A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE VARIABLES CONTRIBUTING TOWARDS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A LEARNING CULTURE IN SCHOOLS

by

MABATHO SEDIBE

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PROMOTER:
Prof. Dr. W.J. Fraser

2006
I dedicate this study to my children, Molefe, Mmathapebo, Tebatso
and my husband, Edward Morewane Sedibe,
for their love, support and patience throughout my years of study,
and my late parents, Judah Sekgothe and Merriam Mamphedi Sekhukhune,
for the foundation they laid in my life and the emphasis
that they placed on educational achievements.
My sincere thanks and gratitude are extended to the following people:

- Prof. W.J. Fraser, my promoter, for his endless support, guidance and encouragement as well as the interest he showed in the research. Working under Prof Fraser was a privilege and has enriched my experience indeed. May God bless him.

- The North-West Province, Department of Education (in Moretele Area Project Office) for giving me permission to use schools for this study.

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- The Statistical Consultation Service of the University of Pretoria, for assistance with the statistical processing of data used in this study.

- My sincere thanks to Mrs A van Dyk who did the typing.

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- My special thanks go to my understanding husband, Dr. Edward Morewane Sedibe, for his outstanding moral support.

- Above all, I thank God who gave me the strength and wisdom to pursue and succeed with this study.
I declare that “A comparative study of the variables contributing towards the establishment of a learning culture in schools” is my own work and that all sources that have been used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references. This thesis was not previously submitted by me for any degree at another university.

MABATHO SEDIBE
Submitted: April 2006
The establishment of a culture of teaching and learning in disadvantaged high schools is a challenging phenomenon since the inception of the new democratic South Africa. This study attempts to investigate variables contributing towards the establishment of a culture of teaching and learning in high schools. It is revealed through literature study that some investigations into this research topic has already been done in South Africa, but little if none is done in the disadvantaged high schools in the North-West Province, that is the reason why I was prompted to pursue this topic further.

The high failure rate in Grade 12 results according to my opinion is a serious concern and is on the lips of every teacher, learner, parent, politician and relevant stakeholders. This high failure rate is, according to the findings from the literature review, caused by factors such as underqualified and unqualified teachers, inadequate resources, overcrowded classrooms, poor infra-structures (buildings), poor socio economic background of learners’ parents, inconducive environment at school and inadequate role played by teachers and learners in the teaching and learning situation. One expects that the majority of disadvantaged schools would have achieved above the 70% as the pass rate benchmark in the final Grade 12 examinations. However, in most schools in the disadvantaged area this is not the case.

Based on the above statement and the complexity of the study in consultation with variables employed, I opted to use both quantitative and qualitative research designs with an aim to attempt to obtain consistency, validity and reliability of the research results. The analyses of the results reveal that most disadvantaged schools still experience a poor culture of teaching and learning. This is evidenced by low Grade 12 pass rate results in some of the provinces, including North-West.

The research revealed that the variables impacting on the performance of learners at schools are subjected to a complexity of integrated activities many of which are difficult to isolate as predominantly responsible for poor performance as such. What does appear to be an issue of concern is the apparent lack of dedication one would expect
from some teachers working with secondary school learners. One could conclude from the many responses that poor achievement is directly linked to poor teaching and that the latter would again be the result of poor qualifications, lack of resources, poor support systems and most important however, a lack of commitment and dedication needed to ensure a professional approach towards classroom management and teaching.

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**KEYWORDS**

Classroom environment  
Constructivism  
Ecosystems  
Learners  
Learner-teacher support materials  
Learning culture  
Parents  
Parental involvement  
Powerful learning environments  
School environment  
School Management Teams  
Teachers  
Teaching culture

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Table 4.65: Comparison of responses from teachers & SMTs regarding “the department of education supplies the school with adequate textbooks/learning resources” across Schools A, B and C

Table 4.66: Comparison of responses from teachers & SMTs regarding “learners sometimes go to school being hungry” across Schools A, B and C

Table 4.67: Comparison of responses from learners regarding “teachers sometimes dodge their school classes / lessons” across Schools A, B and C

Table 4.68: Comparison of responses from learners regarding “teachers arrive late for school” across Schools A, B and C

Table 4.69: Comparison of responses from learners regarding “the modernity of the school” across Schools A, B and C

Table 4.70: Comparison of responses from learners regarding “the school has computers that are used by learners and teachers” across Schools A, B and C

Table 4.71: Comparison of responses from learners regarding “the classrooms are overcrowded with learners at a teacher/learner ratio of more than 1:40” across Schools A, B and C

Table 4.72: Comparison of responses from learners regarding “the school has media facilities such as television sets, tape recorders, video etc” across Schools A, B and C
Table 4.73: Comparison of responses from learners regarding “smoking dagga, drinking alcohol and taking other drugs is one of the school’s problems” across Schools A, B and C

Table 4.74: Comparison of responses from learners regarding “parents do provide children with the necessary stationary and textbooks for Grade 12” across Schools A, B and C

Table 4.75: Comparison of responses from learners regarding “the department of education supplies the school with adequate textbook/learning resources” across Schools A, B and C

Table 4.76: Comparison of responses from parents regarding “teachers sometimes dodge their school classes / lessons” across Schools A, B and C

Table 4.77: Comparison of responses from parents regarding “teachers do sometimes arrive late for school because of transport problems or other problems” across Schools A, B and C

Table 4.78: Comparison of responses from parents regarding “the school is modern” across Schools A, B and C

Table 4.79: Comparison of responses from parents regarding “the school has enough lighting” across Schools A, B and C

Table 4.80: Comparison of responses from parents regarding “the school has computers that are used by learners and teachers” across Schools A, B and C

Table 4.81: Results of ANOVA, comparing gender, using variables dealing with schools factors

Table 4.82: Results of ANOVA, comparing qualifications, using variables dealing with school factors

Table 4.83: Results of ANOVA, comparing experience, using variables dealing with school factors