

CHAPTER THREE

3. THE FAMILY

3.1 THE REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE OF THE FAMILY

3.1.1 Introduction

One of the most significant consequences of the emergence of industrialisation is the progressive removal of educational functions from the family. Formal educational institutions have taken over from the family, the teaching of specific skills as well as much normative teaching. Parsons (1958 quoted IN Banks 1976:61) asserts that "the school has become the focal socialising agency" at least for those years during which the child is full-time within the educational system. However, Banks (1976:61) contends that in the most advanced industrial economy, the school cannot and does not take over completely from the family. He maintains that the first five years are crucial foundation years because during this period the parents fully influence the child by their behaviour and attitudes. It is also true to say that the family exerts a profound influence on the response of the child to the school.

Thus, the study of students' academic performance should be closely related to the family background and learning home environment. There is, however, a great complexity of the concept of home environment or home background since family life has multi-facets which appear to be equally important, but it is often difficult to put these aspects into operational terms. Banks (1976:62) argues that this is particularly true where the attempt is often made to encompass such factors as child-rearing practices, speech and thought patterns and fundamental value-orientations.

Furthermore, Stinchombe (1969 quoted in Banks 1976:62) argues that it can be shown that these factors do not operate independently but are closely related to each other and may well have a cumulative effect. Under such conditions, it is almost impossible to discover the precise way in which a particular family background operates to produce under or over-achievement. Moreover, it is disputable precisely how much influence social class has on student's ability.

Banks (1976:70) argues that parental interest and achievement motivation may be more important in enhancing the high academic performance of the student. This view cannot be accepted in its entirety as there are many equally important factors that influence student's performance. The concept of under-achievement presents us with a host of problems since there is no way of measuring potential as distinct from actual ability.

Nor are there such things as working class in terms of father's occupation are replete with many heterogeneous elements and so similarly defined as middle-class.

In his study, Coleman (1964 quoted in Stub 1975:256) revealed that the differences in academic achievement between black and white school children could not be attributed to the differences in the quality of the schools in Britain. He argued that there were only minor differences between black and white schools on such factors as average class size, library facilities, number of textbooks, age of school buildings, and teachers' education and background. He argued further that differences in achievement seemed to be most closely related to such factors such as the students' own background and the backgrounds of their fellow students, rather than the objective quality of the school. Again Coleman (1964 quoted in Stub 1975:257) contended that the background of students has considerable influence on the nature of teachers' expectations for lower-class children, be they black or white.

A survey of relevant literature of factors which influence the academic performance of students in secondary schools reveals that parents have a crucial role to play in the education of their children. In this regard, Becner (1981 in Smith and Cheung 1986:13) argued that parental influence is a major factor which affects the child's level of attainment. Becner also stated

that children cannot develop on their own and that they have to be guided and motivated by their parents. Parental involvement in children's education makes children feel the importance of education. Children become more serious because of their parental involvement and interest in their school work. From the outcomes of his study, Becner (1981 in Smith and Cheung 1986:13) concluded that children benefited educationally when parents were involved, and interested in their schooling.

Seemingly, in another study Kapambwe (1980:16) stated that for a child to do well in their work is, to a certain degree, dependent on the encouragement and support children get from their parents. Furthermore, Reid (1984:191) in his study argued that substantial body of research had shown that parents of children who are successful in school take a greater interest in their education and visit school more often.

In a similar study, Wolfe and Behrman (1984 in Lockheed et al. 1989:240) established that family background affects the possibility that children enrol in, attend and complete various levels of schools. For example, after analysing historical data from the Philippines, Smith and Cheung (1986 quoted in Lockheed et al. 1989:240-241) noted that parents' educational and occupational levels have shaped children's attainment in school, with the same level of magnitude, since the early twentieth century. In support of this evidence, Psacharopoulos and Arriagada (1987 quoted in Lockheed et

al. 1989:241) also found parental literacy to be strongly associated with the number of years that children attended school in Brazil.

Furthermore, the students' family background also affects their learning while they are in school. This was supported by Schiefelbein and Simmons (1981 in Lockheed et al. 1989:241) who found that social class significantly helped predict the achievement of students in twenty-eight out of the thirty-seven Third World studies they reviewed. In this regard, Wolfe (1970), Haron (1977) and Ryan (1973 quoted in Lockheed et al. 1989:241) argued that family background appears to determine students' achievement more strongly in urban schools, whereas school factors have a greater influence on the achievement of rural and very poor children.

The significance of the effect of the family background on the academic performance has been strongly expressed by sociologists. For example, Haralambos (1987:334) views any social disorganisation of the family as dysfunctional for the child making it difficult for such an emotionally disturbed child to cope with the learning task at school. Many learning problems which a child encounters at school can be traced directly to a dysfunctional family situation. In support of this assertion, Belkin et al. (1977 in Haralambos 1987:334) noted that conflicts within the family milieu which may range from mild deprivations and lack of concern to severe mistreatment of the child inevitably bring their results to the classroom.

Belkin et al. (1977 in Haralambos 1987:334) maintain that the school and family cannot be viewed as two independent environments as the home shapes the intellectual background with which the teacher works. Seemingly, Brener and Moschiker (1974 in Kotane 1975:45) express this issue vividly when they argue that learning has no special geographical setting or time. The family is therefore a foundation for education for educational experiences without which the school cannot fulfil its functions properly. Douglas (1964:69) further reflects that children's attitudes to their school work are deeply affected by the degree of encouragement given by the parents, and by their own level of emotional stability.

Again, Sund (1976 in Nesengani 1990:16) asserts that a rich, discriminating environment contributes enormously to the manifestations of cognitive development, and central to such an environment are the adults surrounding the child. They obviously provide much of this nourishment for the child's mind in different ways. It is maintained that a mind without operational food, just as a body without nutrients, does not grow well. Furthermore, psychologists are convinced that the presence of both parents in the nuclear family setting is vital in determining the effects of the immediate intellectual environment on intellectual growth. Notable among the psychologists is Zanjonc and Marcus' influence model (1975 quoted in Nesengani 1990:16), which defines a family's intellectual environment as an average of absolute intellectual levels of all members. Each individual member of the family

contributes to the total intellectual atmosphere, which is subject to continual changes. For example, according to the model a one-parent family or a migrant's household is likely to constitute an inferior intellectual environment diluted by the number of children against one parent. "Children who are reared in this reduced intellectual environment tend to show deficits of intellectual development." (Zanjonc et al. 1975 quoted in Nesengani 1990:17).

Another relevant literature asserts that the interest parents have in education tends to be associated with the academic motivation and willingness of their children to be active in learning (Kapambwe 1980, Behr; Cherian, Mwamwenda, Ndaba, and Ramphal 1986; Marjoribanks 1987; Holloway, Fuller, Hess, Azuma, Kashiwagi and Cherian 1990 quoted in Cherian 1991:183). Gage and Berliner (1984); Behr et al. (1986); Grolnick and Ryann (1990) in Cherian 1991:183) noted that a child who is strongly motivated is more likely to make good academic progress than one who is not, and such pupils are likely to be involved in learning tasks if their parents, as models, indicate the importance of education by getting them involved in school work. Also, a number of researchers have reported positive effects for parental interest and motivation on the scholastic achievement of children. Miller (1970:260-269), for example, found that children, particularly boys, did much better at school if their parents expressed interest in their progress. Douglas (1964:137) also observed that children tended to

work well when their parents took an interest in their school progress and work poorly when parents were not interested. Eysenck and Cookson (1970), Ainsworth and Batten (1984) and Toomy (1976) in Cherian (1991:183) reported that parental interest strongly correlated with academic achievement. Similarly, Reid (1976), Niles (1981), Chetty (1985), Bach, Khattab and Bulick (1985), Staver and Herbert (1986) and Barber (1988) quoted in Cherian (1991:183) noted a positive relationship between parental interest and children's scholastic achievement. Douglas (1964) in Nesengani (1990:15) further reflects that children's attitudes to their school work are deeply affected by the degree of encouragement given by their parents, and by their own level of emotional stability.

Generally, everybody accepts that some occupations are open only to people who have particular educational qualifications, especially, for example, the professional (medical doctors, accountants, and so on). In supporting this assertion, Reid (1978:214) notes that there is the overall tendency that the 'higher' the occupation the longer of the time spent in education. Reid adds that, occupations in this category attract higher income. It may be argued that people in higher occupations are likely to earn higher income, and therefore have the capacity to provide their children with the necessary educational facilities that may influence their (children's) performance. However, the researcher is of the opinion that it is precarious to accept these assertions because while there is a very strong correlatiom between

education and occupation, it is not absolute. For, according to Reid (1978:212), not all those with higher educational qualifications work as professionals, employers or managers nor are these jobs undertaken exclusively by holders of such qualifications. In the same vein, Reid (1978:212) says:

"This must be due to change in the occupational structure and educational opportunities over time, and to the importance of factors other than education in getting and keeping a job."

For example, in his study Jubber (1990:5) found that parents' work category particularly the father's work category, was more statistically significantly related to the school performance of the child.

In the present study, the researcher would attempt to find out whether under the conditions in Thohoyandou, the occupation category of parents influence their children's performance in school.

Although a vast body of literature exists on the influence of parental education on the academic performance, no such studies have yet been conducted in Venda. It is generally accepted that parents who are themselves highly educated motivate their children to work hard in school. They provide their children with the relevant tools and equipment. For Cooley (1965 quoted in Johnson 1986:160-161) contended that:

"When parents have a high regard for education, they transfer their feelings to their children."

This attitude of parents becomes a motivational force, encouraging the children to do well in school. Reid (1978:212) argues that it is also believed that parents who are well educated want their children to be well educated as well. Furthermore, parents who were good students expect their children to be the same. If their children have difficulties at school, these parents are quick to recognise the existence of difficulties, quick to confer with teachers about overcoming them and ready to help their children.

In their studies, Jubber (1990), Cherian (1990), Nesengani (1990), Kapambwe (1980), Marjoribanks (1987), Musgrove (1966), Douglas (1964) and Banks (1976 quoted in Cherian 1991:4) confirm that parental education is related to students' performance. For example, in their studies, Bernstein (1972:289; Bourdieu and Passeron 1977:135) argue that the level of education of an individual group or country determines to a great extent, their positions on the economic and social scale. Bandura and Walters (1963) and Scgaeferm (1961) in Banks (1976:66) also argue that it has been shown that the family plays a fundamental role in their children's education from a very early age. While the researcher subscribes to the findings of these investigators, it should be noted that all these studies were carried out in environments with conditions different from what is prevailing in Venda. In Venda, a large number of parents are illiterate and only a few parents have

education up to matriculation level. It should, however, be disclosed that there is a small number of educated parents emerging in Venda because of their access to educational opportunities both in Venda itself and in South Africa at large. Hence, in this study, the investigator will attempt to examine whether a relationship exists between the educational level of parents and the academic performance of their children.

Further, it is argued that a favourable material environment has a far-reaching effect on the pupil's success in school. Nevertheless, in their studies on the effect of the material environment on the academic performance of pupils, Floud et al. (1956:89, 145) showed that the material environment of the home was of less importance in differentiating between the successful and the unsuccessful pupil than the differences in the size of the family and on the education, attitudes and ambitions of parents. On the contrary, Floud et al. (1956:145) contend that where incomes were lower and housing conditions less favourable, the successful at each level were distinguished by the relative material prosperity of their homes.

The study of Douglas (1964 quoted in Banks 1976:66) on the effect of housing conditions on pupils' school performance concludes that unsatisfactory housing conditions depress the test performance of pupils irrespective of their social class; but whereas the middle-class children, as they get older, reduce this handicap, the manual working-class children from

unsatisfactory homes fall even behind. Similarly, the Crowther Report (1964 quoted in Banks 1976:67) discovered the part played by financial circumstances in early leaving from grammar school and technical schools showed that such early leaving was negligible if father's income exceeded about twenty pounds a week. The Crowther Report (1964 in Banks 1976:67) found at the same time that the proportion of young people mentioning the desire to earn money as the reason for leaving school declined significantly as the father's income increased. Nonetheless, there are no means of knowing how far poverty was a causal factor at work here since the study showed that even in the lowest income group, approximately thirty children had stayed at school beyond the age of sixteen. It is therefore clear that poverty is not necessarily a handicap if other circumstances are favourable.

Therefore, in this study, the researcher will attempt to discover whether parents' income level has any statistical significance in influencing academic performance of pupils in junior secondary schools in Thohoyandou.

More recently, the Plowden Report as quoted by Banks (1976:67) defined home circumstances to include not only the physical amenities of the home but also the number of dependent children, father's occupational group and parents' education. The researcher does not, however, support the view that mere parental attitudes influence pupils' academic achievement since

attitudes entail many other variables. Many sociologists like Hyman (1954), Sewekk and Shaw (1957) and Douglas (1968) in Banks (1976:70-71) argued that parental interest and encouragement do not have as much impact on the pupils' academic performance, as the income level of parents. Using household level as a rough proxy for the students' social class, Chernchovsky and Meersook (1985; and King and Lillard, 1987 quoted in Lockheed et al. 1989:241) found significantly educational attainment effects in Indonesia and Malaysia.

It is further assumed and accepted that parents who have higher educational qualifications are likely to get a better job with a good income and the prospects for promotion and higher income. With a higher income, parents can provide life-enhancing amenities for the family. They can afford to send their children to the best school and even hire a teacher to give extra tuition to them at home after school. In subscribing to this view, Jubber (1990:4) in his study of economic status on a child's school performance found that

"Family income contributes directly or indirectly to the success of the child's achievement in school. Its more direct effects relate to such things as the relationship between income and nutrition, health, quality of school, attitude to pre-school education, and the ability of the family to supply the kinds of educational support, equipment and experiences which can foster school success."

In the same study, Jubber (1990:4) found that the children from the poorest homes have proportionately more of their number who are poor performers (34% of the pupils from the poorest homes fell in this category compared with the 24% of those from the richest homes). However, Jubber also found that it is not the children from the richest homes who have the greatest percentage of their number classified as good performers, but rather children from rich homes. While Jubber's findings may simply be due to chance, it would be interesting to investigate further the possibility of educational handicaps arising from a very high economic status.

In this study, therefore, the researcher will investigate the impact of socio-economic status of parents on the academic performance of Standard 8 pupils in secondary schools in Thohoyandou. Also, the researcher will find out what effect the facilities in the learning home environment such as study-room, tables and chairs suitable light, enough time for study, nutrition, mass media (radio and television) and parental motivation have on the academic performance of Standard 8 pupils in junior secondary schools in Thohoyandou. In this study, socio-economic status of parents refers to educational, occupational and income levels of parents.

3.1.2 What does the word "family" mean?

Although the word "family" undoubtedly is known to everyone everywhere, it conveys meanings that may, however, evoke feelings that vary from person to person. So the 'term' does not lend itself easily to definitions because it differs from society to society. Many of us think of the family as a social unit consisting of a married couple and with their children.

Murduck (1949 in Haralambos 1987:325), has defined the family as a social group, characterised by common residence, economic co-operation and reproduction. It includes adults of both sexes at least, who maintain a socially approved sexual relationship and one or more children, own or adopted, of the sexually cohabiting adults. On the contrary, Gresse (1973 in Le Roux 1993:8) views the family as a situation where adult and non-adult meet with a specific educational aim, which is to guide and assist the child towards adulthood. It is an accepted fact that the birth of a child motivates the family towards becoming a unit in which education should be available and necessary. There is no doubt that the new-born child is in need of education and the parents are the only ones who can meet this need. In this regard, the family is described as a performed educational unit where education action occurs.

In the western sense, the family refers to married couple and their unmarried offspring. This type of family is also called a nuclear or restricted conjugal family. However, according to Stayt (1968:185), in the African sense, the family includes the parents, brothers and sisters of the couple and the children of their brothers and sisters, embracing the whole lineage. Further, this type of family consists of a husband with his wife or wives, their children and a large number of relatives living under one roof or in close proximity to one another. This type of family is also called consanguineal family. The significant thing about this type of family is that the members are literally jointly held together by 'one blood'.

This type of family which is called extended family, is all-inclusive and all-embracing: and from the author's experience the death of a member affects all the other relatives who gather together to mourn. Any fortune or success of a member of the family is, according to the investigator's own experience, celebrated by all the other relatives.

In the Venda traditional society, the "muta" (meaning "the family") consists of father, mother and children and the extended family. It is all-inclusive, encompassing close relatives. So, with regard to the BaVenda (Venda people), the concept of family involves the nuclear family as well as the extended family. The sisters and daughters marry outside this extended family grouping and go to live with the family of their husband, otherwise all

the members of the family tend to live near to each other; each man building his wives' huts close to the house of his father (Stayt, 1968:185). This aggregation of houses forms a patriarchal group which acts as a single unit in social and religious affairs.

In summary, the family is generally the basis of socialization, that is, family patterns underlie politics, economics, and culture of the society. It is within the context of the family system of any conceivable society that the foundation of the child's education is laid.

TABLE 13 : RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STUDENTS AND THEIR SCHOOL PERFORMANCE IN TERMS OF WHERE THEY LIVE

TYPE OF DWELLING										
	HOUSE		FLAT		HUT		SHACK		TOTAL	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
FAIL	149	73,8	12	5,9	38	18,8	3	1,5	202	100,0
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
PASS	104	77,1	0	0	28	20,7	3	2,2	135	100,0
TOTAL	253	75,0	12	3,6	66	19,6	6	1,8	337	100,0

$p > 0,05$

Number missing = 4

As revealed by Table 13, there is no significant relationship between the variables, “students who live in houses, flats, huts and shacks” and school performance ($p > 0,05$).

3.1.3 Features of Venda Extended Family

Among the Venda people, the family consists of man, wife and children, brothers and sisters, aunts and grandparents. It is an extended family; it is therefore called all-inclusive and all-embracing (oral: 15-10-1996). It is to be noted that both parents are responsible for taking care of their children and ensuring their social, physical and moral development. The father is, however, responsible for providing shelter, clothing, and money for running the household. Nevertheless, the mother may contribute to the family income when she is doing some paid work. It is assumed that when both parents contribute to the family income, they are able to provide the needs of their children, which in turn is likely to improve their school performance.

Furthermore, the father is responsible for enforcing discipline in the home. In this regard, the mother may report a child who has misbehaved to the father who institutes the appropriate punishment. Therefore, the long absence of the father who is a migrant worker from the home is likely to adversely affect the discipline of the children, resulting in their school performance.

As it has been clearly expressed elsewhere in this study, although the father plays an important role in the family, it is the paternal aunt (makhadzi) who plays a dominant role (oral: 15-10-1996). She settles disputes in the family as well as marital matters. Children look up to her for affection, emotional and material support. They seek her advice and assistance when necessary.

From the interview with some parents, it emerges that the Venda extended family has undergone and is still undergoing significant changes due to modernization. Because of economic constraints, families can no longer cater for distant relatives of the extended family system; nor can a man now afford to have more than one wife. Hence the family is increasingly becoming a nuclear family where man provides for his wife and children only. Another salient feature of Venda extended family is that a large number of fathers live and work outside Venda as migrant workers. They usually visit their home in Venda at month-ends. The long absence of fathers from home has, to a large extent, weakened their authority to exercise control over the behaviour of their children. Thus the mother is forced to raise the children almost single-handedly by assuming the role of a father as well as mother. She now has to enforce discipline in the home, and her dual role often creates tension between her and the children, particularly when the children reach the age of adolescence. This tension is likely to adversely impact on the children's school performance.

Another important feature is that some fathers who are migrant workers do not remit adequate money and this may result in the impoverishment of the family income. Such a situation is likely to compel some children to discontinue with their education.

TABLE 14 : RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PUPILS LIVING WITH PARENTS AND OTHER RELATIVES AND THEIR SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

PUPILS LIVING WITH:										
	BOTH PARENTS		MOTHER ONLY		FATHER ONLY		RELATIVES		TOTAL	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
FAIL	81	39,1	95	45,9	10	4,8	21	10,2	207	100,0
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
PASS	66	49,3	52	38,8	7	5,2	9	6,7	134	100,0
TOTAL	147	43,1	147	43,1	17	5,0	30	8,8	341	100,0

$p > 0,05$

According to Table 14, there is no statistically significant relationship between the variables, "living with both parents", "mother only", "father only", "relatives" and school performance ($p > 0,05$). It seems however, that 66 ($\pm 49,3\%$) of the pupils who live with both parents passed, which is much higher than the other categories under pass.

In this regard, we can assume that the fact of pupils who live with both parents, from the theoretical aspects mentioned earlier in this chapter, can be a factor in enhancing the performance of pupils in school.

3.1.4 The role of the significant other such as the "Makhadzi" (Aunt), "Malume" (Uncle) etcetera in the Venda family system

Among the Venda people, there are some members of the family who are held in high esteem because of the important role they play in the family. From the author's own experience, these members are regarded as the significant other who perform an essential role, and whom children would like to emulate. The members of the family who are regarded as the significant other are the following:

3.1.4.1 The role of the "Makhadzi" (Aunt)

The "makhadzi" is the pupil's father's sister. The Venda people are patrilineal. The "makhadzi" who plays a vital role. The "makhadzi" plays a very important part in Venda life, sharing with her elder brother the privileges belonging to the head of the family. She is the primary factor in bringing the cattle into the family, by means of which her brother is able to obtain his wife. She is therefore responsible for the establishment of her brother's family, and consequently the best person fitted to approve the heir whose

duty it will be to preserve the continuity of this family. Her advice is sought for in matters pertaining to questions of marriage, and it is she who charges the amount of money to be paid as 'lobola' or bride-price.

Furthermore, according to Venda old men and women interviewed on 18 June 1996, the "makhadzi" plays the role as significant other to her brothers and sisters' children by providing them with a shelter, food, clothing and emotional support. Thus the children of the "makhadzi's" living brothers and sisters often visit the home of "makhadzi" to seek her advice and assistance when necessary. Particularly, the "makhadzi" takes care of the children who have lost their mothers, that is, "makhadzi's" sisters by living with them in her home. Hence in the Venda traditional life, children look up to the "makhadzi" as their significant other who can provide them with love, affection, loving care and emotional support in times of need (interviewed some parents, 24 June, 1996).

TABLE 15 : NUMBER OF CHILDREN (PUPILS) LIVING WITH THE "MAKHADZI"

RELATIONSHIP	NUMBER OF CHILDREN	%
Parents	298	93,1
Makhadzi	22	6,9
TOTAL	320	100,0

Number missing = 21

Table 15 depicts that only 6,9% of 320 children who responded to the relevant question live with their "makhadzi". This number is not statistically significant as compared with 93,1% of the children who live with their parents. Therefore, according to this study, more and more children are living with their parents, which undermines the vital role of the "makhadzi" as significant other in the Venda traditional society. Perhaps, the reason for this trend may be due to the present high cost of living which prevents the "makhadzi" from living and caring for other children in addition to her own children. It could also be that after the death of a spouse, the other living spouse is able to take care of the children and hence this removes the onus of the "makhadzi" taking the responsibility for living with, and caring for the children left behind.

3.1.4.2 The role of the "Malume" (Uncle)

According to Stayt (1968:174), the mother's brother is called "malume" (uncle). The "malume" plays a less important role as compared to the role of the "makhadzi" in the Venda family system. The "malume" takes part in a marriage ceremony and in the past had a right to "ndzanzi" or part of the "lobola" or bride-price. Today, although the mother may keep it herself, she seldom refuses to give it to her brother should he require it. The "malume" also participates in religious rites. He may be the guardian of the sacred goat that is offered to the mother's spirits, invoking their protection in the event of impending danger, or at the commencement of a hazardous journey.

However, according to this study, the role of the "malume" as significant other is to provide a shelter, food, clothing, sustenance and general care of his sister's children where especially, the sister is poor and incapable of providing for the children's needs or where the sister is dead. The children may visit the "malume's" home occasionally to seek his advice or assistance when necessary. In this way, the children grow up to accept the "malume" as significant other whom they would like to emulate. Thus they look up to the "malume" as significant other because of the favours and help they receive from him. The "malume" also provides care, affection and emotional support to his sisters' children. Besides, he assists in resolving problems affecting the general welfare of the family.

It is to be noted that generally children go to the "makhadzi", and it is only in the extreme cases when they go to the "malume". They usually go to the "malume" when the "makhadzi" is incapable of supporting them as a result of poverty.

TABLE 16 : NUMBER OF CHILDREN (PUPILS) LIVING WITH THE "MALUME"

RELATIONSHIP	NUMBER OF CHILDREN	%
Parents	298	95,2
Malume	15	4,8
TOTAL	313	100,0

Number missing = 28

According to Table 16, 4,8% of the children (pupils) who responded to the relevant question live with their malume. This percentage is not statistically significant when is compared with the number of pupils (95,2%) who live with their parents. Therefore, according to this study, more pupils live with their parents instead of with their malume. This picture may obscure the importance of the role of the malume as significant other. This trend is obvious as children in most cases, only come to live with their malume when they encounter a serious problem. For example, when they lose their mother through death and their makhadzi is unable to take care of them because she

is very poor. Another reason for this trend may be that due to the high cost of living, "malume" is unable to take care of his own children together with his sisters' children. In spite of this shortcoming, children often visit their malume to receive his advice. They therefore look up to their malume as significant other who provides them with care, affection and emotional and material support.

3.1.4.3 The role of the biological father

The traditional African family is an important social unit in society. It generally consists of husband, wife or wives and children. Since descent is always reckoned through the father, the traditional family in Venda is patrilineal. The entire family is based on the biological father. Motshologane (1975:22) supports this statement when he mentions that the father is the undisputed head of the family and is feared as well as respected by his wife or wives and children. Thus in Venda traditional family, the biological father is responsible for the conduct of his dependents and is answerable in Venda traditional law for their misdeeds. In the tribal court, he is their legal representative. It is therefore his duty to discipline his wife, or wives and children to avoid trouble.

Hence, in Venda tribal family, the biological father is the legal representative of the family and the link between the family and the ancestral spirits. It is thus only the father who can enter into a contract. The wife who occupies a subordinate position cannot enter into contract without the consent of the husband.

The father's powerful position in the family enjoins him to perform a number of vital roles which ensure the sustenance and stability of the family. Furthermore, the father is responsible for thatching his huts and allocating them to his wife or wives and children. Also, part of his duties is to apportion land to his wife or wives in order to raise crops. It should be mentioned that it is the father who provides food, shelter and clothing for his wife and children. He is, in fact, the breadwinner in the family. The education as well as the medical care of his family is his responsibility. He has the final word in decision-making and his decisions are final. He settles all disputes between his children. His consent is needed before the children or the wives can take any independent action (Stayt 1968:155). The discipline of the conduct of the children falls under the jurisdiction of the biological father in the Venda family life, who punishes or scolds any child who breaks his rules. Motshologane (1975:23) summarized the role of the husband and father in a family as that of protecting his wife and children, treating them satisfactorily, providing food, shelter and clothing for them. Besides, the children (pupils) look up to the biological father as the significant

other who provides them with love, affection, emotional and material support. He assists his children in solving their problems.

It should however, be noted that there have been drastic changes in the role of the biological father in the family system in Venda in that a substantial number of them live and work away from home in towns such as Johannesburg, Pretoria as migrant workers.

It is noted that the relationship between father and children is usually good. However, children often feel scared to discuss their problems with their father, conscious of the fact that it is the father who enforces discipline in the home by meting out punishment to anyone who misbehaves. Thus children with problems first approach their mother who, in turn, tells the father. Besides children do not often see their father who may be a migrant worker. There is, therefore, a more 'open' relationship between children and their mother than with their father.

There is also an assumption that working fathers who often have contact with their children (pupils) after coming home from work are likely to influence pupils to perform well in school. It is noticeable, from the author's experience, that some fathers in Thohoyandou cannot help their children with school homework because they are either illiterate, semi-literate or the level of their education is far lower than that of their children. In spite of this

shortcoming, many working fathers who have frequent contact with their children can exercise control and discipline over their conduct. In fact, the mere presence of the father in the home can be a factor to compel children (pupils) to stay at home and do some school work instead of going out to roam about with friends.

Besides, the father who is illiterate or semi-educated can assist pupils in solving their problems which are not of academic nature. In the case where the father is reasonably educated, he can supervise the pupils' school work at home, or even help them with their school homework.

Therefore, one of the important areas of the focus of this study is to explore the impact of father's contact with pupils on their (pupils) performance in school.

TABLE 17.1: RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WORKING FATHER'S CONTACT WITH PUPILS AND SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

	EVERYDAY		ONCE A WEEK		1 - 2 MONTHS		3 - 4 MONTHS		5 - 6 MONTHS		TOTAL	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
FAIL	96	61,5	12	7,7	22	14,1	17	10,9	9	5,8	156	100,0
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
PASS	29	50,9	3	5,3	15	26,3	6	10,5	4	7,0	57	100,0
TOTAL	125	58,7	15	7,0	37	17,4	23	10,8	13	6,1	213	100,0

$p > 0,05$

Number missing = 128

As revealed by Table 17.1, no significant relationship exists between the variables, "father's contact with pupils" and school performance ($p > 0,05$).

Again 37,5% out of 341 pupils did not mention any contact with father. The probable reason for the omission may be that their fathers are dead, they are illegitimate, or their fathers, particularly the fathers who are migrant workers, do not come home at all.

3.1.4.4 The father's occupation category and pupil's school performance

As the people of Thohoyandou do a variety of occupations, many of which overlap in terms of skills required, it was a difficult task to categorise all the occupations appropriately. Therefore, in order to overcome the problem of categorisation, and for the purpose of this study, Miller's Occupational Scale (Miller, 1970:260-269) was used to categorise the occupations. Miller used socio-economic status - that is educational level, occupational level and income level as - indicators to place people in different categories of occupations.

As has been expressed elsewhere in this study, it is generally accepted that there is the tendency of people in higher occupations to earn a higher income than those in lower occupations. Hence those in higher occupations are likely to have the financial capacity to provide adequately for the needs of

their children which ultimately tends to influence their good performance in school.

In this study, the effect of the role of the father as the significant other on pupil's performance in schools in Thohoyandou will be examined in terms of expectations, motivation, etcetera.

TABLE 17.2: RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FATHER'S OCCUPATION CATEGORY AND SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

	PROFESSIONAL		ADMINIS- TRATIVE		SKILLED		SEMI- SKILLED		UNSKILLED		DON'T KNOW		TOTAL	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
FAIL	22	11,9	11	5,9	31	16,8	2	1,1	16	8,6	103	55,7	185	100,0
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
PASS	23	19,7	9	7,7	18	15,4	2	1,7	12	10,3	53	45,3	117	100,0
TOTAL	45	14,9	20	6,6	49	16,2	4	1,3	28	9,3	156	51,7	302	100,0

P > 0,05

Number missing = 39

As Table 17.2 shows, there is no significant relationship between the variables, "the father's occupation category" and school performance ($p > 0,05$). However, in the category "pass", about 20% of the pupils with fathers in professional positions passed. This is slightly higher than "pass" for other categories. The trend seems to lend support for theories which state that fathers in higher positions earn reasonably high income which enables them to provide the needs of their children (pupils).

Also, 45,7% out of 341 pupils did not know their fathers' occupation category. This trend also seems to support the theory that fathers who have warm and cordial relationship with their children (pupils) are likely to tell them something about their occupations. On the other hand fathers who usually keep their children at a distance do not discuss their occupations with them.

3.1.4.5 Father's income and pupil's school performance

It is generally accepted that fathers who are in good occupations or trade are likely to be accorded a high status and prestige in society. Such occupations offer lucrative remuneration, immense prospects for promotion, and general well-being. Thus fathers in such occupations are likely to receive a reasonably good salary, and with a 'fat' salary, they may be able to acquire power and influence in a society.

Hence they are in a position to feed and clothe their children properly. Besides, they can provide their children (pupils) with school uniforms, buy them textbooks and pay their school fees timeously.

Some fathers in Thohoyandou have no capacity to help their children with their school homework or supervise their study in the home because they are illiterate or their level of education is lower than that of the children. In spite of this shortcoming, by virtue of their income, some fathers are able to employ teachers to give their children extra tuition in the home. For example, from the author' experience and observation, it has become common practice of some fathers in Thohoyandou to send their children with learning problems to private remedial schools.

It is thus generally noticeable that, all in all, well-to-do fathers in Thohoyandou can provide learning facilities such as good light, chairs and tables for their children. It is conjectured that pupils who come from such homes which are conducive to learning are likely to perform well in school. In this regard, this study attempts to examine the impact of father's income on pupil's school performance.

TABLE 17.3: RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FATHER'S INCOME AND PUPIL'S SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

	R		R		R		R		R		R		TOTAL R	
	3120-4120		5120-6120		7120-8120		9120-10,120		11,120-12,120		OVER 12,120			
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
FAIL	15	18,5	11	13,6	17	21,0	19	23,5	12	14,8	7	8,6	81	100,0
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
PASS	8	12,9	9	14,5	14	22,6	17	27,4	10	16,1	4	6,5	62	100,0
TOTAL	23		20		31		36		22		11		143	100,0

$p > 0,05$

Number missing = 198

As it can be seen from Table 17.3, no significant relationship exists between the variables, "father's income" and school performances ($p > 0,05$). Also, according to this table, only $\pm 42\%$ (143) of 341 pupils indicated father's income. Large numbers missing could be an indication that 58% out of 341 pupils may not have any idea of their father's income. This picture does confirm the fact that most African parents do not normally disclose their income to their children. Parents regard matters concerning their income as confidential, and therefore do not tell their children.

3.1.4.6 The role of the mother (Mme)

In Venda tribal life, the mother, "mme", performs a number of important roles. She is responsible for her kitchen, "tshitanga", "ndi" and yard, "muta", and keeps the latter well plastered with cow-dung and sometimes painted in a geometric design in white and ochre (Stayt, 1968:30-31). In this regard, she is responsible for cleaning the house or huts, drawing water from the stream, fetching fire-wood from the bush, cooking food and ensuring the general well-being of the family. Besides, she bathes the children, washes clothes as well as the kitchenware. It is also the mother who tills the land in order to raise crops such as maize, "tshikoli", millet, sweet potatoes, beans, pumpkins, water-melons, vegetables and monkey nuts to supplement her family's food. Further, it is the mother who prepares beer for a working party when they are clearing, weeding and harvesting

crops. During the harvest time, the mother and her older children collect the cobs in large baskets which they carry to the granaries near the homestead. The mother and her older daughters beat and thresh the corn in order to separate the debris from the seed which is brushed up ready for stamping. As regards the erection of huts, the mother cuts the grass for thatching and does the plastering with cow-dung (Stayt, 1968:32). In performing these duties, the mother may assign some of the household chores to her older daughters.

It should however, be mentioned that, from the author's own experience, the role of the mother in Venda society has undergone drastic changes, especially the families in the peri-urban areas such as Thohoyandou. The changes are due to the fact that many mothers in Thohoyandou have acquired educational qualifications which have enabled them to enter the labour market. Some of them work in government departments, parastatal bodies, institutions of learning, and in the shops. Therefore the mother in the family life in Thohoyandou and other peri-urban areas is currently working and contributing to the family income. Those mothers who are illiterate work in the informal sector by selling vegetables and fruits such as maize, bananas, apples, avocados, cabbages, spinach etcetera in order to supplement the family income. Some of them are employed as domestic helpers, cleaners and "tea-ladies". Thus a substantial number of mothers in the families in Thohoyandou have become "working mothers" instead of

"full-time housewives".

This is due to the present prevailing high global inflationary economic trends which precipitated high cost of living, thereby transforming mothers in Venda into breadwinners - a wide departure from their traditional role of full-time "mothering" in the family. It is assumed that mothers who are working are able to contribute financially to the family income. Consequently, they are also able to help in providing the basic needs for their children; for example, clothing, school uniforms, textbooks and school fees and food. It is noted further that such family income from mothers may activate pupils to work hard to improve their performance in school.

As regards the relationship between mother and children, from the author's experience of working among the Venda people, Venda children are more socially attached to the mother in whom they can confide than the father. Venda mothers are more approachable to children than the father. Children are therefore afraid to approach the father with their problems, knowing that it is the father who disciplines in the home. Thus children who have problems first approach the mother who, in turn, tells the father. They are aware that the mother would rather be more sympathetic to their problems than the father. Thus children have a more "open" relationship with the mother with whom they can discuss their confidential matters than the father who is not easily approachable, and whose confidentiality they are not

sure of. Children therefore know more about the situation of the mother than that of the father. Another reason for this state of affairs is that children live with the mother most of the time and not with their father who, as a migrant worker may only visit the home once a year.

3.1.4.7 Mother's occupation category and pupil's school performance

As indicated elsewhere in this study, Miller (1970:260-269) used socio-economic status, that is, educational, occupational and income levels as indicators to place mothers in different categories of occupations. It is common knowledge that mothers who are in higher occupations are likely to have good financial means to provide some of the basic needs of their children (pupils) and are able to subsidise the family income. It is further assumed that such financial support from the mother may enable pupils to perform well in school because they have nothing to worry about since most of their needs like food, clothing and school facilities are adequately catered for. It is thus one of the aims of this study to examine the extent to which mother's income (family income) affects pupil's performance in school.

TABLE 18.1: RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MOTHER'S OCCUPATION CATEGORY AND SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

	PROFESSIONAL		ADMINIS- TRATIVE		SKILLED		SEMI- SKILLED		UNSKILLED		DON'T KNOW		TOTAL	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
FAIL	37	18,8	5	2,5	24	12,2	7	3,6	60	30,4	64	32,5	197	100,0
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
PASS	30	25,6	5	4,3	18	15,4	5	14,3	28	23,9	31	26,5	117	100,0
TOTAL	67	21,3	10	3,2	42	13,4	12	3,8	88	28,0	95	30,3	314	100,0

$P > 0,05$

Number missing = 27

Table 18.1 does not show any significant relationship between the variables, “the mother's occupation category” and school performance ($p > 0,05$). Also, a large number of pupils, 27,9% out of 341 did not know the mother's occupation category. This picture does confirm the notion that mothers in Thohoyandou do not generally discuss their occupations with their children. However, in the case of mothers, there were only 95 pupils who did not have any idea about mother's work compared to 198 pupils who did not know their father's occupations. This statistic indicates that there is a more “open” relationship between the mother and child than between the father and child.

TABLE 18.2: RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MOTHERS (FAMILY INCOME) WHO BUY GROCERIES, ETC. FOR THE HOUSEHOLD AND SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

	MOTHERS BUY FOR HOUSEHOLD		MOTHERS DON'T BUY FOR HOUSEHOLD		TOTAL	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
FAIL	88	60,7	57	39,3	145	100,0
	N	%	N	%	N	%
PASS	36	55,4	29	44,6	65	100,0
TOTAL	124	59,0	86	41,0	210	100,0

$p > 0,05$

Number missing = 131

As indicated in Table 18.2, there is no significant relationship between the variables, “working mothers who buy 'things' for the household” and school performance ($p > 0,05$). It seems, however, that in the category “pass”, $\pm 55,4\%$ of pupils whose working mothers buy 'things' for the household passed compared to $44,6\%$ of pupils whose mothers do not buy 'things' for the household.

This picture lends support to the theories that parents who have a regular good “family income” may be able to provide their children with their basic needs, such as, shelter, clothing, favourable environment, nourishing food, etcetera which can enhance their physical development. Besides, such parents can provide educational facilities such as school uniforms, textbooks, pay school fees which may also stimulate their children to perform well in school.

However, a possible explanation of a large number of pupils, $38,4\%$ missing is that they might not know whether or not their mothers contribute to the family income by buying groceries, etcetera for the household. Perhaps, the mothers of some of the pupils missing may have died.

3.1.4.8 The role of boys

Among the Venda people, household chores are allocated along sexual lines. Hence boys are allocated specific duties which differ from those of girls. The boys are sent out to herd the goats at a very early age while the older ones look after the cattle. According to Stayt (1968:95), cattle-herding is so important that the age of man is often reckoned from the time at which he was a herd-boy. They make good herd-boys and seem to understand the animals a great better than the older men. It is seldom that a boy returns home at night without his full complement of cattle. If he does lose an animal, he is sure to receive a sound thrashing from his father. It is the duty of the boys to send the cattle for dipping, milk the animals, work in the garden, water the flowers and plough the fields during ploughing season. Boys also hunt cane-rats and trap birds with bird-line, or shoot them with bows and arrows, or ingenious tools made from twigs.

Today, the role of boys in the Venda traditional family, has changed considerably. Because boys spend a lot of time on schooling and doing their school work, they have abandoned some of the traditional roles such as trapping birds, cane-rats and ploughing the fields; particularly those boys who live in peri-urban towns like Thohoyandou.

In summary, boys are responsible for herding the cattle and goats, sending them for dipping and milking them. They also work in the garden and water flowers.

TABLE 19.1: FREQUENCY AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF BOYS (PUPILS) IN TERMS OF HOUSEHOLD CHORES

TYPE OF CHORE	N	%
Gardening	62	39,5
Cattle/goat grazing	43	27,4
Watering flowers	52	33,1
TOTAL	157	100,0

Number missing = 3

Table 19.1 reveals that 39,5%, 27,4% and 33,1% of the boys do gardening, send cattle and goats for grazing/dipping and water flowers respectively as their household chores. As indicated in the table, most of the boys do gardening as a household chore. On the whole the table shows that 98,1% out of 160 pupils do perform chores.

TABLE 19.2: RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TIME SPENT ON HOUSEHOLD CHORES BY BOYS (PUPILS) AND SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

TIME SPENT ON HOUSEHOLD CHORES								
	30 MIN		45 MIN		60 MIN		TOTAL	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
FAIL	35	31,2	29	25,9	48	42,9	112	100,0
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
PASS	13	28,9	11	24,4	21	46,7	45	100,0
TOTAL	48	30,6	40	25,5	69	43,9	157	100,0

$p > 0,05$

Number missing = 3

Table 19.2 does not depict any significant relationship between the variables, "time spent on household chores" and school performance ($p > 0,05$).

3.1.4.9 The role of girls

Girls play more varied roles than their brothers in a household. They usually stay at home and help their mothers in drawing water from the riverside and fetching fire-wood from the bush. They are responsible for washing the dirty clothes and ironing them. Sometimes they baby-sit their small brothers and

sisters whilst their parents are away from home. In the rural areas, girls help their mother in plastering huts with cow-dung and stamping the corn. In this way, girls share the household chores with their mother. The open question in the questionnaire reveals that girls (pupils) in Thohoyandou perform many different roles, such as babysitting, cooking food, cleaning the house, washing clothes and ironing them. They are also sometimes sent out to sell vegetables and fruits in order to earn some money to supplement the family budget.

This study will try to find out whether or not, the time spent on household chores affects the performance of the girls (pupils) in school.

TABLE 20.1: FREQUENCY AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF GIRLS (PUPILS) IN TERMS OF HOUSEHOLD CHORES

TYPE OF CHORE	N	%
Babysitting	11	6,1
Cleaning	57	31,7
Cooking	77	42,8
Washing/ironing	35	19,4
TOTAL	180	100,0

Number missing = 1

As revealed in Table 20.1, girls (pupils) in Thohoyandou do babysitting, cleaning, cooking and washing and ironing as the major household chores. However, most of the girls (42,8%) do cooking as a chore. The second chore which a large number of girls (31,7%) do is cleaning of the house whilst a small number of them (6,1%) do babysitting. This is followed by washing/ironing which is done by 19,4% of the girls. The table shows that 99,4% out of 181 girls indicated that they do chores.

TABLE 20.2: RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TIME SPENT ON HOUSEHOLD CHORES BY GIRLS (PUPILS) AND SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

TIME SPENT ON HOUSEHOLD CHORES								
	30 MIN		45 MIN		60 MIN		TOTAL	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
FAIL	33	30,5	34	31,5	41	38,0	108	100,0
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
PASS	22	30,6	27	37,5	23	31,9	72	100,0
TOTAL	55	30,6	61	33,9	64	35,6	180	100,0

$p > 0,05$

Number missing = 1

Table 20.2 shows no significant relationship between the variables, "time spent on household chores" and school performance ($p > 0,05$).

3.2 FUNCTIONS OF THE FAMILY IN VENDA FROM THE FUNCTIONALIST PERSPECTIVE

Generally, the family in Venda performs many significant roles in relation to the larger society, replacing society's members through bringing children into the world, socialising children, producing and consuming goods and services, maintaining the physical and emotional well-being of its tasks within the home and special community. However, the roles of parents in Venda traditional cultural life, as has been expressed elsewhere in this study, are differentiated by sex-roles in that the father performs certain specific roles which are vastly different from that of the mother.

Consequently, the traditional education of the boys is the responsibility of the father, whilst that of the girls falls under the umbrella of the mother. The norms, beliefs, attitudes and values are transmitted by the parents to both boys and girls. Thus, through the process of socialisation, Venda parents prepare their young members for their future adult life in Venda society. As regards the preparation of pupils for life outside the Venda society, both boys and girls are taught to be hard-working, innovative, resourceful, affable and hospitable. In this regard, the boys are taught to be courageous and manly in order to face the challenges and vicissitudes of life outside the Venda society. Similarly, the girls are taught to be obedient, humble, modest, chaste and hard-working - the essential prerequisites for a

successful marriage.

It should however, be noted that the preparation of boys and girls through traditional education tends to be conservative as children prepared in this way cannot adequately and confidently cope with the challenges and rigours of the life outside Venda society because of the stringent and diverse demands of the present-day modernization.

It is noticeable that with the inception of formal schooling, the traditional roles of parents in Thohoyandou have undergone dramatic changes considerably. Parents now send their children to schools where teachers also continue with the preparation of pupils for life both inside and outside Venda society. At schools, pupils are taught different subjects, for example, the essence of punctuality, hard-work - all geared to preparing them for wider life outside Venda society. Through the systems of tests, examinations and class-work, schools award certificates to successful pupils with which they can pursue further studies or search for employment. In this regard, schools help in the socialization of pupils, and legitimising the essence of the principles of meritocracy and credentialism. Furthermore, schools transmit Venda indigenous culture as well as the western cultures to pupils, both of which pupils are required to internalize. The consequences of this type of education in terms of pupils' school performance are enormous. For it puts pupils on the horns of dilemma as which of the two

cultures they should imbibe. In some cases, pupils at an impressionable age tend to accept western cultural values as superior and to look down on their own cultural values as inferior.

Some headmasters/headmistresses allow pupils without good facilities in their homes, such as, a place to study, good light, tables and chairs, etcetera, to do their school homework and study in the schools in the evenings and week-ends. It can be said that the schools in Thohoyandou are doing reasonably commendable work with regard to the socialization of pupils. But whether the schools are actively succeeding in their educational crusade leaves much to be desired. This is evidenced by the fact that today there are too many young and inexperienced teachers who do not have the necessary capacity to counsel and guide pupils.

Besides, there have been instances when some male teachers have been found drinking beer with some of their pupils after school hours. Furthermore, some male teachers, according to the parents interviewed, have been seen having amorous and undesirable relations with some of their female pupils, resulting in unwanted early teenage pregnancies. All these unbecoming practices have, to a large extent, undermined discipline in some schools and the capabilities of schools to effectively prepare pupils for their future adult roles. Functionalist theory also places the child in a certain environment, social, economic, political, etcetera, which tends to impact on

the child's general behaviour as well as his or her performance in school.

3.2.1 The family from a Marxist perspective

According to Demaine (1981:1), Marx had little to say about education and the analysis of the role of the family. However, other sociologists like Althusser, Bowles and Gintis, Illich and many others who subscribed to the ideas of Marx wrote volumes of literature on Marxist concept of education and the functions of the family. Thus, according to Marxian analysis of the family in capitalist society, the family is seen as a unit which produces one of the basic commodities of capitalism: namely, labour. It produces it cheaply because from the view of the capitalists, they do not have to pay for the production of children or their upkeep. For example, the wife is not paid for producing and rearing children.

For instance, Margaret in Haralambos (1987:341) states that the amount of unpaid labour performed by women is very large and very profitable to those who own the means of production. To pay women for their work, even at minimum wage scales, would involve a massive distribution of wealth. At present, the support of the family is a hidden tax on the wage earner - his wage buys the labour power of two people. She maintains the fact that the husband must pay for the production and upkeep of future labour exercises a strong discipline on his behaviour at work. Further, the fact that the

husband cannot easily resign from his work when he has a wife and children to support weakens his bargaining power and commits him perpetually to wage labour. In addition Benston in Haralambos (1987:341) argues that as an economic unit the nuclear family is a valuable stabilizing force in capitalist society. Since the production which is done in the home is paid by the husband - father's earnings, his ability to withhold labour from the market is much reduced.

According to Marxist theory, the family does not only produce and rear cheap labour, but it also keeps it in good order at no cost to the employer. For, in her role as a home-maker, the woman ensures that her husband's needs are attended to expeditiously, thereby keeping him in good running order to perform his role as a wage labourer. Ansley in Haralambos (1987:341), echoing Parson's view, asserts that the family functions to stabilize adult personalities. For the wife acting as an absorbent pad, provides emotional support for and absorbs the frustration in the husband by working in a capitalist system. In this way, the frustration produced by the work in the husband, is absorbed by the comforting wife, and thus ensures the stability of the system.

However, Marxian approaches to the role of the family are criticized on the grounds that the Marxist exponents had the tendency to talk about "the family" in capitalist society without regard to possible variation in family life

between social classes and over time. Also, Morgan, quoted in Haralambos (1987:342) in criticizing both functionalist and Marxian approaches, notes that both functionalist and Marxian approaches presuppose a traditional model of the nuclear family in Europe where there is a married couple with children, where the husband is the breadwinner and where the wife stays at home to deal with the housework. The Marxian approaches to the functions of the family further assumed a family in which women are not part of the labour force.

As regards the role of providing economically for the family, many parents in Thohoyandou are in the informal sector of the economy and in semi-skilled or unskilled occupations where they earn meagre wages. Most of these parents are semi-educated or illiterate and earn as little as R260 per month; some of them even earn less than R200 per month. This evidently underpins the assertion of Bowles and Gintis (1976 quoted in Blackledge and Hunt 1985:135) who argue that education is used as the State apparatus to reproduce and maintain the capitalist economic system in a capitalist country. In this regard, most parents in Thohoyandou in South Africa have either little formal education or never had formal schooling at all. Therefore, with little or no formal education, most of the parents in Thohoyandou are in occupations where they earn little income that can hardly support themselves and their families.

Some parents who were interviewed by the author note that as a consequence of a high level of illiteracy coupled with extreme poverty, though education in South Africa is virtually fee-free, many Thohoyandou parents can hardly afford to buy school uniforms and textbooks for their children as well as pay school fund. It is therefore not uncommon to see large numbers of children lingering aimlessly about in town, washing cars or carrying shoppers' purchases to their cars for some 'tips' instead of schooling. Consequently, one can argue that the cob-web of poverty and illiteracy in which most Venda parents find themselves, can be attributed to, a large extent, the outcomes of the educational system, that is, the Bantu Education that existed in the past. In this respect, the Bantu Education sowed the seeds of both social and economic inequalities between the various racial groupings - Thus the Bantu Education was intentionally designed to produce a large number of semi-skilled and unskilled blacks who were used as a source of cheap labour to support the economy in South Africa. This assertion was supported by Christie and Collins (1984 in Allais and McKay 1995:39) who argue that the inequalities in Bantu Education would preserve the ideology of inferiority and the social relations of domination and subordination.

Thus a large number of the blacks had to sustain the economy of South Africa by serving in a "docile, disciplined, submissive, subservient and subordinate" position. To this end, Mathonsi (1988:41) argues that in a

capitalist society the education system functions to meet the needs of capitalist employers for a disciplined and skilled labour force and to provide a mechanism for social control. In this respect, the Bantu Education system was used to act as a "silent ideological state apparatus" in the interest of political stability characterised by job-reservation, Group Areas Act, Influx Control, preferable employed groups in certain industrial zones, Pass Laws, etcetera. In this way, education in South Africa was directly linked to political and economic forces. Black (African) education was geared to producing workers while white education created the management sector in South Africa. Although the Bantu Education has been scrapped with the inception of the new political dispensation, its damaging effects are so deep-rooted and endemic in the fabric of the black society in South Africa that it will take many years to redress the yawning and gaping economic imbalances between the blacks and the whites. Hence many Venda parents, like the other blacks in other parts of South Africa, would have to live with problems of illiteracy, unemployment, poverty and the like for many years to come.

It should, however, be pointed out that in spite of incalculable economic harm done to the blacks by the Bantu Education, there is a gradual emergence of blacks of the middle-class in Thohoyandou and elsewhere in other parts of South Africa. For example, there are black doctors, lawyers, engineers, university professors, teachers, businessmen, and businesswomen

who are reasonably well-to-do. Nevertheless, according to Le Roux (1993:91), large numbers of blacks are still bedeviled with a host of problems, among which are unemployment, illiteracy, poverty, malnutrition, uncongenial learning home environment, for example, living in "match-boxes", "make-shifts", tin shacks, cardboard shacks, tents and old cars in squatter locations some of which have no proper sanitation, tarred streets, clean drinking water, electricity and the like. All these problems hinder black families from providing their children with the minimum necessities of life.

As a result, most black families can hardly afford a decent meal per day, nor are they able to clothe their children adequately. All these are also compounded by resurgence of a high level of crimes such as violence, rape, child abuse, robbery, early teenage pregnancies, drug-peddling - just to mention a few. It should be mentioned that the unfavourable situations in which the black pupils find themselves have contributed to demoralising them, and making them have a distorted and gloomy vision about their future. Such is the miserable plight of the underprivileged black families, which underpins the Marxist view that education is used and manipulated by the people in the dominant position or ruling class to perpetuate the economic and racial inequalities between the whites and the blacks in South Africa.

3.3 CONCLUSION

This chapter discusses the various literature pertinent to the subject of study. It points out that formal educational institutions are taking over from the family, in the teaching of specific skills as well as normative teaching. It is, however, argued that in the most advanced economy, the school does not take over the education of the child completely. For, the family still continues to play an important role in the child's education. Thus, for the child to perform well in school, he or she needs both moral and material support from the family.

Therefore, the school and the family cannot be viewed as two independent bodies performing entirely two different functions, because both of them perform complementary functions. The family lays the foundation on which the school shapes the personality of the child.

The study also highlights the major features of the Venda extended family, and some changes taking place in the structure and functions of the Venda family especially in the urban towns. It further spells out the roles of significant others, for example, the "makhadzi" (aunt), the "malume" (uncle), biological parents, boys and girls. Furthermore, the occupations and incomes of the family are discussed in terms of its impact on the school performance of children.

Finally, the roles of the family are discussed from both functionalist and Marxist perspectives. It points out that functionalist and Marxist perspectives place the child in a certain environment, for example, social, economic, political, etcetera, that influences the child's school performance.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. LEARNING HOME ENVIRONMENT

4.1 WHAT IS ENVIRONMENT?

Environment may be defined as consisting of all external sources and factors to which a person or aggregate of persons is actually or potentially responsive. Thus an environment may be broken down into physical, social and cultural and elements, such as, tools and instruments forming part of the cultural environment. Environment also refers to one's surroundings, the material things around one, the area one lives in, the living things, objects, spaces and forces with which one lives whether close to or far away. The Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary (1993:406) defines environment as "the aggregate of all the external conditions and influences affecting the life and, development of an organism."

Further, the word "environment" denotes something more than surroundings which encompass an individual. It denotes the specific continuity of the surroundings with its own tendencies. According to Le Roux (1993:96), environment can be conceptualised as a vehicle for transformation and also as the space in which transformation can take place. He asserts further that

child and environment are coexistential and co-essential, interdependent, inseparable, and interwoven. Thus the environment consists of those conditions that promote or inhibit the characteristic activities of a living being. Water, for instance, is an environment of a fish because it is necessary to the activities of the fish, that is, to its life. Environment therefore also signifies what enters into this activity as a sustaining or frustrating condition.

This follows that a person whose activities are associated with others has a social environment. What that person does and what he or she can do depends upon the expectations of others. It is believed that people who are connected with other people cannot perform their own activities effectively without taking the activities of those they are connected with into consideration. The literature on social environment, according to Le Roux (1993:93), argues that the environment in which a child grows up plays an important role in the direction and outcome of that child's development. A non-supportive environment impedes development while a supportive environment facilitates development. According to Pretorius (1987 in Le Roux 1993:106-107), contends that social environment is so important that environmentally deprived children manifest undesirable behaviour patterns and attitudes. They tend to be troublesome both in class and at home. They drop out academically and socially and they tend to absent themselves from classes and play truant. In fact, they develop personality problems. Again,

Booyse (1989 in Le Roux 1993:93), in supporting this view, describes the depriving environment as follows:

"an impoverished environment that is devoid of opportunity; unstable interpersonal relationships; inadequate cognitive development; a culturally different educational level; and a poor residential area with conditions such as overcrowded housing, noise, crime, and other socio-pathological phenomena."

It is noted, however, that the situation in Thohoyandou and South Africa in general is not too far different from the picture depicted by Booyse above. Low family income, lack of inadequate housing facilities such as study room, a good light, table and chair for study and school homework, inability of most parents to supervise their children's school homework due to illiteracy, lack of parental motivation and support, poor nutrition and the general non-supportive and unfavourable climate in the homes of black families have contributed and still contribute to the environmental deprivation of black children (pupils). Undoubtedly, these environmental shortcomings do adversely affect the performance of children in schools.

Furthermore, ad-hoc investigations have produced evidence that it is the environment rather than genes which most influences intellectual developments. In the study of a group of children in an overcrowded orphanage, who were considered too retarded to be adopted, Burt and Skeels (1966 in Meighan 1989:172) found that average I.Q. for the group had risen

to 92,8, an increase of 28,5, after moving children to a smaller, more home-like environment and encouraging individual care for each one as well as a variety of toys and stimulating material. There also have been studies of mentally handicapped adults who showed improvements in I.Q. when transferred to a more stimulating environment. The research of Burt and Skeels (1966 in Meighan 1989:173) was concerned with how children acquire intelligence. An underlying assumption of these arguments is that the measuring of intelligence is socially necessary. But before intelligence can be measured, it must be defined. It has been, in fact, extremely difficult to obtain an acceptable definition of intelligence as a whole.

Bowles and Gintis (1976:49) point out that while there is an undoubted relationship between high occupational status and I.Q., this could just as easily be explained by social background or environment as by inherited intelligence.

4.2 WHAT DOES "LEARNING HOME ENVIRONMENT" MEAN?

Berger and Berger (1972 in Le Roux 1993:84) describe home environment as a retreat when one becomes engulfed by tensions, frustrations and anxieties that characterise the larger macro-world. It is the home where people are prepared and equipped to encounter the difficult outside world of work with its social and economic demands. Home is also a place where

people rear their children, they establish emotional ties with members of their family, and from where they establish social relationships with the community. It is therefore a haven, a place to relax, enjoy family life and learn to be a good citizen.

Home should furthermore, be a haven for the child, a place where a child can experience acceptance, respect, positive regard and co-operation and learns to be integrated into society (Le Roux, 1993:84). A home is the basic social unit or environment in which a child is educated where a child's social, physical, moral, affective, cognitive, conative and spiritual potentials are adequately and appropriately stimulated and where socialization actually originates (Le Roux , 1993:85).

In this regard, home and family dynamics are powerful agents of socialization. Also, it is the home where a child's needs are met; not only the basic needs for food, shelter and protection, but also high order needs, such as, the need to be accepted and the need to realize one's potential. Hence an educationally appropriate environment, both physical and non-physical, affects the total development of a child. Consequently, the nature and quality of the home environment in which a child grows up is of paramount importance for a child's development. This means that the home, as an important aspect of the environment plays a dominant role in preparing a child for adult life. By the same token, the development of the child's

personality is profoundly and extensively influenced by the quality of the education offered at home.

MacIver and Page (1962 in Le Roux 1993:85) speak of the importance of the home environment (or household) by listing the home as an example of the common or universal characteristics of a family unit. They argue that education does not occur in a physical vacuum or in nothingness. A physical locality or space must be available or present before education can occur; and a home is such a place. The nature and characteristics of the physical home affects and in many instances determines the course and outcome of education. They further assert that if the child is deprived of a proper home, which is often the case when the father is absent from home due to occupational obligations or where there is lack of material things, education will not really be experienced as a facilitating agent in the total development of the child.

In the same vein, Le Roux (1993:31) points out that education is embedded in and influenced by social factors in a social environment. Education cannot be isolated from societal influence. The upbringing of a child as it occurs in the contemporary family and school is enacted against a social background. There is ongoing interaction between the education environment and society. The child is educated for acceptance in society on the basis of the norms, values and skills that children acquire.

The picture painted about the conditions in the learning home environment in the west by the previous authors in this study are not far different from the situation in the learning home environment in Thohoyandou. In order to verify the pupils' description of the physical conditions in their home environments, the researcher interviewed forty elderly parents, comprising twenty men and twenty women selected randomly from the universe. According to some elderly Thohoyandou parents consulted by the author (oral: 24-09-1995), the learning home environment is where the child lives, grows up and learns until he or she becomes an adult.

From the interview, it emerged that the conditions in some Thohoyandou learning home environments are not congenial for effective school work. Some of them do not have facilities such as a separate study room, table and chair and good light. As a consequence, some pupils do their school work in the sitting-room or dining-room. Some parents also have no capacity to assist their children with their school work in the home because they are illiterate or working outside Venda as migrant workers or are preoccupied with their heavy work commitments. In some cases, some houses are situated near shebeens whose loud music serves as a distraction to pupils when they are studying. Pupils in such an environment obviously cannot concentrate and this adversely affects their school performance.

Furthermore, the parents again (oral: 13-10-1995), indicated that some women are compelled to raise their children single-handedly because their husbands are migrant workers. As a consequence, the women encounter problems in enforcing discipline in the home since the children are aware that traditionally it is the father who can discipline them. This often creates conflict and tension between the mother and her children resulting in some children deserting the home to stay with their friends. Also, some fathers who are migrant workers do not remit adequate money for the family. This does impoverish the family where the mother is earning a low income or not working at all. In such a situation, she is not able to provide the needs of her children adequately. Undoubtedly such a frustratingly impoverished situation adversely impacts on pupils' performance in school.

TABLE 21 : FREQUENCY AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENTS IN TERMS OF THE DWELLINGS THEY LIVE IN

TYPE OF DWELLING	N	%
House	253	75,1
Flat	12	3,6
Hut	66	19,6
Shack	6	1,8
TOTAL	337	100,0

Number missing = 4

Table 21 shows that 253 (75,1%), 12 (3,6%), 66 (19,6%) and 6 (1,8%) of pupils live in houses, flats, huts and shacks respectively. It also shows that a large number of pupils live in houses as compared to the other types of dwellings.

TABLE 22.1 : RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STUDENTS AND THE AVAILABILITY OF A STUDY ROOM AND THEIR SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

AVAILABILITY OF STUDY ROOM IN:										
	HOUSE		FLAT		HUT		SHACK		TOTAL	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
FAIL	47	79,7	2	3,4	9	15,2	1	1,7	59	100,0
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
PASS	13	72,2	1	5,6	4	22,2	0	0,0	18	100,0
TOTAL	60	77,9	3	3,9	13	16,9	1	1,3	77	100,0

$p > 0,05$

Number missing = 264

Table 22.1 does not reveal any statistically significant relationship between the variables, "the availability of study room in a house, flat, hut, shack" and school performance ($p > 0,05$).

Facilities such as a study room in the home can be a factor in enabling pupils to perform well in school.

77% of 341 pupils did not indicate whether they had a study room. It could be that they used their schools as a study place.

TABLE 22.2 : RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PUPILS WHO USED THEIR SCHOOLS AS A STUDY PLACE AND THEIR SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

PUPILS USED SCHOOLS AS A STUDY PLACE		
	N	%
FAIL	144	55,2
	N	%
PASS	117	44,8
TOTAL	261	100,0

$p > 0,05$

Number missing = 80

Table 22.2 does not depict any statistically significant relationship between pupils who used their schools as a study place and their school performance ($p > 0,05$).

However, the picture shows that 76,5% of 341 pupils used their schools as a study place because they had no study rooms in their homes. The picture also shows that only a few pupils had study rooms in their homes.

TABLE 23.1: RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PUPILS ROOMING WITH OTHER PERSONS IN A HOUSE/FLAT AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

NUMBER OF PUPILS ROOMING												
	DON'T ROOM		WITH 1		WITH 2		WITH 3		WITH 4		TOTAL	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
FAIL	44	31,4	40	28,6	30	21,4	20	14,3	6	4,3	140	100,0
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
PASS	27	29,0	25	26,9	27	29,0	8	8,6	6	6,5	93	100,0
TOTAL	71	30,5	65	27,9	57	24,5	28	12,0	12	5,2	233	100,0

$p > 0,05$

Number missing = 108

According to Table 23.1, there is no statistically significant relationship between the variables, "pupils rooming with one, two, three or four pupils: and their school performance ($p > 0,05$).

TABLE 23.2: RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PUPILS ROOMING WITH OTHER PERSONS IN THE SAME ROOM IN A HUT/SHACK AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

NUMBER OF PUPILS ROOMING												
	DON'T ROOM		WITH 1		WITH 2		WITH 3		WITH 4		TOTAL	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
FAIL	3	8,8	8	23,5	9	26,5	9	26,5	5	14,7	34	100,0
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
PASS	4	16,0	7	28,0	11	44,0	3	12,0	0	0,0	25	100,0
TOTAL	7	11,9	15	25,4	20	33,9	12	20,3	5	8,5	59	100,0

$p > 0,05$

Number missing = 282

As indicated in Table 23.2, no statistically significant relationship exists between the variables, "students sharing a room with one student, two students, three students, four students in a hut/shack" and school performance ($p > 0,05$).

A possible explanation of a large number of pupils (83%) missing, could be that they shared a room with more than four other pupils, as is usually the case of pupils who sleep in huts/shacks.

TABLE 24 : RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PUPILS WHO SLEEP ON A BED AND THOSE WHO DON'T SLEEP ON A BED, AND THEIR ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

	PUPILS WHO DON'T SLEEP ON A BED		PUPILS WHO SLEEP ON A BED		TOTAL	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
FAIL	42	20,9	159	79,1	201	100,0
	N	%	N	%	N	%
PASS	23	17,3	110	82,7	133	100,0
TOTAL	65	19,5	269	80,5	334	100,0

$p > 0,05$

Number missing = 7

Table 24 does not reveal any statistically significant relationship between the variables, "students who don't sleep on a bed", "students who sleep on a bed" and school performance ($p > 0,05$).

It is to be noted, however, that $\pm 82,7\%$ of students who slept on a bed passed compared to $17,3\%$ of students who did not sleep on a bed. This picture also seems to support the assumption that students who have such a facility in the home are likely to sleep comfortably, and hence perform well in school than those students who sleep in a less comfortable place.

TABLE 25 : RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PUPILS WHO FEEL REFRESHED AFTER A NIGHT'S REST AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

	PUPILS WHO DON'T FEEL REFRESHED AFTER A NIGHT'S REST		PUPILS WHO FEEL REFRESHED AFTER A NIGHT'S REST		TOTAL	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
FAIL	35	17,8	162	82,2	197	100,0
	N	%	N	%	N	%
PASS	15	11,1	120	88,9	135	100,0
TOTAL	50	15,1	282	84,9	332	100,0

$p > 0,05$

Number missing = 9

Also, Table 25 does not depict any statistically significant relationship between the variables, "students who do not feel refreshed after a night's rest", "students who feel refreshed after a night's rest" and school performance ($p > 0,05$).

It seems however, that $\pm 88,9\%$ of students who felt refreshed after a night's rest passed, which is much higher than students 11,1% of students who did not feel refreshed under the category of pass.

The reason for this picture is that students who had a good night's rest are likely to wake up refreshed the next day and to be able to concentrate on their schoolwork. Hence students in this category are likely to perform better than those who did not have a good rest.

TABLE 26 : RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PUPILS USING CHAIRS AND TABLES WHEN DOING SCHOOLWORK AT HOME AND THEIR ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

	PUPILS WHO DON'T USE CHAIRS/TABLES		PUPILS WHO USE CHAIRS/TABLES		TOTAL	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
FAIL	11	5,6	186	94,4	197	100,0
	N	%	N	%	N	%
PASS	19	14,2	115	85,8	134	100,0
TOTAL	30	9,1	301	90,9	331	100,0

$p > 0,05$

Number missing = 10

Table 26 does not show any statistically significant relationship between the variables, "students who do not use chairs and tables", "students who use chairs and tables" when doing schoolwork at home and school performance ($p > 0,05$).

It seems however, that $\pm 85,5\%$ of students who used chairs and tables passed, which is much higher than $14,2\%$ of students who did not have this facility in the home, under category of pass.

This trend seems to lend support to the conclusions that such facilities in students' home can be a factor to enhance their school performance.

TABLE 27 : RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PUPILS USING DIFFERENT TYPES OF LIGHT FOR STUDY AT HOME AND THEIR ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

TYPES OF LIGHT								
	PARAFFIN		CANDLE		ELECTRIC		TOTAL	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
FAIL	77	38,5	24	12,0	99	49,5	200	100,0
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
PASS	47	35,3	14	10,6	72	54,1	133	100,0
TOTAL	124	37,2	38	11,4	171	51,4	333	100,0

$p > 0,05$

Number missing = 8

It is to be noted that Table 27 does not show statistically significant relationship between the variables, "students who use the following light for school work in the home: paraffin light, candle-light, electric light and other

light” and school performance ($p > 0,05$).

It seems however, that in the category pass, $\pm 51,4\%$ of students who used electric light passed compared to students who used other types of lighting.

TABLE 28 : RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CHORES INTERFERENCE IN PUPIL'S SCHOOL WORK IN THE HOME AND THEIR ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

	CHORES DID NOT INTERFERE		CHORES INTERFERED		TOTAL	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
FAIL	164	86,8	25	13,2	189	100,0
	N	%	N	%	N	%
PASS	112	90,3	12	9,7	124	100,0
TOTAL	276	88,2	37	11,8	313	100,0

$p > 0,05$

Number missing = 28

Table 28 does not show any significant relationship between the variables, “non-interference in chores”, “interference in chores” and school performance ($p > 0,05$).

TABLE 29 : FREQUENCY AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF PUPILS WHO HAD TELEVISION SETS, RADIO AND MAGAZINES IN THE HOMES

Available in the home	N	%
Television sets	295	86,5
Radio	31	9,1
Magazines	15	4,4
TOTAL	341	100,0

Table 29 shows that 295 (86,5%), 31 (9,1%) and 15 (4,4%) of students have television sets, radio and magazines respectively in their homes. This trend further depicts that today more students are exposed to television programmes particularly students in big towns, and hence they are able to learn through television educational programmes. Students who have such facility are likely to acquaint themselves with events taking place both nationally and globally. Therefore, students with such exposure are stimulated and perform better in school.

It should be noted that although radio and magazines also disseminate important messages, they are not as effective as the television where students can see what is happening.

TABLE 30 : FREQUENCY AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF PUPILS WHO WATCH TELEVISION AT HOME

Where pupils watch television	N	%
Pupils watch TV at home	271	91,9
Pupils watch TV elsewhere	24	8,1
TOTAL	295	100,0

Number missing = 46

According to Table 30, 271 (91,9%) and 24 (8,1%) of students watch television at home and elsewhere respectively. This trend shows that although 85,3% out of 341 students have television sets in their homes, 24 of them chose to watch television elsewhere.

The probable reason for this state of affairs is that the 24 students may not have access to the television in their homes due to the restrictions imposed on television by their parents. It could also be that they chose to watch television in their friends homes where they would feel free to share ideas about television programmes.

TABLE 31 : RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PUPILS' TIME SPENT WATCHING TELEVISION PER DAY AND THEIR ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

TIME PUPILS SPENT WATCHING TELEVISION PER DAY?																
	30 MINS		60 MINS		120 MINS		180 MINS		240 MINS		300 MINS		300+MINS		TOTAL	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
FAIL	28	15,2	37	20,0	44	23,9	25	13,6	6	3,3	6	3,3	38	20,7	184	100,0
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
PASS	19	17,1	31	27,9	27	24,3	10	9,0	9	8,2	5	4,5	10	9,0	111	100,0
TOTAL	47	15,9	68	23,1	71	24,1	35	11,9	15	5,0	11	3,7	48	16,3	295	100,0

$p > 0,05$

Number missing = 46

Table 31 does not show a statistically significant relationship between the variables; “students who spend 30 minutes, 60 minutes, 120 minutes, 180 minutes, 240 minutes, 300 minutes plus respectively in watching television programmes” and their school performance ($p > 0,05$).

TABLE 32 : NUMBER OF HOMES WHICH HAVE REFERENCE BOOKS AND THOSE WHICH HAVE NO REFERENCE BOOKS

	N	%
Homes with reference books	198	58,9
Homes without reference books	138	41,1
TOTAL	336	100,0

Number missing = 5

The table shows that $\pm 60\%$ of the pupils do have reference books at home while $\pm 40\%$ do not have.

TABLE 33 : RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PUPILS WHO REFERRED TO REFERENCE BOOKS AND SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

	USED REFERENCE BOOKS		DID NOT USE REFERENCE BOOKS		TOTAL	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
FAIL	115	84,6	21	15,4	136	100,0
	N	%	N	%	N	%
PASS	78	83,3	15	16,1	93	100,0
TOTAL	193	84,3	36	15,7	229	100,0

$p > 0,05$

Number missing = 112

According to Table 33, no significant relationship exists between the variables, "students who used reference books", "students who did not use reference books in the home" and school performance ($p > 0,05$).

TABLE 34 : FREQUENCY AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF THE MODE OF TRANSPORT USED BY PUPILS

MODE OF TRANSPORT	N	%
Walking	240	72,5
Bus	10	3,0
Taxi	74	22,4
Bicycle	6	1,8
Father's car	1	0,3
TOTAL	331	100,0

Number missing = 10

As indicated by Table 34, 240 students, 10 students, 74 students, 6 students walked, used buses, taxis and bicycles respectively to school. However 240 (72,5%) of 331 students walk to school.

TABLE 35 : FREQUENCY AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF THE TIME TAKEN TO ARRIVE AT SCHOOL BY PUPILS

TIME	N	%
10 MINUTES	76	24,1
15 MINUTES	80	25,4
20 MINUTES	64	20,3
30 MINUTES	66	21,0
60 MINUTES	29	9,2
TOTAL	315	100,0

Number missing = 26

Table 35 reveals that 90,8% of 315 students took between 10 minutes and 30 minutes to arrive at school. This indicates that most of the students live not far from the schools. Only 9,2% of 315 students took 60 minutes to get to the school which indicates that a small number of students live relatively far away from their schools.

4.3 FOUR MAJOR FOOD NUTRIENTS

According to Tendani C. Takalani, Chief Community Liaison Officer, Community and Clinical Nutrition Dietician, Thohoyandou, (Oral: 01 January 1997), there are four major nutrients: protein, vitamin C, carbohydrates and fats. Takalani asserts that for a pupil to develop well physically and mentally, the pupil must eat food containing those four major food nutrients. The four major food nutrients, in the right proportion, are regarded as adequate for a healthy human body. Therefore, a pupil who eats breakfast/lunch/supper containing the four major food nutrients is deemed to have eaten adequate food. On the contrary, any food items lacking the four major nutrients, are regarded as inadequate. Thus, the four major foods of nutritional value were used as indicators of adequate or inadequate breakfast/lunch/supper.

TABLE 36.1 : NUMBER OF PUPILS WHO TAKE ADEQUATE BREAKFAST

ADEQUATE BREAKFAST	NUMBER OF PUPILS
Bread/porridge/eggs	15
Bread/tea/fruits	52
Cereal/bread/tea	43
Pap/milk/tea	21
Total	131

Table 36.1 indicates that 38,4% (131) of 341 who usually take breakfast before going to school, do have adequate breakfast.

TABLE 36.2 : NUMBER OF PUPILS WHO TAKE INADEQUATE BREAKFAST

INADEQUATE BREAKFAST	NUMBER OF PUPILS
Pap/stew	73
Bread/tea	56
Pap/bread/tea	27
Bread/porridge	49
Total	205

Number missing = 5

Table 36.2 shows 60,1% (205) of 341 pupils have inadequate breakfast. The possible reason may be that their parents cannot provide adequate breakfast due to limited financial resources.

TABLE 36.3 : RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PUPILS WHO TAKE ADEQUATE/INADEQUATE BREAKFAST FOOD OF NUTRITIONAL VALUE AND THEIR SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

	ADEQUATE BREAKFAST		INADEQUATE BREAKFAST		TOTAL	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
FAIL	79	32,5	164	67,5	243	100,0
	N	%	N	%	N	%
PASS	52	55,9	41	44,1	93	100,0
TOTAL	131	39,0	205	61,0	336	100,0

$p > 0,05$

Number missing = 5

There is no statistically significant relationship between the variables, "pupils who take adequate breakfast", "pupils who take inadequate breakfast" and school performance ($p > 0,05$).

TABLE 37.1 : NUMBER OF PUPILS WHO TAKE ADEQUATE LUNCH AT SCHOOL

ADEQUATE LUNCH	NUMBER OF PUPILS
Pap/meat/eggs	36
Pap/vegetables/soft drink	53
Bread/polony/milk	11
Bread/atchar/soft drink	29
Total	129

Table 37.1, 37,8% (129) of 341 pupils take adequate lunch at school.

TABLE 37.2 : NUMBER OF PUPILS WHO TAKE INADEQUATE LUNCH AT SCHOOL

INADEQUATE LUNCH	NUMBER OF PUPILS
Bread/soft drink	81
Pap/soft drink	32
Bread/jam	37
Bread/polony	51
Total	201

Missing number = 11

Table 37.2 depicts 58,9% (201) of 341 pupils take inadequate lunch at school. This trend may probably mean that the parents cannot afford to provide their children with adequate lunch due to financial constraints.

TABLE 37.3 : RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PUPILS WHO TAKE ADEQUATE/INADEQUATE LUNCH AT SCHOOL AND THEIR SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

	ADEQUATE LUNCH		INADEQUATE LUNCH		TOTAL	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
FAIL	88	35,1	163	64,9	251	100,0
	N	%	N	%	N	%
PASS	41	51,9	38	48,1	79	100,0
TOTAL	129	39,1	201	60,9	330	100,0

$p > 0,05$

Number missing = 11

Table 37,3 does not depict any statistically significant relationship between the variables, "pupils who take adequate lunch", "pupils who take inadequate lunch" and school performance ($p > 0,05$).

TABLE 38.1 : NUMBER OF PUPILS WHO TAKE ADEQUATE SUPPER

ADEQUATE SUPPER	NUMBER OF PUPILS
Pap/meat/eggs	19
Pap/vegetables/sausage/tea	53
Pap/meat/tea	51
Rice/vegetable/milk	20
Total	143

Table 38.1 shows that 38,2% (143) of 374 pupils who usually take supper, do have adequate supper at home.

TABLE 38.2 : NUMBER OF PUPILS WHO TAKE INADEQUATE SUPPER

INADEQUATE SUPPER	NUMBER OF PUPILS
Rice/vegetable	23
Pap/vegetable	86
Bread/tea	31
Pap/bread/tea	55
Total	195

Missing number = 3

Table 38.2 indicates that 57,2% (231) of 341 pupils have inadequate supper. The probable reason for this picture is that their parents are unable to provide adequate supper due to their limited financial constraints.

TABLE 38.3 : RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PUPILS WHO TAKE ADEQUATE/INADEQUATE SUPPER AND THEIR SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

	ADEQUATE SUPPER		INADEQUATE SUPPER		TOTAL	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
FAIL	96	38,7	152	61,3	248	100,0
	N	%	N	%	N	%
PASS	47	52,2	43	47,8	90	100,0
TOTAL	143	42,3	195	57,7	338	100,0

$p > 0,05$

Number missing = 3

According to Table 38.3, there is no statistically significant relationship between the variables, "pupils who take adequate supper", "pupils who take inadequate supper" and school performance ($p > 0,05$).

4.4 SUMMARY OF ACTUAL FINDINGS

Chapter 1: It concerns the general introduction of the subject of study, for example, the problem area, the significance of the study, and the operationalization of the key concepts specific to this study. It also discusses the sample, methods of gathering data, interpreting the data and problems encountered in undertaking this study.

Chapter 2: It was discovered that most of the pupils have high expectations, both parents and teacher expectations and use English as a medium of instruction at school, but they still perform poorly.

Chapter 3: It was found that although the majority of pupils have frequent contact with both parents and have ample time for their school work at home and their parents receive good salary, they still perform poorly in school.

Chapter 4: It was found that most of the pupils live near their schools and therefore need not use transport to school, have high levels of motivation and are, in fact, motivated by their parents, but still do not perform well in school. Furthermore, the majority of pupils have facilities such as proper lighting, adequate meals, beds to sleep on, tables and chairs for study, watch television in their homes, and have no chores interference, but still do not perform well in school.

4.5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings presented above reveal clearly that the number of variables are not related to academic performance in this particular study. Thus, whereas the number of variables are strongly associated with school performance in the various studies done in Europe, particularly in England, it is quite a

different picture in the study done in Thohoyandou. The reasons for these different trends are not far-fetched; in Europe educational levels of parents, parental expectations, parents' occupations and income are all vastly different from what was obtained in Thohoyandou. Furthermore, teachers' and pupils' expectations, facilities in the home and levels of nutrition in Europe are quite different from what we have in Thohoyandou.

This study has amply shown that pupils in Thohoyandou have identical family backgrounds and household conditions. The level of pupils' expectations and motivation is very low because they have no hope of securing employment when they see that there are thousands of professionally trained teachers who cannot get teaching posts or any other jobs. Nor do they hope to enter any tertiary institutions considering the fact that the number of pupils who complete matriculation outnumber the existing places in the tertiary institutions. Besides, most of the pupils who complete matriculation cannot afford to pay the tuition fees, assuming they are offered admissions in the tertiary institutions without securing a bursary or any form of financial sponsorship. The pupils have parents who are poor, and yet have to support large extended families. Thus, the pupils in Thohoyandou are disillusioned and have no strong determination to work hard at school. This partly accounts for a large number of failures at both matriculation and standard 8 levels.

Other possible factors other than those tested that can contribute to pupils' poor performance in schools in Thohoyandou are a high teacher-pupil ratio, heavy teaching workload of teachers, teachers doing private studies, overcrowding in the classrooms, lack of facilities such as library, science laboratories, adequate textbooks, furniture, lack of in-service training courses for teachers in the field, and teachers teaching subjects in which they have no specialization. Added to these factors are politicization of teachers as well as pupils, and the erosion of a culture of learning precipitated by the students' uprising in 1976.

Teachers have to grapple with the problem of a high teacher-pupil ratio in the schools in Thohoyandou. It is not uncommon for one to see a teacher handling a class of more than eighty pupils. Classes are heavily overcrowded and some pupils have to stand and take down notes while attending classes due to acute shortage of chairs and desks. It is also common knowledge that a teacher cannot give individual attention under such conditions. Therefore, teaching is likely to be ineffective and, this can adversely impact on pupils' performance.

Also, lack of facilities such as libraries and science laboratories in the schools in Thohoyandou do hamper teacher effectiveness, which in turn, adversely affects the quality of teaching. In fact, lack of science laboratories renders the teaching of science too theoretical as pupils have no opportunity to

perform experiments. Therefore, teachers in such situations are forced to resort to diagrammatic representations on the chalkboard when illustrating a point instead of showing the real specimen or conducting experiments. All these shortcomings impinge badly on the performance of pupils in schools in Thohoyandou.

There also exists inadequate supply of school textbooks in some of the schools in Thohoyandou. In some cases textbooks arrive so late that teachers are unable to complete the syllabus satisfactorily before pupils write their examination.

Another problem area that contributes to pupils' poor performance in schools in Thohoyandou is the erosion of a culture of learning. The loss of a culture of learning was precipitated by the politicization of pupils as well as teachers due to the general political climate in South Africa at that time. With regard to pupils, the students' uprising was against the imposition of Afrikaans as the medium of instruction in black schools throughout South Africa. This resentment triggered off students boycotting classes in the major towns in South Africa and, this upheaval split over into Venda and other homelands. In this regard, the culture of learning in schools in Thohoyandou was also thrown into the winds after the dust had settled down. Pupils adopted a slogan "Pass one, Pass all." "Liberation before Education." Thus, the students' uprising in 1976 was the last straw that broke the camel's back.

For it eroded the culture of learning in the classrooms in schools in Thohoyandou. Pupils no longer saw the need to study hard because of the lack of job opportunities.

All these factors have contributed to lowering the level of motivation of pupils in Thohoyandou, resulting in their poor performance in schools.

4.6 RECOMMENDATIONS

As the conditions in pupils' households in Thohoyandou are identical, and not conducive for good school performance, the author contends that conditions in schools in Thohoyandou should be improved in order to compensate the shortcomings in pupils' homes. In this regard, the researcher makes the following recommendations:

1. that afternoon classes be vigorously supervised by teachers, and not to be regarded as a matter of routine.
2. that teachers should have the necessary qualifications in the subjects they teach.
3. that the high teacher-pupil ratio should be reduced to say, 1:40. This will enable teachers to give individual attention to pupils.
4. that the heavy teaching work-load of teachers be reasonably lessened in order to make teachers more effective in the classroom.

5. that more spacious classroom accommodation be provided in order to avoid overcrowding.
6. that adequate chairs and desks be provided in the classrooms in order to prevent pupils from standing while attending classes.
7. that school textbooks be supplied to schools timeously to avoid the syllabus not being completed satisfactorily.
8. that libraries and science laboratories be provided in all schools in order to cultivate the habit of reading and searching for information in our pupils as well as making the teaching of science subjects practical.
9. that qualified teacher-librarians be appointed to run school libraries.
10. that teachers who are experienced should be allowed to teach pupils in the lower classes in order to lay a solid foundation.
11. that teachers who have many years of teaching experience should not be promoted and sent to head offices as educational administrators. Such teachers can be appointed but they should be assigned to classrooms where they can continue to use their vast teaching experience.
12. that in-service training courses should be organised periodically in order to acquaint teachers with new methods and techniques of teaching.
13. that principals and teachers should involve parents in the education of their children. For example, parents should be encouraged to attend parent-teacher-pupil meetings. Parents should also be invited to the

schools on 'Open Day' in order to look at their children's school work and to discuss problems of their children with class teachers.

14. that principals should allow pupils who have no place to study at home to go to their schools to study in the evenings and weekends where it is possible.
15. that the Ministry of Education should mount a vigorous campaign to educate parents as to how they can help their children with their schoolwork or how they can get involved in their children's education.
16. basic adult education for parents to reduce illiteracy.

Finally, it is the hope and conviction of the author that if the recommendations were fully implemented, it would go a long way to enhance pupils' performance not only in Thohoyandou but also in the whole of South Africa. No doubt that the implementation of most of the recommendations would require huge amounts of money which cannot be borne by tax-payers alone. This is the more reason why the government should woo foreign investors to invest in the country by making conditions attractive. The government should also solicit the participation of big business concerns. With vision and undivided determination, the government can attain success.