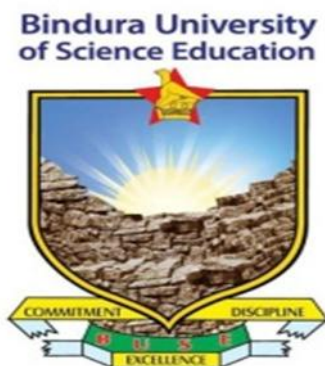


BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY



Title: Factors that are affecting student performance in Harare Northern District.

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of Science in Education Chemistry

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CHAPTER ONE

1.1 Introduction The researcher is going to discuss the introduction, background of the study, purpose of the study, the objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study and limitations of the study.

Parents throughout the world attach great importance to the education of their children and parents in Zimbabwe are no exception. This is because of the important role that education plays in ensuring survival and better living within the family system when the child eventually completes his or her education. The employed child, in turn, is able to support the education of his or her siblings. Parents are proud of the scholastic achievement of their children who eventually get employed and lighten the financial burden of educating other family members. Good academic performance at Prince Edward secondary school lays a good foundation for the progression of the child to tertiary education. This is the reason why the researcher wants to find the factors that are affecting student performance at Prince Edward secondary school in Harare .According to Kandemi (2006), Kenneth Kaunda in his foreword to Growth of Education in Zambia, Mwanakatwe (1968) stated that:

“We are architects of our own destiny. We are bricklayers in the nation building process laying what I consider to be a decent and happy future, for ourselves and the succeeding generation, for we have had our day and full share of problems and enjoyment where this has been possible, but the future is for the young which education must mould with the highest possible degree of perfection\.”Kaunda’s thought is augmented by Amukugo (2010) who observed that “the universal basic aim of school in general remains the preparation of children for their economic future, taking cognizance of a variety of aspects involved in such a future Kamukugo (2010) further observed that the predicament of the schools lies in the fact that they cannot accurately anticipate the future for which they have to prepare the learners.

If we take a look at other countries in Africa such as Senegal we will find out that Senegal as a society does suffer from low academic performance among its students because English is taught as a second language in the country. This might also be a contributing factor. According to Kick (2004) Senegal post-secondary and higher education institutions offer instruction in English as

the primary language of instruction. In accordance with the findings of the studies on English Language Teaching in Senegal the vast majority of students who graduate from high school and go on to various public and private higher education institutions are unable to use language effectively and appropriately in order to meet their social, personal, academic, and professional needs. Considering that the majority of Senegal high school graduates have a limited understanding of the higher education system's expectations, it is not surprising to see students who are uninterested in participating in classroom discussions, find the subject/course boring, are frequently absent, and obtain low grades in exams. The Sultanate of Senegal has been supporting higher education through scholarships in order to provide the industry with quality manpower. Over the last two decades, Senegal has seen a significant increase in the number of higher educational institutions as well as student enrollment. However, this mission has run into an unanticipated problem: an increase in the number of students dropping out of institutions. According to Kick (2004) in 2014-2015, more than 10,000 students dropped out of college, indicating that an average of 7,000 students leave higher education in Senegal each year. College dropout is a serious problem that has hampered the government's higher education mission in Senegal. The statistics show how serious the problem is, and they demand special attention from all stakeholders in Senegal higher education system .Based on that, it become an essential to investigate on the factors that affecting the students' academic performance. The researcher is also going to discuss about various factors that affect academic performance of learners in Zimbabwean School's. There are several factors that can affect students' performance in school, including:

1. Socioeconomic background: Students from low-income families may face challenges such as lack of access to resources, limited parental involvement, and inadequate support systems, which can impact their academic performance.
2. Parental involvement: Parents who are actively involved in their child's education and provide support and encouragement can have a positive impact on their academic performance.
3. Learning environment: Factors such as class size, teacher quality, school resources, and overall school culture can all influence students' performance.

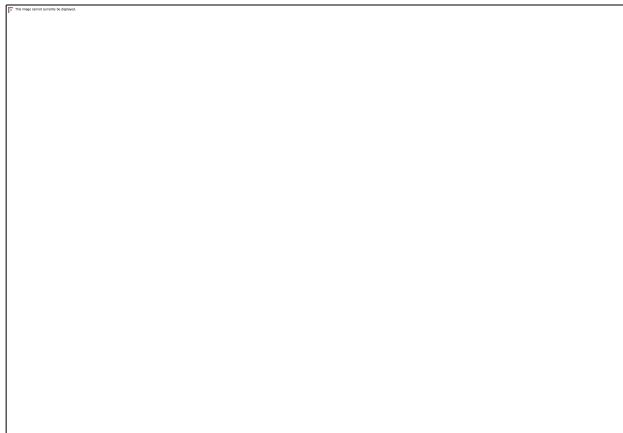
4. Student motivation: Students who are motivated to learn and succeed are more likely to perform well academically. Motivation can be influenced by factors such as personal goals, interests, and aspirations.

5. Health and well-being: Physical and mental health issues can impact students' ability to focus, learn, and perform well in school. Access to healthcare and support services can help address these issues.

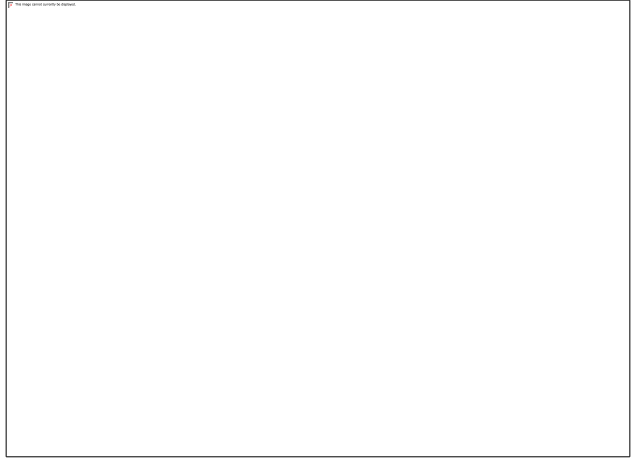
6. Learning disabilities or special needs: Students with learning disabilities or special needs may require additional support and accommodations to help them succeed academically.

7. Peer relationships: Positive peer relationships can contribute to a supportive and engaging learning environment, while negative peer relationships can be a distraction and hinder academic performance.

8. School policies and practices: School policies related to grading, discipline, and academic support can also impact students' performance. Schools that provide effective support systems and interventions for struggling students can help improve academic outcomes.



They are other issues that also affect academic performance such as teacher academic support, teacher emotional support stress and well-being.



1.1 Background of the Study

According to Juma (2011) there is a world-wide agreement that education is a critical factor to the socio – economic development of any country (UNICEF, 2014). It is for this reason that the United Nations (1948) declared the Universal Human Rights with Article 26 guaranteeing the right to education (UNESCO, 2016). In the year 2000, one hundred and sixty-four countries attended the World Education Forum in Dakar, Senegal, where participants re-affirmed the vision of the World Declaration on Education for All, adopted ten years earlier in 1990 in Jomtien, Thailand (UNESCO, 2000).

Education is a fundamental human right, a critical factor to sustainable development, peace and stability within and among countries. Participants signed the Dakar Framework for Action to provide universal primary education to all children; boys and girls equally, in order to ensure that all children around the globe acquire basic literacy, numeracy and life skills to enable them understand their environments better. Learners’ academic performance is vital for the socio-economic development of society (Mushtaq & Khan, 2012). The social and economic development of any country is directly linked to student academic performance (Mushtaq & Khan, 2012). Maybe the academic performance of learners determines their quality and the

extent to which they can become great leaders and provide for the manpower requirements of the nation to drive its socioeconomic development.

Education is considered as a first step for every human activity. It plays a vital role in the development of human wealth and is linked to an individual's well-being and opportunities for better living (Battle & Lewis, 2002). Therefore, it is a key role player which serves as a catalyst for the attainment of a country's vision (MoE, 2011). Education is life, because it ensures the acquisition of knowledge and skills that enable individuals to increase their productivity and improve their quality of life. It is considered a basic need that supports the fulfilment of other basic needs such as shelter, food, clothing, and security; which helps in the improvement of quality of life (Lleras-Muney, 2005). Owing to its positive effects on earnings and on housing, water, sanitation, utilization of health facilities, empowerment of women in taking well-informed decisions related to fertility, family welfare and family health; education has been regarded as an instrument for poverty reduction (Government of the Republic of Namibia, 2004). Empirical evidence shows that education plays a significant role in influencing an individual's economic and social circumstances, with formal schooling playing an important role in the enhancement of economic growth (Lindahl, 2005). By increasing literacy, numeracy and problem-solving skills, education increases individual productivity and earnings. It is believed that productivity leads to new sources of earnings which enhance the economic growth of a country (UNICEF, 2014). The quality of learners' academic performance therefore, remains top priority for educators, because it is meant to make a difference in terms of sustainable socio-economic development locally, regionally, nationally and internationally. It is a principal means for increasing the productive capabilities of societies and their political, economic and scientific institutions (Koskei, Tonui & Simiyu, 2015).

Education is a critical factor which plays a significant role in influencing the economic and social development of a country (Engin-Demir, 2009). It is for this reason that governments around the globe committed themselves to the provision of basic education to ensure their citizens gain literacy and numeracy. It is generally believed that literacy is a critical factor which contributes to socio-economic and sustainable development for future generations (UNDP, studies have been carried out to identify and examine casual factors of poor academic performance in a number of countries around the globe (Bolu-Steve & Sanni, 2013). Most of these studies focus on the interaction of family (home)-related factors, teacher-related factors,

school-related factors and learner-related factors (Diaz, 2003; Mlambo, 2011; Fakude, 2012). Findings of these studies point to hard work and discipline, previous schooling, parents' education, family income, and self-motivation as factors that influence the academic performance of learners in schools (Harb & Shaarawi, 2006). However, it is noted that the combination of factors that influence academic performance varies from one academic environment to another, from one set of group of learners to the next set of group of learners and indeed, from one cultural setting to another (Mlambo, 2011). Hence, the present study, being conducted in a different environment and culture and all with different learners, may bring new insights to the problem under investigation.

In Trinidad and Tobago, Mlambo (2011) examined factors that affect students' academic performance in the West Indies. The findings revealed that factors such as poor school attendance and lack of commitment were responsible for learners' poor academic performance. Declining class attendance in schools around the world eventually leads to high failure rate among learners and the throughput of education system is reduced (Mlambo, 2011; Fakude, 2012). In Pakistan, Mushtaq and Khan (2012) carried out a study to explore the important factors that affect the academic performance of the students. The findings revealed two categories of factors (internal and external) which can have either positive or negative effects on the academic performance of learners. The internal factors include students' competency in English, class schedules, class size, class environment, learning facilities and the teacher's role in the class. For example, large class size and unconducive classroom environment have negative effect on learners' academic performance. On the other hand, external factors include extra-curricular activities, family problems, work and financial issues. It was established that both categories of factors were at play. Similarly, Amitava, Manojit, Seswata and Braja-Gopal (2010) conducted a study on factors that affect students' academic performance in Pakistan. The study revealed a number of socio-economic factors such as students' attendance in the class, family income, mother and father's education, teacher-student ratio, presence of trained teachers in schools, sex of the students, and distance of schools; as factors that affected students' academic performance in Pakistan show implications to current study. For example, high teacher learner and lack of specialist teachers in schools may influence negatively academic performance of learners.

Some studies (e.g. Chambers & Schreiber, 2004; McCoy, 2005) identify gender, ethnicity and father's occupation as significant contributors to students' academic achievement. Above and beyond these, other demographic factors that influence the academic performance of learners are still prevalent at the individual level (Capraro, Capraro & Wiggins, 2000). Studies (e.g. Ma, 2001; Mitchell & Collman, 2001; Jeynes, 2002) reveal that parental education and family socio-economic status positively influence the quality of academic performance of learners. Studies revealed that students with high level of socio-economic status perform better than the middle class students and the middle class students perform better than the students with low level of socio-economic status (Garzon, 2006; Kahlenberg, 2006; Kirkup, 2008). It was also found that low socioeconomic status of parents hinders individuals from gaining access to sources and resources of learning (Duke, 2000; Eamon, 2005). Low socio-economic status adversely affects the academic performance of learners, dragging them down to a lower level (Trusty, 2000). It is also observed that the economically disadvantaged parents are less able to afford the cost of education of their children at higher level, and consequently the children do not work at their fullest potential (Rouse & Barrow, 2006). Krashen (2005) found that learners whose parents are educated perform better in school than their counterparts whose parents are less educated. Educated parents have that. 2008) argued that despite successful and appropriate planning of parental involvement in low socio-economic status areas, in practice, this meets with resistance and lack of parental support. This reflects that parental level of education has a negative or positive impact learners' educational and occupational aspirations. This is also confirmed by scholars Mancebon and Mar-Molinero, (2000); Ma, (2001); Chevalier and Lanot, (2002); Schiller, Khmelkov and Wang, (2002) who stressed the significance of parental level of education and parental involvement in the education of their children. Literature (e.g. Fantuzzo & Tighe, 2000; Veenstra & Kuyper, 2004) points the importance of parental involvement in improving the quality of learners' academic performance and also points out how parental involvement in education of learners facilitates access to progression within education.

On the contrary, an unstable family may contribute to moral decay among learners which may lead to poor academic performance of learners. Scholars (e.g. Mushtaq & Khan, 2012; Bolu-Steve & Sanni, 2013) argue that a child brought up in an unstable and economically-disadvantaged family background is more likely to perform poorly because he or she lacks some basic needs such as food, clothing and proper shelter. However, Malecki and Demaray (2006)

concluded that students from low socio-economic background could perform well in their studies if their parents were involved with their schooling.

In the Republic of South Africa, Fakude (2012) carried out a study to examine the effects of parental involvement on academic outcomes of their children. Findings revealed that funds were allocated to secondary education for the purpose of operational activities such as salaries, in-service training of teachers, provision of learning support materials, textbooks, and other teaching materials, as well as additions or improvements to teaching infrastructure . This shows that the Ministry of Education (2016) made efforts in the provision of teaching and learning materials to improve quality education at secondary level. However, despite such huge capital investments, learning outcomes have not improved as the large number of the Namibian learners has failed form 4 examinations and consequently ended up roaming the streets

Statistics show poor academic performance of form 4 below fifty percent in English Language .In 2010 only 28.41 % qualified for entrance to institutions of higher learning such as University of Namibia (UNAM), Polytechnic of Namibia (Polytech) and the International University of Management (IUM). In 2015 at national level only 29.8 % qualified for entrance to University, while close to 30 %, being ungraded in English Language .In the 2016 academic year, the trend remained the same with a high percentage of form 4 learners, close to 30 %, being ungraded in English Language in the Namibia Senior Secondary Certificate Ordinary National examinations .In the Oshikoto Region, a total of 2,146 form 4 full time learners entered the October / November 2014 O level examinations. Only 686 learners obtained pass rates of A-D symbols (32 %) in English Language , out of 2,146 learners. A total number of 1460 (68%) out of 2,146 obtained E-U symbols in English Language , which means they could not satisfy the requirements of the National examinations in English Language . Consequently, they lead a hopeless life as it is difficult for an underperformed and failed person to get a well-paying job, as both government and private sector need trained people who have passed English Language at O level as a pre-condition. It is noted that with the emergence of a 'knowledge economy', there is little room for unskilled labour (Sargeant & Cowin, 2011). Literature shows that the unskilled work that is available is subject to casualization, and is not well paid (Sargeant & Cowin, 2011). This shows that poor academic performance, especially of form 4 learners in English Language , poses a challenge to the development of countries, especially developing countries

such as Zimbabwe . The low academic achievement requires focused interventions to drastically improve academic performance , as significant bottlenecks in terms of learning outcomes are still evident in secondary education.

Despite the fact that the Government of the Republic of Zimbabwe has made education accessible to all, the poor academic performance in Zimbabwean schools is very high at secondary education level . Poor academic performance in Zimbabwean secondary schools has been a major concern for stakeholders in education over the past five years . Schools, especially senior secondary schools, have shown poor academic performance personalities have called for education methods to be revamped to accommodate and align with the local environment and market needs . Public pressure on regional directors of education, inspectors of education, school principals and teachers to improve academic performance has led to schools coming up with various performance improvement strategies. Contrary, a great concern exists as some of the strategies employed by some regions and schools to improve their academic performance did yield anticipated results. Consequently, some regions in Zimbabwe consistently continue to perform well in the form 4 examinations, while others perform badly

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The sole purpose of secondary education is to prepare pupils for tertiary education at college or university and to some extent prepare students for the world of work. Despite government efforts to provide quality education to all, secondary school learners in some public schools have continued to produce poor academic results in their final School Certificate Examinations. The school and home environment of the learners are expected to provide supportive conditions for pupils to perform well academically. However, records at the selected secondary schools in Harare District revealed that pupils' performance was poor in 2016 and 2017. Ideally a school is a place where children work hard, succeed academically and feel good concerning their envisaged future. Poor academic performance, therefore, jeopardizes the chances of such pupils proceeding to higher education where they would build careers for a better future. There was, therefore, a compelling need to find out those factors that contributed to the poor academic performance of pupils at the selected secondary schools.

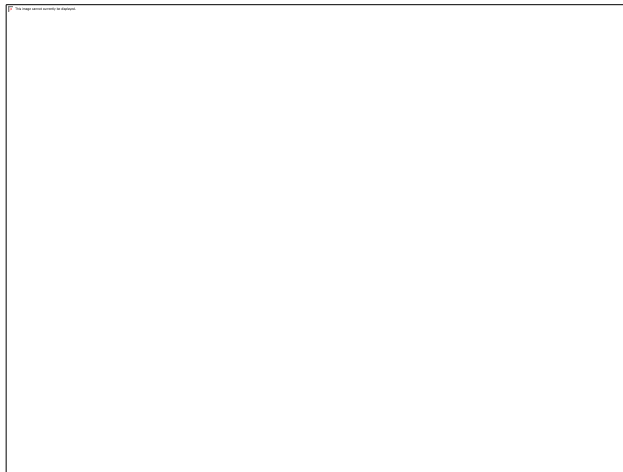
1.3 The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to identify the factors that affect academic performance of pupils in Selected Urban Secondary Schools in Harare Northern District. The study also identified how parents and school authorities can work together to help the pupils improve their academic performance.

1.4 The Objectives of the Study

In this write up the researcher is going to discuss about the factors that affect the students performance at Prince Edward secondary school. The researcher is going to cover several factors that can affect students' performance in school, including: the socio economic background, parents involvement, learning environment, student motivation, health and wellbeing, learning disabilities, peer relationships and school policies and practices.

Research Questions



Arising from the above objectives, the study had the following research questions:

1.5.1 General Research Question

What were the factors that affected student academic performance in the selected Secondary Schools in Harare Urban?

1.5.2 Specific Research Questions

1. How does the School Environment contribute to poor pupil academic performance in the selected Secondary Schools in Harare Urban?
2. How does the home environment contribute to poor pupil academic performance in the selected Secondary Schools in Harare Urban?

3. What teacher and pupil factors lead to poor pupil academic performance in the selected Secondary Schools in Harare Urban?

4. How can pupil academic performance in the selected schools be improved?

1.6 Significance of the Study

The study provided insights into the factors that cause poor academic performance of pupils in a selected secondary schools in Harare Urban. These factors possibly affect pupils' academic performance in urban secondary schools in other parts of the country. It provides scope for intervention over these problems for teachers and parents in the study area and beyond its boundaries. The study has also contributed to the body of knowledge on how the mitigation measures recommended can improve the academic performance of secondary school pupils. It is hoped that the study has also become part of the documentation process on the factors affecting academic performance in secondary schools and the solutions thereof. It is further hoped that it has become the basis for future research on similar topics in order to further develop a better understanding of the challenges at hand.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

The researcher is a school administrator who had the challenge of apportioning time for her responsibilities and the study. Some of the School respondents thought it was the performance of their schools being assessed hence were initially apprehensive that their schools were going to be exposed by the researcher. Some of the learners thought that it was an investigation into their behavior which would be reported to their school authorities and hence were suspicious about the motives of the questions they were being asked.

1.8 Delimitation of the Study

The study confined itself to factors affecting the academic performance of form 4 pupils from Prince Edward Secondary Schools in Harare.

1.11 Definition of Key Study Terms

Academic Performance: According to Lemmer (1999), it is the measurement of the learner's cognitive and performative achievements according to the indicators and set standards by the school or the country's educational system. **Child-headed Household:** According to CSO (2009), the term is interchangeably used with child-headed family in reference to "a family of children that has lost the support, care, protection, responsibility and control of its biological parents or

adult guardianship; and its guardianship is assumed by a person below the age of 18".Effective School: This according to Jansen (1995:185), is a learning institution that has strong administrative leadership, a climate conducive to learning, high expectations for student achievement, and clear instructional objectives for monitoring student performance, emphasis is on basic skills instruction.Effectiveness: refers to the evaluation of the results of performance, and it is beyond the influence or control of the individual.

Home Background:

The Macmillan English Dictionary for Advanced Learners Dictionary, 2007, defines it as the type of family, social position, or culture that someone comes from.Passing:

The Concise English Dictionary 11th Edition defines passing as being successful in an examination; in this case it denotes obtaining a full O level Certificate in at least six (6) subjects, including English, with at least a credit in five of them.

Performance: is synonymous with behavior; it is what people actually do, and it can be observed. Performance includes those actions that are relevant to the organization's goals and can be measured in terms of each individual's proficiency (that is, level of contribution),(Muchinsky, 2006).

School Environment: According to Lemmer (1999), a school is a place where all aspects of formal education take place; a school environment is a place where human activity, whether physical or social, interacts for knowledge acquisition.Secondary School: Owens (1988:138), defines a Secondary School as a School whose major objectives are to prepare students for admission to higher (tertiary) education; prepare students for the world of work. Normally these Schools run from Grade eight (8) to twelve (12).

Regular School: According to Lemmer (1999:70), a regular school is an institution for education and training which strives to meet the diverse needs of learners within regulated periods.

Learner: is a person involved in knowledge acquisition; in this case a student or pupil pursuing secondary education. De Beer (1994), describes a learner as a person who seeks knowledge from a teacher. The MacMillan English Dictionary for Advanced Learners further defines a Learner as one who is in the process of gaining knowledge or a skill that makes it possible for him or her to do something. In this study a learner refers to a pupil in secondary school.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter I am going to research about factors that affect student's academic performance namely school factors, teachers factors, home factors and pupils factors .

2.1.1 School Factors

D'Souza (1994), emphasized that leadership is crucial for the success of any organization. Poor leadership by the school administration would result in an adverse effect on the academic performance of its learners. Poor leadership leads to ineffective supervision which can adversely affect the performance of the learners. Lemmer (1999), discusses a number of characteristics which are universally recognized as influencing education. These include Class Size and Pupil Teacher Ratio as having direct implications on school policy and practice. She notes that Teachers believe that the quality of their teaching and their interactions with learners can decline with an increase in the size of a class. She also states that teachers experience more positive attitudes to students and their work when teaching smaller classes. She further discusses the issue of Measuring Pupil Performance. She notes that the commonly used measure for school performance is based on standardized achievement tests which are believed to be easily reported and interpreted in a consistent fashion to mark the individual differences in as unambiguous way as possible. Munda et al (2000), stated that physical facilities like good classrooms, good ablution blocks, well-maintained school infrastructure contributed to students' motivation which in turn resulted in good performance, as learners like to be associated with a beautiful school environment.

2.2.2 Teacher Factors

Costello (1991), explains that methods of teaching also contribute to pupils' academic

performance. The author notes that the lecture approach is not always effective as it turns the learners into inactive participants in the learning process. The author instead recommended discussions; a project and discovery method which create an enabling environment for the learners and ensures that individual differences are taken care of. teacher-pupil interactions affected the performance of learners.

Mbozi stated that it is the responsibility of the teachers to provide an atmosphere which is conducive to learning by refraining from using abusive language, threatening and engaging in inappropriate relationships with pupils of the opposite sex. Mbozi further noted that pupils who were not secure and comfortable in the presence of their teachers tended to abscond and absent themselves from school.

Mudenda (October 2017), writes about Teachers' contributions towards a normal society. He notes that teachers are highly respected men and women who belong to the educational profession whose primary concern is their behavior in relation with the wider community and also their pupils. Mudenda observes that society expects teachers to practice personal virtues that are considered as being the norm. These include good manners, acceptable speech, responsibility, honesty, prudence, and friendliness. He also notes that teachers are the pioneers in the world of ideas and knowledge; hence they should be well qualified and widely read. Society sees teachers as professional experts in the field of education whose role is to nurture knowledge and skills which are relevant to the child's present and future welfare. Teachers play social and academic roles which always put them in the limelight of society and learners. Mulopo (2010), noted that the proponents of the humanistic paradigm propagated that, the individual has the freedom and capacity to reach self-learning and achieve self-development and is capable of self-directing as long as the environment is enabling. Mulopo further stated that the custodians of teaching and learning should take time to learn how their learners learn and take interest in them. The quality of educational delivery provided by the teacher places the learner at the center.

2.2.3 Home Factors

Chisanga (April 26th, 2018), notes that every aspect matters for child education. She quotes Cornwell Hakapya of the Citizens Environmental and Social Concerns (CESCo) who stated that children need a good environment as well as all necessary products for them to have

wellgrounded education. Collins (2007), stated that the home and child's family were cardinal to a pupil's academic performance. The source notes that the family and home is where norms and morals of society are derived from. Collins further noted that the family provides the basis for early stimulation

and experience in children. He also noted that what children become and how they perform at

school was dependent to a greater extent on the family. Desarollo (2007), indicated that the extent to which parents and family were actively involved in their family member's education had a positive influence on the child's achievement. Durijaiye (1976), observed that physical and psychological conditions of the home environment have an effect on children academically. Kabede (2015) and Masondo (2016), pointed out that learners coming from homes which are headed by themselves or their older siblings carried a burden of family responsibility much greater than that experienced by children from adult headed homes. Such burdens were considered developmentally inappropriate and often resulted in disruptions in education, leading to poor academic performance. Mudenda (October 11th, 2017), wrote on Parents Role in Career Guidance. He pointed out that committed parents take an interest in the education of their children at every level up to university. He said, engaging young people in discussions regarding their future careers gives parents and guardians insights into the particular courses that immediately catch their children's imagination and attention. This, he further said, makes it easy for parents to advise on the subjects which match the course the child is interested in. He further noted that this gives the pupil a sustainable source of stimulation and enjoyment in their learning process. Malawo (2018), wrote that parents will always be important in the lives of their children and noted that children never out-grow their own parents. Parents play a significant role throughout the life of their child. Good parents offer encouragement, love, care, comfort and guidance to their children. Malawo explained that parents were the biggest supporters of their children. They encourage them to fly high and aim for the sky, and to pick up the pieces when things do not work out. Parents are prepared to sacrifice for their children. She wrote this as a tribute to Winnie Mandela from the perspective of her daughter Zenani. Phillips (2011), indicated that child-family households were on the increase due to parental deaths. This was attributed to the HIV/AIDS pandemic which has led to the deaths of many parents leaving children without support and protection.

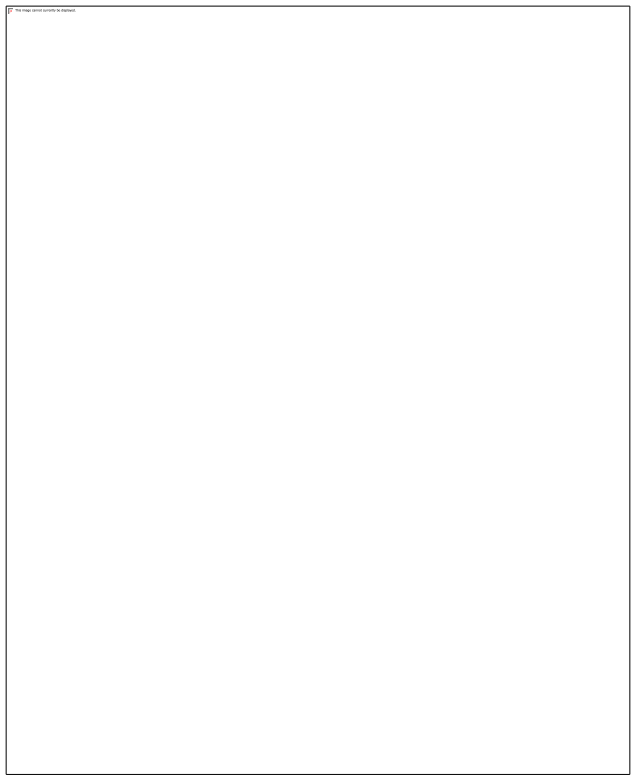
2.2.4 Pupil Factors

Malumo (March 3, 2018), notes that Zambia has one of the highest child marriage rates in the world with statistics indicating that 42% of the Zambian women between the age 20-24, were married before attaining the age of 18. The article reveals that child marriage violates the fundamental rights of the victims of the vice. The article further observes that poverty, religious beliefs, customary practices and, to an extent, inadequate legislative frameworks are some of the factors blamed for early marriages. Malumo further writes that child marriage compromises a girl's development as it results in early pregnancy, risks to health, poverty and interruption of education, which limits her opportunities for career and vocational advancement. Without education, victims of child marriage are at risk of being victims of gender based violence.

Mudenda (2018), wrote that a student who passes senior secondary school examinations with flying colours and is subsequently admitted into higher learning institution, is considered by society as one of the high fliers. He writes that those who obtain between 6 and 15 points in the examinations studied very hard and were focused and determined to succeed in their academic work. Such students, he said, deserved to go to college or university to pursue their dream careers. He further wrote that the families and friends of such students looked forward to the moment when they would witness their graduation. Mudenda explained that the panacea of the student's academic journey is self-discipline, which is vital for success and career development later in life. Mulubwa (2007), notes several factors that can contribute to poor academic performance including the fact that pupils have different academic capabilities. Some are gifted whilst others are slow learners or average learners. . Their contention was that the policy did not deter those readmitted girls from continuing with their sexual activities and most of them ended up becoming pregnant again. The young school mothers were very rude and disrespectful to teachers, who found it difficult to discipline them. Those young school mothers were negative role models to other girls. They even go to the extent of encouraging other girls to be involved in early sex. The worst part was that those young mothers neglected their children and contributed to the increased poverty in the families as they exerted more pressure on their parents who take care of those babies. They further explained that the re-entry policy was not serving its purpose as most of those young mothers either ended up failing or dropped-out before completing form 4. They recommended that if the policy was to be maintained then the Government should consider building separate schools for such learners. Kachemba (2018), reported a case on the arrest of

members of a youth Gang called Mahwindi which was said to be terrorizing residents. The Youths were said to be between the ages 12 and 20. Their atrocities were said to include harassing transport seekers, assaulting of hapless residents, stealing, and generally disturbing the peace of the residents in various locations. The Divisional Criminal Investigations Officer is reported to have advised Mahwindi to live upright lives as the future of the nation lay in their hands. The nabbed culprits were said to be appearing in the courts of law to answer charges of their crimes. Herald (2018), reports that Harare had other youth Gangs like Chipangano, marauding in most of Harare Townships including Mbare. CID reports that the history of youth gangs on Mbare dates back to 1980. The current groups were formed in 2015, though their prominence came to the fore in December 2017. Daily News a Daily Mail Reporter in a follow up edition wrote that the Mahwindi Boys pleaded with the Harare Magistrate Court to grant them bail as they were pupils who were now behind their school work. The Herald of 26th April, reported that those teen gangs were being supplied with drugs and had access to strong alcohol. It stated that poor parenting was one of the causes of the emergence of teen gangs. Kawanga (2018), states that a youth advocate organization Revolution seeks to undertake the fight against examination malpractices. They note that it is not only a source of corruption but a threat to the country's education system. The organization revealed that the scourge was not only in the buying of examination question papers but also in as cell phones. They further explained that examination leakages were not only a crime, but an erosion of the morality and integrity of the education system which ultimately jeopardizes the well-being of future generations. The organization also revealed that the research they conducted on the issue revealed that low-self-esteem was one of the reasons why some students were involved in examination malpractices; that those students create an enabling environment for the learners and ensures that individual differences are ironed out. Osewa (2005), pointed at lack of study materials as a factor that contributes to poor pupil academic performance. The author noted that many students failed their school certificate examinations or came out with unsatisfactory results because of this concern. The source further points out that those pupils who have access to adequate study materials and are more focused are more likely to excel than those who lack the materials. Osewa (2005), also attributed poor pupil academic performance to laziness, sluggishness, time wasting, playing, sleeping and leaving study to the last minute and rushing to study on the eve of the examinations. The source said that the behavior of such students indicates that they were planning to fail, and

that if they ever managed to pass at all they would end up with an average mark. The Zambia Daily Mail (2018), Opinion column quoted the former United Nations Secretary General Mr. Kofi Annan who said “Knowledge is Power, Information is Liberating; Education is the premise of progress in every society and family.” The column also quoted Nelson Mandela who said, “Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world”. The column quoted the former Minister for General Education who explained that while Government is doing a commendable job in providing an opportunity for more Zimbabweans to access education, citizens should rise to the occasion to utilize such opportunities if they are to access positions in public office. The Minister noted that in 2016 many people who wished to be considered as candidates for both parliamentary and local government seats failed to do so because they did not have a “O” level certificate which is a minimum requirement according to the constitution of the country.



2.2.5 Gaps in Literature

Most Literature reviewed on school factors pointed out laissez-faire school managements and pupil-teacher ratio as affecting pupil academic performance. This literature was on studies done

outside Zimbabwe. Mbozi (2008), did similar studies at basic school level. There was little or no 15 schools scenario. Munde and Tamue (2000), did a study on the quality of educational facilities as regards students academic performance in Kenya. Apart from newspaper reports, there seemed to be little or no information on how the quality of educational facilities at a school affects pupil academic performance in Zimbabwe. On the teacher factors, newspaper reports identify factors such as their non involvement in empirical subject matter research and failure to motivate learners by being good role models. Kachemba (2018), wrote on the escalation of involvement of pupils in gang culture at the expense of their education. This is a relatively new phenomenon and very little information about it has been documented. Mutemba (October 24th 2018), brought out the issue of examination leakages in 2018 for Grades 7 Though examination malpractices have been experienced for over a decade, little or no studies have been undertaken to assess its impact on pupil academic performance. The study established the effect of school attributes, home factors, teacher and pupil factors on the pupil's state of mind. With these factors in mind, the study sought to bridge the gap between the pupils' state of mind and their academic performance in urban secondary schools.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

CHAPTER THREE

3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the research methodology that was used in the study. The chapter highlights the main research methodological components employed, which are; the research paradigm, research approach, research design, population, sample and sampling procedure, data collection instruments, credibility and trustworthiness of the collected data, validity and reliability of questionnaires, data collection procedures and data analysis methods. It also

presents at the ethical norms that were observed in this study.

3.2 Research paradigm

The term paradigm originated from the Greek word “paradeigma” which means “pattern” and was first used by Kuhn (1962) to denote a conceptual framework shared by a community of scientists which provided them a convenient model for examining problems and finding solutions. A research paradigm is therefore, defined as an integrated cluster of substantive concepts, variables and problems attached with corresponding methodological approaches and tools (Kuhn, 1962). A scientific research paradigm, in its most basic sense of the word, is a framework containing all of the commonly accepted views about a subject, a structure of what direction research should take, and how it should be performed (Kuhn, 1962). 2011). These different ways of seeing the world have contradictory effects (repercussion) in most academic areas; yet, none of them is considered superior . (Muijs, 2011). This shows that paradigms are opposing worldviews or belief systems that are a reflection of, and guide the decisions that researchers make (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). Various scholars such as Guba and Lincoln (1994) use the terms “scientific” and “naturalistic” and Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998) adopted the terms “positivist” and “constructivist” to distinguish the degree of separateness between paradigm positions and between paradigm and method. For example, a quantitative approach implies the holding of positivist paradigm beliefs whereas a qualitative approach implies the holding of beliefs associated with constructivist paradigm (Creswell, 2003). Both worldviews are appropriate for certain purposes and insufficient or overly complex for other purposes. A person may also change his or her view depending on the situation where he or she lives (Bryman, 2004). The present study used elements from both views and considered them as complementary. A paradigm consists of four parts, namely; ontology, epistemology, methodology and methods. Ontology is concerned with the nature of existence (reality) which is considered as the departure point of all research (Grix, 2004). Epistemology comes from the Greek word “epistēmê”, which refers to knowledge (Haralambos & Holborn, 2008). Epistemology deals with the nature of knowledge (Crotty, 1998; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). The epistemological assumption stresses the importance of interaction and relationship of the researcher to what is being researched. In the case of the mixed methods study, researchers should interact with the study participants (Bryman, 2004). For the success of the research study, the researcher tries to minimize the “distance” or “objective separateness” between himself or herself and those being

researched (Guba & Lincoln, 1988). It was noted by Creswell (2003) that prolonged time in the field by the researcher minimizes the distance as the researcher's observational role shifts from that of an "outsider" to that of an "insider" during his or her stay in the field. Thus, the assumption of epistemology is that knowledge is gained through specific approaches which take into account the differences between the human world and the objects of natural sciences, and therefore, require the social scientist to understand the subjective meaning of social action (Bryman, 2004).

From the above mentioned distinctions about reality and the relationship between the researcher and the researched being (social actors) emerges the methodological assumption. A research paradigm also relates to methodology which is a research strategy that transforms ontological and epistemological principles into guidelines that show how a research process is conducted. For example, the researcher in a mixed methods approach works out the strategy to conceptualize the entire research process in order to get to know reality (Creswell, 1998; Muijs, 2011). Epistemology and methodology are intimately related; the former involves the philosophy of how we come to know the world and the latter involves the practice. Thus, a researcher's methodological approach underpinned by, and reflecting specific ontological and epistemological assumptions, represents a choice of approach and research methods adopted in a given study.

The relationship between ontology and epistemology is fundamental. Ontology and epistemology can be considered as the foundations upon which research is built (Grix, 2004). It is the researcher's ontological and

epistemological assumptions that inform the choice of methodology and methods of research. For Cohen et al. (2003) methods are the range of approaches used in educational research to gather data which are to be used as a basis for inference and interpretation. Methodology is defined as the strategy, an action plan that justifies the use and choices of certain techniques (Crotty, 1998). This implies that methods of enquiry are the reflections of the researcher's assumptions about reality (ontology) and the nature of knowledge (epistemology). Research activity is carried out along the ontological question (the structure and type of truth and, consequently, the reality at hand that can be recognized and known about it by the researcher), epistemological (the connection between the knower or could-be knower and what could be known) and methodological assumptions or perspectives (the procedural and methodological issues regarding

discovering whatever the researcher wants to know) to reach to its sound conclusion (Bryman, 2004; Morgan, 2007;

Haralambos & Holborn, 2008; Cohen, et al., 2011). The ontological issue addresses the nature of reality that is internal or external to the researcher. Reality is constructed by individuals involved in the research situation (Creswell, 2003). This means that ontology assumes that reality is subjective and it is indirectly constructed, based on individual conceptualizations and interpretations. Taking into account research approach such as mixed methods, Bryman (2004) sees this approach being influenced by ontological orientation; whether social reality is viewed as external and objective or as constantly shifting dependent on individual creation.

Ontological questions are concerned with the nature of social entities that are considered as objective entities which have a reality external to social actors or can be considered as social constructions built up from the perceptions and actions of social actors (Bryman, 2004). The ontological view point stresses the existence of multiple realities which are referred to as objectivism and constructionism. From an ontological perspective, it is the task of the researcher to get into contact with other social actors to get to know the reality at hand. For the present study, sampled population who partook in this study are social actors in education who create and interpret their own meaning of factors affecting academic performance of Prince Edwards secondary school. The academic performance of Prince Edwards secondary school, unique and cannot be generalized to other contexts. The present study identified the factors that influence academic performance of learners in the Harare Northern Region. The researcher believes that participants can give diverse interpretations to the academic performance of learners at Prince Edward secondary school in Harare region, depending on how they perceived it. From an ontological perspective, multiple realities exist such as the reality of the researcher, the reality of individuals being researched and that of the researcher interpreting a study. The researcher relied on multiple measures to establish reality. A study by Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) points out that the nature of social phenomena is only interpreted through senses and experiences resulting from different perspectives. Ontology brings to the fore, the reasons why researchers need knowledge as it stipulates the nature of reality as conceptualized by the researcher (Bryman, 2004).

3.2.1 Positivist paradigm

Positivism emerged as a philosophical paradigm in the 19th century with Auguste Comte's

rejection of metaphysics and his assertion that only scientific knowledge can reveal the truth about reality (Descartes, 1998). For Comte, observation and reason are the best means of understanding human behaviour. True knowledge is based on experience of senses and can be obtained by observation and experiment (Haralambos & Holborn, 2008). It was later formally established as the dominant scientific method in the early part of the 20th century by members of the Vienna Circle who sought to construct a unified scientific world-conception that rejects the use of philosophy as a means of learning about the true nature of reality. Unfortunately, it failed as a coherent philosophy of science because of a critical inconsistency between its theory of “reality” and its theory of “knowledge.” (Neurath, 1999).

Positivism adopted Hume’s theory of the nature of reality, namely philosophical ontology. L.Hume(1998) believed that reality consists of atomistic (micro-level) and independent events. Hume advocates the use of the senses to generate knowledge about reality. He thought that philosophical and logical reasoning could lead people to “see” non-existing Links between events occurring simultaneously (Haralambos & Holborn, 2008). However, positivism also adopted Descartes’ epistemology. Descartes believes that reason is the best way to generate knowledge about reality. His deductive method implies that events are ordered and interconnected, and therefore reality is ordered and deductible. The application of critical judgment in investigating multiple research questions using multiple measures, samples, designs, and analyses are necessary to permit a convergence on a valid understanding of a phenomenon (Creswell, 2003). Positivism is linked to quantitative research approach (Mertens, 2015). For Seale (2000), positivist researchers are committed to value neutrality, statistical measurement, quantifiable elements and observable events to establish causal laws. Positivist researchers believe in the possibility of establishing cause-effect relationship, as they are after regularities to make predictions and establish scientific laws (Dammak, 2015). This implies that positivist researchers use scientific methods or measurement-oriented methodologies such as questionnaire to collect numerical data that are analyzed statistically. The quantitative approach employs pre-determined data collection methods to collect numerical data. The findings lead to the identification of statistical trends, averages and frequencies or correlations. The purpose of positivist researchers is to quantify a research problem, to measure and count issues, and finally to generalize findings to the broader population (Hennink, Hutter & Bailey, 2011).

3.2.1.1 Ontology and Epistemology

Guba and Lincoln (1994) are of the view that an apprehendable reality is assumed to exist, driven by immutable natural laws and mechanisms (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). For Guba and Lincoln (1994), social reality is external to individuals. Cohen et al. (2003) concur with Guba and Lincoln (1994) that objects exist independently and have no dependence on the knower. Similarly, Pring (2000) defines realism as the view that reality is there, a world, which exists independently of the perceiver or researcher as well as the world which is to be discovered. Based on the above statements, one can draw a clear demarcation between the knower and the subject known to the knower. Epistemologically, positivists hold a dualist as well as an objectivist view. For Creswell (2009), being objectivist is a fundamental aspect of any competent of inquiry. Positivists are interested in facts and hold that research should be value - free.

3.2.1.2 Methodology

Positivist methodology aims to explain the cause and effect relationship of events (Creswell, 2009). For Creswell (2009), experimental designs appear to provide an umbrella to explain this causal relationship. Thus, questions and hypotheses are tested and verified by experiments. Positivist researchers should seek a cause – effect relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable.

3.2.1.3 Methods

Creswell (2009) maintains that the positivist researcher uses data collection methods to collect quantitative, numerical data that can be tabulated and analysed statistically. To ensure the quality of data collection instruments, positivist researchers use validity and reliability to evaluate the quality of a positivist research. Research acquired from this perspective is socially constructed rather than objectively determined and perceived (Carson et al. 2001).

3.3.2 Epistemology

The position of interpretivism in relation to epistemology is that the researcher is cocreating and sharing knowledge with the sampled population, as well as creating relationships to further an understanding of different points of view (Bassey, (n.d). cited in Pollard, 2002). The research carried out is subjective view, where results can be influenced by the opinions of the researcher. Carson et al. (2001) assert that interpretivist researchers avoid rigid structural frameworks such as those employed in positivist research. They adopt a more personal and flexible research structure which is receptive to capturing meanings in human interaction and makes sense of what is perceived as reality (Carson et al., 2001; Black, 2006). Interpretivism acknowledges the

interaction and interdependence between the researcher and his or her informants. This reflects that the interpretivist researcher enters the field with some sort of prior insight of the research context but assumes that this is insufficient in developing a fixed research design due to complex, multiple and unpredictable nature of what is perceived as reality (Creswell, 1998). Thus, the researcher remains open to new knowledge throughout the study and lets it develop with the help of informants. The use of such an emergent and collaborative approach is consistent with the interpretivist belief that humans have the ability to adapt, and that no one can gain prior knowledge of time and context-bound social realities (Guba & Lincoln, 1998). Interpretivist researchers adhere to the subjectivist view where subjective meaning and subjective interpretations have great importance (Pring, 2000). The object cannot be adequately described apart from the subject, nor can the subject be adequately described apart from the object. Therefore, the relationship between the knower and the subject to be known is not of detachment, but rather of involvement and interaction (Crotty, 1998; Guba & Lincoln, 1998; Dammak, 2015). This implies that according to interpretivism, the world is socially constructed, that is through interaction of individuals. It further implies that the natural and social worlds are not distinct but intertwined and researchers are part of that social reality and are not detached from the subjects under investigation (Dammak, 2015).

3.3.3 Methodology

Interpretivist researchers use various methodologies such as case studies, phenomenology and ethnography to gather data. In qualitative research, researchers employ a wide range of interconnected interpretive methods, seeking better ways to make more understandable the worlds of experiences they have studied (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). Interpretivist methodology aims at examining and understanding phenomena inductively. For Cohen et al. (2003), interpretivist researchers believe that the social world can only be understood from the standpoint of the individuals who are part of the on-going action being investigated. It should be understood that interpretive research is an interactive process by the researcher and the people in the particular setting (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). Contrary to the positivist paradigm, researchers are not detached from the situation under study, but see themselves as participants in the situation they are studying (Creswell, 1998). Due to this involvement of interpretivist researchers in real life situation, they are able to provide thick descriptions of the situation under study (Holliday, 2007). The goal of interpretivist research is to understand and interpret the meanings in human

behaviour rather than to generalize and predict causes and effects, (Pring, 2000). For an interpretivist researcher, it is important to understand motives, meanings, reasons and other subjective experiences which are time and context bound (Pring, 2000). Unlike the positivist who has no direct access to the real world, the interpretivist has direct access to the real world. Unlike the positivist who has a single external reality, the interpretivist has no single, but multiple realities. The interpretivist has multiple realities because his/ her goal is to understand and interpret the meanings in human behavior rather than to generalize and predict causes and effects (Pring, 2000).

Methods

Contrary to positivists who rely on randomization, interpretivists use the purposeful sampling technique and select individuals and sites that are information rich (McMillan, & Schumacher, 2001; Creswell, 2008). They rely on various methods such as, amongst others, interviews and focus group discussions to collect qualitative data. The purpose of interpretive research influences the methods of data collection that the researcher should employ, that enable the researcher to build a relationship of trust with the subjects, for example, a participant observer who opts for prolonged engagement in natural settings builds close relationships with their subjects. An interpretivist researcher may use introspective methods to enable him/ her to achieve deeper understanding of the phenomenon under his/ her interrogation, as well as perceptions of the subject matter being studied (Bryman, 2004). Despite the fact that interpretivism has its own weaknesses, for example, small sample size, its strengths come from its naturalistic approach, relying on human communication. The interpretivist researcher studies people's lived experiences which occur in a specific historical and social context (Hennink, Hutter & Bailey, 2011). Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2001) are of the view that interpretivism accommodates human change over time and does not make the same type of generalizability claims as the positivists.

Data collected in interpretive research is 'rich' data, which is usually qualitative, although quantitative data can be collected as well. Bassey (n.d.) cited in Pollard (2002) says, to an interpretive researcher, the purpose of research is to describe and interpret the phenomenon of the world to get shared meaning with others. Interpretive researchers aim to interpret their results and detail the meaning to people, rather than just understanding what they have researched. Hennink, Hutter and Bailey (2011) concur with Bassey (n.d.) cited in Pollard (2002) as they say

that the purpose of interpretivist researcher is to gain understanding of the phenomenon being investigated.

3.4 Pragmatist paradigm

Pragmatists believe that reality is constantly re-negotiated, debated and interpreted to solve the problem under investigation (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2002). Pragmatism is a deconstructive paradigm that advocates the use of mixed methods in research. It avoids the contentious issues of truth and reality and focuses instead on what works as the truth regarding the research questions under investigation (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2002). The pragmatic paradigm emerged from “paradigm wars” in which researchers belonged to two distinct camps; that is interpretivism and positivism (Armitage, 2005). The positivist researchers’ belief is that the social world consists of concrete and unchangeable reality which can be quantified objectively; whereas, the interpretive researchers oppose the positivist belief of reality; and argue instead, that reality is socially constructed by humans and can be changed and understood subjectively (Corbetta, 2003; Marcon & Gopal, 2005; Kroeze, 2012). From the paradigm wars emerged the pragmatic paradigm as a “third way” in response to the emergence of mixed methods and mixed model design (Armitage, 2005). It is derived from the writings of Peirce, Dewey and James in the 19th and early 20th centuries and Rorty in the late 20th century (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2002).

Based on the above explanation, it appears that pragmatism is neither positivist nor interpretivist; and neither value free nor value laden; but a combination of both to address social real-life issues (Creswell, 2009). Thus, its philosophical assumption is that choosing between one position is unrealistic in practice as research is influenced by the nature of the research questions. It is argued that the most important determinant of which position to adopt are the research questions (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2011). The present study adopted mixed methods to examine the factors that influence the academic performance of form 4 learners, to better understanding the problem. qualitative and quantitative research methods. Such paradigm has been advocated by a number of mixed methods researchers (e.g. Maxcy, 2003; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Morgan, 2007). Such paradigm has been identified as pragmatic paradigm (Morgan, 2007). Although quantitative and qualitative methods are different, and no one approach is superior to the other, it was ideal to combine these methods in the present study. Studies (e.g. Maxcy, 2003; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Morgan, 2007; Feilzer, 2010) indicate that pragmatism has

gained considerable support as a stance for mixed methods researchers. It is oriented 'toward solving practical problems in the "real world" rather than on assumptions about the nature of knowledge (Armitage, 2005; Feilzer, 2010). The pragmatic approach involves collecting data concurrently using measures drawn from The above discussions have justified the use of the pragmatic paradigm to best address the research questions of the present study. The present study combined the quantitative and qualitative approaches to collect data concurrently. The pragmatic paradigm was used in the present study to investigate the research problem.

3.5 Research approach

Research approach refers to the approaches (either qualitative or quantitative or mixed methods) taken in designing, collecting, organizing, analyzing and interpreting findings of a research study (Bryman, 2004). Qualitative research is a naturalistic approach in which phenomena are studied in their natural settings (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001, Patton, 2002). A qualitative researcher seeks an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon and data are inductively analyzed (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2006). In the quantitative approach, a researcher collects numerical data to explain a particular phenomenon and data are statistically analyzed (Muijs, 2011). This study followed a mixed methods approach in order to better understand the research problem. Given the nature of the research problem, the mixed methods approach was deemed appropriate for the current study. The mixed methods research is a methodology for conducting research that involves collecting, analyzing and integrating quantitative (e.g., experiments, surveys) and qualitative (e.g., focus groups, interviews) research (Creswell, 2008; Mertens, 2015). This approach to research is used to provide a better understanding of the research problem being investigated (Creswell, 2008). The mixed methods approach includes both qualitative and quantitative features in the design, data collection, and analysis (Mertens, 2015). Its significance is that the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches in combination provides answers to critical research questions of a qualitative and quantitative nature. Simply put, the mixed methods approach focuses on collecting, analyzing and mixing both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or series of studies (Mertens, 2015). Mixed methods is defined as research in which the investigator collects, analyses, mixes, and draws inferences from both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or a program of inquiry (Creswell & Plano- Clark, 2007). It is believed that the use quantitative and qualitative approaches in combination provides a better understanding of research problems than either

approach alone (Creswell, 2003). Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) also argue that the mixed methods approach complements the strengths of a single design, to overcome the weaknesses of a single design and to address a question at different levels. It is for this reason that the present study was designed to use combinations of methods which yield both qualitative and quantitative data. Multiple methods that included questionnaires with open and closed items, semistructured interviews and focus group discussions were used to collect both quantitative and qualitative data concurrently. For the present study, the researcher collected both quantitative and qualitative data concurrently to answer research questions and to gain understanding on the phenomenon of interest. Numerical data were collected through questionnaires with closed items, while non-numerical data were collected through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. Collecting numerical and non-numerical data were more appropriate to explain factors that influence the academic performance of form 4 learners at Prince Edward secondary school in Harare. Briefly, the present researcher collected numerical and non-numerical (visual) data to include diverse data in order to enrich the validity, reliability and credibility of the study. Non-numerical data were analyzed inductively, while numerical data were analyzed by using cross tables. By mixing both quantitative and qualitative research and data, the researcher gained both breadth and depth of understanding. The researcher triangulated data collected by means of multiple methods. The use of triangulation allowed the researcher to identify aspects of a phenomenon more accurately by approaching them from different vantage points using different methods and techniques (Creswell, 2008).

3.6 Research design

A research design is defined as a strategic plan or a logical arrangement undertaken in research that leads the research activity to its sound conclusion (Patton, 2002; Mushaandja, 2006; Kumar 2011). Similarly, Iimene (2015) says that a research design is an overall strategy that is undertaken by the researcher to integrate the different components of the study in a coherent and logical manner, to effectively address the research questions. Simply put, a research design is the plan (blueprint), an overall structure for the procedures the researcher follows, the data collection instruments, collection and analysis of data. The researcher used the concurrent triangulation design to seek an understanding of factors influencing the academic performance of form 4 learners through triangulating data from multiple methods. The triangulation design, sometimes referred to as the convergent design, is described as a design that involves the

collection of different but complementary data on the same phenomena (Edmonds & Kennedy, 2013). Thus, triangulation design is used for the converging and subsequent interpretation of quantitative and qualitative data. For this study, the concurrent triangulation design was used to enable the researcher to validate and confirm quantitative results collected through closed questionnaire items with qualitative findings collected through open-ended questionnaire items, interviews and focused group discussions. This provided a better understanding of the factors that influence academic performance of form 4 learners at Prince Edward secondary school in Harare region . The purpose of using the concurrent triangulation design was to bring together the differing strengths and weaknesses of both quantitative (large sample size, generalization) and qualitative (small sample size, details and in-depth insights) methods to produce information and to answer research questions in a single study (Muijs, 2011; Mertens, 2015).

3.7 Population

Population refers to the group of cases (people) with similar characteristics (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001). It can also refer to a set of similar events or cases which are of interest for the research problem or question. The population of this study consisted of all the form 4 teachers in the four schools (n=4), all the four Principals, all the form 4 learners ,in the four schools, and parents (n=80) whose children studied in the four schools.

3.8 Sample and sampling procedure

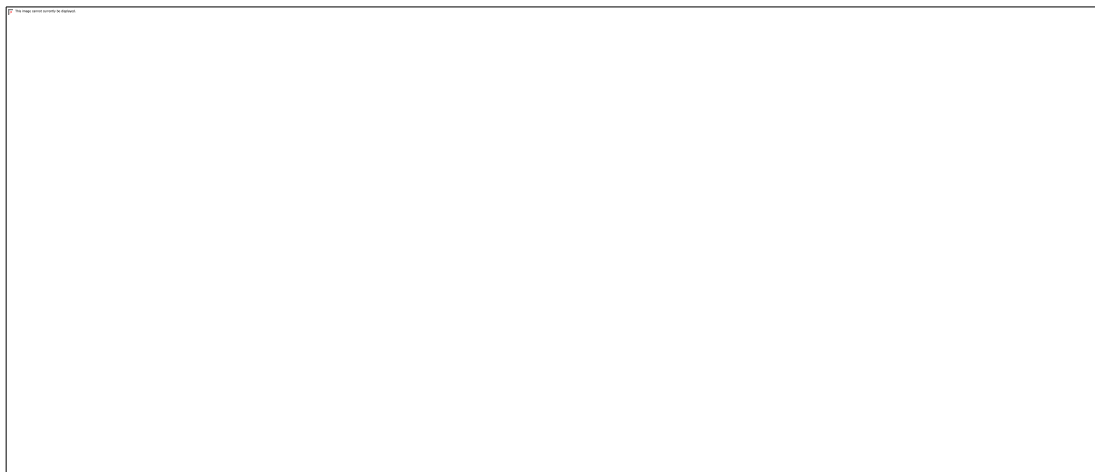
A sample can be defined as a sub-group of people or cases taken from a large population studied to get information (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001). It was impossible and, indeed, not necessary for the researcher to study the factors raised in the literature in the entire population. For Taylor and Bogdan (2015), the researcher's own purpose determines which settings and groups will be the most interesting and yield the most insights. The researcher chose who to study, where and why. Four senior secondary schools were purposively selected based on their pass rates. Given that the total number of senior secondary schools in the Harare Region is 35, the researcher identified 4 schools which are slightly more than the 20 percent recommended in literature (e.g. Van Dalen, 2000), two with good passes and two with poor passes for comparative purposes. The sample of the study consisted of all the 4 principals of the selected schools, all the form 4 learners ,teachers (n=4); 32 (20%) learners who studied "O" level selected through simple random sampling, and finally, 2 parents from each school selected through the reputational approach. It was hoped that the sampled participants in this study would be aware of

factors which inspire and contribute to learners' academic performance, because the school exists in their environment. Therefore, as stakeholders, they might have experienced factors which influence the academic performance of "O" level learners in Harare Region.

3.9 Data collection instruments

Data collection instruments are measurement devices such as survey, test, questionnaire and interview (Koskei, Tonui & Simiyu, 2015) that are used to measure a given phenomenon. Researchers choose which type of instruments to use based on the research questions (Koskei, Tonui & Simiyu, 2015). Data collection instruments are tools used to collect data (Oso & Onen, 2008). The common tools are the questionnaire and interviews. The researcher for the present study found the use of a questionnaire with open and closed items, semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs) as the ideal data collection techniques to provide quantitative and qualitative data on the matter being investigated. The adoption of the pragmatic approach in this study meant that data were collected from form 4 learners, "O" level teachers and principals in the selected secondary schools. Below is the detailed description of the data collection instruments that were used.

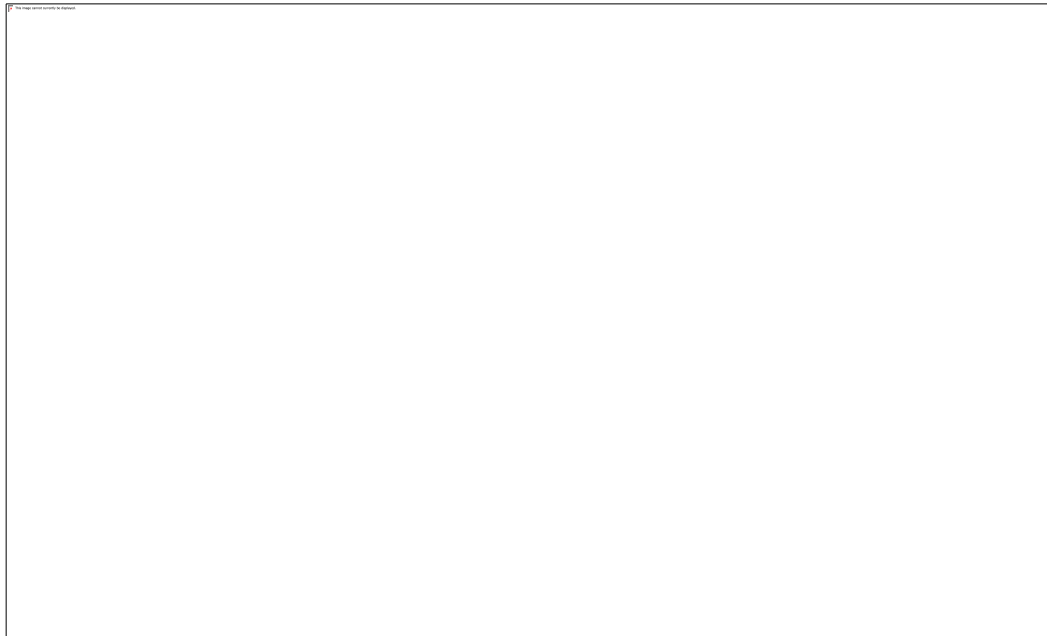
3.9.1 Questionnaires



In the present study, the researcher used questionnaires with open and closed items as data collection instruments. The questionnaires were administered to principal "O" teachers regarding the factors that influence academic performance of "O" level pupils in Harare region . It was appropriate to use the questionnaire to identify factors that influence form 4 learners' academic performance in in Harare Region, and to determine the presence of the influential factors. The questionnaire as a research tool satisfies very precise objectives (Bryman, 2004).

The study followed mixed methods approach which includes both qualitative and quantitative features in the design. The research approach determined the data collection instruments. Questionnaires were preferred to collect quantitative data from the population. Questionnaires were found useful in this study were distributed to the sampled population to collect quantitative data.

Questionnaires were identical that each participant received the identical set of questions. More importantly, questionnaires permit respondents time to consider their responses carefully without interference of the interviewer. The questionnaires were used to collect quantitative data from the large population and to save time as time for collecting data was limited. Self-administered questionnaires were distributed to the targeted sample who was principals and teachers. The questionnaire for the principals and teachers for form 4 consisted of four parts. These were Part A - demographic information, Part B - academic information, Part C - open-ended items and Part D - closed items on teacher-related, home-related and learner-related factors that influence academic performance of form 4 learners in Harare region. The first two parts (Part A and B) sought demographic information of age, gender and working experience while Parts C and D contained questions on home-related, teacher-related and learner-related factors. The four point Like type response format was adopted in Part B thus:

A large empty rectangular box with a thin black border, occupying the lower half of the page. It appears to be a placeholder for a figure, table, or additional text related to the research methodology described above.

SA

-

Strongly Agree	5%	A
Agree	38.33%	NS
Disagree	21.67%	SD
Strongly Disagree	35%	

3.9.2 Interview schedule

Interview is a person-to-person verbal communication where one person asked questions intended to elicit information (Oso & Onen, 2008). Interviewing is a primary way of collecting data in qualitative research to direct the participant in responding to a specific research question (Stuckey, 2013). It is a two-way communication initiated by the interviewer with a particular purpose to obtain in-depth information or data pertaining to the research objectives. Interview, as one of the common ways of data collection techniques, provides factual information about the phenomenon under investigation (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2003). Three major types of interviews are narrative interviews, structured interviews and semi-structured interviews (Stuckey, 2013). Their differences are described below.

3.9.2.1 Narrative Interviews

Narrative Interviews are stories that are based on the unfolding of events or actions from the perspective of a participant's life experience (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). Narrative Interviews are unstructured and typically begin with a wide open-ended question about a participant's experience, where the participant is rarely interrupted in the telling of his or her story (Stuckey, 2013). In narrative Interviews, researchers encourage participants to tell their story. The benefit of narrative interviews is that the participant guides the interview and may tell and provide information that could not have been predicted (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2006; Stuckey,

2013).

3.9.2.2 Structured interviews

Structured interviews can be used to ask questions in a specific and predetermined order with a limited number of response categories (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2006). This shows that structured interviews have sequential and defined order in the questioning process (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2006). The interview is called structured interview because the researcher follows a specific set of questions in a predetermined order to elicit data on participants' thoughts, beliefs and feelings about a topic under investigation (Crabtree & Miller, 1999). This interview technique is appropriate to use when interview requires participant to give a response to each ordered question, which are often shorter in nature (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2006). By using this interview technique, researchers ask sequential set of same questions for consistency. A structured interview is helpful when the researcher knows much about the topic and creates the questions in a survey-like format with open-ended questions (Johnson & Christenson, 2010). This implies that in structured interviews the questions are routinely asked to elicit research data.

3.9.2.3 Semi-structured Interviews

Semi-structured interview is the most commonly type of interviews used in qualitative research (Stuckey, 2013). The researcher sets the outline for the topics covered, but the interviewee's responses determine the way in which the interview is directed (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2006). In general, the interviewer has an interview guide to follow, which is based on the research questions (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2006; Stuckey, 2013). For the present study, semi-structured interviews, using an interview guide, were used to collect data. It is called semi-structured because discussions may diverge from the interview guide, which can be more interesting than the initial question that is asked. The participant does not need to answer the questions in order as in the case of structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews thus, allow questions to be prepared ahead of time, which allows the interviewer to be prepared, yet gives the participant freedom to express views with his / her own words (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2006; Stuckey, 2013). Despite the fact that each of these three types of interviews can be used in qualitative research to collect qualitative data, the researcher found semi-structured interviews most appropriate for the present study to understand factors that influence academic performance

of form 4 learners. It is an appropriate instrument to use when little is known about the research topic, for instance, factors that influence academic performance of "O" level pupils. It was therefore, found very appropriate because it is open and allows participants to give answers in their own words. For this study, an interview guide or schedule which contained predetermined questions was used to gather research data. The pre-determined questions enabled the researcher to probe for more information to

corroborate and validate issues raised in the focus group discussions (FGDs). Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with parents (n=8) as they did not take part in the focus group discussions (FGDs) and questionnaire. This reflects that each of the selected secondary schools was represented by parents (n=2) selected through the reputational approach. The present study used semi-structured interviews to obtain in-depth information from participants who were parents of form 4 learners. Semistructured interviews as data collection instruments were utilized to understand factors that are most relevant to poor academic performance of form 4 learners in the Harare Region, Namibia. The interview schedule helped the present researcher to get required information on the school, teachers, learners and home-related factors and to understand how these positively or negatively influence the academic performance of pupils. For mutual understanding and acceptance, the participants were informed about the purpose of the interview. The advantage of the semi-structured interviews as a specialized form of communication, in which people interact for a purpose, is that they allow maximum opportunity for free expression by the respondents (Fakude, 2012). Free expression of ideas prevailed during the interview session and allowed the researcher to clarify interview questions. In an interview, the interviewer is present to observe nonverbal behavior as well as to assess the validity of the respondents' answers (Struwig & Stead, 2007). For the present study, in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted complement data collected through questionnaire items. The use of in-depth qualitative interviews was necessary to examine the research topic thoroughly and to tap into the rich contextual meanings of the participants' responses. Semi-structured interview questions addressed the major factors related to poor academic performance of learners. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) stress the importance of examining data from more than one source as this would enable the researcher to triangulate qualitative research data. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) believe that multi methods data insights gained from individual sources can be used to complement and enrich the credibility of

the study.

3.9.3 Focus group discussions (FGDs)

Focus group is defined as a group of individuals selected and assembled by researchers to discuss and comment on, from personal experience, the topic that is the subject of the research (Morgan, 2007). Morgan (2007) is of the belief that focus group discussions rely on interaction within the group, based on topics that are supplied by the researcher. Its key characteristics are the insight and data produced by the interaction between participants. Based on the explanation above, focus group discussions involve organized discussions with selected groups of individuals to gain information about their views and experiences of a topic. Focus group discussion is an interaction between the researcher and participants to generate data. A focus group discussion is a small-group discussion guided by a trained leader (Bell, 2010). It is a good way to gather people from similar backgrounds or experiences to discuss a specific topic of interest (Bell, 2010). It is a form of qualitative research consisting of interviews in which a group of people are asked about their perceptions, opinions, beliefs and attitudes towards a phenomenon under investigation (Hitchcock & Hughes, 2013). The purpose of focus group discussions in research is to draw upon respondents' attitudes, feelings, beliefs, experiences and reactions in a way in which it would not be feasible using other methods, for example observation, one

on-one interviews or questionnaire surveys (Hitchcock & Hughes, 2013). A focus group discussion enables the researcher to gain a lot of information in a shorter period of time as the researcher follows an interview guide to solicit information. Researchers engage in discussions with the focus group participants in an interactive setting which encourages them to discuss their thoughts freely with the researcher. The open and free discussions generate ideas and can provide a wealth of information for the study (Hitchcock & Hughes, 2013). Another benefit is that focus group

discussion elicits information in a way which allows researchers to find out why an issue is salient, as well as what is salient about it (Morgan, 2007). As a result, the gap between what people say and what they do can be better understood (Hitchcock & Hughes, 2013). If multiple understandings and meanings are revealed by participants, multiple explanations of their behavior and attitudes will be more readily articulated (Hitchcock & Hughes, 2013). If a group works well, trust develops and the group may explore solutions to a particular problem as a unit

(Hitchcock & Hughes, 2013). The interviewer has to allow participants to talk to each other, ask questions and express doubts and opinions, while having very little control over the interaction other than generally keeping participants focused on the topic. By its nature, focus group discussion is open-ended and cannot be entirely predetermined (Morgan, 2007). Although focus group discussions have many advantages, as with all research methods, they have limitations as well. Some of the limitations can be overcome by careful planning and moderating, but others are unavoidable and peculiar to this approach. For example, the researcher has less control over the data produced (Morgan, 2007) than in either quantitative studies or one-on-one interviewing. Focus groups can also be intimidating at times, especially for shy members. It can be difficult to assemble. It may not be easy to get a representative sample and focus group discussions may discourage certain people from participating, especially those who have communication problems or have special needs. It may discourage some participants from trusting others with sensitive or personal information. Finally, focus group discussion is not fully confidential or anonymous, because the material is shared with others in the group (Hitchcock & Hughes, 2013). Despite its limitations, the researcher for the present study found focus group discussions one of the most appropriate data collection techniques for this study. A fact that the researcher collects data from the large group at once to understand the matter studied made focus group discussions appealing to the present study. Thus, focus group discussions were used to collect data from the Grade 12 learners studied English Language in the four selected secondary schools. The duration of focus group sessions recommended in literature one to two hours (Hitchcock & Hughes, 2013). It was for this reason that the researcher for the present study conducted his focus group discussions from 15

00 to 1600 in the afternoon in all the sites. The researcher used his experience in the Harare secondary education system to make appointments to conduct focus group discussion sessions on Wednesdays afternoon between 1500 and 1600 during which all form 4 were relatively free. This arrangement was guided by the fact that on Wednesday afternoons, secondary learners engaged in extra-mural programmes, so the arrangement had no negative effects on the academic engagement of learners concerned. This arrangement was also made in compliance with the terms and conditions of the approval letter from the Ministry of Education Directorate, which stipulated that permission was duly granted to visit schools of my choice in the Harare Region and carry out research under the following conditions

:□ I had to make appointments well in advance with the concerned school principals.

□ The exercise must not interfere with the normal teaching school programmes.

□ Any participation would be on voluntary basis.

The researcher felt that such an arrangement might not have a negative impact on the academic performance of the form 4 learners who participated in the focus group discussions. During the course of the discussions, the participants interacted freely as they asked each other constructive questions. The researcher for the present study,

facilitated the discussions, ensured that each member (participant) of the group was given an opportunity to air his or her views. The facilitation process served to keep the discussions focused on the topic under investigation. In the present study, first and foremost, the researcher thanked group members for coming to the meeting. The purpose and goals of the meeting were highlighted. The researcher gave clear explanations to make people feel at ease and to facilitate interaction between group members. Ground rules were laid down and agreed upon and group members were encouraged to participate openly. Hitchcock and Hughes (2013) recommend using neutral locations to avoid either negative or positive associations with a particular site or building. In this respect, the researcher undertook logistical arrangements to avoid noise and interruptions during the interview session and focus group discussions. The wide and bold visible notice stating “interview in session” was placed on the door and windows of the interview venue (room). This arrangement was done with the research gate keepers’ (such as principals and their staff members) permission in the site. With the group’s permission, the researcher tape-recorded the discussion. It is generally, best to tape-record interviews and later transcribe the recordings for analysis (Stuckey, 2013). While it is possible to take notes during the session, it is difficult to capture direct quotes from the participants while still engaging in the conversation. The importance of using the tape-recorder is to maintain focus on the participant, to build rapport and dialogue rather than focus on the notes, and for accurately capturing the data (Johnson & Christenson, 2010). The advantage of tape-recorder is that more complete, accurate permanent record can be kept for further data analysis purposes (Jwan, 2010). The researcher for the present

study asked the general opening question to the members of the focus group in order to start off the focus group discussions. In the course of the discussion, the researcher in the present study asked questions and rephrased some of the questions in different ways to understand the matter studied. In order to sustain mutual trust and more importantly to indicate that he was focused and paid attention, the researcher kept eye contact with the members of the group. Members of the group were given an opportunity to ask, comment or air their views. At the end of the focus group discussions, the researcher, summarized what he thought had been said, and asked if the group agreed with the way the idea was captured.

3.9.4 Validity and reliability of the questionnaire

Validity is the accuracy and meaningfulness of inferences drawn from the research findings. It is the degree to which results obtained from the analysis of the data actually represent the phenomena under study (Mungenda & Mungenda, 2003). Validity refers to the quality of data gathering instrument or procedures that enable the instrument to measure what it is supposed to measure (Kumar, 2005). In the present study, validity was determined by the extent to which the instruments covered the research objectives. To ascertain content validity of the research instrument, the researcher consulted experts in the field in the Faculty of Education, University of Fort Hare. The inter-rater method was used to establish the validity and reliability of the questionnaire. This involves giving the questionnaire to raters to check its suitability (validity). The questionnaire was given to 6 raters who all agreed that the questionnaire was suitable. The same raters were also asked to rate the questionnaire out of 10. These ratings were then correlated to see the degree of agreement (reliability). A co-efficient of 0.61 was obtained, indicating that, to a high degree, the 6 raters agreed that the questionnaire was reliable. After that, the questionnaire was test-run or piloted with a group of 4 "O"level teachers to see if it worked as intended. After minor modifications, the questionnaire was adopted for use with the main study sample.

3.10 Data credibility and trustworthiness

Trustworthiness of qualitative data can be assured by the consistency, stability and repeatability of the informants' account as well as the investigators' ability to collect and record information accurately (Fakude, 2012). The credibility and trustworthiness of the

data were achieved or checked in three ways as discussed following section.

3.10.1 Triangulation of instruments

Triangulation entails combining both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods to provide adequate and accurate research results. It involves the conscious combination of quantitative and qualitative methodologies as a powerful solution to strengthen a research design where the logic is based on the fact that a single method can never adequately solve the problem under investigation (Holtzhausen, 2001). Triangulation enriches the data collected as a single data collection method may be validity). The questionnaire was given to 6 raters who all agreed that the questionnaire was suitable. The same raters were also asked to rate the questionnaire out of 10. These ratings were then correlated to see the degree of agreement (reliability). A coefficient of 0.61 was obtained, indicating that, to a high degree, the 6 raters agreed that the questionnaire was reliable. After that, the questionnaire was test-run or piloted with a group of 4 English Language teachers to see if it worked as intended. After minor modifications, the questionnaire was adopted for use with the main study sample.

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one person's report, given during one interview, to only one interviewer, it is less credible than if several people confirmed the research finding at different points in time, during interviews and through unstructured observations, in response to queries from several independent researchers, and in the review of literature. In the present study, the credibility and trustworthiness of the qualitative data were ensured through triangulation of questionnaire, interview and focus group instruments. In this study, data triangulation entailed the comparison of qualitative data received from structured interviews and focus group discussions with quantitative data from the questionnaires. The researcher in the present study used these approaches to enrich the credibility and trustworthiness of the data as the weaknesses of one method was countered by the strengths of the other.

3.10.2 Member checking

Member checking can be defined as a process or technique of testing the data, analytic categories, interpretations and conclusions with members of those groups from whom the data were originally obtained (Angen, 2000). The primary objective of member checking

is to establish credibility and trustworthiness of the collected data (Angen, 2000). This process or technique can be done both formally and informally as opportunities for member-checks may arise during the normal course of observation and conversation or focus group discussions. Member checking is one of the most important techniques for establishing the credibility of a qualitative inquiry. For the present study, the credibility and trustworthiness of the data was ensured through this process. The data record, interpretations, and reports of the inquirer were reviewed by the members or participants who provided the data. Parents and learners who were sampled agreed and approved that their perspectives had been adequately represented and that the conclusions reached in the report were credible to them. This ensured that the study was reasonably convincing and credible.

3.10.3 Prolonged engagement

Prolonged engagement refers to the process of researchers spending sufficient time in the field to learn or understand the culture, social setting, or phenomenon of interest (Angen, 2000). It involves spending adequate time observing various aspects of a setting, speaking with a range of people, and developing relationships and rapport with members of the culture (Angen, 2000). In this process, rapport and trust develop which facilitate and enhance understanding and co-

construction of meaning between researcher and members of a setting. Prolonged engagement means being present in the site where the study is being done long enough to build trust with the participants (Angen, 2000).

For the present study, the researcher kept constant consultation with respondents to understand the phenomenon under investigation better in order to produce more credible results. Through a two weeks prolonged engagement in each of the schools, the researcher built trust among the respondents. Respondents felt comfortable and as such, disclosed information freely, which enriched the credibility of the study.

3.11 Data analysis

Quantitative data which were obtained from closed questionnaire items were analysed using cross tabs and reported mainly in percentages. Qualitative data from open-ended questionnaire items, interviews and focus group discussions were analysed and used mainly to buttress or refute observations made through the closed questionnaire items.

3.12 Ethical considerations

To meet the required ethical obligations, the researcher strictly complied with the ethical considerations discussed below. These considerations involved getting permission to access the research site, obtaining informed consent from participants, ensuring voluntary participation, protecting participants from any kind of harm and ensuring anonymity and confidentiality of participants' personal information.

3.12.1 Permission to conduct the study

Prior to the commencement of this study, the researcher complied with the code of ethics proposed by the University of Fort Hare. The researcher obtained the Ethical Clearance Certificate from the University of Fort Hare Research Ethics Committee and written permission from the Ministry of Education (Namibia) to conduct the research in the

Oshikoto Region of Namibia. 3.12.2 Informed consent

The researcher ensured that participants were well informed about the nature and purpose of the study, and everything that would happen during the research process. The participants were expected to agree to participate in this study through voluntary informed consent. The participants were then given consent forms that they had to sign to formally agree to take part in the study.

3.12.3 Voluntary participation

The researcher informed the participants about their rights to or not to participate in the study. The researcher did not compel or influence participants to participate in the study, if they were not interested. If they wished to withdraw from the study at any stage of the research process, they were at liberty to do so.

3.12.4 Non-harm to participants

The researcher ensured that participants were free from any form of harm. Cohen et al., (2006) stress that greater considerations must be given to the risks of physical and psychological values of individuals than to the potential contribution of research to knowledge. The present researcher ensured that participants were not harmed in any way- physically or psychologically.

3.12.5 Confidentiality, privacy and anonymity

The researcher assured the participants of their rights to confidentiality, privacy and anonymity. Anonymity is in the fact that information provided by participants should in no well as ethical consideration

CHAPTER FOUR

4 DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on data presentation, analysis and discussion. It presents the demographic information of respondents in terms of their distribution by gender, age and years of teaching experience. Data were gathered through questionnaires, interviews and focus group discussions. Questionnaires were given to both principals and form 4 teachers. The researcher also conducted interviews with parents and guardians of form 4 learners who studied English and focus group discussion with form 4 learners. The purpose was to find views on the causes of poor performance of form 4 learners. The researcher decided to present the data and immediately discuss/ analyze them in order to avoid the unnecessary repetition that often characterizes work where data presentation and analysis/ discussion are separated. The data are presented and analyzed/ discussed in line with questionnaire items. Data from the interviews and focus group discussions were used to buttress or refute the findings from questionnaires. The questionnaires addressed the research questions which were: Which factors influence the academic performance of form 4 learners? Sub-research questions were:

- How do school-based factors influence the academic performance of learners?
- Identify home-related factors influence the academic performance of form 4 learners in Harare Northern District?
- Examine teacher-related factors contribute to the poor academic performance of form 4 learners in Harare region.
- How do learner-related factors contribute to the poor academic performance of form 4 learners in Harare Region?
- How can the challenges encountered with "O" level pupils be mitigated in order to improve the

performance of learners ?

The research questions reflected the objectives of the study, which were to identify and examine:

- factors that influence the academic performance of form 4 learners in Harare region ;
- how school-based factors influence the academic performance of form 4 learners ;
- identify home-related factors that influence the academic performance of learners in Harare region;
- examine teacher-related factors that influence the poor academic performance of form 4 learners.
- how learner-related factors contribute to the poor academic performance of "O" level pupils.

• strategies that can be effected in order to mitigate the challenges encountered with learners in order to improve learners' performance in these subjects.

Table 4-1: Identification codes for parents interviewed (n=8)

Code

PA.	Participants
PA.	Parents from school B
PC	Parents from School C
PD.	Parents from school. D
Total	8

With the research questions and the objectives in mind, the questionnaires provided quantitative and qualitative data about the factors that influence the academic performance of learners .Part A presented, analyzed and discussed questionnaire data pertaining to the nature of schools and demographic data of participants.

Part B presented, analyzed and discussed general information related to human-related factors and also to physical resources. Twelve questions were designed to gain information related to human-related factors that influence academic performance of learners and to identify the challenges that are faced in the teaching and learning. Twelve questions were

also designed to solicit factors related to physical resources that influence the academic performance of learners at Prince Edward School. With the research questions and the objectives in mind, the questionnaires provided quantitative and qualitative data about the factors that influence the academic performance of learners. Part A presented, analyzed and discussed questionnaire data pertaining to the nature of schools and demographic data of participants. Part B presented, analyzed and discussed general information related to human-related factors and also to physical resources. Twelve questions were designed to gain information related to human-related factors that influence academic performance of learners, and to identify the challenges that are faced in the teaching and learning. Twelve questions were also designed to solicit factors related to physical resources that influence the academic performance of form 4 learners.

Part C was divided into two categories. The first category examined learner-related factors that influence the academic performance of form 4 learners in Harare Region. Three statements were designed based on a five point Likert scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Not Sure (N), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). The second category examined the home-related factors that influence the academic performance of learners in Harare Region. Four statements were designed to identify and understand home-related factors that influence the academic performance of learners. Follow-up interviews were conducted with parents to further probe into subtle issues raised in the questionnaires.

Part A

4.2 General information

Table 4.2 shows that schools A and B were boarding schools while schools C and D were non-boarding ones. All schools in this study are situated in the rural areas. The observation suggests that academic performance in secondary schools in this study could be linked to the nature and positinality of the school. In Namibia, education is provided through two ministries. There is the

Ministry of Basic Education, Arts and Culture which runs form 1 to form 6, and the Ministry of Higher Education and Training which covers Technical, Vocational and University Education (Ministry of Education, 1993). Accordingly, schools under investigation in this study fall under the Ministry of Basic Education, Arts and Culture.

This study focused on rural schools only because the researcher was interested in finding out why some rural secondary schools performed better than other rural secondary schools, despite being in the same geographical area and region.

4.3 Demographic data

The demographic information was based on gender, age and teaching experience. This was because the researcher sought to establish whether the above variables had an impact on secondary learners' academic performance . In each of the four selected secondary schools, two form 4 teachers were given the questionnaires to fill it. The teachers were asked to indicate their age, gender and teaching experience. This was important because, as already said; the researcher was interested in finding out whether or not the teachers' gender, age and teaching experience had an influence on the academic performance of form 4 learners.

Table 4-3: Age by gender of the teachers (n=8)

Age range of teachers	Gender	Teachers	%
	Male. Female		
25-30	1(12.5%)	3	37.5%
31-36	1(12.5%)	4	50%
37 and above	-----	1	12.5%
Total	2	8	100%

Half (50%) of the teachers were in the age bracket of 31-36 years. Three teachers (37.5 %) were between 25 and 30 years, while only one teacher (12.5%) was 37 years or above. All teachers in this study were young, hence, energetic and active in their work. Although all form 4 teachers

were relatively young, no improvement was made. Generally, most young teachers excel in their performance. Thus these teachers could have positively influence from 4th academic performance. For Wanyama (2013) young teachers in most schools had positive impact on learners' learning outcomes.

Table 4.3 above also shows the gender of the teachers. There was 1 male (12.5%) and 2 female (25 %) teachers aged 25 to 30; 1 male (12.5 %) and 3 female (37.5%) teachers aged 31 to 36 and 1 female teacher (12.5%) aged 37 and above. These figures show gender imbalance in favor of females. These observations confirm findings of many studies (e.g. Onyara, 2013; Biama, 2014) which indicate that; generally, there are more

female than male teachers in both primary and secondary schools. In Canada and other western countries, gender distribution in secondary education has switched from an imbalance in favor of men to an imbalance in favor of women over the last two decades (Organization for economic co-operation and development, 2003).

The findings of this study show gender imbalance in the recruitment of teachers. More female teachers were recruited in the senior grades than their male counterparts. However, Nampala (2013) note that female teachers have been found to be generally soft-spoken and are therefore, not taken seriously by their learners. The researcher is of the view that, although, the academic attainment does not want strength more than care and love, female teachers are naturally not as strong compared to their male counterparts in terms of class management. Their gender may negatively influence the form 4 academic performance in learners. Ndunda (2002) argues that gender has an impact on learners' academic performance on the basis of class control and management. The years of experience as a teacher was also among the demographic variables examined. The teaching experience of teachers was considered an important factor which could influence learners' academic performance. For Milkie and Warner (2011), experienced teachers make a positive influence in learners' academic performance, and their experience matters most if they continue to teach the same grade. Studies found that generally, teachers' experience improved and influenced learners' learning outcomes. In the context of the present study, form 4 teachers had more than five years' teaching experience, yet, they could not produce quality learning outcomes.

1Below are the data for the variable.

Table 4-4: Years of teaching experience of teachers (n=8)

Ranges of yrs of teaching experience	N= 8		
1--5	2	2	25%
6--10	5	5	62.5%
11--15	7	7	12.5%

The teachers' years of experience ranged from 5 to 15 years. All schools in this study were staffed with experienced teachers. The findings concur with Knapp (2006) who says that availability of experienced teachers in a school is very important for better learners' academic performance. All the 4 principals in the four schools were males. This observation confirms observations in literature (e.g. Nyikanyika, 2017) where most leadership positions in schools are occupied by men. All the 4 principals were relatively young (31-40 years) with principal experience ranging from 1-4 years. The principal's job requires not only an understanding of the educational process at the classroom level, but also the skill to coordinate the efforts of a staff that includes teachers, other administrative personnel and other professional and non-professional. To some extent, this should assist them to produce good results in their schools. The present researcher believes that knowledge is not static as social phenomena are dynamic. The knowledge or skill that a teacher learnt ten years ago may no longer be relevant to the new challenges or new problems that emerge today. The classroom also keeps on changing. The classroom is very dynamic. New problems arise and new challenges emerge. We live in the 21st century, an era characterized by new technologies. Thus, new solutions are needed, because the old solutions (skills / knowledge) may not be helpful today.

Part B:

4.4 Information related to human resources

The findings of the study were presented following questionnaire items, which too were guided by the research questions and objectives of the study. Data from interviews and focus group discussions were used to buttress or refute findings from the questionnaire. In Item 2.1(a) the researcher wanted to know if schools have adequate form 4

teachers. The findings reveal that there were no enough teachers. The inadequacy of form 4 teachers might have negative impact on the academic performance of form 4 learners. It was explained that teachers did not have enough time to give sufficient activities to learners. This was necessitated by the fact that one teacher has high number of learners under his or her care. So it becomes difficult for a teacher to do the preparations, give assignments and other written activities, and mark learners' written activities. This happened in the non-boarding secondary schools. The findings confirm observations in literature (e.g. Achilles & Pate-Bain, 2002) where the negative effect of large class size on the learners' academic performance were pointed out. Form 4 teachers found it difficult for them to give enough work to their learners who are in dire need of practice. Teachers also found it difficult to attend to individual learners. Literature (e.g. Uwezo, 2011) indicates that shortage of teachers has a strong negative influence on academic achievement of learners in school. The observations from the questionnaire responses find support in literature, for example, Sifuna (2009) who notes that due to insufficiency of teachers, the teachers in most districts in Zimbabwe do not produce quality learners' academic achievement.

Principal C wrote: We do not have specialist English Language teachers in our schools. This seriously affects our form 4 learners' performance. Four teachers (50 %) in the boarding secondary schools provided a contradictory explanation. They explained that their schools had adequate form 4 teachers. In their explanation, they pointed out to the fact that adequacy of "O" level teachers has a positive influence on form 4 learners' academic performance. It was indicated that both teachers and learners had sufficient time to do the required activities. The workload was fairly distributed, thus, teaching and learning process took place more effectively.

Conclusion can be drawn that adequate teachers positively influences academic achievement. Three principals (75%) indicated that they had sufficient form 4 teachers. They posited that adequate form 4 teachers influenced the academic performance of form 4 learners in a positive manner. Although majority of principals indicated that there are sufficient teachers in their schools, teachers and learners have different views. From teachers and learners' viewpoints, English teachers were not sufficient and consequently were overloaded. Learners went to the extent of saying that even teachers at hand, they are incompetent as they could not express themselves in English and were unable to teach in English which is the medium of instruction. English teachers tend to teach English in local language. English teachers and learners contradict principals' viewpoints. English teachers and learners were of the view that adequate teachers may help to improve the academic performance of learners because all learners in a class are attended to. The demographic information of principals was presented. All the principals had been in their schools for a period of five years.

Principal B wrote:

If you stay for some time in a school, you come to know which teacher is effective in which area. This helps in subject allocation. You may have many teachers but they are not equally competent. Your experience in the school will tell you which English Language teacher should take form 4. In Item 2.2 (a), the researcher was interested in determining the teachers' teaching experience in English Language in Grade 12. As indicated in Table 4.4, all teachers had English Language teaching experience ranging from 5 years to 15 years. Many of the teachers felt that their experience in teaching was very instrumental to them producing good results. They argued that over the years, they had established effective strategies and techniques of teaching and prepare learners for examinations. performance. They argued that experience helps one to know such things as aspects to stress when teaching. The findings obtained from the questionnaire indicated that all teachers and principals stressed that teachers' teaching experience contributed to the academic performance of form 4 learners. Both teachers and principals were of the opinion that the quality of teaching staff in terms of experience is one of the main determinants of achievement of learners in examinations. Thus, they believed that learners' academic performance depends on the teachers' experience, knowledge and the effective application of pedagogy in the classroom. Although all schools in this study had teachers with above five years

teaching experience, they achieved poor results e.g. school C had achieved 7 %, while school D had achieved 6 % in 2014. In 2016 the same schools, school C had achieved 9.8 % and school D had achieved 1.5 %. Although, the 5 years teaching experience confirms literature (e.g. Onyara, 2013) which says that only a few years of experience matter, learners performed poorly in their national examinations. Generally a teacher who had been teaching at a particular grade level for more than five years was positively and significantly associated with increased learners' achievement (Onyara (2013).

Although teachers were experienced, learners who participated in the focus group discussion felt that their experiences had no positive influence on learners' academic performance. Instead, they were responsible for learners' poor academic performance.

Findings reveal that teachers' teaching experience did not significantly influence learners'

academic performance in English Language as measured by their performance in the ZIMSEC examinations.

One learner from School D said:

Although teaching experience matters, this is not the case in our school. The responses from the questionnaire showed that teachers had varied years of teaching experience. As indicated earlier (Table 4.4) many teachers (6-75%) had teaching experience of more than five years. The majority of teachers (7-87.5%) pointed out the importance of teaching experience in the performance of learners.

Teacher A 2 wrote:

I have adequate subject content knowledge. I have been exposed to the marking of form 4 at national level which helps me to know what to stress when I teach.

Teacher B 1 wrote:

My teaching experience enables me to deliver effective teaching to my learners, which in turn, influences their academic performance .

Teacher D 2 also remarked:

Yes, to a certain extent, experience influences good academic performance of learners, but the main problem still lies in the fact that many learners do not have a good foundation . The views expressed above support the claim by Oparanya et al. (2015) that experience and good exposure to English influences and contribute to the improvement of results in the subject. The findings are in line with literature (e.g. Haley & Austin, 2004) which notes that learners' performance is linked to teachers' experience.

Teacher A1 wrote:

Teaching experience helps in the sense that I know which content to cover for my form 4 learners. Experience counts when it comes to what to teach my learners. Although, many teachers shared common understanding in regards to teaching experience, Teacher D1 felt that teaching experience does not influence learners' academic performance.

Teacher D1 wrote:

Teaching experience does not really help to produce good results for form 4 learners . It is about the learners' foundation as to where they obtained primary and junior secondary education. It is not about best teachers. In some cases, the type of learners I have also determines the learning outcomes Principals, however, noted the importance of teaching experience in the learners' learning outcomes.

Principal D wrote:

Teaching experience helps to improve learners' academic results. Experienced teachers are able to provide support to individual learners. The responses of Principal D contradicted the responses obtained from the focus group discussions with learners in School D who see no effect of teachers' experience on learner achievement. As reflected above, responses of learners agreed with those of Teacher D1 who sees no importance and effect of teaching experience in the learners' learning outcomes. The findings tallies with scholars e.g. Ndunda (2002) who points out that if a teacher lacks experience or is dispassionate about teaching, the children may not be able to develop comprehensive understanding of the subject material. Item 2.3 (a) sought information on the average of number of teaching periods per teacher per week and what respondents thought regarding the effect it had on the performance of learners. Given that the Namibian allocation of teaching period is 40 per week, and taking into account the class groups,

whereby one teacher may be responsible for more than 5 class groups ranging from 37-43 learners, the responses from the questionnaire described an average of 40 periods per week as heavy. On the one hand teachers felt that to have 40 periods per week is a good thing, because the more the periods, the more the chances the teacher had with the learners. On the other hand the more the periods, the less the time to mark learners' written work which negatively influenced the academic performance of learners. Teachers have to find extra time in the afternoon or weekends to mark learners' written work, which has an impact on their health (Rockoff, 2009). Teachers' heavy workload is not only detrimental to the learners' academic performance, but also to the psychological well-being of teachers, stability of their family relationships, their blood pressure and heart health (Rockoff, 2009). Some teachers in their response obtained from the questionnaire, expressed their dissatisfaction with teachers' workload in their establishment.

Teacher C 2 wrote:

The teaching load in our school is heavy in all subjects, but the situation is even more discouraging because there are not enough English Language teachers.

Teacher D1 added:

The teaching career is very stressful and frustrating. We are teaching so many periods per week. We are working in a very poor environment. Some teachers felt that they were exploited by the government, because their teaching load was extra heavy. Teachers indicated that the heavy teaching load was caused by teachers who were not attracted to rural schools. Literature (e.g. Ndunda, 2002) says that highly qualified teachers are less attracted to rural schools, due to a number of factors which include among others, large class sizes, resources availability and facilities such as libraries, laboratories, books, lack of proper accommodation for both teachers and learners and lack of transport. In turn, this results in teachers' heavy workload which negatively influences the learners' academic performance.

Principal D wrote

The situation is worse in my school. I had only two teachers teaching form 1 to form 6. Their teaching loads are extra heavy. Heavy work load makes teachers exhausted and demoralized.

The findings of the present study concur with a study by Nampala (2013) which revealed that teachers in rural areas are more overloaded than those in urban areas. Both principals and teachers shared same sentiment in respect to teachers' heavy workloads that it may lead to teachers' low commitment to teaching and as a result, learners will end up performing poorly in national examinations. The findings from the questionnaire showed principals' dissatisfaction with heavy teachers' workload in relation to learners' academic performance.

Principal C 2 wrote:

The teaching load in our school is too heavy due to shortage of teachers. Teachers spend extra time in order to cover topics. For example, some teachers decide to teach even on Saturdays.

The responses are in line with literature (e.g. Hodge, 2015) which says that teachers make time to teach on weekends. What is surprising is that the Namibian Government, through the University of Namibia, trains and produces many teachers every year, but the problem of teachers' workload resulting from shortage of teachers is still persistent.

Item 2.3 (b) which was a follow up item after item 2.3 (a) sought to find the effect the number of teachers' teaching periods per week had on the learners' performance.

Majority of the respondents expressed their satisfaction with the allocation of periods. They felt that more times translates to more attention that can be given to learners. Teacher A1 expressed that he is happy with his 37 periods per week. He had 3 free periods in a week. He felt that with free periods he could finish lesson preparation and importantly could mark learners' written work. The majority of teachers claimed that they had enough time to meet with and give attention to their learners.

However, two teachers claimed that they have 40 periods per week which is detrimental to the learners' performance because this made it difficult for them to teach, to mark and to carry out administrative tasks at subject level. They claimed that they had no time to meet with their learners after school. In their responses, they argued, in order to carry out their tasks as per ministerial expectation they have to create time.

Teacher C1 wrote:

I frequently work until midnight and at weekends in order to do the marking, the recording of

learners' marks in the continuous assessment mark sheet.

Teacher C 2 added:

I get to work every morning at 6:45 and leave on average at 17:30. I take home marking almost every evening which takes about one hour of my time at home and about three hours' worth at weekends.

They claimed that although, they want to meet with and give attention to their learners in the afternoon, the situation did not allow. They therefore concentrated only on the lesson preparation, the marking and other related administrative tasks.

The current study findings are in line with Ndunda's (2002) study which found similar results. Ndunda (2002) observed that the students' performance depended on the teachers' morale and moderate workload. Similarly, Wanyama (2013) notes the negative influence of teachers' heavy workload on learners' learning outcomes. Over-loaded teachers deliver poor teaching, as over-load induces a reduction in teaching activities. As a result of lack of constant and regular interactions between teachers and learners, learners suffer in terms of learning. They suffer the most in terms of reduced performance when such contacts or tailored feedback is less frequent (Aghion; Boustan; Hoxby & Vandembussche, 2007). Lack of specialist teachers in schools influenced teachers' over-load which impacts negatively on learners' performance .(Nampala, 2013). This tends to contribute significantly to inadequate classroom activities for learners and the effective monitoring of learners' performance (Nampala, 2013). A study by Uwezo (2011) also found similar results that teachers' over-load has a strong negative influence on learners' academic performance.

From Item 2.4 (a), the researcher wanted to determine how heavy, moderate or light the workload of teachers in the schools in this study was. As discussed earlier, teachers differ from each other on the allocation of periods with regards to learners' academic performance. Those who had less than 37 periods per week were

happy with allocations, while those who had 37 up to 40 periods per week expressed their dissatisfaction. They claimed the allocation deprived their learners an opportunity for assistance.

They also based their arguments on the fact that they had not only 40 periods, but had also more 30 learners in more than one class group.

Teacher C 2 wrote:

Learner - related factors

The study established that most of the learners in the nam Region, Namibia, were not exposed to English Language outside the classrooms. The findings of the present study are in agreement with literature (e.g. Nampala, 2013; Wanyama, 2013) which highlights that students' academic performance is influenced by a number of factors such as students' attitudes and morale. The present study findings also confirmed what Knapp (2006) found in Australia that the social background of learners is an important variable in determining their background in English Language . Knapp (2006) states that children who come from low socio-economic backgrounds have a poor command of vocabulary and other language skills concerned, because they have little knowledge of the English Language. Due to these deficiencies, learners cannot produce sentences that are complex. Generally, parents interviewed were of the view that their children do not pronounce English words clearly or construct complex sentences. This results in poor academic performance in English.

From this point of view, we can say that English Language learners who come from a low socio-economic background mainly suffer most academically, because they lack supplementary instructional materials. English Language learners in rural areas come from previously disadvantaged families; hence, they have difficulty understanding

English. Literature (e.g. Simasiku, 2006) reveals that many people in Namibia are unemployed, and as such experience difficulties in providing a basic home environment for learning English Language to their children. Simasiku (2006) notes that most of the parents cannot afford to purchase the required English Language learning materials such as textbooks, dictionaries and other educational resources. Most learners in the schools in this study were subjected to poverty, large class sizes, teachers of poor quality, lack of teaching aids, all of which negatively influenced learners' learning outcomes .From this viewpoint, it can be concluded that the differences in English Language learners' performance lie in the differences in life experience of

the learners concerned. The World Bank (2005) notes that economic factors hinder the education progress of English Language learners in Namibia. This suggests that learners from low income families in the region tend to live in poverty with little access to English Language learning materials. Thus, socio-economic disparities influence children's learning outcomes.

The Systems Theory and School Context Model guided and underpinned this study. The School Context Model was used as a framework to examine how school-based, homebased, teacher and learner-related factors influenced the performance of "O" level learners in the four selected secondary schools in the Harare Region. The Systems Theory, which is an input-output model, views school as dependent on the environment in which it is established (Hayajneh, 2007; Nickols, 2007). Thus, the environment influences the academic performance of learners either positively or negatively. Literature (e.g. Talbert & McLaughlin, 1999; Deakin-Crick et al., 2013) reveals that learners' surroundings, such as family, school, church, etc. have an impact on the

teaching and learning outcomes. The way these institutions interact with learners influences how learners perform. The more encouraging and nurturing these relationships and environments are, the better learners will be able to perform academically (Nickols, 2007). Thus, based on the two models, the academic performance of learners is influenced by institutional structural factors (Hijazi & Naqvi, 2006; Nickols, 2007; Mlambo, 2011; Farooq, Chaudhry, Shafiq & Berhanu; Bolu-Steve & Sanni, 2013).

In the context of the present study which examined how school-based, home-based, teacher and learner-related factors influence academic performance of learners, was found that interdependence of school and other institutions had an effect on the academic performance of learners in the Harare Region. The findings showed that various players (structural institutions) in the environment have an influence on the learning outcomes of Grade 12 learners Language in the Harare Region

4.7 Summary

In this chapter, data gathered were presented, analyzed and discussed. The major focus of the study was to examine factors that influence academic performance of learners in the Harare Region. The objectives of the study were derived from the main research question and its sub-research questions. While the questionnaire was the main data collection instrument, semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions were also used to collect data that were mainly used to buttress or refute observations from the questionnaire. The study findings were presented and discussed. The next chapter gives a summary of the study, draws conclusions and makes recommendations based on the findings of the study and for future research.

CHAPTER FIVE

5 SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter summarizes the whole study, draws conclusions and makes recommendations based on the study results, as well as recommendations for further research. Five sections are presented in this chapter. The first section presents a summary of the study by highlighting key points from each of the preceding four chapters. The second section presents a summary of the findings of the study, taking into consideration the research questions, research objectives and assumptions of the study. In the third section, conclusions based on the study's findings are presented. The fourth section offers recommendations based on the major study findings, while the fifth and last section recommends and suggests areas for further studies.

The study identified and examined how school-based, home-based, teacher and learner-related factors influence "O" level academic performance. The assumptions underpinning this study were that there are a number of contextual factors that constrained the provision of quality teaching and learning, causing form 4 learners not to achieve quality learning outcomes in

English Language . The study was conducted in four secondary school ink. The study aimed to seek solutions to the problem with the view of improving the results.

5.2 Summary of the study

This section gives a summary of key points from each of the four preceding chapters.

Chapter One attempted to situate the research problem within the proper context. It began by highlighting the international context, moved into Africa and SADC Region, then finally into Namibia, where the study was conducted. The problem for this study was the poor academic performance of "O" level . The poor academic performance of form 4 learners compromised the socio-economic and sustainable development of the country as it is envisaged by Namibia Vision 2030 and the Policy Framework for Long-Term National Development (2004) which calls for the transformation of Namibia into a knowledge-based society by the year 2030. In Namibia, it is nationally agreed that the transformation process of into a (UNICEF, 2014). The quality of can only be achieved through the provision of quality education and the consequent attainment of quality educational outcomes (Government of the Republic of Namibia, 2004).

The chapter discussed, in its background information, the academic performance of form 4 which has remained static for the past six years in the Oshikoto Region in particular and Zimbabwe in general (Ministry of Education, 2015). For the past six consecutive years (2010-2016), the Harare Region failed to produce satisfactory educational outcomes to justify the money being spent in the education sectors . The education sector has failed to offer satisfaction to its consumers, and to develop the country's human resources necessary for economic and social transformation. Academic performance of poor quality for the form 1 to 6 learners , in the Harare Region was considered a great concern as it directly and indirectly posed a threat to the socio-economic and sustainable development of Zimbabwe, the SADC Region and the international community at large (Wikan & Mostert, 2010; The Urban Trust of Namibia, 2011). The chapter highlighted the significance of learners' academic performance for societal transformation. Scholars (e.g. Mushtaq & Khan, 2012) highlight the significance of learners' academic performance for the socio-economic development of society. The social and economic development of any country is directly linked to student academic performance (Mushtaq &

Khan, 2012). Other scholars (e.g. Ali, Kamaruzaman, Syukriah, Mokhtar, Salamt & Andin, 2009) note the important role learners' academic performance plays in producing good quality graduates who would become great leaders and manpower for the country and further becoming responsible for the socio-economic development of the country. The focus of this study was, therefore, mainly to identify and examine causal factors for the poor academic performance of form 4 in the Harare Region. The chapter presented the statement of the problem, research questions and sub-research questions, objectives of the study, significance of the study, delimitations of the study, and definitions of key terms.

Chapter Two reviewed related literature. Specifically, it looked at the theoretical and conceptual frameworks and literature based on the research questions in order to see what is known as well as not known about the problem under investigation. The review mainly centred on two theories which had a bearing on the present study. The theoretical framework that underpinned and guided the present study was the Systems Theory of von Bertalanffy (1930) which was complemented by the School Context Model of Bascia (2014). These helped with understanding how the school context shaped core processes of teaching and learning.

The Systems theory provides an analytical framework for viewing an organization such as the school. In the present study, the Systems Theory and School Context Model were used as framework to identify and understand how school-based, home-based, teacher and learner-related factors influence the academic performance of learners in the four selected secondary schools in the Harare Region. As an input-output model, the theory helped one to understand that learners' results were influenced by what was put into the system; both human and material inputs. The Systems Theory (von Bertalanffy, 1930) and School Context Model (Bascia, 2014) were considered appropriate guidelines for framing the examination of contextual factors that influence the academic performance of learners in. A school, like other institutions, does not exist in a vacuum; but depends on the environment in which it is situated (Hayajneh, 2007). Thus, these models helped to show how institutions such as families, business community, church and state which interacted with the school influenced the academic performance of learners. The models put emphasis on how interaction and interdependence of the school with other institutions influenced the academic performance of learners. Thus, these models were appropriate because they recognized interdependence of the school and the impact of the

environment on school structure, and the effect of outside stakeholders on the school. By using these models, the causal factors that influenced the academic performance of learners were identified and examined holistically, which helped the study to suggest plans of action on how poor academic performance can be addressed to improve results. Related literature was reviewed to see what was known and not known about issues that influenced the poor academic performance of O level learners in English Language .The chapter ended with a discussion of research findings from other studies regarding contextual factors that influence the academic performance, and by identifying a gap in literature which the topic under the present study sought to fill. In short, the research

findings discussed indicated that many learners have problems with English Language as a second language and that Namibia is not exempted from this problem. While reasons for this poor academic performance in vary from country to country, reasons for the failure in Harare Region have not been adequately explored; hence, the present study.

Chapter Three was a discussion of the methodology that guided the whole research process. The main research methodological components discussed were the research paradigm, research approach, research design, population, sample and sampling procedure, data collection instruments, credibility and issues of trustworthiness of the collected data, validity and reliability of data collection procedures and data analysis methods. Each one of these components was explained in detail to give its meaning in the context of the present study. The chapter also looked at the ethical considerations that were observed in this study. In this study, the researcher wanted to identify and understand school-based factors, home-based factors, teacher and learner-related factors that influence academic performance of learners. The research questions raised in this study determined the research approach adopted. The mixed methods approach which falls within the pragmatic paradigm was adopted to better interrogate the research problem. A paradigm that was ideal to capture both quantitative and qualitative data was considered. The researcher adopted the pragmatic paradigm to concurrently collect both quantitative and qualitative data. Three research instruments, namely; questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions were used to gather data. Questionnaires were used to gather data from principals while teachers and parents were interviewed. Focus group discussions were conducted with learners.

Chapter Four focused on data presentation, analysis and discussion. As a way of avoiding unnecessary repetition, the researcher presented the data and immediately analyzed and discussed them. The data were presented, analyzed and discussed in line with the research questions and objectives. Data from interviews and focus group discussions were used to buttress or refute findings from questionnaires. The triangulation of data collected from the instruments ensured that the data were credible. Patton (2002) argued that triangulation involves checking the findings of some sources against the findings of other sources to increase their credibility.

The chapter first examined the demographic characteristics of the participants. The demographic characteristics examined included age, gender and experience. It was necessary to present demographic data of the participants because variables like age, gender and experience were critical elements with regard to issues of influencing the participants' views on the problem under investigation.

The study found that contextual factors such as teacher and learner-related factors such as lack of exposure to English, poor English Language proficiency, the use of English medium of instruction and the use of local language in English classes, home-based factors such as parental involvement, family level of education and family income, and school-based factors such a lack of physical resources and instructional materials had negative impact on form 4 learners' learning outcomes in English Language form 4 in the Oshikoto Region. It emerged that lack of exposure to English language among both teachers and learners is a critical factor that resulted in the poor academic performance of o'level learners in English Language (With regard to poor English Language proficiency, the study revealed that the school's interaction and interdependence with the environment where the school exists had strong negative influence on English Language proficiency. It emerged from the study that location of schools in rural environments lowered learners' academic performance in English Language. This was largely due to the fact that the environments where both teachers and learners lived have failed to effectively expose them to the English Language. All participants argued that E' teachers and learners faced challenges in the use of English as a medium of instruction. The majority of the participants pointed out that learners and teachers struggled with the use of English as a medium of instruction. The study discovered that teachers persistently used the local language namely (Shona) in classes. Persistent use of local language in English classes by teachers denied learners opportunities for developing their English vocabularies, which had a negative effect on their

performance. Due to poor English Language proficiency, teachers and learners were not comfortable to express themselves in the medium of instruction. The use of English as a medium of instruction was one of the critical challenges that emerged that improper use of the medium learners' poor academic performance in English Language at all the four secondary schools. Many participants indicated ineffective parental involvement in the education of their children as a contributory factor to the failure rate. It was established that one of the major causes of the poor academic performance in English Language at all the four secondary schools was the lack of parental involvement in their children's education. Many parents failed to provide necessary support to their children in the learning of English Language. Lack of structural facilities and materials such as books and other written resources had negative impact on the learners' learning outcomes in English Language. The main home-based constraining factor identified in this study was home environments which were not conducive to effective learning and understanding English Language. Children lacked basic needs; especially English Language study materials and other necessities to enable them to practice the use of English language outside the classroom. The study revealed that the majority of English Language Grade 12 learners in all the four senior secondary schools came from low socio-economic backgrounds. All participants were of the view that family background was one of the strongest predictors of educational outcomes. The study found that poor home and school environments had strong negative influence on the learners' academic performance in English Language (The lack of resources such as written materials and other appropriate equipment's such as audio-visual made teaching and learning of English Language in all the four schools difficult; which negatively affected the learners' academic performance in the end.

5.3 Conclusions

In all the four secondary schools in this study, there was a lack of exposure to English

Language among both teachers and learners. The findings showed that most teachers and learners doing English Language, lacked English Language proficiency due to lack of adequate exposure to English. The research findings also showed that inadequacy of infrastructure such as

libraries, language laboratories and study-halls were matters of serious concern. Inadequacy of such facilities negatively impacted upon influenced learners' academic performance. It can also be concluded that physical resources were not enough in most of the secondary schools since an overwhelming number of respondents claimed unavailability of physical facilities in schools. This affected the academic performance of the learners negatively since they did not get a comfortable environment in which to study.

Human resources in secondary schools in this study were also a critical concern that negatively affected the learners' academic performance. Thus, one can conclude the 2 learning outcomes in English Language in the Oshikoto Region of Namibia were not satisfactory due to a number of factors identified and discussed in this study. 3 Recommendations the study suggests that schools should reinforce the use of English Language inside and outside the classroom as a means of enhancing the exposure of learners to English Language. For learners to perform well in Harare Region needs quality, well trained and experienced and specialist teachers.

5.3.1 Recommendations based on the findings of the study

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher recommends the following:

- English Language. Learners should be exposed to newspapers, novels, short stories and watch educational TV programs to improve their English proficiency. This may help them to improve their English proficiency and improve results.
- Teachers should actively involve learners in the learning of English Language through such methods as debates, drama etc. Teachers should encourage learners to use English at school and in class etc. to improve their English proficiency.
- Secondary school principals should establish partnerships with best performing secondary schools in other regions of Harare in order to share expertise and learn from them. This may lead to the introduction of support programs such as workshops, training and team-teaching to expose learners to diverse teaching approaches to enhance the learning of in order to improve learners' learning outcomes. Since parental involvement is a crucial issue in the education of the learner, the study also recommends that parents be sensitized and encouraged to participate in the education of their children. They should provide learning materials that provide conducive home

environments for learning. They should visit schools to discuss with teachers, their children's progress and how these learners can be assisted to learn and master the English Language.

□ The Ministry of Education in collaboration with the Directorate of Education Namibia Library Service and Life-Long Learning should equip schools UNICEF, 2014). The quality of school libraries with adequate current reading materials. This may ensure that both teachers and learners are exposed to relevant as well as teaching and learning materials in schools to help improve results.

5.3.2 Recommendation for future research

□ The current study focused only on four secondary schools located in a rural setting in the Oshikoto Region of Namibia. The findings of this study may not be generalizable to other secondary schools in the Oshikoto Region and Namibia at large. Thus, there is a need to carry out a study in urban secondary schools in the Oshikoto Region and in other regions for comparative purposes.

□ The present study used the mixed methods approach. Perhaps in future, a study that is purely qualitative may be necessary in order to gain in-depth knowledge on the factors that influence the poor academic performance of learners.

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Lecturer:

Approval form

The undersigned certify that they have read and recommend to the Bindura University Science
and Education for acceptance . A dessertation entitled, Factors that affects academic performance
in Harare Central Region,.submitted by Vengai Posani in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the bachelor of science in education in chemistry ,BscEdCh

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Supervisor :Dr T Chikerema

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Chair person :Dr Ndemo

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