulties in accepting that there is more than one way to learn anything, because due to their own sequential thinking processes, analytics believe 'their' way is the best and the only one.

Kim (2008:235) agrees to the above statement because it has been well documented that highly creative students have trouble in traditional school environments.
Rahal (2010) states that teachers should thus be able to create a learning environment that is supportive and nonthreatening, where mistakes are viewed as inevitable and useful. Measurable successes need to be an integral part of the learning environment. Teachers should, therefore, structure activities as learning experiences rather than tests. Highly qualified teachers will judge the success of a class not by how well

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students learn but by how well students were taught. The goal for any teacher should be to help students master the objectives and skills of the subject being taught. The focus should be on mastery, not evaluation. If a student doesn't understand the lesson, re-teach it in a way that is more compatible with the child's learning style. Focusing on mastery learning may require creative lesson structure to allow slower students more time to master a skill before moving on to the next objective. It is a constant cycle of teaching, testing, re-teaching, and re-testing to assess individual student's knowledge. The requirements of the Grade 12 Business Studies curriculum, however, do not make allowances for this to take place as teachers rush to complete content within a specific time frame. The CAPS curriculum is specific in terms of when formal assessment should be conducted and on what curriculum content, for example, control test 1 should be conducted in week 10 of the first term DBE (2011:32).

Good and Brophy (2008) purport that when teachers are unaware of their behaviour; they can contribute to a student's chronic failure and underachievement. If low achievers perceive that their teachers are just going through the motions with them, offering them an impoverished curriculum, they will begin to withdraw or act out, turn in incomplete work or none at all, or adopt an air of apathy or disdain for school. Since it is the teacher who controls the cultural climate of the classroom, it is ultimately the teacher who can motivate or stifle his or her students. According to Rahal (2010:13), teachers should get to know their students and their parents and the community in which they live. Which students are eligible for free and reduced-price lunch? Which students are classified as homeless? Which of their students may not be having their basic needs met? This information should thus inform the relationship the teacher has with the learner. Chere and Hlalele (2014) postulate that learners want teachers to be accessible and appreciate them as people. This would contribute to creating a good relationship between teachers and learners. When teacher-learner relationships are troubled and misunderstanding between teachers and learners occur, academic underachievement may result. Fine and Pitt (1980) in Colangelo et.al (2014:4) posit "...that there are many possible reasons for underachievement of learners in school such as the lack of self-confidence, feeling overwhelmed and incapable of doing better, lack of self-discipline and low teacher expectations". The teacher's attitude and expectations of learners, therefore, play a vital role in their motivation and effort to do well. Nkosi and Farhangpour (2017) found that lack of communication between

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teachers and learners lead to underperformance of students. Nkosi and Farhangpour (2017:1604) further state that: “The combination of a negative relationship with teachers, poor language skills and communication, and low contact between parents and school, creates a defective learning atmosphere for students”.

When teachers make a mind-shift regarding their role in the teaching and learning process. The most important role of the teacher in the modern classroom is that of a facilitator and mentor of learning activities and no longer of transmitter of information. The challenge for each teacher is to find the individual key that unlocks a child’s motivation to succeed and build on that foundation. One thing is certain: teachers cannot expect to use a one-size-fits-all technique to motivate all students, says Rahal (2010:1)

2.8 Analysis of policy documents related to Business Studies

As stated in the introduction, the curriculum in general has changed in terms of content and assessment practices four times after the general elections in 1994.

The Business Studies curriculum, however, changed only three times with Report 550 which only focussed on the grade 12 Business Economics curriculum introduced from 2006. The content of this curriculum was set out in the National Assessment Guidelines for the Senior Certificate (implementation date January 2006), the NCS and CAPS. The four main topics remained the same in the NCS and in the CAPS curriculum, namely: Business Environment, Business Ventures, Business Roles and Business Operations changed as the old subject, namely Business Economics, focussed only on the business functions and in the new subject the business functions formed about twenty percent of the curriculum. According to the NCS, “Business Studies is a subject that deals with the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes to ensure informed, productive, ethical and responsible participation in the formal and informal business sectors” DoE, (2002:8). Business Studies consists of four main topics, i.e. the business environment, business ventures, business roles and business operations which is then subdivided into subtopics to inform the main topics. The Business Economics curriculum which consisted of the business functions is now encompassed in the last main topic, business operations.

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Business Economics, now Business Studies, was always regarded as an easy subject where learners could study and regurgitate the content and obtain excellent results. Currently, however, this has changed as fifty percent of the curriculum and assessment of Business Studies is based on analysis, interpretation, and application of knowledge. Teachers, therefore, were required to not only change their teaching style and methodology but also had to learn new content to teach the subject.

Bloom's taxonomy became a buzz word in the education circles, and international benchmarking is currently high on the agenda at the Department of Basic Education. Teachers are expected to compile quality assessment tasks using cognitive verbs and teach content which is foreign to them as most of the content in the current Business Studies curriculum has changed. In some cases, cognitive verbs are used out of context which makes it difficult for learners to analyse and interpret that could lead to lower performance in the subject.

(d) Role of the Departmental Head/Subject Head in promoting good performance in Grade 12

It is widely believed that teachers need to be supported, guided and motivated by a dedicated subject leader with a passion for their subject who drives the improvement in curriculum delivery in their department. The DH must motivate the Business Studies teachers in his/her department to prepare and know the content in each grade he offers which will ultimately lead to greater performance of learners in Business Studies. At some schools, however, the DH is not always a Business Studies subject specialist and schools would appoint a post-level one teacher Business Studies teacher as a subject head for moderation purposes.

The subject head or DH should not only organise and control their subject in the context of their school, but also inspire, motivate and influence teachers in their subject group to improve the quality of their teaching, says Gallagher (2015:5). Motivated teachers will ultimately impact positively on their learners which would influence learner achievement.

According to the Personnel Administration Measures (PAM) document, the aim of the Departmental Head is "To engage in class teaching, be responsible for the effective functioning of the department and to organise relevant/related extra-curricular

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activities so as to ensure that the subject, learning area or phase and the education of the learners is promoted in a proper manner”, according to the Government Gazette (2016: A27).

The role of the Departmental Head is as set out in the PAM include the following: teach at least 85% of time spent at school, oversee the department or subject and develop a policy for his/her department, to provide guidance to all educators in the department and support the educational welfare of learners in the department. The Departmental Head must advise the principal regarding the division of work of teachers of in his department and participate in educator appraisals and to assist with general administrative duties assigned to him.

The Departmental Head is the first level of management and as such has to guide teachers. The Departmental Head must therefore be conversant with all relevant policies of the subjects under his/her control to ensure that all the subject requirements and procedures are carried out. The Departmental Head, in consultation with the teachers of each subject, is responsible for the needs of every subject in his/her department. The subject team is, therefore, responsible to compile an extensive subject improvement plan. This is vital for the change and enhancement of learner achievement in the subject.

Teacher development is an important facet of the Departmental Head’s field of responsibility. Appraisals conducted by an experienced Departmental Head are an invaluable tool in assisting teachers to develop and improve their teaching skills and methodology. The Departmental Head should discuss his/her findings with the teacher and assist in problem areas through coaching and in-service training where necessary KZN Department of Education, (2016).

An integral part of the job of a Departmental Head as stated in the Personnel Administrative Measures document PAM (1999:10) is:

To provide and co-ordinate guidance:

- On the latest ideas on approaches to the subject, method, techniques, evaluation, aids, etc. in their field, and effectively conveying these to the staff members concerned.
- On syllabuses, schemes of work, homework, practical work, remedial work, etc.

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- to inexperienced staff members.
- On the educational welfare of learners in the department.

Abolghasemi, McCormick and Connors (1999:80) believe that: “it can be argued that subject department heads, as well as principals, can be key players in the implementation of school vision”.

Conversely, Rahal (2010:2) states that: “motivation does not spring forth from effective management, curriculum, and instruction. These factors are merely the starting point that provides the framework for creating motivating opportunities”.

An Economic and Management Science (EMS) Departmental Head can be a specialist in any one of the three disciplines in the commerce department, namely Accounting, Business Studies or Economics. Several Departmental Heads are, therefore, not Business Studies specialists. This poses a grave limitation as “leadership of the curriculum expects the leader to be a master of the subject”, says Taylor (2008:24).

Another tension that Business Studies Heads of Department face in many South African Schools alluded to by Busher and Harris (1999:309) is that:

> ... some large multi-subject departments can be seen as primarily an administrative convenience…and may be described as ‘confederate departments’ …subject areas are allied together but share little in common…with individual subject areas creating their own identities that may be in conflict. It seems as if many subject teachers question their heads of departments’ knowledge of the subject.

According to Busher and Harris (1999:312), “The views on subject knowledge and pedagogy held by their Heads of Department are, then, of major concern to subject staff”. Heads of department should provide the necessary support and expertise to subject teachers. In order for this to be of value, Departmental Heads have to be subject experts themselves. “Heads of Department should be appointed on the strength of their subject expertise, and they must provide opportunities for teachers to improve their subject and pedagogic knowledge….”, as stated by Taylor (2008:23). This is intensified within the EMS department as the Business Studies Departmental Head may not be a subject specialist. He/she must manage the FET stream for Accounting, Business studies, Economics, and the general stream for EMS (Grade 7 to 9). However, the Departmental Head in many cases may be a subject specialist to only one discipline which might not be Business Studies.

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2.9 Physical resources in the teaching and learning process.

Nurulpaik, Permana, Mirfani, and SuryanaIn (2021:89) state that quality in education can be assessed in terms of inputs, “factors such as resources, programs, and costs, student-teacher ratios, class size, allocation of funds per student, expenditure per student, teacher salaries, curriculum and textbooks”.

Wright (2013:17) suggests that socio-economic status is a strong indicator of a child’s educational experience, outcome, and attainment. It may affect everything from the way they behave to the way they learn and their education beyond the K-12 classroom. Individuals from high socio-economic standing (SES) backgrounds bring different values, such as the desire for perfection and privacy, and have more access to resources, particularly, higher performing schools Payne, (1996). For example, in the educational realm, higher SES parents and students have more access to educational resources such as books, tutors, and educational outings.

Wright (2013: 22) proposes that many researchers such as Flanagan (1988) as cited in McLoyd (1989); Leroy and Symes (2001); and Mistry, et al., (2002) claim that the socio-economic makeup of the home can have considerable effect on the parents’ ability to provide stability and the resources needed for children to grow up feeling confident, secure, and successful. Masango, Van Ryneveld and Graham (2022) concur that parents are important stakeholders in motivating learners to improve their academic achievement. Mahal (2021) regards teachers as an essential component in the successful implementation of the curriculum. Teachers are thus fundamental to learner motivation and achievement.

Chere and Hlalele (2014:835) state that the “quality of secondary education is greatly affected by a lack of or poor facilities”. Learners in carefully planned learning environments demonstrate better attendance and discipline than those in undesirable environments.

Education for All (2000:48) indicates that infrastructure rehabilitation or improvements have high spin-offs, such as attraction and retention of good educators leading to high morale among staff, learners, and the community.

Quality of secondary education is greatly affected by a lack of or poor facilities. World Data on Education (2006:3) indicates that in Lesotho many schools are affected by

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lack of special facilities such as libraries and laboratories which help to enrich quality of secondary education. Rural areas are particularly disadvantaged. For instance, in mountainous areas, where school facilities are inferior, examination pass rates are lowest.

Some researchers such as Chere and Hlalele (2014:836) regard class size as another important aspect of school structure. They suggest that small class size makes both teachers and learners satisfied with school experiences while large classes cause disengagement of both teachers and learners. Berk (2002:464) believes that small class size is beneficial because teachers of fewer children spend less time disciplining and more time giving individual attention, and children's interactions with one another are more positive and cooperative. However, according to Rahal (2010) a quiet, well-organized classroom does not necessarily represent good teaching, nor does control and compliance create a climate for academic attainment. A quiet and organised classroom is no indication that learning took place.

2.10 Conclusion

This chapter presented a review of the literature on learner performance and the causes of underperformance and the conceptual and theoretical framework which underpin the study.

There is a paucity of literature on how a supportive teaching and learning environment can be created for learners in socio-economically challenged circumstances, with high levels of parent unemployment and high parent mortality levels due to HIV/AIDS, large class sizes (overcrowding in some instances), long distances to schools and lack of running water in the school and surrounding communities Moloi: (2010).

A school curriculum designed to be dynamic, which match the needs and interests of all learners, will develop the learners' skills, abilities, and interests. Underachievers would certainly become at-risk students and dropouts when their learning needs are not matched over longer periods of time. If schools had their students' learning styles assessed, trained their teachers to become more aware of diversity in the classroom and teach with matched instruction methods, as well as educate parents in their children's true learning needs, fewer students would experience frustration and the

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inability to succeed in academic classes. This could well be the cure for underachievement.

If the school environment is inadequate or impoverished, effective learning cannot take place. The quality and availability of instructional material, and the condition of buildings and facilities affect the way learners view school and learning. Learners' academic underachievement can sometimes be beyond the control of learners themselves. Apart from the individual-related factors, school-related factors and family-related factors can be responsible for the academic underachievement of learners. The following chapter discusses the research methodology of the study.

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CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The literature review in chapter 2 explored factors which contributed to the underperformance of learners in Business Studies at Grade 12 level. Factors were divided into two categories, namely circumstances and structures at school and the learners' home and social environment. These factors relate to research questions and to be able to answer the research questions one needs to embark on a research methodology. The purpose of this chapter, therefore, is to provide insight into the research methodology.

According to Mishra and Alok (2013: 1), research methods include all the techniques and methods which have been taken for conducting research whereas research methodology is the approach in which research troubles are solved thoroughly. The term 'methodologies' indicate frameworks for the conduct of projects, observation, running notes, talk, interviews, and texts. These frameworks generally form the basis, in a variety of mixtures of the data that most educational methodologies bring together Davidson, (2012). Leedy and Ormrod (2005), however, define a research methodology as the general approach the researcher takes in carrying out the research project. Research methodology is, therefore, the practice we use to attain and understand knowledge.

In this chapter, I present my research questions, motivate the methodological paradigms, research design and research approach, that I used for my research. I also give an indication of the research population, sampling, and research instruments I used. The chapter concludes by addressing trustworthiness and ethical considerations.

3.1.1 Main research question

This study investigates the underachievement of Grade 12 learners in Business Studies, particularly in two schools in working-class communities in the Western Cape. The research is presented as a multiple case study of Grade 12 Business Studies

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learners and teachers to learn more about factors that could possibly contribute to the lack of success in the subject. The research focuses primarily on the learners' and teachers' perceptions of why learners underperform in Grade 12 Business Studies, as the main research question in association with subsidiary questions.

3.1.2 Subsidiary research questions

The following research questions were pursued in the study:

- What is learner achievement and what is meant by under-achievement?
- How do socio-economic circumstances impact on learner achievement in Business Studies Grade 12?
- How do curriculum policy changes influence the teaching practices of Grade 12 Business Studies teachers and learner performance?
- To what extent do the availability of physical resources contribute to learner performance or underperformance?
- What kind of support, provided by the Departmental Head and/or Subject Head, play a significant role in promoting teaching and learning in Grade 12 Business Studies?

3.2 Research paradigms

3.2.1 Introduction

Hussain, Elyas, and Naseef (2013:2374) define research as "a systematic production and expansion of knowledge." According to Mishra and Alok, the definition of research is "an art of systematic investigation." The term paradigm was first introduced by Thomas Kuhn in his landmark book, The Structure of Scientific Revolutions. He defines it as 'an integrated cluster of substantive concepts, variables and problems attached with corresponding methodological approach and tools' Kuhn, 1962, quoted in Hussain, et.al.,(2013:2375). The assumptions that guide this study are based on the ontological, epistemological, axiological, methodological assumptions set out in Table 3.1, according to Creswell (2013:17).

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Table 3.1: Methodological assumptions

Assumptions	Questions	Characteristics	Implications for practice
Ontological	What is the nature of reality?	Reality is multiple as seen through many views	Researcher reports different perspectives as themes develop in the findings
Epistemological	What counts as knowledge? How are knowledge claims justified? What is the relationship between the researcher and that being researched?	Subjective evidence from participants; researcher attempts to lessen distance between himself or herself and that being researched	Researcher relies on quotes as evidence from the participant, collaborates, spends time in field with participants and become an "insider"
Axiological	What is the role of values?	Researcher acknowledges that research is value-laden and that biases are present	Researcher openly discusses values that shape the narrative and includes his or her own interpretation in conjunction with the interpretations of participants
Methodological	What is the process of research? What is the language of research?	Researcher uses inductive logic, studies the topic within its context, and uses an emerging design	Researcher works with particulars (details) before generalisations, describes in detail the context of the study, and

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			continually revises questions from experiences in the field.

Cresswell (2013:17)

3.2.2 Ontological assumptions

Nasser (2017:2) defines ontological assumptions in qualitative research as “a reality which is subjective and multiple, as perceived by participants in a study”. Contrary to the assumptions of the qualitative approach, those of the quantitative approach view reality as objective, singular, and separate from researchers according to Nasser, (2017:3). Tuli (2010:99) refers to ontology as the nature of reality.

For the purpose of this study, the participants’ circumstances at the specific schools’ and the learners’ social environment were considered. These circumstances are shaping their competence in a unique way that may be relevant to other studies of the same nature. To extract the necessary information and to understand the thoughts of the participants, questionnaires and semi-structured interviews were used.

3.2.3. Epistemological assumptions

According to Nasser (2017:2) the “interaction between the researcher and the research informer to obtain relevant data is known as epistemological assumptions of a qualitative research study”. Nasser (2017:3) states that “the object of a study exists independently of quantitative researchers”. Sandoval (2018:2) states that “research has shown that there is some degree of association between epistemological beliefs and learning strategies and school achievement.” He also mentions that there is some empirical suggestion that myriad concerns and in-the-moment judgments have a stronger effect on instructional practices than epistemological beliefs. According to Tuli (2010:99) “epistemology is known as the nature of knowledge”.

Data was gathered to answer the research questions through interacting with the participants, both teachers and learners of two schools in the Western Cape Province who provided information based on their experiences within their institutions and their socio-economic circumstances.

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3.2.4 Axiological assumptions

Nasser (2017:2) posits that “qualitative research is value laden and biased”, while “Quantitative research is supposedly value-free and unbiased”. Denzin (2009:140) observes that:

> Standards for assessing quality research are pedagogies of practice, moral, ethical and political institutional apparatuses that regulate and produce a particular form of science, a form that may be no longer workable in a trans-disciplinary, global and postcolonial world. Indeed, within the evidence-based community there is the understanding that qualitative research does not count as research unless it is embedded in a randomized control trial (RCT). Further, within this community, there are no agreed upon procedures, methods, or criteria for extracting information from qualitative studies.

He further states that “We must create a new narrative, a narrative of passion, and commitment, a narrative which teaches others that ways of knowing are always already partial, moral and political” Denzin, (2009:154).

3.2.5 Methodological assumptions

Nasser (2017:2) defines methodological assumptions in qualitative research as the process of identifying themes, patterns or theories are developed. The accuracy and reliability of results derived from qualitative research methods are secured primarily through verification. Goundan (2019) presents a process of research as follows:

> When you say that you are undertaking a research study to find answers to a question, you are implying that the process:
>
> 1. is being undertaken within a framework of a set of philosophies (research approaches);
> 2. uses procedures, methods and techniques that have been tested for their validity and reliability; and
> 3. is designed to be unbiased and objective.

Philosophies mean approaches e.g., qualitative, quantitative and the academic discipline in which you have been trained. Validity means that correct procedures have been applied to find answers to a question. Reliability refers to the quality of a measurement procedure that provides repeatability and accuracy.
Unbiased and objective means that you have taken each step in an unbiased manner and drawn each conclusion to the best of your ability and without

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introducing your own vested interest. (Bias is a deliberate attempt to either conceal or highlight something).

In quantitative research, however, according to Nasser (2017:3), quantitative research seeks to identify generalizations that can lead to predictions, explanations, and understanding, it is assumed to be context-free. Results of quantitative research are viewed as accurate and reliable in terms of validity and reliability.

The focus of this study was detailed before generalisations were assumed. The researcher used inductive logic relying on the context within which the topic was studied and uses an emerging design.

3.3 Methodological paradigm

The methodological paradigm influences the way knowledge is studied and interpreted. The choice of paradigm sets the intent, motivation, and expectations for the research. Mckenzie and Knipe (2006:2) suggest that: “The term 'paradigm' may be defined as a loose collection of logically related assumptions, concepts, or propositions that orient thinking and research or the philosophical intent or motivation for undertaking a study”. The methodological paradigm therefore constitutes the plans and procedures which the researcher uses to collect, analyse, and interpret data. The three main types of research paradigms are: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed method. The main difference between the various research approaches is the methods used to collect, analyse and interpret data. Data collection in qualitative data focuses more on words or feelings, rather than numbers.

Qualitative researchers use open-ended questions rather that close-ended questions, therefore, do no quantify and test a hypothesis. Quantitative research refers to the testing of objective theories by examining the relationship between various variables. The variables are measurable and data which are analysed by using statistical procedures. It is a structured way of collecting and analysing data using different sources which quantifies the problem and seeks to find projectable results to a larger population. Researchers opting for the mixed method approach believe that a combination of qualitative and quantitative data would provide a more complete understanding of the research question than either the quantitative or qualitative approach.

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The focus of this study leans towards the qualitative research approach as the study seeks to investigate reasons for poor performance in certain societies. A discussion of quantitative and mixed method approaches follows a comprehensive exposition of qualitative research to indicate that the former two were not appropriate for the study.

3.3.1 Qualitative methodological paradigm

3.3.1.1 Introduction

This study operated within a qualitative methodological paradigm or research. Qualitative research is a scientific research method, which unlike quantitative research focuses on understanding of an occurrence rather than measuring the said occurrence. Qualitative research seeks to understand the reasons why a specific phenomenon occurs and how people or society feel about a specific incidence. People's thoughts and feelings are, therefore, an important aspect of qualitative research. It is especially effective when information about the values, opinions, behaviour and social contexts of society impact on an appearance.

This study employed the qualitative research method incorporating a case study as the research design. Qualitative approach was chosen for this study because it attempts to make sense of the experiences of the learners and teachers at two schools within the Metro North Education District in the Western Cape. The qualitative methodology was appropriate for this study because it is "typically used to answer questions about the complex nature of a phenomena, often with the purpose of describing and understanding the phenomena from the participants' point of view" Leedy & Ormrod, (2005:94).

The purpose of qualitative researchers is to seek a better understanding of complex situations, and their work is often exploratory in nature. Qualitative research is also empirical, inductive, and interpretative of a situation within a specific context. This research considers various factors which contribute to learners underachieving in Business Studies. These factors will be carefully investigated, analysed and considered. It involves examination of particular cases from which general principles and rules are drawn while relying on the analysis of the social experience that reflects everyday perception, beliefs, attitudes and behaviour in a given cultural context Clissett, (2008). The social standing of the learners at these schools will be

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considered. Learners at these schools mostly have the same socio-economic background but are of a diverse ethnic background. Context, be it social standing therefore plays a considerable role in the beliefs, perception, attitude and behaviour of learners and teachers at these schools.

3.3.1.2 Characteristics of qualitative research

According to Mack, Woodsong, MacQueen, Guest and Namey (2005:vi) qualitative methods have become important tools within the broader approach to applied research, in large part because they provide valuable insights into the local perspectives of study populations. Mack, et.al. (2005:1) lists the following characteristics:

- seeks answers to a question;
- systematically uses a predefined set of procedures to answer the question;
- collects evidence;
- produces findings that were not determined in advance; and
- produces findings that are applicable beyond the immediate boundaries of the study.

Another characteristic of the qualitative research method is that questions are open-ended which allows participants to provide the researcher with their feelings on the topic and to respond in their own words.

Gounder (2012) describes qualitative research as non-numerical and descriptive. He further states that when a researcher wants to investigate why certain data are random then it is qualitative research.

3.3.1.3 Advantages of qualitative research

Mack, et.al. (2005:vi) posits that qualitative research produces culturally specific and contextually rich data. One of the advantages of qualitative research, according to Mack, et.al. (2005:1) is that qualitative methods are also effective in identifying intangible factors, such as social norms, socioeconomic status, gender roles, ethnicity, and religion, whose role in the research issue may not be readily apparent. In this study, the socio-economic circumstances of the participants will be studied to determine the impact, if any on the learners' ability to perform well in Business Studies at a Grade 12 level. Goundan (2019) claims that because of close researcher involvement, the researcher gains insights such as subtleties and complexities of the

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research and plays an important role in suggesting possible relationships, causes and effects within a study. He also specifies that qualitative research adds flesh and blood to social analysis. Another advantage of qualitative research, according to Mack, et.al., (2005:2) is that this method allows the researcher to probe the initial responses of participants and encourages them to elaborate on their answers. Noy, (2015:13) suggests that qualitative inquiry has no limits in terms of the richness and nuances of both collecting and interpreting procedures.

Williams (2007:67) mentions that qualitative research builds its premises on inductive, rather than deductive reasoning. It is from this observational element that the researcher attempts to explore and explain this occurrence. The strong correlation between the observer and the data is a marked difference from quantitative research, where the researcher is strictly outside of the phenomena being investigated. In addition, Williams (2007:70) posits that the qualitative method allows the researcher to explore and better understand the complexity of a phenomenon.

3.3.1.4 Limitations of qualitative research

Qualitative research often fails to produce findings which are generalizable and the accusation that their explanations of cause and effect often cannot be conclusively proven. The response of qualitative researchers to this criticism, particularly, in the field of education, might be to say that we are often not looking for generalizable findings, but are exploring specific issues within specific schools or colleges, according to Atkins and Wallace (2012).

Qualitative research tends to be more expensive and time consuming because of the time it takes to read, categorize, and code transcripts that result from interviews, observations, and open-ended questions. In addition, qualitative researchers suffer from limited sample sizes, and this may compromise the generalizability of the data. Yet, in some cases, qualitative research presents the preliminary steps for further investigation, as stated by Pacho (2015). Sometimes the data does not offer sufficient evidence for us to arrive at a convincing argument or theory. But difficulties in formulating a theory or argument can arise also when our data appears to present us with a wealth of evidence, according to Atkins and Wallace (2012).

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3.3.2 Quantitative methodological paradigm

3.3.2.1 Introduction

Quantitative research originated in the natural sciences and is based on measurable and observable objects. Tuli (2010:98) mentions that “quantitative research is concerned with things which one can observe and measure. These measurements and observations can be made objectively and repeated by other researchers.” Quantitative research is used to compute the problem by creating numerical data or data that can be converted into usable statistics. It is used to quantify attitudes, opinions, behaviours, and other defined variables and generalise results from a larger sample population. Quantitative research uses quantifiable data to formulate facts and uncover patterns in research. Quantitative data collection methods are much more structured than qualitative data collection methods and believed to be more accurate in their findings. Atieno (2009) refers to the quantitative research design as empirical in nature and based on the natural sciences. This research study focuses on people’s behaviour based on their perceptions, feelings, and attitudes. These are not quantifiable, and the quantitative research paradigm would, therefore, be unsuitable for this type of study.

3.3.2.2 Characteristics of quantitative research

According to Goundan (2019), “strength in numbers characterises the many advantages of quantitative research. It is research which statistically measures attitudes, behaviours and performances and provides results in a percentage which is easier to analyse and interpret”.

Nasser (2017:3) suggests that most quantitative research examines social or human problems by testing a theory composed of variables that are measured by numeric values. Data are analysed with statistical procedures to determine whether a theory’s predictive generalizations hold true. Quantitative researchers tend to seek explanations and predictions that allow for generalization. To this end, quantitative methods include careful sampling strategies and experimental designs. In quantitative research, researchers’ *objectivity* is of utmost concern because their role is to observe and measure while avoiding personal involvement with the research participants. Cresswell (2008:322) substantiates this theory by stating that quantitative research

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has traditionally provided a measurement orientation in which data can be gathered from many individuals and trends assessed across large geographic regions.

3.3.2.3 Advantages of quantitative research

One of the advantages of the quantitative approach, according to Hartman (2015: 28) is the notion of scale reliability, defined as the consistency or stability of test scores, which means that instability reduces the scale's reliability. A scale with low reliability proves itself unusable in quantitative research. According to Williams (2007:70), the quantitative method provides an objective measure of reality. The qualitative method allows the researcher to explore and better understand the complexity of a phenomenon.

3.3.2.4 Critique of quantitative research

Tuli (2010) posits that the nature of social reality for positivists is that empirical facts exist apart from personal ideas or thoughts and that they are governed by laws of cause and effect, thus testing and generalising the laws of human behaviour. Quantitative researchers believe that the positivistic epistemology can therefore be regarded as more trustworthy in relation to qualitative interpretivist-constructivist epistemology. The positivist researcher believe that knowledge exists and should be studied objectively, and findings is quantifiable and speak for themselves. On the other hand, qualitative researchers regard people as participants and not objects. This can be regarded as empowering to the participants as they can be seen as the writers of their own history, according to Tuli (2010). The positivist assumes that there are universal laws that govern human behaviour and that social phenomena is predictable and can, therefore, be controlled.

3.3.3 Mixed method

3.3.3.1 Introduction

The mixed method approach is a research method where both quantitative data, i.e. numbers and closed-ended questions and qualitative data, i.e. words and open-ended questions are used to collect data. Creswell (2008:323) proposes that when researchers bring together both quantitative and qualitative research, the strengths of both approaches are combined, and it can be assumed to a better understanding of

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research problems than either approach alone. This core assumption is the basis for an approach to inquiry called “mixed methods research”. Carrie (2007:65) states that researchers would typically choose the mixed methods approach for research questions that require both numerical and textual data.

3.3.3.2 Characteristics of the mixed method approach

Cresswell (2008:323) mentions the following characteristics of the mixed method approach:

- At its basic elements, mixed methods research involves collecting both quantitative and qualitative data (in response to quantitative and qualitative research questions);
- the merging, linking, or combining of the two sources of data’; and
- and then conducting research as a single study or a longitudinal project with multiple phases.

He distinguishes between three different foci to this research approach, namely researchers focussing on methods of research, the process of research and philosophical approaches Cresswell, (2008).

“The applied methodologists tend to focus on the research methods which means the collection, analysis and interpretation of both quantitative and qualitative data for their study” Cresswell, (2008:326).

Carrie (2007:70) provides an example, of data collection using mixed methods research: “researchers might distribute a survey that contains closed-ended questions to collect the numerical, or quantitative, data and conduct an interview using open-ended questions to collect the narrative, or qualitative, data”.

The researchers whose focus are the research process will encompass all the aspects of the research from philosophical assumptions to the final interpretation and report of the study from both a qualitative and quantitative perspective, according to Cresswell (2008). Mixed method researchers also feel that methods are incidental to inquiry and the philosophical assumptions are the most important focus of inquiry. Hu and Chang (2017:205) posit that “philosophy affects the application of the quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods approach.”

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3.3.3.3 Advantages of the mixed method approach

Cresswell (2008:323) state that it is difficult to conceptualise the mixed method approach as researchers using this method comes from different fields of study bringing various contexts and views into this approach. Cresswell (2008:327) mentions that the advantage of the mixed method approach is that the methods, research questions and the larger guiding philosophical assumptions cannot be disentangled. Williams (2007:70) draws on Johnson and Onwuegbuzie's (2004) view that the mixed methods approach to research is an extension of rather than a replacement for the quantitative and qualitative approaches to research, as the latter two research approaches will continue to be useful and important. The goal for researchers using the mixed methods approach to research is to draw from the strengths and minimize the weaknesses of the quantitative and qualitative research approaches. Carrie (2007:70) states that the mixed methods approach to research provides researchers with the ability to design a single research study that answers questions about both the complex nature of the phenomenon from the participants' point of view and the relationship between measurable variables.

3.3.3.4 Critique to the mixed-method approach

According to Cresswell (2008:323), despite substantial developments in mixed methods, the field of study is plagued by early growing pains such as debates and disagreements about core issues such as its essential nature. Maarouf (2019), mentions two challenges of the mixed method research, the first challenge is this method needs more time, effort, and money because it includes two phases of research and the second big challenge it requires the researcher to expand his research skills, talents and experiences by learning about new research methods and techniques. Cresswell (2008:327) also mentions that the "difficulty of this approach is that is calls researchers to mix multiple paradigms and world views which some writers regard as incompatible." Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004:21) tabulate the strengths and weaknesses of the mixed method research as follows:

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Table 3.2: Strengths and weaknesses of mixed method research

Strengths	Weaknesses
• Words, pictures and narrative can be used to add meaning to numbers. • Numbers can be used to add precision to words, pictures and narrative. • Can provide quantitative and qualitative research strengths. • Researcher can generate and test a grounded theory. • Can answer a broader and more complete range of research questions because the researcher is not confined to a single method or approach. • The specific mixed research designs discussed in this article have specific strengths and weaknesses that should be considered (e.g., in a two-stage sequential design, the stage 1 results can be used to develop and inform the purpose and design of the stage 2 component). • A researcher can use the strengths of an additional method to overcome the weaknesses in another method to overcome the weaknesses in another method by using both in research study. • Can provide stronger evidence for a conclusion through convergence and corroboration of findings.	• Can be difficult for a single researcher to carry out both qualitative and quantitative research, especially if two or more approaches are expected to be used concurrently; it may require research team. • Researcher has to learn about multiple methods and approaches and understand how to mix them appropriately. • Methodological purists contend that one should always work within either a qualitative a quantitative paradigm. • More expensive • More time consuming • Some of the details of mixed research remain to be worked of fully by research methodologists (e.g., problems of paradigm mixing, how to qualitatively analyse quantitative data, how to interpret conflicting results).

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• Can add insights and understanding that might be missed when only a single method is used. • Can be used to increase the generalizability of the results. • Qualitative and quantitative research used together produce more complete knowledge necessary to inform theory and practice.	

3.4 Research design: Case study

3.4.1 Introduction

Case study research is an increasingly popular approach among qualitative researchers, according to Thomas (2011). Several prominent authors have contributed to methodological developments, which has increased the popularity of case study approaches across disciplines (Creswell, 2013; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Merriam, 2009; Ragin & Becker, 1992; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2009). Current qualitative case study approaches are shaped by paradigm, study design, and selection of methods, and, as a result, make the published literature vary. Differences between published case studies can make it difficult for researchers to define and understand case study as a methodology. Experienced qualitative researchers have identified case study research as a stand-alone qualitative approach Denzin & Lincoln, (2011).

What can be regarded as a ‘case’? There is considerable liberty in most accounts of case study methodology on the question of what it is that establishes a ‘case’. “Researchers and educators have reflected on a particular student, a particular exchange, a lesson, a school, a district, an educational programme, a nation’s educational policies and provisions” Freebody, (2011:10). Case study method enables a researcher to closely examine the data within a specific context. In most cases, a case study method selects a small geographical area or a very limited number of individuals as the subjects of study.

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Case studies are designed to suit the case and research questions, and published case studies demonstrate wide diversity and design. In this research, the case is the underperformance of Grade 12 learners from two schools with the same social standing. The schools are both in the same geographical area and both are situated in areas with a high rate of gangsterism and unemployment. The areas in which these schools are situated are rife with “back-yard” dwellers and single parent households. A case enables social researchers to examine the experiences of participants within a specific context in detail. It involves a study of a particular case from which general principles and rules can be drawn while relying on the analysis of the social context that reflects everyday experiences, according to Pacho (2015).

Case studies, therefore, in their true essence explore and investigate contemporary real-life situations through detailed contextual analysis of a limited number of events or conditions and their relationships.

3.4.2 Case study as a bounded system

Baxter (2008:546) states that one of the common pitfalls associated with case study is that there is a tendency for researchers to attempt to answer a question that is too broad or a topic that has too many objectives for one study. Baxter (2008:546) quotes suggestions on how to bind a case as follows: (a) by time and place Creswell, (2003); (b) time and activity (Stake, 1995); and (c) by definition and context Miles & Huberman, (1994). Binding the case will ensure that your study remains reasonable in scope. This enquiry is based on the third method, by definition and context as underperformance of Grade 12 learners at schools in a specific geographical area i.e., context is studied.

3.4.3 The purpose of case studies

The purpose of a case study is to understand one situation in great depth; a particular individual, programme, or event is studied for a defined period of time. The researcher collects extensive data on the individual, program, or events on which the investigation is focussed. These data often include observations, interviews, documents, past records, and so on. The researcher also records details about the context surrounding the case, including information about the physical environment and any historical, economic, and social factors that have bearing on the situation Leedy & Ormrod, (2005).

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For the purpose of this study, the “case” would be the phenomenon that learners from specific backgrounds tend to underachieve in Business Studies. Case studies are empirically omnivorous: as with ethnography, the data that make up a case study can entail observations, interviews, transcripts, notes and documents, i.e. policies, syllabus or curriculum and assessment records, according to Freebody (2011). Data for this case study was collected using learner and teacher questionnaires and interviews, documentation such as the Business Studies results of the past 5 years of the schools investigated and policy documents regarding changes in the Business Studies curriculum, namely the National Curriculum Statement, 2008, Curriculum and Assessment Policy, 2011 and Business Studies Exam Guidelines, 2017.

3.4.4 Types of case studies

Case study research has a level of flexibility that is not readily offered by other qualitative research approaches such as grounded theory or phenomenology. There are two popular case study approaches in qualitative research. Some scholars proposed that case study research is situated in a social constructivist paradigm, whereas others approach case study research from a post-positivist viewpoint. Scholars from both schools of inquiry have contributed to the popularity of case study development of theoretical frameworks and principles that characterise the methodology.

The diversity of case studies reported in the published literature, and on-going debates about credibility and the use of case study in qualitative research practice, suggests that differences in perspectives on case study methodology may prevent researchers from developing a mutual understanding of practice and rigour. In addition, discussion about case study limitations has led some authors to query whether case study is indeed a methodology. According to the methodological discussion of Hyett (2014), case studies focus on one particular instance of educational experience and attempt to gain theoretical and professional insights from a full documentation of that instance. The goal of a case study, in its most general form, is to put in place an inquiry in which both researchers and educators can reflect upon particular instances of educational practice Freebody, (2011).

Yin (1984) notes three categories of case studies, namely exploratory, descriptive, and explanatory. He posits that the exploratory case study set out to learn more about an

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occurrence in the data, i.e. the research question would explore, for example, reasons or actions of improvement, which serves as a point of interest to the researcher. The descriptive case study describes the natural phenomenon which occurs in the data in question, for instance what different strategies are used by a reader and how the reader uses them. The goal with descriptive case studies is to describe the data as they occur. She also suggests that descriptive case studies may take on a narrative form. However, the challenge with a descriptive case study is that the researcher must begin with a descriptive theory to support the description of the phenomenon or story. The explanatory case study examines the data closely both at a surface level as well as on a deeper level to explain the specific occurrence in the data. This ties in with Stake (2005) who posits that the instrumental case study allows the researcher to gain inside knowledge of the experiences of participants. The interpretive approach tries to understand how people experience the world, therefore, depends on the view of the participants. The exploratory case study is, therefore, closely linked to the interpretive approach as well as the instrumental case study. This study employed and instrumental case study design, however, it is difficult to categorise this case study because the reasons why learners underperform in Business Studies are studied, but the study also aim to interpret and explain the data regarding the phenomenon.

According to Zainal, (2007:3)

> ...case studies can be divided into the interpretive and the evaluative case studies. Through the interpretive case study, the researcher aims to interpret the data by developing conceptual categories, supporting, or challenging the assumptions made regarding them. In evaluative case studies, the researcher goes further by adding their judgement to the phenomena found in the data.

3.4.5 Advantages of the case study methodology

Some researchers have concerns about the limitations of qualitative research in providing holistic and in-depth explanations of their subjects' behaviour and behavioural problems. This is one of the reasons for the recognition of case study as a research method. "Through case study methods, a researcher is able to go beyond the quantitative statistical results and understand the behavioural conditions through the actor's perspective" Zainal, (2007:1). He further suggests several advantages in using case studies as a research method:

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> First, the examination of the data is most often conducted within the context of its use that is, within the situation in which the activity takes place. Second, variations in terms of intrinsic, instrumental and collective approaches to case studies allow for both quantitative and qualitative analyses of the data. Third, the detailed qualitative accounts often produced in case studies not only help to explore or describe the data in real-life environment, but also help to explain the complexities of real-life situations which may not be captured through experimental or survey research Zainal, (2007:4).

"Case study research is a very useful method as it allows expanding and generalizing theories by combining the existing theoretical knowledge with new empirical insights" Yin in Vissak, (2010:371). According to Vissak (2010), it is not essential for case studies to rely on literature and previous empirical evidence. Although little is known about a phenomenon, case study research can hence be used for theory-building Vissak, (2010). According to Vissak (2010), the strength of case studies is that data can be collected over a long-time period. "In case study research, it is possible to generalise from only one case if it is useful for theory building" according to Vissak (2010: 373).

Case studies are considered useful in research as they enable researchers to examine data at the micro level. As an alternative to quantitative or qualitative research, case studies can be a practical solution when a big sample population is difficult to obtain. Although case studies have various advantages, in that they present data of real-life situations and they provide better insights into the detailed behaviours of the subjects of interest, they are also criticised for their inability to generalise their results.

Leedy and Ormrod (2005) theorise that a good understanding of a research approach is necessary to enable researchers to choose appropriate research design and techniques to adequately address a research problem. A qualitative methodology involving a case study is relevant for investigating experiences of participants. Justification for the chosen research methodology, including an appropriately high proportion of application must be given. Questions of sampling, data collection, ethical issues, validation, analysis and presentation must also be addressed to develop a theoretical explanation of a phenomenon under study while paying sufficient attention to potential criticisms. To ensure a balanced approach, it is also important for

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researchers to acknowledge challenges faced during their study. In summary, while social scientists may employ various research designs to a study, a qualitative framework integrating a case study method can guarantee success in understanding one situation in great depth; it is rich in detail and so an individual, programme, or event can be studied for a defined period.

3.4.6 Disadvantages of case studies

Although advantages have been identified for the use of case studies as a research design, some researchers have concerns about the limitations of qualitative research in providing holistic and in-depth explanations of their subjects' behaviour and behavioural problems. Case studies have therefore, received criticisms.

Yin (1984) discusses three types of arguments against case study research. First, case studies are often accused of lack of rigour. Yin (1984:9) notes that: "...too many times, the case study investigator has been sloppy, and has allowed ambiguous evidence or biased views to influence the direction of the findings and conclusions". Quantitative researchers have, however, also become of aware that respondents of quantitative surveys may misunderstand the questions, and this could affect the reliability and fairness of their response. This is an indication that both quantitative and qualitative data analysis may be influenced by the respondents' contexts. The researchers' bias can, therefore, not be eliminated from any of the research methods.

Second, case studies do not provide a basis for scientific generalisation because of the small number of subjects investigated, some conducted with only one subject. The question commonly raised is "How can you generalise from a single case?" according to Yin (1984:10). The general outcome of research is to generalise the findings of a case study to theory and previous literature about the occurrence. Similarly, scientists use an experiment and generalise it with scientific theory in quantitative research studies.

Zainal (2007:5) suggests a common criticism of case study method is "its dependency on a single case exploration making it difficult to reach a generalising conclusion and considered case methodology 'microscopic' because of the limited sampling cases".

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Thirdly, case studies are often labelled as being too long, difficult to conduct and producing a massive amount of documentation (Yin, 1984). Case studies of ethnographic or longitudinal nature can elicit a great deal of data over a period. The danger comes when the data are not managed and organised systematically. This view confuses the case study research method with data collection methods such as ethnography and participant observation. A case study does not necessarily refer to be a lengthy study of its subjects or the collection of huge amounts of insurmountable data which should be analysed.

Case study method has always been criticised for its lack of rigour and the tendency for a researcher to have a biased interpretation of the data. Grounds for establishing reliability and generality are also subjected to scepticism when a small sampling is deployed. Often time, case study research is dismissed as useful only as an exploratory tool. Despite these criticisms, researchers continue to deploy the case study method, particularly, in studies of real-life situations governing social issues and problems. Case studies from various disciplines and domains are widely reported in the literature, according to Zainal (2007).

3.4.7 Single and multiple case studies

3.4.7.1 Single case study

A single holistic case takes into consideration the context of the study researching a single phenomenon to be studied. Tellis (1997) postulates that a single case study can be used to sanction or contest a theory. A single case with embedded units can also be considered. Tellis (1997:18) also remarks that: “Single-case designs require careful investigation to avoid misrepresentation and to maximize the investigator's access to the evidence. These studies can be holistic or embedded, the latter occurring when the same case study involves more than one unit of analysis”. Baxter (2008:550) alludes that: “The ability to look at sub-units that are situated within a larger case is powerful when you consider that data can be analysed within the subunits separately (within case analysis), between the different subunits (between case analysis), or across all the subunits (cross-case analysis). The ability to engage in such rich analysis only serves to better illuminate the case”. Starman (2013) distinguishes

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between different types of single case studies, namely the retrospective case study, snapshot studies and diachronic studies. These types of case studies are based on the time dimensions of the study.

3.4.7.2 Multiple case study

Zainal (2007:4) describes the multiple case study as a collective case study, where the researcher coordinates data from several different sources, such as schools or individuals. Unlike intrinsic case studies which set to solve the specific problems of an individual case, collective case studies may allow for the generalisation of findings. Starman (2013:33) distinguishes between the following examples of multiple case studies:

Nested studies: the comparison of elements within one case. Nested studies are distinct from a straightforward multiple case study as it gains integrity from the wider case.

Parallel studies: the cases are all happening and being studied concurrently.

Sequential studies: The cases happen consecutively, and there is an assumption that what has happened at one time point or in an intervening period will in some way affect the next incident.

According to Vissack (2010:373), an advantage of the multiple case study is that it can be used to augment external validity and help to guard against observer bias.

3.4.7.3 Justification for a single/multiple case study

This study employed a single instrumental case study design (Yin, 2008; Stake, 1995). Underachievement in Business Studies was chosen as a critical case Yin, (2009), within a specific context pertaining to the socio-economic circumstances of learners and the area within which the schools are located. This method is ideally suited to the study because it is a thorough approach to determining the reasons why learners in specific communities underperform in Business Studies. It provides a way for rigorous case analysis and is open-ended, allowing new experiential evidence and interpretation to inform the research. This study is a single case as it studies the

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phenomenon of underperformance among Grade 12 learners from specific communities.

3.5 Sampling of participants

3.5.1 Definition of sampling

Leedy and Ormrod (2005:141) define sampling as “the process of selecting a portion of the population which will be a representation of the whole population in a study”. They are therefore the objects selected for study by researchers to form their research sample. Etikan, Musa and Alkassim (2016:1) define a sample as “a portion of a population or universe”. The difference between quantitative and qualitative research could be seen in their method of selecting objects of study. Sampling in quantitative research is based on probability or random samples to ensure generalizability to a larger population. Qualitative studies, on the other hand, select participants purposefully. Etikan, et.al. (2016:1) mention that in purposive sampling, “subjective methods are used to decide which elements are included in the sample”.

3.5.2 Purposive sampling

According to Etikan, et.al (2016), purposive sampling is one of the non-probability sampling techniques. Purposive sampling has limitations as this technique is subjective in nature, but is a useful technique when randomisation is not possible. Bricki and Green (2016) define purposive sampling as selecting participants because they are likely to generate useful data for the project. To ensure that this sample is credible, and covers the main groups you are interested in, one strategy is a maximum variation sample. Purposive sampling refers to selecting individuals or objects which will provide the most information about the research question. My sample would include grade 12 Business Studies learners, Business Studies teachers and the Departmental Heads at these two schools. Previous research on the subject would be consulted. In this study, the participants were selected using data of the performance of Grade 12 learners offering Business Studies of schools in the Metro North Education District (MNED) from 2014 to 2017. The two schools chosen for this study comes from the same geographical area in the MNED, and the results in Business Studies have decreased over the years. Another reason is that the number of learners offering the subject at both schools in this study has reduced over the last three years. All Grade 12 learners offering Business Studies at the selected schools will be part of

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the research. The number of learners offering the subject at school A were 12 and at school B were 15. The teachers two Business Studies teachers at school A and one Business Studies teacher at school A and the Heads of Department of Business Studies at the two schools formed part of the study. The table below will illustrate how the purposive sampling methods were used in this study:

Table 3.3 Purposive sampling methods

Purposive Sampling method	Definition	Used in this study
Maximum variation sampling	The purpose of this type of sampling is to achieve better understanding by looking at the subject from all available angles. This method is known as heterogenous sampling. This type of sampling is used when the sample pool is small	As the sample pool in this study is small, namely only two schools, this method was used in this study.
Homogeneous Sampling	This type of sampling focuses on participants who share similar traits or characteristics.	Grade 12 learners and teachers at two specific schools were the objects of this study. Two categories of people, therefore I did not make use of this type of purposive sampling method.
Typical Case sampling	Here participants would be chosen based on similar expected behaviour	Learners from schools within similar socio-economic backgrounds were the objects of this study. Yes
Extreme/Deviant Case Sampling	This type of sampling focusses on individuals who are unusual or atypical.	Not used in this study as homogeneous groups were studied

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Critical case sampling	A select number of critical cases are selected and examined	Not used in this study
Total population sampling	This method includes the entire population that meets the criteria	Not used in this study
Expert sampling	Experts in a particular field are the subjects of the purposive sampling	Not used in this study

Adapted from American Journal of theoretical and applied statistics

3.6 Research Instruments and the process of data collection

3.6.1 Introduction

Data collection instruments refer to the methods researchers use to gather data for a study. Qualitative researchers often use multiple forms of data in any single study. They might use observations, interviews, written documents, audio-visual materials, electronic documents such as e-mail messages and websites, and anything else that can help them answer their research question Leedy & Ormrod, (2005:143). Principal sources of data for this study includes interviews with learners, teachers and members of the School Management Team (SMT), questionnaires and data obtained from the WCED. In qualitative studies, interviews are unstructured or semi-structured and questions are open-ended. The questions used in this study were open-ended which means learners could provide their own answers. This could yield a problem as the answers may vary and valid comparisons would become difficult.

3.6.2 Questionnaires

The questionnaires employed in this study generated both qualitative and quantitative data. The quantitative data was mostly the learners and teachers' biographical information and their socio-economic circumstances at home. The qualitative data derived from the questionnaires included learners and teachers' feelings and opinions on the circumstances at school. Here open-ended questions were used. The questionnaires handed out to learners and teachers and collected at the schools on a

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date negotiated with learners and teachers. All the questionnaires were, however, not returned.

3.6.3 Documentary evidence from WCED and DBE

Gathering data by studying documents follows the same line of thinking as observing or interviewing is the opinion of Stake (1995:68). Documentary evidence from the WCED and DBE studied and analysed were for statistical purposes. These documents included the examination result reports by the Minister of Basic Education and the diagnostic report on each individual subject, including Business Studies. The evidence from WCED included the subject results per school which includes a per question analysis of the Business Studies results per school.

3.6.4 Interview

3.6.4.1 Introduction

The purpose of an interview in qualitative research for the most part is not to get simple yes and no answers. The qualitative interviewer should arrive with a short list of issue-oriented questions, anticipating probes that evoke good response Stake, (1995:65). Bricki and Green (2016:11) mention that to ensure reliability and validity of the interview, certain techniques should be adopted (see Table 3.4).

Table 3.4: Interviewing techniques

Interviewing technique	Aim
Reproducible	Someone else could use the same topic guide to generate similar information.
Systematic	To ensure that we are not just picking interviewees or data that support our pre-existing ideas about the answers.
Credible	The questions we asked and the ways in which we ask them should be reasonable ones for generating valid accounts of phenomena.
Transparent	Methods should be written up so that readers can see exactly how the data were collected and analysed.

Adapted from Bricki and Green (2016)

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3.6.4.2 Semi-structured interviews

Bricki and Green (2016: 11) define semi-structured interviews as interviews based on a loose structure or topic guide made up of open-ended questions, defining the area to be explored. It is very important to develop the right question to ask and to remember that the respondent is unlikely to share your perspective on the world. A topic guide usually has a list of the key questions that the interviewer would like to cover with some useful prompts to encourage the interviewee to talk about specific issues if they do not come up spontaneously. Moriarty (2011:8) avers that semi-structured interviews are based on a series of open-ended questions about a series of issues the researcher think was relevant to the topic. The semi-structured interview was used for interviewing the teachers at the two schools. Semi-structured questions were used in the focus group interviews with learners.

3.6.4.3 Focus group interviews

Moriarty (2011:10) suggests that focus group interview should be reserved for those occasions when all participants have shared the same experience. The similarity of participants interviewed in this study was that (a) they were all Grade 12 learners, (b) all offered Business Studies (c) they lived in the same community. Moriarty (2011:10) mentions that one advantage of focus group interviews is that it can encourage participants who are reluctant or shy away from being interviewed on their own. The use of focus group interviews in this study allowed the more introverted students to express themselves more openly, inspired by the participation of their more outspoken peers."

3.6.4.4 Conducting the interviews

The interviews for this study were arranged with teachers individually at their respective schools at a time which was convenient to them. Focus group interviews were arranged at the two schools on separate dates. The interviews lasted between 45 and 50 minutes. Semi-structured interviews were conducted. The interviews were recorded with permission of all participants, namely learners and teachers.

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3.7 Qualitative data analysis

3.7.1 Introduction

Noble and Smith (2014:1) define qualitative research as a generic term which refers to a group of methods and ways of collecting and analysing data which is interpretative or explanatory in nature and focus on meaning where data collection is undertaken in its natural setting. They state that qualitative researchers usually work with text when analysing data.

3.7.2 Analysing and reporting qualitative data.

Researchers can present possibilities and theories and can argue for and against as long as the processes are transparent and the approach and methods are ethical and grounded in practice Atkins & Wallace, (2012: 3). Evidence is the data we select to support our argument. Data should be interrogated to identify whether there is a case to argue. Data which is relevant to your argument is called evidence Atkins & Wallace, (2012: 6).

When evidence is selected, a researcher should guard against selecting only evidence which supports one's own argument, ignoring data which contradicts our argument and bias. Bias exists when a researcher wants to prove hypothesis. It is, therefore, important that the researcher's analysis and selection criteria are transparent.

According to Atkins and Wallace (2012: 13), the researcher should always make sure that the data selected for presentation is illuminative, i.e., throws light on the research question, which indicates something significant to the research, representative of the data as a whole and illustrative. Atkins and Wallace (2012:16) quote Wellington (2000, 135:9) who breaks the process of dealing with data down into six broad stages, i.e.

Table 3.5: Stages of data analysis

Immersion	getting an overall sense or feel for the data.
Reflection	exploring and examining perspectives, attributes, experiences, and actions.
Analysis	the breaking down of the data into its component parts.

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Synthesis	the search for patterns, common themes, arguments, or ideas.
Location and relation	identifying how these fit with another current research.
Presentation:	which in Wellington's list also includes selection.

Adapted from Atkins and Wallace (2012)

"When categories identified from questionnaires are not replicated in the interviews and it is not possible to make any meaningful synthesis of the interviews as a whole, it is important that we accept it and write it into our research report, rather than persevering with the analysis to the point at which we begin to read things into the data which are not really there" Atkins & Wallace, (2012:17).

"When the researcher analyses and present the discourses, views, ideas, memories or stories of others, as is often the case in the field of education, it is important to ensure that these do not, by a process of being mediated through the researcher's own preconceptions and opinions, become distorted and contaminated. The authentic voice of participants in the study should as far as possible be retained" Atkins & Wallace, (2012:17).

3.8 Trustworthiness and rigour in research

As social science variables are difficult to measure, a qualitative researcher should carry out a "contextualised comparison" which automatically searches for analytically equivalent of contextual factors is the opinion of Starman (2013:36). Validity is defined by Pacho (2015:50) as concerning the integrity of the conclusions that are generated from research. He defines reliability or trustworthiness of research as the degree to which a procedure gives consistent results. It refers to the degree of accuracy and comprehensiveness of data collected. In this study, triangulation was used to strengthen the trustworthiness of findings.

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3.9 Triangulation

According to Bricki and Green (2016:26), triangulation can be defined as a method for increasing validity of findings through deliberately seeking evidence from a wide range of sources and comparing these findings. Any difference is regarded as an important source of data.

In qualitative data, validity can be addressed through the honesty, depth, richness and scope of the data achieved, the participants approached, the extent of triangulation and the disinterestedness or objectivity of the researcher, according to Pacho (2015: 50). In qualitative research, reliability can be regarded as a fit between what researchers' record as data and what actually occurs in the natural setting that is being researched, that is, a degree of accuracy and comprehensiveness of coverage. Bracketing, triangulation and thick description will be used to strengthen the validity and reliability of findings. Tufford and Newman (2012) in Pacho (2015:51) define bracketing as a method used in qualitative research to mitigate the potential damaging effects of preconceptions that may taint the research process and thereby to increase the rigour of the study. Bryman (2008:700) defines triangulation as "the use of more than one method or source of data in the study of a social phenomenon so that findings may be cross-checked". Triangulation supports the strength of interpretations and conclusions in qualitative research. Thick description will be used to enhance validity and reliability in this study. Thick description refers to the researcher's task of describing and interpreting observed social action or behaviour within its context Pacho (2015:51).

Table 3.6 Triangulation in qualitative research

Triangulation	**Application**
Method triangulation involves the use of multiple methods of data collection about the same phenomenon.	I have used multiple data collection methods e.g., Interviews and questionnaires to gather my data.
Investigator triangulation involves the participation of two or more researchers in the same study to	I was the only researcher on this project and therefore did not use another researcher.

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provide multiple observations and conclusions.	
Theory triangulation uses different theories to analyse and interpret data.	For this study, I made used of only one theoretical framework and, therefore, this type of triangulation was not applicable to my study.
Data source triangulation involves the collection of data from different types of people, including individuals, groups, families, and communities, to gain multiple perspectives and validation of data	Data was collected data through interviews with selected individuals in different areas to gain multiple perspectives and validation of data.

Adapted from Carter, Bryant-Lukosius, DiCenso, Blythe, and Neville (2014:545)

3.10 Demarcation of the study

There are 58 schools in the Metro North Education District which offers Business Studies as a subject. The two schools used in the research study are both Afrikaans medium schools in the same geographical area of MNED where learners struggle to perform well in Business Studies.

3.11 Ethical considerations

3.11.1 Introduction

Guidelines on research ethics were observed throughout the various stages of this study. The principles of confidentiality and voluntary participation was considered and communicated to participants. The principle of confidentiality requires that the data collected should be used only for this study and may not be shared with any third party. It is a requirement that all participants participated voluntary with informed consent as all relevant information was communicated to participants.

3.11.2 UWC

Ethical clearance was applied for and granted by the university's ethics committee. The policy on research ethics (2009:2) of UWC declares the following with regards to research:

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> This Policy on Research Ethics applies to all members of staff, graduate and undergraduate students who are involved in research on or off the campuses of UWC. In addition, any person not affiliated with UWC who wishes to conduct research with UWC students and/or staff is bound by the same research ethics policy. Each member of the University community is responsible for the implementation of this Policy in relation to scholarly work with which she or he is associated and to avoid any activity which might be in violation of this Policy.

Taking the above-mentioned policy regulations into consideration, I embarked on my study with clear guidelines in terms of ethical issues of anonymity, confidentiality, honesty, and integrity. I made every effort not to bring the institution into disrepute.

3.11.3 Ethics used in the study.

Each participant was issued a consent form and an information sheet concerning their consent and participation before data collection for this study started. The information sheet informed participants of the purpose of the study, potential benefits, protection of their confidentiality. Voluntary participation and the right to withdraw from the study was explained. The anonymity of the research was guaranteed using numbers and letters of the alphabet in the data analysis.

3.11.4 WCED

Application to perform a research study was applied to the Research Department of the WCED. The research department required the researcher to complete an application form in which the purpose of the study was required. Permission was granted by WCED to conduct research in two schools in the Metro North Education district of the Western Cape.

3.11.5 Informed consent

Arifin (2018:30) defines informed consent as “participants need to be adequately informed about the research, comprehend the information and have a power of freedom of choice to allow them to decide whether to participate or decline”. Consent forms were compiled by the researcher and distributed to learners, teachers, and parents. Consent was obtained from parents of learners under the legal age of 18. Consent and anonymity were explained to learners and teachers.

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3.11.6 Ethical considerations in data analysis and reporting

To keep the anonymity of the participants, numbers and letters were used in the analysis of the data, e.g. school A and school B. The questionnaires used did not require names of participants, it was therefore completely anonymous. The confidentiality of participants was protected.

3.12 Storage of data

I stored all the electronic collected data on a computer that was password protected in accordance with the ethical guidelines of UWC (UWC, 2009). The physical data, questionnaires, and interview questions were stored in a private secure location at home which only I have access to.

3.13 Conclusion

In this chapter, the focus was on the research methodology, which included the methodological paradigm, the research approach, the case study, research instruments, sampling, data analysis and ethical considerations. The purpose of this chapter was to guide the study to achieve the best possible results. Chapter 4 presents itself with the presentation of data which stemmed from data collected through questionnaires and semi-structured interviews.

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CHAPTER 4
PRESENTATION OF DATA

4.1 Introduction

Chapter three provided a discussion of the research methodology and specifically the case study as research design. This chapter presents the findings of the data collected and gathered using the research instruments. These findings are in relation to factors contributing to the low or underperformance or achievement of learners in Grade 12 Business Studies.

I engaged with the collected data as early as possible during the data collection process. The reduction and organisation of the data occurred so that early coding and category construction could begin. Therefore, in this chapter the results presented are the responses of the research participants to the research questions.

The data presented in this study represents Grade 12 Business Studies learners and teachers from 2 schools in the same geographical area. The research sample consisted of 27 respondents which included 24 learners and 3 teachers of whom 2 were also DHs (See Chapter One, 1.7.6 for an explanation of DH and the expected roles of the Departmental Heads).

Secondly, after the short introduction, I presented the research questions and indicated how they related to research instruments to be able to gather quantitative or qualitative data. Thirdly, I described the profile of the two schools that participated. This is followed by the presentation of the data gathered from the questionnaires and semi-structured interviews that were administered to learners' and the teachers at the two schools. Lastly, the chapter is concluded by providing a summary of the chapter and its relationship to the Chapter Five.

4.2 Relationship between the research instruments and data generated.

Table 4.1 indicates the relationship between the quantitative and qualitative questions. The purpose of this table was to assist the researcher to categorise the findings of the research in Chapter Five.

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Table 4.1: Categorising research questions according to the type of data

Main Research Questions	Questionnaire	Quantitative data	Interviews with teachers	Qualitative data	Interview with learners	Qualitative data
"Why are learners from working class communities in two secondary schools under-achieving in Grade 12 Business Studies?"	**Teachers:** **Section A:** Biographical information **Section B:** Motivation, Interest and competence within the subject **Learners:** **Section A:** Spatial information **Section B:**	 ✓ ✓ ✓	All questions of the semi-structured interview schedule addressed the main research question	 ✓	All questions of the semi-structured interview schedule addressed the main research question	 ✓

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	Motivation, Interest and competence within the subject					

Subsidiary Research Questions	**Questionnaire**	**Quantitative data**	**Interviews with teachers**	**Qualitative data**	**Interview with learners**	**Qualitative data**
What is learner achievement and what is meant by under-achievement?	Questions 1 – 6 (interview schedule) Appendix F Questions 1 – 3 (interview schedule) Appendix F1	✓	Section B question 8 - 9 and 25 - 26 Teacher questionnaire (Appendix D2)	✓	Section B questions 1-3 and 6 Learner questionnaire (Appendix D1)	✓

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What is the effect of socio-economic circumstances on learner achievement in grade 12?	Question 10 (interview schedule) Appendix F	✓	Section B questions 10 - 11 and 23 – 24 Teacher questionnaires (Appendix D2)	✓	Section A Learner questionnaire (Appendix D1)	✓
How do curriculum changes influence the teaching practices of grade 12 Business Studies teachers?	Questions 1 – 6 and 11 (interview schedule) Appendix F Questions 4 - 5 (interview schedule) Appendix F1	✓	Section A Teacher questionnaire and Section B questions 12 14 (Appendix D2)	✓	Section B question 8 Learner questionnaire (Appendix D1)	✓
To what extent does the availability	Question 12 (interview		Section B question 15 to 17 Teacher		Section B questions 4, 5 and 7 Learner questionnaire (Appendix D1)	✓

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of physical resources contribute to learner performance?	schedule) Appendix F Questions 6 – 6.1 (interview schedule) Appendix F1	✓	questionnaire (Appendix D2)	✓		
What role does the Departmental Head and/or Subject Head play in promoting good performance in Grade 12 Business Studies?	Questions 7 – 9 (interview schedule) Appendix F Questions 13 - 15 (interview schedule) Appendix F Questions 7 - 10 (interview schedule) Appendix F1	✓	Section B questions 18 – 22 and question 27 Teacher questionnaire (Appendix D2)	✓		✓

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4.3 Description of sampled schools: School profile

4.3.1 Introduction

The socio-economic area within which the schools are situated, the context of the student population and school infrastructure provided some insights into the learner performance at the schools. The information below reflects only the schools who participated in the study. The schools were given letters of the alphabet to protect the anonymity of the schools and their learners. This is in line with the ethical considerations of research.

4.3.1.1 School A

School A is situated close to an industrial area, but also surrounded by low-cost housing, mainly flats. This area is rife with various gangs and learners belong to the different gangs situated and operating in the area. Most of the learners at the school live in the area, but some travel to school by various means of transport, i.e. train, bus and minibus taxis. Using public transport resulted in learners arriving late at the school which impacted on contact time. The school accommodates both Afrikaans and English-speaking learners and most of the English-speaking learners are from foreign countries, e.g. Somali. The number of learners offering the subject ranged from poor to acceptable, as demonstrated by Table 4.2 below:

Table 4.2: School pass rate - 5 years: School A

Centre name	Exam	Entered	Wrote	# pass at 30%	Pass rate at 30%
School A	201411	18	18	7	38.9%
	201511	28	27	6	22.2%
	201611	15	15	9	60.0%
	201711	22	22	2	9.1%
	201811	12	11	7	63.6%

The statistics above is an indication of the pass rate of School A for 5 years from November 2014 to November 2018. Column A represented the school, column B was an indication of the date of the final Grade 12 examination for Business Studies. Column C represented the number of learners who entered or registered to write the

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final examination and column D was the actual number of learners sitting down for the examination. The last two columns represented the actual number of learners obtaining the minimum percentage of 30% and the pass rate of the specific year, respectively. The minimum pass percentage for Business Studies is 30%. It is clear from the above-mentioned data that the Grade 12 results of the school see-sawed from very poor, 9.1% pass rate in 2017 to average, 63,6% the highest achievement of the school in 2018. The average pass rate of the school over the five years was 38.8%. The school has a policy where teachers take their learners from Grade 10 to Grade 12. The implication was that the teachers offering the subject at Grade 12 level changed every year. It is clear from the above-mentioned statistics that learner performance was better every second year. This could be an indication that one teacher's results were better than the other. The possible reason for the good results in 2018 was that this was the first year that the school offered Business Studies in English. Most learners offering Business Studies in English were learners from foreign countries who resided outside of the immediate area of the school. There was a steady decrease in the number of learners offering the subject at the school. The average number of learners offering the subject at school A was 19. However, only 12 learners entered to write Business Studies in 2018.

4.3.1.2 School B

The school is situated in an area where the community are relatively poor and mostly low-cost housing is provided for people living in this area. The school is an Afrikaans medium school, and the enrolment consists only of learners who live in the school's proximity. The school is classified as a small school with an enrolment of less than 500 learners.

Table 4.3: School pass rate - 5 years: School B

Centre name	Exam	Entered	Wrote	# pass at 30%	Pass rate at 30%
School B	201411	31	31	14	42.2%
	201511	37	36	16	44.4%
	201611	39	38	22	57.9%
	201711	14	13	6	46.2%
	201811	15	15	9	60.0%

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The number of learners offering Business Studies at school B was steady from 2014 to 2016. From the table above, the enrolment for Business Studies has decreased drastically from 2017. This was because the school opted to offer Tourism as an elective and an option for learners against Business Studies. The results for Grade 12 Business Studies ranged between 45% and 60% for the five years within the period of this research study. The average pass rate over the five years was 50.1%. This number was still below the minimum pass rate of 60% required from the WCED.

4.3.1.3 Comparison of the pass rates of the two schools over a period of five years

Drawing on the information contained from Tables 4.2 and 4.3, I present the following table to compare the results of Business Studies in Grade 12 at School A and School B, from 2014 to 2018.

Table 4.4 Comparison of the business studies results, School A and School B from 2014-2018

Centre name	Exam	Average # Entered	Average # Wrote	# pass at 30%	Pass rate at 30%
School A	201411-201811	19	18.6	6.2	38.76
School B	201411-201811	27.2	26.6	13.4	50.14

It was clear from the above-mentioned data that school B averaged a 50.14% pass rate and school A averaged 38.76%. Although the schools are situated in areas of similar socio-economic circumstances, a significant difference in the performance of learners in Business Studies of 11.98%, between the two schools was observed.

4.4 Presentation of findings from the data collected through the research Instruments

4.4.1 Questionnaires

Questionnaires were distributed to both learners (see Appendix D1) and to teachers (see Appendix D2). These questionnaires generated both qualitative and quantitative data as indicated in Table 4.1 above.

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4.4.1.1 Learner questionnaire (see Appendix D1)

The learners who participated hailed from two schools in the same geographical area of the Western Cape. Section A of the learner questionnaire generated mostly quantitative data which directly speaks to the learners' circumstances and surroundings at home, i.e., the socio-economic circumstances in which they live. Section B of the questionnaire related to Business Studies and learners' interest in the subject. This part of the questionnaire related to how they felt about the subject, therefore, qualitative information. The data was captured mostly in Microsoft Excel spread sheets which converted the data into tables and graphs.

School A

Questionnaires were distributed to 15 learners, of which 11 completed questionnaires were returned. This amounted to 73,3% return rate. Some of the learners were 17 years of age and parental consent to participate in the study was obtained (see Appendix A1).

School B

Of the 15 learner questionnaires distributed to grade 12 learners at school B, only 13 completed questionnaires were returned. This amounts to 86.7% return rate. Some of the learners were 17 years of age and parental consent to participate in the study was obtained (see Appendix A1).

4.4.1.2 Teacher questionnaire (see Appendix D2)

The teachers' questionnaire dealt with their ability to teach the subject and how they experienced the various changes in the Business studies curriculum. The first part of the questionnaire was biographical information which contributed to the teachers' experience and understanding of Business Studies and teaching in general. Section B of the teacher questionnaire elicited the participants opinion on the teaching and learning of Business Studies, therefore qualitative information.

School A

Both teachers at school A returned the completed questionnaires. This amounts to a 100% return rate.

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School B

Only one educator was responsible for Business Studies at School B who returned a completed questionnaire. This totals a return rate of 100% for the school.

4.4.1.3 Summary and comparison

The schools were coded as School A and School B. The distribution and response rate are listed in table 4.5 below.

Table 4.5: Learner and teacher responses returned.

School	Participant	Distributed	Returned	Percentage
A	Learners	15	11	73.3
A	Teachers	2	2	100.0
B	Learners	15	13	86.7
B	Teachers	1	1	100.0

Fifteen questionnaires were distributed at both schools. The return rate of school A was 73.3% and at school B was 86.7%. This amounts to a 13.3% difference in the rate of return between school A and school B.

4.4.1.4 Learner responses to the questionnaires

Graph 4.1 below illustrated that at the time of the completion of the learner questionnaires, the learners' ages ranged from 16 to 20 years of age. Most of the learners were in the correct age cohort or a year ahead of the norm. Only 4 learners were above the cohort of 18 years old. Only 16% of the learners were above the cohort of a Grade 12 learner which indicates that only 16% of learners currently in Grade 12 was retained in previous grades.

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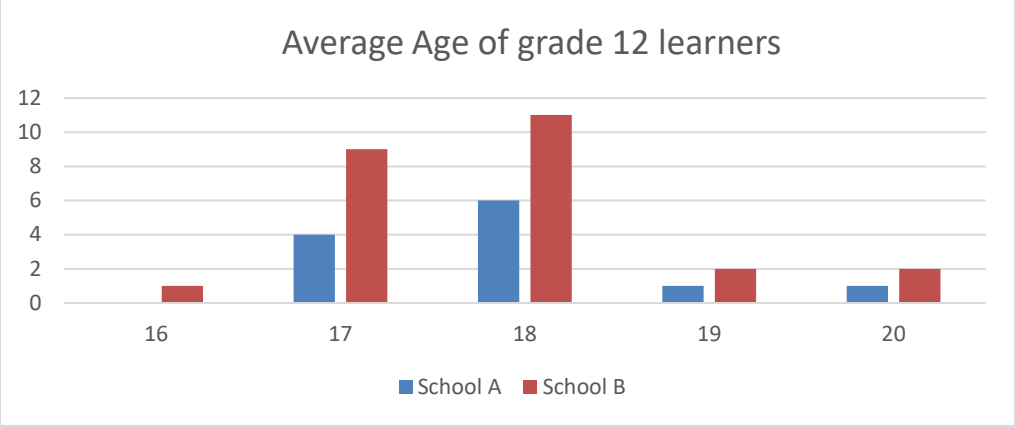

Figure 4.1: Average age of Grade 12 earners

More females than males offer Business Studies as a subject at these two schools as illustrated in Graph 4.2, below. In school A, 5 out of 11 respondents were male and 6 respondents were female. At school B, however, 11 of the 13 respondents were female and only 2 respondents were male.

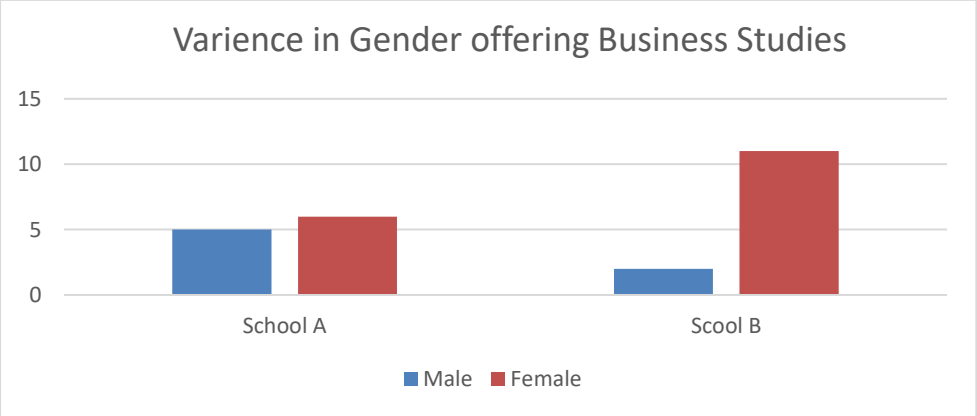

Figure 4.2: Variance in Gender of learners offering Business Studies

Questions 1-4 in Section A of the learner questionnaire focussed on the spatial circumstances of learners. This was an indication of the socio-economic circumstances in which learners live. There is a school of thought which posits that learners' circumstances at home influences their motivation and, therefore, their level of performance.

The Graphs below, Figure 4.3 and 4.4, indicates firstly the learner's spatial circumstances i.e., the size of the home and number of people in the household, if they have a space to study, how many hours a day are available for study purposes.

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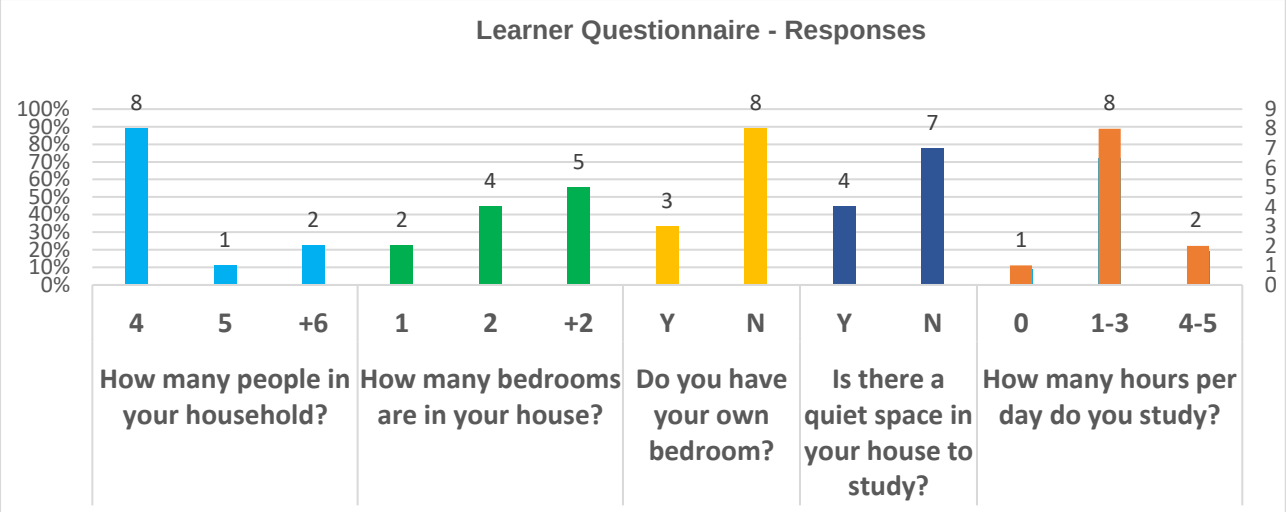

Figure 4.3: School A: Learner questionnaire

The above-mentioned data indicates that of the learners participating in the study at school A, 72% lived in households of 4 or less, while 19% lived in households where 6 or more people occupy the same house. At the same time, 55% of learners lived in houses with 2 or less bedrooms and 45% learners lived in houses with more than 2 bedrooms. Of these learners only 28% have their own bedrooms and 64% of the respondents indicated that they do not have a quiet space in the house to study. 72% of the respondents indicated that they study between 1 and 3 hours per day indicating that most of their time at home is spent doing chores. Two learners which amounted to 19% of the learners indicated that they study for four to five hours per day.

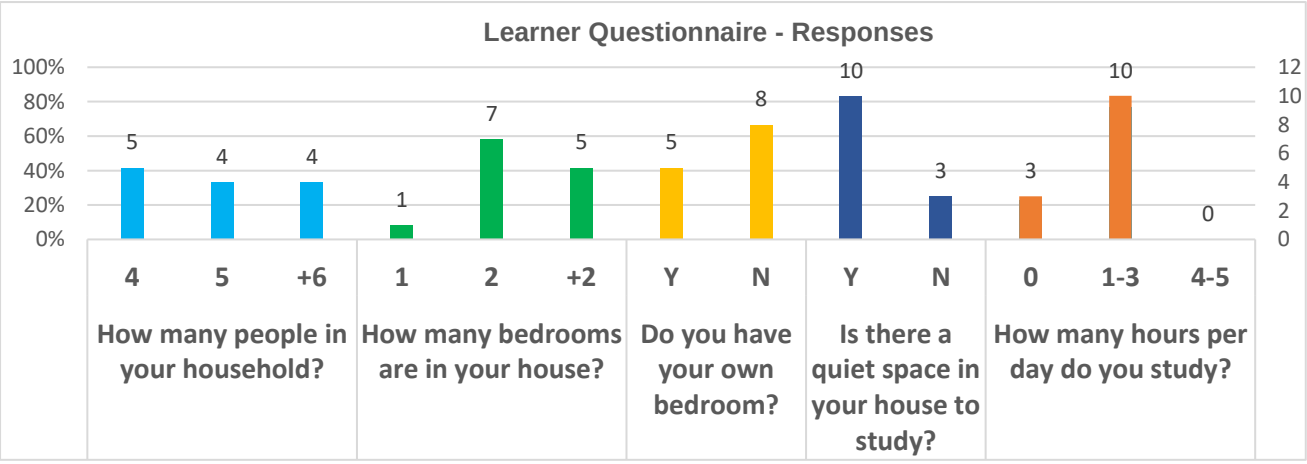

Figure 4.4: School B: Learner questionnaire responses

From the above-mentioned data, the indication was that 38% of learners from school B lived in households of 4 or less, while 60% lived in households where 5 or more people occupy the same house. At the same time, 61% of learners lived in houses

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with 2 or less bedrooms and 38% of the respondents indicated that they lived in houses with more than 2 bedrooms. Of these learners, only 39% have their own bedrooms and 23% of the respondents indicated that they do not have a quiet space in the house to study. 71% of the respondents indicated that they study between 1 and 3 hours per day indicating that most of their time at home is spent doing chores. No learners at school B studied for more than 4 hours per day.

In summary, it was clear that the spatial circumstances of learners at School B was healthier than that of respondents at school A. 39% of respondents at School B indicated that they have their own bedroom as opposed to 28% at School A. Similarly, 77% of learners at School B indicated that they have a quiet space at home to study while only 36% of respondents at School A confirmed that they had space to study. The number of hours per day learners spent on their studies was comparable.

The graphs below provide a clear indication of the factors which could be motivational to learners to achieve, i.e., highest qualification, number of people employed, number of learners in the household.

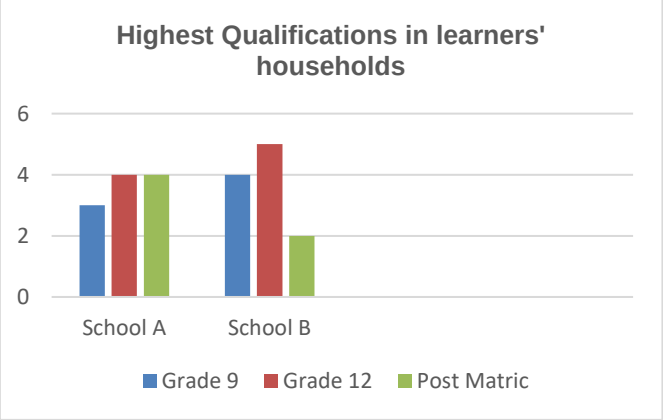

Figure 4.5: Highest qualification in learners' homes

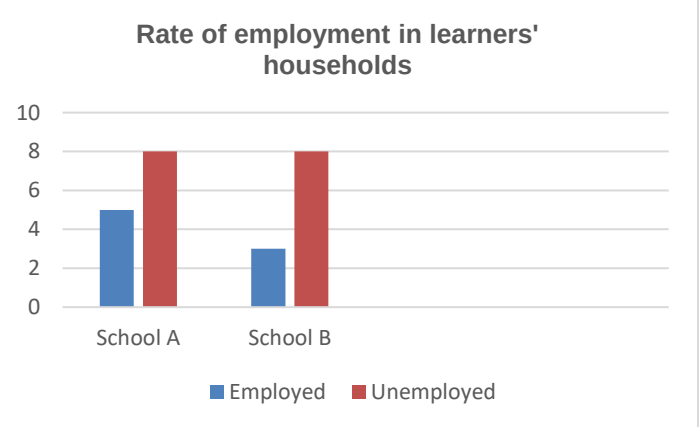

Figure 4.6: Rate of employment in learners' households

The above-mentioned numbers indicate that more than 70% of the respondents have parents or siblings who holds a matric certificate or higher, however 68% of the respondents indicated that the adults within their households were unemployed. This could be a huge demotivational factor.

Section B of the learner questionnaire included eight items relating to the subject Business Studies, the reasons learners chose the subject, their perspective of the subject and how they perceive the teaching methods and learning and teaching

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resources. All the questions in this section are quantitative in nature as learners are given options to choose from. These options include number of hours, agree, strongly agree, disagree, and types of resources. Some of the questions, however, lends itself to qualitative data, as learners' feelings and perceptions are required, e.g. the impact of resources on their learning.

Figure 4.7 below is a graphic depiction of the learner responses regarding the subject. 64% of the learner respondents indicated that they love the subject and need it for their career choice, while 36% chose the subject because it was part of the subject package at the school. Most of the respondents stated that they had an average or below average achievement in the subject, only 17% of learners had an above-average achievement in Grades 10 and 11. Business Roles and Business Ventures seems to be the difficult content which learners indicated that they struggle with. This could be because the content is heavily loaded, and calculations are part of this content. Only 4% of the respondents indicated that they do not have access to resources, 58% of learners indicated that they do have access to the internet. Most learners stated that their teachers use resources and that these resources help them to understand the Business Studies content. All learners agree that their teachers are knowledgeable and knows the Business Studies content.

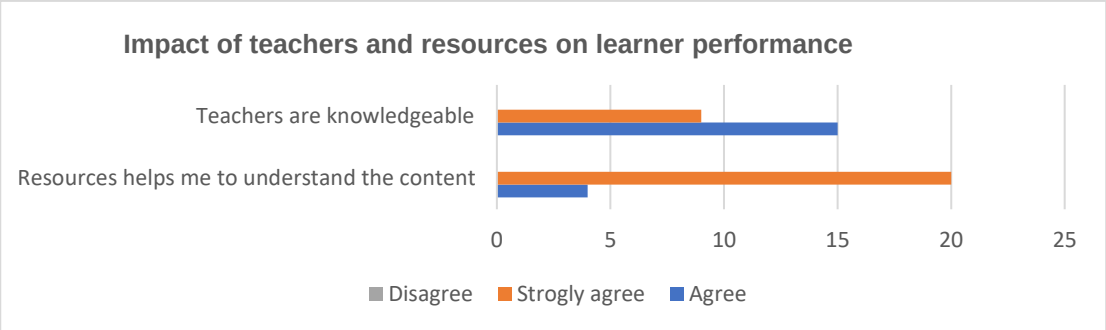

Figure 4.7: Impact of teachers and resources on learner performance

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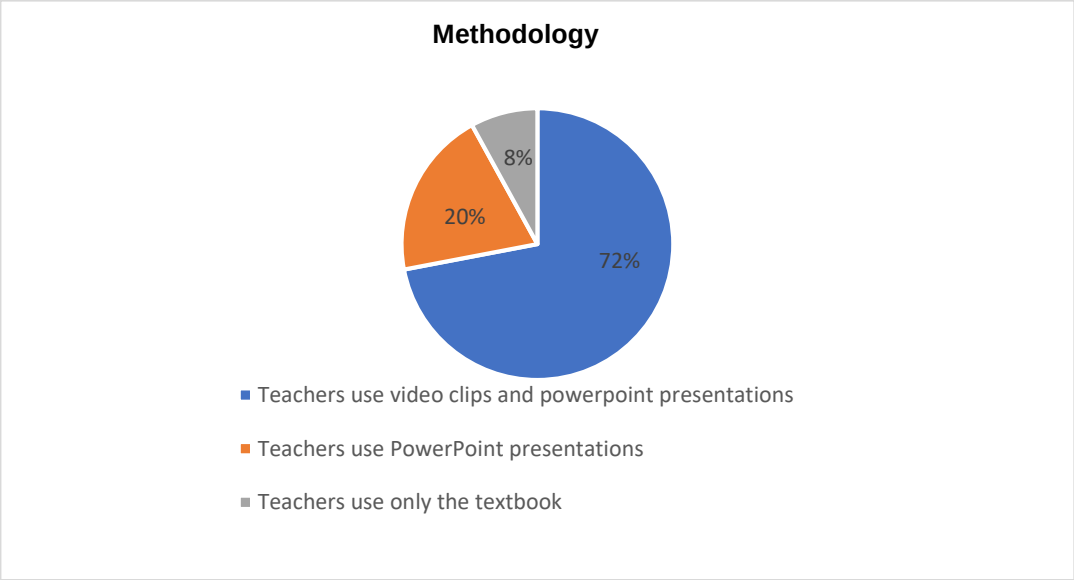

Figure 4.8: Impact of methodology on learner performance

4.4.1.5 Teacher responses to questionnaire

Three teachers completed and returned the questionnaires. Two teachers at School A and One teacher at school B were responsible for Business Studies. This is not statistically significant, rather it provides valuable insight into the teachers' knowledge and methodology as well as experience in teaching the subject. The three teachers were all above 40 years in age.

Section A of the questionnaire is based on the individual teacher's biographical information which studies the qualifications and experience in teaching Business Studies in the further education and training (FET) phase. Questions 1 to 3 of Section A of the questionnaire speaks to the experience of the teachers as indicated in the graph below:

All teachers were experienced in teaching the subject. The average number of years teaching experience in Business Studies was 10 years, which means that only one of the three teachers taught Business Economics in the dispensations of House of Representatives (HoR), House of delegates (HoD), Department of Education and Training (DET) and the Cape Teachers Department (CTD). The above-mentioned were the four education departments in the pre-1994 (apartheid) era.

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Questions 4 to 7 indicate the teachers' qualifications and workload at school. Workload at school refers to the number of lessons a teacher should prepare, depending on the number of subjects allocated to the specific teacher. A senior teacher, i.e. DH, Deputy principal and principal have extra administrative responsibilities.

Table 4.6 Highest qualification and qualification in Business Studies

Post level		Highest qualification		Highest qualification in Business Studies		Number of teaching subjects	
1	1	Teachers Diploma	0	I	0	1	0
2	2	Degree + Teachers diploma	1	II	0	2	1
3	0	Postgraduate+ Teachers diploma	2	III	3	3	2

From the information tabulated in the table above, all three teachers were well versed in Business Studies, as they have a third-year qualification in Business Studies. All the teachers were highly qualified as one was in possession of a bachelor's degree and two have post-graduate qualifications in education. Two of the teachers were part of the school management team (SMT) at the school and only one of the three teachers occupied a post level 1 teacher post. All teachers taught more than one subject at the school. Two of the teachers indicated that they teach EMS in the General Education and Training (GET) phase. This subject is included in the teachers' formal qualification. Teachers indicated that they also taught subjects such as Life orientation, Arts and Culture and Mathematics in the GET phase. The teachers had no formal qualification in these subjects.

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Section B of the teacher questionnaire as presented in the graph below, elicited the participants opinion on the teaching and learning of Business Studies.

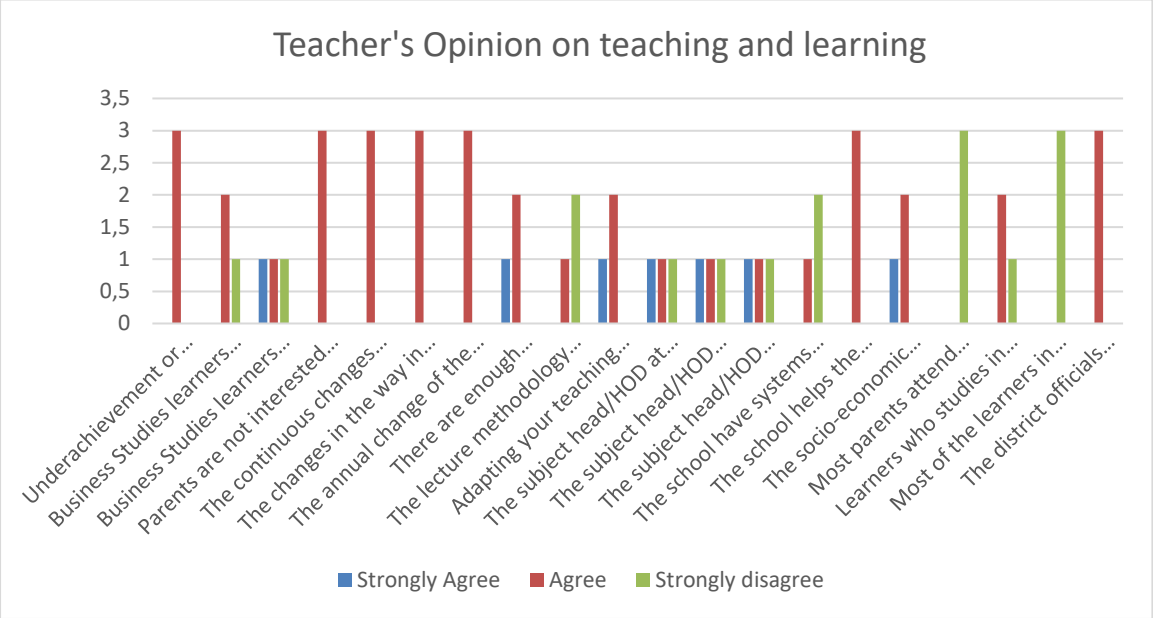

Figure 4.9 Teachers opinion on teaching and learning

All the educators agreed on the meaning of the concept “underachievement”, defining it as a deviation from the expected norm. In the case of minimum achievement in Business Studies, the norm of 30% was not achieved at the two schools. The teachers unanimously agreed that learners did not achieve because parents were not actively involved in their schooling. There were a number of challenges regarding the subject itself which teachers felt could contribute to this underachievement by learners, i.e. the continuous changes in the Business Studies curriculum, the changes in the phrasing of questions and the annual changes in the examination guidelines. Teachers had differences in opinion regarding the impact of the socio-economic circumstances of learners and geographical areas where the schools are situated on learner achievement. The teachers’ opinions varied from strongly agree to strongly disagree on the direct impact of the availability of resources and teaching methodology on learner achievement. The teachers also disagreed on the role of the HOD regarding supporting teachers with content knowledge and methodology. All the teachers agreed that parents did not attend parent teacher meetings and that this disinterest impacted on learner achievement. All the teachers also agreed that Grade 12 learners did not read at the required level with comprehension. They, however, had different opinions

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on the impact of home language on achievement. They fully agreed that the support provided by the district office was sufficient and should enhance teaching and learning.

4.4.2 Semi-structured interviews

4.4.2.1 Learner interviews (Appendix C2)

School A: Semi-structured interviews were conducted with eleven of the fourteen learners of school A. A request was made to the school to interview all Grade 12 learners as only a small number of learners offered the Business Studies at the school.

School B: Semi-structured interviews were conducted with seven of the fifteen learners of school B. A request was made to the school to interview all Grade 12 learners as only a small number of learners offered Business Studies at the school.

4.4.2.2 Teacher interviews (Appendix F3)

School A: Only one teacher at the school was available to be interviewed. The Grade 12 teacher at School A was not available to be interviewed. Several attempts were made to schedule an interview with the teacher, but he indicated his unavailability. The teacher interviewed taught Grade 11 Business Studies and was also the Departmental Head (HOD) for Business Studies.

School B: The Business Studies teacher at school B interviewed was also the Departmental Head, i.e., post level 2 teacher. This was the only qualified Business Studies teacher at the school.

4.4.2.3 Summary and comparison

Only 46.6% of the learners of School B availed themselves for the semi-structured interviews, while 78.5% of learners were available at the arranged time of the interview.

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4.4.2.3.1 Responses of learners to the semi-structured interviews

What follows are the responses of the Grade 12 learners to the semi-structured interviews at each of the two schools. The interviews took place in a relaxed atmosphere and learners were re-assured of the confidentiality of the process. Learners were asked to raise their hand to indicate that they would like to answer the specific question. Questions 1 to 3 focus on the learners' attitude towards the subject. Questions 4-6 was about the teaching and learning of Business Studies, questions 7-12 focussed on learners perception of the school, i.e. monitoring and support of learners and teachers and their view of what was good and what they would like to change at their respective schools.

a) Reasons learners find Business Studies interesting

School A: Most learners at School A indicated that they found Business Studies interesting but challenging as the content "is too much". "There is too much reading and application" One learner from School A, however, indicated that she found Business easier to understand than other subjects because it was very theoretical and you just have to read and comprehend. This particular learner switched from Physical Science to Business Studies.

School B: The participants were asked why they found Business Studies an interesting subject. Many learners indicated that the subject tended to be more challenging than many other subjects. The subject lends itself to subject matter which is relevant to learners and their parents. They mentioned content which they found especially interesting , namely legislative matters, e.g. where they learnt about their rights as consumers and workers. Many learners, however, also indicated that they found the content too loaded and difficult to remember. Some learners indicated there was too much reading and writing. Many learners also indicated that they would like to further their studies in Accounting and Business Management and would like to make this their chosen career field.

b) How to study for a Business Studies examination

It was clear from the participants responses that learners have various learning styles. One learner indicated she records herself on her cell phone and listen to the recording using earphones. "It is almost like a song that you listen to". They were the new

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generation who listens to songs which makes it easy to remember. This is an auditory learner. Other auditory learners indicated that they would recite the content until they remember the work. Visual learners indicated that they highlight their notes making summaries and recite because they "like to see what they are studying". Some learners indicated that they use colours, for example, questions would be different colour and the answer would be a different colour. "Make summaries afterwards and recite to see if you understand", was one learner's response. One learner at **School B** indicated that she makes mind-maps of the content. Others indicated that they make small notes of the content and study little bits at a time. This helped them to break the content into smaller blocks and which were more manageable from a learning point of view. Some learners indicated that they helped peers to read with understanding. One learner from School A indicated that when she explained the work to others, she tested her own understanding of the content. In this regard a learner commented as follows: "If I can't explain the work then I know that I don't understand the work".

c) How long before the Business Studies examinations to you start to prepare?

At **School A**, 4 learners indicated that they study one day before any test or examination. Some learners mentioned that they study only the night before and would study through the night. Only one learner indicated that she started at least one week before the exam and would then revise the day before the examination. One learner indicated that her parent expected her to revise and study daily and partake in class.

At **School B,** the learners' responses were mostly in line with that of School A. Most of the learners indicated that they started to study only two days before the examination would be conducted. One learner indicated that she started to study at least two weeks before the test or examination and a few learners indicated that they revised daily which helped them to prepare for the examination.

d) Does your teacher have an interesting way of teaching the subject?

School A: All the learners indicated that their teacher presented the content in an interesting manner. Here are some of their comments: "The teacher stimulates you by using different things or examples to make content clear and accessible". Learners mentioned that the teacher "doesn't stick to the subject" all the time he makes jokes

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and goes off the topic. Learners also mentioned that he “gives common examples that we can relate to and “In the exams remember that gave this example and used it when answering”.

School B’s learners specified that their teacher tried to make the content interesting by making use of video clips to explain the content. “He uses a variety of practical examples to provide some clarity. He uses different methods of teaching the content and sometimes expects the learners to make posters of certain content and learners are then expected to present to the class”. The teacher, therefore, used co-operative learning. Learners stated that explaining to the class helped the person who was presenting because they had to prepare and had to know the specific content. The teacher also encouraged learners to work in pairs and explained the content to each other.

e) Would you want the teacher to change anything he does in the class?

Learners at both **School A and School B** indicated that they would not want their teachers to change their methodology.

f) Do your teacher use resources to enhance his lessons?

Learners at both schools stated that their teachers used resources such as PowerPoint presentations, video clips and telematics presentations of relevant content. The prescribed textbooks were sometimes used as well as the core notes. Learners at both schools indicated that the teachers used the data projector.

If yes, do these resources help you to understand Business Studies better?

Learners offered several diverse opinions to this question. Some learners specified that the use of the resources provided more examples and content became clear and understandable. The different teaching methodologies used in for example the telematics presentations made the content clear. Other learners disclosed that they found some of the presentation “boring” because the teacher “talks all the time”. The teacher used the PowerPoint presentations as “notes” and that learners had to write the content from the slide show. The slide shows were not always used to make content easier to understand. Learners mentioned that they were expected to write

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notes and it felt as if they came to school just to write notes and content was not explained to them.

g) How do the senior management team (SMT) monitor that effective teaching, learning and assessment takes place?

Learners at **School A** stated that monitoring of teaching and learning did not exist at the school. They, however, felt that monitoring of teaching and learning was important to make sure that both learners and teachers were accountable for quality teaching and learning. At **School B,** learners indicated that a Departmental Head monitored their books, but that the principal and the two HOD's only came to the class in the event of a teacher being absent. Monitoring of teaching and learning did not occur.

h) Do the SMT monitor your books on a regular basis?

School A learners mentioned that books were not monitored by any member of the SMT at all. They indicated that monitoring of books should help to motivate learners to keep their books updated. **School B's** learners indicated that one learner book was monitored by a member of the SMT. They also felt that the monitoring of their notebooks could serve as a motivation to learners to work harder to keep their books up to date and that it showed that teachers and the school cared about the learners.

i) What is the nature of learner support programmes if any at your school?

School A: Peer educators is volunteers from the community who holds one on one sessions to discuss individual problems. The peer educators take learners out on youth programmes, for example, last year she took us to symphony high school on 16 June for a youth day programme. These programmes keep us busy and out of trouble. Their focus is on what is happening at the school. This programme includes all the learners at school who are willing to participate. The peer educators help learners who are going through "certain things", maybe at home things are not going well, then council's learners. Extra classes were, however, only for certain subjects. Equilibrium was at the time an outside organisation (forms social groups). Meetings were held every Tuesday to build self-esteem. Learners mentioned that the meetings help them to get their minds off school and to relax. Equilibrium arranged leadership camps inviting learners from various schools where the focus would be on social and leadership skills. Learners felt that these camps taught them to communicate with

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others. They paired learners with learners from other schools. In addition, these camps encouraged teamwork.

School B: A volunteer came to the school once a month and helped learners with reading and comprehension. Some learners could read but did not understand what they were reading. This is a challenge in a Subject like Business Studies, where learners are expected to understand and apply their knowledge. The volunteer helped with self-confidence as he expected learners to read and explain their understanding of the reading. Learners felt that although this programme helped them to build confidence and self-esteem, they needed help from specialists in Business Studies to focus on the academics. Equilibrium helped them with social skills, but the academic performance was neglected. Equilibrium was a non-governmental organisation (NGO) which worked in this specific area.

j) Do the learner support programmes offered at your school help you to improve your studies?

School A: Learners suggested that no academic support was offered to them as they needed support in the subjects which they were struggling with. They indicated that the resources available in the school library were out-dated and did not help them with completion of assignments. The huge number of break-ins and subsequent vandalism undermined their academic performance. Other resources such as the computers at the school were out-dated and could not be used. Learners also indicated that they were not allowed to use the school's computers as only the CAT learners were allowed to use it.

School B: At school B, learners mentioned that to date they did not have any intervention or extra tuition in Business Studies. They however experienced an improvement in the subjects where extra tuition was offered, i.e., Mathematics and Life Sciences.

k) What would you change at your school and why?

The responses of the five learners from School A were as follows:

> Learner 1: Academic support and more resources. Level of teenage pregnancies should drop. Teenage pregnancy is like fashion at this

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school. Every year somebody in Grade 12 must be pregnant. Train learners about teenage pregnancies.

Learner 2: Sport activities do not cater for all the interest of learners, only soccer, rugby and netball are offered, but not on a regular basis as learners don't want to stay after school as they do not have money for transport when learner must play games against other schools. Teacher must pay out of their own pocket. No contributions from learners. Too dangerous in the area and can, therefore, not stay to late at school. Athletics and rugby are the only sport. Sometimes soccer, however the soccer team only played one match for the whole year.

Learner 3: Discipline – learners are unruly children and ill-mannered, but they face no consequences. Learners don't want to listen to the teachers or adhere to the rules of the school, they do as they please because they know there are no consequences for their actions. Very few teachers check homework. The Grade 12 learners indicated that their class teacher is strict and "You can never come to her class and not have your work or books". However, not every teacher has the time to do that.

Learner 4: Learners don't do their homework or their tasks or when they do it, it is substandard because "they know at the end of the year they give you marks to pass". They know they will not fail. Kids at the school are only afraid of a few teachers.

Learner 5: She gives you "codes" to write. Nobody wants to write something two hundred times.

School B:

Learners regarded the following issues as challenges at their school:

- Non-existent leadership structures such as an RCL or prefect body.
- The absence of extra-mural activities as only chess was offered at the school.

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- Discipline at the school posed numerous problems for example non-cooperation of learners in physical education activities.
- Teacher absenteeism caused poor performance in certain subjects.

The impact of the size of the school were:

- Teachers taught subjects which fell outside their field of expertise, for example, the Business Studies teacher were responsible for Life Orientation and Mathematics as well.
- The subject streams were narrow and not career orientated, but rather on teacher qualifications.
- Limited resources and the state of the buildings contributed toward the poor performance of learners.

l) What would you not change and why?

School A:

Learners agreed that they would not change the school's code of conduct. The code of conduct was, however, not implemented and enforced by all teachers. The impact was that learners disrespected the code of conduct and would not abide by the rules.

School B

Learners indicated that they would not change the code of conduct of their school. Although the code of conduct was a good one, it was not always implemented. The school hours changed from 8:00 to 8:15 which meant that less learners were late which consequently meant less detention. The support of Equilibrium was good as they helped learners with social skills and self-esteem. Athletics which was the only sport at the school was only conducted during the first term of the school year. Learners would, therefore, not have any post-curricula activities at school and Equilibrium would then be the only post curricula activity they could join.

4.4.2.3.2 Teacher interviews

What follows are the responses of the Grade 12 teachers to the semi-structured interviews at each of the two schools. The interviews took place in a relaxed atmosphere and teachers were re-assured of the confidentiality of the process.

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Questions 1 to 6 focussed on issues of methodology. Questions 7-9 focussed on role of the Senior Management Team (SMT) in monitoring and support of learners and teachers. Questions 10-15 focussed on the teachers' perceptions of the impact of learners socio-economic circumstance, learning styles and availability of resources on teaching and learning. Lastly, teachers' were asked what they found effective at the school and what structures at the school they would like to change and why.

1. **To what extent did the changes in the Business Studies curriculum have an impact on your teaching practices? Motivate**

School A

Both teachers at school A indicated that although they taught Business Studies, both started their teaching careers as specialists in one of the other commerce subjects. The DH was the Economics specialist at the school, whilst the post level 1 teacher focussed more on Accounting. Both were forced to teach more Business Studies classes as the other two subjects, Accounting and Economics, were discontinued at the school. The Accounting teacher indicated that he tried to continue with application of the content as in Accounting but found the enormous amount of content disconcerting. The Economics specialist indicated that in the past he focussed more on completing the "syllabus" as learners were only expected to regurgitate content learnt.

School B

Only one teacher was responsible for Business Studies at school B. He indicated that: "There is a difference between the Business Economics curriculum and the Business Studies curriculum in the sense that although the components of the Business studies curriculum were reduced to four main topics, the actual content of the curriculum covers more topics". He continued and stated that: "The content was less as it consisted only of forms of ownership and the Business functions. The business functions are now part of a wider topic so is forms of ownership part of a wider topic". He mentioned the changes in assessment which could impact the performance in Business Studies, negatively "The question paper also differed as the total of the questions were more and the choice questions were reduced to 3 out of 5, whereas in Business Economics learners had a wider choice, 5 out of 8 questions." Teachers

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had to make some adjustments to the way they taught as the requirements within the subject had changed significantly. He stated that: “In the past, I focussed only on note taking and testing learners understanding and remembering of the content”. The current curriculum’s expectations at the time were different as the curriculum is focussed on what happened in practice, i.e. practice- oriented. Learners had to understand what happened in the Business, therefore, bring reality into the classroom was imperative.

2. **What was the impact of curriculum changes on learner understanding and learning? Motivate**

A teacher at School A stated that: “All the learners at our school took Business Economics on the Standard Grade where learners were expected to give back knowledge, they learned verbatim. Learners were not expected to apply their knowledge, and they did fairly well in these exams”.

The teacher at School B made the following comments on the effect of curriculum changes on learner understanding and performance in the subject:

> There is a definite challenge regarding the amount of work learners are expected to master. Questions were more structured and learners new what to expect. Learners could choose topics and focus only on the chosen topics. So too these changes impacted on the teachers as they had to change their focus. Learners always did well with the old curriculum whereas learners struggled to master the new content. The Business economics curriculum was content based whereas the business studies curriculum is more skills based and teachers find it difficult to teach the skills and not just the content. In Business Economics learners had the choice of higher grade or standard grade. The difference between higher and standard grade was that learners offering the subject on the standard grade could regurgitate content learned and were not exposed to essay type questions. Currently all learners are assessed the same and some learners are not able to master the higher cognitive aspects of the subject. Some learners do not even attempt Section C which is the essay type questions despite all efforts on the teacher side to teach them how to write essay type questions. Learners put minimum effort into their studies”.

3. **What do you think is the best way to teach Business Studies?**

The post level one teacher at school A indicated that: “I mostly use video clips of for instance production systems to bring the reality to learners. The school was not able

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to take learners on fieldtrips where they could see what happened in real life situations. So, this was the most effective way to bring reality into the classroom".

The teacher at school B divulged that:

> The best way to teach Business studies is to teach it practice oriented, i.e. bring the reality into the classroom. It is good to bring the reality to the classroom, but in the past, we could "go to the reality", i.e. visit production sites such as coco cola, etc. Currently the rules and regulations make it difficult to take learners on excursions. The problems surrounding the school also makes it difficult to take learners out on excursions which means we must teach learners in class about for example, the production process whereas in the past they could see how mass production was used.

4. **Do you have learners with different learning styles in your class?**

The post level one teacher at school A said that **"**According to the learning styles questionnaire, learners were given as a baseline activity at the beginning of the year, most learners in Grade 12 was visual learners" and that "I use mostly video clips and PowerPoint presentations when teaching".

The teacher at School B made the following comments:

> Definitely. Most of the learners are visual learners. The auditory learners in the class are less according to the learning styles questionnaire learners had to complete at the beginning of the year. Most learners have a combination of the two.

Teachers at both schools indicated that they found it difficult to accommodate the different learning styles but indicated they used PowerPoint presentations and video clips. Teachers disclosed that the learners were focussed the first two or three times but lost interest when too many video clips were played. The teacher at school B divulged that "Even PowerPoint presentation became boring to them and they lost interest". He indicated that he employed a method where learners prepared a section of the work and presented it to the class. This was found to be a very effective method to keep learners interested. All three teachers indicated that it was important to use different methods on a regular basis to keep them focussed.

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5. **How do you accommodate these learners with different learning styles of learners in your class?**

Teachers at both schools had similar thoughts about learning styles. “You must use a variety of methods to keep learners interested”. Teachers indicated that they use the lecture method to accommodate auditory learners, PowerPoint presentations and showing of video clips for the visual learners and peer teaching and peer presentations to accommodate the kinaesthetic learners were used. “Teaching methods should however be changed regularly to keep learners focussed and interested as they find classes easily boring”, one teacher commented. Interestingly, not one of the teachers mentioned skills or the application of learners’ knowledge in the interview. The assumption could be that teachers’ focus was completion of content and not teaching learners the necessary skills to be able to answer questions in a Business Studies paper.

6. **Do you think it is important to reflect on teaching practices? How often do you reflect on your practices?**

The Departmental Head at school A commented: “Yes, it is important to reflect on your teaching practices after every lesson to determine if learning took place and if you need to change your methodology”.

The teacher at school B propounded:

> It is important because if you do not reflect, you would never know if a method is successful and if learning took place. Unfortunately, I do not reflect after each lesson, although that would be ideal. I try to reflect on a weekly basis. Reflection shows you if you must adapt or change a teaching methodology. Because our school is very small, teachers tend to talk to each other sharing which methods work in their subjects with which class. So, teachers would share ideas on teaching methodology. I would then try a method shared in the staff room, sometimes it would work in Business Studies, sometimes not.

7. **How do subject heads/principal/academic committee monitor that there is effective teaching and learning?**

The post level 1 teacher at school A indicated that no monitoring of teaching and assessment practices occurs at the school. “Monitoring of formal assessment was encompassed in the assessment policy of the school but was seldom implemented”.

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The teacher at school B indicated that:

> The same teachers are part of most of the committees, as the school is very small and only a few teachers are part of the SMT. We have internal moderation, where we look at the learner notebooks and the formal assessment tasks. Internal moderation of assessment tasks takes place twice per term.

8. **How do subject heads/principal/academic committee monitor the quality of assessment outcomes or teaching strategies?**

The post level one teacher indicated that no monitoring of teaching and assessment practices occurs at the school. “Monitoring of formal assessment was encompassed in the assessment policy of the school but was seldom implemented”. The DH, however, indicated that internal moderation was completed every term.

School B:

> We complete an assessment tool after moderation of tasks and learner scripts. It became difficult however with the different subjects, as only one specialist per subject normally taught at the school. So, a colleague who was not necessarily a subject specialist would moderate, i.e. quality assure the quality of the tasks and the quality of marking. Teachers also taught subjects for which they were not qualified but would also then have to quality assure the tasks in those subjects of their peer teachers.

9. **Why is it important for the school management team (SMT) to monitor the quality of teaching, learning and assessment?**

Teachers at both schools indicated that monitoring of teaching, learning and assessment was important because it was in the interest of the learners. Monitoring must take place to ensure that the expectations of the curriculum was fulfilled. Monitoring was also important for the school, to make sure that the goals as set out in the School Improvement Plan (SIP) was reached. “All monitoring should be to the advantage of the learners”, one teacher commented.

10. **How do the socio-economic circumstances of learners at your school impact their ability to learn the subject?**

Both teachers at school A indicated that learners were more interested in their extra-mural activities at home, i.e., belonging to gangs. They indicated that learners’ circumstances were distressing and had a great impact in their attitude toward

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schooling. The parent involvement was extremely poor. According to the teachers, the lack of parent interest and involvement in their children's schooling had the biggest impact on poor learner performance.

The teacher at school B indicated that:

> Poverty is a big problem. Learners do not have enough space at home to study. Some learners do not live with their parents, they live with guardians or grandparents. Some learners felt that although guardians provide food and clothing, they lack caring and emotional support. Most of the parents are unemployed and cannot provide in the educational needs of their children. He indicated that learners attend school for the grant they receive from the state, which were in many cases the household's only source of income. Some parents are alcoholics or addicted to drugs and have no control over their children, hence children do not respect parents. Gangsterism is another influence on learners because they are pressurised to join or girls to become 'girlfriends' of the gang leaders. This lead to alcohol and drug abuse among the grade 12 learners.

11. **How did you adapt your teaching practices to provide for this situation?**

Teachers at both schools indicated that they provided the necessary resources if the school was unable to deliver the resources. Schools were under resource as school fees were seldom paid because of the socio-economic circumstances of learners. Unemployment and poverty were rife in these communities. The resources teachers provided included magazines, newspapers, highlighters, paper, stationery. These products were not a priority at most of the learners' homes because of poverty. These products were regarded as luxury produce and not necessities. Learners, however, do need the resources to complete their school-based assessment (SBA). Teachers at the schools would try to fill this gap and provide the resources themselves, if possible.

12. **Does the availability of physical resources have an impact on your teaching practices and the learners' ability to learn? Motivate**

The post level one teacher at School A used his personal computer, speakers and laptop as the school was not able to supply these resources. The teachers indicated that although the school had a library, the resources were outdated. Learners were not willing to go to the public library to do research.

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The teacher at school B made the following comments on availability of resources and the impact on learning:

> Resources such as PowerPoint presentations and video clips can appeal to some learners and have a positive impact on the learners' interest in the subject matter and therefore impact their ability to learn in a positive way. There are however only a few data projectors at school which cannot be used daily. It is sometimes not possible to copy notes for learners because of a lack of funds. Although most of the learners are in possession of cell phones, data is a problem, as learners need data to do research on the internet. The school has computers, but many of the learners are not computer literate and do not know how to do research on the internet. These skills need to be taught, but the school does not have a delegated computer teacher to teach learners these skills. Learners can do research at school, but most of the books in the library is out-dated. Learners do not want to walk to the public library as they feel it is not safe to walk because of gang violence. Research can therefor only be completed during the school day and learners do not have the resources at home to complete tasks after the school day. This can have a negative impact on learner performance as information needed to understand some content is lost to the learners.

13. **What is the nature of learner support programmes if any at your school?**

School A: Teachers mentioned the following learner support programmes their school offered:

- Peninsula school feeding scheme.
- After school and Saturday classes for Grade 12 learners. The teachers indicated that extra tuition was only for grade 12 learners.

School B: The teacher indicated the following programmes at the school:

- The school feeding scheme was a big help as most learners come to school without having eaten anything at home. This helped the learners to concentrate in class.
- The school was running an after school and Saturday programme for Grade 12 learners to consolidate content taught and give learners an opportunity to study as many of them do not have space to study at home.
- Winter and Spring schools for Grade 12 learners.

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14. **How effective are the learner support programmes offered at your school?**

The teachers of both schools had similar comments regarding the support programmes.

School A: Teachers indicated that learners attended after school and Saturday tutoring sessions when a snack were supplied.

School B: The school feeding programme takes place daily. The academic programme is sometimes not as effective as all learners do not attend extra tuition classes as the school cannot guarantee the learners safety. Gang related incidents, violence and shooting prohibits learners from attending these classes.

15. **How do you track the effectiveness of the learner support programme you offer?**

School A: The teachers indicated that they prepare informal assessment activities when learners return to class as revision of the tutoring sessions.

School B: The teacher mentioned that he prepares informal assessment of the content tutored which learners completed on the day of tutoring. “One can also assess in the formal tasks and tests if the extra classes had a positive impact on the learners’ performance”.

16. **If you were part of the SMT of the school, what would you change and why?**

The post level one teacher commented “The implementation of the code of conduct by all teachers and the support provided by SMT to the teachers regarding discipline”.

The teacher at school B expressed that**: “**To increase the learner numbers at the school. If the number of learners can grow, we would be able to employ more teachers. We would then be able to offer more subjects. Our limited subject choice results in us not attracting more learners. We need to market the school”.

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17. **What would you not change and why?**

Both teachers at school A found this question very difficult to answer. The DH, however, mentioned that the attitude and teamwork amongst the SMT is one aspect that stands out at the school. The teacher at school B indicated that “the attitude and teamwork amongst the staff members. Teachers helped each other with discipline in the classrooms. Sharing best practices which colleagues could be used and be implemented in their classes”.

4.4.2.3.3 Comparison between the teachers of the two schools

The teachers of the two schools had similar qualifications. All teachers were highly qualified in Business Studies. All three teachers taught other subjects before being compelled by the school to teach Business Studies as the other commerce subjects were discontinued at both schools. From the interviews, it was clear that teachers found the socio-economic circumstances of learners to have a big impact on the ability to perform well at school. The changes in the Business Studies curriculum played a vital role in how teachers had to adapt their teaching styles to accommodate all learners in their respective classes. Members of the SMT had different opinions regarding the monitoring of teaching and learning as opposed to the post-level 1 teacher.

4.5 DBE and WCED documents with regards to results of Grade 12 business studies

According to the 2019, final diagnostic report for non-languages (DBE, 2019: 58), there was a steady decline in the Business Studies results for the 5 years since 2014. (DBE 2019) The performance of Grade 12 learners in Business Studies dropped from 77,9% in 2014 to 64,9% in 2018 at the 30% level.

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The table below shows the decline in the performance of Grade 12 learners in Business Studies from 2014 to 2018.

Table 4.7: Overall achievement rates in Business Studies 2014 - 2018

Year	No. wrote	No. achieved at 30% and above	% achieved at 30% and above	No. achieved at 40% and above	% achieved at 40% and above
2014	207 659	161 723	77,9	111 743	53,8
2015	247 822	187 485	75,7	127 453	51,4
2016	234 894	173 195	73,7	116 225	49,5
2017	204 849	139 386	68,0	87 535	42,7
2018	192 139	124 618	64,9	77 105	40,1

Source: DBE diagnostic report for non-languages 2019

From the table above, it was clear that the achievement in Business Studies has a direct impact on the decline in the number of learners offering Business Studies. Although an increase in the numbers were evident from 2014 to 2015, a steady decline in the number of learners offering Business Studies was visible from 2015 to 2018, from 247 822 in 2015 to 192 139 in 2018. This decline amounts to a decrease of 22% of learners offering Business Studies at a national level.

Table 4.8 Business Studies results of the Metro North Education District (MNED) 2014 - 2018:

Subject Code	Subject	District	Year	Number entered	Number Wrote	Number passed at 30%	Pass Rate
BSTD	Business Studies	METRO NORTH	201411	4195	4133	3420	83%
BSTD	Business Studies	METRO NORTH	201511	4403	4231	3646	86%
BSTD	Business Studies	METRO NORTH	201611	3650	3559	3092	87%
BSTD	Business Studies	METRO NORTH	201711	3557	3436	2644	77%
BSTD	Business Studies	METRO NORTH	201811	3771	3650	2616	72%

Source WCED results 2019

Similarly, in the table above, there was a steady decline in the number of learners offering Business Studies in the MNED district and a decline in the pass rate of Business Studies.

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4.6 Conclusion

This chapter presented the data captured from the learner and teacher questionnaires semi-structured interviews with teachers and learners.

The data of the questionnaires was presented according to the two sections in the questionnaire, namely biographical and spatial information and learners and teachers view of Business Studies as a subject. Graphs and tables were used to enhance the details of the data collected to provide the reader with a clear understanding of the nature of the schools involved in the study. The biographical data summarised the learners' spatial circumstance and the teachers' experience, qualifications and type of appointment. Similarly, the semi-structured interviews were divided into two parts, namely teachers and learners view on Business Studies as a subject and the changes within the subject and circumstances at the schools and the support offered to teachers and learners. The following chapter discusses the analysis and interpretation of the findings of the study.

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CHAPTER 5

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate why learners from specific socio-economic and geographical areas underperform in Business Studies.

In Chapter Four, data was categorised into themes to analyse and interpret the data collected. Data was collected through document study, questionnaires and focus group interviews. From the responses to the questionnaires and focus group interviews, categories and themes were developed to enable the analysis and interpretation of the data.

Chapter five analyses and interprets the data to identify reasons for the underperformance of Grade 12 Business Studies learners in a specific geographical area. This phenomenon was researched through the guidance of specific research questions which are:

The main research question was: “Why are learners from working class communities in two secondary schools under-achieving in Grade 12 Business Studies?”

The subsidiary research questions were:

- What is learner achievement and what is meant by under-achievement?
- What is the effect of socio-economic circumstances on learner achievement in Grade 12?
- How do curriculum changes influence the teaching practices of Grade 12 Business Studies teachers?
- To what extent does the availability of physical resources contribute to learner performance?
- What role does the Departmental Head and/or Subject Head play in promoting good performance in Grade 12 Business Studies?

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In the next section of this study, I present further analysis and interpretation of the data collected and presented in Chapter Four. The chapter concludes with proposals on how this phenomenon could be addressed by all role-players.

5.2 Foundation for analysis

5.2.1 Quantitative data analysis

According to Younus (2014:41), a quantitative method is appropriately applied where the research issue is clearly defined, and the questions asked to respondents lead to concise answers. Westat (2002:44) mentions that “data collected through quantitative methods are often believed to yield more objective and accurate information because they were collected using standardised methods which can be replicated. Vosloo (2014:333) posits that “quantitative research requires objective evaluating of the data which consist of numbers, trying to exclude bias from the researcher’s point of view”. Quantitative research always involves the numerical analysis of data gathered by means of structured questionnaires.

In this research, teacher and learner questionnaires were used to gather statistical information regarding learners’ socio-economic circumstances and teachers’ qualifications. This data is paramount to the study and shed light on the main research question, i.e. “Why are learners from working class communities in two secondary schools under-achieving in Grade 12 Business Studies?” The questionnaires were designed to elicit responses about learners spatial and social circumstances and teachers’ biographical circumstances and qualifications. The data collected would provide answers to the research questions.

The questionnaires, (Appendices D1 and D2), described in detail in Chapter Three, consist of two sections which had to be completed by Grade 12 learners and Business Studies teachers. Section A of the learner questionnaires focussed on their spatial and socio-economic circumstances and Section B obtained responses related to their view of the subject. Section A of the teacher questionnaire elicited biographical information about the respondents and Section B generated information on the teachers’ view of the subject and circumstances at the school.

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5.2.1.1 Quantitative analysis and interpretation of the spatial and biographical data of the Questionnaires

The spatial information of learners in section A of the questionnaire (Appendix D1) provided a clear indication of the circumstances at home and the opportunities or lack of opportunities for Grade 12 learners to study and focus on their studies in the two schools in which the research took place. The learners' spatial circumstances gave a clear indication that more than 60% of the learners had a quiet space to study. This contradicts the results of Business Studies at these two schools. School A managed an average pass percentage of 38.8% from 2014 to 2018, and school B's average pass rate was 50.7%. If 60% of learners had a quiet space to study, the expectation would be that at least 60% of the learners would pass the subject. More than 75% of learners, however, indicated that their parents did not own the house they were living in. 57% of adults living with the learners were unemployed.

Most of the respondents were within the accepted age co-hort. This indicated that most of the learners who completed the questionnaires did not repeat a grade at any stage of their school career. At these two schools, 60% of the learners indicated that they had a quiet space to study and 71,5% of respondents indicated that they studied between 1 and 3 hours per day. The learner performance should therefore improve as they spend time on their studies daily. Grobler (2009) mentions two dimensions of time, namely chronological or "clock time" and experiential time. Chronological time have a definite beginning, middle and end time. Experiential time can be divided into cyclic, linear, and infinite, linear, and limited. People with a cyclic view of time tends to think that time is unlimited and, therefore, do not haste in fulfilling a task. When viewing time as linear, infinite people tend to plan in haste to obtain results. The linear and limited view of time puts people under pressure because of time limitations. According to Grobler, people's view of time impacts on their motivation. The converse effect is that only 60% of learners had a quiet space to study. This situation would impact negatively on their ability to focus on their studies. Grobler (2009) quotes Nigidi and Qwabe (2006: 539) who state that a lack of support from the family such as housing facilities for studying, and illiterate parents impacts negatively on learner motivation and performance. Grobler (2009:107) quotes Berns's statement of (2007:52) that children from families with low income are likely to believe that they have control over

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the future and, therefore, try less hard in school, accomplishing less than children from families with a higher income. Grobler (2009:109) concludes that all learners, irrespective of their socioeconomic status, should be motivated towards scholastic achievement. In addition to this learning motivation, the learners should be guided to develop an active future-oriented time concept. Teachers should, therefore, take greater accountability in ensuring learner motivation and scholastic achievement.

At the two schools, more than 70% of the respondents had parents or siblings who held a matric certificate or higher, however 68% of the respondents indicated that the adults within their households were unemployed. This could be a huge demotivational factor as learners could regard having a matric certificate as unimportant as most people with a matric certificate in their immediate environment are unemployed. According to Moloi and Kamper (2010), parental unemployment is one of the major challenges of learner achievement in socio-economically challenged environments. They do, however, cite “three themes for creating a supportive teaching and learning environment as school parent partnerships, teacher leadership and value systems” Moloi &Kamper, (2010: 259).

The three teachers responsible for Business Studies at these schools were highly qualified and had more than ten years’ experience to teach the subject. It is, however, apparent that the workload of these teachers might impact on their motivation to teach Business Studies to their full potential as all three teachers taught two or more additional subjects.

Analysing the biographical information as provided by respondents in Section A (Appendix D2) of the teacher questionnaire, it was clear that all the teachers were highly qualified to teach Business Studies. Their teaching experience was between 16 and 30 years. All the teachers had more than 10 years’ experience in teaching Business Studies. This could be an advantage to the school as their teaching experience could have a positive impact on learner performance. Conversely, this could have a negative impact on learner achievement as new and innovative methods could go astray. Moolman et.al. (2020: 6) state that generally, a teacher-centred approach to teaching was quite common across the sample, with some teachers taking it to the extreme and not welcoming questions or comments from learners.

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Mathiba and Nkoana (2020:2) quote Spaul and Jansen in their book review and comment that “some authors argue that unless teachers get to acquire higher levels of content knowledge of what they teach” (p. 263) and “meaningful capacity building to improve their pedagogical practices” (p. 243), any trajectory of primary education system improvement will remain a deferred dream. Unless these experienced teachers make a mind shift to engage new methodology, they would not change the outcomes. Moloi and Kamper (2010) cite Gabriel (2005), Cole (2009) and Yosso (2005) and state that teachers should help learners’ access and digest learning material and cultivate community in the classroom, as some learners under-perform due to their lack of motivation, and that aggressively conscious efforts by teachers in classrooms are the only way to alleviate social inequality, poverty, and misery and to enhance academic achievement for learners. Teachers thus co-construct the necessary conditions for learners to succeed.

5.2.1.2 Quantitative analysis and interpretation of Section B of the learner questionnaire (Learner response to subject)

Section B of the learner questionnaire (Appendix D1) analysed the learners’ response to the subject. The questionnaire had predetermined responses of which respondents had to choose one alternative. From the data the following analysis and interpretations were made:

The learner questionnaire was twofold: firstly, to determine learner motivation to achieve in Business Studies and secondly, to assess the learners’ perceptions of the teachers’ competence in teaching, 66% of the respondents indicated that they loved Business Studies, but 90% of them achieved 50% or below. Of the 90%, 42% achieved below 50% in Business Studies. This is an indication that although learners indicated they were interested in Business Studies; they lacked the motivation to perform well in the subject. According to Grobler (2009: 94), economically disadvantaged learners find it difficult to understand the relevance of schoolwork for their future goals, due to high rates of unemployment in their communities and lack of financial resources to further their education. The unemployment rate amongst the adults living with the respondents could also be a contributing factor to learners’ lack of motivation to study

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and achieve. All the respondents believed that the teachers were highly competent and skilled to teach the subject.

The higher percentage of the respondents (68%) indicated that they chose Business Studies because they needed it to further their careers. Only 38% of the respondents indicated that it was part of a subject package. This was an indication that 38% of the respondents were not interested in Business Studies, which could impact negatively on learner achievement.

All learners indicated that their teachers were knowledgeable in the subject content. Furthermore 37,5% of respondents agreed that teachers were knowledgeable, however, 62,5% strongly agreed that their teachers were knowledgeable. This was an indication that learners had confidence in their teachers' ability to teach the subject. Taylor (2008:10) confirms that it is self-evident that what children learn is heavily dependent on what teachers know and do in their classrooms. This is especially true for poor children who get little support for schoolwork from their homes and little intellectual stimulation in their broader social environments.

5.2.2 Qualitative data analysis

As stated in Chapter Three (section 3.8), the analysis of the data was concluded through a coding procedure which included breaking down, probing, linking, conceptualising, and classifying of data.

The analysis of this research study is based on a qualitative research approach and specifically on the interpretivist theory. According to Tuli (2010:98), the aim of research in social science is to understand the meaning of certain events or occurrences for and on the individual. He adds that according to the interpretivist paradigm, reality is subjective and socially constructed by the participants. This, therefore, means that the researcher tries to understand a specific phenomenon within a community and not to generalise the findings, but to discover a deeper understanding of the phenomenon. In this study, the phenomenon is the underachievement of Grade 12 learners within a community ridden by poverty, crime and gangsterism.

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The rationale for the qualitative analysis was to two-fold: firstly, to establish the impact of learners' socio-economic circumstances on their achievements and secondly, whether the demands of the Business Studies curriculum and teachers' knowledge contribute to learners' underachievement. The procedure leading to the analysis included interview recordings and transcriptions, organising data collected from questionnaires and observations.

The analysis of the questionnaires and semi-structure interviews was undertaken to establish reasons for under-achieving of Grade 12 learners in Business Studies.

The objectives of this investigation were therefore to:

- Define underperformance and to identify factors which contribute to this phenomenon;
- Establish to what extent a learners' socio-economic circumstances contribute to their ability to achieve;
- Investigate how curriculum policy changes influence the teaching practices of the Grade 12 Business Studies teachers and resultant learner performance;
- Outline the extent to which availability of physical resources contributes to learner performance or underperformance; and
- Identify the kind of support provided by the Departmental Heads and/or Subject Heads in promoting teaching and learning in Grade 12 Business Studies.

The analysis of data was done through a coding process to classify the data using themes, and concepts. According to MacLure (2013: 164), coding in its broader sense, involves looking for patterns or order in a body of data using interview transcripts or fieldnotes to identify recurring themes, categories or concepts. According to MacLure (2013: 165), developing a coding system implies a few steps:

However, most versions of coding, whatever their provenance, involve:

a) body of 'data' (interviews, field notes, responses to questions, documents, personal narratives, naturally occurring interactions, visual images, etc.);
b) a search for recurrence and pattern, through
c) naming and collecting (categorising); and
d) reduction of complexity through the assembly of data into superordinate categories or concepts.

Turner (2014) and Wilson (2009) concur that coding is capturing variations in settings, participants, methodology, experimental manipulations. Dependent measures are an

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important objective of the coding protocol, not only for careful description but also for use in the analysis to explain variation in study findings.

It is clear from the above that data should, after a very sophisticated process, be reduced into themes and categories or concepts. The researcher made sure that the names of these categories or concepts remained compatible with the direction of the study.

The categories or concepts and themes are reflected in Table 5.1 below:

Table 5.1: Categories or concepts and themes that emerged from the research.

No	Category/Concept	Themes
1.	Describing and identifying learner performance or under-performance	• Learner motivation • Teacher's knowledge and methodology • School Culture
2.	Investigating the effect of socio-economic circumstances on learner achievement	• Learners' spatial circumstances at home • Qualification and employment of adults at home
3.	Determining the influence of curriculum changes on learner achievement and teaching methodology	• Teacher qualifications • Teacher knowledge of curriculum changes and methodology
4.	Ascertaining the impact of the availability of resources on learner achievement	• Learner and Teacher access to resources • The effective use of resources
5.	Exploring how support structures at schools promotes learner achievement	• Learner motivation • Teacher motivation • SMT support to teachers and learners • School Discipline

The categories and themes were linked to the research questions to interpret the data collected as depicted in table 9 below:

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Table 5.2: Linking the research questions with the data collection methods including categories and themes.

Research questions	Data collection methods		Categories	Themes
	Qualitative data	Quantitative data		
1. What is learner achievement and what is meant by under-achievement?	Question 1 – 3 (learner interview schedule) Appendix F Question 1 – 3 and 10 (teacher interview schedule) Appendix F1	section B questions 1-3 and 6 Learner questionnaire (Appendix D1) Section B question 8 - 9 and 25 - 26 Teacher questionnaire (Appendix D2)	1. Learner Achievement	i. Learner motivation ii. Teacher's knowledge and methodology iii. School Culture
2. What is the effect of socio-economic circumstances on learner achievement in grade 12?	Question 10 (interview schedule) Appendix F	Section A Learner questionnaire (Appendix D1) Section B questions 10 - 11 and 23 – 24 Teacher questionnaires (Appendix D2)	2. Socio-economic circumstances	i. Learners spatial circumstances at home ii. Qualification and employment of adults at home
3. How do curriculum changes influence the teaching practices of grade 12 Business Studies teachers?	Questions 1 – 6 and 11 (learner interview schedule) Appendix F Questions 1-3(interview schedule) Appendix F1	Section B question 8 Learner questionnaire (Appendix D1) Section A Teacher questionnaire and Section B	3. Curriculum changes	i. Teacher knowledge of curriculum changes ii. Teaching methodology

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		questions 12 14 (Appendix D2)		
4. To what extent does the availability of physical resources contribute to learner performance?	Question 12 (interview schedule) Appendix F Questions 6 – 6.1 (interview schedule) Appendix F1	Section B questions 4, 5 and 7 Learner questionnaire (Appendix D1) Section B question 15 to 17 Teacher questionnaire (Appendix D2)	4. Resources	i. Learner and Teacher access to resources ii. The effective use of resources
5. What role does the Departmental Head and/or Subject Head play in promoting good performance in Grade 12 Business Studies	Questions 7 – 9 (interview schedule) Appendix F Questions 13 - 15 (interview schedule) Appendix F Questions 7 - 10 (interview schedule) Appendix F1	Section B questions 18 – 22 and question 27 Teacher questionnaire (Appendix D2)	5. Support Structures	SMT support to teachers and learners

5.3 Qualitative analysis and interpretations of data according to categories and themes

The responses from the questionnaires and interviews were arranged into categories and themes. From the presentation of data and findings in Chapter Four, the research questions were linked with the categories and themes which emerged from the research instruments, namely, the questionnaires and the semi-structured interviews.

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5.3.1 Subsidiary research question 1: What is learner achievement and what is meant by under-achievement?

By discovering teachers' and learners' understanding of achievement and under-achievement, a relationship could be established relating to learner performance in Business Studies. The category identified in this research question from the data collected through the questionnaires and semi-structured interviews were learner achievement which was linked to the learner interview schedule.

I firstly analysed and interpreted the themes as they emanated from the semi-structured interviews with Business Studies learners and then from the semi-structured interviews with teachers**: Category**: Learner achievement. The following themes emerged from this category: i. Learner motivation; ii. Teachers' knowledge and methodology and iii. School Culture**.**

5.3.1.1 Semi-structured interviews with learners

The following questions speaks to this category: learner questionnaire (Appendix F, Questions 1-6) as well as section B questions 1-3 and 6. Questions 1 - 3 in the learner interview schedule addresses learner motivation.

i) Learner motivation

According to Porter (2014) and Rahal (2010), supported by Masitsa (2006), underachievement can be considered an "umbrella" term; underachievers are students who are not significantly working up to their potential. Some aspects of underachievement include a lack of motivation, disinterest in school, not handing in homework on time, not completing homework, too much socializing, making schoolwork the lowest priority.

Disinterest in the field of study can be demotivational to learners. When asked why do you find Business Studies interesting, question 1 in the semi-structured interview, a learner from school A mentioned it was not interesting, and that he only took this subject as *the school don't offer accounting anymore;* similarly, 2 learners from school

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B said that it was not interesting as *the content is too much and there is too much reading and it's too much to remember.* A second learner stated *that there is too much writing, one cannot take in everything. (**die inhoud is te veel en daar is te veel leeswerk en dis te veel om te onthou)*.** A second learner stated that there is too much work, and one cannot remember everything (***Daar is te veel skryfwerk, mens kan nie alles invat nie**).*

Ullah and Khan (2013:91) state that “the curriculum content should be passable and relevant towards the present-day needs”. This vindicates the poor performance of some learners at these two schools as the subject was chosen because they had no other choice, and learners regarded the content as too much to remember.

From the answers in the learner questionnaire, it was clear that learners did not regard their schoolwork as their highest priority. Learners’ answers to question 3, namely “how long before the Business Studies examinations do you start to prepare?” most learners indicated that they started studying one or two days before the Business Studies examinations. Only one learner indicated that she revised the content every day and only revises before the examinations. Ullah and Khan (2013:91) mention that individual disparities among the students can influence their motivational level regarding time management.

Ullah and Khan (2013) concluded that usage of effectual teaching methodologies, adequate learning environment in the classroom and self-motivated involvement of the students to slot in knowledge acquisition are the foremost determinants that can increase the student’s motivation for learning. Self-motivation can, therefore, be influenced by other factors such as the effectiveness of teaching strategies and a conducive learning environment. It is clear from the responses that most learners at the two schools lacked self-motivation and the willingness to work hard to achieve good results.

ii Teachers’ knowledge and methodology

Iwu, et.al. (2013:840) cite the South African Department of Education (2000): “Desirable teacher qualities are linked to good subject knowledge, teaching skills and

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classroom management, relationships with learners, dedication, accessibility, and hard work as factors which contributes to learner performance". Learners agreed that their teachers were knowledgeable in the subject matter and used a variety of methods to make content interesting and easy to understand. Learners' responses to question 6 at School A: "Does your teacher have an interesting way of teaching the subject?" were positive and most of them agreed. One learner suggested that: *The teacher stimulates you by using different things/examples* and another learner commented that his teacher used *videos to explain the work* ***videos om die werk te explain****,* yet another learner mentioned that the teacher *use common examples which relate to our context.*

Learners at school B indicated that the teacher gave learners an opportunity to present to their peers and stated that: *Presentation by learners. (****Aanbieding deur leerders)****. We explain in the class, how we understand the work****. (Ons verduidelik vir die klas hoe ons die werk verstaan)****. When we explain to someone, we learn the work ourselves. (****As ons vir iemand anders verduidelik, leer jy self)****.* A second learner at school B purported that: *You try to understand and then explain to your mate. (****Jy probeer om die werk makliker te verstaan en verduidelik aan jou maat).***

In response to question 5, all the learners indicated that they would not want their teachers to change anything which they did in class. Learners were very loyal towards their school and teachers. Although learners indicated that they would not want teachers to change their methodology, this did not reflect in the achievement of learners in Business Studies.

iii School culture

Nkosi (2017:1599) states that "it is commonly agreed that the management and leadership of a school powerfully influences the school environment and sets the tone for teachers and the school community, and that the nature and quality of school leadership is the key to students' success". The management of a school determines the school culture. School culture encompasses teacher and learner attitude and discipline. A learner at school A commented: *Discipline is also a big evil at school* (***Dissipline is ook 'n groot euwel by die skool)****.* Moloi and Kamper (2010) mention

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that their research indicates that principals in schools believe that the key aspect to maintaining a constructive tuition climate in schools is discipline of both teachers and learners. They mentioned that a school culture which is conducive to learning is a safe, happy, and healthy environment. A lack of discipline at a school can, therefore, be regarded as a contributing factor to a climate of underachievement and learner demotivation. Rossouw (2003) concurs with the above-mentioned statement saying that all forms of misbehaviour and ill-discipline of learners have a negative influence on a culture of teaching and learning. Adherence to the school code of conduct for learners and teachers would therefore contribute to a culture of teaching and learning at a school.

5.3.1.2 Semi-structured interviews with teachers

The questions from semi-structured interviews with teachers which address this category are from the teacher interview schedule (Appendix F1, Questions 1 – 3 and 10) and Section B question 8 - 9 and 25 - 26 of the Teacher questionnaire (Appendix D2)

i) Learner motivation

Teachers were all in agreement that learners were not motivated. Teacher C mentioned that: *Learners put minimum effort into their studies.* The teachers were in agreement that learners were not prioritising their studies. What follows, are some of the responses of teachers to question 10: Teacher A*: Gang activities keep them from completing homework which impacts negatively on their results. If learners do not complete their homework, I will not be able to determine content they are struggling with.* Teacher C*: Where parents work, learners must go home to clean, cook and look after siblings. This takes away valuable study time.*

The teacher at school B commented as follows:

> *Learners have a negative attitude towards their studies. In the Grade 12 class, learners feel that they have reached their goal. When they are here, they are "big" an adult which is enough for them. Don't worry about schoolwork or passing matric, I am fine. Nobody will worry if I fail.*

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***(Leerders het 'n negatiewe traak-my-nie-agtige houding. In Graad 12 is daar byvoorbeeld leerders wat voel ek het bereik wat ek kon. As ek hier is is ek klaar groot en dis goed genoeg vir my. Moenie nog worry oor skoolwerk of om te slaag nie ek is fine. Niemand gaan bekommerd wees as ek nie slaag nie**.)*

Masitsa (2006) states that motivation is crucial to learning because it influences self-determining interest in the learner which encourages them to put some effort into the learning task.

Masitsa (2006) states that educators can motivate learners to achieve if the learning experience fulfils the learners' needs for competence, intrinsic interest, extrinsic rewards, social support, and sense of ownership.

ii) Teachers' knowledge and methodology

From the teacher questionnaires completed by the three teachers at the two schools, it was clear that the three teachers were well educated in the subject. All of them were in possession of a B. Com degree, whilst two of them were in possession of an Honours degree in Education. Iwu, et.al. (2013:840) also state that: "...schools may face poor pass rates because teachers may lack the drive to prepare lesson notes and even present themselves with enthusiasm for classes". The teachers at the two schools had large workloads and were compelled to teach subjects outside of their field of study as they taught at schools with a low enrolment and therefore a small staff establishment. This could impact on their motivation and drive to present themselves with passion and commitment to prepare themselves for their classes. Teachers mentioned in the semi-structured interviews that it was difficult to make the content practical because of the current rules regarding outings. Circular 46 of 2013 (WCED:2013) stipulates the regulations regarding school outings, e.g., "Attendance at these activities is not compulsory, and learners who do not participate are not academically disadvantaged as a result of their absence". This is, however, not the only method teachers can use to make the Business Studies content practical and interesting to learners. Teachers must keep abreast of the developments within their subject content. Planning and research play a major role in teacher didactics and methodology.

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Teacher C mentioned that:

> *The best way to teach Business studies is to teach it practice oriented, i.e., bring the reality into the classroom. It is good to bring the reality to the classroom, but in the past, we were allowed to go to the reality, i.e., visit production sites such as coco cola, etc. Currently the rules and regulations make it difficult to take learners on excursions. The problems surrounding the school also makes it difficult to take learners out on excursions which means we must teach learners in class about for example the production process whereas in the past they could see how mass production is used.*

Another comment by teacher B reads as follows: *The ideal would be to be able to take learners on excursions to Business premises, but the challenge is always transport and the fact that learners cannot afford to pay for transport.*

Both schools are situated in impoverished areas of the community. Parents are not always able to afford to pay for transport. Both schools do not have school busses and learners are obliged to use public transport, such as minibus taxi's which must be paid. The schools often do not have the funding to pay for outings.

iii) School culture

The semi-structured interviews of both teachers and learners indicated that the lack of support by school management was a factor to be considered in the poor performance of learners at the school. Teacher A indicated that: *There is no monitoring of teaching and learning at the school* and that *there is only internal moderation of learner scripts after the completion of a formal test or exam.*

All the teachers indicated that discipline was a huge factor in learner performance. According to Van der Westhuizen, et.al. (2002), the second most significant variable contributing to poor academic results is a lack of discipline within the student body. Discipline issues include contempt for the teacher, disruptive behaviour, and a work-free environment. They furthermore state that the disrespect for teachers' and the abolishment of corporal punishment in schools caused teachers to remove learners from the class resulting in learners losing a lot of schoolwork and falling behind. Learners would then loose interest and motivation to study, resulting in poor performance.

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Van der Westhuizen, et.al. (2002) also mention that: "...lack of educator discipline, commitment and morale is the third highest cause of poor learner performance". They pose high absenteeism of educators as an indicator of lack of discipline, motivation, and commitment of teachers.

Wolhuter, Van der Walt and Potgieter (2013) are of the opinion that if students consider the teacher as a role model and willingly choose to follow him or her, and if the teacher tries to be an example of an integrated, whole, noble, and disciplined person, disciplinary problems are likely to be non-existent or at most minimally evident.

5.3.2 Subsidiary research question 2: What is the effect of socio-economic circumstances on learner achievement in Grade 12?

The category for this question is socio-economic circumstance and the themes which impact on this issue are i. Learners' spatial circumstances at home and ii Qualification and employment of adults at home.

5.3.2.1 Semi-structured interviews with learners

It was important to determine the socio-economic circumstances of learners who were participating in the study. This data would assist teachers and researchers to adapt their approach to learners living within these circumstances. The categories and themes in this section were linked to the research questions in the learner questionnaire (Appendix D1 Section A and Section B questions 10 - 11 and 23 – 24).

Both schools are situated in the same geographical area of the Western Cape. This area is gang ridden which can have a negative impact on learners' willingness to focus on their studies. Influences such as gang activities and high unemployment might have had a negative impact on learners. From the information gathered through learner questionnaires and learner semi-structured interviews, it became clear that the socio-economic circumstances of these learners impacted on their ability to achieve at the highest level due to a lack of motivation. As derived from the learner questionnaires, the unemployment rate of adults in the lives of learners from these two schools are

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68%, although 70% of these adults hold a matric certificate. This could have a negative impact on learners' motivation to pass matric as despite obtaining a matric certificate, chances of employment are only 30%, as 70% of adults within learners' households with a matric certificate was unemployed.

Matsabane (2016:31) defines a role model as an individual whom people can identify with as s/he may have qualities which other individuals may aspire to have. Learners did not have role-models in their society and teachers did not have the ability to motivate learners to achieve to their full potential. Learners were seldom positively encouraged.

5.3.2.2 Semi-structured interviews with teachers

The categories and themes in this section were linked to the teacher questionnaire (Appendix D2) as well as to the interview schedule (Appendix F question 10), which were investigating:

i. The effect of socio-economic circumstances on learner achievement with themes;
ii. Learner spatial circumstances at home; and,
iii. The qualification and employment of adults at home.

Farooq, Chaudhry, Shafiq, Berhanu (2011: 2) posit that:

> Besides other factors, socioeconomic status is one of the most researched and debated factor among educational professionals that contribute towards the academic performance of students. The most prevalent argument is that the socioeconomic status of learners affects the quality of their academic performance. Most of the experts argue that the low socioeconomic status has negative effect on the academic performance of students because the basic needs of students remain unfulfilled and hence, they do not perform better academically.

Teacher B at school A commented that:

Our school is located in a poverty-stricken area where learners belong to gangs. Learners are under a lot of pressure to belong to these gangs.

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The teacher at school B mentioned that: *Poverty is a huge problem. Learners who do not have space at home to study. Learners do not live with their parents, live with their gaurdians or grandparents. Poverty is a huge problem. Learners do not have adequate space at home to study. Learners do not live with their parents, some live with gaurdians or grandparents.* (***Armoede is 'n groot problem. Leerders wat nie genoegsame leerspasie by die huis het nie. Leerders woon nie by hul eie ouers nie, hulle woon by voogde of grootouers).***

The comments from teachers above is a clear indication that the learners live in dire socio-economic circumstances, that the pressures within the community have a definite impact on the learners' attitude towards schooling and, therefore, affect their academic performance, particularly, in Business Studies. The absence of parents plays a huge role in their academic performance, as grandparents and guardians do not provide the necessary motivation and encouragement for these learners. Learners are therefore dependent on themselves.

5.3.3 Subsidiary research question 3: How do curriculum changes influence the teaching practices of Grade 12 Business Studies teachers?

Teeger (2015) posits that the apartheid policy was officially introduced to South African society in 1948 where separate and unequal educational spaces were created. The South African educational landscape experienced numerous changes which were implemented to eradicate the differences which was inherited by the Apartheid policies. Gumede (2016: 69) mentions that:

> Education is critical in redressing the injustices of apartheid colonialism which created an inequitable and fragmented education system. Factors such as school access, governance, curriculum, teacher deployment and financial resources have also gone through the education policy mill.

The need for a change in the curriculum was, therefore, necessitated as response to the inequalities created by the Apartheid system. This question seeks to understand the impact of these policy changes on Business Studies teachers. The categories in this section were linked to the research questions in the learner interview schedule (Appendix F, questions 1-6 and 11), and the teacher interview schedule (Appendix F1,

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questions 4 and 5) as well as Section B of the learner questionnaire (Appendix D1, question 8) and Section A and B of the teacher questionnaire (Appendix D2 questions 12-14).

The category identified in this research question from the data collected through the questionnaires and semi-structured interviews were Curriculum changes with the themes being i) teacher knowledge of curriculum changes and ii) teaching methodology.

i) Teacher knowledge of curriculum changes

The Business Studies curriculum has changed or transformed four times since the establishment of the government of national unity in 1994. This transformation started with C2005 and OBE. The OBE system was launched in 1997 as a learner -centred curriculum. In 2002, the NCS was introduced as a result of constraints and challenges observed with the OBE curriculum. The NCS was streamlined culminating in the RNCS. Many reasons were put forward for the inadequate implementation of the NCS amongst others, inadequately trained teachers, insufficient resources and lack of support from government. The CAPS was, therefore, introduced in 2012.

The Business Studies curriculum content has transformed with the transformation of the curriculum from Business Economics, where the focus was the study of the functions within the business to four main topics in the NCS and CAPS where the business functions is situated within one of the four main topics, namely the business operations. The other three main topics offered content which was not familiar to the teachers. Teacher C mentioned that the expectations of the Business Studies curriculum have changed significantly in terms of the assessment practices. In the Business Economics curriculum, learners were expected to study the content and give it back. They were not expected to apply knowledge. There is a school of thought in teaching circles that the Business Studies curriculum are overloaded and touches on too many aspects without much detail.

Teacher C indicated that there is a difference between the Business Economics curriculum and the Business Studies curriculum in the sense that although the

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components of the Business studies curriculum were reduced to four main topics, the actual content of the curriculum covers more topics. Teachers were trained in 2005, 2006 and 2007 for the implementation of the NCS in Grades 10, 11 and 12, respectively. It can, therefore, be presumed that teachers were aware and informed of curriculum and assessment changes of the NCS. Similarly, teachers were trained or orientated in the CAPS for three consecutive years for implementation from 2012. It can, therefore, be concluded that Business Studies teachers were adequately trained in the subject content.

ii) Teaching methodology

In the interview with teachers, it became clear that changes in assessment practices of Business Studies had an impact on teacher methodology. The cognitive requirements for a formal assessment task in Business Studies according to the CAPS document (2012:45) and the Grade 12 CAPS amendments Abridged Section 4 (2020: 27), are 30% basic thinking skills, 50% moderately high thinking skills and 20% higher order thinking skills. This requires of learners to be able to apply content knowledge and not just a regurgitation of knowledge. Teachers are, therefore, compelled to change their teaching methodology to include participation of learners. Cohen-Miller, Merrill and Shamatov (2018), posit that the traditional method of teaching was teacher centred and the learners were regarded as receivers of information and teachers the givers of information. A comment from a teacher B was that: *Teachers had to make some adjustments to the way they teach. In the past, I focussed only on note taking and testing learners understanding and remembering of the content.*

The assessment requirements of 30% basic thinking skills, 50% moderately high thinking skills and 20% higher-order thinking skills is a stark contrast to the expectation in the past, where learners were expected to regurgitate knowledge with low level understanding. The emphasis in Business Studies is application of knowledge, which is embedded in the 50% moderately high thinking skills required in CAPS.

Govender (2018) states that the failure to successfully implement curriculum changes in South Africa can largely be attributed to the focus on curriculum reforms rather than the way in which these changes should be delivered. Teacher development should

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therefore include a transformation of their teaching methodologies and adjust appropriately to the mandated reforms.

Teachers have not kept up with the changes and challenges of the advancement in technology and did not adapt their methodology to inculcate these changes. Learners did, however, indicate that teachers used video clips and PowerPoint presentations in delivering of the curriculum. When asked if the teacher used resources to enhance teaching and learning, a learner at School A answered: *Yes, the data projector. He shows video clips and use PowerPoint presentations to teach the content.* Some learners at School B stated that *"the teachers make use of Videos soos telematics en PowerPoint presentations and* ***aanbiedings en*** *data projector.* From the above-mentioned comments from learners, although teachers used different tools to enhance teaching practices; no improvement was shown in the learner results at both schools in this study. It could, therefore, be concluded that teachers were not using these tools effectively and efficiently. Then, teachers would ideally be knowledgeable about and experienced in utilizing several efficient teaching strategies for implementing a student-centred classroom.

5.3.4 Subsidiary research question 4: To what extent does the availability of physical resources contribute to learner performance?

This question seeks to determine the availability of physical resources at the school and how it impacts on teaching and learning.

The category identified in this research question from the data collected through the questionnaires and semi-structured interviews was Resources with the themes i.) Learner and Teacher access to resources and ii.) The effective use of resources

5.3.4.1 Semi-structured interview with learners

i.) Learner and teacher access to resources

It was important to determine to what effect the availability of resources had an impact on learner performance. Taylor (2008:2) denotes the SACMEQ scores which shows that South Africa is outperformed by eight surrounding countries, many of which, including Mozambique, Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania, are much poorer, with gross

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domestic products in the order of one-tenth to one-fifth of South Africa's. This occurrence shows that while in general, poverty is strongly associated with performance, many school systems achieve higher quality with far fewer resources than South Africa has. Taylor (2008:23) mentions that textbooks must be issued to learners for the year so that they are available at any time.

The category and theme for this question was linked to Questions 6 of the learner interview schedule. Does your teacher use resource to enhance his lessons? and 6.1, If yes, do these resources help you to understand Business Studies better? (Appendix F)

All Grade 12 learners at the two schools were issued with a Business Studies textbook. The CAPS textbooks were approved before the examination guidelines were issued and some content is not included in the textbooks. The Grade 12 Business Studies examination guidelines have changed three times since 2014. It is imperative that teachers add content which is amiss from the textbook, and which is included in the examination guidelines which should be taught. Learners' responses to question 6 included: School A: *Yes, the data projector. He shows video clips and use PowerPoint presentations to teach the content.* The learners at school B stated that: *The teachers make use of Videos like telematics and PowerPoint presentations and data projector.* It can, therefore, be assumed that teachers had the necessary resources to enhance their teaching practices. Learners and teachers have, however, indicated that their libraries were not suitably resourced to satisfy the needs of the learners.

ii.) The effective use of resources

Despite the fact that learners at both schools indicated that their teachers use resources such as video clips and PowerPoint presentations to enhance teaching and learning, and that these resources help them to understand the content better, it is clear from the results of the Grade 12 Business Studies learners over the past five years, that the use of these resources did not have a positive impact on learner achievement in the subject. Although learners indicated that teachers used the data projector for video clips and PowerPoint presentations, the results at both schools is a clear indication of learners' inability to apply their knowledge and that these tools are not put to effective use to enhance teaching and learning. The mere use of technological resources is not a guarantee of learner understanding of content.

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Muhle (2014) states that textbooks play an important role in the curriculum delivery both in the planning and classroom teaching sessions. Although all the Grade 12 learners at both schools were issued textbooks, it was however not clear if these textbooks were used effectively. A learner at School A stated that: *My teacher sometimes uses the textbooks*, which could be an indication that the textbook was not used effectively. It is clear from the diagnostic report of Van der Berg and Gustafsson (2017) that access to textbooks matters and that the value of textbooks is not recognised by teachers in equipping leaners, irrespective of their social standing with the necessary knowledge, skills, and values to become meaningful participants of society in a free country.

5.3.4.2 Semi-structured interviews with teachers

The category and theme for this question was linked to Question 12 of the teacher interview schedule (Appendix F1).

i.) Learner and teacher access to resources

Question 12 of the teacher semi-structured interview stated: Does the availability of physical resources have an impact on your teaching practices and the learners' ability to learn? Motivate.

Teachers in the semi-structured interviews alluded to the fact that they use PowerPoint presentations and video clips to enhance teaching and learning. The teacher at school A stated:

Not really as I have my own resources which I bring to school. It does have an impact on the learners' ability to complete tasks and projects, as they are scared to visit the library because of gang activities in the area. We do not have a proper library at the school and most of the resources are outdated. This means that learners' projects are basically just re-writing of the textbooks.

The teacher at school B said that: *Learners do have cell phones now. The school has computers but many of them are not computer literate, do not know how to search for resources on the internet, so when the school day closes, then there are no more resources out there. So, we just have to provide all that stuff and learners can e.g., not going to the library because it is unsafe because of the gang violence*. *Learners do have cell phones. The school do have computers, but most of the learners are not computer literate and do not know how to access resources on the internet. So, we have to supply all the resources because learners cannot go to the public library as a result of the gang violence in the area.* (***Leerders het nou wel selfone. Die skool het rekenaars maar baie van hulle is nie rekenaarvaardig nie, weet nie hoe om op die internet bronne te soek nie, so as die skooldag sluit, dan is daar niks meer***

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***bronne buite nie. So ons moet maar al daai goed voorsien and leerders kan bv. nie biblioteek toe gaan nie want dit is onveilig as gevolg van die bendegeweld)*.**

Teachers did not mention the textbook as a primary resource of effective teaching and learning. Learners and teachers at both schools indicated that all Grade 12 learners had access to an approved textbook. However, teachers were more focussed on other resources and regarded the access to other resources as vital in effective teaching and learning. Govender (2018) concurs that a lack of resources hinders effective teaching and learning.

ii.) The effective use of resources

When asked about resources, teachers did not refer to the textbook as a learning and teaching resource. Teachers did, however, refer to other resources such as computers and internet access. All the teachers mentioned that the libraries at schools were outdated and could not help learners with projects. They also indicated that learners were too scared to do research for projects at the public libraries. Teacher A confirms that learners do not visit public libraries: *It does have an impact on the learners' ability to complete tasks and projects, as they are scared to visit the library because of gang activities in the area.*

5.3.5 Subsidiary research question 5: What role does the Departmental Head and/or Subject Head play in promoting good teaching practices at the schools?

This question seeks to understand the impact of these policy changes on the Business Studies teachers. The categories in this section were linked to the research questions in the learner interview schedule (Appendix F, questions 7-9) and the teacher interview schedule (Appendix F1, questions 7-10) as well as Section B of the teacher questionnaire (Appendix D2 questions 18-22 and 27).

The category identified in this research question from the data collected through the questionnaires and semi-structured interviews was support structures with the following theme, SMT support to teachers and learners.

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5.3.5.1 Semi-structured interviews with learners

From the engagement with learners through the semi-structured interviews it became clear that the two schools did not offer support or encouragement other than extra classes. Learners at both schools alluded to peer educators and Equilibrium an NGO whose focus are social and leadership skills. Learners at School A had the following comments on Equilibrium: Equilibrium (forms social groups) with meetings every Tuesday to build self-esteem. *They help you to get your mind off school and to relax. They arrange leadership camps which focus on social and leadership skills.* The learners at School B concurred with this statement: *We attend leadership camps with learners from other schools. The camps teach you to communicate with others because they pair you with learners from other schools. This teaches you teamwork*. According to the learners at both schools, the monitoring of teaching and learning was also non-existent. A learner at school B stated that the DH at the school did not monitor their books on a regular basis. *No, not often*, *Ms G only monitored one learner book*. (***Nee nie gereeld nie juffrou G het een leerder se boek gemonitor).***

At School A, all the learners agreed that teaching, and learning are not monitored. To both questions 7 and 8; How do the senior management team (SMT) monitor that effective teaching, learning and assessment takes place? and Do the SMT monitor your books on a regular basis? The answer was an emphatic ‘no’.

5.3.5.2 Semi-structured interviews with teachers

Two of the three teachers interviewed, hold DH positions. One teacher is the only qualified Business Studies teacher at his school. There was, therefore, no person who could help him in promoting good teaching practices at his school. It was, however, clear from the teacher interviews that monitoring of teaching and learning at the school was not a regular occurrence. Teacher A at School A indicated that he does not receive any support from the DH and that monitoring of teaching and learning is non-existent. *We must submit the test or exam before the time to the HOD. As we are only two people at the school teaching the subject, we must do peer moderation. Even though this is expected, it is not always completed in practice. Many times, moderation only takes place after the test or exam was conducted.* The DH indicated that although

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monitoring of teaching and learning is evident in their school's policy documents, the actual monitoring of teaching and learning does not exist.

The conclusion would therefore be that the implementation and monitoring of the school policies are at fault and not the actual policies. Schools do have policies on paper, but do not apply these policies in practice. The monitoring of learner notebooks is an important aspect of effective delivery of teaching and learning in schools. It is imperative that SMT members use the policy documents of the school to compile criteria for monitoring of curriculum delivery and assessment practices. The teachers' understanding of monitoring of teaching and learning is moderation of formal assessments and not teaching and learning practices. This is clear from the comment of teacher A when asked about the monitoring of teaching and learning: *Many times, moderation only takes place after the test or exam was conducted" and "we must do peer moderation*. The above-mentioned conclusion is reflected in the statement by Govender (2018: S8) who mentions that the teachers in the study clearly felt that the role of the staff management teams in their schools in relation to the curriculum reform was typically administrative. They viewed the super-vision and monitoring as superficial and lacking the depth and breadth to assist with improving the quality of learner academic achievement, since so much staff management time was spent on administrative duties".

5.4 Conclusion

This chapter analysed and interpreted the data collected from questionnaires and semi-structured interviews with learners and teachers. Having analysed the data collected from the questionnaires and interviews, the conclusion which can be made is that although socio-economic circumstances have an impact on learner motivation, it is not solely responsible for the underachievement of learners in Business Studies. Teachers indicated that learners' ability to read and comprehend with the multiple changes in the curriculum and the assessment of Business Studies is a huge contributing factor towards the underachievement of Grade 12 learners.

Another factor which was highlighted, especially in the interviews, was the lack of structure and support at schools. Both teachers and learners indicated that although

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a code of conduct exists at their schools, it is implemented differently by different teachers. This lack of congruity is confusing for learners and impacts on the discipline at the school. Chapter six will feature a summary, conclusions, and recommendations for further study in this field.

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CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter a summary is given of each chapter, the findings are discussed against the background of the primary/main and the secondary/subsidiary questions, and recommendations are formulated. In Figure 6.1, a graphic summary of the categories and associated themes are presented and lastly the chapter concludes with a discussion of the limitations and suggestions for further research.

The focus of the study was on the underachievement of performance of Grade 12 Business Studies learners at two schools in working class communities in the Western Cape Province.

The research was specifically geared to answer the main research question: “Why are learners from working class communities in two secondary schools under-achieving in Grade 12 Business Studies?”

To be able to answer the main research question, the subsidiary questions were developed to provide specificity to the research problem:

- What is learner achievement and what is meant by under-achievement?
- What is the effect of socio-economic circumstances on learner performance?
- How do curriculum changes influence the teaching practices of Grade 12 Business Studies teachers?
- To what extent does the availability of physical resources contribute to learner performance?
- What role does the Departmental Head and/or Subject Head play in promoting good performance in Grade 12 Business Studies?

Data was generated from the analysis of curriculum and policy documents and research instruments, namely questionnaires and interviews conducted with twenty-five learners and three teachers from two schools in the Western Cape. The following categories emerged from the data:

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- Learner performance or under-performance;
- Effect of socio-economic circumstances on learner Achievement;
- Influence of curriculum changes on learner achievement and teaching methodology;
- Impact of the availability of resources on learner achievement; and
- Support structures at schools to promote learner achievement.

Each category is divided into themes:

Table 6.1 A graphic summary of the categories and associated themes

CATEGORIES	THEMES
Learner performance and underperformance	• Learner motivation • Teacher knowledge and methodology • School culture
Effect of socio-economic circumstances on learner achievement	• Learner spatial circumstances at home • Qualifications and employment of adults at home
Influence of curriculum changes on learner performance and teaching methodology	• Teacher qualifications • Teacher knowledge of curriculum changes and methodology
The impact of the availability of resources on learner achievement	• Learner and teacher access to resources • The effective use of resources
How support structures at schools promotes learner achievement	• Learner motivation • Teacher motivation • SMT support to teachers and learners • School discipline

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6.2 Summary of chapters

6.2.1 Chapter One

Introduction to the study

This chapter consisted of a discussion of the background to the study and the motivation to conduct this study. The problem statement was articulated which was followed by the aim and objectives, namely to:

- Define underperformance and to identify factors which contribute to this phenomenon;
- Establish to what extent a learners' socio-economic circumstances contribute to their ability to achieve;
- Investigate how changes in the curriculum influences the knowledge and methodology of the Business Studies teacher and if this has an impact on their learners' achievement;
- Research if the availability of physical resources and the type of support by the Departmental Head and Subject Head would ensure that the necessary goals are achieved; and
- Develop a framework which Departmental Heads and subject Heads can use in their support of teachers within Business Studies.

The research aims and objectives were followed by the research questions, conceptual framework, theoretical framework, literature review, the research methodology, ethical considerations, and trustworthiness.

6.2.2 Chapter Two

Literature review and conceptual framework

The conceptual framework of this study focusses on the two concepts, namely achievement and underachievement and the interchangeable use of performance and underperformance as well as achievement in literature. Literature pertaining to the concept's underperformance and underachievement as well as the impact of social standing on learner achievement and the changes in the Business Studies curriculum

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were reviewed. A conceptual framework was therefore developed to guide the investigation and analysis.

6.2.3 Chapter Three

Research and Methodology

A qualitative research approach was adopted to explore these factors. A case study as qualitative research design used in this study enabled the researcher to capture the participants' context and background variables. The participants in this case consisted of three teachers and all the Business Studies learners at the two schools studied. The lived dimensions that were inherent to these specific teaching and learning situations, were studied. The methods used to gather information included literature on research methodology, document review, questionnaires and semi-structured interviews with learners and teachers at these two schools.

The study adopted an interpretive approach by observing and interpreting the reality and context of learners and teachers. Qualitative data analysis was used for the findings and in the process categories and themes were developed from the data.

6.2.4 Chapter Four

Presentation of data

The data presented in this study was collected through questionnaires which generated both qualitative and quantitative data and semi-structured interviews with both learners and teachers. The data collected was organised according to the research questions and divided into themes and categories to assist the researcher with the analysis and interpretation of data in Chapter Five.

6.2.5 Chapter Five

Analysis and interpretation of data

A qualitative research approach was adopted in this study. Data from the questionnaires could be regarded as statistical and more quantitative in nature. Thematic analysis was used to analyse qualitative data which emanated from the open-ended questions and statistical procedures were used to analyse the quantitative data. Qualitative data collected from questionnaires, were analysed and themes and

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categories were formulated. The themes and categories facilitated the interpretation of the data to obtain spatial and biographical information of learners and teachers. The interpretation of the data shed light on the learners' attitude towards Business Studies and their resultant performance and achievement. The information gathered from the teacher questionnaires elucidated the teachers' thinking of changes in the curriculum and their consequent implementation thereof.

6.2.6 Chapter Six

In the remainder of this chapter the significant findings of the research, conclusions, recommendations, and limitations of the study are discussed in detail.

6.3 Findings of the study

The research findings of the study were derived from the data collected from the questionnaire and semi-structured interviews in relation to the main research question and the subsidiary questions.

6.3.1 Subsidiary question 1: What is learner achievement and what is meant by under-achievement?

Learner achievement as found in this study refers to the learner's ability to perform to the expected minimum requirement as stated by the Department of Basic Education. This minimum requirement is a pass percentage of 30% in Business Studies. Underachievement reflected an achievement of less than the required norm.

In Chapter five, themes impacting learner achievement or underachievement emerged. The first theme related to learner motivation. From this research it transpired that learners who are not motivated will not work hard and, therefore, will not perform well in school. Many scholars regard motivation as the strongest determinant of success for learners. Hardre et al. (2006) concur that motivation is among the most influential and major contributing factors of students' success or failure in school. This study revealed that although learners indicated that they are interested in Business Studies as a subject, they do not achieve the expected norm which is an indication that learner achievement or underachievement can be linked to intrinsic motivation.

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Kori, Pedaste, Altin, Tonisson, and Palts (2016) list interest in the subject to be studied as a major motivational factor. They do, however, confirm that the most important factor of student motivation still depends on the student's cognitive ability and dedication to their studies. Lopes and Oliveira (2017), however, believe that there is an intricate relationship between the teacher, student, school, and societal factors, such as attitudes and beliefs toward education.

The second and third themes which evolved was teacher knowledge and methodology as well as school culture. From the questionnaires and interviews with the teachers at the two schools, it was clear that teacher knowledge was not the problem, but rather teacher methodology. The teachers were all highly qualified in the subject matter. All the teachers, however, indicated that they used the "lecture" method, a "one-size-fits-all" approach which did not provide for the different learning styles of learners. This can cause disinterest in some learners, which could lead to ill-discipline. Lopes and Oliveira (2017) agree that even though most classroom instruction follows a whole-group model, students learn as individuals, not as a group.

School culture encompasses the values and norms of an institution. Academic accomplishment is not highly valued in dysfunctional schools, and neither teachers nor pupils are intellectually motivated.

The key to functional schools and therefore learner discipline and a school's overall academic performance was determined to be good school management. MacNeil, Prater and Busch (2009) suggest that students' learning will be substantially enhanced when principals engage with the climate of the school in ways that encourage goal focus and create systems to facilitate change. Obadire and Sinthumule (2021) agree that a lack of discipline among students has a negative impact on students' academic achievement since effective teaching and learning cannot take place in an unorganised school setting.

6.3.2 Subsidiary question 2: What is the effect of socio-economic circumstances on learner achievement in Grade 12?

Farooq et al. (2011) state that the socio-economic circumstances and parents' education have a significant effect on students' overall academic achievement. This study disclosed that the learners' socio-economic circumstances did indeed have an impact on the learners' performance. Similarly, this research found that learner

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motivation could be linked to their spatial circumstances where 68% of the adults in their households, who hold a matric certificate, were unemployed. The unemployment rate within these communities is high, gangsterism is rife, parent involvement is minimal, the spatial circumstances of most of the learners in these communities is not conducive to studying. This should, however, not be generalised as some learners in both schools did perform at a rate higher than the norm.

Many of the experts argue that the low socioeconomic status has a negative effect on the academic performance of learners. The environment and the personal characteristics of learners play an important role in their academic success. The academic performance of students heavily depends upon the parental involvement in their academic activities. Similarly, the school personnel, members of the families and communities provide help and support to students for the quality of their academic performance. This social assistance has a crucial role for the accomplishment of performance goals of learners.

6.3.3 Subsidiary question 3: How do curriculum changes influence the teaching practices of Grade 12 Business Study teachers?

Govender (2018) states that since the ushering in of a democratic South Africa in 1994 school education in the country had been in turmoil. She indicated the changes as follows: C2005 was introduced in 1997, RNCS in 2002, the NCS in 2007, and the CAPS in 2012. In addition to these changes, the Business Studies Examination Guidelines were introduced in 2014 and revised 5 times since then. Du Plessis and Letshwene (2020) agree that “The ongoing crisis in South African education and constant curriculum changes puts strain on schoolteachers”.

From the questionnaires and interviews with teachers, it was clear that teacher knowledge was not the problem, but rather teacher methodology. The teachers were all highly qualified in the subject matter. All the teachers, however, used a “one-size-fits-all” approach and did not make provision for the different learning styles of learners. Although teachers used PowerPoint presentations and video clips to relay the content, the skills learners needed to answer application questions and approach the content creatively were absent. Govender’s (2018) comments that the failure to

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successfully implement the various curriculum reforms to date in South Africa, can be attributed to the fact that attention was focused on the educational change desired, rather than the training of teachers to deliver and implement the curriculum changes aligned with the fact that teachers lack the methodology to teach the new curriculum and the 21st century learners. In their study on challenges facing teachers, Du Plessis and Letswhene (2020) indicate that teachers raised workload and the heavy burden of the CAPS curriculum with insufficient time frames to complete content as a challenge.

6.3.4 Subsidiary question 4: To what extent does the availability of physical resources contribute to learner performance?

Ndlovu (2018) in a study to determine if the availability of resources contribute greatly to learner performance, found that rural schools in Zimbabwe were outperformed by the urban counterparts and that this phenomenon could be attributed to the inadequacy of resources available at schools in rural areas. Similarly, Du Plessis and Letshwene (2020) assert that learners who attend schools with few educational resources are academically impaired and when they realise that their teachers have low expectations for them, they do poorly. Contrary to the above-mentioned statements, Ndlovu (2018) also found that some schools in rural areas outperformed their urban counterparts. At both schools in this study, teachers indicated that there was not a shortage of textbooks and that all Grade 12 learners were in possession of a textbook. Learning and teaching resources, however, does not only refer to the availability of textbooks, but also to games, printed media, PowerPoint presentations and data projectors. It is expected of teachers to follow the CAPS curriculum in their planning and to use various textbooks to supplement the content in the textbook which the learners use. Teachers can make their own resources using printed media, for example, to bring the business world into the classroom and make the content relevant and current to learners. Okongo, Ngao, Rop, Nyongesa (2015) purport that the availability of teaching and learning resources enhances the effectiveness of schools which brings about good academic performance in learners.

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6.3.5 Subsidiary question 5: What role does the Departmental Head and/or subject head play in promoting good performance in Grade 12 Business Studies?

Govender (2018) emphasises the fact that since teachers are responsible for implementing curriculum change in the classroom, they should be supported in various ways. She further mentions that Verspoor (1989) recommends four elements for achieving successful teacher training which supports curriculum reform, namely: "permanent and locally available in-service training; effective systems for teacher support, guidance, supervision and monitoring; adjustment of the content of teacher training to the teachers' own level of knowledge and experience; and encouragement of teachers' motivation and commitment". These elements are, however, constrained by many challenges which includes the dissatisfaction with the quality of teacher professional development and continuous support. The challenges many teachers face include the lack of professional development activities linked to classroom practice to enhance teaching and learning. Teachers find it challenging when they are not granted enough time to practice methodology learnt and to apply this knowledge effectively in their classrooms. A lack of monitoring and support of curriculum delivery, both internally and externally poses more challenges to the system and, therefore, contributes to the underperformance of learners in Business Studies. Collectively, these studies indicate that effective curriculum change require commitment to developing necessary capacity among teachers; they further highlight the complexity of the reform process.

6.3.6 Main research question: Why are learners from working class communities in two secondary schools under-achieving in Grade 12 Business Studies?

The conclusions emerged from the findings as they relate to the factors which may impact on learner performance. The findings were based mainly on literature review, learners' and teachers' responses to the questionnaires and interviews with learners and teachers. The table below illustrates the Business Studies results over a period of 5 years, from 2014 to 2018.

Learner performance in the two schools studied are recorded as follows:

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Table 6.2: Pass rate of schools in NSC Business Studies Examination

School	2014 pass % at 30%	2015 pass % at 30%	2016 pass % at 30%	2017 pass % at 30%	2018 pass % at 30%
A: # of learners	18	28	15	22	12
A: Pass %	38.9	22.2	60	9.1	63.6
B: # of learners	31	36	38	13	15
B: Pass %	45.2	44.4	57.9	46.2	30

Source: WCED analysis of results: January 2019

School A

The analysis of the data in the table above indicated a decrease in the number of learners offering Business Studies at School A over the five-year period. Although the number of learners was always below the maximum of 40 learners per class, according to the Department of Basic Education's norms and standards, the pass rate in Business Studies indicates that was lower in 2015 and 2017, namely when the class numbers were higher (28 and 22) with pass rates of 22.2% and 9.1%, respectively. Learner performance was much higher when class numbers were below 20; with 15 learners in 2016 with a pass rate of 60% and with 12 learners in 2018 with a pass rate of 63.6%. The conclusion is, therefore, that learners achieve a better result when class sizes are small.

School B

The achievement of the learners at school B was, however, steady in 2014 and 2015. There was, however, a sharp increase in the performance of learners in 2016 which decreased in 2017 and 2018, just the opposite situation in comparison to School A because the number of learners decreased, and the pass rate also decreased. These statistics shows that despite smaller class sizes, the performance of learners was still low. Class size, therefore, does not have an impact on the achievement of learners.

What emerged from the study was the fact that learner social economic circumstances influence their motivation to achieve. However, when class sizes are low and teachers have opportunity to give personal attention to each learner, the learner performance improved in School A. The exact opposite was, however, perceived in school B. This agrees with a school of thought in literature which proclaims that class sizes don't matter. Although the primary resource which is a textbook were available to all learners at both these schools, it had no impact on the learner performance. Teachers

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interviewed did not regard the textbook as a resource but referred to libraries and online resources and its availability when prompted about resources and the use thereof at schools. The non-existence of support from the senior management team at schools could be a deterrent to the adequate achievement of learners.

6.4 Recommendations

This study makes recommendations which DBE and provincial education departments could pursue to improve the performance of learners in Business Studies. While some of the recommendations in this study are not all new, it emerged from the findings of this study, thus reinforcing recommendations made by previous researchers on this topic.

6.4.1 Specific recommendations

6.4.1.1 Learner achievement and under-achievement

i) Teacher/Provincial department of education

Kori, Pedaste, Altin, Tonisson, and Palts, (2016) state that the most important factor of student motivation still depends on the student, how much they study and their cognitive ability. Teachers should know each learner's ability and teach to their strengths. Teachers should therefore profile each learner and track their academic performance in the subject throughout the year. Where learner performance deteriorates, causes should be ascertained, and the relevant help should be sought. If social problems are the cause of a lack of motivation of learners, the relevant professionals at the district office should be consulted. The schools should seek assistance from the psychiatrists' and learner support advisers at the district office when learners need help with study skills or cognition.

ii) DBE

The DBE can revise the curriculum to address learner interests and thus improve learner motivation. The Business Studies curriculum could be more practical, and learner centred, for example a practical assessment task in entrepreneurship which runs over the three years of the FET band. This assessment task should be completed in parts over the three

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years. Policies regarding the use of technology, e.g. cell phones as part of the curriculum can be amended.

6.4.1.2 The effect of socio-economic circumstances on learner achievement

i) **Teacher/Provincial department of education**

Teachers should consider the learners' context and adapt their lesson planning to accommodate learner's circumstances to improve understanding. Teachers can use examples of Businesses within the community or its surrounds to explain certain topics to learners. Schools should profile learners to determine what their spatial circumstances are at home and make provision in the form of a feeding scheme and a venue for learners to do homework or study after school.

i) **DBE**

The socio-economic circumstances of learners are much bigger than an educational issue. The Department of Basic Education should research which skills are required in our economy and redesign the curriculum to equip learners with the necessary skills to be employable. I would suggest that government and corporates combine to ensure economic growth by job creation initiatives. People should be given self-worth by being financially independent from the state. This can only be achieved through job creation. A feeling of self-worth would encourage and motivate learners from these communities to work hard, therefore improve their results to become employable.

6.4.1.3 The impact of curriculum changes on teaching practices

i) Teacher/Provincial department of education

The findings of this study highlighted the lack of knowledge and the ability to teach the new content effectively to grade 12 Business Studies learners although the teachers interviewed for the purpose of this study was all highly qualified and very experienced. The content of the Business Studies curriculum has however evolved, and teachers did not

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equip themselves to teach this new curriculum with its changed assessment practices. The new curriculum, which is skills based, and which assesses learners' ability to apply content knowledge to given scenarios seems to be challenging to these teachers. The teachers' inability to adapt their methodology to include the new assessment requirements and the changing demands of the learners' poses a big challenge. Universities should align their programmes for the B.Ed. and PGCE students to the requirements of the national curriculum.

ii) DBE

I would therefore recommend that the DBE streamline the curriculum and that provincial education departments together with Higher Education Institutions (HEI's) develop an advanced certificate in education (ACE) course for Business Studies focussing on the new content as well as new methodology. I would also recommend that bursaries be made available for teachers to upskill themselves. Teachers should, as in other professions, i.e. doctors be compelled to attend conferences and courses on the latest trends on methodology to keep their status as a registered teacher.

6.4.1.4 The impact of the availability of physical resources on learner performance

i) Teacher/Provincial department of education

Most schools in the Western Cape provide access to internet facilities for learners and teachers. The WCED e-portal is zero rated and all teachers and learners have access to the e-portal. Resources are loaded on a regular basis and teachers can access these resources to use as part of their planning and assessment practices. District departments have Google classrooms per subject where teachers can register to use all available resources posted. Although these resources are readily available to teachers, it is not used effectively. I would recommend that teachers be trained to use all resources effectively to affect an improvement in learner achievement.

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ii) DBE

The DBE can set standards for the development of resources. They can also source partners from the private sector to fund projects for the development of resources. Textbooks and workbooks which addresses all the content in the curriculum should be supplied free of charge to all learners.

6.4.1.5 The role does the Departmental Head in promoting learner performance in Grade 12

i) **Teacher/Provincial department of education**

From the interviews with the teachers, it is clear that the DH does not play a significant role in ensuring quality teaching and learning. At one of the schools, the Business Studies teacher is the only subject specialist and is also appointed as the DH. There is no other person with expertise knowledge of the subject who can ensure the quality of teaching and learning. Although a DH at the other school is a specialist, it was clear that the quality of support is only in terms of assessment practices and not the quality of teaching. I would recommend that DHs be trained as to their role in ensuring quality teaching and learning. Monitoring of DHs' practices and compliance to requirements should form part of the assessment directorate's tasks. The provincial education department could invest in training for novice DHs to equip them with the necessary skills to fulfil their task as Departmental Head.

ii) DBE

The appointment process of DHs and other members of the senior management teams (SMTs) of schools should be more stringent and based on a qualification in school and change management

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6.4.2 General recommendations

Teachers should be well-versed in active and interactive teaching and learning methods and regularly incorporate them into their lessons and practices. Teachers should also become knowledgeable about higher order thinking skills (not just lower and middle order) as identified by Bloom's Taxonomy and encourage higher order thinking in their learners by posing open-ended or conceptual questions. Teachers should be required to network and share best practices through professional learning communities (PLC). PLCs could play an instrumental part in uplifting the standard of teaching at schools, and therefore an improvement in the Business Studies results. Forming and belonging to a PLC should become compulsory for teachers. The Department of Basic Education should determine the minimum number of scheduled meetings teachers should attend for their registration as a teacher. This would ensure that teachers are always abreast of new developments in their profession.

6.5 Limitations of the study

This study was conducted at only two schools within the Metro North Education District where the results in Business Studies have been constantly poor. As only two schools, although in the same geographical area were studied, it would be difficult to generalise as the context of schools may differ. Another limitation of this study was that only one teacher, who was both the Business Studies teacher and the DH at the school, was interviewed.

The questionnaires had some limitations, as teachers and learners had to respond to predetermined answers. Their own feelings were not considered.

The interviews were subject to time constraints as this had to happen after school and learners only had a limited time for the interviews. Teachers also had other responsibilities that they had to attend to as two of the teachers were part of the SMT of their respective schools.

As indicated before, it was found that learners were very loyal toward their school and teachers and might not have been completely honest in their responses.

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6.6 Avenue for further research

The purpose of this study was to determine which factors contributed to the underachievement of learners in Business Studies. Although most of the questions were directed at the learners who find themselves in challenging circumstances at the specific schools, i.e. schools in poverty-stricken areas, socio-economic circumstances are not the only factor contributing to the lack of performance in the subject. The constant changes within the Business Studies curriculum and assessment practices seem to be significant in the underachievement of learners. I would suggest that each factor studied above, i.e. lack of resources, changes in curriculum and teachers' ability to adapt to the changing educational environment should be studied in detail. Furthermore, I would suggest that the study not be limited to only two schools in one district but should encompass a larger sample.

6.7 Conclusion

Business Studies is one of the subjects in the curriculum at FET level that attracts a high number of learners in all provinces in South Africa and in the district. More than 50% of all matriculants in Metro North Education District offer Business Studies as one of their elective subjects. If learners under achieve in Business Studies, it has a dire impact on their ability to be employable or to qualify for further studies. It is, therefore, important to ascertain why learners underachieve or fail Business Studies and to make the relevant changes to improve learner achievement.

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8. Appendices

8.1 Ethical Clearance – UWC

19 May 2017

Ms C Gordon

Faculty of Education

Ethics Reference Number: HS16/1/17

Project Title: Learner achievement in Grade 12 Business Studies: A case study of two schools in the Western Cape.

Approval Period: 19 May 2017 – 19 May 2018

I hereby certify that the Humanities and Social Science Research Ethics Committee of the University of the Western Cape approved the methodology and ethics of the above mentioned research project.

Any amendments, extension or other modifications to the protocol must be submitted to the Ethics Committee for approval. Please remember to submit a progress report in good time for annual renewal.

The Committee must be informed of any serious adverse event and/or termination of the study.

Ms Patricia Josias
Research Ethics Committee Officer
University of the Western Cape

PROVISIONAL REC NUMBER - 130416-049

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8.2 Ethical Clearance – WCED

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REFERENCE: 20170814 –3844

ENQUIRIES: Dr A T Wyngaard

Mrs Cherylleen Gordon
22 Altenburg Street
Highbury
Kuils River
7580

Dear Mrs Cherylleen Gordon

RESEARCH PROPOSAL: **LEARNER ACHIEVEMENT IN GRADE 12 BUSINESS STUDIES IN WORKING CLASS COMMUNITIES: A CASE STUDY OF TWO SCHOOLS IN THE WESTERN CAPE**

Your application to conduct the above-mentioned research in schools in the Western Cape has been approved subject to the following conditions:

1. Principals, educators and learners are under no obligation to assist you in your investigation.
2. Principals, educators, learners and schools should not be identifiable in any way from the results of the investigation.
3. You make all the arrangements concerning your investigation.
4. Educators' programmes are not to be interrupted.
5. The Study is to be conducted from **22 February 2018 till 29 September 2018**
6. No research can be conducted during the fourth term as schools are preparing and finalizing syllabi for examinations (October to December).
7. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey, please contact Dr A.T Wyngaard at the contact numbers above quoting the reference number?
8. A photocopy of this letter is submitted to the principal where the intended research is to be conducted.
9. Your research will be limited to the list of schools as forwarded to the Western Cape Education Department.
10. A brief summary of the content, findings and recommendations is provided to the Director: Research Services.
11. The Department receives a copy of the completed report/dissertation/thesis addressed to:

    The Director: Research Services
    Western Cape Education Department
    Private Bag X9114
    CAPE TOWN
    8000

We wish you success in your research.

Kind regards.
Signed: Dr Audrey T Wyngaard
Directorate: Research
DATE: 21 February 2018

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8.3 Semi-Structured interviews

8.3.1 Teachers

1. To what extent did the changes in the Business Studies curriculum have an impact on your teaching practices? Motivate

2. What was the impact of curriculum changes on learner understanding and learning? Motivate

3. What do you think is the best way to teach Business Studies?

4. Do you have learners with different learning styles in your class?

5. How do you accommodate learners with different learning styles in your class?

6. Do you think it is important to reflect on teaching practices? How often do you reflect on your practices?

7. How do subject heads/principal/academic committee monitor that there is effective teaching and learning?

8. How do subject heads/principal/academic committee monitor the quality of assessment outcomes or teaching strategies?

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9. Why is it important for the School management team (SMT) to monitor the quality of teaching, learning and assessment?

10. How do the socio-economic circumstances of learners at your school impact their ability to learn the subject?

11. How did you adapt your teaching practices to provide for this situation?

12. Does the availability of physical resources have an impact on your teaching practices and the learners' ability to learn? Motivate

13. What is the nature of learner support programmes, if any at your school?

14. How effective are the learner support programmes offered at your school?

15. How do you track the effectiveness of the learner support programme you offer?

16. If you were part of the SMT of the school, what would you change and why?

17. What would you not change and why?

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8.3.2 Learners

1. Why do you find Business Studies interesting?

2. How do you study for a Business Studies examination?

3. How long before the Business Studies examinations to you start to prepare?

4. Does your teacher have an interesting way of teaching the subject?

5. Would you want the teacher to change anything he does in the class?

6. Do your teacher use resources to enhance his lessons?

6.1 If yes, do these resources help you to understand Business Studies better?

7. How do the senior management team (SMT) monitor that effective teaching, learning and assessment takes place?

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8. Do the SMT monitor your books on a regular basis?

9. What is the nature of learner support programmes, if any at your school?

10. Do the learner support programmes offered at your school help you to improve your studies?

11. What would you change at your school and why?

12. What would you not change and why?

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8.4 Questionnaires

8.4.1 Learners

This questionnaire is to be completed by learners who are in Grade 12 in 2016 doing Business Studies. It will take approximately 45 minutes to complete. This questionnaire is part of a research study on the achievement of learners from working class communities in Business Studies. This questionnaire must be completed individually and as honestly as possible. Anonymity and confidentiality is guaranteed for all institutions and individuals participating in this research.

I would like to thank you in advance for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.

Date of participation	
District	Metro North Education District
Province	WCED
Age	
Gender	

Kindly return this questionnaire to the Class educator immediately after completion.

All completed questionnaires will be collected from the facilitator.

For more information kindly contact:

Cherylleen Gordon

021 903 0764(h)

021 938 3162(w)

076 5900 540 (cell)

Cherylleen.Gordon@westerncape.gov.za

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SECTION A

ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS CIRCLING THE OPTION OF YOUR CHOICE WHERE REQUIRED.

Spatial questions

1	How many people in your household? *4* *6* *more than 6*
2	How many bedrooms are in your house? *1* *2* *more than 2*
3	Do you have your own bedroom? *Yes* *No*
4	Is there a quiet space in your house to study? *Yes* *No*
5	How many hours per day do you study? *0* *1-3* *4-5*
6	Do you have any chores? *Yes* *No* If yes how long does this take per day? 0 – 2 hours 2 – 3 hours more than 3 hours
7	The highest qualification in my household is: *Grade 9* *Grade 12* Post matric qualification
8	All adults in the household are employed Yes No
9	Do your parents own your house? Yes No
10	How many children in your household including you attend school? 0-1 2 – 3 more than 3

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SECTION B

Answer the following questions by choosing the correct option

General questions

No	Question	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Other Reason
1	I Chose to do Business Studies because:	I love the subject and would like to make it my career	It was part of the subject choice package at school	I was not allowed to take physical science	
2	My average percentage for business Studies in grade 10 and 11 was:	Above 70 %	Above 50%	Below 50%	
3	I find the following topics challenging:	Business ventures and Business environments	Business Environments and Business operations	Business roles and Business Ventures	
4	I have many resources available to help with my studies	I have access to the internet, school and public libraries and newspapers	I have access to school and public libraries	There is no library at school and public library is far from home	
5	My teacher uses resources to make Business Studies easier	My teachers uses video clips and PowerPoint presentations to teach	My teacher uses PowerPoint presentations to explain Business Studies	My teacher uses the textbook to explain the content	
6	I study the content taught every day by reading through the content completed on a specific day	I read and make notes of the content on a daily basis	I work through previous papers to apply my content knowledge	I work through previous paper, makes mind maps and make short notes on the content	
					Motivate
7	The resources helps me to understand the content	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	
8	My teacher knows the subject and his teaching style helps me to understand and study Business Studies	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	

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8.4.2 Teachers

This questionnaire is to be completed by teachers of Business Studies in the Further Education and Training (FET) band. This questionnaire is part of a research study on the achievement of learners from working class communities in Business Studies. This questionnaire must be completed individually and as honestly as possible. Anonymity and confidentiality are guaranteed for all institutions and individuals participating in this research.

I would like to thank you in advance for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.

Section A: Biographical Information

1. Please tick the number of years you have been teaching

1 – 5 years	
6 – 10 years	
11 – 15 years	
16 – 20 years	
21 – 25 years	
26 – 30 years	
More than 30 years	

2. Please tick the appropriate block regarding your experience in teaching Business Studies

1 – 5 years	
6 – 10 years	
11 – 15 years	
16 – 20 years	
21 – 25 years	
26 – 30 years	
More than 30 years	

3. Please tick the appropriate block regarding the number of years at your current school

1 – 5 years	
6 – 10 years	
11 – 15 years	
16 – 20 years	
21 – 25 years	
26 – 30 years	
More than 30 years	

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4. Please tick the appropriate block regarding your post level

Post level one – teacher	
Post level two – Departmental Head	
Post level three – Deputy principal	
Post level five - Principal	

5. Please tick the appropriate block regarding your highest academic and professional qualification

Teachers Diploma	
Bachelor's Degree + Teachers Diploma	
Post Grad Degree + Teachers Diploma	

6. Please tick the appropriate block regarding your highest qualification in Business Studies

Business Studies I	
Business Studies II	
Business Studies III	

7. Please tick the appropriate block regarding your current workload

Business Studies Grades 10 - 12	
Business Studies 10 – 12 and EMS 8 - 9	
Business Studies and 2 more subjects	
Business studies and 3 or more subjects	

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Section B: Read the statements about teaching and learning and make your choice

Read each item carefully and think how each statement impacts on teaching and learning. Indicate your response by making a cross (X) under the appropriate number with a motivation if possible.

No	Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Strongly disagree	Motivate
8	Underachievement or underperformance can be defined as a deviation from the expected norm				
9	Business Studies learners underachieve because they are not interested in the subject				
10	Business Studies learners underachieve because of their socio-economic circumstances				
11	Parents are not interested in learner performance				
12	The continuous changes in the Business Studies curriculum is a great challenge				
13	The changes in the way in which questions are phrased is a big challenge				
14	The annual change of the exam guidelines could be challenging to the teaching and learning of Business Studies				
15	There is enough resources available to enhance teaching of Business Studies				
16	The lecture methodology is the best way to teach Business Studies				
17	Adapting your teaching style to accommodate today's learners could improve the results				
18	The subject head/HOD at your school support teachers with content knowledge				
19	The subject head/HOD supports teachers with methodology				
20	The subject head/HOD supports teachers to compile quality assessment tasks				

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21	The school have systems in place to support learners who under achieves in Business Studies				
22	The school helps the teachers when learners do not submit formal assessment tasks				
23	The socio-economic circumstances of learners' impact on the learners willingness to learn				
24	Most parents attend parent-teacher meetings and shows support to their grade 12 learners				
25	Learners who studies in their home language find it easier to achieve in Business Studies				
26	Most of the learners in grade 12 read and understand at the required level for their grade				
27	The district officials provide support to teachers to enhance teaching of Business Studies				

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8.5 CONSENT FORM

Title of research project: Learner achievement in Grade 12 Business Studies in working class communities: A case study of two schools in the Western Cape

Student researcher: Cherylleen Gordon

Supervisor: Professor Juliana Smith

Educational Studies Department
Faculty of Education
University of the Western Cape
Telephone:
Email: juliana@worldonline.co.za

Name of participant:

Nature of the research

This is a case study which describes and analyses the teaching and learning of Business Studies in grade 12 in working class communities. The researcher will interview teachers and students, observe classes and make journal entries of the observations. The research study is in the fulfilment of the requirements of the master's degree in Education.

Participant 's involvement:

What 's involved:

a) The researcher will interview the participant for thirty minutes about her or his understanding and experience of the Business Studies curriculum. The researcher will ask the participant 's permission to make a sound recording of the interview and take notes during the interview.

AND / OR

b) The participant will be observed, and journal entries will be made of said observations.

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Risks:

The anticipated ethical issues partly relate to the potential for harm and risk in the observation of the classroom. In the enhanced competitive environment of secondary education the performance of both teachers and students is foregrounded with respect to the achievement within the subject. The potential for harm and risk in qualitative research extends to other phases of the research process, including negative experiences during interviews and in the representation of the views of research participants in the research report.

Benefits:

Participants will have the opportunity to reflect upon her or his own learning and professional development and contribute, through the publication of the research findings, to the development of teaching and learning at schools in working class communities or townships.

Costs:

There are no costs involved.

Payment:

The participant will not receive any payment.

- I agree to participate in this research project.
- I have read this consent form and the information it contains and had the opportunity to ask questions about them.
- I agree to my responses being used for education and research on condition my privacy is respected, subject to the following:
    - I understand that my personal details may be included in the research
    - I understand that I am under no obligation to take part in this project.
    - I understand I have the right to withdraw from this project at any stage.

Signature of Participant: _____

Name of Participant: _____

Date: _____

Signature of student researcher:

Name of student researcher: Cherylleen Gordon

Date: _____

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8.6 Information Sheet

Title of research project:	Learner achievement in Grade 12 Business Studies in working class communities: A case study of two schools in the Western Cape
Student researcher:	Cherylleen Gordon
Supervisor:	Professor Juliana Smith
	Educational Studies Department Faculty of Education University of the Western Cape Telephone: Email: juliana@worldonline.co.za

Name of parent:

Name of participant:

Nature of the research

This is a case study which describes and analyses the teaching and learning of Business Studies in grade 12 in working class communities. The researcher will interview teachers and students, observe classes and make journal entries of the observations. The research study is in the fulfilment of the requirements of the Master's degree in Education.

Participant's involvement:

What's involved:

a) The researcher will interview the participant for thirty minutes about her or his understanding and experience of the Business Studies curriculum. The researcher will ask the participant's permission to make a sound recording of the interview and take notes during the interview.

AND / OR

b) The participant will be observed and journal entries will be made of said observations.

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Risks:

The anticipated ethical issues partly relate to the potential for harm and risk in the observation of the classroom. In the enhanced competitive environment of secondary education the performance of both teachers and students is foregrounded with respect to the achievement within the subject. The potential for harm and risk in qualitative research extends to other phases of the research process, including negative experiences during interviews and in the representation of the views of research participants in the research report.

Benefits:

Participants will have the opportunity to reflect upon her or his own learning and professional development and contribute, through the publication of the research findings, to the development of teaching and learning at schools in working class communities or townships.

Costs:

There are no costs involved.

Payment:

The participant will not receive any payment.

I …….. (Full name of parent) the undersigned, parent of …… (Full name of learner) hereby grants permission for my son/daughter to participate in the above-mentioned research project. I understand that participation is voluntary and that his/her name would not be mentioned in the final research project.

Signature of Parent: _____

Date: _____

Signature of student researcher:

Name of student researcher: _____

Date: _____

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8.7 Letter to Head of Education: WCED

THE HEAD: EDUCATION
(FOR ATTENTION: DIRECTOR: EDUCATION RESEARCH)
WESTERN CAPE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
PRIVATE BAG X9114
CAPE TOWN
8000

4 December 2015

Dear Sir/Madam

APPLICATION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT A DEPARTMENTAL INSTITUTION

I, Cherylleen Gordon, am currently studying at the University of the Western Cape (UWC). I am pursuing a Master's degree in the Educational Studies Department, Faculty of Education. The title of my research **is:** *Learner achievement in Grade 12 Business Studies in working class communities: A case study of two schools in the Western Cape.* This research will be conducted under the supervision of Professor Juliana Smith. The essence of this study is to investigate and receive a better understanding of the factors which impact the performance of Business Studies learners and to sustain improved performance in the subject.

I therefore wish to apply for permission to conduct a research study at the following schools:

- Elswood Secondary School; and
- The Range Secondary School

I also wish to request access to official documents including educators' portfolios, attendance registers, timetables, work schedules, grade 12 results, etc. which will provide more insight into the perceptions and understanding of teachers' and learners' experiences, needs and expectations.

Your permission is a requirement to complete my application for ethical clearance to be submitted to the university ethics committee.

The research is qualitative in nature, using the interpretive paradigm. A questionnaire and semi-structured interviews will be used as research instruments to collect in-depth data from individual principals, selected members of the SMT, teachers and grade 12 learners. Questionnaires will be completed and analysed. Interviews will be audio taped and transcribed along with other collected data in a journal for the purposes of my dissertation.

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In order not to interrupt the programme at schools, the questionnaires and interviews will be scheduled by appointment. Interviews will be conducted between January and March 2016.

Participation in this research is voluntary and participants are free to withdraw from the study at any time without any negative or undesired impact. Participants' identifications will remain anonymous. All information shared in the session will remain confidential and will not be used for any other purpose, other than for the purpose of this research. A summary of the research findings will be made available to you on request.

For more information feel free to contact either myself or my supervisor on the below contact details:

Professor Juliana Smith
Tel: 084 798 7081 / 021 862 2877
Juliana@worldonline.co.za

I trust that my request will be considered favourably.

Yours in Education

Ms Cherylleen Gordon
Tel: 021 903 0764
021 938 3162
076 5900 540
Cherylleen.Gordon@westerncape.gov.za

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8.8 Letter to principals

January 2016

The Principal

RE: RESEARCH PROJECT

Thesis Title: ***Learner achievement in Grade 12 Business Studies in working class communities: A case study of two schools in the Western Cape***

Dear Principal

This letter serves to acquire the consent of parents, teachers and learners to conduct research at your institution.

My name is Cherylleen Gordon and I am currently registered for the M.Ed. degree within the Faculty of Education at the University of the Western Cape. The general aim of the study is to explore the reasons why learners from working class communities under achieve in the Business Studies curriculum.

The Western Cape Education Department (WCED) and Metro North Education Department (MNED) have granted permission to conduct research in selected schools. Two schools will be selected from all schools invited to participate.

I envisage the following categories of your school community to be participants in the study:

- All Grade 12 Business Studies learners of 2016**;**
- All Grade 12 Business Studies teachers of 2016; **and**
- Business Studies Heads of Department at the two schools**.**

The data collection process will include the following:

- Questionnaires – approximately 45 minutes to complete (1 day)**;**
- Focus group interviews of 10 learners per school – approximately 1 hour 30 minutes – 2 hours (1 day)**;**
- Focus group interviews with grade 12 Business Studies teachers**; and**
- Focus group interviews with Business Studies HOD.

The data collection time frame will be as follows:

- All questionnaires/interviews to be conducted after normal academic programme of the school

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The venue for collection of data will include:

- School Hall / classrooms

Letters will be issued to all participants including consent forms that need to be completed and returned by no later than 25 February 2016.

Your positive response will be highly appreciated.

Yours in Education

Ms Cherylleen Gordon

Tel: 021 903 0764
021 938 3162
076 5900 540
Cherylleen.Gordon@westerncape.gov.za

SUPERVISOR: Professor Juliana Smith

Tel: 084 798 7081/021 862 2877

Juliana@worldonline.co.za

PLEASE COMPLETE AND EMAIL NO LATER THAN 15 FEBRUARY 2016

EMAIL: Cherylleen.Gordon@westerncape.gov.za

Fax: 086 5311 559

CONSENT FORM

I, the undersigned, hereby grant permission that the Grade 12 Business Studies learners of 2016 and Grade 12 Business Studies teachers of 2016 at _____ (name of school) may participate in the research project undertaken by Cherylleen Gordon, a M.Ed. student in the Faculty of Education at the University of the Western Cape.

Full name of Principal: _____

Signature of Principal: _____

Date: _____

School Stamp: _____

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8.9 Declaration of Confidentiality and Impartiality

I, the undersigned, accept that all information, documentation and decisions regarding any matter of this study are confidential. I, therefore, undertake not to make known anything in this regard.

I also declare that I will not purposefully favour or prejudice anybody.

	NAME	SIGNTURE	DATE
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			

Signature of student researcher:

Name of student researcher: Cherylleen Gordon

Date: _____

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8.10 Editor contract

Mentor/Mentee Agreement: Thesis Editing & Professional Writing Coach.

I, Dr. Eden Padayachee will serve in the capacity of editor to the client until the final submission of the Thesis to the examination board. We both agree to the following goals as the focus of our editing agreement:

1. The client is responsible for payment upfront of **R 6000.00** for the entire editing of the dissertation (220 pages). This includes both technical and language editing, reference checks, contents, and page numbering.

   Bank Account Details:
   Account holder: Eden R. Padayachee
   Name of Bank: Standard Bank
   Branch Code: 6509
   Account number: 10193346905
   Type of account: Current/Cheque

2. The editor will expect input from the client in the form of detailed, written chapters already structured according to supervisor guidelines.

3. The Editor will review each do the necessary technical and editing corrections and return to the client. The client will then make the corrections and send the next Chapter for review and editing until submission of the thesis to the examination board.

4. Clients can submit chapters one at a time or the entire thesis for feedback. The editor does not write chapters and the client is responsible for organizing content and will be trained on how to write content and express themselves professionally on paper.

5. Editor turn-around time for the thesis is 2-4 weeks maximum.

6. The Editor will edit proofread and look at sentence construction, grammar, and spelling to produce a polished final document.

7. **I, the mentor can guarantee the quality of my editing and mentorship abilities, however, I cannot guarantee that the examination board will accept the thesis with a pass. This will depend on the hard work, persistence and amount of effort put in by the mentee.**

8. **Please note that there is no refund for the amount paid once it has been deposited into the mentor's bank account.**

Signatures:

Mentor: Mentee: Date: 09-10-23

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8.11 Editor certificate

08 November 2023

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Editorial Certificate

This letter serves to prove that the thesis listed below was language edited for proper English, grammar,
punctuation, and spelling, as well as the overall layout and style by myself, proprietor of Neurogenesis
(Pty) Ltd.

Thesis Title: GRADE 12 LEARNER ACHIEVEMENT IN BUSINESS STUDIES IN WORKING -CLASS

COMMUNITIES IN TWO SCHOOLS IN THE WESTERN CAPE, SOUTH AFRICA

Author: CHERYLLEEN ENID GORDON

The research content or the author's intentions were not altered in any way during the editing process. However,
the author has the authority to accept or reject my suggestions and changes. I, the editor can guarantee the quality
of my editing and mentorship abilities, however, I cannot guarantee that the examination board will accept the
thesis with a pass. This will depend on the hard work, persistence and amount of effort put in by the mentee.
Should you have any questions or concerns about the edited document, I can be contacted at the listed telephone numbers or email addresses.
Yours truly,

Dr Eden Padayachee

(Proprietor/ PhD. Medicinal Biochemistry)

Dr. Eden Rebecca Padayachee

PhD Medicinal Biochemistry (Specialized Field:

Neuroscience)

Website Link:
https://neurogenesisconsulting.com/
Email: eden@neurogenesisconsulting.com
University of CapeTown
Department of Integrative Biomedical Sciences
Institute of Diagnostic Medicine
Observatory Cape Town

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8.12 Letter to WCED

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Fax: +27 (0) 21 959 2647
Website: www.uwc.ac.za
Email: mmolebatsi@uwc.ac.za

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

02 August 2017

To: Western Cape Education Department

Dear Dr Audrey Wyngaard

This letter serves to confirm that the Gordon, Cherylleen Enid, 2250274 is a registered Masters student in the Faculty of Education the University of Western Cape for the academic year of 2017.

Should you have any further queries, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours faithfully

UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN CAPE
FACULTY EDUCATION
FACULTY OFFICER
02 AUG 2017
FAKULTEIT OPVOEDKUNDE
UNIVERSITEIT VAN WES-KAAPLAND

Ms Moswang Moloi
Faculty Officer
Faculty of Education: Postgraduate Studies Office
First floor, room E106
University of the Western Cape (UWC)
Private Bag X17
Bellville
7535
Phone: +27 21 959 2651
Fax: + 27 21 959 2647
Email: mmolebatsi@uwc.ac.za

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8.13 Turnitin Report

turnitin

Digital Receipt

This receipt acknowledges that Turnitin received your paper. Below you will find the receipt information regarding your submission.

The first page of your submissions is displayed below.

Submission author:	Cherylleen Gordon
Assignment title:	Thesis check similarity
Submission title:	Grade 12 learner achievement in Business Studies in workin...
File name:	2023_CG_THESIS_FINAL_6_SEPT.docx
File size:	538.13K
Page count:	197
Word count:	58,683
Character count:	328,786
Submission date:	20-Sep-2023 05:21PM (UTC+0200)
Submission ID:	2171655051

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION, OVERVIEW AND CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

Underachievement of grade 12 learners is a phenomenon which needs sustained inquiry if a change is to be achieved. Often a Grade 12 certificate is perceived as a passport to tertiary education and the minimum requirement to enter the world of work. Despite its importance, many students do not make this milestone in South Africa. It is important to find out why so many students still fail despite transformation in the education system in the post-apartheid era. Nkosi (2017:1586)

According to Thabo-Nkadimeng and Mmakola (2019:176) learner performance is influenced by teacher preparedness, which means inadequate preparation of teachers equates to poor learner performance. Apart from the teacher's preparedness other factors such as lack of content and pedagogical knowledge can also be attributed to poor performance of learners. Certain contextual factors relating to learners play a role in poor learner performance. Thabo-Nkadimeng and Mmakola (2019:179) mention that certain contextual factors contribute to poor learner performance. The contextual factors can be divided into resources at school level as well as factors at the learners' home, such as poverty and their socio-economic circumstances.

These studies will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Two, section 2.6.

Despite interventions such as the National Strategy for Learner Attainment (NSLA) by the Department of Basic Education (DBE) and the High School Improvement Programme (HSIP) by Provincial Education Departments as well as various Grade 12 tutoring sessions supported by the various District Offices to improve learner performance, the performance in the final examination at certain schools remains below 60%. The NSLA was introduced by DBE in 2007 to assist schools with a pass rate below 60%. The DBE provides material and funding to provincial departments to assist those schools with extra classes and tutoring in subjects where learners underperform. The HSIP is a similar programme initiated by provincial departments of

1

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