

AN INVESTIGATION OF FAMILY/PARENT  
BACKGROUND AND LEARNING HOME  
ENVIRONMENT ON THE ACADEMIC  
PERFORMANCE OF STD 8 PUPILS IN THE  
NORTHERN PROVINCE

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by

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**TABLE 1.2 : TEACHING EXPERIENCE OF STD 8 TEACHERS IN THE  
 SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOLS AT  
 THOHOYANDOU, VENDA**

<b>NUMBER OF TEACHERS</b>	<b>TEACHING EXPERIENCE (IN YEARS)</b>
25	1 - 5
42	6 - 11
10	12 - 17
6	18 - 23
<b>TOTAL = 83</b>	

Table 1.2 depicts the number of years of teaching experience of Std 8 teachers. It is interesting to note that 69.9% out of the 83 teachers have years of teaching experience stretching from 6-23 years. Only 25 teachers have 1-5 years of teaching experience. On the whole, all the teachers are quite experienced.

## DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of my late grand-mother Nana Akua Ayimaah, and my late parents, Wilson Kwaku Yeboah and Rose Amma Boadiwaa-Yeboah, for expertly guiding me and giving me the much-needed emotional and financial support throughout my education. That I am what I am today is due to their unselfish sacrifice and unfailing commitment to my education.

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Finally, I am graciously grateful to my wife, Comfort, and my children for the patience and understanding they displayed throughout the preparation of this thesis. Their moral support is profoundly appreciated.

**AN INVESTIGATION OF FAMILY/PARENT BACKGROUND AND LEARNING HOME ENVIRONMENT ON THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF STD 8 PUPILS IN THE NORTHERN PROVINCE**

**ABSTRACT**

This thesis discusses how a variety of factors like socio-economic status and educational levels of family/parents affect Std 8 pupils' school performance in twelve selected secondary schools in Thohoyandou, Venda in the Northern Province. It further examines how parents motivate pupils to do well at school, and how the expectations of parents and other relatives as well as teachers as significant others contribute to the academic attainment of pupils..

It also focuses on the favourable conditions in the pupils' learning home environment such as availability of a private study-room, language used at home, adequacy of time for both relaxation and schoolwork, learning facilities, parental involvement and nutritional values that help in promoting and enhancing pupil school performance.

Finally, the author provides some recommendations about how parents can actively involve themselves in their children's education.

## **TEN KEY WORDS IN THIS THESIS**

Investigation, family/parent background, influence, academic performance, learning home environment, socio-economic status, educational level, nutritional value, level of expectations of significant others and level of motivation.

**'N ONDERSOEK NA DIE ROL WAT DIE FAMILIE-/OUERAGTERGROND EN  
DIE HUISLIKE OMGEWING WAARIN HULLE LEER, SPEEL IN DIE  
AKADEMIESE PRESTASIES VAN ST. 8 LEERLINGE UIT GESELEKTEERDE  
SEKONDÊRE SKOLE IN THOHoyANDOU, VENDA, IN DIE NOORDELIKE  
PROVINSIE**

**SAMEVATTING**

Hierdie tesis bespreek die wyse waarop 'n aantal faktore, soos die sosio-  
ekonomiese status en die opvoedkundige peil van die familie/ouers, st. 8  
leerlinge se skoolprestasies beïnvloed in twaalf geselekteerde skole in  
Thohoyandou, Venda, in die Noordelike Provinsie. Dit ondersoek ook die  
wyse waarop ouers leerlinge motiveer om goed te doen op skool, asook hoe  
dit wat betekenisvolle mense soos ouers, ooms, tantes en onderwysers van  
hulle verwag, bydra tot die bereik van die verlangde akademiese sukses van  
die leerlinge.

Dit fokus ook op gunstige toestande in die leerling se tuisomgewing,  
byvoorbeeld die beskikbaarheid van 'n private studeerkamer, taalgebruik by  
die huis, genoeg tyd om te slaap en te eet, ontspanning en skoolwerk,  
leerfasiliteite, ouerlike betrokkenheid en die voedingsvlakke wat help om  
leerlinge se skoolprestasies aan te moedig en te verbeter.

Ten laaste voorsien die outeur ook 'n paar voorstelle oor hoe ouers aktief betrokke kan raak by 'n leerling se opvoeding.

### **SLEUTELWOORDE IN HIERDIE TESIS**

Navorsing, familie-/oueragtergrond, invloed, akademiese prestasie, huislike omgewing waarin geleer word, sosio-ekonomiese status, opvoedkundige peil, voedingswaarde, verwagtingsvlakke van betekeisvolle mense en die vlak van motivering.

The study was done at a time when Venda was an 'independent homeland.' However, with the political dispensation coupled with the elections held in 1994, Venda was re-incorporated into South Africa, and now forms part of the Northern Province (formerly Northern Transvaal).

## ABBREVIATIONS

B.ED.	:	Bachelor of Education (Post-Grad)
U.E.D.	:	University Education Diploma (Post-Grad)
B.A.	:	Bachelor of Arts
S.S.T.D.	:	Senior Secondary Teacher's Diploma
S.T.D.	:	Secondary Teacher's Diploma
H.D.E.	:	Higher Diploma in Education
P.T.D.	:	Primary Teacher's Diploma
J.S.T.C.	:	Junior Secondary Teacher's Certificate
H.P.T.C.	:	Higher Primary Teacher's Certificate
P.T.C.	:	Primary Teacher's Certificate

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.1	Professional and academic qualifications of Std 8 teachers in the selected secondary schools at Thohoyandou, Venda	8
Table 1.2	Teaching experience of Std 8 teachers in the selected secondary schools at Thohoyandou, Venda	9
Table 1.3	Standard 8 promotion examination results: 1989-1991	12
Table 2	Contingency table in respect of pupils' academic performance	30
Table 3	Teacher expectation and school performance	61
Table 4	Parents' expectations and school performance	64
Table 5	Pupil's expectations and school performance	66
Table 6	Frequency and percentage distribution of pupils in terms of different forms of motivation	71
Table 7	Kind of motivation and school performance	73
Table 8.1	Relationship between father's educational level and pupils' school performance	77
Table 8.2	Relationship between mother's educational level and pupil's school performance	80
Table 9.1	Relationship between pupil's home language and school performance	85
Table 9.2	Relationship between the language in which pupils communicate mostly among themselves in the classroom and school performance	87
Table 9.3	Relationship between the language in which pupils communicate mostly among themselves on the school play-grounds and school performance	88

Table 9.4	Relationship between pupils who communicate in English mostly in the home and school performance	89
Table 10	Annual costs of education per pupil, 1930-1945	95
Table 11	Per capita expenditure on education, 1953-1985	96
Table 12	State per capita expenditure on school pupils by race (rand per annum)	98
Table 13	Relationship between students and their school performance in terms of where they live	136
Table 14	Relationship between pupils living with parents and other relatives and their school performance	139
Table 15	Number of children (pupils) living with the "makhadzi"	142
Table 16	Number of children (pupils) living with the "malume"	144
Table 17.1	Relationship between working father's contact with pupils and school performance	149
Table 17.2	Relationship between father's occupation category and school performance	152
Table 17.3	Relationship between father's income and pupil's school performance	155
Table 18.1	Relationship between mother's occupation category and school performance	160
Table 18.2	Relationship between mother's (family income) who buy groceries, etc. for the household and school performance	161
Table 19.1	Frequency and percentage distribution of boys (pupils) in terms of household chores	164
Table 19.2	Relationship between time spent on household chores by boys (pupils) and school performance	165
Table 20.1	Frequency and percentage distribution of girls (pupils) in terms of household chores	166



Table 20.2	Relationship between time spent on household chores by girls (pupils) and school performance	167
Table 21	Frequency and percentage distribution of students in terms of the dwellings they live in	187
Table 22.1	Relationship between students and the availability of a study room and their school performance	188
Table 22.2	Relationship between students who used their schools as a study place and their school performance	189
Table 23.1	Relationship between pupils rooming with other persons in a house/flat and academic performance	190
Table 23.2	Relationship between pupils rooming with other persons in the same room in a hut/shack and academic performance	191
Table 24	Relationship between pupils who sleep on a bed and those who don't sleep on a bed, and their academic performance	192
Table 25	Relationship between pupils who feel refreshed after a night's rest and academic performance	193
Table 26	Relationship between pupils using chairs and tables when doing schoolwork at home and their academic performance	194
Table 27	Relationship between pupils using different types of light for study at home and their academic performance	195
Table 28	Relationship between chores interference in pupil's school work in the home and their academic performance	196
Table 29	Frequency and percentage distribution of pupils who had television sets, radio and magazines in the homes	197
Table 30	Frequency and percentage distribution of pupils who watch television at home	198
Table 31	Relationship between pupils' time spent watching television per day and their academic performance	199

Table 32	Number of home which have reference books and those which have no reference books	200
Table 33	Relationship between pupils who referred to reference books and school performance	201
Table 34	Frequency and percentage distribution of the mode of transport used by pupils	202
Table 35	Frequency and percentage distribution of the time taken to arrive at school by pupils	203
Table 36.1	Number of pupils who take adequate breakfast	205
Table 36.2	Number of pupils who take inadequate breakfast	205
Table 36.3	Relationship between pupils who take adequate/ inadequate breakfast and their school performance	206
Table 37.1	Number of pupils who take adequate lunch	207
Table 37.2	Number of pupils who take inadequate lunch	207
Table 37.3	Relationship between pupils who take adequate/ inadequate lunch and their school performance	208
Table 38.1	Number of pupils who take adequate supper	209
Table 38.2	Number of pupils who take inadequate supper	209
Table 38.3	Relationship between pupils who take adequate/ inadequate supper and their school performance	210

## DECLARATION

I, Seth Kwasi Yeboah solemnly declare that to the best of my knowledge, this research is the product of my original effect.

Sources used or cited have been duly acknowledged by appropriate reference.

.....  
S.K. Yeboah

<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
The geography of the Venda people	1
History of the Venda people	2
Background information of the qualifications of teachers in the selected secondary schools	4
<b>CHAPTER ONE</b>	<b>10</b>
1. Introduction	10
1.1 Purpose of the study: Statement of the problem	14
1.2 The need for study	18
1.3 Significance of the study	19
1.4 Demarcation of the study	21
2. Methods of research	22
2.1 Research design	22
2.2 Sample	23
2.3 The questionnaire	24
2.3.1 The questions	24
2.3.2 Marks of students	26
2.3.3 Gathering of the data	27
2.4 Interpretation of data (statistical analysis)	28
2.5 Conceptualization	28
2.5.1 Scholastic achievement	28
2.5.2 Academic performance	29
2.5.3 Pupils	30
2.5.4 Pupils/students	31
2.5.5 Dependent ages	31
2.5.6 Family background	31
2.6 Operationlization	31
2.6.1 Parental education	31
2.6.2 Parental occupation	32
2.6.3 Family	34
2.6.4 Family/Parents	34
2.6.5 Parents	34
2.6.6 Household	34
2.6.7 Standard 8 external examination	35
2.6.8 Paid worker	35
2.6.9 Employment	35
2.6.10 Functional educational level	35
2.6.11 Occupational level	36
2.6.12 Poverty	36
2.6.13 Income level	36
2.6.14 Parental income	37
2.6.15 Teacher expectations	38
2.6.16 Parent expectations	39
2.6.17 Pupil expectations	40

	xiv	
2.6.18	Parent motivations	41
2.6.19	Nutrition	43
2.6.20	Time spent on chores	44
2.6.21	Time spent on watching television, listening to the radio and reading newspapers, etc	45
2.6.22	Type of dwelling and the number of people living in a dwelling	47
2.6.23	Reference books	48
2.6.24	Home language	48
2.6.25	Language spoken among pupils in the classroom	50
2.6.26	Language spoken among pupils on the school playfields	51
2.6.27	Time spent on transport by pupils to get to school	51
2.6.28	Facilities	52
2.7	The limitations of the study	53
 CHAPTER TWO		 55
2.	Theoretical perspectives of education	55
2.1	Parents' (Family's) role in the education of the child	55
2.2	Pupils' perception of what significant others such as biological parents, uncle and aunt expect from them	57
2.3	Teacher expectations from pupils	59
2.4	Parents' expectations of the pupil	62
2.4.1	Parents' educational expectations from pupils	64
2.5	Theoretical perspective of the pupil's expectation	65
2.5.1	Pupil's own educational expectations	66
2.6	The theory of motivation	67
2.7	Social learning theory	74
2.8	Language	82
2.8.1	Linguistic ability and academic performance	84
2.9	Deprivation - Marxist analysis	93
2.10	Summary of theoretical concepts	117
2.11	Conclusion	118
 CHAPTER THREE		 120
3.	The Family	120
3.1	The Review of the literature of the family	120
3.1.1	Introduction	120
3.1.2	What does the "family" mean?	134
3.1.3	Features of Venda extended family	137
3.1.4	The role of the significant other such as the Makhadzi (Aunt), Malume (Uncle) etcetera in the Venda family system	140
3.1.4.1	The role of the "Makhadzi" (Aunt)	140
3.1.4.2	The role of the Malume (Uncle)	143
3.1.4.3	The role of the biological father	145

3.1.4.4	The father's occupation category and pupil's school performance	150
3.1.4.5	Father's income and pupil's school performance	153
3.1.4.6	The role of the mother (Mme)	156
3.1.4.7	Mother's occupation category and pupil's school performance	159
3.1.4.8	The role of boys	163
3.1.4.9	The role of girls	165
3.2	Functions of the family in Venda from the functionalist perspective	168
3.2.1	The family from a Marxist perspective	171
3.3	Conclusion	177
CHAPTER FOUR		179
4.	Learning home environment	179
4.1	What is environment?	179
4.2	What does learning home environment mean?	182
4.3	Four major food nutrients	204
4.4	Summary of actual findings	210
4.5	Conclusions and recommendations	211
4.6	Recommendations	215
BIBLIOGRAPHY		218
ANNEXURE		231

## THE GEOGRAPHY OF VENDA

Venda is situated between the latitudes 22°15' and 23°19' south, and longitudes 29°50' and 31°30' east. It is separated in the north by a thin strip of land from the Limpopo River which forms its border with Zimbabwe. In the east, the Levubu River forms its boundary with the Kruger National Park, and in the south and south-east, Gazankulu adjoins it. It is bounded in the west by Soutpansberg and Messina. The total land is 6500 square kilometres (2500 square miles).

Venda lies at a height of 240 to 1400 metres above sea level. Temperatures and humidity are both high in summer, while winters are temperate to warm and, on the whole, frost free.

According to Stayt (1968:3), the Soutpansberg is also the source of most of Venda's large rivers, as well as brooks, streams and rivulets. The largest rivers are the Nzhelele, Nwanedi, Mutale, Mutshinduli, Mbodi, Luvhu (Levubu) and its tributaries, Little Letaba and the Limpopo. All these rivers are perennial, which is an unusual occurrence for any territory in Southern Africa.

According to Venda Census Population Statistical Results (1989:26), the population of Venda, approximately 530,000 is fairly homogeneous

Vhavenda. Ninety-seven percent of the people live in the rural areas.

Venda lacks many job opportunities, hence migrant labour is paramount. A substantial number of Vhavenda work in some of the big towns in other parts of South Africa, especially in Johannesburg, Pretoria, Durban, Pietersburg as migrant workers.

Thohoyandou, which means the 'head of the elephant' and which is the capital town of Venda, is peri-urban. It is however, growing very fast. Venda is affectionately referred to as 'The Land of Legend' due to its spectacular scenic splendours and awe-striking and sacred forests, rivers, lakes and waterfalls and game. It was one of the so-called 'independent homelands' which was re-incorporated into the new South Africa in April 1994. It now forms part of the Northern Province (the former Northern Transvaal) with its administrative centre at Pietersburg.

## **HISTORY OF THE VENDA PEOPLE**

Van Warmelo points out that Venda speakers currently inhabit the Northern Transvaal (now Northern Province) and Southern Zimbabwe. But Krige (1937), Liesegang (1977), Schapera (1952) and Scully (1978) as quoted by Loubser (1988:20) argue that oral traditions and historical documents mention the presence of Venda speakers in an area lying between north-



eastern Botswana and south-western Mozambique. This region is between the predominantly Sotho-speaking area south of the Soutpansberg (a 180 kilometres long series of east-west orientated mountains) and the Shona linguistic cluster north of the Limpopo River.

Van Warmelo (1956) as quoted by Lukhaimane (1984:2), also contends that the Venda people form a compact but composite group inhabiting the north-easterly part of the Zoutpansberg in the Northern Transvaal (now Northern Province). The area has been divided into three zones: namely, the eastern, the southern and the western zones. In fact, Venda forms part of the Rhodesian Venda. The western and the eastern zones, generally reveal a homogeneous cultural background. It is only in the southern zone where the Vhavenda have mixed greatly with the Tsonga and the Sotho-speaking groups.

Furthermore, Marquard and Standing (1945) as quoted by Lukhaimane (1984:3) indicate that the Vhavenda are people of considerable ability and endurance who have lived in isolation and have preserved many peculiar ideas and practices of their own. It is believed that the Venda crossed the Limpopo River into the Nzhelele Valley round about 1750A.D. There is, however, no agreement about the time the Venda people crossed the Limpopo River. Even, Venda historians do not agree on this point. However, it is generally accepted that by 1700 the Vhavenda had already settled in

this country for a long time.

As regards the original home of the Vhavenda, Transvaal Native Affairs Department (1968:62) maintains that there is ample evidence that they are from Central Africa. According to Van Warmelo (1945:10), oral traditions give the original place from where the Vhavenda migrated as the place of "many rivres and lakes". Schapera (1937:7) contends that this claim is, in fact, supported by history because all African ethnic groups in South Africa migrated from Central Africa.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION OF THE QUALIFICATIONS OF TEACHERS IN THE SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

Today, teachers are expected to play an important role in the education of the child. According to Faure et al. (1972:183), so great is the demand for education, training and instruction today, and so great will it be in the years to come, that present teachers are looked upon to deliver the goods by guiding, directing and instructing pupils to ensure that they succeed. In supporting this view, Le Roux (1994:161) asserts that the teacher plays a crucial part in creating a healthy learning environment and helping pupils to make sense of the world around them. According to Le Roux teachers should therefore be endowed with special skills, knowledge and empathy for a poverty-culture pupil.

Writing on South African social context, Lemmer and Squelch (1993:182), remark that Black pupils entering a white school often experience cultural discontinuity, especially when the school ethos, values, traditions, culture and expectations differ markedly from those of their home background and previous school experiences. They add that the teacher, therefore, has an important role to play in bridging cultural gaps of all their pupils. Teachers must also be prepared to learn about their pupils and consider their backgrounds when designing their lessons.

Again, Faure et al. (1972:136) contend that in general, the teacher's role is changing, in that the authoritative delivery of knowledge is being supplemented by spending more time diagnosing the learner's needs, motivating and encouraging study, and checking the knowledge acquired.

In subscribing to this view, Brookover and Gottlieb (1964:348, 350) argue that teachers are expected to maintain dominance as well as social distance and respect. They are in the same vein expected to interact with their pupils both inside the classroom and on the school playfields. For, it is generally assumed that it is only through such a harmonious interaction between teachers and pupils that the latter can learn.

It is an accepted fact that today teachers in Venda and in other parts of South Africa have to grapple with the problem of having to teach pupils from

diverse cultural backgrounds. Thus, teachers find themselves providing multicultural education. Inevitably, this poses problems to teachers as they have to reconcile their own culture with that of their pupils.

It can be argued that teachers of today must have both professional and academic qualifications to be able to cope with the complexity of the nature of their work. With this view in mind, the researcher looked at the professional and academic backgrounds of teachers in Venda, who teach Std 8 classes of the secondary schools selected for this study.

A close observation of their backgrounds makes interesting reading. In all, eighty-three teachers teach various subjects in Std 8 classes of the selected secondary schools. They have a variety of professional as well as academic backgrounds.

Thirty of the teachers have a 3-year Post-matric Secondary Teachers' Diploma while twelve have B.A. degree and Secondary Teachers' Diploma. Also, twelve teachers hold B.A. degree and a Post-graduate University Education Diploma. Nine teachers have B.A. Education and Junior Secondary Teachers' Certificate while another five teachers have B.A. degrees and Junior Secondary Teachers' Certificate. Another five teachers have Secondary Teachers' Diploma and Junior Secondary Teachers' Certificate. Two teachers hold B.A. degree and Primary Teachers' Certificate. Four

teachers possess B.A. degree, B. Education plus University Education Diploma; B.A. degree, B. Education plus Secondary Teachers' Diploma; B. Education plus Junior Secondary Teachers' Certificate; B.A. degree plus Senior Secondary Teachers' Diploma respectively. The remaining four teachers have Secondary Teachers' Diplomas plus Higher Diploma Education. Secondary Teachers' Diploma plus Primary Teachers' Certificate; Secondary Teachers Diploma, Primary Teachers' Certificate, plus Higher Diploma Education, and Secondary Teachers Diploma plus Higher Primary Teachers' Certificate respectively.

The background information shows that 53% of the teachers have both university degrees and professional qualifications while 47% of them have only matric certificates and professional qualifications. The average teaching experience of the teachers is five years. Another interesting observation is that all the teachers are men. The probable reason for this situation is that there were more men teachers than women teachers in all the schools selected for this study. The predominance of men teachers teaching Std 8 classes, therefore, does not in any way indicate that the women teachers were less capable of teaching major examination classes. It was, therefore coincidental that the men teachers, being in the majority, happened to be teaching the Std 8 classes.

**TABLE 1.1 : PROFESSIONAL AND ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS OF  
STD 8 TEACHERS IN THE SELECTED SECONDARY  
SCHOOLS AT THOHoyANDOU, VENDA**

<b>NO OF TEACHERS</b>	<b>PROFESSIONAL AND ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS</b>
12	B.A., U.E.D
1	B.A., B.ED., U.E.D.
1	B.A., B.ED., STD
1	B.ED., J.S.T.C.
1	B.A., S.S.T.D.
12	B.A., STD
5	B.A., J.S.T.C.
9	B.A., ED., J.S.T.D.
2	B.A., P.T.C.
1	S.T.D., H.D.E.
30	STD.
5	STD, J.S.T.C.
1	STD., P.T.C.
1	STD., P.T.C., H.D.E.
1	STD., H.P.T.C.
<b>TOTAL = 83</b>	

**TABLE 1.2 : TEACHING EXPERIENCE OF STD 8 TEACHERS IN THE  
SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOLS AT  
THOHOYANDOU, VENDA**

<b>NUMBER OF TEACHERS</b>	<b>TEACHING EXPERIENCE (IN YEARS)</b>
25	1 - 5
42	6 - 11
10	12 - 17
6	18 - 23
<b>TOTAL = 83</b>	

Table 1.2 depicts the number of years of teaching experience of Std 8 teachers. It is interesting to note that 69.9% out of the 83 teachers have years of teaching experience stretching from 6-23 years. Only 25 teachers have 1-5 years of teaching experience. On the whole, all the teachers are quite experienced.

# CHAPTER ONE

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Today, more and more developing countries see education as the "ticket" to remunerative employment and a desirable income (Jones, 1989:1). Education has therefore become inexorably bound up with economic development, social mobility, increased productivity and it is viewed by the State as having substantial political value for meeting populations' aspirations in literacy, skills, credentials and status. Thus education has become a symbol of human progress and a signification of individual success.

Education has also become one of the fundamental principles for the organization of the modern societies, and for the grading of children in terms of their intellectual abilities and potential. In this regard, children who are evaluated, on the basis of examination results, to have superior intellectual abilities and potential are streamed into a particular class and taught differently for their less able and less promising peers. The result of this is that it has created a system whereby pupils, parents and even teachers have to come to attach vital importance to the marks obtained in school work. For example, pupils have become so "marks-conscious" that on getting their marked written work back, the first thing they do is to look at what marks



they scored rather than considering the number of mistakes they made. Similarly, some parents have also become so concerned about the scores of their children obtain that they first thing they do is to ask about the marks their children obtained in an examination or test, or their position in the examination. According to Jubber (1990:1), since so much depends on the answers learners produce in an examination, it is not surprising that questions like "What mark did you get?" and "Where did you come?" are so often asked by pupils and parents. They know that pupils who perform magnificently in tests and examinations have immense educational opportunities open to them to achieve the highest academic qualifications and obtain secure and well-paid job.

Further, Jubber (1990:1) argues that it is generally assumed by teachers, *inter alia*, that pupils who perform very well in tests and examinations and take good positions in the order of merit, come from good homes apparently different from those who perform poorly. Thus, in this study the researcher is concerned with the influence of pupils' family background and learning, home environment on their performance in examination and test results, and class and standard position in Venda schools. The investigator is interested particularly in Venda because apparently nobody has attempted to research on the extent to which a pupil's family background and home environment affect his or her school performance in this country. Furthermore, the focus of this study is on standard 8 pupils because this standard is generally

regarded as crucial in determining the number of pupils who will enter senior classes and eventually write the matriculation examinations. Hence standard 8 class is predictive to what we should anticipate in the future matriculation examination results.

Furthermore, standard 8 pupils write external examinations centrally set by the Venda Department of Education for promotion to standard 9. Over the past few years the Std 8 promotion examination results have been particularly disturbing because a large number of pupils fail to proceed to Std 9 as shown in the table below.

**Table 1.3 : STANDARD 8 PROMOTION EXAMINATION RESULTS:  
1989-1991**

YEAR	NO OF PUPILS WROTE THE EXAM	NO OF PUPILS PASSED	PASS %	NO OF PUPILS FAILED	PASS %
1989	11083	8492	76,6	2591	23,4
1990	13079	6631	50,7	6448	49,3
1991	15581	9571	61,4	6010	38,6
Total	39743	24694	62,1	15049	37,9

Source: Venda Educational Statistics, 1992:6

In 1992, Std 8 pupils, for the first time, wrote Std 8 examinations set internally by individual secondary schools (Venda Educational Statistics 1992:6). However, the results were not better than in the past years. Only

56% of the Std 8 pupils who wrote the internal examinations in 1992 were successful.

There is the general tendency among parents and the general public to blame the high rate of failures at both the junior secondary school and the matriculation level on the lack of appropriate educational facilities such as, lack of suitable classrooms and textbooks and qualified teachers. Although, the paucity of educational facilities may affect the performance of pupils in schools, the researcher is of opinion that parental background and learning home environmental factors are equally important in the education of the child. Hence this study will attempt to discover the effects of the family background and learning home environment on the pupils' performance in school.

Chapter One is concerned mainly with the introduction of the subject with regard to the identification of the problem to be investigated while Chapter Two deals with the various theoretical perspectives on education regarding the role of parents in pupils' education and pupils' perception of what the significant others expect from them. It also discusses pupils' own expectations, the importance of linguistic ability, Marxist analysis of education as a generator of socio-economic deprivation and the various hypotheses to be tested.

Chapter Three discusses the pertinent literature on the subject of the family, further gives different meanings of the family both in the western and Venda sense and examines different types of families, focusing on the type of family which is dominant in Venda. It also explores, in general, the role of the family and specifically its role in Venda, and also especially the effects of the role of the significant others such as the biological father, mother, aunt (makhadzi), uncle (malume), brothers and sisters on pupils' school performance. Furthermore, it examines the functions of education from the Marxist perspective.

Chapter Four defines the learning home environment and material conditions such as housing and nutrition in the home. It also discusses the significance of the language used in the home, availability of enough time for study, suitable learning equipment such as good light, chairs and tables, a study room for schoolwork and pupils' exposure to media such as newspapers, television and radio. It further discusses the analysis of the data, the results of this study and makes a few recommendations.

### **1.1 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY: STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The main purpose of the study is to investigate the association between family background, learning home environmental conditions and the academic achievement of Std 8 pupils of junior secondary schools in the Thohoyandou

Education Area in Venda, Northern Province. This involves the following problems:

- 1.1.1. the extent to which teacher's expectations are related to pupils' performance in the six major subjects taught at school;
- 1.1.2. the extent to which parent expectations are related to pupils' performance in the six major subjects taught at school;
- 1.1.3. the extent to which pupils' expectations are related to their performance in the six major subjects taught at school;
- 1.1.4. the extent to which family motivation (material and non-material) is related to pupils' performance in the six major subjects taught at school;
- 1.1.5. the extent to which father's education level is related to pupils' performance in the six major subjects taught at school;
- 1.1.6. the extent to which father's occupation category is related to pupils' performance in the six major subjects taught at school;
- 1.1.7. the extent to which parent income is related to pupils' performance of the six major subjects taught at school;
- 1.1.8. the extent to which working father's contact with pupils is related to pupils' performance in the six major subjects taught at school;
- 1.1.9. the extent to which mother's education level is related to pupils' performance in the six major subjects taught at school;

- 1.1.10. the extent to which mother's occupation category is related to pupils' performance in the six major subjects taught at school;
- 1.1.11. the extent to which working mothers are related to pupils' performance in the six major subjects taught at school;
- 1.1.12. the extent to which working mother's contact with pupils is related to pupils' performance in the six major subjects taught at school;
- 1.1.13. the extent to which working mothers who buy groceries, etc, are related to pupils' performance in the six major subjects taught at school;
- 1.1.14. the extent to which pupils' home language is related to their school performance in the six subjects taught at school;
- 1.1.15. the extent to which the language in which pupils communicate mostly among themselves in the classroom is related to their performance in the six subjects taught at school;
- 1.1.16. the extent to which the language in which pupils communicate mostly among themselves on school playfields is related to their performance in the six subjects taught at school;
- 1.1.17. the extent to which English in which pupils communicate mostly in their homes is related to their performance in the six subjects taught at school;
- 1.1.18. the extent to which time spent on household chores by boys is related to their performance in the six major subjects taught at

school;

- 1.1.19. the extent to which time spent on household chores by girls is related to their performance in the six major subjects taught at school;
- 1.1.20. the extent to which chores interference in pupils' school homework is related to their performance in the six major subjects taught at school;
- 1.1.21. the extent to which home with reference books is related to pupils' performance in the six major subjects taught at school;
- 1.1.22. the extent to which pupils who use reference books in the home is related to their performance in the six major subjects taught at school;
- 1.1.23. the extent to which pupils who read other books apart from school textbooks is related to their performance in the six major subjects taught at school;
- 1.1.24. the extent to which time taken by pupils to arrive at school is related to their performance in the six major subjects taught at school;
- 1.1.25. the extent to which balanced food taken by pupils as breakfast is related to their performance in the six major subjects taught at school;
- 1.1.26. the extent to which adequate breakfast is related to pupils' performance in the six major subjects taught at school;

- 1.1.27. the extent to which balanced food taken by pupils as lunch is related to their performance in the six major subjects taught at school;
- 1.1.28. the extent to which balanced food taken by pupils as supper is related to pupils' performance in the six major subjects taught at school.

## **1.2. THE NEED FOR STUDY**

A critical examination of educational statistics of the results of junior secondary school pupils particularly Std 8 are alarming. For example, in 1989 only 8492 out of 11083 pupils who wrote Std 8 examinations could proceed to Std 9, and in 1990 only 6631 out of 13079 were successful, leaving 6448 as dropouts. In 1991, 9571 out of 15581 pupils entered Std 9, and 6010 were unsuccessful (Venda Educational Statistics 1991:6). The numbers of Std 8 failures keep on rising at an alarming rate every year.

The researcher has selected particularly Std 8 for this study as it is a watershed, in the matric student's educational career because pupils who are able to pass Std 8 external examinations eventually reach Std 10 where they write matriculation examinations. This means that Std 8 final examination is apparently a reflection of Std 10 matriculation examinations results (Statistical Results of Std 10 Matriculation Examination 1990:4).



Furthermore, there is a strong need for this study as no research in this area has been conducted in Venda. This study, the researcher hopes, will be able to throw light on the interplay of the major independent variables, that is family's socio-economic and educational background, parent expectations and motivations, both teachers' and pupils' expectations and the material conditions in the home in influencing the academic performance of Std 8 pupils.

### **1.3 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

Education whether formal and informal is of fundamental importance to any society. Ogunsanya (1965:124) cites Garset who argued that:

"Man is occupied and preoccupied with education for a reason which is simple, bold and devoid of glamour: in order to live with assurance and freedom and efficiency, it is necessary to know an enormous number of things ... that is the reason."

This view implies that education is an instrument for survival in a world which is developing rapidly. In a sense, therefore, education is an investment which humankind uses to manipulate the environment to his advantage. There is no doubt that education is central to all progress and is highly instrumental in accelerating progress in all human spheres. Nevertheless, many educationists doubt whether education is indeed an investment which yields profits after a number of years. But in Africa it is said that politicians still regard it as an investment (Blakemore and Cooksey,

1981:241). This explains why money allocated to education in some African countries is greater than that given to any other ministry (Coombs, 1969:19). In spite of empirical evidence to support this finding, the practice is still widespread. Venda, for example, spent a very substantial amount of the national budget on education when it was a homeland (Radio Thohoyandou, 19 August, 1991).

This study will attempt to investigate the role of the family background and home environment in the education of the child in a developing country like Venda (now part of the Northern Region of South Africa). The problems that family background and home environment posed and still pose to the pupils' performance in school, will also be considered. This study will concentrate more specifically on the influence of parents' background and material conditions in the home on the academic performance of pupils in schools with a view to establishing the role of parental influence in the child's education.

The researcher has selected the junior secondary school for this study, since the percentage rate of pupil drop-out at this level is very high. Among the variables to be investigated is the home background and the support pupils receive from the home for active and successful academic career.

#### **1.4 DEMARCATION OF THE STUDY**

A study of the school system in Venda shows that it is made of a number of interrelated sub-systems and the most obvious of these are the primary schools, the secondary schools, the colleges of education and other tertiary institutions including the University of Venda. This study will focus on Junior Secondary School system with specific reference to Std 8 pupils in junior secondary school in the Thohoyandou Education Circuit. The study will be restricted to Std 8 pupils because the number of successful pupils who enter the senior secondary school sector gives a fair indication of the pupils who will eventually write the matriculation examinations. If it is expected of them to perform well at school, then parents should provide an educative environment conducive to learning.

The researcher has chosen Thohoyandou Education Circuit because Thohoyandou is a peri-urban town and has secondary schools situated both in the town and in the adjoining rural area. Undoubtedly, secondary schools in Thohoyandou have better educational facilities and achieve better examination results than their counterparts in the rural area, who do not have such facilities.

## **2. METHODS OF RESEARCH**

### **2.1 RESEARCH DESIGN**

After studying the relevant literature the author first designed a questionnaire eliciting responses covering the following: particulars of pupils, particulars of parents, the pupil's learning home environment such as nutrition, teacher's expectations, parents' expectations, pupil's own expectations, and parental motivation of pupil. The questionnaire which was composed of both open-ended and closed-ended questions, were precoded to facilitate analysis.

The design of the survey is that it examines critically the relationship between independent variables of family background and learning environment, and dependent variables, the pupils' academic performance at school.

The pertinent literature surveyed supports the fact that family background and learning home environment have a considerable effect on academic performance at secondary school level overseas, especially in Britain. As a result the researcher decided to look at this implication by empirically checking the relationship in Venda context. The empirical research, therefore, was undertaken to equip parents as well as teachers with the knowledge of providing a favourable home environment and conducive

school climate in order to improve pupils' academic performance.

## **2.2 SAMPLE**

### **Procedure**

Twelve schools out of thirty-five schools were randomly selected for this study. The total number of respondents were 341, comprising 160 boys and 181 girls were randomly selected from the twelve schools. Their average ages were 16,8 and 16,6 years respectively.

The 341 Std 8 respondents constituted 32% (approximately) of sample size of the total student population of 1068 of the twelve schools and 11% of the total student population of 3100 of the thirty-five schools respectively, in Venda.

Therefore, the 11% of the sample size of the total student population of 3100 of the thirty-five schools in Venda is representative enough since, according to Krejcie and Morgan (1970:620), a sample size of 10% of any population from 3000 and over is representative.

The investigator assigned a number to all the pupils on a composite list of all the Std 8 pupils in the twelve secondary schools. The respondents were then selected, using a table of random three-digit figures so as to avoid

biases and make the selection more representative of the population target.

The researcher chose secondary schools in Thohoyandou Education Area because the schools generally have common characteristics. They are on the periphery of Thohoyandou and readily accessible. With the exception of two secondary schools - Mbilwi which follows a science-based curriculum and Dimani a agriculture-based curriculum- all of them offer the same subjects. The pupils are also, to a large extent, influenced by the social, political and economic changes taking place in Thohoyandou. Besides, schools in Thohoyandou have comparatively better educational facilities such as enough classrooms, furniture, textbooks and equipment, and more stability in staffing. Thus the twelve schools were randomly selected because they were the biggest homogeneous set of schools doing almost the same subjects.

## **2.3 THE QUESTIONNAIRE**

### **2.3.1 The questions**

The questions, which are both structured and unstructured, total one hundred and forty-three items. The first seven questions were used by the author to obtain information about the respondent such as the name of pupil, age, sex, name of school, standard and the location of the school. Twelve

items elicit information about the particulars of the pupil's family, for example, the number of living brothers and sisters (siblings) of pupils, their ages, the number of other wives the father has, the number and ages of children from the pupil's uncle or aunt living with the pupil in the same household, for example, the type of dwelling, the number of rooms in the dwelling and whether the dwelling is owned by the pupil's father, or is a rented or mortgaged house. Seven items elicit information about other people (excluding the pupil's mother and father) who are living with the pupil in the same household. Seventy-seven questions describe the kind of learning home environment in which pupils live and from where they attend school. The questions also seek such information as whether the respondent has a separate study room, reference books, table and chair, good light, a well-ventilated sleeping room, enough time for both sleep and 'school' homework, and the general conditions in the pupil's learning home environment. Seventeen items elicit information about the level of nutrition and health of the pupil, the kind and number of meals taken per day, whether the meals are nutritiously balanced and enough, and the one who prepares the meals. There are fourteen questions which cover the particulars of pupils' father, for example, his level of education, his level of occupation and income, regular remittances from the father; in case of migrant workers, the frequency of father's visits to the home and the number of time of contact he has with the pupil on each visit. Finally, nine questions elicit information about the pupil's mother, her level of education, her occupational and income

levels.

The language used in the questionnaire (see Annexure) is everyday, non-threatening language to reduce the respondents' likelihood of giving wrong responses. The questions are relatively short and easy to read so that they would be understood by pupils of average academic ability. The format assured confidentiality to enable respondents to answer the questions truthfully.

### **2.3.2 Marks of students**

In this study, the marks of the students were used as an indicator of academic performance. The Std 8 pupils in the sample wrote four tests in six major subjects taught at the secondary schools. Each of the six subjects carried a maximum of 200 marks. A pupil was required to obtain a minimum of 40% in each test in order to pass; that is, 40% of 200 (80 marks) in each of the six subjects in a test. Any pupil who obtained less than 40% in a subject was deemed to have failed, or performed poorly in that subject. Thus, for a pupil to pass all the six subjects in the four tests, he or she must obtain 40% of the grand total of the four tests, that is 40% of 4800 (1920 out of 4800). A pupil who obtained anything less than that was deemed to have failed or performed poorly.



### **2.3.3 Gathering of the data**

The author wrote a letter seeking the permission of the Director-General of the Venda Department of Education for the use of the twelve secondary schools in the Thohoyandou Education Area. The purpose of the study was clearly explained to the Director-General who then granted the permission. The researcher then visited the Area Manager (Inspector for Thohoyandou Education Circuit) to inform him of the Director-General's permission to use the schools in this area and to explain the purpose of the study to him. Thereafter, the author visited the Headmasters (Principals) of the twelve secondary schools and arranged with them the time the researcher would visit their schools to administer the questionnaire to the pupils to be selected randomly.

Thereafter, the researcher proceeded with the gathering of the data. Copies of the questionnaires were administered to the pupils selected randomly, and pupils were aided to answer it by the researcher explaining question by question to them.

The questionnaires were then collected (by the researcher) after the respondents had completed them. In all cases, it was duly arranged that respondents answer the questionnaire during the study period in the afternoon at all the schools in the sample in order not to disrupt the normal

classes in the morning. All the schools used have afternoon study periods.

## **2.4 INTERPRETATION OF DATA (STATISTICAL ANALYSIS)**

The questions were precoded to facilitate interpretation of the data. Frequency tables with Chi-square based on statistics were used to determine the relationship between dependent and independent variables.

## **2.5 CONCEPTUALIZATION**

The following variables relate specifically to this study.

### **2.5.1 Scholastic achievement**

Although scholastic achievement is one of the most important goals of educational process, and acts as a major predicting variable of success in modern society (Carmichael, 1964; Coleman et al, 1966; Horn, 1977) as quoted by De Jager (1987:7), the definition of the construct poses many problems. Fourie (1978 in De Jager (1987:8) argues that even though a number of terms are used, a definition of scholastic achievement in terms of theoretical construct is seldom formulated. In this current study, literature relevant to these issues will be presented.

A review of literature reveals that a number of terms are used in various ways to refer to scholastic achievement. A number of educationists (Maqsd, 1980; Nowicki and Roundtree, 1971; Kirk, 1980; Rutter, 1983; Honess and Kline, 1974; Rajamohan and Rajaratham, 1979; Gauden and Otter, 1977; Powell, 1971; Faustman and Mathews, 1980; Anastasi, 1976) in De Jager (1987:7) used terms such as scholastic attainment, scholastic success, scholastic attainment, academic attainment, academic competence, academic performance and academic achievement to indicate the evaluation of an individual's level of accomplishment within an educational environment. Thus the term 'academic' is used within a wider context, but 'scholastic' is used specifically to refer to any phenomenon occurring at school. The term is also used to refer to academic achievement while 'academic performance' can refer to an individual's performance at elementary or primary school (Shaw and Uhl, 1971; Friend, 1972; Lao, 1980; Skuy and Erikson, 1980; Botha, 1971; Bruwer, 1973) as quoted by De Jager (1987:8).

In an attempt to clarify the use of the terms, scholastic and academic, Coetzee (1977) as quoted by De Jager (1987:8) asserts:

"... the concept of scholastic will always refer to achievement at school level while academic performance refers to achievement at post-level."

### **2.5.2 Academic performance**

In this study, academic performance was defined in terms of a pupil who

obtained a "Pass" mark of 40% in each of the six subjects written in a test. Thus a pupil should have obtained 40% of the grand total marks of 1200 (or 480) in the six subjects written in each of the four tests. Hence any pupil who did not obtain 40% in any of the six subjects was deemed to have failed (see the Contingency table).

**TABLE 2 : CONTINGENCY TABLE IN RESPECT OF PUPILS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE**

SUBJECTS	NUMBER OF TESTS			
	1	2	3	4
1. Mathematics	200	200	200	200
2. English/Afrikaans	200	200	200	200
3. Venda	200	200	200	200
4. Biology/Physical Science	200	200	200	200
5. History/Geography	200	200	200	200
6. Economics/Bus Economics	200	200	200	200
Grand Total Marks per Test	1200	1200	1200	1200

### 2.5.3 Pupils

These will be defined as standard 8 male and female pupils who (under the former Venda Department of Education) are receiving tuition in secondary schools on a full-time basis.

#### **2.5.4 Pupils/students**

These will be used interchangeably.

#### **2.5.5 Dependent ages**

Refer to people aged 0-14 and those who are aged 65 and over. The remaining age groups are economically productive (Zopf, 1984:127).

#### **2.5.6 Family background**

Family background is used to mean socio-economic status of parents and it embraces educational, occupational, prestige and income levels into an average rank usually expressed in terms of social class.

### **2.6 OPERATIONALIZATION**

In this study, the following are the key independent variables and how they were measured.

#### **2.6.1 Parental education**

According to the study undertaken by Fraser (1988:126), children of the parents of middle-class tend to do well academically because of selective wives and the tendency to inherit innate intelligence. Fraser found in his study that parental education, reading habits, income, occupation and living space are all related significantly to Intelligence Quotient and performance.

Usually, it is assumed that parents of middle-class have a set of values that propel the child to perform well in school. Parents in the middle-class, by virtue of their higher educational qualifications, develop achievement-values which are passed on to their children. Rosen (1956:211) notes:

"Middle-class children are more likely to embrace the achievement value-system which states that given the willingness to work hard, plan and make proper sacrifices, an individual child should be able to manipulate his or her environment so as to ensure success."

It is common knowledge that a small middle-class family is gradually emerging in Venda. Parents in this class have higher educational qualifications which enable them to secure reasonably well-paid jobs with (good remuneration). It is therefore assumed that the parents in this category should play an important role in enhancing their children's performance at school. In this study, the expression parental level of education was used to refer to any parent who has received functional education for, at least, 4 years, and who can read and write. Hence 4-year functional education was used to determine the influence of parental education on the academic performance of pupils. A question on the highest level of education was used as an indicator to ascertain level of parental education.

### **2.6.2 Parental occupation**

It is generally accepted that some occupations are open only to people who have particular educational qualifications (Reid, 1984:210). There is the

tendency that the higher the occupation, the longer the time spent in education. Reid (1984:214) also adds that the higher the qualifications, the higher the income. Usually, the occupations in this category attract higher income. In support of this view, Jubber (1990:7) says that the highly educated and occupationally well-positioned parents have the advantage of transmitting to their children, the kind of skills, knowledge and attitudes which encourage and facilitate good school performance. Jubber concludes that they are generally further fortunate in being able to provide the kinds of equipment, resources, experiences and study environment that promotes good school work, and they are also able to send their children to the 'best' schools.

It should, however, be mentioned that it is extremely difficult to measure the occupations of parents in Venda because parents are in a wide variety of occupations. For example, parents are in professional, managerial, clerical, technical, skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled, domestic occupations which make categorisation very difficult.

However, Miller (1970:260-269) categorises all occupations into five groups: professional, administrative, skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled occupations. Therefore, in this study, the Miller's Occupation Scale (Miller, 1970:260-269) was used as an indicator to categorise the occupations and also, to determine the influence of parental occupation on pupils' academic

performance.

### **2.6.3 Family**

This will be operationally used to refer to a nuclear and extended family where one or both biological or social parents live with their family in the same household.

### **2.6.4 Family/Parents**

These will be used interchangeably.

### **2.6.5 Parents**

These will be used as married/unmarried couple or used to mean somebody who has interest in the child's education, and who devises means to get him or her educated by providing the necessary facilities for him or her to learn. They will also used to refer to husband and wife with children or a child or a husband and wives with children.

### **2.6.6 Household**

These will be used to refer to the basic residential unit with which economic production, consumption, inheritance, child-rearing and shelter are arranged and carried out.



### **2.6.7 Standard 8 External Examination**

Refers to the examinations which Standard 8 pupils write at the end of the year. It is set externally by the Venda Department of Education for the selection of successful pupils into Senior Secondary School.

### **2.6.8 Paid worker**

Is used to refer to anyone who has been working and receiving wages/salary for any unspecified period of time. It includes full-time workers, temporary/casual workers, part-time workers and self-employed workers. This was measured by asking respondents to indicate the monthly income in the questionnaire.

### **2.6.9 Employment**

Refers to any type of work a person does and for which he or she receives a remuneration (Barnhart and Barnhart, 1987:692).

### **2.6.10 Functional educational level**

Is used to refer to a person who can read and write, and who has completed at least, 4-year functional education. Functional literacy aims at developing individual's mental equipment and communication powers as well as their technical and vocational capacities. It offers educative functions to broad sectors of society, promotes the formative part which the major economic activities may play, defines the principle and practical methods of education,

objective by objective and problem by problem, and invites all concerned, not just illiterate adults, to participate in educational activity (Faure et al, 1972:142).

#### **2.6.11 Occupational level**

Operationalized, the term refers to all workers who are in professional, administrative, skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled occupations.

#### **2.6.12 Poverty**

Operationalized, it means to a situation in which people lack money to maintain a minimum standard of health and decency should be the normal condition of most people (Horton and Hunt, 1988:381). Thus, poverty may refer to relative deprivation, that is, the inability to maintain the living standards customary in the society. This concept assumes that people are poor only in relation to others who are not poor. Poverty may also refer to absolute deprivation, that is, the inability to afford minimal standards of food, clothing, shelter, and health.

#### **2.6.13 Income level**

Is used to refer to a minimum sum of R260 which a worker receives at the end of the month (Oral - Venda Labour Centre, 10 June 1996). However, some workers receive more than R500 per month. Particularly, those in professions receive more than R1000 per month. In fact, some workers in

some professions get more than R2500 per month.

#### **2.6.14 Parental income**

It is further assumed and accepted that parents who have higher educational qualifications are able to get a better job with a good income and the prospects for promotion and higher income. With a higher income, a parent can provide life-enhancing amenities for the family. He or she can afford to send his or her child to the best school, and even hire a teacher to give extra tuition to the child at home after normal school hours. For instance, in Jubber's (1990:4) research on the effects of socio-economic status on a child's school performance, observes:

"Family income contributes to a child's cognitive development directly and indirectly. Its more direct effects relate to such things such as the relationship between income and nutrition, health, quality of school attended, preschool education, the quality of home as an information environment, the value attached to education, and the ability of the family to supply the kinds of educational support, equipment and experiences which foster school success."

In the same study, Jubber found that children from the poorest homes have proportionately more of their number who are poor performers. It is noticeable from Jubber's study that parental income contributes tremendously to a child's education. Nevertheless, like parental occupation, it is not easy to determine the level of parental income in Venda because of different categories of workers with vast variations of income levels. For

example, self-employed persons, full-time workers, part-time workers, technical workers, clerical workers, skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled workers, and people in professional and managerial occupations earn differential income. Hence, for the purpose of this study, an annual income of R3120 (R260 taken as the minimum wage an unskilled worker in Venda gets per month) (Thohoyandou Labour Centre, Oral: 11 June 1996) was used as the point of departure from other ranges of higher annual incomes to determine the influence of parental income on pupils' academic performance.

#### **2.6.15 Teacher expectations**

A great deal has been written about the effect of teacher expectations on pupils' academic performance and achievement. According to Le Roux (1993:192), research has shown a high correlation between positive teacher expectations and pupil performance. It is also generally said that teacher expectations influence pupils' behaviour. In their study, Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968:48) gave support to the view that once a child is labelled by the teacher and others, a 'self-fulfilling prophecy' operates; the teacher expects certain behaviour from the child and the child responds to the expectations. It is further to be noted that once this pattern is established, it is hard to alter. Therefore, teacher expectations can either help pupils to perform well or poorly at school. For instance, if teachers expectations are favourable towards pupils, they will be stimulated to work hard at school but

where they are unfavourable and discouraging, pupils will be demotivated, and consequently perform poorly. In this regard, Measor and Sikes (1992 quoted in Dekker and Lemmer 1993:13) contend that, not only do teachers' attitudes determine development but also provide important models for pupils.

Nash (1973 in Chapman 1986:109) concluded that teachers' perceptions of pupils greatly influenced their attainment. Similarly, Becker (1963 in Chapman 1986:112) notes that once a teacher has labelled a pupil as a 'lazy pupil', the pupil comes to bear the label and this may adversely affect his or her school performance. And Meighan (1981 quoted in Chapman 1986:113) concludes that in the extreme form, labelled pupils may be isolated and driven into a 'special unit' or the 'sin bin' which can disastrously affect their academic performance.

Nonetheless, what the teacher expects from his or her pupils, is difficult to measure as it is, by and large, subjective and speculative but (nevertheless) a question on what marks pupil thinks the teacher expects from him/her was included in the questionnaire.

#### **2.6.16 Parent expectations**

Generally, parents who are highly educated, expect their children also to be highly educated. These parents serve as role models for their children to

emulate. Therefore parents with high expectations for their children (pupils) provide them with the necessary school facilities, equipment, emotional support and motivation. As a result of these incentives, the pupils try to succeed by working hard at school. Like teacher expectations, it is not easy to measure parent expectations since they differ from parents to parents. Besides, they are also both subjective and speculative. A question about their opinions on their parents' expectations in terms of the marks their parents would like them to get was used to measure this variable.

#### **2.6.17 Pupil expectations**

It is evident that pupils who have the right attitudes and interest in their education, work hard in order to do well at school. They are self-motivated and they hardly need extrinsic motivation in order to work conscientiously. These pupils work diligently and strive to excel in class. Thus, one would say that when pupils have high expectations of becoming, for example, medical doctors, engineers and pharmacists, they work much more assiduously to achieve their objective. By so doing, their academic performance is improved considerably. It should be mentioned that a pupil's expectations are dependent on his or her self-concept. Hence a pupil's self-concept propels him or her to attain the highest academic laurels in his or her educational career.

Le Roux (1994:19) defines self-concept as:

"the complete totality of views on, as well as feelings about all the dimensions of the self. It includes socially acquired knowledge, views and attitudes with regard to the self, an evaluation of the self according to objective standards."

Mwamwenda (1995:372) also defines self-concept as a person's way of perceiving himself or herself and may be either positive or negative. Allied to self-concept, is self-motivation. They are motivated to work hard not because they expect any rewards, but because they are intrinsically interested in working hard. In this way, they are able to achieve success.

In this study, pertinent questions on pupils' expectations about the marks that they would like to get was included in the questionnaire.

#### **2.6.18 Parent motivations**

Seifert (1983:11) defines motivation as the tendency to engage in a certain behaviour or the inner arousal that leads to those behaviours. Thus, motivating pupils means persuading them to do, and to want to do whatever leads to learning. According to Seifert (1983:298), it means persuading pupils to do things on their own accord. Similarly Thorndike (1932 in Mwamwenda 1995:20), in addressing himself to the importance of motivation, in learning, observed that how hard pupils work on a given task, is determined by their level of interest. The greater their interest or motivation, the harder they will work, and the lower their interest or motivation, the less hard they will work. Also, Mwamwenda (1995:259)

defines motivation as a concept used as an explanation or rationale for a way a person or an organisation behaves. The same concept is used to refer to something that is innate in an individual. It is an energiser or a driving force, a desire or an urge that causes an individual to engage in a certain behaviour. In short, by definition, motivation is a concept which can account for why people behave the way they do. And that human behaviour is motivated, either externally or internally; positively or negatively.

Thus, some pupils are intrinsically interested in school subjects and will work hard to succeed without much external motivation. However, there are some pupils who lack intrinsic motivation, and they will only work hard if they have reinforcement either from their parents or teachers. Hence Strom and Bernard (1982 quoted in Mwamwenda 1995:202), assert that the other ways of motivating pupils are to exploit 'the desire to overcome difficulty, the desire to secure social approval, and the desire to excel one's past record.'

The concern of teachers and parents has therefore always been to find ways and means of making pupils attend and respond to learning tasks so that learning itself becomes a source of motivation. It can therefore be argued that pupils work hard when their parents show interest in their work and provide them with the much needed motivation.



In this study, parental motivation was used to refer to both material and non-material rewards, and pupils receive from their parents or guardians. Questions on whether a pupil did receive rewards and the nature of the rewards given, were used to measure this variable.

### **2.6.19 Nutrition**

Diet and health are closely related. It can thus be argued that the diet of a pupil is of direct relevance to his or her intellectual development and capability. For this reason, Mwamwenda (1995:31) contends that the food consumed by pupils must contain all the essential food nutrients such as proteins, carbohydrates, vitamins, water, fat and minerals. In short, pupils must have a balanced diet.

It has also been established by numerous research studies that deficiency in nutrition is associated with poor growth and physical development and inadequate haemoglobin levels. Stifford (1987:3) notes that there is growing evidence that malnutrition has impact on brain development, learning capacity and behaviour.

Swartout (1943:117) maintains that most people understand that the growth and normal development of children and the strength and efficiency of adults depend to a great degree upon what they eat. He explains that from the food we eat, we get the following: first, the materials from which

bones, muscles, nerves, skin, and all other body tissues are built; second, the energy needed to keep every body activity in operation; third, the essential chemical regulators that harmonize both the growth processes and the work of all the organs. If any of the essential food factors are lacking, as they may be in case of a person does not choose the right food or the right combination of foods, good health is impossible. Thus, good health depends on a balanced diet, that is, one that includes a mixture of the five basic nutrients, namely, proteins, carbohydrates, fats, minerals and vitamins that the human body needs to maintain itself. It is therefore generally accepted that a pupil who is well-fed on a balanced diet becomes energetic and is able to work enthusiastically and efficiently rather than a pupil who is poorly fed. Therefore, pupils on a balanced diet, are likely to perform well in school. Hence a good balanced diet was taken to measure the effect of nutrition on pupils' academic performance in school. Questions on what pupils eat (and if they do eat something) for breakfast, lunch and supper were included in the questionnaire.

#### **2.6.20 Time spent on chores**

Generally, boys and girls in Venda perform different household chores after school hours. The girls do the cooking, cleaning of the house, washing and ironing of clothes, bathing young children and baby-sitting, while the boys, mostly, do gardening, weeding around the house compound and taking cattle, and goats for grazing. Of course, they spend different times on these

chores. It can be assumed that pupils who have ample time at their disposal, can do their school homework while those who spend a lot of time on household chores may be unable to attend to their homework. Therefore, the amount of time spent on chores, is of vital importance. The more time spent on doing chores, the less time learners have for their homework. On the other hand, the less time they spend on the chores, the more time they have for doing their school work. So the researcher asked questions on what chores the pupils perform and the time spent on these chores.

#### **2.6.21 Time spent on watching television, listening to the radio and reading newspapers, etc**

Undoubtedly, the mass media are impersonal communications directed to a vast audience. Macionis (1995:138) asserts that the development of mass media occurs as communications technology, first newspapers and, more recently, radio and television, spread information on a mass scale. Furthermore, Macionis (1995:138) says that today, watching television has become a regular routine and, young boys and girls spend almost as many hours in front of the television as they do in school. Indeed, Singer and Singer (1983 quoted in Macionis 1995:139) contend that television consumes as much of children's time as interacting with parents. Macionis (1995:138) states further that the mass media has an enormous effect on our attitudes and behaviour. For this reason, they are an important component of the socialization process.

Macionis (1995:141) emphasizes that television and the other mass media have enriched our lives in many ways, contributing to socialization by bringing a wide range of entertaining and educational programmes. Thus, television, films and other forms of mass media increase our understanding of diverse cultures and provoke discussion of current issues.

It should also be mentioned that television has the potential for developing positive attitudes. In support of the effective role of television, Mwamwenda (1995:208) stresses that television has a strong effect on human reactions, attitudes and sensitivity. He then suggests that it may be relevant to base assignments on television programmes pupils have seen. It should be mentioned further that the influence of television and other mass media, on our lives is profound. They do not only provide entertainment, but provide and shape much of the information which we utilize in our daily lives. They disseminate information on a mass scale and help us in following current issues both nationally and internationally. It can thus be assumed that pupils who watch educational programmes on the television, or listen to educational lessons on the radio or read newspapers can enrich their knowledge by acquiring a great deal of new ideas and information. So, the mass media can serve as useful supplement to the classroom teacher's lessons, and both the teacher and pupils can equally benefit from such programmes as some information that cannot be obtained locally, can be provided by the tele/teachers as well as radio teachers. Newspapers and

magazines also have an added advantage of equipping pupils with new vocabulary, and enabling them to follow trends in national and global affairs. So an attempt will be made to find out the effect of the mass media on pupils' performance in Thohoyandou and questions on whether they have access to television or radios and the time spent per day watching television or listening to the radio were included in the questionnaire.

#### **2.6.22 Type of dwelling and the number of people living in a dwelling**

It is commonly assumed that a congenial learning home environment with a separate study-room, tables and chairs, and a good lighting system can help pupils to attend to their school work better. In this regard, pupils who come from environmentally disadvantaged homes where parents have divorced, or are separated; where there is overcrowding, or a high level of noise emanating from a 'shebeen' nearby and where educational facilities and equipment are non-existent, are likely to become frustrated and demotivated. Consequently, the deplorable conditions in the home can adversely affect pupils' performance in school. Pupils from such an environment often fail to measure up to expectations because of the uninviting and poor situations in which they find themselves.

On the other hand, pupils who come from favourable homes with the necessary equipment and accessories, are likely to perform well in school. They are motivated by the environment in which they find themselves and

as a result they work harder to succeed. Hence, questions about the kind of dwelling with its facilities were used to determine the effect of favourable physical conditions on pupils' academic performance.

### **2.6.23 Reference books**

It is common knowledge that pupils who have relevant reference books in the home, to which they can refer when doing school work, can acquire more additional information and ideas from available reference books than pupils whose only source of reference is the school textbooks. For, pupils who have access to suitable reference books either in the home or in a nearby library, can learn how to search for information and explore new subject areas. Hence, it can be mentioned that such learners are more likely to improve the quality of their work rather than those pupils who only use school textbooks which are, to a large degree, syllabus-based. Thus, while school textbooks provide information specifically for the school syllabus, reference books deal with a wider scope of information on, and even go beyond the scope of school textbooks. Questions on the availability of reference books, students' homes and usage of these books were included.

### **2.6.24 Home language**

Pretorius (1990 in Le Roux 1994:36) asserts that it is commonly accepted that education in the medium of the mother tongue (or home language) is the ideal. It is also assumed that if pupils are taught first to listen and to speak,

as well as to read and to write in their mother tongue, at the early stages in their educational development, they will be able to understand the school subjects and thereby have a solid foundation. Such a foundation may help them to grasp the various subjects when they eventually come to be taught in a second language as the medium of instruction. It is also held that language seen as an integral part of one's cultural heritage will also enable pupils to rediscover and appreciate their cultural values, and admire the exploits of their past traditional warriors and their contributions to their society.

Le Roux (1994:136) once again emphasizes the importance of the mother tongue by saying that, worldwide, many of the problems that have been experienced in the school situation have been attributed to the difficulties of pupils (and also teachers) in having to learn (or teach) in a tongue other than their mother tongue. In the same breath, Mwamwenda (1995:165) points out that most documents argue that pupils are able to understand subjects that are taught in their home language because they can form the correct concepts. Learning in one's mother-tongue does not only enable them to appreciate the richness of their cultural heritage, but it also facilitates their academic progress. In support of this argument, Westley, (1992) and Ngugi (1992 quoted in Mwamwenda 1995:169) point out that in the 1980s, a number of literary African figures and educators expressed a strong desire for the use of African languages as the medium of instruction and literary

communication. Again, Westley (1992:359) argues that mother-tongue education in the primary years, offers the best introduction to literacy that eventually is an aid to English acquisition.

Furthermore, Akinnaso (1988:98) states that mother-tongue education facilitates cultural transmission, cognitive development and communicative ability. In supporting this assertion, Cummins (1984:452) and Guiora (1984:10) contend that it is significant to note that the child's mother-tongue in school entails cognitive and affective benefits for the reason that the mother-tongue is the very livelihood of human self-awareness, the carrier of identity, the safe repository of a vast array of affective and cognitive templates making up the total web of personality. Questions on language used in classroom or playground by students to communicate among themselves were asked in the questionnaire. There were also questions to find out the extent to which students use English, the medium of instruction, outside the classroom.

#### **2.6.25 Language spoken among pupils in the classroom**

It is noticeable that the frequent use of a language by pupils as a regular medium of communication in any situation, for example, in the classroom enables them to acquire fluency and proficiency in that language. So pupils who frequently communicate among themselves in English, which is the medium of instruction, in the classroom can acquire a reasonable amount of



proficiency in that language. These pupils often can express themselves quite confidently both orally and in writing. This ability facilitates their understanding of the school subjects in English, in the classroom.

#### **2.6.26 Language spoken among pupils on the school playfields**

Also, it is a fact that if pupils frequently speak the language which is the medium of instruction on the school playfields, it can facilitate their acquisition of the language. This will, in turn, facilitate pupils' comprehension of the subjects taught at school, and further enables them to clearly express their thoughts orally, as well as, in writing. It should also be mentioned that by using the instruction language among themselves frequently during play periods, the learners' ability to communicate with one another in the language can be improved significantly. Pupils will also have the advantage of improving their school performance in the school subjects as the language used in teaching the subjects will be comprehensible to them.

#### **2.6.27 Time spent on transport by pupils to get to school**

The amount of time spent by pupils to get to school, is of paramount importance because pupils who live very far away from school in areas where there is no proper or efficient mode of transport available, will have to walk to school. In certain cases, transport may be available but pupils may not be able to afford the transport costs, and therefore have to walk to

school. The researcher observed that pupils who walk over long distances to school, more often than not, arrive late and exhausted. They therefore miss the subjects which are taught early in the morning. Some of these students do not have any breakfast before going to school and this worsens their condition.

As such students are hungry and tired, they are unable to actively concentrate on the lessons being taught. The result is that their comprehension of the lessons is impaired considerably. Where students consistently arrive late at school, their performance at school could be adversely affected. On the other hand, pupils who live in close proximity to the school, can arrive at the school in time as they can easily walk to school. As the school is within walking distance, the possibility of pupils missing early lessons may be minimal or non-existent. Being fresh and energetic and regularly punctual, they are able to actively attend to and concentrate on the lessons, and consequently they have a better grasp of the lessons they are taught.

In this study, the different modes of transport used by pupils to reach the school, were used to determine the amount of time spent on transport.

#### **2.6.28 Facilities**

Facilities are operationalized to refer to the availability of things such as a

study room, good light, chairs and tables, reference books, in the pupil's home that will make it easier and more convenient for the pupil to do his or her schoolwork in the home where he or she lives and from where he or she attends school.

All the variables mentioned under 2.6 were used as independent variables. In the statistical analysis, their influence on school performance were calculated. These results will be shown when the tables are presented and discussed elsewhere in this study.

## **2.7 THE LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The focus of the study was on the influence of the socio-economic background of the family and the learning home environment on a pupil's academic performance at school hence teaching abilities and classroom activities were not considered. This could be an interesting and challenging area of further study.

As some of the parents of the students used in this study live and work in some of the big towns, especially, in Johannesburg, the researcher had to rely heavily on the pupils for the information provided about their parents. Thus, the possibility of some pupils trying to impress by giving favourable responses about their parents' background and the material conditions in

their homes cannot be entirely ruled out. Therefore, to reduce significantly the possible biases that this shortcoming might entail, the author visited a number of pupils' homes in order to see the kind of learning environment in which pupils live and work, and to interview some parents about how they motivate their children to work hard at school. Also, the purpose of interviewing some parents was to confirm or otherwise, the veracity of the responses provided by their children to the questions in the questionnaire. The researcher found that parents' responses to the questions posed, to a large degree, confirmed the responses, which is an ample indication that pupils answered the questions objectively and truthfully. Their responses can therefore be regarded as reliable.

However, not all parents were interviewed because many of them are migrant workers. Even if all the parents were working in Venda, the costs of employing student interviewers and training them, as well as transportation costs would have been certainly too high. As it has been indicated elsewhere in this study, the question as to whether a teacher's educational qualifications and teaching abilities impact on pupils' academic performance is outside the scope of this study. This area can, however, be a challenging and rewarding field for exploration. The greatest problem was a dearth of local literature and non-availability of adequate statistical information on the subject of study.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **2. THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES OF EDUCATION**

The study will be done within the framework of the following perspectives.

#### **2.1 PARENTS' (FAMILY'S) ROLE IN THE EDUCATION OF THE CHILD**

Many people see education in different perspectives and thus define it in numerous ways. Some view education from a utilitarian dimension, that is, in terms of the benefits it will bring either to them or to their children. Thus Van Niekerk (1982 in Le Roux 1993:106) defines education as the assistance given to a child so that he or she can become an adult. Landman (1973 quoted in Le Roux 1993:100), however, defines education as helping the child with regard to the meanings that he should attach to the realities of life. Rulashe (1989:70) defines it as the adult's purposeful, deliberate and systematic intervention in the child's development. According to Gunter, (1984 quoted in Le Roux 1993:100), education is the child's guided development from complete dependence at first to adulthood, with complete self-reliance as the ultimate aim. Brookover and Gottlieb (1964:153) maintain that there is also a common assumption that education is the means by which equality of opportunity and social mobility are guaranteed.

By and large, the kind of perception that parents have on education determines the kind of role they play in their children's education. Thus, in Venda as in many African countries, education is regarded as a determinant factor of the level of prosperity, welfare and security. Education is seen as a means of getting a certificate which is a passport to a coveted job, a status and an income.

Therefore, the people of Venda, although economically disadvantaged by the accident of history, strive to keep their children in schools, because the acquisition of any higher academic qualification serves as an economic pillar of the entire extended family system. In Ghana, for instance, the desire to invest in the education of children as an insurance for old age is so strong among the Akan people that some parents could decide to sell their valuable property such as cocoa-farms, jewellery, and ornaments, or pledge their cocoa-farms in order to raise funds to sponsor their children's education.

In some cases, the members of an extended family contribute some money to send a relative overseas for further education. Among the Lozi and Tonga tribes in Zambia, parents and family members sometimes sell their cattle in order to sponsor their children's education. Thus to many Africans, education is a precious commodity; it is, in fact, the life-supporting and economic power-house for the entire extended family. This is based on the researcher's own experience in the Ghanaian society.

In this study, an attempt will be made to find out whether parents/family members in Thohoyandou play their supportive role in the education of their children by, for example, buying them school textbooks, paying their school fees in time, and the effect of their role on their children's school performance.

## **2.2 PUPILS' PERCEPTION OF WHAT SIGNIFICANT OTHERS SUCH AS BIOLOGICAL PARENTS, UNCLE AND AUNT EXPECT FROM THEM**

It should be noted that pupils shape their self-image according to what other people expect from them. Sullivan (1977 in Johnson 1986:155) refers to such people as the significant others. Horton and Hunt (1988:97) define the significant others as the persons whose approval we desire and whose direction we accept. Woelfel and Haller (1971 in quoted by Horton and Hunt 1988:97) also define the concept, as those persons who exercise major influence over the attitudes of individuals. It should be mentioned that significant others may be influential because of the roles they play in a child's life. One could also be selected as a "significant other" because he or she is an important celebrity, a best friend, or a relative. Horton and Hunt (1988:98) assert that the significant others are important to us and, therefore, their ideas and values tend to become our ideas. They form role models whom pupils are proud to emulate.

Cotgrove (1975:235) supports the view that pupils from working-class homes have a restricted knowledge of the range of occupations open to them. They are unlikely to have relatives who are accountants, solicitors or businessmen. They are far more likely to be influenced in their occupational choice by significant others, such as father, elder brother or uncle, and for this reason may not follow in the footsteps of an advanced relative.

Brembeck (1966:77) also subscribes to the view that the self-concept a student holds is influenced, to a large extent, by the significant others in his/her classroom environment; namely his teacher and classmates. There is also abundant research literature which supports the view that self-concept influences a pupil's school achievement. For instance, Brembeck (1966:77) says that the student who feels he is appreciated, valued and wanted by the significant others around him, tends to regard himself with realist esteem. On the other hand, the student who is devalued by his or her significant others, such as his teacher and classmates, will tend to regard himself or herself as incapable of achievement. The influence of self-concept on pupils' school performance in secondary schools in Thohoyandou would be an interesting subject area for research.

In this study, an attempt will be made to ascertain the extent to which the significant others such as, the biological father, mother (parents), uncle and aunt in the Venda cultural setting affect pupils' school performance.



### 2.3 TEACHER EXPECTATIONS FROM PUPILS

According to Newmann et al. (1989:224), 'teacher expectations' refer to teachers' perceptions of the extent to which students are capable of learning the material that teachers try to teach. If teachers see themselves having to teach uneducable students, the dim prospects for success breed hopelessness and, estrangement from work - the feeling, why even try? On the other hand, when teachers' expectations are high, the confidence that students will be able to respond enables them to invest themselves in teaching with reduced risks of failure. It should also be noted that Brookover et al. (1979), Lipsitz, (1984), Purkey and Smith, (1983), Rutter et al., (1979), Weber, (1971) and Pilling and Pringle, (1978), Seaver (1973) as quoted in Newmann et al. (1989:224) have supported the importance of teachers' expectations to students' achievements.

Newmann et al. (1989:224) assert further that teachers communicate, explicitly and implicitly, differential expectations about students' capacities to learn. Students who perceive that their teachers have confidence in their ability are more likely to concentrate and to work on school assignments and, therefore, are likely to achieve higher levels than are students who sense that their teacher considers them to be less able to master what they are taught.

Furthermore, there is abundant evidence in the relevant literature that teacher expectations have an impact on student performance at school. Such expectations may stimulate the student to work hard in the school, or compel him or her to adopt unfair and improper means by copying notes in examinations or tests so as to satisfy his or her teacher expectations. Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968 in Brookover and Erickson 1975:315) who have done research on teacher expectations support the view that students tend to behave in terms of others' expectations and that teacher expectations are associated with student achievement. They argue that it is reasonable to conclude that the expectations of teachers as well as those of other adults and students affect the student's school performance.

Meighan (1981:119) also argues that the central proposition in studies of teacher expectations is that pupils tend to perform as well or as badly as their teachers expect. Lemmer and Squelch (1993:71), in supporting the effectiveness of teacher expectations, contend that the expectations teachers have of pupils exercise a complex, strong and significant impact on pupil performance.

**TABLE 3 : TEACHER EXPECTATION AND SCHOOL PERFORMANCE**

TEACHER EXPECTATION	50%		60%		70%		80%		TOTAL	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Fail	6	7,0	20	24,0	26	31,0	32	38,0	84	100,0
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Pass	3	4,8	16	25,8	10	16,7	33	53,2	62	100,0
Total	9	6,1	36	24,7	36	24,7	65	44,5	146	100,0

$p > 0,05$  (Number missing = 195)

This table shows no significant relationship between the variables "teacher expectation" and "school performance" ( $p > 0,05$ ). It seems however, that in the category "pass", (70% and 80% taken together), 43 out of 62 pupils did pass.

This seems in line with theories which state that teacher expectation can be a factor to motivate pupils to perform well. Also "teacher expectation" refers to the pupil's opinion of what the teacher expects of him or her. Only 146 out of 341 pupils indicated marks that their teachers expect of them. Strangely enough, a large number of pupils (195) did not have any idea of the marks that their teachers expect from them - based on "don't know" in the questionnaire.

In conclusion from Table 3, Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968 in Brookover and Erickson 1975:316) contended that once a pupil is labelled by the teacher and others, self-fulfilling prophecy operates; she or he expects certain forms of behaviour from the pupil and the pupil responds to the expectations. They concluded that once this pattern is established, it is hard to alter. However, there are many other variables which affect expectations of a student's behaviour and performance. Brookover and Erickson (1975:317) argue that although test scores and academic achievement are important factors that affect teacher expectations, a student's attractiveness, social class, names etcetera are other factors that equally influence teacher expectations. Furthermore, pupils pick up the subtle cues; this 'self-fulfilling prophecy' can cause them to believe they have certain abilities and can influence their future behaviours and academic performance. It therefore goes without saying that teachers can manipulate the classroom situation to affect student performance. Nevertheless, the extent to which classroom activities affect teacher expectations of a student's academic performance is outside the parameters of this study.

#### **2.4 PARENTS' EXPECTATIONS OF THE PUPIL**

From the researcher's own experience, Venda parents look at schools as specialised institutions in which general education tasks of society are formally undertaken. It is generally accepted that the central activity of

schools is teaching and learning. Schools also impart knowledge, skills, beliefs and attitudes. Further, schools train personnel to fill occupational roles in society, to raise the morality of society by developing in youth virtues deemed important and to maintain national development by providing manpower. Parents therefore expect schools to prepare their children for occupational roles, provide entry into professions, enable the poor or underprivileged to improve their status in society and provide people with experiences.

Because of the importance Venda parents attach to education, they put their children in schools in the hope that the schools will offer the kind of knowledge and skills which will enable their children to obtain secure jobs with good salaries and good prospects for promotion. Hence some parents in Venda either spend their meagre income or take loans from the banks in order to sponsor the education of their children. They obviously expect their children to work hard, to pass their tests and examinations, and to obtain certificates which open the gate to better and secure future.

### 2.4.1 Parents' educational expectations from pupils

**TABLE 4 : PARENTS' EXPECTATIONS AND SCHOOL PERFORMANCE**

PARENT EXPECTATION	50%		60%		70%		80%		TOTAL	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Fail	3	2,8	19	17,9	36	34,0	48	45,3	106	100,0
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Pass	1	1,2	16	20,3	18	22,8	44	55,7	79	100,0
Total	4	2,2	35	18,9	54	29,2	92	49,7	185	100,0

$p > 0,05$  (Number missing = 156)

Table 4 does not show a significant relationship between the variables "school performance" and "parent expectation" ( $p > 0,05$ ). It seems however that in the category "pass", (70% and 80% taken together)  $\pm 78\%$  of pupils passed compared to 21,5% who passed when the categories of 50% and 60% are taken together. This seems in line with theories which state that parent expectation can be a factor to stimulate pupils to do well in school. Here, "parent expectation" refers to a pupil's opinion of what parents expect of them. Nevertheless, only 185 out of 341 pupils indicated, marks that parents expect of them. A large number of pupils (156) did not have any idea as to what marks their parents expect of them. The probable

reason for this trend is that a reasonably large number of parents in Venda do not normally tell their children the positions they (parents) expect them to take in examinations. Nor do parents tell their children the mark they expect them to score in an examination or test.

## **2.5 THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE OF THE PUPIL'S EXPECTATION**

Generally, students who have the right attitudes and interest do well in school (Cherian, 1990:1). These students work hard spontaneously and strive to excel in class. Thus, when students have high expectations of becoming, for example, medical doctors, engineers, pharmacists, they work more diligently to achieve their objective. Thus, pupils' expectations can propel them to achieve the highest academic laurels in their educational career.

It should however, be mentioned that a student's expectations are dependent on his or her self-concept. In this regard, Le Roux (1994:34) argues that a child who lives in a milieu or environment fraught with lack of order, a limited language code, primitive communication, low intellect, insecurity, poor orientation towards school and clashes between the value orientations of the family and the school develops a negative self-concept. However, the effect of self-concept on a pupil's academic performance is outside the scope of this study. This subject could be an interesting area for exploration.

It could be assumed that in a socio-cultural set up like Venda, pupils expect schools to equip them with the relevant knowledge and skills which will enable them to get employment. Some of the pupils also believe that if they work hard and pass their examination very well, they can proceed to tertiary institutions to further their education. According to Cooley (1965) in Johnson (1986:157), pupil's self-image may affect his or her academic performance. This is exemplified by the fact that a student who sees himself or herself as perceived by other people as a brilliant student will endeavour to live up to that self-image by working hard at school. In doing so, he or she will improve his or her academic performance. On the other hand, a student whose 'self' is perceived by others as indolent, weak and incapable of succeeding in his or education, will not be motivated to work hard in school as he or she has no positive self-image to uphold.

### 2.5.1 PUPIL'S OWN EDUCATIONAL EXPECTATIONS

**TABLE 5 : PUPIL'S EXPECTATIONS AND SCHOOL PERFORMANCE**

PUPIL EXPECTATION	50%		60%		70%		80%		TOTAL	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Fail	4	2,9	14	10,0	23	16,4	99	70,7	140	100,0
Pass	2	2,0	7	7,1	17	17,2	73	73,7	99	100,0
Total	6	2,5	21	8,8	40	16,7	172	72,0	239	100,0

$p > 0,05$  (Number missing = 102)



Table 5 does not show any significant relationship between the variables, "pupil expectation" and "school performance" ( $p > 0,05$ ). It seems however that in the category of "pass", (70% and 80% taken together), 90,9% out of 99 pupils passed. This trend seems to confirm theories which state that high pupil expectation can motivate pupils to perform well.

The item in the questionnaire seems important to determine whether it is "own expectation" or not. It is however possible that significant others can inculcate a tendency to perform well.

However, a possible reason for a large number of pupils, 29,9% missing is that they might not have any particular expectations.

## **2.6 THE THEORY OF MOTIVATION**

Seifert (1983:11) defines motivation as the tendency to engage in certain forms of behaviour or to the arousal of that tendency leads to those behaviours. Seifert (1983:11) also maintains that learners commonly have motives to achieve, to affiliate with others and to gain power. According to him, some motives are intrinsic, that is, they come from within the learner and others are extrinsic, that is, they come from people or sources outside the learner. He defines a motive as a tendency for disposition to act, rather than an action itself. Again, Seifert (1983:299) indicates that a motive

arouses or energizes the individual, directs him or her movement towards some sort of goal and sustains the movement towards that goal over a period of time.

Several research findings however suggest that student's senses of self-worth affect their motivation in school (Covington and Beary, 1976; Purkey, 1978) as quoted by Seifert (1983:117). Seifert (1983:117) contends that students who feel good about themselves set relatively high standards for themselves yet not so high that they do not have a reasonable chance of achieving them. But students with lower self-esteem may set goals that are either unrealistically high or extremely low.

Mwamwenda (1995:259) also argues that motivation is a concept used as an explanation or rationale for the way a person or an organism behaves. The term is also used to refer to something that is innate within an individual. It is an energizer or a driving force, a desire or an urge that causes an individual to engage in a certain behaviour. In this regard, motivation is like a gravitational force that impels a child to redouble his or her effort at school. Thus motivation may be compared to the fuel which provides the energy to cause a car to move. However, a car requires a driver. Parents and teachers may sit in the driving seat from time to time, but the purpose of modern education is that the child should be enabled to take the controls as often as feasible, and eventually direct his

or her own course without much outside help. Therefore, a child without motivation is like a car without fuel to, provide the power to propel him or her on. He or she has to be motivated.

Pasens (1958) in Banks (1976:226) defines extrinsic motivation as being persuaded to do something by various forms of rewards and punishments; intrinsic motivation as the desire to do something worthwhile for its own sake; social motivation as the desire to do something because it is regarded as an approved activity by an admired person. Hugen (1974) in Meighan (1981:189) asserts that pupils undertake to learn mainly to avoid the disagreeable consequences if they do not. For example, they may obtain low marks or may not be promoted, or be censured, punished if they do not work hard enough. Meighan (1981:193) supports this view and notes that students would not generally work independently without instrumental motivation such as an external examination.

Fox (1978 as quoted in Meighan 1981:350) contends that students work very hard to avoid disagreeable consequences of low marks or censure if they were unsuccessful. By the same token, Thorndike (1928) in Mwamwenda (1995:201) maintains that how hard pupils work on a given task is determined by their level of interest. The greater the interest the harder they work, and the lower their interest, the less hard they will work.

Several research findings by (Kapambwe, 1980), Behr, Cherian, Mwamwenda, Ndaba, and Ramphal (1986), Majoribanks (1987), Holloway, Fuller, Azuma, Kashimagi, and Gorman (1990 as quoted in Cherian 1991:183-188), have established that the interests parents have in education tends to be associated with the academic motivation and the willingness of their children to be active in their learning. Also, according to Gage and Berlemer (1984), Behr et al. (1986), Grolnick and Ryan (1990 as quoted in Cherian 1991:181), a pupil who is strongly motivated is more likely to make good academic progress than one who is not, and such pupils are likely to get involved in learning tasks if their parents, as models, attach importance to their education and get them involved in school work.

The researcher has found out that in Venda cultural setting, parents motivate their children in diverse ways to work hard in school. For instance, parents show their appreciation and approval when their children carry out their instructions properly. Sometimes parents use punishment as a form of motivation. In this case, a child who fails to perform his or her given task satisfactorily is denied food, or thrashed by the father. Thus, with the withdrawal of some privileges from the child, or infliction of corporal punishment on him or her, parents seek to motivate their children to behave properly.

This study tries to discover the diverse ways in which the significant others such as parents, uncles, aunts in Venda traditional family motivate pupils to work and whether the forms of motivation have any significant effect on the academic performance of the pupils.

**TABLE 6 : FREQUENCY AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF PUPILS IN TERMS OF DIFFERENT FORMS OF MOTIVATION**

<b>FORMS OF MOTIVATION</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
1. No motivation	24	10,1
2. Reward (material)	42	17,7
3. Given time to study	7	3,1
4. Praise	50	21,1
5. Advised to work hard	74	31,2
6. Helped with school work	15	6,3
7. Other	25	10,5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>237</b>	<b>100,0</b>

Missing number = 104

Table 6 indicates that 31,2% of the parents in Thohoyandou advise their children (pupils) to work hard in school. The table also reveals that 21,1% of the parents praise their children when they have passed their tests and examinations. According to the responses given to an open question on this

topic, 17,7% of the parents give rewards such as new clothes, wristwatches, footwear and money to their children as a form of motivation 9,3% of the parents give their children some time to study or help them with their school work. Only 24 out of 237 pupils indicated that they did not receive any form of motivation from their parents. 213 out of 237 pupils received motivation in a variety of forms from their parents. This trend is evident that Thohoyandou parents, on the whole, motivate their children in different ways to work hard at school.

**TABLE 7 : KIND OF MOTIVATION AND SCHOOL PERFORMANCE**

	NO MOTIVATION		REWARD/ PRESENTS		GIVEN TIME TO STUDY		ADVISED TO STUDY		HELPED WITH WORK		PRAISE		OTHER		TOTAL	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
FAIL	21	19,1	15	13,6	5	4,5	21	19,1	10	9,1	20	20,0	16	14,6	110	100,0
PASS	3	2,4	27	21,3	2	1,6	53	41,7	5	3,9	28	22,0	9	7,1	127	100,0
TOTAL	24	10,1	42	17,7	7	3,1	74	31,2	15	6,3	50	21,1	25	10,5	237	100,0

$p > 0,05$

Number missing = 104

As can be seen from Table 7, there is no significant relationship between the variables, "different kinds of motivation" and "school performance" ( $p > 0,05$ ). It seems however, that in the category "pass", rewards (21,3%) and advice to study (41,7%) taken together),  $\pm 63\%$  of pupils did pass. Also 24,4% passed when the categories of praise (17,3%) and (7,1%) other forms of motivation are taken together. This seems to be in line with the assumption that rewards and praise can be a factor to motivate pupils to perform well in school. Only 237 out of 341 pupils indicated that parents used different methods to motivate them. As can be seen from the table, rewards, advised to study, praise etcetera are the prominent motivators used by parents of the students used in this research. The possible reason for a large number of pupils, 30,5% missing is that they might not have any kind of motivation from their parents.

## **2.7 SOCIAL LEARNING THEORY**

Bandura (1977 in Mwamwenda 1995:203), a social psychologist, states that social learning theory is based primarily on what a child learns in his or her environment as he or she interacts and observes others. Bandura further adds that this theory guides a person's behaviour so that he or she acts in accordance with social norms, values and beliefs, thus enabling the person to adjust successfully to society. Schau et al. (1983 as quoted in Mwamwenda 1995:203), argue that social learning is ongoing and



continuous. Children pick up behaviour, consciously or unconsciously almost everyday watching parents, teachers, peers, etcetera ... Almost every action of a teacher or parent in the presence of children, therefore has the potential of being a model to the child. A pupil thus identifies with another significant person's behaviour, attitudes, system of values or beliefs. Such a person may be a parent, a figure of authority or a peer. Thus pupils like to identify themselves with certain individuals in society and, as far as possible, behave exactly like the persons they see as role-models. Thus they may consciously or unconsciously model the status which their parents, teachers or peers occupy in society.

Hence, parents who are highly educated may serve as status models for their children to emulate. Therefore, children who have parents with high level of education are likely to work hard at school in order to attain or even excel the educational level of their parents. On the other hand, children who have parents who have a low level of education or are illiterates may not study hard at school since their parents do not serve educationally as status models. In this respect, Bandura (1977 as quoted in Mvamwenda 1995:204-211), contends that teachers and parents are in a position to serve as models and enhance desirable behaviour, and personality development among children. In Venda traditional family life, boys tend to follow their fathers as hunters and great warriors whilst girls often follow their mothers as housewives in the home.

The current study seeks to discover the impact of the parents's level of education on pupils' school performance.

TABLE 8.1 : RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FATHER'S EDUCATIONAL LEVEL AND PUPILS' SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

	POST-GRADUATE		UNIV. DEGREE		POST-MATRIC		STD IX-X		STD VI-VIII		PRIMARY	NO SCHOOLING		DON'T KNOW		TOTAL		
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	N	%	N	%	N	%	
FAIL	7	3,4	12	5,9	20	10,3	23	11,2	16	7,8	39	19,0	61	29,2	27	13,2	205	100,0
PASS	14	11,6	10	8,3	14	11,6	11	9,1	13	10,7	20	16,5	27	22,3	12	9,9	121	100,0
TOTAL	21	6,4	22	6,7	34	10,4	34	10,4	29	9,0	59	18,1	88	27,0	39	12,0	326	100,0

$p > 0,05$

Number missing = 15

Table 8.1 shows no significant relationship between the variables, "father's educational level" and "school performance", ( $p > 0,5$ ). This picture tells us that pupils of fathers with primary education or no education at all performed better compared to pupils of fathers with university education and post-matric education. In terms of "pass" a possible explanation might be that pupils of fathers with primary education only or no education at all, see financial hardships of their parents. This may motivate them to study very hard at school in order to avoid such hardships in future, and be in a position to help their parents financially.

12% of 326 pupils did not know their father's educational levels. This trend confirms the notion in Venda that fathers normally do not tell their children about their education.

Finally, it may be argued that the fact that a pupil comes from a home where the parents are highly educated, does not necessarily imply that the pupil will perform well at school. Much depends on the involvement of the parents in the pupil's education. It is common knowledge that, many highly educated parents (fathers) are often preoccupied with official work which requires attendance at meetings for many hours or going on trek. So most of the time they are either away from home on duty or come home when they are too exhausted as a result of the stress and strain of office work and therefore cannot assist their children (pupils) with their schoolwork.

For the purposes of this study, the cut-off point of father's educational level is four years of functional education when a person is deemed to be able to read, write, communicate in the language of the medium of instruction, participate in his or her community developments and contribute to his or her community.

**TABLE 8.2 : RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MOTHER'S EDUCATIONAL LEVEL AND PUPIL'S SCHOOL PERFORMANCE**

	POST GRADUATE		UNIV DEGREE		POST-MATRIC		STD IX-X		STD VI-VIII		PRIMARY		NO SCHOOLING		TOTAL	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
FAIL	10	4,7	14	6,5	19	8,9	23	10,7	26	12,2	55	25,7	67	31,3	214	100,0
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
PASS	12	10,3	12	10,3	14	12,1	13	11,2	17	14,7	14	12,1	34	29,3	116	100,0
TOTAL	22	6,7	26	7,9	33	10,0	36	10,9	43	13,0	69	20,9	101	30,6	330	100,0

$p > 0,05$

Number missing = 11

As the figures in Table 8.2 indicate, there is no significant relationship between the variables, "mother's educational level" and "school performance" ( $p > 0,05$ ). It seems, however, that in the category of "pass", mothers with the following educational levels: post-graduate plus university degree, post-matric plus secondary education, primary education and no schooling at all, obtained 20,6%, 38,0% and 41,4% respectively.

This trend shows that pupils of mothers with primary education or no schooling at all performed better compared to pupils of mothers with post-graduate plus university degrees and post-matric plus secondary education.

This study, therefore, does not support the theory that parents who are highly educated serve as a role model or motivating force to their children and enable them to perform well at school. Rather, this study has highlighted the point that pupils whose parents are either less educated or have no schooling at all, see the stark economic hardships and impoverishment encountered by their parents. The interview conducted by the researcher, some parents even revealed that they take loans from banks in order to sponsor their children's education. Thus, pupils of such parents, as revealed in this study, appear determined to work hard at school to achieve success in order to avoid the financial hardships and abject poverty that their parents experience. As a result, pupils of poor parents with less education or no schooling tend to perform well compared to pupils of

educated or well-to-do parents, whose needs are usually fully provided for.

## **2.8 LANGUAGE**

Johnson (1986:67) states that language is very important, for it allows us to organise symbols into ideas about ourselves and our culture. He states further that there would be no culture without language, for it is through language that we mark and interpret perceptions and communicate with one another. Johnson (1986:147) adds that as important as physical contact is, it is language that lies at the heart of culture and social life, and without interaction with others, we cannot possibly acquire it. As regards language and cognitive development, Yarrow et al. (1975 in Johnson 1986:147) note that children who are frequently spoken to and played with develop their mental abilities more rapidly than do less stimulated infants.

In emphasizing the importance of language, Giddens (1993:40) states that no one disputes that possession of language is one of the most distinctive of all human cultural attributes, shared by all cultures. Browne (1994:290) argues that success depends very heavily on language - reading, writing, speaking, and understanding and that low language proficiency may cause difficulties in communication, and may create disadvantages at school. Teachers may mistake language difficulties for lack of ability, and because the pupils with communicative problems in English, the medium of



instruction, may be penalized in the classroom. Bernstein (1970 in Browne 1994:290) also argued that there is a relationship between language use and social class, and that the language used by the middle-class is a superior instrument for success at school compared to the language used by the working class.

Macionis (1995:67-69) defines language as the key to the world of culture, it is a system of symbols that allows members of a society to communicate with one another. Language is, in fact, the major means of cultural transmission, the process by which one generation passes culture to the next. Levitas (1974:131) also contends that language is a powerful force in the formation of the culture of any society.

The language issue in South Africa is very sensitive since South Africa is a multi-lingual society and each ethnic group is trying to get its language officially recognised at the national level. To resolve the language issue, eleven languages have been officially recognised; however, English and Afrikaans still remain the most widely used official languages in South Africa.

In this study, an attempt will be made to find out the impact of language on pupils' school performance.

### **2.8.1 Linguistic ability and academic performance**

Low achievement in school may be attributable to factors in the pupils' learning home environment. One feature of that learning home environment is language. There has been a considerable amount of research into the study of the relationship between language and school performance, especially in the western countries compared to developing countries.

McCarthy (1954 and Klein (1965 quoted in Mangan et al. 1978:41) argue that in certain family environments, the methods of exercising control, and the nature of interactions that take place, etcetera are such that children do not acquire a high degree of linguistic resourcefulness.

Bernstein (1973:42) in his analysis of language commonly used by the British child, made a distinction between restricted code and elaborate code. He asserted that children of middle-class parents speak elaborate language whilst those of the working class parents speak restricted language.

Language is an effective instrument for communication and thinking and therefore forms a vital component of the learning home environment. Therefore pupils who often use the language which is the medium of instruction at school and in their homes, are likely to follow the lessons taught at school better. Consequently, they are able to do well, compared

to those who are handicapped in the use of the language in which school subjects are taught. In Venda, most of the pupils speak Tshivenda - the local language, at home and not English which is the medium of instruction at school. The use of Tshivenda as a means of communication in the home is due to the fact that most of the parents are illiterate. Even in homes where parents are literate, Tshivenda is still the main language of interaction.

In this study, the author attempts to discover the influence of the use of local languages such as Tshivenda, Zulu, Xhosa on the pupils' school performance.

**TABLE 9.1 : RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PUPIL'S HOME LANGUAGE AND SCHOOL PERFORMANCE**

	TSHIVENDA		ENGLISH		AFRIKAANS		N. SOTHO		OTHER		TOTAL	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Fail	111	55,5	15	7,5	2	1,0	27	13,5	45	22,5	200	100,0
Pass	66	48,9	21	15,6	2	1,5	18	13,3	28	20,7	135	100,0
Total	177	52,8	36	10,7	4	1,2	45	13,4	73	21,8	335	100,0

$p > 0,05$  (Number missing = 6)

The above table indicates that 177 out of 335 ( $\pm 53\%$ ) of the respondents have Tshivenda as home language. Only 36 (10,7%), 4 (1,2%), 45 (13,4%) out of 335 pupils use English, Afrikaans, and Northern Sotho as home languages respectively.

Within the various home language categories, it seems as if a large percentage failed, but in the "English" category, 15,6% passed, compared to 7,5% who failed.

This trend therefore seems in line with theories which state that home language can be a factor which enables pupils to perform well in school. For the purposes of this study, "home language" refers to the pupil's mother-tongue, that is, the language into which the pupil was born, and which he or she speaks frequently.

**TABLE 9.2 : RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE LANGUAGE IN WHICH PUPILS COMMUNICATE MOSTLY AMONG THEMSELVES IN THE CLASSROOM AND SCHOOL PERFORMANCE**

	TSHIVENDA		ENGLISH		AFRIKAANS		N. SOTHO		TOTAL	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Fail	110	54,7	89	44,3	1	0,5	1	0,5	201	100,0
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Pass	69	52,3	62	46,9	1	0,8	-	-	132	100,0
Total	179	53,8	151	45,3	2	0,6	1	0,3	333	100,0

$p > 0,05$  (Number missing = 8)

Table 9.2 does not show any significant relationship between the variables, "language in which pupils communicate mostly among themselves in the school classroom" and "school performance", ( $p > 0,5$ ). More or less 54% of the pupils communicate among themselves in Tshivenda. Only  $\pm 45\%$  do so in English which means that  $\pm 55\%$  of the pupils do not use English, the medium of instruction, when they communicate among themselves in the school classroom.

**TABLE 9.3 : RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE LANGUAGE IN WHICH PUPILS COMMUNICATE MOSTLY AMONG THEMSELVES ON SCHOOL PLAY-GROUNDS AND SCHOOL PERFORMANCE**

	TSHIVENDA		ENGLISH		N. SOTHO		TOTAL	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
FAIL	173	86,1	27	13,4	1	0,5	201	100,0
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
PASS	112	83,6	22	16,4	0	0,0	134	100,0
TOTAL	285	85,1	49	14,6	1	0,3	335	100,0

$p = 0,05$

Missing number = 6

As can be seen from Table 9.3, there is no significant relationship between the variables, "the language in which pupils communicate mostly among themselves on the school play-grounds" and "school performance" ( $p > 0,05$ ).

Only 14,6% of the pupils indicated that they use English as a medium of communication on the play-grounds.

**TABLE 9.4 : RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PUPILS WHO COMMUNICATE IN ENGLISH MOSTLY IN THE HOME AND SCHOOL PERFORMANCE**

	ENGLISH SPOKEN AT HOME		ENGLISH NOT SPOKEN AT HOME		TOTAL	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Fail	52	26,0	148	74,5	200	100,0
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Pass	36	26,9	98	73,1	134	100,0
Total	88	26,3	246	73,7	334	100,0

$p > 0,05$  Number missing = 7

As the figures in Table 9.4 indicate, there is no significant relationship between the variables, "pupils who communicate mostly in English in the home" and "school performance" ( $p > 0,05$ ). 26,0% of the pupils do speak English at home while  $\pm 74\%$  do not. This picture indicates that pupils who communicate mostly in English in the home in Thohoyandou do not necessarily perform well because 73,1% of pupils who do not even communicate in English in the home were successful.

This situation may be due to the fact that a large number of parents in Thohoyandou are illiterate, or those who are even educated communicate with their children (pupils) in the local language. This may not aid to acquire

better fluency in English which is the medium of instruction. As a consequence, it may adversely affect pupils' ability to perform well in the subjects which are taught in English.

The conclusion one may reach with regard to language and school performance in terms of first language and language of instruction is that both of them serve as a medium through which pupils learn. The eminent linguist, Halliday (1985:96), in supporting this view states that most of what we learn, we learn through language. This is true even of our commonsense knowledge, all that we learn before and outside our schooling; but it is especially true of educational knowledge. He contends that language is so central to the whole of the educational process that its role was never talked about, since no-one could conceive of education without it.

Basically, first language and second language, according to Halliday (1985:92), are different ways of expressing (saying) the same meanings (things). Halliday argues further that both of them have structures, forms and follow rules. The two are alternatives "outputs" - alternative realizations of the meaning potential of language; anything that can be said in writing can also be said in speaking, and vice versa. The two are different realizations of language.



Even when it comes to the language of instruction, there are marked differences between spoken form of the language and the written form. The latter often has impact on school performance since the method of evaluation of performance in school work often involves the written language. For, in the case of spoken language, one does not have to spell words correctly, or punctuate what one says. Also, one can express the same thing in different ways in order to achieve clarity.

On the other hand, written language has certain features which differ from spoken language. Language of instruction entails the use of 'technical' terms that are peculiar to a particular subject. A teacher teaching Geography, Economics or Chemistry uses words and terms that are peculiar to each of these subjects. Thus, for one's work in a particular subject to be understood, one must use expressions and linguistic styles, forms, terms and structures appropriate to that subject.

In a written exercise, a pupil has to develop a theme and present it in a coherent, articulate and orderly manner, choosing appropriate words and terms. So the type of skills one needs in a written language are much more demanding than in spoken language. The author has noted in his years of teaching experience, that many students who speak fluent English still find it difficult to organise their material, develop it and present it in a lucid and coherent manner when it comes to writing. They have the tendency to think

first in the native 'spoken' language and then convey it in the language of instruction - in this case, English which is the medium of instruction. What they write often shows traits of direct translation from the native language into English and there is often many grammatical aberrations and inaccuracies, rendering their work quite unacceptable.

From the discussion above, it becomes clear that pupils who are orally proficient in the language of instruction may not perform well in tests written in English.

Hence it is the view of the author that a pupil must do well in both in the spoken and the written forms of the language of instruction (English) in order to perform well in school. This view is supported by Halliday (1985:100) who says that both spoken language and the written language are both forms of language; it is the same linguistic system underlying both. However the two forms exploit different features of the system, and gain their power in different ways. Thus the powers of the spoken language and that of the written language complement each other. Both must be present in order to enable pupils to perform well in school.

## 2.9 DEPRIVATION - MARXIST ANALYSIS

According to Demaine (1981:1), Marx did not have to say much about the functions of education. Instead, people like Bowles and Gintis, Althusser and others who subscribed to the Marxist view on education, wrote volumes of literature on the concept of education from a Marxist perspective. According to these Marxists, Marxist concept of deprivation was based on the functions of education. They argue that education contributes to reproducing and maintaining the capitalistic system; that the ruling class bends education in such a way so as to suit their own interests, and that education is regarded as an element of the state machine and fulfils a function that serves to perpetuate capitalistic production relations.

Thus Bowles and Gintis, (1976 in Allais and McKay 1995:35) argue that education cannot be understood as a phenomenon isolated from the rest of society. They further argue that education needs to be examined in the light of its relationship to the economic base and other social institutions of society. Again, Bowles and Gintis (1976 in Allais and McKay 1995:35) thus focus on the way in which the educational system is an integral element in the reproduction of the prevailing class structure of society. They furthermore contend that the class and power relations of economic life are perpetuated or reproduced in capitalist society. Thus, according to Marxist view, education reproduces inequality and helps the ruling class to maintain

its position of dominance.

Blackledge and Hunt (1985:161) also support the view that education maintains the capitalist system. However, the process of class maintenance is concealed from public view by the universally reigning ideology of the schools. In this regard, Bowles and Gintis (1976 in Allais and McKay 1995:39) assert that if capitalism is to succeed, it requires hardworking, docile, obedient, and highly motivated workforce. As a consequence, the four-tier previous education system in South Africa designed along racial, ethnic groups: the Whites, the Asians, the Coloureds and the Blacks had far-reaching significance on Black education in Venda. The philosophies and policies of the education systems were based on the political and economic philosophies of the government at that time - the apartheid policy, that is, separate development for the racial groups according to their respective cultural aspirations. In this respect, the provision of education for the Black children was relegated to the background. Black education was heavily discriminated against in terms of allocation of funds for educational equipment and other facilities. For example, there was widespread disparity in the annual costs of education per pupil between 1930 and 1945 as indicated below:

**TABLE 10 : ANNUAL COSTS OF EDUCATION PER PUPIL, 1930-1945**

YEAR	WHITES	BLACKS
	£	£
1930	22.12.0	2.2.8
1935	23.17.2	1.18.6
1940	25.14.2	2.4.4
1945	38.5.10	3.17.10

Source: Africa Perspective No 17 Spring, 1980:12.

The more recent statistics of the allocation of funds to the education of the racial groups still put Black education at a great disadvantage. This is illustrated by the expenditure of funds indicated in Table 11.

**TABLE 11 : PER CAPITA EXPENDITURE ON EDUCATION, 1953-1985**

YEAR	AFRICAN % OF WHITE EDU		COLOURED % OF WHITE EDU		INDIAN % OF WHITE EDU		WHITE
	R		R		R		R
1953-4	17	13,3	40	31,3	40	31,3	128
1969-70	17	6,0	73	25,9	81	28,7	282
1975-6	42	7,1	150	25,4	190	32,1	591
1977-8	54	8,2	185	28,2	276	42,0	657
1980-1	139	15,2	253	27,7	513	56,2	913
1982-3	146	12,1	498	41,1	711	58,7	1211
1984-5	214	42,7	501	33,2	905	59,9	1511

Source: Survey of Race Relations in South Africa (1976) in South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR), Johannesburg, 1978:399.

The pattern of state expenditure has reflected the huge inequalities between black and white education. Table 11 shows the per capita expenditure on different categories of school pupils for various years in the 1970s and 1980s.

**TABLE 12 : STATE PER CAPITA EXPENDITURE ON SCHOOL PUPILS BY RACE (RAND PER ANNUM)**

YEAR	AFRICANS		COLOUREDS		INDIANS		WHITES
	PER CAPITA EXPENDITURE (P.C.E.)	% OF WHITE P.C.E.	P.C.E.	% OF WHITE P.C.E.	P.C.E.	% OF WHITE P.C.E.	P.C.E.
1971-2	25,31	5,5	94,41	20,5	124,40	27,0	461,00*
1975-5	39,53	6,5	125,53	20,7	170,94	28,3	605,00
1975-6	41,80	6,5	139,62	21,7	189,53	29,4	644,00
1976-7	48,55	7,5	157,59	24,5	219,96	34,2	654,00
1978-9	71,28	9,8	225,54	31,2	357,15	49,3	724,00
1979-80	91,29	7,8	234,00	20,0	389,66	33,3	1 169,00
1980-1	176,20	17,3	286,08	28,0	n/a	n/a	1 021,00
1981-2	165,23	13,5	418,84	34,3	798,00	65,7	1 221,00
1982-3	192,34	13,9	593,37	42,8	871,87	63,0	1 385,00
1983-4	234,45	14,2	569,11	34,4	1 088,00	65,8	1 654,00
1986-7	476,95	19,0	1 021,41	40,7	1 904,20	75,9	2 508,00

\*Estimate. Figures for African pupils in the 'common area' only, i.e. excluding the homelands.

Source: Blignaut, *Statistics on Education in South Africa, 1968-1979*; SAIRR, 1981, 1982, 1983, 1984, 1985, 1988. in Nasson and Samuel (1990:31).



Thus, right from inception, black education was designed in such a way that it would produce black scholars who could not compete with their counterparts whites for jobs on the same footing of equality. According to Pelzer (1966 quoted in Motlhabi 1984:7), this motive is evident in the speech made by Jan Smuts in London in 1917 to the effect that:

"... We have felt more and more that if we are to solve the Native question, it is useless to try to govern Black and White in the same system, ... They are different not in colour but in mind and in political capacity ..."

Furthermore, Benson (1969 in Motlhabi 1984:7) stated that on another occasion Smuts affirmed that the ideal of the Union government was to make South Africa a "White man's country". The philosophy of the South African government of the day which was reflected in the implementation of Black education system is also noticeable in the question posed by Dr Malan (1948 in Neame 1962:73) posed the question whether the

"European race' in South Africa would in future succeed to maintain its rule, its purity and its civilization, or would it 'float along until it vanishes forever, without honour in the Black sea of South Africa's Non-European population ..."

Neame (1962:73-74) stated that Dr Malan warned that the removal of segregation, would mean that South Africa would sooner or later have to take its place among the half-caste nations of the world. Neame (1962:131) also notes that Strijdom (1955), the successor of Dr Malan in

the same vein, observed that

"Either the White man dominates or the Black man takes over ... And the only way (the Europeans can maintain domination is by withholding the vote from the Africans."

Here, Strijdom states emphatically that it was not possible for Blacks in general to take over government, either through merit or otherwise. He set aside certain jobs for Whites only. He also introduced separate university education for Blacks and Whites. There were to be separate universities also for Africans, Indians and Coloureds. In response to criticism, Strijdom (1957 in Neame 1962:141) pointed out:

"The universities are there to serve the nation and not apart from and independent of the nation. The nation cannot allow such institutions to spread doctrines that are perilous to the life or future of the White race ..."

As regards the political philosophy and educational policy of the South African government, it was reflected in the speeches of subsequent Prime Ministers, Ministers of Native Education and in parliamentary debates. For example, the much-quoted statement of Dr Hendrik Verwoerd, Prime Minister, from 1958-66 in (Kallaway 1990:173) is that:

"There is no place for him ... (i.e. the black) in the European community above the level of certain forms of labour.

... Until now *he* has been subjected to a school system which drew him away from his own community and misled him by showing him the greener pastures of European society in which he was not allowed to graze."

Hitherto Dr Verwoerd had questioned the wisdom of teaching the Bantu child mathematics since he could not use it in practice. According to Motlhabi (1984:54), Dr Verwoerd said:

"What is the use of teaching a Bantu mathematics when he cannot use it in practice? That is absurd ... Education must train and teach people in accordance with their opportunities in life. It is therefore necessary that native education should be controlled in such a way that it should be in accordance with the policy of the state."

Also, the Interdepartmental Committee on Native Education (the Welsh Commission) (1936 in Kallaway 1990:168) stating what was the thinking of White South Africans about social relations of dominance and subordination reported that:

"The education of the White child prepares him for life in a dominant society and the education of the Black child for a subordinate society."

The year 1948 was thus a crucial year in the history of South Africa and, more especially in the history of its Black people. This was so with the Nationalist government coming into power with a political policy of apartheid

or the enforced segregation of Black and White people into different areas, a new ideology was introduced into Black schooling system.

As has been expressed elsewhere in this study, apartheid introduced inequality in education. Hence State policy towards Black schooling was possibly the single most important factor accounting for the 1976 students' uprising. From the educational provision made by the state an educational system that ensured the vast majority of Black pupils had an inferior schooling, was put into place (Nasson and Samuel 1990:17).

Thus, according to the Hansard (1953 quoted in Nasson and Samuel 1990:1) the intentions of the state as regards Bantu education were made explicit by Dr Verwoerd. He stated that:

"... the schooling structure set up by missions produced the 'wrong type' of black person ... Racial relations cannot improve if the result of Native Education is the creation of frustrated people who, as a result of the education they received, have expectations in life which circumstances in South Africa do not allow to be fulfilling immediately, when it creates people who are trained for professions not open to them. ... Above all, good racial relations cannot exist when the education is given under the control of people who create many expectations on the part of the Native himself, if such people believe in a policy of equality ... It is therefore necessary that Native Education should be controlled in such a way that it should be in accordance with the policy of the State. ..."

A crucial part of the State's educational policy was to develop a school system that would ensure that the majority of black children had some contact with Bantu education. This emphasis resulted in a massive increase in the number of black pupils in the lower primary (Sub A to Standard 2) and higher primary levels (Standard 3 to Standard 5). Thus the missionary schools were generally forced to hand over control to the State or face closure. According to Christie and Collins (1985 quoted in Nasson and Samuel (1990:18), in 1953 there were over 5000 state-aided mission schools. All educational appointments, syllabi, examinations and school buildings were to be controlled exclusively by the state. Christie and Collins (1985 quoted in Nasson and Samuel (1990:18) again stated that in 1955 there were some 970000 black pupils in primary schools, comprising 731000 pupils in lower primary and 239000 in higher primary.

It would seem that in purely quantitative terms "Bantu Education" had achieved something. Nonetheless, this growth was confined to the lower standards. The deliberate lack of state funding for secondary schools coupled with pervasive poverty, ensured that a massive drop-out rate characterised black schooling. Out of 20,000 black pupils in Sub A in 1950, only 894 reached matriculation in 1962. Of these 532 (59,8%) failed (Rand Daily Mail, 28 March, 1975 quoted in Nasson and Samuel 1990:18). According to the Survey of Race Relations by South African Institute of Race Relations in South Africa (SAIRR) (1972:257), by 1970 the position had

changed substantially. So 68,8% of black pupils were in the lower primary classes (41,0% were in Sub A or Sub B); 4,1% were in junior secondary classes (Form I to Form III) and 0,36% were in Form IV or V. Some 2938 black pupils, or 0,11% of the total black school enrolment were in the final year of secondary school, Form V, matriculation.

What these figures reveal is that the state was determined to ensure that in line with apartheid policy, the vast majority of black children would receive a type of education that did not equip them for anything other than unskilled manual labour. However, at the same time the state, through schooling, was trying to ensure that Whites were prepared for almost complete monopoly of the dominant positions in society. With regard to this, Nasson and Samuel (1990:19) stated that in 1975 some 36,4% of white pupils were in secondary school. This was proportionately about 13 times greater than the number of black pupils in secondary school 1975. For every one black student at matriculation level, there were 4% white students.

This very vast difference between white and black attrition rates in schools was due to the privileged economic position of white parents and the racially discriminatory allocation of funds by the state. The latter can amply be illustrated by the fact that, according to South African Institute of Race Relations (1978 quoted in Nassons and Samuel 1990:19), between 1975-76, R744 million was allocated to white education and R166 million to black

education. This averaged out to R166 for every white scholar and R41,80 for every black scholar.

The inequality still exists in spite of the fact that the amount allocated to black education has improved considerably since the incremental change in the method of state funding for black education. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, black education was funded by a fixed treasury contribution of R13 million plus 80% of black taxes. However, black wages were so low that 80% of black taxes represented a meagre amount. In this regard, the Department of Bantu Education (DBE 1961 quoted in Nasson and Samuel 1990:19) stated that until 1970 the state operated on the basis that the expansion of black schooling was 'dependent upon an increased contribution by the Bantu in the form of taxation. This kind of thinking had serious consequences. As has already been noted, very few black children were accommodated in secondary schools. For instance, the Department of Bantu Education (1976 in Nasson and Samuel 1990:19) stated that in 1970, of the 9108 black schools, only 415 taught at secondary level. Only 104 of these went up to matriculation. From 1970 onwards, there appears to have been a shift in state policy and a further 439 secondary schools were built between 1970 and 1976. By the end of 1976 there were 844 black secondary schools.

The accommodation problem was aggravated by the state's policy of locating black high schools in the homeland labour reserves. This was a further attempt to restrict secondary school education to a small minority, as well as being in line with the state's policy of relocating people to the homelands. In this respect, the Department of Bantu Education (1975 in Nasson and Samuel 1990:19) stated that in 1975 there were 604 secondary schools in the homelands and only 170 in the urban areas of South Africa. The limited number of black secondary schools ensured that thousands of children were forced into the labour market prematurely, in order to earn some wages to subsidise the family budget. Another important consequence of the limited allocation of funds was that the vast majority of teachers in black secondary schools were hopelessly underqualified. In 1976 only 1,7% of teachers had a university degree. Another 10,4% had the matriculation certificate, 49,3% had two years of secondary school and 21% had only primary school education (South African Institute of Race Relations in Nasson and Samuel 1990:20). Besides being underqualified, most teachers were poorly paid. In 1975 black teachers with similar qualifications to whites earned 55% of white teachers' salaries. The Rand Daily Mail, 7 January 1975 (quoted in Nasson and Samuel 1990:20) indicated that an African woman with a degree and a teacher's certificate started on R185 per month, whereas a white man with similar qualification started at R342 per month.



The little teaching that could be done was made even more difficult by appallingly overcrowded conditions. According to the South African Institute of Race Relations (1976 quoted in Nasson and Samuel 1990:20), in 1975 the average teacher-pupil ratio in black schools was 1:54,1 against 1:20,1 in white schools. Often the number in a class would approach 100. In 1975 a high school science teacher in Soweto had 84 pupils in his Form II class. His statement explains the hopelessness of black adolescents' position at that time. According to the Rand Daily Mail, 7 January, 1975 (quoted in Nasson and Samuel 1990:20) the teacher asked "How can we turn them away when we know they will roam the streets?" In fact, in 1975 it was reported that because principals were reluctant to turn away pupils, some primary school classes had up to 113 pupils (Rand Daily Mail, 21 January, 1976 quoted in Nasson and Samuel 1990:20).

The lack of state funds meant that schooling was very expensive for black pupils and their parents. Until 1976 parents were responsible for purchasing uniforms, all stationery and a number of textbooks for their school-going children. The Cape Times, (4 September, 1975 in Nasson and Samuel 1990:20) reported that in Soweto, parents were paying 38 cents a month in addition to their rents in order to ensure that schools are built. White pupils in state schools received all their textbooks and stationery at no cost. It is paradoxical that white parents who were the 'haves' paid nothing for textbooks and stationery while black parents who were the 'have-nots' had

to pay for these items. All these factors combined to ensure a high failure and drop-out rate amongst black pupils. For example, according to SAIRR (1976 quoted in Nasson and Samuel 1990:20), in 1975, some 41,6% of all black pupils who wrote the higher primary certificate examination failed. Some 27% of black pupils who wrote the mid-secondary examination failed and 36,2% of the matriculation candidates failed. About this problem, Nasson and Samuel (1990:20) commented:

"There is little doubt that the high failure rate discouraged many pupils from proceeding with their schooling."

Besides the high drop-out rate in the secondary schools, the drop-out rate of black school-goers in the lower standards was astronomical. The Star, 26 April, 1976 as quoted in Nasson and Samuel (1990:20) reported that in 1976 in black school:

"... more than half the children leave with less than four years schooling and so revert to illiteracy."

Such was the nature of the system of education which was established by the South African government in the homelands including Venda. The education system was characterised by discrimination and lack of the necessary educational equipment. Thus, right from the early years in school, the black child was deprived of the necessary educational facilities that would enable him or her to do well in school. As regards this discrimination

against the black education of the black child in South Africa, Bishop Desmond Tutu (quoted in Le Roux 1993:30) made the following statement:

"Depending on your pigmentation, you are placed high or low on the social pyramid ... It will determine what sort of education you are likely to get ..."

In Thohoyandou most secondary schools do not have libraries and science laboratories even though they sit for science subjects in the matriculation examination. Generally, classes are overcrowded, and in some cases pupils attend classes under trees. The conduct of classes in the open are subject to the vagaries of the weather. Some headmasters have no office and have to share the staff room with all members of staff. In some cases where a headmaster has an office, the same office is used as a store-room for storing sports equipment, stationery and other school property. Perhaps, this appalling state of affairs may be a characteristic of black education in South Africa itself, and the picture may not be largely different in most of the previous so-called "independent homelands". The researcher is of the opinion that lack of suitable educational equipment and congenial school climate is likely to adversely affect the level of motivation of both teachers and pupils, the culture of learning, and the general performance of pupils. As regards this situation, Pretorius (1987 quoted in Le Roux 1993:92) indicated that some pupils live in an environment that is characterised by a low economic and social status, a low level of education, unemployment and inferior occupations, limited community involvement in education, and limited

potential for upward or vertical social mobility. These children encounter poverty, deprivation and cultural "black holes" which hinder not only their optimal self-actualisation and self-concept but also their chances of performing well in school. Regarding this state of affairs, Kok (1970 quoted in Le Roux 1993:92) made the following statement:

"The children are environmentally deprived and are characterised by the display of a poor self-concept (they have limited self-confidence and this is often exacerbated by failure); limited motivation; perpetual deficiencies; poor creativity; language deficiencies."

Most of the pupils living in such educationally, culturally and economically deprived environment may not go to school at all because their parents cannot afford to pay school fees. They leave school earlier because their parents cannot support them financially. Therefore, some of them leave school early in order to do odd jobs to earn some money to supplement the family income. Others discontinue schooling at an early stage because they either lack motivation or fail their examinations.

Research study has also found that a student living in a geographical and physical environment that is unfavourable, finds it very difficult to transform his or her innate potential into actualities. For Kok (1970 in Le Roux 1993:92) contends that this type of environment can be best termed non-supportive, which implies that the student does not experience healthy relationships with the family, or usually encounters problems at school. In

support of this view, Gowan and Demos (1966 in Le Roux 1993:93) assert that a pupil living in such condition is deprived of appropriate intellectual stimulation.

It is therefore evident that South African education has, to a large extent, failed to meet the needs of black students. The structure and organisation of the education system and the political, social and economic factors that have shaped its development served to promote the interests of the dominant group and ensured their participation and integration into all spheres of society. In this way, separate education in South Africa has largely served to keep the culturally diverse population divided, to protect the position of the dominant group, and to ensure domination in all facets of society. It is clear that the school was used as a powerful instrument for supporting and legitimising the position of the dominant group and in furthering political interests.

One of the important means of maintaining power is to ensure conformity and continuity to the ideologies of the dominant group. In this regard, the school in South Africa is used to ensure conformity to the prevailing ideologies of the dominant group. In schools pupils are taught to accept unquestioningly the existing prevailing dominant values, attitudes, ideologies, social practices and institutions in society as a whole.

It is a fact that schools play an important role in the process of social reproduction. McLaren (1989 quoted in Le Roux 1993:178) refers to social reproduction as the reproduction or perpetuation of social class. Schools also perpetuate and reproduce the social relationships and attitudes needed to sustain dominant economic and class relations. Schools transmit the status and class positions.

In the South African education system, this has been achieved through the creation of separate schools, centralised control by the dominant group, limitation to educational institutions, the unequal allocation of financial and physical resources, and the perpetuation of poor quality teaching through inadequately trained personnel. Moreover, Nokomo and Makate (1990 in Le Roux 1993:178) asserted that apartheid education has been effectively used to perpetuate a racial division of labour in which whites dominate the skilled sector of the labour market, and the oppressed groups occupy semi-skilled or unskilled positions. In support of this view, Wolpe and Unterhalter (1991 in Le Roux 1993:178) maintained that the Bantu Education Act 1953 was used as an instrument to shape education in order to perform these functions. It led to policies aimed primarily at structuring and expanding black education only to the extent that it served to meet the labour requirement of whites, and also at restructuring content to inculcate Christian National Education values, thereby socialising blacks to accept their subordinate position in society.

In subscribing to this notion, Mncwabe (1990:28) pointed out that the education system of the South African government was used as a means of ensuring the diversity and cultural separation of ethnic groups. He argued that:

"... a fundamental political preoccupation of the ruling Afrikaner Nationalist Party is to ensure diversity and separation of cultures."

It follows that separation of education has ensured that students attend separate schools organised along the lines of cultural and racial characteristics resulting in students being educated in isolated cultural capsules. So, under a separate system dominated by a Christian National Education ideology, teachers were used to transmit, interpret and reproduce the cultural values, norms and heritage of the dominant group with a view to assimilating sub-dominant groups into the mainstream culture and establishing cultural homogeneity and supremacy. In that way, the cultural heritage of sub-dominant groups and their histories, experiences and contributions were marginalised; and in the process their cultures were relegated to the background. To this end, Mphahlele (1983 in Mncwabe 1990:28) observes

"One of the main causes of the present crisis is that Blacks receive their education in schools of their own cultural grouping, which in reality pay little heed to their own culture."

Further, according to the International Defence and Aid Fund (IDAF) (1983:27), education is used to help perpetuate segregation and domination in South Africa by preparing black children for economically and politically subordinate positions in society. Cultural diversity was exploited and emphasised to create divisions and barriers among people. Besides, the government of South Africa spends much more on white children than it does on education for black children. In this regard, the IDAF (1983:27) stated that:

"Unequal expenditure throughout the whole history of education in South Africa has meant unequal facilities and resources."

As a result of lack of adequate funding to black education, many schools for black children are in chronic need of repair. There are shortages of classrooms for black children and wide disparities in the supply of textbooks. Teacher training has been unequal as well as teacher-pupil ratio. In 1981 the teacher-pupil ratio was 1:18 for Whites, 1:24 in Indian schools, 1:27 in Coloured schools and 1:48 in African schools (South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR) Survey, 1981:334). However, sustained protests against apartheid education, together with the economic need for more skilled labour, have led to increased investment of resources in education for black pupils. Nonetheless, the scale of inequalities that existed is so great that far more resources would be needed to close the gap than have so far been invested or appear to be planned. Also, according to Survey of Race Relations 1980 in South African Institute of Race Relations 1981:334), a



three-fold increase on expenditure in education would be needed to close the gap.

There are wide differences in the numbers of children of each group attending school. All white children, because of the laws governing education, receive education up to the age of 15. A much smaller proportion of African children go to school. Many who go to school have to leave after a few years. They have to leave because of the limited number of places and because they have to help support their families. For example, of African children who started school in 1967, only 15% stayed on to Form III, two years short of the final form. A much higher proportion of white schoolchildren were in secondary school. The content of education was geared to the needs of the apartheid system and this has been the principal focus of the struggle of pupils, students, teachers and parents for change (IDAF 1980 School Boycott (1980) in Nassons and Samuel 1990:28).

The government's policy on admission of black students to white technikons (technical colleges) is the same as in the case of universities; it can occur only where ministerial permission is granted. In 1981 a law was passed, providing for the establishment of separate black technikons. Until recently there was virtually no training of Africans as artisans.

Besides educational deprivation which contributed to the poverty of the black people in Venda, lack of job opportunities, low wages and non-participation of the government at the national level, all contributed to the poverty of the people. As there was an acute problem of unemployment, a substantial number of Venda people worked in towns outside Venda as migrant workers. They had to run two "homes" in that they had to use part of their meagre wages for their own upkeep, and remit some money to their families in their villages in the rural areas. Furthermore, politically, they were disenfranchised and, hence had no representatives who could bring developments to their area. Even though the Venda people had the so-called independence during the end of the creation of the "homelands", the budget of the Venda government which came from the coffers of the South African government based in Pretoria, was strictly controlled.

Another factor that contributed to the poverty of the Venda people was the problem of acquiring land for farming. In the case where the people were able to acquire some land, they had no capital to buy the necessary farming machinery and inputs to cultivate and enrich the land. Therefore, few black peasant farmers could compete with the white commercial farmers on the same footing of equality. So black farmers in Venda had to abandon their farms and go to work for white farmers as farm labourers for low wages. Furthermore, large family sizes accounted for the poverty of the people. The average family size was conservatively four children. With this family size,

coupled with low wages, parents could not afford to feed, clothe and educate their children well. This accounted for the presence of a large number of children who did not attend schools, as well as the prevalence of malnourishment among children.

In conclusion, social deprivation, lack of education, underdeveloped black townships, long term retardation of economic growth, deepening recession, violent repression and mass unemployment, all contributed to the poverty of the Venda people. This study was aimed at discovering the impact of poverty and its related factors on the performance of pupils in schools in Thohoyandou.

## **2.10 SUMMARY OF THEORETICAL CONCEPTS**

In this study, Marxist concept of education has been used to refer to parental deprivation as manifested in the parents' levels of education, occupation and income. All these were likely to contribute to the non-supportive and non-stimulating learning home environment which were likely to impact on the pupils' performance at school. As regards the role of the parents/family, the author used the role to imply how the pupil regarded his or her biological parents as the significant other and, how to work hard to meet the parents' expectations. The perspective on the motivation was employed to find out how parents motivated their children to work hard at school by providing a

favourable learning home environment conducive for learning to take place.

The use of these concepts was to elicit information about both the parents and children's expectations and socio-economic status (SES) of the parents which comprise parental level of education, occupation and income, and learning conditions such as sleeping and study rooms, type of chores, nutrition and exposure to mass media, for example, newspapers, television, radio and magazines.

## **2.11 CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, another central aim of Bantu Education, according to Christie and Collins (1984 in Kallaway 1990:174), was its hegemonic function. One of the aims of Bantu education was to facilitate the reproduction of the relations of production in a docile form. The Bantu education system was able to prepare blacks to accept differences as part of unchallenged order. According to Kallaway (1990:181), the quality of schooling provided for blacks could not equal that provided for whites. The State's funding therefore made the poorest section of the community pay for its own social services. Therefore, in analysing the system on the basis of Marxist theory of labour reproduction, one cannot state that the Bantu education was geared towards the reproduction of labour required by the needs of capitalist accumulation in general. Thus the education system and the political

ideologies of the government of the day, contributed to the disempowerment and impoverishment of the blacks. As a consequence, the blacks suffered from social, economic, psychological and political deprivation. Bantu education was the best means for reproducing labour in the form the white in a dominant position desired.

## **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.

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**ANNEXURE**

**QUESTIONNAIRE**

Please complete this questionnaire as accurately as possible.

**AIM:**

Your response to the questions will help in giving an idea of the influence of family background and home environment on the academic performance of pupils in Junior Secondary Schools in Venda.

**INSTRUCTIONS**

You are requested to write an **X**, in the appropriate box, e.g. **X**, or the correct information on the space to each question or statement where applicable. There are no right or wrong answers. Information gained from you will be used only by the researcher.

Of course, strict confidentiality shall be observed.

Thanking you for your cooperation.

S.K. Yeboah

(Researcher)

**PARTICULARS OF THE PUPILS**

001. NAME OF PUPIL : \_\_\_\_\_

002. NAME OF SCHOOL: \_\_\_\_\_

003. STANDARD : \_\_\_\_\_

004. SEX :

Male	
Female	

005. WHAT IS YOUR AGE: \_\_\_\_\_

006. LOCATION OF HOME: \_\_\_\_\_

007. DATE : \_\_\_\_\_

**A. PARTICULARS OF THE FAMILY**

008. How many living brothers and sisters do you have from the same mother? (Do not include yourself.)

None (apart from me)	
One other child	
Two children	
Three children	
Four children	
Five children	
Six children	
Seven children	
Eight children	
Nine children	
Ten children	
More than ten children	

009. What are the ages of these children in years?

Child number	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Age										

010.1 How many wives does your father have apart from your mother?

Number of wives	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
-----------------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----





015.1 Are there any of your aunt's (makhadzi) children living with you in the same household?

Yes	
No	

015.2 If you say 'Yes', how many of your aunt's (makhadzi) children are living in the same household with you? \_\_\_\_\_

016. What are their ages (in years)?

Child number	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Age										

## B. HOUSEHOLD

017. What type of dwelling does this household occupy?

House	
Flat	
Huts	
Shacks	
Other (specify)	

018. In the case of a house, how many sleeping rooms does it hold where you live? \_\_\_\_\_

019. In the case of a flat, how many sleeping rooms does it hold where you live? \_\_\_\_\_

020. In the hut, how many sleeping rooms does it hold where you live? \_\_\_\_\_

021. If it is a rented dwelling (house), how much money do your parents pay in the form of rent or mortgage every month?

Rent	
Mortgage	
I don't know	

### C. THE PUPIL

022. Are you living (staying) with:

Both parents everyday	
Mother only because father is away at work	
Mother only because she is a divorcee	
Mother only because she has never married	
Mother only because her husband died	
Father only because he is divorced	
Father only because he has never married	
Other relatives only because parents are living elsewhere	
Father only because his wife died	

023. In case you are not living with your father and mother, name the person or persons with whom you are living (relationship).

---

024. What is the highest level (standard) of education of this person?

---

025. Is he or she working?

Yes	
No	

026. If you say 'Yes' to question 025, what kind of work is he or she doing? \_\_\_\_\_

027. Does he or she buy 'things' e.g. food, clothes, etc for the household?

Yes	
No	

028. Which of the following persons is/are living in the same household with you?

Father and mother (parents)	
Father only	
Mother only	
Brother only	
Sister only	
Other (specify)	

**D. PUPIL'S LEARNING ENVIRONMENT**

029. If you are living in a house or flat, is there a separate study room?

Yes	
No	

030. If you are living in a shack, is there a separate study room?

Yes	
No	

031. If you are living in a hut, is there a separate study room?

Yes	
No	

032. If you are living in a house or flat, how many people share a bedroom with you? (Give a number.) \_\_\_\_\_

033. If you are living in a hut or shack, how many people share a bedroom with you? (Give a number.) \_\_\_\_\_

034. Do you sleep on a bed?

Yes	
No	

035. If you say 'No' to question 034, where do you sleep?  
\_\_\_\_\_

036. Do you have adequate ventilation when you sleep?

Yes	
No	

037. Do you feel refreshed after a night's sleep?

Yes	
No	

038. If you say 'No' to question 037, give reasons.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

039. Do you do your school work at home?

Yes	
No	

040. If you say 'Yes' to question 039, how much time do you spend, doing your school homework at home? \_\_\_\_\_

041. If you do not do your school homework at home, where do you do your school homework? (Mention the place.) \_\_\_\_\_

042. Give reasons why you do your school homework at the place mentioned in question 041. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

043. Do you study for a test at school?

Yes	
No	

044. If you say 'Yes' to question 043, how much time do you spend studying for a test at school? \_\_\_\_\_

045. If you say 'No' to questions 043, give reasons why you do not study for a test at school? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

046. Do you study for a test at home?

Yes	
No	

047. If you say 'Yes' to question 046, how much time do you spend studying for a test at home? \_\_\_\_\_

048. If you say 'No' to question 046, give reasons why you do not study for a test at home. \_\_\_\_\_

049. Do you use a table when you are doing your school homework?

Yes	
No	

050. If you say 'No' to question 049, what do you use when you are doing your school homework? \_\_\_\_\_

051. What do you sit on when you are doing your school homework? \_\_\_\_\_

052. What light do you use for your private study at home?

Paraffin lamp	
Candle light	
Electric light	
Gas light	
Battery light	
Other (specify)	

053. Name the chores (i.e. the work, apart from your school work) you do at home.

---

---

054. How much time do you spend per day doing these chores at home?

---

055. Do these chores interfere with your school homework?

Yes	
No	

056. If you say 'Yes' to question 055, give reasons.

---

---

---



057. Do these chores interfere with your studies at home?

Yes	
No	

058. If you say 'Yes' to question 057, give reasons.

---

---

059.1 How many older brothers from the same mother living in the same household with you are working? \_\_\_\_\_

059.2 Do(es) he/they buy food, clothes etc for other people in the household where you are living?

Yes	
No	

060.1 How many older sisters from the same mother living in the same household with you, who are working? \_\_\_\_\_

060.2 Do(es) she/they buy food, clothes etc for other people in the household where you live?

Yes	
No	

061.1 Are there any your uncle's (malume) children mentioned in question 013.1 who are working?

Yes	
No	

061.2 Does/do he/she/they buy food, clothes etc for the household where you live?

Yes	
No	

062.1 Are there any your aunt's (makhadzi) children mentioned in question 051.1 who are working?

Yes	
No	

062.2 Does/do he/she/they buy food, clothes etc for the household where you live?

Yes	
No	

063. How many older brothers do you have who are not working?

---

064. How many younger brothers do you have who are not working?

---

065. How many older sisters do you have who are not working?

---

066. How many younger sisters do you have who are not working?

---

067. Do you have a television set at home?

Yes	
No	

068. Do you watch television at home?

Yes	
No	

069. If you do not watch television at home, where do you watch television? \_\_\_\_\_

070. How much time do you spend watching television per day?

---

071. Are there any other books apart from your school textbooks in your home?

Yes	
No	

072. If you say 'Yes' to question 071, do you refer to the books when you are studying in your home?

Yes	
No	

073. Do you read books (e.g. novels, magazines) for recreation or pleasure?

Yes	
No	

074. If you say 'No' to question 073, give reasons why you do not read other books for recreation or pleasure.

---

---

075.1 Do you read newspapers?

Yes	
No	

075.2 If you say 'No', give reasons.

---

---

076. Do you read magazines?

Yes	
No	

077. If you say 'No', give reasons.

---

---

078.1 What is your 'home' language?

---

078.2 What is your second language?

---

078.3 What is your third language?

---

078.4 Others, specify

---

079. What language do you speak mostly on school playgrounds?

---

080. What language do you speak mostly in the classroom?

---

081. Do you speak English in your home?

Yes	
No	

082. How do your parents motivate you to work hard at school?

---

---

084. What is the highest educational standard your parents expect you to achieve in terms of average percentage?

Percentage	
50	
60	
70	
80 +	
Uncertain	

085. What is the highest standard you would like to achieve in terms of average percentage?

Percentage	
50	
60	
70	
80 +	
Uncertain	

086. How do you get to school?

Walking	
Bus	
Taxi (Kombi)	
Bicycle	

087. In case you go to school by bus, how much money do you spend per day? \_\_\_\_\_

088. In case you go to school by taxi (Kombi), how much money do you spend per day? \_\_\_\_\_

089. How long does it take you to get to school? \_\_\_\_\_

090. What time does your school start in the morning? \_\_\_\_\_

091. Do you like the time your school starts?

Yes	
No	

092. If you do not like the time your school starts give reasons.

---

---

093. Indicate (show the persons responsible for paying your school fees).

Parents	
Other persons	

094. Are your school textbooks bought on time.

Yes	
No	

095. If you say 'No' to question 094, give reasons.

---

---

096. Do your parents sometimes ask you to look after young children (baby sitting) instead of going to school?

Yes	
No	

097. Do your parents sometimes ask you to take cattle, goats etc for grazing or dipping?

Yes	
No	



**E. NUTRITION**

098. What do you eat in the morning before going to school? (Mention the kind of food.) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

100. Who prepares the meal (i.e. breakfast) in case you eat before going to school in the morning? \_\_\_\_\_

101. In case you do not have breakfast, give reasons.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

102. Do you have lunch at school during lunch time?

Yes	
No	

103. If you say 'Yes' to question 102, what kind of lunch do you have? (Mention the kind of food.) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

104. In case you do not have lunch, give reasons.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

105. If you have breakfast, is the food enough?

Yes	
No	

106. If you say 'No' to question 105, give reasons.

---

---

107. In case you have lunch, is the food enough?

Yes	
No	

108. If you say 'No' to question 107, give reasons.

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109. What do you have for supper? (Mention the kind of food.)

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110. Who prepares the supper?

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111. In case you do not have any supper, give reasons.

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112. In case you have supper, is the food enough?

Yes	
No	

113. If you say 'No' to question 112, give reasons.

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114. How many meals do you have on Saturday? Give a figure.

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115. How many meals do you have on Sunday? Give a figure.

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**F. FATHER'S PARTICULARS**

116. What was the highest educational standard or class your father completed?

Post-graduate (after first university degree)	
University degree (first degree)	
Post matric Diploma, Teacher Training College	
Std IX - X	
Std VI - VIII	
Std III - V	
Grade 1 - Grade 2	
Never been to school	
Do not know	

117. Is your father doing any work (employment) which brings him some regular income?

Yes	
No	

118. If you say 'Yes' to question 117, what kind of work is he doing?

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119. Where does your father work most of the time?

Inside Venda	
Outside Venda	

120. If he works in Venda, does he come home every day after work?

Yes	
No	

121. If you say 'No' to question 120, why does he not come home? (Give reasons.)

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122. If he works outside Venda, name the place where he works.

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123. How often do you come into contact with your father?

Every day	
Once a week	
Every month end	
Every 3 to 4 months	
Every 5 to 6 months	
More than 6 months	

124. Does your father send money home, if he is working outside Venda?

Yes	
No	

125. If you say 'Yes' to question 124, how much does he send home?

Amount	
Do not know	

126. How regularly does he send the money?

1 - 2 months	
3 - 4 months	
5 - 6 months	
More than 6 months	
Do not know	

127. Name the person (i.e. relationship who receives the money) e.g.

brother, sister etc. \_\_\_\_\_

128. Does he/she use the money to buy things, e.g. food for the household?

Yes	
No	

129. If you say 'No' to question 128, give reasons.

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**G. PARTICULARS OF MOTHER**

130. What was the highest educational standard or class your mother completed?

Post-graduate (after first university degree)	
University degree (first degree)	
Post matric Diploma, Teacher Training College	
Std IX - X	
Std VI - VIII	
Std III - V	
Grade 1 - Grade 2	
Never been to school	
Do not know	

131. What was the highest educational standard or class your father's other wives completed?

Wife 1	
Wife 2	
Wife 3	
Wife 4	
Wife 5	
Wife 6	
Do not know	

132. Is your mother doing any work (employment) which brings her some regular income?

Yes	
No	

133. If you say 'Yes' to question 132, what kind of work is she doing?

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134. In case she is doing full-time work (employment), how many hours is she away from home?

Number of hours	
Do not know	

135. In case she is doing part-time work (employment), how many hours is she away from home?

Number of hours	
Do not know	

136. Does she come home every day after work?

Yes	
No	



137. Does your mother spend her own money for buying things (e.g. food, groceries, etc) for the household?

Yes	
No	

138. If you say 'Yes' to question 137, specify (name) some of the things she buys for the household every month.

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