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FAMILY RELATIONS AS A CAUSE OF SCHOOL DROPOUT

by

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DISSERTATION

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PROMOTER: PROF J.C.LAMPRECHT

NOVEMBER 1992
Dedicated to my husband
David
and my son Rodney
FOREWORD

I would like to thank the Human Sciences Research Council, the Rand Afrikaans University and Standard Bank for the financial support which made this study possible.

Interpretations are made by the writer and cannot be regarded as official pronouncements made by the above institutions.

In this study, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise, the male form of the pronoun he also includes the female form she; the noun grade and its plural form grades include the noun standard and its plural form standards; the noun student and its plural form students include the noun pupil and its plural form pupils.
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ABSTRACT

Research teams from the Department of Educational Sciences of the Rand Afrikaans University and the Hubert H.Humphrey Institute of Social Ecology of the Ben Gurion University pooled their knowledge, experience and expertise to address needs and problems associated with children dropping out of school. The aims with this project are the determining of the possible causes of the youth dropout phenomenon and the developing of prevention programmes to address the problem.

Each member of the team at the Rand Afrikaans University has done research on a specific facet of school dropout. These facets include family relations, self concept, locus of control and school climate. This dissertation focuses on family relations as a cause of school dropout.

The method of research is twofold. A literature study constitutes the first part in which terminology, concepts, definitions causes and consequences of dropout are discussed. The emphasis is placed on family relations such as family background, family structure and family relationships as a cause of school dropout.

This is followed by an empirical study to investigate whether there is significant differences between at risk and non at risk standard seven pupils with regard to family relations as identified by their teachers and as measured by the questionnaire.

It is evident from the literature that early school departure causes great concern for parents, teachers and society in South Africa. Researchers agree that there are various causes for school dropout, with family relations as one of the major causes influencing academic success.

The empirical investigation made use of standard seven pupils
affiliated to five high schools in the P.W.V. area - 734 pupils answered the questionnaire. The information was processed with the SPSS - computer package at the Statistics Computer Service of the Rand Afrikaans University. The information was evaluated by means of Student's $t$ - test.

The empirical findings showed that:

* there are no significant differences between the family relations of at risk and non at risk standard seven pupils with regard to the following variables:
  * Family relationships
  * Family size
  * Family situation
  * Home language
  * School progress
  * Gender
  * Age

* The result is that family relations do not effect school progress of at risk and non at risk pupils to the extent of dropout.

* When qualitatively evaluated it appears that non at risk pupils have better family relations than at risk pupils.

* Further research would be recommended to support these results.

Implications for educational psychologists generally and educators particularly would be to design programmes aimed at improving and enriching family relationships. The study is concluded with a few recommendations in this regard.
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CHAPTER 1
PROBLEM, AIM AND METHOD OF THE INVESTIGATION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This is a group project on school dropout which is undertaken by the Rand Afrikaans University of South Africa and the Ben Gurion University of Israel. The purpose is to identify the at risk pupil, research the causes and consequences of school dropout and eventually write prevention programmes. The following factors will be included in the profile of the dropout pupils: family relations, self concept, school climate and locus of control. This study will primarily deal with family relations as a cause of school dropout in general and more specifically in the culturally and economically disadvantaged communities.

In South Africa there is widespread concern about the high dropout rate in many schools. Each country needs its youth to be productive, creative, motivated and self-supportive. It is therefore of the greatest importance that the full potential of the youth of South Africa must be developed.

The high dropout rate does not keep track with the technological and political development in South Africa. The new South Africa will need a highly qualified and capable working community. For the South African youth to be included in this working force he will have to stay in school and develop his full potential.

1.2 THE DROPOUT PHENOMENON

1.2.1 Portrait of a dropout

Bachman, Green and Wirtinen (1972 : 60) described the dropout as an individual with low self esteem, little desire
for self growth and limited commitment to accepted social values.

According to Hicks (1969 in Mahan and Johnson, 1983: 80) dropouts show certain behavioural patterns: First the pupil loses interest in school resulting in lower grades. Then the pupil begins to skip classes. He then runs into conflict with school authorities. He begins to act out his frustrations at school or in class which eventually results in suspension. Parental involvement creates more conflict and the pupil eventually quits. Once out of school he experiences boredom rather than the exciting times he had anticipated.

1.2.2 Dropout as a universal problem

Research on high school dropout indicated that it is related to background, achievement, attitudes and individual behaviours. Characteristics that are most strongly related to dropping out are socioeconomic status, race/ethnicity and low academic achievement (Rumberger et al., 1990: 283).


In South Africa research on school achievement and dropout was mostly done by researchers such as Lötter (1965), Ferreira (1968), Engelbrecht (1968, 1972), Garbers (1968, 1972, 1980), Rip (1971), Heubasch (1972), Botha (1973), De Beer (1976), Niewoudt (1976), Nel (1976), Van Rensburg (1976), Verwoerd (1985) and Van Rooyen (1990).
1.3 CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES OF DROPOUT

1.3.1 Personality factors

The child is a unique person with his own personality, who has regular contact with significant others (parents, brothers, sisters, teachers, friends). Obviously his personality can be influenced through communication, experiences, attitudes and so forth. That is the reason why Hamachek (1987 : 141) stated: the human personality is too complex to remain absolutely the same; new and different experiences have the power to reshape and even replace original attitudes and life styles; different developmental stages and maturation demand that we make new adjustments and develop new perceptions of ourselves, others and even the environment we live in.

Considering the above it is justified to state that the dropout experiences personality problems with which he cannot cope and as a result leaves the school before matric. These personality problems include:

- The low self concept,
- The need for expression,
- Diffuse personality disorganisation,
- Negative attitudes,
- Intellectual ability,
- Sex differences.

1.3.2 Social and Family background factors

The child is also a member of a family which appears to be the major unit of society. The child has a physical, emotional and social dependence on the parents so that they are in a unique position to influence the child's learning about himself, others and the world around him. These first human relationships teach the child what to expect later in his dealings with others. If a child's first interpersonal
relationships give him the wrong view of life at the outset, what hope is there for the future? (Burns, 1982: 69, 104).

Social and family background factors which influenced dropout are: Socioeconomic status, absent parents, parental involvement and attitudes, parents financial position, broken homes, family relationships, delinquency, truancy, pregnancy, extra-curricular activities and so forth.

1.3.3 School factors

The pupil's adaptation to the school environment depends on the existing state of the pupils developing self concept and the nature of the psychological experience and concomitant reflections of self, provided by that environment and the significant others within it. Whether the change from home to school environment benefits or harms a child, the transition itself is very likely to cause some stress to many children. The child's ability to deal with this stress depends to some extent on his or her "social competence" which is evidently related to the childrearing behaviour of parents (Burns, 1982: 102).

Combining school factors such as dissatisfaction with school, academic performance, underachievement, school background and attendance, school climate, relationships with teachers, peers and so forth, with family background and personal problems Wehlage, Rutter, and others (1989: 37) arrive at the following hypothesis to explain dropping out:

"If one comes from a low socioeconomic background, which may signify various forms of family stress and personal difficulties and if one is constantly discouraged by the school because of signals about academic inadequacy and failures, and if one perceives little interest or caring on the part of the teachers, and if one sees the institution's discip-
line system as ineffective and unfair, and one has serious encounters with the disciplinary system then it is not unreasonable to expect that one will become alienated and lose one's commitment to the goals of graduating from high school and pursuing more education" (Wehlage, 1989 : 37).

1.3.4 Consequences of dropout

The consequences of early school departure have far reaching effects on the personality and future of the dropout. Most dropouts experience difficulty in finding employment and is forced to relegate to low paying jobs (Timberlake, 1982 In Tidwell, 1988 : 941).

Therefore when a pupil drops out of school and fails in his or her attempt to find a job, both society and the pupil suffer. Costs to society are not just financial: the depressed self esteem, dissatisfaction and alienation experienced by many dropouts can escalate to disordered, aggressive behaviour (Pam Larson, Bruce Shertzer, 1987 : 163).

In South Africa, and more specifically in the culturally and economically disadvantaged groups there is not enough recreational activities and facilities available to the youth. As a result dropouts are likely to engage in antisocial behaviour such as delinquency, truancy, drug abuse and so forth.

1.4 TERMINOLOGY, CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS

1.4.1 Dropout

The term "dropout" has been used to designate a variety of early school leavers: pushouts - undesirable pupils;
disaffiliated - pupils no longer wishing to be associated with the school; educational moralities - pupils failing to complete a program; capable dropouts - family socialisation did not agree with school demands; stopouts - dropouts who return to school, usually within the same academic year (Natriello, 1987: 19).

In her study Verwoerd (1985: 83) defines the dropout as any eligible compulsory school dropout who at any stage permanently ends his school career for any reason which does not comply or correlate with his inherent shortcoming or ability.

Garbers (1980: 1) defines dropout as the phenomenon when children terminate their school career before they have reached matric (sometimes std. 8) in any type of teaching or education.

Dropping out is a symptom of a fundamental mismatch between pupil and school; it is collision between an individual with "basic problems and limitations" and "the typical high school environment" (Pawlovich et al., 1983: 41).

Timmermans and Van der Burgh (1979 In Van Rooyen; 1990: 26) describe the dropout as a pupil who did not yet complete standard six and who was not older than 15 years when he left school. Furthermore the pupil had to be not older than eighteen and should not have left school longer than six years ago.

For the purpose of this study dropouts are seen as those individuals who end their full time school attendance while still eligible for compulsory education.
1.4.2 Relationship

Relationship is a feeling, attitude or commitment one has towards oneself in association with others (Forest, Mikolaitis eds; 1986 : 79).

In relationship there is social interaction between the different human beings. All partners involved should be well equipped for engaging in interaction, thus providing them with the opportunity of establishing a relationship. In a family, the parents and children form bonds with each other. So the family as a unit is emotionally turned inward, and its life behind its front door consists largely of complex transactions between its members (Duck, 1989 : 143).

If the family does not represent a sphere of basic safety and basic security for the child and he does not receive love, warmth, acceptance, authority for which he has a definite need, it means an attack of his whole human existence and it becomes an unfavourable precursor to his eventual acceptance of the school situation and performance in this regard. The results could be: under-achievement and eventual school dropout (Pretorius, 1979 : 200).

1.4.3 Disadvantaged

The disadvantaged or culturally and economically deprived child is found in an environment which makes it impossible for him to develop his latent unique personality possibilities and to achieve accordingly (Kapp, 1989 : 142).

Pretorius (1987 b : 22) describes the disadvantaged child as an individual who cannot adhere to the demands of modern life because of : language backlog which limits his communication possibilities in the dominant culture (i.e. the most directive culture in any society) (Kapp, 1989 : 143) and experience background which limits him to adopt learning and
life contents from the dominant culture.

1.4.4 At risk pupil

The criteria used in this study to identify the at risk pupil could be divided into three categories: age, scholastic profile and personality image. It appears that children between 13 and 15 are mostly at risk to drop out of school (Schirmer and George, 1983: 97 and Bondesio, 1986: 19).

These pupils' scholastic profile includes: absence without excuse (Wirenski, 1984: 6). The phrase "ceased to attend" is used by Van den Steuvel (1986: 141) when a pupil has been absent without acceptable excuse for 20 consecutive school days and has not formally withdrawn from school; poor school achievement in academic subjects; failing in one or more standards in the first six years; a backlog in years, age or standard in comparison with classmates; a backlog in mathematics, reading and writing (Wirenski, 1984: 6).

In conjunction with the former scholastic image Schirmer, et al., (1983: 97) and Van den Steuvel (1986: 141) also found the following to be characteristic of the personality image of the at risk pupil: behaviour problems, withdrawal, no respect for the property of others, no respect for authority and merely putting in time waiting to reach the legal age when they can join the dropout population (Wirenski, 1984: 3 In Steyn, 1988: 412).

1.4.5 Non at risk pupil

After studying the characteristics of the at risk pupil it seems logical that the non at risk pupil will be known for regular attendance, good scholastic progress, higher motivation and high self concept. Normally the parents of these children have high expectations of their children and support them to develop their potential. These parents also communicate more with their children, teach them how to
socialise and the children then feel welcome and at home.

1.5 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

From the above literature it is clear that school dropout is a universal problem. The causes and consequences vary greatly. It is also clear that poor family relations is one of the most important causes of school dropout and even more so in the disadvantaged groups. Questions can therefore be posed as to how adolescents become dropouts and to what extent family relations has an influence on dropout. Answers may well be sought in the pupil's relationships with significant others such as his parents, peers or the school. It is for this reason that the nature of family relations as a cause of school dropout is being investigated.

1.6 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study aims to investigate: firstly, how the at risk and non at risk pupil perceive their family relationships; and secondly, how family relations affect school performance.

1.7 METHOD OF THE STUDY

This method of study is two-fold and falls into the category of explorative research. Firstly, it contains a literature study in which family relations as a cause of school dropout are investigated with special emphasis on family background, family relationships and family structure. Secondly a questionnaire will be handed out for completion. The target group is non at risk and at risk standard seven pupils of selected high schools in the P.W.V. area.

The questionnaire covers the following factors: self con-
cept, family relations, school climate and locus of control. The aim is to compare the test results between the at risk and the non at risk pupils.

1.8 PLAN OF THE STUDY

Chapter 1

In this chapter a short reflection of the problem, aims and methods of the study is undertaken.

Chapter 2

In this chapter the causes and consequences are investigated as to the extent it relates to school dropout.

Chapter 3

This chapter deals with family relations that are categorised in:

(1) family background
(2) family structure
(3) family relationships

as a cause of at-risk pupils and eventually school dropout.

Chapter 4

The empirical research, method of investigation, the sample group, instruments of measurement and the procedure to be followed are dealt with.

Chapter 5

The empirical findings are tabulated and discussed.

Chapter 6

This chapter concludes the study with a summary of findings, guidelines for parents and educators as well as recommendations for further research.
CHAPTER 2

SCHOOL DROPOUT: CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES

2.1 INTRODUCTION

According to the literature mentioned in Chapter 1 there are numerous causes for school dropout. For this study these causes will be categorised into four sections:

(1) Family factors
(2) Personality factors
(3) School factors
(4) Social factors

The main objective of this study is to emphasise family relations as a cause of school dropout.

2.2 CAUSES OF DROPPING OUT

The reasons dropouts mostly give for leaving school include poor school performance, dislike of school, expulsion, desire to work, financial difficulties, home responsibilities, pregnancy and marriage. It is justified to say that factors which contribute to early school leaving may be found in personality, home, school and community. The value orientation in respect of school attendance and educational aspirations would tend to create either a climate conducive to school attendance or school leaving (Rip, 1971: 1).

Mahan and Johnson (1983: 80) support the previous statement by describing the high school dropouts to be adolescents who have extreme family or personal problems, perform below average academically, and have trouble making school adjustments.
2.2.1 Family Related Factors - An Introduction

The family unit provides all the initial indications to the child as to whether he is loved or not, accepted or not, a success or a failure, because until school the family is virtually his only place of learning. The young child is very vulnerable, with a high degree of physical, social and emotional dependence on the family (Burns, 1982 : 68). Thus, the family has a great influence on the child's life and could be the cause of his early departure from school.

Family related variables that could affect a pupil to drop out are the size of the family, education, jobs and their attitudes toward education. In addition, economic conditions, such as low income, and individual or family financial problems, may either force or provide a convenient excuse to leave school (Zeller, 1966; Kumar, Padro and Watson, 1977 In Pavlovich, 1983 : 42).

Rumburger (1983 In Larsen and Shertzer, 1987 : 165) reported that parents' educational level could be used in predicting future dropouts. Children of dropouts had a greater chance than other pupils to be dropouts themselves. Presumably, parents who have not completed high school have an antagonistic or apathetic attitude about education and believe that school completion is not a necessity for their children. These beliefs and attitudes are communicated verbally and behaviourally to the child, creating even more conflict about staying in school.

Students from low socioeconomic status (SES) backgrounds are more likely to leave school prematurely than are pupils from high SES backgrounds (Rumburger, 1983 In Tidwell, 1988 : 941).

The more highly educated the parents, the more likely they are to serve as positive role models. Such parents positively influence their children's aspiration for advanced schooling; they spend more "quality time" with their children; they actively increase the academic abilities and
opportunities of their children. Because higher SES families usually live in more affluent communities with better financed schools, the children from these families are likely to have supportive, rewarding educational experience. Further, children from poorer families may find it necessary to seek employment to supplement their family's incomes, as many Hispanic dropouts have indicated (Borus et al., 1980 In Tidwell, 1988: 941).

Children from homes where only a single parent is present are least likely to remain in the formal school setting until graduation, possibly because of financial difficulties rather than the structure of the home environment per se (Shaw, 1982 In Tidwell, 1982: 141).

2.2.2 Influence of Personality factors on dropout

2.2.2.1 Personality development

Every human being is a person who must continuously answer to the world through his choices, morality, feelings and so forth. As a human being each person changes because he grows physically; his feeling structure is not static; his insight broadens and his hierarchy of values also broadens as illustrated below (Van Niekerk, 1986:19).

FIGURE 2.1

![Diagram of personality development](image)
Derived from the above, favourable growth and development of the personality implies the fulfilment of one's own potential to lead to a meaningful and productive life. According to Allport (1955) and Frankl (1975) in Van Rooyen (1990: 68) the striving towards sense and meaning is an important determinator and characteristic of psychological personality functioning. This implies that personality integration is an integration of the psychic and physical components of the personality so that body and soul can function as a unit. In school it is not only the cognitive that is developed but also the conative, affective and self functions. The conclusion is that when the child leaves the school too early his total personality development suffers (Van Rooyen, 1990: 68).

2.2.2.2 The self concept

The self concept is the image a person has of himself. The self concept of the mature person is an idea of the person as a totality and includes the cognitive, emotional and evaluative aspects. This implies that the person does not only have knowledge about his qualities but also of his feelings and evaluations about himself and his qualities. The self concept includes the self image, self esteem and self acceptance. The self image is a deeper image a person has of himself. Self esteem on the other hand is a personal evaluation of one's characteristics (Louw, 1984: 234).

A person's self concept is positive if he evaluates his characteristics as good and acceptable. The more a person is dissatisfied with his characteristics the more negative his self concept is. A child with a negative or low self concept normally has high anxiety level (Bledsoe, 1964 in Louw, 1984: 235). His school achievement and social adjustment tends to be poorer later on in life. The assumption is that a child with a positive self concept is more successful academically and adjusts better socially. He has a high degree of self confidence and is not shy to give
his opinion (Sears, 1970 In Louw, 1984 : 235).

Many at risk pupils experience little respect from school administrators and teachers. Consequently, the potential dropout may be more a victim of a lack of understanding than a pupil with a learning problem. An example of this is when pupils' cultural experiences are in conflict with school norms (see Self, 1985, Hedman, 1984, Schwabach, 1985 In Bearden Spencer, 1 Moracco 1989 : 113).

Beck and Minci (1980 In Larsen and Shertzer, 1987 : 163) suggested that the dropout, who has experienced feelings of failure in school, is greeted by a society that is overtly hostile to dropouts, thus reinforcing his or her feelings of worthlessness. Conant (1961 In Larsen and Shertzer, 1987 : 164) stated that the dropout problem represents "a serious threat to our free society" and suggested that it was "social dynamite".

2.2.2.3 The need for expression

Expression is every mode of expression of the person, his gestures, tone of voice, way of work and so forth. The human being as totality (as a willing, thinking, experiencing person) is involved in each expression. Only when the person assigns his conscious and unconscious feelings, ideals and behaviour to another person projection takes place (Kapp, 1989 : 49).

The need for expression is the natural consequence when a person does not get a chance to express himself in a certain manner. The at risk pupil to a certain extent shows a stronger need for expression than the non at risk pupil. This need for expression which is noticed sometimes in their interests can create a false image. The at risk pupil does not necessarily possess the ability for the named expression. On the one hand he may not have the skill. On the other hand it may imply a projection of his need to escape
from the school situation with its rules and regulations (Garbers, 1980: 40).

2.2.2.4 Diffuse Personality Disorganisation

Niewoudt (1976: 176) found that diffuse personality disorganisation is more noticeable in at risk pupils. They show a lack of self worth, have a poorer moral tendency, are less emotionally mature, show weaker personality integration and a lack of ego strength, is suspicious and is almost paranoiac about safety, tend more towards guilt feelings, show more symptoms of tension, frustration as well as suppressed anxiety (van Rooyen, 1990: 72).

It is difficult for pupils with such complex problems (which grow constantly and become more intense) to maintain themselves in a school situation. Their more complex life situation and inner conflicts make their position unbearable. Obviously they would feel out of place in school (Niewoudt, 1976: 176).

Kruger (1978: 195) concludes that the high percentage problems in high school could possibly be linked to problems in adolescence. In an attempt to find themselves and to build up an own identity they normally question authority. Together with this they experience most situations with more intensity and their emotional reaction is stronger and more than that of the younger child. This feeling of inability to take care of anxiety, conflict and the tension of social and biological demands then obstructs their intellectual achievement (Pretorius, 1979: 199).

2.2.2.5 Negative attitude toward school

It appears that the attitude pupils have toward school and the degree of a pupil's social integration in the school environment are related to early school departure. In a
study conducted by the Centre of Human Resource at Ohio State University in 1980 large numbers of American male youth of all ethnic groups reported leaving school because they "disliked" it (Rumberger, 1988 : 940).

Dropouts nearly always experience alienation (rootlessness, hopelessness, and estrangement) from their school, home, neighbourhood, and society in general. Such perceptions are grounded in the youths' belief that they have suffered great injustices because of race, language, culture, or religion. Potential dropouts typically have inferior social and communication skills, and such pupils seldom, if ever, participate in extracurricular activities (Cervantes, 1965 In Rumberger, 1988 : 940).

In the survey of Bachman (1971 : 65) it was also clear that negative school attitudes and rebellious behaviour were related to dropout. Being on the periphery of school life, being unsuccessful academically, feeling alienated and disconnected from the mainstream, one could hardly expect the dropout to perceive the school in any other manner (Williams, 1987 : 317).

2.2.2.6 Ability

The concept ability brings intelligence to mind. The most definitions refer to intelligence as a cognitive skill which concerns the adjustment of the organism to its environment. It is also accepted that intelligence is that possibility of a person which creates new situations and as such is part of the constituency of the personality structure of the child (Van Niekerk, 1985 : 22). This cognitive ability of the adolescent makes it possible for him to achieve academically; to reach independence; to make a career choice and to form a value system and identity (Louw, 1984 : 402).

Considering the above it is noticeable in the economically deprived family that the pedagogically neglected and social-
ly neglected adolescent is not brought up towards adequate school progress and this ends in dropout. There is a strong tendency to escape from the unpleasant school situation (Pretorius, 1979: 204-205).

Ability has been widely investigated as a factor of school dropout and it is possible that high school dropouts have lower average intelligence quotients (IQs) than those who stay in school (Sewell, Palmo, and Manni, 1981 In Rumberger et al., 1988: 940). Although IQ has intuitive appeal as an explanation for early school departure, IQ differences fail to account for the many dropouts who are intellectually capable and who were performing at an average or above-average level academically before they left high school.

Over one million young people in America leave school each year. The explanation given is that those who drop out cannot benefit from educational experiences anyway. However, the fact is that well over half of those who drop out have an average mental ability. Even more tragic, about a fifth of all dropouts can be classified as gifted (Hamachek, 1987: 264).

2.2.2.7 Gender differences

Niewoudt (1976: 177-178) found that boy and girl dropouts correspond remarkably well regarding their personality characteristics, interest patterns and the way they handle their life situations. It even appears that there is no difference between the genders as to the extent of dropout. The dropout rate in the standard 6-10 phase is 31% for boys and 29% for girls. In the standard 8-10 phase it is 52% for both genders. The most remarkable difference between the different genders is that boys to a greater extent are more light-hearted and unconcerned than girls.

2.2.3. School related factors
2.2.3.1 Dissatisfaction with school

Dissatisfaction with school is such a broad category that it defies explicit definition. It includes a dislike for teachers and for certain subjects, failing, not getting along with other pupils, or too small a choice of subjects. According to Hewitt and Johnson (1979 In Pawlovich, 1983: 42) dissatisfaction with school has recently replaced economic and personal reasons as the most frequently cited reason for leaving school early. Several Canadian studies corroborate the finding (Reich and Young, 1975; Watson, 1976; Archer, 1978 Larter and Eason, 1978; Cipywnyk, Pawlovich, and Randhawa, 1983 In Pawlovich 1983: 42).

2.2.3.2 Academic Performance

2.2.3.2.1 Failing and retaining pupils

"Zeller (1966) and Green (1966) write that a poor reading ability, failing grades and irregular attendance are among the primary predictors of dropout. One predictor of future dropouts is retention in one or more of the early grades. Kaplan and Luck (1977) stated that as many as 50% of dropouts have been held back at least once, and Schreiber (1964) estimated that a pupil who failed first or second grade had an 80% chance of dropping out. A logical explanation would be that dropouts lack the ability to keep up with academic work, but other researchers (Howard and Anderson (1978), Elliot, Voss and Wendling (1966), Sewell, Palmer and Manni (1981) found this to be inaccurate" (In Larsen and Shertzer, 1987: 165).

Poor academic performance is a virtual certainty from pupils with high rates of absenteeism. Poor academic preparation and performance lead to failing courses and standards, both of which are strong predictors of dropping out (Wehlage, 1989: 37).
2.2.3.2.2 Underachievement

Underachievement is defined by Butler-Por (1987 : 6) as a large discrepancy between the child's school performance and some manifestation of the child's true ability, such as the teacher's and parents' observations of achievement, creativity and intelligence measures.

Underachievement most frequently starts in primary school. Children cease to strive as a result of parental indifference toward grades, for too much is demanded of them and they become discouraged, or emotional disturbance over inter family conflicts interferes with schoolwork. Children may be unaware that they are working below capacity, and may offer irrelevant excuses when the problem is pointed out. By the time they reach high school, the pattern of underachievement is habitual and difficult to change (Metcalf & Gaier. 1987 : 919). Underlying the poor study habits, weak skills, disorganisation and defences are feelings of absence of personal control over their educational success. Underachievers don't really believe that they can achieve their goals even if they work harder and continue their downward cycle to become high school dropouts (Rimm, 1988 : 35).

2.2.3.3 School background and attendance

The school is not only responsible for the intellectual development and education of the child, but also fulfils an important role in the socialising of the child. Tec (1974 : 116) maintains that as a socialising agent "the school might be regarded as a link between the family, and peer group, one in which society's expectation are more fully articulated" (Lötter et al., 1979 : 398).

According to Lotter et al., (1979 : 399) the following facts about school background could result in dropout:

- The school starting age of a child.
When a child attends a few different schools in his school career.

When a child regularly stays absent from school.

Achievement problems and school failure. (Screiber, 1964: 91).

The school environment.

Distance from school and travelling problems.

Van Rooyen (1990: 52) also mentioned that when the economically deprived child attends a good creche it could prevent dropout. "Early intervention is a challenge to incompetence and poverty" (Hunt et al., 1972: 12).

2.2.3.4 School Climate

According to Garbers (1980: 72) the climate of the school is a subtle quality which originates from a very complicated structure of influences, activities and participants in and around the physical set up of the school. It has a powerful permanency because it is so polivalent and can be identified. The principal always fulfils a key role in the school climate. It is also obvious that the at risk pupil feels much more unwelcome and dissatisfied in the school than the non at risk pupil. The at risk pupil, to a great extent, experiences the teacher to be strict; does not acknowledge the interest the teachers have in him as a person and also shows little appreciation for the teacher's ability to teach.

If the school and class atmosphere does not mean a safe learning space and a safe social space for the pupil then his social maladjustment could cause underachievement and dropout. It is also a well-known fact that when the pupil feels welcome
in the class his school work improves. Relaxed communication in the social interaction in the classroom means successful learning to the pupil while discommunication has a laming effect on the pupil (Pretorius, 1979: 201).

When a comparison was made of pupils of similar background, the pupils attending a secondary school which was attempting to provide a human and personal atmosphere reported much more positive feelings about their school experience" (Pawlovich, 1983: 48).

The following factors in the relationship between teacher and pupil could lead to an unhappy school experience, underachievement, disillusion, boredom and eventually school dropout:

- When the teacher does not explain the learning material adequately.
- When the teacher does not understand and accept every child with his unique personality.
- When the teacher does not consider realistic achievement expectations.
- When the teacher does not consider the maturity level, gender, intelligence emancipation, milieu and communication problems of the pupils.
- Inadequate communication.
- If the pupil does not participate in extra-curricular activities.
- If the pupil does not learn in school that it is meaningful and valuable to achieve at his best so that he could experience complete fulfilment (Pawlovich, 1983: 49).

In connection with the trust and authority relationship be-
tween teachers and pupils it was found that the pupils from a poor school-supported family accept the authority of the teachers more readily than the other pupils. However they experienced the teachers as strict. The economically deprived child search for the security which is enclosed in strictness of the school situation. (Garbers, 1980 In Van Rooyen, 1990: 56).

2.2.3.5 Feelings toward peers

In the peer group the pupil gets the opportunity to test his ideas against those of the other members. This creates a feeling of belonging and acceptance to the group. In this way the pupil can develop a feeling of being welcome in the group (Du Plessis, 1976: 76).

According to the research of Williams (1987: 318) graduates attached a greater importance to friendship than did the dropouts, and graduates were more likely to have had graduate friends than were dropouts. Dropouts more frequently perceived themselves as being older than their classmates.

Brindlet (1974: 30) maintains as one of the reasons for poor school attendance of the economically deprived the gangs that attract the children away from school. In their different school diagnosis of the at risk pupils in comparison with the non at risk pupils Coetzee (1977), Du Plessis (1976 Jacobs 1977) as well as Van Niekerk (1977 In Van Rooyen, 1990: 58) described the image of the dropout in connection with his participation in groups outside the school as follows:

* they participate more readily in activities outside the school.

* the at risk girl tends to have heterosexual relationships with men that are not attending school.

* they prefer participating in clubs, organisations and
societies outside the school to the activities of the school.

* they are to a greater extent linked to peer groups outside the school which are working already.

* these groups outside the school consider school work as less important.

* the cultural congruence between the outside peer group and the peer group at school is lower in comparison with the non at risk pupils (Van Rooyen, 1990 : 58-59).

2.2.3.6 Future and Career Orientation

According to Niewoudt (1976 : 176-177) the at risk pupil realises already early in his school career that he is going to drop out. He does not see his future via the school and his interests are directed towards certain fields of careers. The researcher also found a fairly limited predisposition. The dropout shows little interest in art, hobbies, nature, extracurricular activities, sports activities as well as sociality. Despite this career directed orientation the dropout normally does not leave school with constructive plans for the future. His opinion about work is vague, aimless and unrealistic. The conclusion is that the dropout leaves school as a result of a series of school failures and the belief that it is too late to do something about it (Van Rooyen, 1990 : 75).

The National Commission on Secondary Education for Hispanics in 1984 reported that most Hispanics enter high school with goals as high as other pupils, but far too many leave school without diplomas and are therefore locked out of the job market (Larsen and Shertzer, 1987 : 166).

Work-related reasons for leaving school are cited regularly by boys and girls. Therefore the assumption could be made that
enough job-opportunities and favourable economic situations make it easier to drop out of school.

2.2.4. Social explanations for school dropout

2.2.4.1 Introduction

The Citizens Policy Centre studied school dropout behaviours in California in 1984 and found four major types of social explanations for school drop-out: pregnant female adolescents or male pupils whose partners are expecting children; working youths; minority or foreign-born youth and delinquency (Fagan and Pabon, 1990: 309).

2.2.4.2 Delinquency

"Juvenile delinquency is a serious problem in South Africa. Research in criminology proves that the largest percentage of adult delinquents already showed behaviour problems in their youth. According to the Central Service of Statics (1981) juveniles between 7 and 17 years are responsible for more or less 13% and 18 to 20 years for more or less 18% of all serious socioeconomic delinquency" (In Cloete and Conradie, 1982: 17).

Rates of delinquency are far higher among dropouts than among those who remain in school (Bachman, Green & Wirtanen, 1971; Kaplan and Luck, 1977 (In Rumberger, 1988: 940) found that one-fourth of all dropouts in their study had been suspended from school at least once, and that an additional one-fifth had been identified by their teachers as "problem pupils".

2.2.4.2.1 Identification of the juvenile delinquent

According to Cloete and Conradie (1982: 27-30) the following factors are characteristic of delinquent behaviour:

* A negative attitude toward school and authority.
* Underachievement which is the symptom of other underlying problems that cause lack of interest in schoolwork, retention and failure.

* Unauthorised absence from school which causes the child to believe that he cannot achieve goals.

* Dropout which is caused by intellectual inability; lack of interest; irresponsibility; negative family influences and school factors.

2.2.4.2.2 Causes of delinquency

According to the legal definition delinquency is every action that is prohibited by the law and are caused by urbanisation; affective negligence and rejection by the parents; disharmony in marriage relationships; negative attitude and inconsistency of parents; relationships with and influence of the peer group; school factors such as extra-curricular activities, underachievement etcetera (Pasques In Cloete, 1982 : 38-58).

2.2.4.2.3 Delinquency and substance use

Some studies show a positive association between dropout and both drug use and delinquency. High school dropouts composed about half the sample (51%) of a 1945 Philadelphia male birth cohort, yet they were responsible for over 71% of the cohort's criminal offences (Wolfgang et al., 1987, In Fagan and Pabon,1990 : 307). Dropouts appear to use drugs more frequently and require treatment more often than their school attending peers (Select Committee on Narcotic Abuse and Control, 1986; In Fagan and Pabon, 1990 : 307).

2.2.4.3 Truancy

Truants, like delinquents, come from family backgrounds characterised by multiple adversities and have antisocial and
deviant life styles after leaving school. It seems likely that adverse backgrounds produce antisocial people, and that truancy and delinquency are two symptoms of this anti sociality (Farrington in Hersov, 1980 : 62).

2.2.4.3.1 Causes of Truancy

According to Hersov (1980 : 7-19) the following factors are contributory to truancy: boredom; school curriculum; moving from relatively informal and sheltered environment of the primary school to the more highly structured milieu of the high school; unfriendly and aggressive classmates and critical teachers.

The personality of the child is also a determinant of truancy. It seems evident that truants differ both from non-truants and from each other in certain personal traits and in their social circumstances. Along with unhappiness at school there is often unhappiness at home as well. Many are also lonely and miserable (Tyerman, 1967 : 63).

2.2.4.3.2 The effect of truancy on dropout

While the relationship between high school truancy and dropout seems inevitable it is of interest that dropping out of high school was influenced by the level of primary school truancy (Robins and Ratcliff in Hersov, 1980 : 71).

In a Study of Excellence in High School Education in America over the decade 1972-1982 it occurred that the dropouts were more likely to report having behaviour problems while in school. They played truant more often than stayers, had disciplinary problems, have been suspended from school or had trouble with the police. The dropouts also reported higher rates of absenteeism and tardiness than stayers (Ekstrom et al., 1988 : 116).
2.2.4.4 Pregnancy

Like family problems, teenage pregnancy knows no class boundaries. It is estimated that approximately one third of the girls who drop out of high school do so because of reasons related to pregnancy (Earle, Roach and Frazer, 1987 in Wehlage et al., 1989: 62). Despite their common condition, adolescents who become pregnant also face unique demands from family relationships, their social and economic situation, and the degree of involvement of the child's father. The consequence of such demands is that school completion becomes more difficult unless she gets the necessary support.

This population of pregnant adolescents shares a number of important common characteristics: they are all young; have problems with attendance and credit accumulation and a large group are from working class backgrounds. Most of them are unsure of themselves, still adjusting to the conflicting feelings that accompany pregnancy. On the one hand they might be excited about the baby but on the other hand aware that society castigated them as teenage mothers (Wehlage, et al., 1985: 16-17).

The Theron Commission (In Lötter et al, 1979: 3-8-6) emphasized that the uncontrolled and unplanned natural growth rate in the lower socioeconomic strata is a very important facet of their low standard of living. Unwanted pregnancies can lead to social problems such as negligence and abusing of children as well as other behavioural problems. This on its turn keeps the spiral of poverty intact.

2.2.4.5 Extra-Curricular Activities

Students do not spend all their school time in the classroom. Extra-curricular activities also play an important role in high schools (Ekstrom et al., 1988: 67).

Ekstrom et al., (1988: 91-92) found that pupils participated
less in most extra-curricular school activities as seniors than they had done as sophomores. Students also spent more time as seniors in dating, talking with friends, and riding around. Dropouts seldom discuss their experiences with their parents. The parents of the dropouts are reported as doing less monitoring of pupils' extra-curricular activities. Dropouts also reported spending less time reading than did stayers. Sophomores who later became dropouts were less likely to participate in church and community activities for young people than the sophomores who persisted in high school.

According to Natriello et al., (1987 : 56) the dropouts appear to feel alienated from school life. They report lower levels of participation in most extra-curricular activities, especially in athletics. They are less likely: to feel satisfied with the way their education is going; to be interested in school; to like working hard in school; to feel that they are popular with other pupils; to feel that other pupils see them as good pupils, as athletes, or as important, but more likely to feel that other pupils see them as troublemakers.


2.3 CONSEQUENCES FOR THE DROPOUT

2.3.1 Financial status

Most available research supports the widely accepted view that leaving high school without a diploma has several negative consequences. The costs of dropping out include difficulty in finding employment and being relegated to low-status and low paying jobs (Timberlake, 1982 In Tidwell, 1988 : 941). Dropouts have lower lifetime earnings and are more likely to be the recipients of welfare payments than are graduates (Beck and

Bossard, (1970: 450) supports these findings because he states that when young people leave school they have subsequent problems that are more grave than for the average graduate. Their rate of employment is lower and the types of employment are also different. Their hours of work are longer, and their chances of employment are best in the kinds of occupations that are expanding least rapidly. Throughout life, the income of the dropout is apt to be less than for the high school graduate.

2.3.2 Unemployment

Many dropouts are also unemployed and must cope with idleness. Few inexpensive opportunities for recreation are available to adolescents and they are more likely to engage in antisocial behaviour (Biddle, Bank, Anderson Keats & Keats, 1981 *In* Tidwell, 1988 : 941). Society also loses when many of its at risk workers remain unemployed. Statistics (Jones, 1977 *In* Larsen and Shertzer, 1987 : 164) show that the unemployed dropout is 6 to 10 times more likely than an employed person to become involved in crime.

2.3.3 Social, cultural and psychological consequences

The social, cultural, and psychological experiences of dropouts are as limited as their financial status and prevents them from achieving the satisfactions enjoyed by others in our society (Bossard, 1970: 451). Dropouts face these additional problems because they often are judged negatively by others as well as by themselves. Students who leave high school before graduating are more likely to experience racial discrimination, to receive disapproval from parents, friends, and society and to devalue themselves because of their decision to leave school (Steinberg, Blinde, Chan 1984 *In* Tidwell, 1988 : 942).

The social consequences of leaving school early have been identified repeatedly. When a pupil drops out of school and
fails in his or her attempt to find a job, both the pupil and society suffer. Beck and Muia (1980 In Shertzer & Larsen, 1987 : 164) suggested that the dropout, who has experienced feelings of failure in school, is greeted by a society that is overtly hostile to the dropout, thus reinforcing his or her feelings of worthlessness; Wacker (1981, Weidman and Friedmann, 1984 In Shertzer & Larsen 1987 : 164) observed that dropouts usually miss out on the part-time, summer and work study experiences acquired by some high school pupils, and, therefore, have not developed the requisite attitudes, values, and skills needed on a job. Personal problems and deficient working experiences often make the dropout unattractive to employers.

2.4 CONCLUSION

The problem is not simply to keep educationally at-risk youth from dropping out, but more importantly to provide them with educationally worth-while experiences. Those who lack basic skills, career skills, and the social presence to be successful in the workplace will encounter unemployment and welfare with the frustration and indignity this status confers on them. Previously the labour market was able to absorb most of those with a limited education, but increasingly the lack of a high school diploma is tantamount to a denial of employment. In order to be employable in other than the most menial work, those entering the labour market will certainly have to master the core competencies that should be acquired in high school (Natriello, 1987 : 71).

It should be stressed here that the above profile and consequences do not apply to all pupils who drop out of school. They come from all economic strata and drop out for many reasons, some of which are practical or unescapable. Many dropouts pick up their education at a later stage, and some succeed in life without further schooling. The description given here is that of the hard-core problem which exists and which is a threat for the future.
CHAPTER 3

FAMILY RELATIONS AS A CAUSE OF SCHOOL DROPOUT

3.1 INTRODUCTION

It seems clear that society is seriously malfunctioning in its role of preparing children for adulthood. There is upheaval and disarray about child-rearing patterns in the daily media. Pronouncements are made about building a better life, making progress and meeting tomorrow's challenges. But those prospects for tomorrow will be crucially affected by how well today's children are brought up.

In this chapter two main concepts viz., family relations and school dropout are dealt with. Both include the life of a child and immediately an interwoven relationship is being created. This problem of school leaving which is actually a dropout of school before the appropriate time, is a universal problem.

3.2 DEFINITIONS

According to Vincent D. Folley (In Corsini, 1989 : 466) a family is the social unit in which people by mutual choice attempt to attain their needs: some physical, some emotional. Emotional needs can be reduced to three dimensions: intimacy, power and meaning. People need to be close to others, to belong. They also need to express themselves, to be unique. Every family is marked for its own uniqueness, specialness and peculiarity. Finally, there must be meaning or purpose in their lives. Although it can be argued that the family unit is not necessarily there to fulfil these goals, it is nevertheless rarely possible to achieve these needs without a family.

Although there are different opinions about what a family is
we cannot get away from the fact that the family is the centre of education.

Pretorius (1979: 44) describes it as follows: The family is: the centre of education, the core community, the primordial cell of the community, the basic life community, the central and grounding education environment of the child, the building block of life in the state and community, the primary education situation and the primary live-together situation.

In conclusion we could agree with Henderson (1981: 60) who believes that a family is more than a structure. It is a vibrant functioning reality, a group of persons living together in intimate continuing relationships.

3.3 FAMILY INTERACTION

3.3.1 The nature of family interaction

These intimate relationships exist regardless of the degree of harmony in the family; in fact, family discord and tensions precipitate their own distinctive varieties of expression.

The first is sensory interaction, the sound of a voice, the sight of a gesture or facial expression, or a factual contact between one person and another. The second is emotional interaction, as in reciprocal joy, love, hate et cetera. This non-verbal communication is of the highest importance in human interaction. Especially is this true in the more intimate forms of interaction such as one finds in the family. Finally there is interaction at the intellectual level, where one person expresses an opinion or states an idea to which another person reacts such as found in rational conversation (Henderson, 1981: 61).
3.4 CULTURAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN HOME AND SCHOOL

Closely related to the above comments is the fact that cultural differences, particularly of an ideological nature, inevitably develop between the school and the family world. In school, through formal instruction and informal contacts, the children learn to live in a world which is alien to their parents. Teachers in the school at times reflect the attitude that whatever is foreign is inferior. Influenced by this attitude, the children begin to despise the customs and culture of their forbears (Bossard, 1970 : 439).

On the other hand children present behaviour problems at times because of the antagonisms to the school culture which are aroused in them by their parents. Many lower-class homes are in conflict with the schools, and the conflict is usually resolved by having the children withdraw from school as early as possible (Bossard, 1970 : 440).

Another cultural conflict between home and school arises from their contrasting interpretations of life and the universe. Large numbers of parents and elder people still think in theological terms, whereas the children have acquired a scientific approach and mode of interpretation (Bossard, 1970 : 440).

3.5 FAMILY INFLUENCES ON DROPOUT BEHAVIOUR

3.5.1 Introduction

To the question of what causes pupils to drop out, many answers have been given. One of them is home related factors. These include a need for money, poor health of pupils or family members, marriage, and parental attitude towards school. They come largely from neighbourhood and families that have no great interest in education, do not have good work habits, and do not inspire good work habits in their children. Generally, the parents have had little schooling
and may have been dropouts themselves. They are hard-pressed financially and want their children to go to work as soon as possible (Bossard, 1970: 440).

3.5.2 Family background and its effect on dropout

3.5.2.1 Socio-Economic Status
Numerous studies have shown that family background, particularly socioeconomic status (SES), exerts a considerable influence on educational attainment in general, as well as on dropout behaviour. That is, pupils from families of lower socioeconomic status, when such status is often measured by parental education or family income, exhibit higher dropout rates than do pupils from families of higher socioeconomic status (Bachman, Green and Wirtanen, 1971; Ekstrom et al., 1986 in Rumberger 1989: 284).

Firstly, parents in high socioeconomic status families are more likely to be involved with their children's education which creates a chance for the children to improve their academic performance (Fehrman et al., 1987, Lareau 1987, Stevenson and Baker 1987 in Rumberger 1989: 284).

These parents also spend more time with their children in pursuit of activities that end in cognitive development. They influence their children's academic performance by imparting the appropriate values, aspirations and motivation needs to persevere and succeed in school (Wright and Wright 1976 in Rumberger, 1989: 284).

As a rule the child identifies with the socioeconomic status of the family to which he was born. In this way a career is mostly transferred from parents to children, specially in the lower income group. In most cases when there is no interest from the parents, the child also does not strive towards a higher socioeconomic status (Du Plessis, 1976: 71).
3.5.2.2 Training and career status of the father

According to Garbers (1980: 33-34) there is a tendency that fathers of at risk pupils are mostly in lower status careers in comparison with fathers of non at risk pupils. It appears as if the socioeconomic circumstances of the family, as determined by the career of the father, show the quality of the family structure (eg. housing, aspirations, intellectual climate, cultural educational level) which is connected to the children's progress at school.

A number of researchers found a significant relationship between the career of the father and school dropout of their children (Elliot, Voss and Windling (1966) and Hathaway and Monachesi (1964 In Van Rooyen, 1990: 48). The findings were that in families where the father is a day-labourer 38% boys and 32% girls left the school before they completed high school.

In comparison the dropout rate of children from professional fathers was only 5%. The research of Timmermans and Van der Burgh (1979 In Van Rooyen, 1990: 49) on the economically deprived in South Africa also support these findings.

3.5.2.3 Working Mothers

The statement is that the children of today grow up "fatherless" but to a greater extent "motherless" because the number of working mothers grows by the day (Du Plessis, 1976: 41). The mother of today sees society from another perspective and has a choice between being a mother and being a working woman. She prepares herself to be a breadwinner if her husband should divorce her or if he should pass away.

Generally it is expected that the working of the mother outside her home would show a correlation with dropout. However this is not the case. Research shows that there is less mothers of dropouts in comparison with mothers of stay-
ins who work outside their homes (Du Plessis, 1976: 42).

3.5.2.4 Parental involvement, education level and attitudes of family members

According to a survey in a California High School (Rumberger et al., 1989: 293) parent's involvement in their children's education influences dropout behaviour. Some pupils need academic assistance to succeed and remain engaged in school. Parental involvement includes parent's monitoring and helping pupils with homework, attending school conferences and functions, and providing a supportive learning environment. Because they frequently do poorly in school, dropouts probably need more assistance than do other pupils, yet they report lower levels of parental involvement (According to a survey in California Rumberger et al., 1989: 296).

In this regard Garbers (1980: 33) reports that parents of dropouts also have low education qualifications. Lichter et al., (1964: 151-152) also found that dropout could be the result when parents do not value effective school education enough. Imitation of the example of such school indifferent parents is the cause of so many children who do not see the sense and meaning of school and school education. The conclusion is "dropout parents breed dropout sons" (Screiber, 1966 In Du Plessis, 1976: 52).

Parental support for children may be especially important in the face of poor school performance. One reason is that lower class parents are more likely to accept the authority of the school and the feedback about their children as accurate, even when it is negative. Such responsiveness to negative school evaluations can reduce a pupils' desire to remain in school (Rumberger et al., 1989: 296).

According to Garbers (1980: 33) the brothers and sisters of dropouts also do not make an effort to complete tertiary education. Krauss (1964: 871) found when brothers and
sisters study further it has a positive influence on the younger children also to study further.

3.5.2.5 Background of economically deprived children

The parents' financial position as one of the direct indexes of socioeconomic status shows a correlation with dropout. The fact that parents can not carry the study and teaching costs at school as well as at university causes dropout. However, it stays difficult to isolate the influence of financial circumstances from other factors like the size of the family and the education level of the parents (Garbers, 1990: 34).

The economically deprived child, i.e. the child who grows up under non-school directed circumstances is not prepared for school and is a high risk for school dropout, because:

- Poverty and negligence mean dissatisfactory life circumstances, cramped home conditions, feelings of insecurity and pressure on the child to start earning money as soon as possible.

- There is a shortage of reading material and the use of language is poor and for this reason little chance for language development.

- There is little stimulation for the child's sensory development because of the shortage of toys.

- The family lives from day to day. There is no future planning.

- Little interest and inconsistency from the parents cause maladjustment by the children.

- There is a lack of communication between parent and child.
Economically deprived children mostly have a low self image.

Garbers (1980 : 52) describes the education environment of the economically deprived child and the way in which he is captured in it as the "spiral of poverty". In this regard he makes the following statements.

"As long as the human being shows initiative and wants to be someone; as long as he has freedom, etcetera, the culturally deprived child can escape from the "spiral of poverty" (see Figure 3.1)."
FIGURE 3.1

POVERTY
Financial and Cultural

PARENTS
Poor health and feeding during pregnancy
Poor/no family planning
Increased infant deaths
Increased family size
Low education level and career status
Primitive education onslaught
Disharmonic family life.

CHILD
Malnutrition
Cronic sickness
Poor medical care

EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT
Autocratic discipline style
Limited ordering of environment (space)
Peer group directed
Limited language code and primitive communication
Intellectually low and intellectual achievement pressure
Lack of security
Poor school directed
Conflict in value orientation between family and school

Negative academic self image
Relative low self motivation/dynamics
Accumulated back log on academic level
Diffuse personality disorganisation
Dissatisfied need for expression
School indifferent creativity
Social incompetency in middle class set up
Career directed orientation
Uncomfortableness in school

HIGH RISK OF SCHOOL FAILURE
SCHOOL DROP OUT

RISKY CAREER FUTURE

"SPIRAL OF POVERTY"
(ADAPTED FROM GARBERS, 1980 : 52)
3.5.3 Family Structure and its effect on school dropout

3.5.3.1 Family size

Where it concerns family size it appears that dropouts, to a great extent, come from larger families (more than five children). According to Garbers (1980) and Lötter (1976 In Van Rooyen, 1990: 33) larger families are found mostly in the Afrikaans speaking groups in South Africa. It is also a fact that the large family mostly lives in the socially disadvantaged areas where you find poor housing, poor study conditions, poor parental guidance, low education level of parents and financial need.

According to Stroup and Robins (1967: 118) there is a direct link between large families and dropout. They show a correlation between the life style of the family and school problems. In fact they see this aspect as a possible prediction to school dropout.

In contrast more recent research (Dornbusch et al. 1987: 1244-1257) found that a pupil's marks are positively related to authoritative "parenting styles", regardless of the type of parent structure.

3.5.3.2 Position of the child in the sibling row

According to Garbers (1980: 32) the position of the child in the sibling row is a factor in school dropout. His findings were that in families where the children according to order of rank were placed fourth or higher the percentage dropouts increased significantly.

The above mentioned research is in line with Musgrave's (1970: 186) findings that the eldest children, mostly in the working class families, progressed relatively better than expected. The reason for this is probably because education negligence influences younger children in large families more than
the older children. Pretorius (1979: 144) supports this statement by saying that the eldest child was alone for a long time and received undivided love. Attention was also given to his school progress, with the result that when the next child is born, the eldest has, although having been "dethroned", acquired the necessary stability to keep on achieving positive results.

3.5.3.3 Boys and Girls

Garbers' (1980: 33) opinion is that girls more than boys drop out of school. Researchers such as Rose and Marshall (1974), Tyerman (1968) and Kruger (1978 in Van Rooyen, 1990: 44) found the opposite to be true.

According to Tyerman (1968: 57) girls older than twelve years stay absent from school to a greater extent than boys but generally there is a correlation of 9 to 1 in favour of girls absenteeism. Kruger (1978: 195) on the other hand stated that boys more than girls have behavioural problems, are less disciplined and have poorer concentration abilities. In contrast with this more emotional problems were found in girls.

Boys enter school with a predisposition to academic underachievement and this problem gets more serious as they progress to higher standards. On the other hand girls poor academic achievement apparently starts with puberty (Cervantes (1965), Tyerman (1968), Lichter (1962), Van Aarde, 1967 in Van Rooyen, 1990: 44).

3.5.3.4 Broken homes

This term refers to the situation where one or both parents are absent for a long period (Van Rooyen, 1990: 35). In actual fact some parents desert their children when they leave home without making any arrangements to continue to contribute financially or practically to the family (Friedrich, 1988: 42).
6). Broken homes leave children upset, with guilt feelings, behavioural problems or they may even become ill (Freidrich, 1988: 48).

Divorce, family desertion by a parent, a second marriage, death or sickness of any member of the family mean a disruption of the family situation. Any such unnaturally incomplete situation interrupts education (Pretorius, 1979: 141).

3.5.4 Family relationships and its effect on dropout

3.5.4.1 Introduction

According to Sarafino and Armstrong (1980: 500) parents generally feel ambivalent towards the adolescent's drifting away from the family. The authors feel that parents must allow the child to develop other interests without allowing him to feel abandoned, in spite of the fact that their values are different.

3.5.4.2 Developing a relationship

Developing a relationship might seem to be something that "just happens" once we start to feel positive about someone else. It feels as if it has an inevitability about it that has mostly to do with increased liking for, and acquisition of knowledge about the other person - and vice versa. Another aspect of the development of a relationship is growth of intimacy, with greater feelings of relaxation, more bending of the "relationship rules", greater familiarity, and greater psychological closeness (Duck, 1989: 41).

Regarding involuntary relationships, like close family ties, there are other and better indices of increasing closeness such as the affection expressed verbally and non-verbally, the absence of conflict and so forth (Duck, 1984: 44).

Thus for a healthy relationship between parents and children the ingredients should be unconditional acceptance, mutual
There is a correlation between children who have a good relationship with a mature father and their possibility to achieve scholastic success. It is the quality time the father spends with the child and his schoolwork that motivates the child to see the importance of his schoolwork. (Gallagher and Harris 1964 : 49).

The father in the economically deprived family is unable to present to the child a world which will correspond with the life pattern presented by the school (Kapp, 1989 : 144-146).

The child could then withdraw from his school environment and drop out because he is scared of failure. Not only his school performance but also his total personality development are influenced (Pistorius, 1976 : 70-71).

3.5.4.4 Relationship with the mother

The opinion of Du Plessis (1974 : 136) is that a mutual expectation exists between mother and child. The mother-child relationship has a broader and stronger influence on the total development of the child than the father-child relationship. It is for this reason that Liddle (1962 : 16) maintains that in cases where there is a good relationship between mother and child there is less school dropout.

When the relationship between mother and child is dissatisfactory the attitude of the child toward school also changes in most cases. Achievement then has no value for the child. The relationship with the mother can influence the child in such a way that he cannot progress according to expectation (Kapp, 1989 : 165).

3.5.4.5 Sibling relationships
Birth order, spacing and gender appear to be important factors in sibling relationships and achievement. First-borns tend to be bossy and act like authoritarian parents to the younger siblings. They also seem to have more self-confidence and self-esteem than other children in the household and consequently a better self concept (Joubert, 1980: 41).

Competition between siblings is a normal phenomenon and is one way through which the child learns to know himself, his abilities and shortcomings. It can be damaging when parents compare children with one another and give more privileges to one than to the other (Pistorius, 1976: 71).

2.5.4.6 Relationship between parent and child

Sometimes a child could experience problems because of a disturbance in his education path or a feeling of insecurity or shortcomings in his personality. This could then influence the emotional, cognitive and normative aspects of his life. He then makes himself noticeable through unacceptable behaviour. Education which shows these characteristics is qualified as disharmonic education dynamics, shown in Figure 3.2.
FIGURE 3.2
DISHARMONIC EDUCATION DYNAMICS

(adapted from Sonnekus, 1984: 53)
3.5.4.7 Parenting Styles

According to Rumberger et al., (1989) "parenting styles" that foster good communication between parents and their children and responsible behaviour in children also appear to influence a pupil's achievement in school.

Van Wyk (1989: 16-17) makes the following remarks about "parenting styles";

* The **authoritarian** parents are so strict and rigid in their views with the result that they tend to regulate and dominate their children's behaviour, dispositions and judgements. The child is almost never allowed to also give his own view. The result is that the child has no say in the decisions that are made about him.

These children mostly experience feelings of inadequacy, inferiority, shame, immature dependency and irresponsibility at home and in school.

* The **permissive** parents are the other extreme. They are against authoritarian attitudes and allow their children a great deal of freedom. They are hesitant to discipline their children because they believe it "can damage the child's personality".

Children from such homes always feel that nobody loves them and they experience feelings of unsafety and insecurity. These children tend to be disrespectful towards their parents and other people and become very selfish.

* The **authoritative** parents try to understand the child before they judge or punish. They exert firm control but
3.5.4.7 Parenting Styles

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These children most often experience feelings of inadequacy, inferiority, shame, immature dependency and irresponsibility at home and in school.

* The permissive parents are the other extreme. They are against authoritarian attitudes and allow their children a great deal of freedom. They are hesitant to discipline their children because they believe it "can damage the child's personality".

Children from such homes always feel that nobody loves them and they experience feelings of unsafety and insecurity. These children tend to be disrespectful towards their parents and other people and become very selfish.

* The authoritative parents try to understand the child before they judge or punish. They exert firm control but
allow room for decision making.

Research shows that children of understanding parents have mature judgement and reflect good problem solving behaviour. They get on well with other people; are less hostile and aggressive; have self confidence and are spontaneous. They are able to achieve better on various levels because they are free of the binding effect that high levels of tension and anxiety have on a person (Van Wyk, 1989: 18).

The findings of Rumberger et al., (1986: 286) also suggest the following explanations of how family influences dropout behaviour and why differences in family practices arise:

Firstly, adolescents from permissive households make decisions without their parents' guidance and become more susceptible to the influence of their peers. The lack of parental control and excessive peer influence may lead to improper social attitudes and behaviours, like truancy and drug use. It can also lead to poor attendance and disciplinary problems in school, which influence dropout behaviour.

Secondly, a parent's reaction to a pupil's marks can help or hinder the pupil's internal motivation. Extrinsic rewards and punishments reduce internal motivation, since individuals then explain their behaviour as the product of outside forces. In contrast, if children get a chance to develop internal motivation it improves their academic performance and reduces dropping out.

3.6 COMMUNICATION BETWEEN PARENT AND CHILD

3.6.1 Verbal and Non-verbal Communication

According to Botha (1964 in Du Plessis, 1976: 43) the term
"talk" is mostly associated with language communication. Talk does not necessarily include language. A meaningful look, a shake of the head or the shrug of the shoulders are also forms of talk.

Pistorius (1976: 213) maintains that the most important communication medium is the spoken word and mostly so the mother tongue because the child is more familiar with the word symbols and idiomatic expressions.

It is Campbell's (1970: 97) opinion that the degree of contact a child has with his parents, the quality of the language model they provide for him, and their reinforcement of his speech activities are important determinants of his language and cognitive development.

3.6.2 Achievement motivation

Within the home is created an intellectual climate which, at the one extreme, fosters favourable attitudes to learning, develops in children a commitment to striving and learning and leads to high value being placed on school success; at the other extreme school learning is held in low or negative regard and there is an absence of parental reinforcement for the academic endeavours of the child (Campbell, 1970: 88). Douglas (1964 In Campbell, 1970: 88) conclude that the attitude of children to their school work is deeply affected by the degree of encouragement their parents give them and by their own level of emotional stability.

Rimm (1986: 38) stated that children may learn to under achieve by copying their parents. Sometimes parents try to empathise with their struggling children and they share with them some unfortunate memories. These may help parent and child to feel closer, but it also convey a message of expectation. A gifted, high energy six year old who had just completed his second day in first grade summed it up succinctly: "My grandpa hated school, my dad hated school, and I hate
school". Obviously, his family influence and his identification with his father have not contributed positively to his attitude about learning.

3.6.3. Educational Climate at Home

Education has a character of dialogue and the happy mutual dialogue between parent and child forms the basis for mutual respect and emotional bonding. In an emotionally appropriate climate like this the child is normally very approachable to the parents' feelings, thoughts and values. If there is any disturbance in the education communication then the child's personality is also disturbed and that causes education need. The child in education need does not live in connectedness with his parents and therefore he feels unsafe and insecure. The anxiety this causes creates many possibilities for emotional and behavioural disturbances such as: aggression, depression, juvenile delinquency, under achievement and dropout (Kapp, 1989: 133).

It is true that the education climate in the family of the dropout is normally poor. The parents are negative about the problems of their children. They are impatient to answer questions and use the excuse that education is the task of the teacher. Culturally and educationally deprived children also do not have their own bedroom in which they can create their own live-and-learn world. Generally it appears that children from wealthy families experience more homeliness and welcome-ness than economically deprived children. Children drop out of school because they do not feel at home. This could originate from the education climate at home (Garbers, 1972: 23).

The person who grew up in a loving home atmosphere where his uniqueness and individuality were respected would be able to realise his potential and achieve well at school.

3.6.4. Family influences on the developing of the self concept
The family situation can influence a child's achievement in a number of ways and then the child is unable to meet the expectations of the teachers.

The result could be constant failure and developing of a low self concept. Factors to be considered are the following (Dyer and Duming, 1983: 159-161, In Kapp, 1989: 165-166):

1. **Inconsistency** in the education procedure of the parents causes difficulty for the child to adjust to the fixed rules of the school.

2. Some parents never set demands on their children which expect effort from them, with the result that the child is not able to complete the tasks of the teacher.

3. Some parents have a negative attitude towards school. This could lead to poor school attendance and resistance in the child towards school.

4. Some parents are not interested in their children's activities; do not supervise their schoolwork and homework; do not create enough chances for communication to guide their children effectively.

5. **Over-protection** from parents obstruct the developing of independence and thorough working attitude.

6. Children from broken homes or children who are only rejected by their parents lack the personal support and attention from parents partly or totally.

7. Some children have to work after school and over weekends to supplement the family income. They do not have enough time for school work.

8. Problems, discord and difficult circumstances in the family cause children to be worried, with the result that they cannot give their full attention to their school work.

9. Parents sometimes make the mistake of constantly comparing
the achievements of the less intelligent child or the poor achiever to the other children in the family. Such unfair comparisons do not only damage family relationships but also lead to serious resistance and learning problems.

(10) A dropout often shows a set pattern which relates to family members. Some children often stay in school only a little longer than what their parents and older brothers and sisters did. Their negative attitudes towards school and school work is also transferred easily onto the younger children.

3.7 DISCIPLINE AND PARENTAL PUNITIVENESS

3.7.1 Introduction

Since the Gluecks' research in 1950 numerous studies confirmed that poor discipline and poor supervision are causal factors for behavioural problems and dropout. In this regard Van Aarde (1967 In Van Rooyen, 1990 : 41) states that the home circumstances of the underachiever are characterised by too strict supervision and control or no control at all whereas the parents of the achiever apply positive and discreet control.

3.7.2 How parents operate

Parents of the economically deprived tend to be less sympathetic, constructive, democratic, involved and warm in their education strategy than wealthy parents (Garbers, 1980 : 24). In most cases the mother takes over as the authoritative figure because of the absence of the father (Pistorius, 1976 : 61).

Sometimes parents also try too hard to help their children, without knowing they prepare the ground for underachieving and dropout. There are variations in the ways parents try to help, but inadvertently make one another into an ogre. In
their attempts to help, the child becomes so confused that in the end he no longer listens to either parent (Rimm, 1988:52).

It is true that parents do have more experience, knowledge and are better prepared to make wise and responsible decisions than children. If parents too often make decisions for the child it prevents the child from developing self discipline. This could also be the cause for a child to become rebellious against all forms of discipline (Van Wyk, 1989 : 82) and eventually drop out from school.

3.7.3 Withdrawing from parental authority and discipline

The result of the decline of parental authority is that children withdraw totally from the authority of their parents and use their money and free time in a way that suits them. Such active withdrawing from parental authority is characteristic of the dropout (Garbers, 1972 and Sonnekus, 1973 In Du Plessis 1976 : 66).

There is a link between the undermining of the father as the figure of authority and dropout because in most families the father declines totally from his position of authority. This makes him an inferior figure and it is damaging to the child's education achievement. Where there is no authority of the father the child is exposed to inconstant forces in the society and himself (Pistorius, 1976 : 60).

3.8 CONCLUSION

It seems obvious from the previous discussion in this Chapter that the dropout problem of the adolescent has its roots in the family situation. The dropout therefore is dependent on his parents for school achievement based on the following aspects:
1. companionship and availability of parents
2. parents' involvement with education to create a chance for academic achievement.
3. conversation, encouragement and motivation via language and communication.
4. to achieve his goals and to satisfy his needs.
5. healthy relationships which are supportive, trusting, accepting, satisfactory, secure and loving.
6. to feel at home with his parents and to do things together in harmony, safety and security.
7. to develop a positive self concept through acknowledgement and acceptance and to realise his full potential.
8. positive consistent discipline and sympathetic guidance.
CHAPTER 4

THE RESEARCH DESIGN OF THE EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the context and aim of this study will briefly be referred to, the method of investigation, the research group, measuring instrument and statistical techniques will then be clarified.

4.2 CONTEXT

This study is part of a group project currently being undertaken by students of the Education Department at the Rand Afrikaans University and the Ben Gurion University. The project focuses on variables related to school dropout such as self concept, family relations, school climate, and locus of control. In this particular study, an attempt will be made to obtain empirical information on the influence and effect family relations have on school dropout and more specifically in the disadvantaged groups (Ref. par. 1.4.3).

The results of the research could possibly be utilised to identify the at risk pupils and prevent them from early school leaving. Therefore the long term goal of the research is to develop intervention programmes for deprived youth at risk in order to address the dropout problem at school more effectively.

4.3 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study aims to investigate:
4.3.1 how at risk and not at risk pupils experience their family relations.
4.3.2 how family relations affect school progress
4.3.3 whether there is significant differences between family relations of at risk and not at risk standard seven pupils as identified by their teachers.

In answer to this purpose various hypotheses are formulated which will be researched empirically.

4.4 FORMULATION OF HYPOTHESES

4.4.1 Null hypotheses

Hot 1 There are no statistically significant differences between the average test score of at risk and not at risk standard seven pupils with regard to family relations as identified by their teachers.

Hot 2 There are no statistically significant differences between the average test scores of at risk and not at risk standard seven pupils with regard to family relations as measured by the following variables of a questionnaire:

* Family relationships
* Family size
* Family situation
* Home Language
* School progress
* Gender
* Age

4.4.2 Alternative Hypotheses

Hat 1 There are statistically significant differences between the average test scores of at risk and not at risk standard seven pupils with regard to family relations as identified by their teachers.

Hat 2 There are statistically significant differences between the average test scores of at risk and not
at risk standard seven pupils with regard to family relations as measured by the following variables of a questionnaire:

* Family relationships
* Family size
* Family situation
* Home language
* School progress
* Gender
* Age

4.5 METHOD OF STUDY

4.5.1 The pilot research

This research was conducted by the researcher and various field workers. A sample of 30 standard seven pupils from a high school in a disadvantaged community in the P.W.V area was used. This research did not include respondents who are already part of the sample. Consequently the results will not be incorporated in the final statistical analysis.

The main purpose of this research was to test the questionnaire, to refine it and to determine the duration for completion of the questionnaire.

During this research it was found that the pupils experienced difficulty in understanding the five point scale and most of them had poor language comprehension and a low vocabulary. They also found some questions embarrassing and did not answer them. They completed the questionnaire in approximately thirty to sixty minutes. The necessary alterations were made in the instructions and some of the questions were reformulated.

4.5.2 Obtaining of data
Each researcher and the field workers (teachers at the school) were responsible for the completion of the questionnaires at a particular school. The researcher conducted the research to obtain the data according to the following procedure: Instructions were read to the respondents; the five point scale was explained; the respondents were asked to respond honestly and accurately to each question; they were motivated to ask questions at any time; a relaxed working atmosphere was created; the respondents were assured that all the information was confidential; there was a break after thirty minutes; numbered class lists were given to the field workers to identify the at risk pupils; limited identification was used; the pupils were asked to write their initials and date of birth on the back of the completed questionnaires.

4.6 DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH GROUP

4.6.1 Population

The population consisted of standard seven pupils affiliated to twenty high schools in the P.W.V. area. There are various reasons why this population was chosen. Amongst others they are entering a new phase in their development, namely adolescence. Characteristic of adolescence is physical, biological and emotional changes that occur in the maturation process. They must also make subject choices and choices concerning their future. The adolescent's ego and identity as well as his school life can be affected by these changes Engelbrecht, et al., 1982 : 77-79).

4.6.2 The Sample

The sample initially consisted of 1000 standard seven pupils from five dual medium high schools chosen as follows: out of twenty schools eligible for selection, nine schools situated in sub economic areas, were identified, of which four were chosen at random. The fifth school was situated in an area of
higher socioeconomic status, and was chosen at random from the remaining eleven schools.

4.6.3 Division of the final research group according to gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>274</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>734</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.6.4 Limitations
Initially it was planned to use a sample of a 1000 respondents but eventually only 734 respondents completed the questionnaire. This could be ascribed to the large number of absenteeism.

4.7 THE MEASURING INSTRUMENT

The questionnaire was developed by the research group and staff members of the Education Science Department and was standardised by the Statistic Computer Service of the Rand Afrikaans University.

The instrument consists of two sections. In the first section are the questions about the following variables related to dropout:
* self concept
* locus of control
* school climate
* family relations - this is the component that is emphasised in this particular study. (See appendix).

The second part contains the background information because less exertion will be required to respond to these questions.

The respondents had to circle the number which describes them best on a five point scale:
4.8 STATISTICAL ANALYSIS AND TECHNIQUES

After completion the questionnaire was numbered and questions were checked for mistakes and omissions. The data obtained was computerised, corrections were made and the data was assimilated at the Statistics Computer Service of the Rand Afrikaans University.

For interpretation of the data the following techniques and analyses were used:

1. Students t-test
2. SPS3-Package
3. NPSO-Program - Item analysis program
4. BMDP4M-Factor Analysis
5. Kuder-Richardson 20-Formula

These analyses and techniques will be discussed and implemented in Chapter 5.
CHAPTER 5

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the statistical techniques will be implemented and the empirical findings will be tabulated, analysed and interpreted against the background of a literature study.

5.2 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

Phase 1
Each researcher in the group decided on which items to use in a particular component of the questionnaire. The 4 components measured are:

Self Concept, Family Relations, Locus of Control, School Climate

Phase 2
The items were analysed jointly. Then the measuring instrument was presented to ten professionals to obtain face validity and content validity. The validity is reflected to the extent in which it measures what it is supposed to measure. Recommendations were made and the necessary changes implemented to improve the validity of the measuring instrument.

Phase 3
The information gathered from the 734 questionnaires was analysed to obtain factorial validity. The factor analysis program used is the BMDP4M - Factor Analysis and the factor method is PFA (Principal Factor Analysis). The factor which is obtained from the PFA is researched further for reliability. These factor loadings on the PFA with regard to each item are presented below:
Table 5.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Factor Loadings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>140 To what extent are the members of your family comfortable and</td>
<td>0.742</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>relaxed with one another?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>133 How often does your family do things together?</td>
<td>0.733</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>147 To what extent do your family members respect each others</td>
<td>0.731</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>feelings?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>139 How often would your family spend an evening together just talking?</td>
<td>0.693</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>131 To what extent would you regard the members of your family as</td>
<td>0.670</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>good friends?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>104 To what extent do your parents care about your feelings?</td>
<td>0.670</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>120 To what extent are your family relationships close?</td>
<td>0.666</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>108 To what extent do you feel your parents devote enough time to you?</td>
<td>0.653</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From Table 5.1 it appears that items 140, 133 and 147 which measure the importance of Family Relationships, have the highest factor loadings.

The program used to determine reliability is the NP50 Program. The reliability was calculated by means of the Kuder Richardson 20 formula. A reliability coefficient of 0.938 is calculated in this study. This high coefficient proves this measuring instrument to be very reliable. On the grounds of these analyses the items are accepted as reliable and valid.
5.3 HYPOTHESES AND ANALYSES

Hypotheses are formulated with regard to the following independent variables:

* Family relationships
* Family size
* Family situation
* Home language
* School Progress (Failing in school)
* Sex
* Age

The two target groups are at risk and not at risk standard seven pupils.

Students' t-test is used to compare the two groups with each other to determine whether there is statistically significant differences in the average test scores with regard to family relations

5.3.1 Family relationship as independent variable

5.3.1.1 Hypotheses

Hot  The average test scores of at risk standard seven pupils in comparison with not at risk standard seven pupils regarding family relationships do not differ statistically significant.

Hat  The average test scores of at risk standard seven pupils in comparison with not at risk standard seven pupils regarding family relationships differ statistically significant.

5.3.1.2 Significance of differences between at risk and not at risk pupils with regard to family relationships.
Table 5.2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Grp</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>Degrees of freedom</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family relationship</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>274</td>
<td>144,120</td>
<td>25,615</td>
<td>1,06</td>
<td>732</td>
<td>0,2891</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>460</td>
<td>146,141</td>
<td>24,566</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The groups referred to in Table 5.2 are:
1. At risk pupils
2. Not at risk pupils

5.3.1.3 Analysis

From Table 5.2 it appears that between the standard seven at risk and not at risk research groups there is no significant difference at the 0,01 level and 0,05 level with regard to family relationships.

The result is that the Hot is supported and the Hat is rejected. The mean score of the at risk group is lower than the mean score of the not at risk group. This is an indication that not at risk pupils have qualitatively better family relationships than the at risk pupils as supported by the literature (ref. to par. 2.2.4)

5.3.2 Family size as independent variable

5.3.2.1 Hypotheses

Hot There is no statistically significant difference between the average test scores of standard seven pupils with regard to family size when considered in the following manner:

Hot 1 At risk pupils from small families compared with at risk pupils from large families.
Hot 2 at risk pupils from small families compared with not at risk pupils from small families.

Hot 3 at risk pupils from large families compared with not at risk pupils from large families.

Hat There is a statistically significant difference between the average test scores of standard seven pupils with regard to family size when considered in the following manner:

Hat 1 at risk pupils from small families compared with at risk pupils from large families.

Hat 2 at risk pupils from small families compared with not at risk pupils from small families.

Hat 3 at risk pupils from large families compared with not at risk pupils from large families.

5.4.2.2 Significance of differences between family size with regard to family relations.

Table 5.3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Grp</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>( \bar{X} )</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>Degrees of freedom</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family size</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>145,2835</td>
<td>25,7983</td>
<td>0,73</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>0,4664</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>142,9925</td>
<td>24,8424</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>145,2835</td>
<td>25,7983</td>
<td>0,12</td>
<td>381</td>
<td>0,9030</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>256</td>
<td>144,9453</td>
<td>25,4191</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>142,9925</td>
<td>24,8424</td>
<td>-1,90</td>
<td>307</td>
<td>0,0585</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>148,2159</td>
<td>23,2443</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.3.2.3 Analysis

The groups referred to in Table 5.3 are:

1. at risk pupils from small families
2. not at risk pupils from small families
3. at risk pupils from large families
4. not at risk pupils from large families

From Table 5.3 it appears that there is no significant difference at the 0.01 level or 0.05 level between the at risk and not at risk pupils from small families with regard to family relations. In all instances Hot 1,2,3 are supported and Hat 1,2,3 are rejected. When the mean scores of groups 1,2,3,4 are compared it is noticed that the at risk pupils from small families as well as the at risk pupils from large families appear to have qualitatively poorer family relations. This corresponds with paragraph 3.5.3.2 of the literature study.

5.3.3 Family situation as independent variable

5.3.3.1 Hypotheses

Hot There is no statistically significant difference between the average test scores of standard seven pupils with regard to family situation when considered in the following manner:

Hot 1 at risk pupils living with two parents compared with at risk pupils living with one parent

Hot 2 at risk pupils living with two parents compared with not at risk pupils living with two parents

Hot 3 at risk pupils living with one parent
compared with not at risk pupils living with one parent.

Hat There is a statistically significant difference between the average test scores of standard seven pupils with regard to family situation when considered in the following manner:

Hat 1 at risk pupils living with two parents compared with at risk pupils living with one parent.

Hat 2 at risk pupils living with two parents compared with not at risk pupils living with two parents.

Hat 3 at risk pupils living with one parent compared with not at risk pupils living with one parent.

5.3.3.2 Significance of differences between family situations with regard to family relations.

Table 5.4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Grp</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>( \bar{x} )</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>Degrees of freedom</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>146,7514</td>
<td>23,9928</td>
<td>1,28</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>0,2033</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>142,3636</td>
<td>27,4763</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>146,7514</td>
<td>23,9928</td>
<td>-1,00</td>
<td>473</td>
<td>0,3158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>situation</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>302</td>
<td>149,0066</td>
<td>23,2972</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>142,3636</td>
<td>27,4763</td>
<td>-0,03</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>0,9799</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>142,4603</td>
<td>25,9016</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** Significant at 0,01 level  
* Significant at 0,05 level
5.3.3.3 Analysis

The Groups referred to in Table 5.4 are

1. at risk pupils living with two parents
2. not at risk pupils living with two parents
3. at risk pupils living with one parent
4. not at risk pupils living with one parent

From Table 5.4 the following conclusions are made: there is no significant difference at the 0.01 level and 0.05 level between family relations of standard seven at risk pupils and not at risk pupils whether they are living with both parents or with one parent. In all instances the Hot 1, Hot 2 and Hot 3 are supported and the Hat 1, Hat 2 and Hat 3 are rejected. Although the difference is not significant on the 0.01 level and 0.05 level qualitatively it appears that pupils living with two parents have better family relations than those living with one parent. Evidence to support this statement is found in paragraph 3.5.3.5 of the literature study.

5.3.4 Home Language as independent variable

5.3.4.1 Hypotheses

Hot

The average test scores of standard seven pupils do not show a statistically significant difference with regard to home language when considered in the following manner:

Hot 1 at risk Afrikaans speaking pupils compared with at risk English speaking pupils.

Hot 2 at risk Afrikaans speaking pupils compared with not at risk Afrikaans speaking pupils.

Hot 3 at risk English speaking pupils compared with not at risk English speaking pupils.
The average test scores of standard seven pupils show a statistical significant difference with regard to home language when considered in the following manner:

Hat 1 at risk Afrikaans speaking pupils compared with at risk English speaking pupils.

Hat 2 at risk Afrikaans speaking pupils compared with not at risk Afrikaans speaking pupils.

Hat 3 at risk English speaking pupils compared with not at risk English speaking pupils.

5.3.4.2 Significance of differences between language groups with regard to family relations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Grp</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>Degrees of freedom</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>142,7463</td>
<td>26,5452</td>
<td>-1,36</td>
<td>243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>148,6136</td>
<td>22,4149</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>142,7463</td>
<td>26,5452</td>
<td>-1,17</td>
<td>557</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>358</td>
<td>145,3380</td>
<td>24,4115</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>148,6136</td>
<td>22,4149</td>
<td>1,03</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>143,4834</td>
<td>26,9793</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** Significant at 0,01 level
* Significant at 0,05 level

5.3.4.3 Analysis
The groups referred to in Table 5.5 are:

1. at risk Afrikaans speaking pupils

69
2. not at risk Afrikaans speaking pupils
3. at risk English speaking pupils
4. not at risk English speaking pupils

The following conclusions are made from Table 5.6:

There is no significant difference at the 0.01 level or the 0.05 level between the family relations of the research groups whether they are Afrikaans speaking or English speaking. In all instances the Hot 1, Hot 2 and Hot 3 are supported and the Hat 1, Hat 2 and Hat 3 are rejected.

When the mean score of the 4 research groups are compared qualitatively it appears that at risk Afrikaans speaking pupils have poorer family relations than at risk English speaking pupils. It is interesting to note that the opposite is true for not at risk pupils. Qualitatively it appears that not at risk Afrikaans speaking pupils have better family relations than not at risk English speaking pupils.

5.3.5 School progress as an independent variable

5.3.5.1 Hypotheses

Hot There is no statistical significant difference between the average test scores of standard seven pupils with regard to school progress when considered in the following manner:

Hot 1 At risk pupils who never failed in school compared with at risk pupils who failed in school.

Hot 2 At risk pupils who never failed in school compared with not at risk pupils who never failed in school.

Hot 3 At risk pupils who failed in school compared
with not at risk pupils who failed in school.

Hat There is a statistically significant difference between the average test scores of standard seven pupils with regard to school progress when considered in the following manner:

Hat 1 at risk pupils who never failed in school compared with at risk pupils who failed in school.

Hat 2 at risk pupils who never failed in school compared with not at risk pupils who never failed in school.

Hat 3 at risk pupils who failed in school compared with not at risk pupils who failed in school.

5.3.5.2 Significance of differences between categories of school progress with regard to family relations

Table 5.6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Grp</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>Degrees of freedom</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School Progress</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>145,9647</td>
<td>25,7864</td>
<td>0,73</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>0,4635</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>143,4972</td>
<td>25,3137</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>285</td>
<td>146,4737</td>
<td>24,0145</td>
<td>-0,17</td>
<td>368</td>
<td>0,8662</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>143,4972</td>
<td>25,3137</td>
<td>-0,63</td>
<td>336</td>
<td>0,5292</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>145,2485</td>
<td>25,7595</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** Significant at 0,01 level  
* Significant at 0,05 level

5.3.5.3 Analysis
The groups referred to in Table 5.6 are:

1. at risk pupils who never failed in school
2. not at risk pupils who never failed in school
3. at risk pupils who failed in school
4. not at risk pupils who failed in school

The following conclusions are made from Table 5.6:

There is no significant difference at the 0.01 level or the 0.05 level between the family relations of the research groups whether they never failed in school or whether they failed once or more times. In all instances the Hot 1, Hot 2 and Hot 3 are supported and the Hat 1, Hat 2 and Hat 3 are rejected. Despite the rejection of the alternative hypotheses the higher mean scores of pupils who never failed at school are qualitatively an indication of the importance of good school progress. According to Wehlage (1989: 37) "poor academic performance and preparation lead to failing courses and standards, both of which are strong predictors of dropping out."

5.3.6 Gender as independent variable

5.3.6.1 Hypotheses

Hot There is no statistically significant difference between the average test scores of standard seven pupils with regard to gender when considered in the following manner:

Hot 1 At risk boys compared with at risk girls.

Hot 2 At risk boys compared with not at risk boys.

Hot 3 At risk girls compared with not at risk girls.

Hat There is a statistically significant difference between
the average test scores of standard seven pupils with regard to gender when considered in the following manner:

Hat 1  At risk boys compared with at risk girls.

Hat 2  At risk boys compared with not at risk boys.

Hat 3  At risk girls compared with not at risk girls.

5.3.6.2 Significance of differences between genders with regard to family relations.

Table 5.7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Grp</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>X</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>Degrees of freedom</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>144,8710</td>
<td>22,9038</td>
<td>0,45</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>0,6543</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>143,5000</td>
<td>27,7186</td>
<td>0,6543</td>
<td>0,6076</td>
<td>0,3440</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gender

|       | 1   | 124 | 144,8710 | 22,9038 | 0,51    | 332                | 0,01  |
|       | 2   | 210 | 146,2428 | 23,9500 | 0,95    | 398                | 0,05  |
|       | 3   | 150 | 143,5000 | 27,7186 | 0,95    | 398                | 0,05  |
|       | 4   | 250 | 146,0560 | 25,1196 | 0,95    | 398                | 0,05  |

** Significant at 0,01 level
* Significant at 0,05 level

5.3.6.3 Analysis

The groups referred to in Table 5.7 are:

1. At risk boys.
2. Not at risk boys.
3. At risk girls.
4. Not at risk girls.

The conclusions made from table 5.7 are as follows:
* There is no significant difference at the 0.01 level or the
  0.05 level between the family relations of the boys and
girls in the at risk and not at risk research groups. In
all instances the Hot 1, Hot 2 and Hot 3 are supported
and the Hat 1, Hat 2 and Hat 3 are rejected.

* By comparing the mean scores of the different groups it
appears that at risk boys have qualitatively better family
relations than at risk girls.

* In literature there is contradictory opinions about
dropout with regard to gender. It is Garbers' (1980 : 33)
opinion that girls more than boys drop out of
school. Rose and Marshall (1974), Tyerman (1968) and
Kruger (1978, Van Rooyen, 1990 : 44) found the opposite
to be true.

5.3.7 Age as independent variable

5.3.7.1 Hypotheses

Hot There is no statistically significant difference with
regard to age between the average test scores of
standard seven pupils when considered in the follow­
ing manner:

Hot 1 At risk pupils 14/15 years old compared with
at risk pupils 16/17 years old.

Hot 2 At risk pupils 14/15 years old compared with
not at risk pupils 14/15 years old.

Hot 3 At risk pupils 16/17 years old compared with
not at risk pupils 16/17 years old.

Hat There is a statistically significant difference with
regard to age between the average test scores of
standard seven pupils when considered in the follow­
ing manner:
Hat 1 At risk pupils 14/15 years old compared with at risk pupils 16/17 years old.

Hat 2 At risk pupils 14/15 years old compared with not at risk pupils 14/15 years old.

Hat 3 At risk pupils 16/17 years old compared with not at risk pupils 16/17 years old.

5.3.7.2 Significance of differences between age groups with regard to family relations.

Table 5.8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Grp</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>(\bar{X})</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>t-value</th>
<th>Degrees of freedom</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>144,4395</td>
<td>24,4650</td>
<td>0,34</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>0,7355</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>143,2829</td>
<td>26,5633</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>144,4395</td>
<td>24,4650</td>
<td>-1,13</td>
<td>390</td>
<td>0,2593</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>301</td>
<td>147,6678</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>152</td>
<td>143,2829</td>
<td>26,5633</td>
<td>0,05</td>
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<td>136</td>
<td>143,1250</td>
<td>26,5242</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** Significant at 0,01 level
* Significant at 0,05 level

5.3.7.3 Analysis

The groups referred to in Table 5.8 are:

1. at risk pupils 14/15 years
2. not at risk pupils 14/15 years
3. at risk pupils 16/17 years
4. not at risk pupils 16/17 years

The conclusions made from Table 5.8 are as follows:
There is no significant difference at the 0,01 level or 0,05 level between the family relations of at risk and not at risk pupils with regard to the age groups 14/15 and 16/17. In all instances the Hot 1, Hot 2 and Hot 3 are supported and the Hat 1, Hat 2 and Hat 3 are rejected. By comparing the mean scores of the 14/15 year old pupils with the 16/17 year old pupils of both research groups it appears that the older group in standard seven has qualitatively poorer family relations than the younger group.

5.4 CONCLUSION

The aim of this study is to investigate whether there is significant differences between family relations of at risk and not at risk standard seven pupils. Considering this aim no significant differences were found between the family relations of at risk and not at risk pupils according to the following variables:

* Family relationships
* Family size
* Family situation
* Home Language
* School progress
* Gender
* Age

When the view of the research groups are considered in terms of the mean scores as shown in Table 5.9 it is found that the following groups have qualitatively better family relations:

* not at risk pupils from large families
* not at risk pupils living with two parents
* not at risk pupils who never failed
* not at risk boys
* not at risk 14/15 year old pupils
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>$\bar{x}$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family relationship</td>
<td>at risk</td>
<td>144,12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>not at risk</td>
<td>146,14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>145,28</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>not at risk pupils small families</td>
<td>142,99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>at risk pupils large families</td>
<td>144,94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>not at risk pupils large families</td>
<td>148,21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family size</td>
<td>at risk pupils living with two parents</td>
<td>146,75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>not at risk pupils living with two parents</td>
<td>149,00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>at risk pupils living with one parent</td>
<td>142,36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>not at risk pupils living with one parent</td>
<td>142,46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family situation</td>
<td>at risk Afrikaans speaking pupils</td>
<td>142,74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>not at risk Afrikaans speaking pupils</td>
<td>148,61</td>
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<td>at risk English speaking pupils</td>
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<td>143,48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>at risk pupils who never failed</td>
<td>145,96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>not at risk pupils who never failed</td>
<td>146,47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>at risk pupils who failed</td>
<td>143,49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>not at risk pupils who failed</td>
<td>145,24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>at risk boys</td>
<td>144,87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>not at risk boys</td>
<td>146,24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>at risk girls</td>
<td>143,50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>not at risk girls</td>
<td>146,05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>at risk 14/15 years</td>
<td>144,43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>not at risk 14/15 years</td>
<td>147,66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>at risk 16/17 years</td>
<td>143,28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>not at risk 16/17 years</td>
<td>143,12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* - highest scores mean better relations.
Considering the fact that no significant differences were found it appears that the problems mentioned in this literature study are not experienced to the same extent by this specific research group. The result is that family relations do not affect school progress of at risk and not at risk pupils to the extent of dropout.
CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 SUMMARY OF LITERATURE CONCLUSIONS

6.1.1 Introduction

This study was undertaken out of concern about the high drop­out rate in many schools. The degree of success experienced in school establishes the child's future role in society. Therefore it is the task of parent and teacher to determine exactly where the problem is situated and to attempt finding proper intervention. Through this the child gets a chance to develop his full potential and is retained longer in school.

It was the opinion of the researchers of this project that components such as self concept, family relations, locus of control and school climate should be investigated through literature. It appears that these components are causal factors of school dropout.

Poor family relations and emotional problems can negatively effect academic achievement resulting in dropout. It is for these reasons that family relations as a cause of school dropout is researched.

6.1.2 Causes of dropout

In Chapter 2 the causes for school dropout are categorised as follows:

(1) Personality factors
(2) School factors
(3) Social factors
(4) Family factors
6.1.2.1 Personality factors

Every individual should grow and develop to fulfil his potential. This can not happen when a child leaves school too early because then his total personality development suffers.

The one aspect of personality which is always affected is the self concept of the child. Children with a positive self concept are more successful academically and adjust better socially and have a high degree of self confidence (Sears, 1970 Louw, 1984: 235).

Characteristics of the personality of the at risk pupil are: low self concept; the need for expression; diffuse personality disorganisation; negative attitude toward school; under developed ability; biological changes he cannot cope with.

6.1.2.2 School factors

The school environment and school climate must also be considered as reasons for dropping out. Pupils sometimes find situations in school very irritating. They then withdraw from the situation, become dissatisfied with school and drop out.

Other school factors that cause dropout are: Failing and retaining of pupils; Underachievement; School background and attendance; the relationships between pupil and pupil as well as between pupil and teacher; pupils' future and career orientation.

6.1.2.3 Social factors

Social factors that influence the pupils to drop out include: higher age than classmates; different interests; different socioeconomic status; different nationality; physical appearance; personality characteristics; teenage pregnancy; delinquency and substance abuse; truancy; extra curricular activities.
6.1.2.4 Family factors

In Chapter 3 family relations as a cause of school dropout is discussed. It seems clear that the family is a vibrant functioning reality, a group of persons living together in intimate continuing relationships. They are always in interaction with each other. The nature of the interaction could be sensory, emotional or intellectual. It seems obvious that through these interactions the family should influence dropout behaviour.

It is found that family background, family structure, parental involvement, parental attitudes, family relationships and "parenting styles" have a great influence on dropout.

Considering all these factors it is reasonable to assume that the dropout problem has its roots in the family situation and the at-risk pupil is therefore dependent on his parents for school achievement.

6.1.3 Consequences for dropout

Leaving high school without a senior certificate has numerous negative influences on the self concept and future of the child. Considering the economical climate in South Africa no child can consider leaving school without any kind of specialised training or university education.

Dropouts find it difficult to obtain decent employment. If they do the earnings are very low and no job satisfaction is experienced. The unemployment rate and crime rate are growing; the youth misses out on real opportunities and the individual and country are suffering as a result.

6.2 SUMMARY OF EMPIRICAL CONCLUSIONS

6.2.1 Conclusions of the investigation.
The aim of the investigation is twofold: firstly, to examine how at risk and not at risk pupils experience their family relations and to what extent these relations cause school dropout; secondly, to establish whether there is significant differences between the family relations of at risk and not at risk standard seven pupils as identified by their teachers.

6.2.2 The empirical investigation.

In Chapter 4 the variables and experimental investigation are discussed. A questionnaire was used on the research group consisting of 734 standard seven pupils from 5 schools in the PWV Area. The results were edited and verified personally. The individual components of the questionnaire were computed by means of Student's t-test with the help of the SPSS programme computer package; the NPSO program and the BMDP4M factor Analysis.

6.2.3 In Chapter 5 the research results are presented. From these the following conclusions can be drawn:

6.2.3.1 In general it seems that not at risk pupils have qualitatively better family relations than at risk pupils (Table 5.9)

6.2.3.2 Non at risk pupils do not differ significantly from at risk pupils with regard to the variable of family relationships.

6.2.3.3 Not at risk pupils do not differ significantly from at risk pupils with regard to the following independent variables:

* Family size
* Family situation
* Home Language
* School progress
6.2.3.4 The following groups of non-at-risk pupils differ in terms of the mean score from the at-risk pupils:

* not at risk pupils from large families
* not at risk pupils living with two parents
* not at risk pupils who never failed
* not at risk boys
* not at risk 14/15 year old pupils

6.2.3.5 The only exception is at-risk pupils with English as home language who seem to have qualitatively better family relationships than not at-risk English and Afrikaans speaking pupils.

6.2.3.6 According to factor loadings on items and mean scores with regard to family relations it appears that the respondents of both research groups place the highest value on:

* respect between parents and children.
* togetherness with parents.

Generally it appears that family influences relating to at-risk pupils are qualitatively lower than in the case of not-at-risk pupils. This indicates that they could feel less positive towards their parents and might lack the support and encouragement needed to achieve according to their ability and to stay longer in school.

In summary it is reasonable to state that a very high reliability coefficient of 0.938 is calculated for this study. Therefore the measuring instrument and the results of the study are also reliable.

6.3 LIMITATIONS IN THE STUDY
In general, the research group is not large enough to draw universally valid conclusions. Other factors that should be considered are:

* that only five schools are used in the empirical investigation.
* the number of English speaking pupils is much less than the number of Afrikaans speaking pupils.
* the number of males and females is not evenly distributed.
* more geographical variables could have been used if the respondents answered all the questions.
* the criteria given to the teachers to indicate at risk and not at risk pupils could have been more specific.

6.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

The results of the empirical investigation show no significant difference between the family relations of at risk and not at risk pupils but this does not mean there is no need for further research and prevention programmes.

Implications for educational psychologists generally and educators particularly would be to design programmes aimed at improving and enriching family relationships, family involvement, parental punitiveness, parenting styles and communicating patterns. Appropriate information to parents, teachers and adolescents, together with suitable changes to the learning and living environment of the at risk pupils, could improve school attainment and school achievement.

GUIDELINES for prevention programmes could include the following aspects:

* Both research groups (at risk and not at risk pupils) feel very strongly about respect and "togetherness" with
parents. Therefore programmes should address these needs.

* Schools must design strategies to target the parents of pupils who are most at risk, single parents, step-parents, parents of pupils who failed already and who are in the 16/17 age group and still in a low standard.

* The parenting techniques to be emphasised have the dual benefit of improving the pupils' performance in school, as well as reducing the risk of dropping out (Rumberger et al, 1990: 297).

* School achievements, life accomplishment and the resulting self confidence and self sufficiency are outcomes that all parents wish for their children. General parenting guidelines emphasising these goals are:

- acting as appropriate models
- clear positive messages
- consistent parenting
- temporary extrinsic reward system
- Organisation and order at home
- Communication with schools
- Attention to homework and study habits (Rimm, 1988: 97 - 113).

6.5 CONCLUSION

In South Africa school dropout will stay an actual issue and a matter of concern to parents, teachers and the community. The future demands of the country with regard to the economy become bigger and bigger. There is a shortage of expertise, capabilities and experience needed to handle these demands. Therefore it is necessary to educate the youth of South Africa in such a way that they could realise the importance of ter-
tiary education. The role of the parent in the moulding and developing of the child's self concept and supporting of his efforts to reach self actualization by using his full potential can never be overemphasized.
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APPENDIX A
QUESTIONNAIRE

You can help us learn a lot more about how young people feel about themselves and their lives. These questions cover many areas. Your answers will help us understand the experiences and concerns of people of your age. Please read each question or statement carefully and think about how it applies to you. This is not a test, so there are no right or wrong answers. Try to respond honestly and accurately, but it is not necessary to spend too much time thinking about each item.

Circle the number which describes you best on a five point scale.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Card</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1 - 4)</td>
<td>(5)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

103. To what extent do your parents care about you?

- To a great extent: 5 4 3 2 1
- Not at all: (37)

104. To what extent do your parents care about your feelings?

- To a great extent: 5 4 3 2 1
- Not at all: (38)
105. To what extent do you feel the rules your parents set for you are fair?

To a great extent: 5 4 3 2 1  Not at all (39)

106. To what extent can you talk to your parents about problems you are having?

To a great extent: 5 4 3 2 1  Not at all (40)

107. To what extent do your parents see to it that you attend school regularly?

To a great extent: 5 4 3 2 1  Not at all (41)

108. To what extent do you feel your parents devote enough time to you?

To a great extent: 5 4 3 2 1  Not at all (42)

109. To what extent do you feel that if you keep out of your parent's way, they are satisfied to let you do whatever you want to do?

To a great extent: 5 4 3 2 1  Not at all (43)

110. To what extent do you feel that your parents are unconcerned about what you do, as long as you stay out of trouble?

To a great extent: 5 4 3 2 1  Not at all (44)

111. To what extent do your parents control your behaviour?

To a great extent: 5 4 3 2 1  Not at all (45)
112. To what extent are your parents involved in helping you with your schoolwork?

To a great extent

Not at all

113. To what extent do you feel your parents expect too much from you?

To a great extent

Not at all

114. To what extent do your parents encourage you to do well in school?

To a great extent

Not at all

115. To what extent do you feel your parents are proud of you when you do well at school?

To a great extent

Not at all

117. To what extent do your parents care that you attend school regularly?

To a great extent

Not at all

118. How often do your parents attend school functions?

Always

Never

119. To what extent do the members of your family help each other?

To a great extent

Not at all
120. To what extent are your family relationships close?

To a great extent [5 4 3 2 1] Not at all

121. How often do your parents completely ignore you after you've done something wrong?

Always [5 4 3 2 1] Never

122. How often do your parents act as if they don't care about you any more?

Always [5 4 3 2 1] Never

123. How often do your parents disagree with each other when it comes to raising you?

Always [5 4 3 2 1] Never

124. How often do your parents take away your privileges (TV, movies, dates)?

Always [5 4 3 2 1] Never

125. How often do your parents blame or criticize you when you don't deserve it?

Always [5 4 3 2 1] Never

126. How often do your parents yell, shout, or scream at you?

Always [5 4 3 2 1] Never
127. How often do your parents disagree about punishing you?

| Always | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | Never |

128. How often do your parents nag at you?

| Always | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | Never |

129. To what extent do you consider your parents' marriage a happy one?

| To a great extent | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | Not at all |

130. To what extent do the members of your family fight with each other?

| To a great extent | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | Not at all |

131. To what extent would you regard the members of your family as good friends?

| To a great extent | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | Not at all |

132. To what extent would your family members discuss personal problems with each other?

| To a great extent | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | Not at all |

133. How often does your family do things together?

| Always | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | Never |

134. How often does your family enjoy meals together?

| Always | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | Never |
135. How important, do you think, is it that your family celebrate occasions such as birthdays and anniversaries together?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very Important</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(69)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

136. How often do your parents argue?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Always</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(70)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

137. To what extent do you enjoy it when your family does things together?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Always</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(71)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

138. To what extent would you regard your family home as the place where you feel emotionally safe?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To a great extent</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(72)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

139. How often would your family spend an evening together just talking?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Always</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(73)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

140. To what extent are the members of your family comfortable and relaxed with one another?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To a great extent</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(74)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

141. To what extent do your parents make your friends feel welcome when they visit you?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To a great extent</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(75)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
142. How often does your family attend church/mosque together

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Always</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

143. With reference to your family, to what extent would you yourself one day marry and have a family?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To a great extent</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

144. How often do your family members cheer each other up when one is depressed?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Always</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

145. To what extent do you respect your parents?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To a great extent</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

146. To what extent will you miss your family if you have to go away for quite a long time on, for example, a school trip?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To a great extent</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

147. To what extent do your family members respect each other's feelings?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To a great extent</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>Not at all</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

A-7
BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. Gender: Male  1  
   Female:  2  

2. Age:  

3. Standard:  

4. What is the highest academic qualification which your father/stepfather/guardian obtained at a school, college or university?

   No education at all  01  
   Std. 6 or lower  02  
   Std. 7 or 8  03  
   Std. 9 or 10  04  
   Diploma at College of Education  05  
   Diploma at Technical College  06  
   Diploma at another College  07  
   Diploma at a University  08  
   Bachelor's degree  09  
   Bachelors degree and Diploma in education  10  
   Honours degree  11  
   Master's degree  12  
   Doctor's degree  13  
   I do not know  14  

(11)  
(12-13)  
(14)  
(15-16)
5. Home language: Afrikaans
   - English
   - Other

6. Religion: Moslem
   - Christian
   - Other


8. What is the highest academical qualification which your mother/stepmother/guardian obtained at school, college or university?
   - No education at all
   - Std. 6 or lower
   - Std. 7 or 8
   - Std. 9 or 10
   - Diploma at College of Education
   - Diploma at Technical College
   - Diploma at another College
   - Diploma at a University
   - Bachelor's degree
   - Bachelors degree and Diploma in education
   - Honours degree
   - Master's degree
   - Doctor's degree
   - I do not know
9. Numbers of brothers and sisters

10. Describe your family situation:
   Parents live together
   Single-parent father
   Single-parent mother
   Other
   Specify:............... 

11. Is your father presently employed?
    Full time 1  Part time 2  No 3

12. Is your mother presently employed?
    Full time 1  Part time 2  No 3

13. Indicate in which occupation category your father/stepfather/guardian can be classified, by studying the following occupational groups.

- Professional or semi-professional workers. e.g. pharmacist, architect lawyer, bailiff, surgeon, translator, teacher. 01

- Administrative workers. e.g. departmental manager, executive director, mine mngr, personal secretary, executive officer. 02

- Clerical workers. e.g. bank clerk, bookkeeper, cashier, clerk, postmaster, storeman, teller, time-keeper. 03

- Sales workers; e.g. auctioneer, insurance agent. off-salesman, estate agent, traveling salesman, market agent, businessman. 04

- Trained artisans. e.g. baker, driller, welder electrician, boiler-maker, artist, bricklayer, butcher, carpenter, paint sprayer. 05
Qualified fieldworker. e.g. ambulance driver, customs officer, crane operator, pilot, conductor, shunter, traffic officer.

Farmers, gardeners, foresters, fisherman, e.g. farmer, manager of farm, forester, gardener, stock inspector, fisherman.

Personalised and domesticated workers. e.g. undertaker, butler, tailor, chef, caterer.

Operators and semi-skilled workers. e.g. concrete worker, blockman, treesprayer, dam builder, factory worker, watchman, mine worker, shift foreman.

Unskilled worker: e.g. roadworker, farm labourer, railway worker, cleaner

14. Most of my friends:
   - Attend the same school I do □ 1
   - Attend a different school □ 2
   - Do not attend school □ 3

15. To what extent do you like going to school?
   - To a great extent □□□□ □ 5
   - Not at all □ 1

16. How many times have you failed a standard at school?
17. How do you evaluate your school achievement?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very good</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below average</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failing</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

18. To what extent is completing school important to you?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extent</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To a great extent</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

19. Until what standard are you planning to stay at school?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

20. To what extent are your school marks an indication of your ability?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Extent</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To a great extent</td>
<td>5 4 3 2 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

21. What kind of job do you think you will do when you grow up? 

- [ ] 

(31) (32) (33) (34) (35) (36)