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PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION STRATEGIES WITH REGARD TO SCHOOL DROPOUT IN RURAL BLACK SOUTH AFRICA

BY

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Submitted to the Faculty of Education in accordance with the requirements of the degree of DOCTOR EDUCATIONIS in PSYCHOLOGY OF EDUCATION at the RAND AFRIKAANS UNIVERSITY

PROMOTER: DOCTOR C.F. VILJOEN
CO-PROMOTER: PROFESSOR DOCTOR J.C. LAMPRECHT

MAY 1996
DECLARATION

I, NEO ELLIOT RAIKANE declare that

"PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION STRATEGIES WITH REGARD TO SCHOOL DROPOUT IN RURAL BLACK SOUTH AFRICA"

is my work, that all the sources used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references, and that this thesis was not previously submitted by me for a degree at another university.

N.E. RAIKANE
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At the top of the list is God. Immeasurable and unquantifiable thanks are due to Him for having sustained me during all the times of my life. When I lost both my parents, and life seemed sombre and pessimistic, God sustained me during all the difficult times of my life and made the completion of this thesis possible. My humble and heartfelt gratitude is due to Him - "DEO GRATIAS" - THANKS BE TO GOD.

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my late parents, Taelo and Raphiri, with respect and affection. It is also dedicated to my late brother, Pontsho. May their souls rest in peace.

This work is dedicated to my eldest brother, Joseph Ramoagi Raikane, his wife and children.

This work is also dedicated to my brothers, George, Harry, Shadrack and Rodney and to my two sisters Irene and Patience - with love.

This work is finally dedicated to my wife and our children.
As dinge verkeerd loop, soos soms gebeur
As die paadjie kronkel en jy opdraand moet beur,
As jou skuld 'n berg word wat jy moet oorbrug,
As my moet glimlag, maar liewer sug,
As sorge druk en jy voel gedaan,
Moenie tou opgooi nie, hou net aan.
Die lewe se lesse is soms hard
En dit lyk mos of alles jou terg en tart.

Maar dis juis wat mens toets en brei.
Laat jy jou so gou onderkry?
Moenie gaan lê nie, probeer maar weer,
Sukses kom nooit die eerste keer
Die wolk van twyfel het ook 'n rand
Wat silwer is aan die ander kant.
Jou voorspoed wag daar om die draai
Veel nader as jy ooit kan raai.
Glimlag - jy gaan die toets deurstaan,
en....
Hou vol, hou uit, hou aan!

Philene Blom.
OPSOMMING

Te veel studente wêreldwyd, ook in Suid-Afrika, verlaat skool voor Standerd 10. Hierdie tendens in baie skole, veral in Swart plattelandse skole in Suid-Afrika, is 'n saak van kommer vir opvoedkundiges. Hierdie vroëe skoolverlaters ontwikkel nie hulle potensiaal ten volle nie, hulle ontwikkel nie vaardighede vir enige behoorlike beroep nie, is dikwels werkloos, gefrustreerd, maak waarskynlik geen sinvolle bydrae tot die gemeenskap nie en alle finansiële bydrae van die regering tot hulle opvoeding blyk tevergeefs te wees. Hulle word dikwels gesien as die verloorders van die samelewing.

Om hierdie probleem aan te spreek, het navorsingsspanne van die Departement Opvoedingswetenskappe aan die Randse Afrikaanse Universiteit en die Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Social Ecology van die Ben Gurion Universiteit in Israel besluit om kragte saam te snoer en hulle kennis en ondervinding in te span in 'n omvattende projek oor vroëe skoolverlating. In die projek is navorsing oor verskillende faktore wat kan bydra tot vroëe skoolverlating onderneem.

Die doel van hierdie besondere studie is om hierdie probleem binne die konteks van swart plattelandse skole in Suid-Afrika te ondersoek, om sodoende 'n voorkomingsprogram gebaseer op resultate van die navorsing voor te stel toepasbaar op vroëe skoolverlaters in plattelandse Swart gebiede in Suid-Afrika. So 'n program behoort ontwerp te word met inagmensing van sowel die interne as eksterne behoeftes van potensiële vroëe skoolverlaters.

In hierdie navorsing word hoofsaaklik 'n kwalitatiewe beskrywende, ondersoekende en verkennende benadering gebruik gemaak. Die doel van dié benadering is om nuwe insigte in hierdie probleem te ontwikkel. Deur fokusgroeponderhoude kon die navorser die standpunte van hoofde van skole, ouers, onderwysers, vroëe skoolverlaters en risiko-leerlinge bepaal en oorsake van vroëe skoolverlating asook voorkomende aksies identifiseer. Op grond van die kennis en insig wat verwerf is deur 'n analyse van die veldwerk is 'n voorkomings- en aksieprogram ontwikkeld vir onderwysers, hoofde, die
regering en ouers. Die behoeftes van vroeë skoolverlaters binne die gemeenskapskonteks van plattelandse swart areas in Suid-Afrika is 'n sentrale tema in die program.

Voorkomingsprogramme wat fokus op oorsake en oplossings vir vroeë skoolverlating moet ontwerp word met inagrening van faktore uitgeleg deur hierdie navorsing: dit hou verband met sosio-ekonomiese en politieke faktore sowel as sake verwant aan die skool self.

Aangesien vroeë skoolverlating 'n leerling verhoed om sy volle potensiaal te ontwikkel, word verdere navorsing aanbeveel om die resultate en aanbevelings van hierdie studie te ondersteun.

Vroeë identifikasie van risiko-leerlinge en 'n interaksie-program om faktore wat tot vroeë skoolverlating bydra uit te skakel, tesame met sosiale ondersteuning kan help om vroeë skoolverlating te voorkom. Dit veronderstel samewerking tussen die ouerhuis, die skool en die gemeenskap, met die ondersteuning van die sentrale onderwysdepartement.

Die voorgestelde benadering tot die voorkoming van vroeë skoolverlating en riglyne vir die implementering daarvan is geëvalueer deur kundiges plaaslik (RAU) sowel as internasionaal in Nederland. Aanbevelings is gemaak vir die praktiese gebruik van hierdie riglyne en vir navorsing. Die waarde van die studie is in die aanspreek van 'n baie werklike en ernstige behoefte in die plattelandse Swart gebiede in Suid Afrika en om 'n praktiese oplossing voor te stel.
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CHAPTER 1

SCIENTIFIC FOUNDATION AND COURSE OF RESEARCH

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The problem of high dropout rate or early school leaving is causing widespread concern amongst educators. This study is undertaken as part of a group project on school dropout or premature school leaving, which is undertaken by the Rand Afrikaans University of South Africa (RAU) and the Ben Gurion University of Israel. The purpose of this project is to identify the at-risk pupil, research the causes of school dropout, and identify the consequences of early school leaving in order to determine preventative measures.

The following 4 factors have been studied in the profile of the school dropout:-

- socio-economic factors
- social support
- political factors; and
- issues relating to the school itself

In South Africa the high dropout rate in Black schools especially is a cause for concern. Under the new educational system, desegregation of schools is the ideal. This will, however, probably not be achieved overnight, and the problem of school dropout in Black schools will remain a problem for some time to come. Even if desegregation has been fully achieved, it can be argued that certain causes of dropout will always remain the same because not all causes are school-related. The cultural and home situation of potential dropouts will not necessarily improve on account of their being in desegregated schools. The focus of this study, therefore, will remain relevant.
One clear indication of the magnitude of concern over the dropout problem is the plethora of literature generated in response to it (Baas, 1991:1). Causes and consequences of early school leaving, characteristics of pupils at risk of dropping out from school, and dropout prevention and intervention programmes have been studied widely.

Schools in South Africa also have to content with this universal problem.

1.2 THE PHENOMENON OF DROPOUT

In dealing with the phenomenon of dropout, attention will be focused on the portrait of a dropout and dropping out as a universal problem.

1.2.1 Portrait of a dropout

Timmermans and Van der Burgh (1979 In:Van Rooyen; 1990:26) defined the dropout as a pupil who did not yet complete standard six and who was not older than 15 years when he left school. Bachman, Green and Wirtanen (1972:60) defined the dropout as an individual with low self esteem, little desire for self growth and limited commitment to accept social values. According to Hicks (1969 In Mahan & Johnson, 1983:80) dropouts show certain behavioural patterns, and dropping out can be seen as a symptom of a fundamental mismatch between pupil and school. It is a collision between an individual with "basic problems and limitations" and "the typical high school environment" (Pawlovich, 1983:41). This implies that dropouts experience problems in their schools. 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.
First the pupil loses interest in school, resulting in lower grades. This in turn has the following serious pedagogical implications: the pupil begins to skip classes. He begins to act out his frustrations at school or in class, which finally results in suspension. Parental involvement may create more conflict and the pupil loses interest and quits. However, once out of school he experiences boredom rather than the exciting times he had anticipated; this may lead to other problems such as juvenile delinquency.

Greene (1990:3) argues that the term "dropout" can be confusing, since many of the students who leave high school prematurely, may continue and even complete a course of education elsewhere and would be unfairly categorised as "dropouts". This is a problem because a record is not kept of what happens to pupils after they have left school. Miller (1988:12) in an ethnographic study of social and academic participation among high school pupils, describe dropping out as a process of gradual disengagement from school. In terms of Pallas and Verdugo's (1986:12) typology, the generic use of the word is emphasised: a school dropout is an individual who stops attending school whether or not he re-enters at a later stage. It can be argued, however, that most dropouts, especially in disadvantaged Black communities, have restricted possibilities for continuing their education; dropout thus remains a cause for grave concern.

1.2.2 Dropping out as a universal problem

Research on high school dropout indicated that it is related to socio-economic background, scholastic achievement, attitudes and individual behaviours. Characteristics that are most strongly related to dropping out are socio-economic status, race, ethnicity and low academic achievement (Rumberger, Ghitak, Poulos, Rittar, Phillip & Dornbusel, 1990:283).

The problem of dropout has been investigated internationally by a number of researchers like Wehlage, Rutter and Smith (1989), Weis (1989), White (1980) and Slavin (1988).
On the local scene, it has been investigated by researchers like Verwoerd (1985), Van Rooyen (1990), Crawage (1992), Sinclair (1994) and Van Ake (1992). It becomes clear from the available research that dropout is a universal problem, which is manifested across cultures.

1.3 CAUSES OF DROPOUT

In the relevant literature, a vast array of probable causes are given, and most researchers are in agreement about causes (Natriello, 1987:59). Because of the design of this study, which will be explained in 1.8 and in more detail in Chapter 2, specific causes will not be discussed before analysis of the field work (Chapter 3).

1.4 CONSEQUENCES OF DROPOUT

School dropouts are viewed both as failures of the educational system and as individuals who have failed to achieve a basic qualification even when they had the intellectual capacity to. Most available research (Walters, 1994; Crawage, 1992; Sinclair, 1994) supports the widely accepted view that leaving high school without a diploma has several negative consequences. These negative consequences are financial, social and psychological in nature (Bossard & Bell, 1970:451; Kaplan, 1994:105; Conger, 1991:623; Lamb, 1994:194), all of which have far reaching effects on the personality and future of the dropout. Most dropouts experience difficulty in finding employment and are forced to relegate to low paying jobs (Timberlake, 1982 In Tidwell, 1988:941). One serious consequence is that these children may - as street children - become involved in prostitution (Labuschagne, 1995). The world of the dropout is described poignantly by Justiz and Kameen (1987:380) in the following quote:
"The fabric of the entire society is weakened as increasing numbers of dropouts swell the ranks of society's dependents. The underclass from which most dropouts come and into which they are almost inexorably drawn is expanding rapidly. The world they enter lies on the edge of a more secure and productive society; it is a world in which dreams have died."

The problem of dropout is compounded by the fact that a disproportionate number of children from homes of low socio-economic status (SES) leave school prematurely (Gage, 1990:283; Hahn, Danzberger & Lefkowitz, 1987:89). These pupils will be all the more handicapped without a high school diploma or the literacy skills it represents. In the long run, they may place an increased burden on social welfare programmes for housing, health care and employment, if not for further subsidized education (Catterall, 1985:76; Beck & Muia, 1980 In: Tidwell, 1988:941).

The social, cultural, and psychological experiences of dropouts are as limited as their financial status and prevent them from achieving the satisfactions enjoyed by others in society (Bossard & Bell, 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.

A predominant social belief about schooling is that it is one of the best and most accessible mechanisms to achieve social mobility. Implied in this belief are the assumptions that education provides people with knowledge and skills which will produce pay, reward and prestige. The dropout will not have these.

Bossard and Bell (1970:450) state that when young people leave school without successful completion of courses enrolled for, they have subsequent problems that are more grave than for the average scholar. 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: the long-term employment prospects of dropouts are dismal (Hahn, et al. 1987:260). The rate of employment of dropouts is 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. If the dropout in turn has a family, his own children may also become dropouts because of his inadequacy to maintain them and afford them a good standard of living. This is why dropouts are in turn likely to produce other dropouts (Ntlhe, 1995:83).

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. To substantiate this, statistics (Jones, 1977 in Larsen & Shertzer, 1987:164) show that the unemployed dropout is 6 to 10 times more likely than an
employed person to become involved in crime because he has to devise means of earning a living and the easiest way out is to steal and commit other related crimes such as armed robbery and extortion.

When a pupil, therefore, 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 low self esteem, dissatisfaction and alienation experienced by many dropouts can escalate to disordered, aggressive behaviour (Larsen & Shertzer, 1987:163) and the dropout becomes a social burden.

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 become dependent on 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 should be seen as a challenge to educational authorities.
1.5 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Although the phenomenon of dropout has been researched extensively, the majority of research pertains to overseas countries. Even research undertaken in South Africa has focused mainly on dropout in White schools. In the project mentioned in 1.1 dropout has been studied in other contexts as well. Crawage (1992), Van Ake (1992), Sinclair (1994) and Walters (1994) studied different factors contributing to dropout in the Coloured context; Ntlhe (1995) researched the relationship between self concept and dropout in Black adolescents. But as yet no study has focused exclusively on the Black rural school population in South Africa, where unique conditions prevail.

Furthermore, it can be argued that research about the causes of dropout and characteristics of pupils at risk of early school leaving is futile in itself. It only serves a purpose in so far as it is aimed at prevention and intervention strategies with regard to dropout. In this respect Baas ((1991:3) stresses that it is important to identify the particular population's characteristics.

Against this background the problem to be researched in this study can be formulated as follows:

* Which factors in and characteristics of the rural environment contribute to dropout in Black secondary schools?

A second part of the problem pertains to prevention of and intervention with regard to school dropout in Black rural schools, namely
What measures can be taken to prevent dropout in Black rural secondary schools? This refers to a strategy for the prevention of dropout.

1.6 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The ultimate aim of the research is to describe a strategy or approach for preventing school dropout that would meet the needs of rural Black communities in South Africa. To achieve the aim of the research the following objectives are set:

* To explore and describe the viewpoints of principals, teachers, parents and pupils in terms of identifying factors that put pupils at risk of early school leaving, and ways and means of curbing school dropout.

* To describe a prevention approach for policy makers, teachers and parents, based on the findings of the research study, that will meet the needs of school dropouts within a community context in rural Black South Africa, and to develop guidelines for the implementation of such an approach.

1.7 ASSUMPTIONS OF THE RESEARCHER

These are divided into metatheoretical, theoretical and research assumptions.
1.7.1 Metatheoretical assumptions

Metatheoretical assumptions are not testable and deal with the human being and society (Botes, 1994:6). From an educational perspective, the child, and therefore also the child at risk, is seen as a person in need of education in order to give expression to his humanity (Van Zyl, 1977:216). To reach self-actualization, the child must contribute actively to his own "becoming". Herber's (1979:128) view in this respect, pertaining to man in general, includes the child:

"...der Mensch hat sein Werden zu leisten, sich selbst im werden zu erwirken."

In the context of this study, Van Zyl's remark "...elke nuwe wyse van skepping of skending wat die mens aanwend, raak die opvoedingstakstelling omdat die bedrywighede van die mens sy wereld as die opvoedings-milieu van sy kinders tot 'n ondersteunde of 'n nie-ondersteunde milieu kan verander", can also be interpreted inclusively to incorporate both the physical and psychological environment of the child. It accentuates the crucial role of the educator with regard to his responsibility towards the developing child.

Taking this discussion into account, it can be concluded that both the at-risk child and his educators should be concerned with his unwillingness to complete his school career.

1.7.2 Theoretical assumptions

Various factors in the environment - internal and external - of the potential dropout, contribute to a decision to leave school prematurely. According to Hodgkinson (1991:9) schools have been largely fashioned to serve well-motivated white middle to upper
income students whose families are relatively stable. However, societal, economic and
demographic changes have lead to a new student population, where the single most
significant factor in the school aged population of the future is the expected increase in
both the number and the proportion of the educationally disadvantaged at-risk youth

Although these authors refer to the American context, their observation is applicable to
the situation in South Africa as well. However, every context has it unique
characteristics; therefore it is necessary to ascertain the causes of dropout in South
African rural areas in order to enable the researcher to describe relevant prevention
strategies.

Taking this into consideration, the central theoretical statement of this study is the
following:

Insight into the experiences of school dropouts as provided by pupils, teachers (including
school principals), and parents can provide the basis for a prevention programme that
may be implemented in order to strengthen the individual at-risk pupil within his/her
family, school and community.

The potential school dropout in rural Black South Africa adheres to an African world-
view which is group and hierarchy orientated. The school dropout should not be seen
in isolation but as part of a group. The principal, teachers and parents of the potential
school dropout will be seen by the school dropout to be in a position of authority and
will therefore be responded to in a specific culturally determined way. The experience
of those in authority needs to be explored if a strategy to assist the potential school
dropout optimally is to be developed and where the hierarchical position of the principal,
teachers and parents is taken into consideration.
A prevention strategy is not only implemented by principals in rural Black South Africa and teachers may not always be the most appropriate persons to do the prevention, due to chronic staff shortages and the inability to follow school dropouts up in the community. A multifaceted approach in which parents and the community could also be included would be more effective (Baas, 1991:3).

The background of the potential school dropout in a rural area in Black South Africa has to be understood if a complete needs assessment is to be made. In order to expand that understanding, demographic information about school dropouts within a specific geographical area is required, including the identification of the needs and possible resources of the potential school dropouts.

1.7.3 Methodological assumptions

LeCompte, Millroy and Preissle (1992:xvi) state the following:

"In the less than thirty years since qualitative research emerged as a serious approach to inquiry in education, its status has evolved from that of an upstart, marginal, and often pariah stepchild to a respected member of the research community. In some places, qualitative research methods are preferred over quantitative and experimental models".

In order to determine whether to employ a qualitative or quantitative research design, the researcher has to take note of the research determinants. In this study the research decisions based on the determinants of the research are as follows:
A qualitative research design that is contextual, exploratory and descriptive in nature will be used.

The views of the potential school dropout, principals and teachers and the parents of school dropouts about the causes of dropout will be explored and described by using focus group interviews. This technique will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 2.

A prevention strategy that will meet the needs of the potential school dropouts in rural Black South Africa will be described.

1.8 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHOD OF INVESTIGATION

The design of this study presented an interesting challenge to the researcher, as two different paradigms - that of quantitative and qualitative research - had to be consolidated. This was necessitated on account of the fact that what started out as a quantitative study, had to be converted to a qualitative design, on account of the following circumstances:

In the introduction it was mentioned that this study forms part of a joint project. In this project a questionnaire pertaining to various factors - such as school climate, home climate and self-concept - contributing to school dropout, was developed. Other researchers studied the contribution of single aspects to school dropout. This research was proposed to study the influence of all these factors on school dropout in the rural areas. Questionnaires were completed by more than a thousand standard seven pupils in rural and farm schools and the normal procedure characteristic of quantitative research was followed. At the stage of statistical analysis, however, problems were encountered. No statistically significant data could be reported. This was ascribed to the fact that,
despite changes in the questionnaire to allow for comprehension by rural Black pupils, the context and formulation of questions did not allow adequately for a difference in the frame of reference of the respondents (Anderssen & Myburgh, 1988:282).

On account of this disappointing result, it was decided, in consultation with the promoters, to change the design of the study to the qualitative paradigm. In this, the study acquired special status as the only qualitative research undertaken in the project.

One bit of useful data that was gained in the first approach, was through a Chaid analysis (Magidson, 1994). This was done to determine how the three types of schools involved in the project - urban, rural and farm schools - featured with regard to risk of dropout for their pupils. From this analysis it became clear that being in a farm school puts a child at high risk of dropping out (46,42%), followed by rural schools (31,65%), and urban schools (24,22%).

Once this result was known, the question as to why rural and farm schools were such high risk environments with regard to school dropout once more arose. A qualitative research design then seemed well suited, on account of the fact that "qualitative data, ... can provide rich insight into human behaviour" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985:99) because it is useful for uncovering the emic (insider) view. Boyle (1994:166) stresses that the insider's view of what is happening, and why, is instrumental in understanding and accurately describing situations and behaviours.

In this research, therefore, a qualitative, exploratory and descriptive, contextual design is used. The aim of exploratory studies is to develop new insight into phenomena and to increase understanding. Furthermore education is a social and human science and the integrated research strategy in education as proposed by Botes (1989:168) will be used.

The research design and method of investigation will be explicated fully in Chapter 2. An overview of this design and method is given in Table 1.1.
Table 1.1 Research design and methodology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PHASE 1</th>
<th>PHASE 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1.8.1 Purpose</strong></td>
<td><strong>Purpose</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To explore and describe the viewpoints of principals, teachers, parents and pupils in order to identify causes of school dropout and possible preventative measures</td>
<td>The description of a prevention strategy for teachers and parents with regard to dropout, and the development of guidelines for the implementation of the strategy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1.8.2 Research plan</strong></td>
<td><strong>Research plan</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To enable the researcher to obtain the insider (emic) view, a qualitative design, which will use techniques of exploration and description will be used.</td>
<td>Themes and categories identified through data analysis in Phase 1 will be used.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1.8.3 Sample</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>* Sample population</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At-risk pupils and their parents and teachers (including principals)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Sample criteria</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School principals and teachers of rural secondary schools. &quot;At-risk&quot; adolescents (± standard 7) and their parents</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Sampling method</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-probability, purposive sampling (Basch, 1987:414)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
1.8.4 Trustworthiness

Based on the model of Lincoln and Guba (Krefting, 1992:217-222) the following strategies for trustworthiness will be employed:

* Credibility (truth value)
* Applicability (transferability)
* Consistency (dependability)
* Neutrality (confirmability)

1.8.5 Field work (data collection)

In order to obtain a rich data basis, multiple sources of data will be used. The techniques are:

* Focus group interviews (Krueger, 1994) with:
  - school principals;
  - teachers;
  - parents of at-risk adolescents;
  - at-risk adolescents

* Field notes
Observational notes of the researcher made directly after interviews

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trustworthiness</th>
<th>Data collection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The description of a prevention programme will take into account the strategies for trustworthiness as discussed in Phase 1.</td>
<td>* The relevant literature will be incorporated with themes and categories identified in Phase 1, to describe the prevention programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* The programme will be discussed with educational psychologists in order to obtain peer evaluation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.8.6 Data analysis

- Focus group interviews are tape recorded and transcribed fully and accurately.

- Transcripts are read and tapes listened to with the intent of generating a list of key ideas, words, phrases, and verbatim quotes that capture sentiments (Basch, 1987:417). The researcher and two independent coders analyse the data, using various methods of content analysis (Kerlinger, 1986; Giorgi, 1985). Independent coders receive a protocol for data analysis.

- The researcher and independent coders discuss their findings in order to determine their degree of consensus.

- Follow-up interviews with respondents (members checking) contribute to truth value (Kerlinger, 1986:481).

- Literature control

Themes and categories identified in analysis are discussed in relation to relevant literature.

(Adapted from Lombard:1995)

1.8.7 Research context

The research is contextual in that it focuses on adolescents, parents and teachers in a rural area in Black South Africa and the researcher has therefore taken a cultural relativist position. The cultural relativist position claims that what is valid in one culture may not be valid in another culture, as the effect of culture is too great to maintain universality of principles (Kerlinger, 1986:427). Instead of making assumptions about
what the school dropout in rural Black South Africa may need, a full investigation first has to be made.

1.8.8 Research objective

The research objective is to explore and describe the phenomenon of school dropout within the context of rural Black South Africa.

1.9 TERMINOLOGY, CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS

The following core concepts will be defined: dropout, relationship, disadvantaged, at-risk pupil, non-at risk pupil, environment and department of education and training.

1.9.1 Dropout

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

In the definition of Garbers (1980:1) dropout is defined as the phenomenon where children terminate their school career before they have reached matric (sometimes Standard 8) in any type of teaching or education.

In his discussion of the concept "premature school-leaver" Visser (1981:19-20) interprets the concept as follows:
a premature school-leaver has, by implication, left school too soon;

• such children are unable as individuals to answer appropriately in a normative manner to the appeal that they fully actualize the positive human potential of which they are capable, and this militates against reaching their educational goals.

Visser's interpretations of the concept are based on the following definitions:

• "Die vroë skoolverlater is 'n normale kind wat die Matriekeksamen normaalweg sou kon slaag, dog om bepaalde redes die skool vroeër verlaat."

• "Die vroëe skoolverlater is 'n kind wat wei oor die verstandelike en ander moontlikhede om 'n bepaalde standerd te slaag, beskik, maar wat die skool verlaat voordat hy daardie moontlikhede verwerklik het" (Visser, 1981:20).

The definition of Hahn, et al. (1987:257) puts it succinctly:

"If you aren't in school and you haven't graduated, you're a dropout". ("Graduated" in the American context means to obtain a secondary school certificate.)
Because of the complexities of the problem it is only logical that there should be variations among premature school-leavers. This is described by Miller (1989: 184-197). He refers briefly to the middle-class dropout.

The middle-class dropout is a dropout from average families. They come from backgrounds which are neither rich nor poor. Their parents are ordinary professional people like nurses, teachers and clerks. They are divided into the following groups:

* emotionally disturbed children whose problems are personal and not directly related to school;

* children who experience emotional difficulties as a result of the direct effect that school has on them;

* the dropout from a family which is economically and/or educationally marginal to the middle-class.

Miller (1989:186) believes that the latter type makes up most of the middle-class premature school-leavers.

There is also the lower-income dropouts. They come from poor families, and deprived environments. Miller (1989:187) suggests that there are four categories in this group which makes up the bulk of children who leave school prematurely. Natriello (1987:19) identifies five categories. They are:

* School-inadequate dropouts: Such children have difficulty in completing school because of low intellectual functioning. They are also known as
educational mortalities. In terms of definitions citing adequate intellectual ability as a factor, these children cannot truly be described as dropouts.

* School-rejecting dropouts: These are adolescents "propelled by a push away from school", who generally indicated that in rejecting them, the school had pushed them away. They reject school, and are also referred to as the disaffiliated.

* School-perplexed dropouts are a result of cultural prejudices since it is widely assumed that "all or most low-income families and youth have very little interest in school or in high-level occupation achievement". These dropouts are rejected by school. They cannot fit in school and they have no option but to leave school prematurely. Natriello (1987:19) refers to them as pushouts.

* School-irrelevant dropouts are those who have never been expected to graduate as they have had a job level in mind which required a lower level of education than having to pass through high school successfully. They are termed "capable dropouts". The question that may be asked here is why these children have such a low aspiration level.

* Stopouts (Natriello, 1987:19) are dropouts who return to school, usually within the same academic year.

From the last four categories given above, it can thus be inferred that the concept "dropout" can be interpreted as premature school leaving, where a child leaves school earlier than it is expected in terms of his potential. Leaving school prematurely implies that by dropping out of formal schooling one is unable to function properly in a particular society. The last statement tends to confirm and support the standard-
functional model of socialization that there is certain universally acceptable behaviour expected of individuals.

1.9.2 Relationship

Relationship can be defined as a feeling, attitude or commitment one has towards oneself in association with others (Forest & Mikolaitis, 1986:79).

In relationships there is social interaction between 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 and authority, for which he has a definite need, it means an attack on his whole human existence and it becomes an unfavourable precursor to his eventual acceptance of the school situation - with its particular relationships - and performance in this regard. The results could be underachievement and eventual school dropout (Pretorius, 1979:200).

1.9.3 Disadvantaged

The disadvantaged or culturally and economically deprived child is found in an environment which makes it virtually impossible for him to develop his latent unique personality possibilities and to achieve accordingly (Kapp, 1989:142).
Pretorius (1988:22) describes the disadvantaged child as an individual who cannot adhere to the demands of modern life because of the language backlog which limits his communication possibilities in the dominant culture (that is the most directive culture in any society) (Kapp, 1989:143), and a limited experience background which restricts him to adapt to learning and life contents from the dominant culture. Life contents from the dominant culture include the values, morals and standards espoused by the dominant culture. If there is a vast difference between a pupil's own and the dominant culture, and the latter forms his school environment, he may become an "at-risk" pupil.

1.9.4 At-risk pupil

A pupil described as "at risk" is one who is in danger of failing to complete his education with an adequate level of skills (Slavin & Madden, 1989:4). Before a pupil becomes a dropout, certain risk factors which may contribute to dropout predisposes him, as it were, to become a dropout. The criteria used in this study to identify the at-risk pupil can be divided into four categories: age, scholastic profile, personality image and home profile. It appears that children between 13 and 15 are mostly at-risk to drop out of school (Schirmer & George, 1983:97).

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. The profile also includes 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 and a backlog in mathematics, reading and writing (Wirenski, 1984:6). Taking all this into account, it can be argued that the at risk pupil may suffer from a poor self-concept and low motivation.
Schirmer and George (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, Bischoff, Behr & Vos, 1989:412). The home background of the potential dropout teems with problems, such as financial problems, moral problems and alcoholism, to cite but a few examples. This picture emphasises the bleak prospects of the dropout.

The terms "potential dropout" and "at-risk pupil" will be used interchangeably in this study.

1.9.5 Not 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 positive self-concept compared to the at-risk pupil.

Normally the parents of not at-risk pupils have high expectations of their children and support them to develop their potential (Steyn, et al. 1989:417). These parents also communicate more with their children and teach them how to socialize; the children then feel welcome and at home, as compared to the situation of the at-risk pupils.

1.9.6 Environment

The concept can be described as a person's geographical or physical world, which refers to the child's physical environment. This environment includes all facilities available
to the child in a primary education situation (the family) and in the secondary education situation (the school). It also encompasses the social world; the education and socialization of a child occurs always in a micro-educational milieu (the family), meso-educational milieu (the school), macro-educational milieu (the society) and the peer-group-milieu. The third aspect is the cultural-historical world. Every person belongs to a certain culture and has a historical heritage; that is, he has a tradition.

The child also has a psychological environment which refers to the child's "inner world" and entails the overall feeling that the child has as a result of failures or successes, and frustrations he has experienced.

1.9.7 Department of Education and Training (DET)

South Africans are divided into four population registration groups: Whites, Africans, Coloureds, and Indians. Traditionally each of these population groups had its own sub-system of education. The African people's sub-system was called the Department of Education and Training, or DET.

1.10 CHAPTER LAYOUT

The study is planned as follows:

Chapter 1: Scientific foundation and course of research
Chapter 2: Research design and method (Phases 1 + 2)
Chapter 3: Data analysis: focus group discussions
Chapter 4: Literature control and contextualising the results
Chapter 5: Description of a prevention programme of school dropout in rural Black South Africa and guidelines for the implementation of the programme.

Chapter 6: Conclusion, limitations and recommendations of the study

1.11 SUMMARY

In this chapter the background of the study was discussed, as well as the problem to be researched and objectives of the study. In order to realise the aims of the research, a qualitative approach will be implemented to explore and describe the experience of the school dropout, and principals of schools, teachers and parents in a specific area. The aim of the study is to develop new insight into the phenomenon and to increase understanding about the experienced problem in order to improve the practice of prevention of school dropout by describing a prevention programme developed to specifically meet the needs of the school dropout in rural Black South Africa.

Attention has also been focused on the research design and method of investigation, terminology, concepts and definitions, as well as a research plan.

In the ensuing chapter, attention will be focused in more detail on research design and research method.
CHAPTER 2

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Truth exists; only lies are invented.
Georges Braque (1917)

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In chapter one it was pointed out that a qualitative design will be used in this study. In this chapter the rationale for a qualitative approach will be discussed, and the research design will be presented. Before any specific design is considered, however, the approach taken in this study with regard to the literature review must be explained (Viljoen, 1996), mainly on account of controversy regarding sustaining theory (Henning, 1995:30). This author argues against qualitative research practice that approaches the field with complete conceptual "openness", in other words via a research design which excludes a theoretical conceptual framework and which includes a literature control subsequent to the empirical investigation, in favour of organising existing theoretical knowledge in a conceptual whole in which propositions are stated explicitly and in which known variables are identified. The danger in this approach, however, can be summarised in Wolcott's (1990:29) words:

"You may be surprised (even disappointed) to discover that some studies ... previously regarded as exemplars of descriptive work actually are constructed upon a conceptual framework, with case data playing only an illustrative role."

According to LeCompte and Preissle (1993:152) conventional science practice dictates that reviews should be completed prior to beginning any of the research activities and placed near the beginning of the report. These, however, are, in the words of these
authors, "... linear, compartmentalised, and mechanistic conventions ...". The placement of the literature review should be decided by researchers individually, according to the kinds of questions being posed, the approach to the research being constructed, the data being collected and analysed, and the working styles of the investigator.

It should be noted that conceptual openness does not mean an a-theoretical stance. Nor does not placing the literature review in the "sacred third chapter" (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993:152), mean that no literature was reviewed prior to the field work. On the contrary, the researcher will go to the field with a broad theoretical base; in the context of this study, with regard to the dropout phenomenon.

In this study, where causes of dropout, and possible ways of preventing it are being studied, the researcher takes cognisance of these aspects - as discussed in the relevant literature - beforehand, but also acknowledges the unique context of the at-risk adolescent in rural South Africa. Therefore, the literature review in this study will be presented in the form of a literature control with the analysis of field data.

2.2 RESEARCH DESIGN OF THE STUDY

A qualitative research design will be used that is explorative and descriptive and purely contextual to understand the phenomenon studied. Qualitative research is an in-depth analysis of the problem in order to understand the what and the why of human behaviour, according to Smith (1993:31). Qualitative designs are naturalistic in that the researcher does not attempt to manipulate the research setting (Patton, 1990:39), as the point of qualitative methods is to understand naturally occurring phenomena in their naturally occurring states.
• Explorative

The purpose of exploration is to investigate a relatively unknown territory. Although "dropout" cannot be seen as unknown territory, the unique context may well be. The method is used in this study to gain insight into the experience of:

* the Black potential school dropout in rural and farm schools in South Africa;

* the direct care givers, namely the principals, teachers and parents of these pupils.

The method implies that the researcher is willing to study new ideas and possibilities and not to allow predetermined ideas and hypotheses to direct the research (Mouton & Marais, 1990:45).

• Descriptive

The principle here is to present an accurate description of what is being studied, though not necessarily of all data. Reducing and ordering material entail selection and interpretation, which will be done with the verbatim transcribed focus group interviews (Strauss & Corbin, 1990:22).

The method is used in this study to:

* describe the viewpoints of principals, parents and potential school dropouts;

* to add additional information to the categories studied under the explorative method, and

* to describe the concepts and overall approach as well as guidelines for using the prevention programme in practice.
A context represents a specific set of properties that pertain to a phenomenon; that is the location of events or incidents pertaining to a phenomenon along a dimensional range. It is further the particular set of conditions within which the action/interaction strategies are taken to manage, handle, carry out and respond to a specific phenomenon (Strauss & Corbin, 1990:101).

It must be kept in mind, however, that research context is only valid within a certain time-space and value context (Botes, 1991:7). This research is constrained to the phenomenon of dropout in the specific rural community which is being studied. Furthermore, the research findings are interpreted and the intervention programme developed within an educational-psychological perspective.

2.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research will be conducted in two phases. As the research is explorative and descriptive in its intent, phase one will comprise of the exploration and description of the viewpoints of teachers (including principals) and parents of potential dropouts, and potential dropouts themselves with regard to factors that contribute to early school leaving and possible ways to prevent it. To understand the dropout phenomenon the researcher will use a qualitative research method which attempts to describe, interpret and reconstruct the subjectively meaningful worlds of people (Babbie in Schurink, 1989:1), in this case of the potential dropout and the people concerned with his problem. In phase two possible prevention strategies will be discussed.
2.4 PHASE ONE: EXPLORATION AND DESCRIPTION OF VIEWPOINTS OF TEACHERS, PARENTS AND AT-RISK PUPILS

The following discussion will be guided by the summary of the design which is presented in Table 1.1 (Chapter 1).

2.4.1 Research plan

The purpose of phase one is to explore and describe the viewpoints of the people concerned with early school leaving, namely at-risk pupils and their teachers and parents. The techniques of exploration through focus group interviews, and description (subsequent to analysis of data) will be used. In this way the emic (insider) view of the causes and possible prevention strategies with regard to dropout in rural Black schools in South Africa can be obtained.

2.4.2 Sample

The sample is taken from a population in which the phenomenon is explored. Qualitative researchers employ purposive non-probability sampling (Glaser & Strauss, 1967:65; Basch, 1987:414). Respondents are chosen as representative of the target population (Lincoln & Guba, 1985:201). Sample criteria are the following:

* School principals of the schools included in the study. (Twelve schools in the North West Province, qualifying as rural or farm schools were identified; from these, eight schools were chosen randomly to be included in the study).

* Teachers at these schools.
* At-risk adolescents in the schools involved. Standard seven pupils were targeted, because they are at a critical phase in their school career with regard to choosing school subjects which will influence their future career possibilities. These pupils are also at an important developmental phase, physically, mentally and psychologically.

* Parents of pupils identified as potential dropouts.

Criteria for defining potential dropouts were discussed with teachers, who had to identify these pupils. These include the following:

- Failure (once or more)
- Being over aged for standard
- Coming from a low socio-economic background
- Having a poor self-concept
- Displaying a negative attitude towards school

The efficacy of teacher perception as a method of identification of students who are at risk of school dropout was found to be supported through a number of longitudinal research studies (Rush & Vitale, 1994:327).

2.4.3 Trustworthiness of the study

According to Kirk and Miller (1986:10) qualitative research is an empirical, socially located phenomenon, defined by its own history, and not simply a residual grab-bag
comprising all things that are "not quantitative". Quantitative researchers sometimes tend to question the objectivity of the qualitative research. The objectivity of qualitative research, however, can be supported by various techniques, and is evaluated in terms of the reliability and validity of its observations (Kirk & Miller, 1986:13). These two aspects are referred to as the "trustworthiness" of the study, because qualitative researchers need alternative models appropriate to qualitative designs that ensure rigor without sacrificing the relevance of the qualitative research (Krefting, 1991:214). Using the same terminology as that of quantitative research, will not do justice to the unique character of qualitative research.

For the purpose of this study Guba's (1981 In Krefting:1991:215-217) model for trustworthiness of qualitative research will be used because it is well-developed conceptually and has been extensively used by qualitative researchers, particularly nurses and educators, for a number of years (Krefting, 1991:215). In Table 2.1, placed at the end of this discussion, the criteria applicable in this study to ensure trustworthiness are presented.

The following four aspects of trustworthiness form the basis for Guba's (1981) model:

- truth value (credibility)
- applicability (transferability)

"Truth value" and "applicability" are analogous to internal validity and external validity respectively (Eisenhart & Howe In LeCompte, et al., 1992:651). According to these authors, the next two aspects refer to reliability and objectivity (in experimentalist terminology) respectively:

- consistency (dependability)
- neutrality (confirmability)
Truth value determines whether the researcher has established confidence in the credibility of the findings of the study. Factors taken into consideration are the confidence of the researcher regarding the truth of findings based on the research design, informants and context (Krefting, 1991:215). In qualitative research truth value is usually obtained from the discovery of human experiences as they are lived and perceived by informants and is termed credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985:290). These authors argue that internal validity is based on the assumption that there is a single tangible reality to be measured. If multiple realities are presented then these have to be revealed by the informants as adequately as possible.

Findings should therefore be tested against various groups either from where the data was drawn or with persons who are familiar with the phenomenon being studied. Sandelowski (1986:27) suggests that a qualitative study is credible when it represents such accurate descriptions or interpretations of the experience that people who also share that experience would immediately recognise the descriptions. Patton (1990:56) argues that all credible research strategies include techniques for helping the investigator become aware of and deal with selective perception, personal biases, and theoretical predispositions. Systematic data collection procedures, multiple data sources and triangulation aim at producing high-quality qualitative data that are accurate, credible and true to the phenomenon under study.

Transferability or applicability is usually seen as an important factor of validity and refers to the degree to which findings can be applied to other contexts and settings.
within groups, which includes the ability to generalise from the findings to larger populations. In qualitative studies, generalisation is often not possible because every research situation is made up of a particular researcher in a particular interaction with particular informants (Sandelowski, 1986:30). Guba (in Krefting, 1991:216) suggests that a more appropriate perspective would be transferability as the criterion against which the applicability of qualitative data is assessed. Research meets this criterion when findings fit into contexts outside the study situation that are determined by the degree of similarity between two contexts. The researcher does not necessarily have to transfer the findings to other settings, but must present the data sufficiently descriptive so that it is possible for another person to make a comparison, if needs be (Lincoln & Guba, 1985:290). These authors argue that transferability is more the responsibility of the person wanting to transfer the findings to another situation than that of the researcher of the original study.

As long as the original researcher presents sufficient descriptive data to allow comparison, he has addressed the problem of applicability. The so-called "audit trail" (Halpern, 1983 in Morse, 1994:24) contributes to this end, by enabling another investigator to follow the cognitive development of the research as it developed.

2.4.3.3 Dependability

Dependability (or consistency) determines whether the findings would be consistent if the inquiry were replicated with similar subjects in a similar context (Krefting, 1991:216). Variability can be expected in qualitative research due to the fact that the instruments assessed are the researcher and the informants, both of whom vary greatly within the research project. Seeing that qualitative research emphasises the uniqueness of the human situation it is variation rather than identical replication that is sought
(Field & Morse, 1985:15). Because variability can be expected in qualitative research, consistency is defined in terms of *dependability*, which implies trackable variability, meaning variability that can be ascribed to identified sources. Variability should therefore be explained either in terms of the informant or the researcher or the context. Qualitative research further looks at the range of experience rather than at the average of experience so that it is important to include atypical or non-normative situations in the findings. The key to qualitative research is to learn from the informants rather than to control them.

2.4.3.4 Confirmability

Confirmability or neutrality refers to the degree to which findings are a function solely of the informants and conditions of the research and not of other biases, motivations and perspectives (Lincoln & Guba, 1985:301). In quantitative research one tries to be as objective as possible, with a good scientific distance between the researcher and the subjects. In qualitative research, however, the value of findings increase when the distance between the researcher and the informants are decreased. Lincoln and Guba (1985:299) shift the emphasis of neutrality in qualitative research from the researcher to the data. Neutrality of the data becomes the important factor and not neutrality of the researcher. In this respect Pitman and Maxwell (In LeCompte et al. 1992:758) stress that the researcher should hold to the tradition of nonjudgmental learning that is generically characteristic of qualitative research. Lincoln and Guba (1985:300) suggest that confirmability is therefore the criterion of neutrality which is achieved when truth value and applicability of data are established.

A confirmability audit includes the following:
* All raw data, including audiotapes, transcriptions, field notes and results of analysis.

* Theoretical notes

* Process notes, including notes on methodology, trustworthiness and audit trail.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRATEGY</th>
<th>CRITERIA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Credibility</td>
<td>Field experience of two years before onset.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reflexivity on the role and possible influence of the researcher on the study.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Different environmental social groupings are involved apart from the school dropout, namely principals, parents and the potential school dropout to cover a broad range of interaction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Triangulation of data methods are used, namely focus group interviews with different groups of respondents, as well as field notes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Member checking is done with a number of the participants in the first and second phases of the study.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Peer examination is done during the doctoral seminars delivered at various stages of the study. Insights are discussed and problems presented as a form of debriefing. Independent experts are involved in the analysis of the data.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Transcripts of interviews and focus group discussions are readily available to be examined critically at any stage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Correlation between interviews and observations are done. The focus group discussions are done in different stages to elicit both the experience and the viewpoint of the participants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No inconsistencies are left unexplained in the analysis of the data.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rigorous exploration of concepts before definition is formed. Concepts are related into statements and a visual model is formed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The overall described programme is evaluated by independent experts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transferability</td>
<td>Dense description of methodology research</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Dependability | Every step of the data gathering, analysis and interpretation is described.  
Independent coders will be used in the study to deal separately with the data and to compare results.  
Recoding is done of segments of the data after two weeks, with comparison of results.  
Different data-gathering methods as explained under credibility are used to ensure dependability.  
Doctoral committees with experts are held throughout the study to check the research plan and implementation.  
Dense description of research method, programme and guidelines for use in practice.  
Peer examination of model and guidelines. |
|---|---|
| Confirmability | A South African counterpart is used as auditor to consider the process of research as well as data, findings, interpretations and recommendations. The following categories are included for the audit:  
- raw data (notes and recordings)  
- data reduction and analysis products  
- data reconstruction and synthesis products  
- process notes  
- any other material used related to disposition and intentions  
The auditor will be used throughout the study and not only at the end.  
Triangulation of multiple methods, data sources and theoretical perspectives are used.  
Reflexive analysis through the use of a field journal is done to increase awareness of the influence of the researcher on the data. |
2.4.4 Ethical rigor

At all times during the research participants will be ensured of anonymity and informed consent will be obtained before any focus group discussions are held. All participation will be voluntary. Confidentiality and anonymity will be assured (Parse, Coyne & Smith, 1985:18). Respondents' names will not be mentioned in the study, and results of interviews are only given to interviewees and only by the request of an interviewee to other persons.

Official permission and Government clearance will be obtained. Before the onset of any interviews official permission has to be obtained from the Department of Education, Sport and Recreation for Government clearance. Feedback regarding the results of the study also has to be given to the Department.

2.4.5 Data collection

Data will be collected by conducting focus group interviews with various groups of respondents, as well as through field notes.

2.4.5.1 Focus group interviews

A focus group session can be defined as a discussion during which a small number of respondents, usually not less than four or not more that 12, under the guidance of a moderator talk about topics which are seen as important to the investigation (Basch, 1987:411; Krueger, 1994:18). It is conducted as an open conversation in which each
participant may comment, ask questions of other participants, or respond to comments made by others, including the moderator. Interaction among respondents is encouraged to stimulate in-depth discussions of various topics (Folch-Lyon & Trost, 1981:444; Hendershott, Henderson & McDaniel, 1992:54).

According to Sapp and Temares (1993:81) focus group interviews offer a technique for understanding the needs and opinions of members of a community by probing selected areas of special interest. Typically, a focus group study will consist of a minimum of three focus group interviews (Krueger, 1994:6). Interviews are conducted until the data is saturated, meaning that no new themes or aspects are mentioned by respondents.

In this study, focus group interviews will be conducted with four different groups, namely school principals, teachers, parents of at-risk pupils and at-risk pupils.

To ensure maximum participation, the researcher will create an environment that nurtures different perceptions and points of view, without pressurising participants (Goodman, 1984:41). Insight into attitudes, perceptions, and opinions of participants are solicited through open-ended questions and a procedure in which respondents are able to choose the manner in which they respond and also from observations of those respondents in a group discussion (Krueger, 1994:19).

Focus group discussions will be held in a comfortable, non-threatening setting. As these sessions will last more or less 1 hour, comfort is a necessity. A high quality tape recorder will be strategically placed to capture the dialogue between facilitator and participants. In focus group discussions the facilitator and the researcher are one and the same person. He encourages interaction amongst participants to stimulate in-depth discussions, and must be skilled in group process, which is essential. The researcher read extensively on focus group interviews prior to conducting the interviews. Discussions with people experienced in the technique also contributed to a sensitivity to possible problem situations. Being skilled as a moderator includes asking questions
with minimum reference to notes, avoiding value-laden comments such as "Excellent", and avoiding giving personal opinions (Krueger, 1994:123).

The focus group sessions will be opened with introductions and a brief explanation of the research in progress. Participants will be made to feel that their contributions are valued and confidential.

The facilitator will make brief notes during the session as a validation of the taped comments. Key insights will also be recorded during the session. Transcription of tapes will be done as soon as possible after the focus group session to prepare for analysis.

The questions asked in focus group interviews are extremely important. These can be divided into two categories, namely the initial questions and questions asked throughout the interview.

According to Krueger (1994:53) the initial questions may appear to be spontaneous, but they have been carefully selected and phrased in advance to elicit the maximum amount of information.

The initial questions that will be asked in this research are the following:

* What, in your opinion, may contribute to early school leaving?

** What can be done to prevent school dropout?

The questions are identical for all the groups; each member of a group gets a card with the questions on it.
Additional questions are phrased carefully so as not to be leading, thereby invalidating the data, and are based on remarks made by respondents. The researcher, however, relies on his theoretical knowledge of the phenomenon being studied to be sensitive to remarks that could yield more data. This will be done by the following techniques:

* Paraphrasing of remarks made by respondents.

* Statements and questions such as:
  "You mentioned... Can you tell me more about that?"
  "Can you explain that?"
  "Does anyone want to add something in this regard?"
  "Yes...?"

* Pausing and probing (Krueger, 1994:115/116)

Furthermore, strategies for effective communication will be used, as the researcher is the "instrument" in qualitative research. These strategies include, inter alia, empathy, openness, non-verbal communication to ensure a relaxed atmosphere, and a neutral stance. The moderator should be nonjudgmental, and communicate to each respondent that his contribution is appreciated and valued (Basch, 1987:415).

Focus group interviews will be conducted in Tswana (the principal language of Blacks in the North-West Province) and translated by the researcher, who is well qualified in this respect, having been employed in the Department of African languages at Unisa.

An assistant moderator will be present. His task is to take extensive notes, to operate the tape recorder, and to handle logistics such as lighting and seating (Krueger, 1994:104). Directly after the interview there is debriefing between the moderator and
assistant moderator. It captures the first impressions, and highlights and contrasts findings from earlier focus groups (Krueger, 1994:128).

2.4.5.2 Pilot study

A pilot study was conducted to verify whether the chosen research method is suitable for the defined study and to eliminate problems which may arise with regard to the interviewing technique. This pilot study consisted of two focus group interviews, one with at-risk pupils and one with principals of schools.

2.4.5.3 Field notes

In the above discussion it was pointed out that focus group interviews allow the researcher to observe the respondents during the interview. On the basis of these observations field notes are made directly after the interviews, to describe underlying themes and dynamics (Kerlinger, 1986:480). Four categories of field notes are differentiated, namely observational notes, theoretical notes, methodological notes (used in planning the focus group interviews) and personal notes (Wilson, 1989:434-436). Observational notes are descriptions of events experienced through watching and listening. Methodological notes are instructions to oneself, critiques of one's tactics, and reminders about methodological approaches that might be fruitful. A researcher using focus group interviews may, for instance, remind himself not to allow one member of a group to dominate the discussion. Personal notes are notes about one's own reactions and reflections and experiences. Theoretical notes are purposeful attempts to derive meaning from the observational notes. The researcher uses these, through inference and interpretation, to build his analytic scheme.
2.4.6 Data analysis

Analysis of data forms the second part of phase one of the research, and will be discussed in the following section.

2.4.6.1 Introduction

In this study transcript-based analysis (Krueger, 1994:143) will be used, which means that data analysis can only begin after the audio-recordings have been transcribed fully and accurately. A verbatim transcription includes repetition of words, hesitating, laughter, etcetera.

2.4.6.2 Analysis procedure

Analysis starts with reading the transcripts and listening to the tapes with the intent of generating a list of key ideas, words, phrases, and verbatim quotes that capture sentiments (Basch, 1987:417). Thereafter ideas are used to formulate categories and ideas and quotes are placed in the most appropriate categories. The next step is to examine the contents of each category to search for subtopics. Categories can be clustered into themes, which will provide the major headings for the written report (Basch, 1987:417).

In this research, a combination of two approaches to analysis will be used, namely the phenomenological method of Giorgi (1985:10-19), which is inductive, and the deductive method of Kerlinger (1986:479-481). The inductive approach starts with examination of a phenomenon and builds theoretical categories and propositions from relationships
discovered among the data (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993:42). The deductive approach begins with a theoretical system and matches it empirically to a body of data.

Krueger (1994:149-151) suggests that the focus group researcher considers seven factors in analysis, namely:

a. Words. The researcher should consider both the actual words used by the participants and the meanings of those words.

b. The context. The researcher should examine the context by identifying the "triggering stimulus" for a comment and then interpreting the comment in light of the context of stimulus.

c. The internal consistency. Participants often change or reverse their positions. The researcher should note when there is a shift in opinion which is relevant to the purpose of study.

d. The frequency or extensiveness of comments. Some topics are discussed by more participants (extensiveness) and some comments are made more often (frequency) than others. While considering frequency or extensiveness, it is also wise to take note of what was not said but expected.

e. The intensity of the comments. Some topics are discussed by participants with a special intensity or depth of feeling. This may be difficult to identify in transcripts alone because intensity is often communicated by changed voice tone, talking speed and emphasis on words. The researcher's field notes should include references to factors such as these.

f. The specificity of responses. Researchers should give more weight to responses that are specific and concrete rather than those that are vague and ambiguous.

g. Find the big ideas. Big ideas emerge form "an accumulation of evidence - the words used, the body language, the intensity of comments - rather than from the isolated comments". In other words, the researcher should not get caught up in counting the number of times something is said, but should rather look for patterns.
In analysis, coders use bracketing and intuiting (Crabtree & Miller, 1992:24). Bracketing means that the researcher puts aside all knowledge that he has about the phenomenon being studied; existing theoretical knowledge is not imposed on emergent data (Henning, 1995:30). "Intuiting" in this study refers to the focusing of attention on the phenomenon of dropout.

A protocol (see Addendum A) will be given to independent experts with the request to analyse the transcribed data. One independent expert will be a specialist, with extensive experience and knowledge of the research method. A researcher from the Faculty of Education (RAU) will also be included. The protocol and unmarked transcripts will be given to the independent coders to analyse the data. The researcher will meet with each of the experts to compare their analysis and discuss the degree of consensus. In analysis themes and categories are identified and refined to meet the criteria of homogeneity, inclusiveness, usefulness, mutual exclusiveness, clarity, and specificity. The results, together with all the analysed data will be presented to peers at the Faculty of Education (RAU) for further validation, as an additional measure of trustworthiness.

Some qualitative researchers criticise the use of independent coders in the analysis phase. The researcher, however, agrees with Kirk and Miller (1986:20), who state that objectivity is the essential basis of all good research, because "without it, the only reason the reader of the research might have for accepting the conclusions of the investigator would be an authoritarian respect of the person of the author." The use of independent coders contributes to objective data analysis.

After analysis of the data, the researcher will go back to some of the respondents to conduct follow-up interviews. This strategy, known as "member checking" is a form of triangulation that contributes to the truth value of the research (Kerlinger, 1986:481). It entails a discussion of themes identified through analysis, with respondents to check whether the researcher interpreted their ideas about the topic under investigation correctly.
2.4.7 Literature control

According to LeCompte and Preissle (1993:152) a literature review can be placed towards the end of a study. As this was discussed in some detail in the introduction to this chapter, this section will only deal with the specific approach taken in this study.

In Chapter 3 themes and categories, as defined through data analysis, will be discussed, substantiated by direct quotes from respondents. The results of the research will be discussed on the basis of relevant theories and results of studies related to the subject of this study. New insights obtained will be dealt with more specifically. The literature control will also contribute to the trustworthiness of the study and will be conducted in Chapter 4.
2.5 PHASE 2: DESCRIPTION OF STRATEGIES FOR A PREVENTION PROGRAMME AND GUIDELINES FOR THE OPERATIONALISATION OF THE PROPOSED PROGRAMME

In this section data gathering and data-analysis will be discussed. The strategies for trustworthiness that were discussed in 2.4.3 are also applicable in this phase of the research.

2.5.1 Data gathering

For the development of a prevention programme with regard to dropout, the relevant literature will be incorporated with themes and categories identified in phase one. The arguments in the review of literature should, where possible, support the interpretation of data and the conclusions reached (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993:153).

2.5.2 Data analysis

Data analysis with regard to the dropout prevention programme will take into account aspects of functionalism (with regard to the characteristics of the dropout population), conflict theory (with regard to the social class origins of dropouts and at-risk pupils), and psycho-dynamic theory (with regard to personality characteristics and attitudes most associated with dropping out of school and dynamics within the family that affect tendencies to drop out of school).
2.5.3 Peer evaluation

The proposed programme will be discussed with educational psychologists in order to obtain peer evaluation. Remarks and recommendations of peers will be used to refine the dropout prevention programme.

2.6 CONCLUSION

A qualitative research design that is explorative, descriptive and contextually specific to rural South Africa will be used for the study. Focus group interviews will be used to collect the data. The sample will be selected from the population living within a reasonable radius of identified schools and will be involved through purposive sampling. After data gathering, data analysis will be done and contextualised by means of an extensive literature control. The methods to be used were described and the development of the trustworthiness of the study, according to Guba's model (1981 In: Krefting, 1991:215), was included.

In the ensuing chapter, attention will be focused on discussion of results.
"...Modise travels twelve kilometres to school everyday, and he is bare-footed. The problems come when winter arrives especially. He suffers from cracking of feet more especially on the heels, small stones enter on the cracking of heels and makes this open more until blood flows out. And that is really painful and the sore itches more in winter. So eventually the boy decides to forget about the school and remain at home next to the fire".

(Vignette from focus group interview)

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the analysis of the field data will be presented. As was discussed in the previous chapter, coders of raw data worked independently, and the following discussion will be presented according to the main themes that were identified. Five main themes became apparent, namely:

* The school situation of at-risk pupils.
* Social systems
* Socio-economic status
* Cultural/Political factors
* Personal factors

In Table 3.1 a summary of main themes and the categories under each theme is presented.
Table 3.1. Summary of themes and categories defined in the analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Subcategories</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.2.1 School situation</td>
<td>3.2.1.1 Lack of facilities</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.1.2 Teachers</td>
<td></td>
<td>a. Discipline</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>b. Teacher qualifications</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>c. Negative attitudes of teachers</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>d. Teacher awareness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>e. Abuse of pupils by teachers</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.1.3 Farm schools</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.1.4 Lack of guidance and role models</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.1.5 Overcrowding of schools</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.1.6 Irrelevant curriculum</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.1.7 Failing and retaining of pupils</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.1.8 Language difficulties</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3.2.1.9 Age grouping</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.2 Social systems</td>
<td>3.2.2.1 Family situation</td>
<td>a. Family values</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>b. Absence of parents</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>c. Home environment</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>d. Parental involvement and support</td>
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Group I = Parents  
Group II = Principals of schools  
Group III = Teachers  
Group IV = Pupils
3.2 DISCUSSION OF RESULTS OBTAINED THROUGH FOCUS GROUP DATA ANALYSIS

The relevant themes and categories will be discussed, followed by substantiating quotes from respondents. Quotations are given verbatim, without corrections to style and grammar because it contributes to the understanding of the research context. The researcher's comments (for purposes of clarification) are given between brackets.

3.2.1 Theme 1: The school situation of the potential dropout

Under issues relating to the school itself, nine categories were identified, namely lack of facilities, (attitudes of) teachers, farm school standards, lack of guidance, overcrowding, an irrelevant curriculum, retaining pupils, language difficulties, and age differences.

3.2.1.1 Lack of facilities

Respondents in all four focus groups mentioned a lack of facilities. These included not only facilities at schools, but even the very schools themselves. It seems that there are not enough schools to accommodate all pupils in the rural communities. Sports facilities, libraries and laboratories were mentioned, as well as desks, text books, and other teaching aids.

"...on the question of sporting activities. There are no facilities."

"They need teaching aids." (Referring to teachers)

"Also lack of facilities and available schools."
"...there is no secondary school in the area."
"...to equip our schools with relevant facilities, for example laboratories."
"There are no books in the libraries, no libraries, no facilities in general."
"Some of them don't even have desks for pupils to sit on."

In order to prevent this problem, respondents suggested the provision of recreational facilities, more schools, laboratories and library equipment, books and other educational facilities. Subsidies should be equal for all race groups, fund raising campaigns should be undertaken, and the business community should become involved.

"Provision of recreational facilities within the school..."
"... equip with relevant facilities ..."
"Donations from companies to help provide (facilities)"
"Fund raising campaigns ...
"Educational facilities should also be provided in schools."
"Schools should be built in each and every area..."
"Schools should be facilitated with equipment, the government should provide the schools with laboratories and library equipment."
"The government and the Department of Education, Recreation and Sport should provide books at schools."
"I further feel that the government should subsidise the education of Blacks and Whites equally."

3.2.1.2 Teachers

Here five subcategories were identified namely discipline, teacher qualifications, negative attitudes of teachers, teacher awareness and abuse of children by teachers. These will be discussed separately.
a. Discipline

The issue of discipline was mentioned. It seems that overly strict teachers cause pupils to stay away from school, which may eventually lead to dropout.

"It's a question that the teachers are strict."

"Some children become so scared of teachers that they choose not to come to school at all."

"Now that child will soon adopt... a negative attitude against the school...(Referring to too strict disciplining)"

"They tend to be wild and when teachers tame them, they thin out by dropping out..." ("They" refers to at-risk pupils, while "tame" refers to disciplining of pupils by teachers).

It is not clear in what form this "taming" is administered, but the issue of corporal punishment was mentioned:

"... means a child who is being bullied at school ..." (by teachers)

"Corporal punishment and other methods of punishment. In the past pupils were tortured, mentally. When a teacher tells him (the at-risk pupil) how stupid he is ... even today in some schools ..."

In order to prevent this harsh behaviour of teachers, respondents suggested that teachers should make allowances for individual differences, and use constructive ways of disciplining pupils.

"Teachers should acknowledge that students have individual differences, therefore corporal punishment is not the only solution to rectify mistakes of pupils."

"Punishment should be given in a mild, reasonable, and constructive manner ..."
b. Teacher qualifications

The reality of poorly qualified teachers, and its effect on the pupils is stressed by three of the four groups of respondents. Unwillingness of principals to adjust to a developing society was also mentioned. Poor teacher qualifications are linked with lack of motivation and destroying the morale of pupils.

"This type of teacher fails to motivate pupils in their learning."

(Referring to underqualified teachers).

"Some principals are outdated in their approach ..."

"They employ unqualified ... teachers"

"Underqualified teachers destroy the morale and the spirit of learners."

"Qualified teachers also do not want to go and teach in rural areas and on farms ..."

Poor qualifications of teachers were seen in the context of specific subjects; this sub-category also contains a reference to inadequate teacher training, and lack of adequate preparation by teachers:

"Lack of qualified teachers on technical subjects such as mathematics ..."

"I feel dropout is caused directly by improper teacher training ..."

"... the unskilled teachers are not able to transmit knowledge ..."

"... they do not prepare thoroughly."

Solutions to the problem of unqualified and under-qualified teachers have two dimensions: it is the government's responsibility to employ only qualified teachers and to upgrade teacher training. Through workshops for teachers, standards could be upgraded. Proper screening procedures could prevent the appointment of unqualified teachers. Teachers should also improve their qualifications through further study.
"... call better qualified teachers (recruit teachers who are specialised in their own fields)"

"Professional and qualified teachers should be employed and they need to be trained on how to reduce the amount of dropouts."

"Teachers must be upgraded."

"... the government should also employ more qualified teachers ..."

"Workshops to be organised, the standard of education to be raised, teachers to be encouraged to study further."

"Teachers must be encouraged to improve their qualifications."

"Posts should be properly advertised and teachers be properly screened before appointment."

"Teachers must be retrained and new skills, approaches and methods introduced to teachers."

"Pre-service teachers should be well equipped with new methods, approaches and development skills that will be improved time and again to suit the changing curriculum."

c. Negative attitudes of teachers

Discrimination against poor pupils were mentioned as contributing to the pupils' perception of the school environment as disinviting. Negative attitudes of teachers are seen to be contributing to dropout. An autocratic style and favouritism are among specific negative aspects that were mentioned.

"Some of these ... teachers do not have love, respect and psychological attitudes (probably referring to empathy) towards the children they teach."

"Teachers also discriminate against children because of the nature of the family the child comes from. They send around children from poor families, for example to the shops. Those from rich families are never sent around. This is unfair and it makes children feel unhappy."
"Some teachers ridicule us (poor pupils), scold us and make us feel bad."
"Teachers also contribute to dropout because they discriminate against children".
"...criticise them openly in front of other pupils, give them funny names ...
"
"Another problem is autocracy on the part of teachers ... do not allow pupils to participate in the classroom ..."
"Teachers who show some favouritism and subjectivity in class will lead the unfavoured pupils into being dropouts ...."

In order to prevent this problem, respondents made the following suggestion:

"Teachers must motivate pupils and be able to treat pupils in a respectful manner."

d. Teacher awareness

When teachers fail to get to know pupils better, they lack awareness of the circumstances of pupils, which may include divorce, absence of parents, and so forth.

"Teachers don't know the background from which their pupils come ...".
"... sometimes teachers are not aware, they don't know about such children ...
" (referring to orphans/children of divorcees living with their poor grandparents).

Unqualified teachers do not know how to cope with different personality types:

"... unqualified teachers ... will be unable to treat the introverts in the expected way. He will treat him in a bad way without considering the situation of the child."
Individual contact with pupils, and acquiring knowledge of a pupil's background were suggested as ways of dealing with this problem:

"Teachers should call pupils one by one, converse with them, know their children (pupils) and their home background."

"They (teachers) should be trained on how to deal with individual differences."

e. Abuse of pupils by teachers

It seems that pupils are abused by their teachers. Harassment of pupils and even sexual abuse, especially of girls, were mentioned

"I am very much concerned with teachers' manners... We must not bully them by beating them with fists or always calling them names."

"Some teachers molest and harass our children..."

"... being sexually abused..." (referring to girls).

"Sexual abuse; this happens mostly to girls..."

"A child who is molested or being sexually abused cannot proceed well with his/her education."

3.2.1.3 Farm schools

Parents discussed the situation in farm schools, which are isolated, dependent on the farmer for their existence and characterised by low standards. Different classes are taught simultaneously by one teacher:

"... you find that there is no standard..."
"On most farms there are one teacher schools... When the teacher is sick or absent, there is no schooling."

"Another serious problem we have in our schools on farms is lack of qualified teachers."

No specific measures for dropout prevention in farm schools were mentioned.

3.2.1.4 Lack of guidance and role models

This category refers to vocational guidance and counselling. If it is lacking, pupils may choose subjects irrelevant to their future careers, or become confused, having no direction because they do not know what occupations are available to them. Guidance is also linked with educated people being role models.

"Another point, I would say, is lack of proper guidance."

"Our children are ignorant of the various occupations that can be followed ..."

"Lack of guidance and counselling ... choosing subjects which hinder their learning ..."

"They tend to have no direction ..." (referring to at-risk pupils)

"I think students must be given proper guidance... career guidance."

"... as a parent I might fail to show my children the correct direction."

In order to prevent this problem, respondents suggested that schools should provide career guidance and counselling, as well as career exploration and preparation. Someone suggested that schools should have career guidance officers; educational tours were also mentioned.

"I think students must be given proper guidance ... career guidance."
"exposed to different vocations"

"Career guidance and counselling should be provided to the schools"

"Career awareness, exploration and preparation must function to these poor African kids."

"There should be a school guidance officer."

"... educational tours could really be valuable."

3.2.1.5 Overcrowding of schools

This can be seen in conjunction with Category 1 (Lack of facilities), because a lack of schools leads to overcrowding in classrooms, with unacceptable pupil-teacher ratios. Overcrowding is also ascribed to the fact that president Mandela urged all pupils of school going age to attend school. It hampers the child's school work through his inability to pay attention in an overcrowded classroom.

"Some of the schools are so overcrowded that the child is not able to listen attentively."

"Overcrowding. In some schools there are more children than the required number."

"As a result of the national call by president Mandela for pupils to go back to school, our schools now have the problem of overcrowding..."

"Students are forced to occupy a single class with the maximum number of 50 to 60."

"Size of classes, which may deny the teacher an opportunity of implementing the principle of individualisation."

"When the children are congested in one classroom, they start by absenting themselves from school..."
In order to prevent overcrowding, respondents suggested the building of more schools and more classrooms at existing schools.

"More classrooms should be built to meet the demands of the ever-growing population."

"More schools must be built."

3.2.1.6 Irrelevant curriculum

The curriculum plays an important part in sustaining pupils' interest. Most curricula, however, do not take the interest of pupils into consideration, by being too academic, theoretical, and not relevant to job opportunities. When pupils cannot cope with what is expected, they decide to drop out of school.

"I want to focus on a too academic curriculum that has no room for everybody."

"... the subject matter is too theoretical."

"Most dropouts leave school because they cannot cope with the curriculum imposed on them."

"The material or subject content is a problem also. If the material or the content does not meet the needs of the child, the child may lose interest in school."

"When the curriculum is not written in the interest of the pupils, and ... not relevant to job opportunities."

Solutions for the problem of an irrelevant curriculum were discussed with reference to a more practical approach, improving the quality of the curriculum, adapting it to the level of the pupil, and diversification in order to accommodate all pupils.
"... our education system should be more practical than theoretical ..."

"... exposed to different vocations ..."

"Improve the quality of the curriculum to suit the pupils' interest, understanding and surroundings."

"The curriculum should be at the level of the learner."

"The curriculum should be more diversified so that almost all pupils can be accommodated ..."

3.2.1.7 Failing and retaining pupils

If a pupil fails, he must repeat a standard. When this happens twice or more, the pupil may become disencouraged, and drop out of school.

"Repeating a class too often leads to pupils leaving school."

In order to prevent this problem, respondents suggested the following solutions:

"... relate what is going on in the classroom with extra-mural activities ..."

"... educational tours could be really valuable..."

3.2.1.8 Language difficulties

This is linked with the migration of parents, which causes pupils to move from one language "area" to another.
"Yes, it (migrating) is a problem particularly for language reasons. If parents move to a Zulu-speaking community and the child is Pedi-speaking, then the child will have problems of language at school."

No measures for prevention were discussed in this regard.

3.2.1.9 Age grouping

Many Black pupils are, for different reasons, overaged for their classes. As a measure to prevent this, same-age classes were suggested, with reference to a child's cognitive development:

"... children must be grouped in classes on grounds of same age because they reason the same way when they are of the same age."

3.2.2 Theme 2: Social Systems

The following categories were identified under this theme: Family situation (with five subcategories), alcohol abuse by parents and peer influence.

3.2.2.1 Family situation

Five sub-categories were identified under this category, namely family values, absence of parents, social life at home, parental involvement and support, and lack of education of parents.
a. Family values

Parents especially stressed their responsibility in this regard, although it was mentioned by school principals as well. Parents can contribute to a child's early school leaving if they don't communicate their values to their children. This may lead to teenage pregnancies, which usually result in dropout. Parents who are too strict or who do not agree about their child's education, may also contribute to discouragement of their children.

"As a parent, I might fail to show my children the correct direction ..."
"... when the parents are sometimes part of the problem, because we never just give our values clearly..."
"When parents have different views ... the father may be too demanding and the mother too permissive."
"... no one trying to show her the right way..." (referring to teenage pregnancy)
"... each child must understand the family values that are right."
"I have seen very strict parents ...

Respondents mentioned independent households - away from grandparents - and respect for children as possible solutions to this problem.

"Parents should be encouraged not to stay with grandparents."
"Parents should be encouraged to respect their children."

b. Absence of parents

Linked with poverty, which is one of the categories of the next theme, is the absence of parents, sometimes through divorce, but more often caused by necessity when one or more parents have to leave home to find employment in cities, or migratory employment. This affects even small children, who then have to be looked after by their
older brothers or sisters. This contributes to absenteeism, which could eventually lead to dropout. Even when parents come home in the evenings, children are alone after school.

"You find that in most instances small children are left on their own ..."
"... there is nobody to keep an eye ..."
"They leave home on Monday and only come back on Friday" (referring to parents)
"... parents not being able to supervise their children ..."
"They come, say, twice a year during Good Friday and Christmas."
(referring to parents)
"... such a problem (absence of parents) usually will cause pupils to deviate because there is nobody to keep an eye."
"... when parents have to shift from one place to another ..."
"... the migrating labour system ..." (referring to harvesters migrating from one farm to another)
"... the father and mother are working in Johannesburg."
"When both parents are working the child spends a lot of time unsupervised in the afternoon."

c. Home environment

The home environment of the potential dropout may be dull, with parents not stimulating their child's development and not exposing him to situations that will encourage interest in his school work. Family and social problems, such as continuous conflict between parents, and divorce affect the child's emotional equilibrium. The resultant stress influences his ability to pay attention in school.

"... social life at home which is not appealing for the child ..."
"... lack of exposure ..." (referring to an unstimulating home environment)
"... family problems or social problems ..."
"A child whose parents have divorced may be stressed to such an extent that he no longer concentrates in class."

"... continuous conflict between a child's parents disturbs a child psychologically."

In order to prevent this problem, respondents suggested involving social workers, assisting parents to become enlightened, or removing children from unfavourable environments, either by having them adopted or putting them in children's homes.

"... social workers should also be involved to enlighten parents ..."

"Social workers must intervene, see to it that these children are taken care of by putting them up for adoption."

"Or if there is a home for such children, they must be kept there until they are independent if their parents consent to this."

d. Parental involvement and support

Respondents in all four focus groups pointed out that a lack of parental involvement and support may lead to early school leaving. Parents often do not attend school activities, do not take notice of the child's homework, and do not support the child's education in general. This is regarded (by uninvolved parents) as the responsibility of the school. Lack of support is also manifested when parents come to school and embarrass their children in front of teachers and fellow pupils. These children tend to avoid school.

"If the parents are non-supportive ..."

"Parents are absent from school activities ..."

"... some parents never give themselves a chance of going through the books of their children ...

"They (parents) also take it to be the problem of the school."

"...a lack of support by parents of the child's education."
Improper parental supervision may be harmful if a child is allowed to watch too much television:

"As a result of uncontrolled watching of TV sometimes the child does not perform well at school."

Respondents suggested a partnership between home and school, and encouraging parents to visit the school as part of the solution for the problem of uninvolved parents. Parent-Teacher-Associations as well as Parent-Teacher-Student-Associations could also be formed in order to stimulate parental involvement. Teachers should create opportunities to discuss pupils' school work with their parents.

"There must be objective partnership in matters related to the school ..."
"... encourage parents to visit school ..."
"Parental involvement can be achieved by forming the Parent Teachers Association ..."
"Form the Parents Teachers Student Association (P.T.S.A.) which once a month or so, or once a quarter can meet and discuss pupils' problems in the school."
"Teachers will create that opportunity and ... explain to the parent ... your child's performance is below par."

e. Lack of education of parents

Some parents who are uneducated do not support their children's education; their attitude is that the child must take responsibility for his school attendance, which also implies school work. Respondents also pointed out the self-perpetuating tendency of the dropout phenomenon, in that children whose parents did not complete their school
careers become dropouts themselves. Illiteracy of parents is seen as a result of the apartheid system.

"We have parents who are not educated."

"No, they are uncultured."

"... they are illiterate themselves ..." (referring to parents)

"there is that thing of dropouts produce dropouts..."

"The carefree attitude of some of the illiterate parents. They take it the child must himself see to it that it goes to school."

"Illiteracy of parents due to the apartheid may cause dropouts."

Illiteracy of parents should become the responsibility of teachers living in the area, and of the community. Adult education centres can assist and educate illiterate and poorly educated parents.

"... a teacher is still regarded as a custodian of knowledge ..." (They should help illiterate parents).

"... finding the assistance of members of the community ...

"... the neighbours should now step in."

"There should be education for adults so that they too can learn, hence they will be supportive towards their children."

"If you have illiterate parents, such problems can be referred to teachers who are resident in the village."

"We can arrange parents' meetings, have adult education in schools and have literacy programmes."

3.2.2.2 Alcohol abuse by parents

Alcohol abuse by parents can lead to dropout. Alcoholic parents, or parents simply going on drinking bouts do not act responsibly towards their children.
"Irresponsible parents who ... buy liquor and drink excessively ..."
"Parents do bad things when drunk in front of children."
"... the oldest has to parent the little ones, because parents sleep out, are drunkards ..."

No preventative measures were discussed where parents' alcohol abuse is concerned.

3.2.2.3 Peer influence

Adolescents' need to conform renders them especially vulnerable to peer pressure. They become impressed with possessions of peers who have begun working, and are able to buy cars and proper clothes. A little money may seem like a lot to a child from a poor background. As peers who have left school are seen to be better off, school becomes irrelevant.

"... I will mention peer pressure ... adolescents want to conform ..."
"If ... peers drop out of school ... working on the mines ... buy themselves nice clothes ... this peer in school feels that he is wasting his time ..."
"That is why the peers are going to overcome her because she just follows the group ..."
"We have gangsters and a pupil associates with gangsters; then the pupil wants to have nice clothes, drive a car of his own ..."
"A child may be influenced by his peers who have already left school."

Peer groups can also have criminal tendencies:

"Sometimes it depends on the type of peer groups which the child is committed to ... sometimes they are thieves and robbers ... able to make money ... he will see school to be useless and a sheer waste of time."
The solution to this problem is seen in pointing out to children that friends can mislead them, and in providing recreational activities for young people.

"Pupils should be encouraged not to be too close with friends as they will sometimes mislead them."

"Social activities for young children should be constructed."

3.2.3 Theme 3: Socio-economic status

The following categories were identified under this theme: Poverty and distance from school.

3.2.3.1 Poverty

The parents' poor financial position occasioned by unemployment and inability to raise money for the proper upbringing of the children render them especially vulnerable to poverty, inability to pay for school fees and pay for transport to and from the school. In order to augment and supplement the income of the parents and try to make ends meet, some pupils, especially older ones, have to work in the afternoons or drop out of school to seek employment. As peers who have left school are seen to be better off, school becomes irrelevant.

"... parents are not well to do to afford school funds."
"When they are grown up, their children will also be dropouts because of continuing poverty"

"... there are children who work in the afternoons, they have to pay for their own school fees ... you find that the school work is just too much for them."

"School funds are too high for the unemployed families ...

"... low socio-economic status is a cause of dropout ...

"Poverty is the most single common element in African schools that causes dropout."

Poverty leads to hunger, malnutrition and illness, which contribute to absenteeism, poor academic achievement and, eventually, dropout.

"If a person is hungry, the chances of concentrating on school work are limited."

"Poverty will create malnutrition. When a child is not well fed he will fail to continue with schooling ..."

"... malnutrition; there is no way in which education can be successful on a hungry child..."

"The problem of illness disturbs a child's learning. A child will have a short spell of concentration in a class."

"They also have a problem of food. They go hungry."

Prevention of this problem includes community involvement, social welfare, financial assistance to poverty-stricken families and bursaries for poor pupils. Feeding schemes at schools should be introduced, as well as free education.

"... teachers should liaise, the principals too, with the social welfare for these people..."
"... that the community through its institutions such as churches should work with schools ..."

"... there must be some financial assistance ...

"... more money should be put aside to cater for the resources needed to uplift the standard of education."

"The government should offer bursaries to further requirements needed for development and in order to assist and finance them."

"For those who lack money, bursaries should be granted."

"There should be catering at schools (feeding schemes), I mean".

"The system of feeding schemes should be introduced."

"There must be enough jobs for employing people."

"Free and compulsory education should be practised in African countries."

"They should also provide parents with job opportunities so that they should be able to send their children to schools."

"I feel a social security system and family grants should be introduced amongst Blacks to help parents in maintaining their families."

3.2.3.2 Distance from school

Schools are not centrally situated. A lot of schools are far from pupils' homes and these pupils are subsequently bound to attend school either in the neighbouring villages or farms. Because of general poverty of parents pupils have to travel long distances getting to school and back home. Some pupils travel up to 40 kilometres to and from school on foot. Transport facilities are not there, and even if they are there, not many parents can afford to pay for the children to board buses or taxis to school. This affects even small children, especially farm children, who then have to walk long distances, hungry, and stay there the whole day hungry at school and still be expected to walk back home. This contributes also to absenteeism, and truancy, and could eventually lead to dropout.
"... there is a long distance that children must walk ..."
"So schools may be a long distance from home ..."
"... walk long distances to get to a high school and there is no transport."
"A child is expected to take a long journey daily to go to school. When he arrives at school he is tired, even hungry."
"When he arrives at home, he is tired and goes to sleep without doing his school work because he goes to school on foot."

In order to address the problem of distance from school, respondents suggested that schools should be built more centrally; transport to schools not within walking distance should be subsidised by the government.

"Distance from school can be addressed if both the government and communities should jointly build schools in each community to minimise the distance."
"More schools should be constructed near people so as not to travel long distances."
"The government should subsidise buses to ferry pupils to and from schools."

3.2.4 Theme 4: Cultural/political factors

Under cultural/political factors, the following categories were identified: forced removals and initiation practices.
3.2.4.1 Forced removals

Because of forced removals, the children have to abandon their studies, either completely or half-way through, change residence and find new acquaintances and teachers in a completely different milieu. Sometimes on reaching the new destination, where they are trekking to, there is no infrastructure, no schools, no teachers and this could subsequently lead to school dropout. In other instances on reaching the new destination, you find that maybe the school that is there is Zulu, Xhosa, Shangaan or some other African language which the pupil does not know and has to switch over from mother-tongue to a foreign language. This can be traumatic and devastating for the child, and this could lead to school dropout.

"... your chief is chasing us out of the village."

"... they are taken away to very far away and remote places where proper education is not taking place."

"In our village the chief has decided to chase away certain families."

No preventative measures were mentioned in connection with forced removals.

3.2.4.2 Initiation practices

The initiation practices of some ethnic groups may contribute to dropout, because pupils do not return to school after initiation.

"African communities practice initiation school which removes students from formal education."

"... you may find the child going to initiation school and after that he is no longer interested in going back to school."
According to respondents, having these schools during holidays could help prevent dropout.

"Initiation ceremonies and periods of attendance should be during school holidays."

3.2.5 Theme 5: Personal factors

This theme yielded six categories, namely lack of motivation, truancy and absenteeism, teenage pregnancy, alcohol abuse, intelligence quotient and academic achievement, and self concept.

3.2.5.1 Lack of motivation

Lack of motivation is seen as a contributing factor to dropout, and is linked with a child's not being properly guided by his teachers, or not seeing a meaningful future even if he works hard at school. Associating with peer groups characterised by a negative attitude towards school and learning also cause a lack of motivation. Another cause is poorly qualified teachers, and uninteresting, even boring, subject matter.

"So once the child is left on his own, there is lack of motivation"

"Our pupils are not fully motivated ..."

"... we were not motivated to get better marks." (on account of job reservation under the apartheid system)

"So he will see school to be useless and a sheer waste of time." (Reference to a lack of motivation due to association with a school-negative peer group).
"This type of teacher (underqualified) fails to motivate pupils in their learning."

"There must be something interesting, something motivating ... not only extrinsic motivation but also intrinsic motivation."

"Sometimes our pupils are not committed enough."

According to respondents motivation could be increased through relating subject content with extra-mural activities, using areas of interest to expand motivation to other situations, and using educated people as role models.

"I think we should use the interest of the particular child that is there in sport, we use it as a starting point and develop interest in other fields of study such as the classroom situation ..."

"... relate what is going on in the classroom with extra-mural activities."

"... educated people who are better qualified should be role models ..."

"... because he was wearing his academic regalia."

3.2.5.2 Truancy and absenteeism

Truancy refers to the staying away from school by pupils when they are supposed to be attending. This is seen as a cause of dropout, sometimes linked with disinterest in school work.

"Sometimes they make like they are going to school, parents think they have gone to school ..."

"They do not care for school work ..." (resulting in truancy)
"Pupils end up ... playing truant."

Absenteeism refers to failure by pupils to attend school on account of various circumstances. This includes parents' requests for absence from school so that their children can help at home, which is often linked with cultivation of land and harvesting. Siblings sometimes take turns to attend school, working on the farm during alternate weeks. The result is gaps in their school work, which may contribute to poor academic achievement. Absenteeism may also be caused by illness.

"... parents frequently coming to request their children to be given holidays to come and help at home, especially farming communities."
(during harvest/ cultivation times)

"Poverty leads to illness, malnutrition and absenteeism."

"There are still others in the rural areas who alternated ... this week it is so and so's week to go and look after the cattle ... they miss out."
(school work done in their absence).

In order to prevent absenteeism and truancy, respondents felt that cultural factors should not be allowed to interfere with school attendance and suggested that initiation practices should be schedule during school holiday periods.

"Cultural factors should not be allowed to hinder school attendance and retard progress."

"Initiation ceremonies and periods of attendance should be during school holidays."

3.2.5.3 Teenage pregnancy

Teenage pregnancy is seen as a result of inadequate or no sex education. It is a problem that is often encountered. Once a teenager becomes pregnant, she cannot go back to
school, even after the baby's birth, because in this particular culture, she is no longer seen as a child but a woman. It is seen as a direct cause of dropout.

"In our culture when a girl is pregnant, she is no more a girl and must forfeit her place in school ..."
"... a community school where one teenager falls pregnant ...
"They don't lecture to them about sex education; that is why so many of them fall pregnant."
"Teenage pregnancy ... lots of children drop out of school because of this problem."

Adequate sex education, both at home and in school could contribute to curbing teenage pregnancies.

"School nurses can teach sex education and the proper use of contraceptives.
"... culture must wait" (Said in connection with a remark that it is taboo in the Black culture to talk to children about sex).
"I think sex education and not pornography should be taught in schools. School nurses will help."
"They (pupils) should be taught about the use of contraceptives."

3.2.5.4 Alcohol and substance abuse by pupils

Alcohol abuse by pupils affects their school attendance and their ability to pay attention to their school work.

"Pupils who are addicted to alcohol can easily drop out of school."
"... he will be thinking of the places he used to get alcohol from."
(causing lack of concentration).
"The dagga smoker drops out of school because does not become a conducive place for him."

3.2.5.5 Intellectual ability and academic achievement

The child's intellectual ability and failure to achieve has been identified as possible causes of dropout because some pupils (those with low intellectual ability) may view the school as a place where they do not belong.

"... sometimes the child does not perform well at school ..."
"A less gifted child can also have serious problems."
"Some children who have low intellectual ability see the school as a place where they don't belong."
"The other cause of dropout is low IQ."

Not only low IQ, but intellectual giftedness were mentioned as a possible cause of dropout; gifted pupils may get bored with the standard of teaching and irrelevant curricula they are subjected to, causing them to lose interest in school.

"There are types of gifted children ... when they are taught there are no facilities at school."
"Some unqualified teachers fail to cope with the intellect of pupils."
(Implying high intellectual ability).
"Giftedness can also cause a child to drop out of school, particularly when the curriculum does not cater for needs of such a child."
Preventative measures should include special provision being made for children of different intellectual abilities.

"Gifted children ... should be catered for." (in special classes or schools)
"The schools should cater for both gifted and the non-gifted child."

In order to prevent dropout as a consequence of below average intellectual ability, schools should focus on these children individually:

"This child needs to be attended to and not isolated."

3.2.5.6 Self concept

One of the parents mentioned a negative self concept, reflected in the low self-worth as a factor contributing to dropout. Pupils referred to poverty as a cause of shame, contributing to a negative self concept.

"Low self-worth and self-esteem, since it is prominent ..." (Being unable to afford school uniforms and books).
"We ... feel out of place, rejected and neglected and some teachers ridicule us and make us feel bad ... we are the laughing stock of others."
"Teachers give them funny names... the whole class laughs at such pupils."
"...that child (a less gifted child) ... will automatically leave because he will feel inferior and small."

With regard to self-concept and dropout prevention respondents mentioned non-specific "moulding" of self-confidence.
"Appropriate methods should be implemented ... so that pupils are moulded positively towards establishing self-confidence."

3.3 CONCLUSION

In this chapter attention was focused on the analysis of the field data. The following five main themes were identified; namely the school situation of at-risk pupils, support systems, socio-economic status, cultural/political factors and personal factors. These main themes and the categories under each theme were presented with substantiating quotes.

In the following chapter, attention will be focused on literature control and contextualising results.
CHAPTER 4
LITERATURE CONTROL AND CONTEXTUALISING RESULTS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter a literature control of the results obtained from the focus groups will be presented. The findings of the study will be contextualised in the literature review. From the discussion further theoretical departure points for the prevention programme will be derived.

Literature control is extremely significant to validate results and findings obtained from the focus group interviews. The rationale behind employing literature control is also to confirm whether or not the results are acceptable and can be justified by literature also, in order to satisfy the requirements for the trustworthiness of the study.

School dropout is an issue with many different aspects, as has been highlighted in the analysis of the field data. Apart from the suffering that is caused by school dropout the consequences on the internal and external environment of the potential school dropout directly and on the family and school indirectly form an essential part of the school dropout experience.

4.2 LITERATURE CONTROL

From the analysis of the focus group interview transcriptions, five main themes unfolded, namely issues relating to the school situation, support systems, socio-economic factors, cultural-political factors and personal factors. Each of these four main themes had categories, referring to specific causes of school dropout (See Table 3.1).
In this section, a literature control will be presented in respect of each of these five main themes. To ensure structural coherence, the literature control will be presented in the same sequence as the date analysis in Chapter 3. It is noteworthy to mention at this stage that evidence suggests that the home situation and school situation are not independent but operate in a symbiotic relationship (Rip, 1979:19): the one complements and influences the other.

4.2.1 The school situation of the potential dropout

In this section the categories and sub-categories identified in paragraph 3.2.1. will be discussed with reference to relevant literature.

4.2.1.1 Lack of facilities

Respondents mentioned that lack of facilities such as desks, books, libraries, laboratories, and even buildings, contributed to school dropout. This is supported by the literature (Walters, 1994:65). In many Black high schools subjects such as Physical Science, Biology and Chemistry are presented without apparatus. Pupils do not even know what a laboratory looks like (Ntlhe, 1995:49).

Provision of education facilities creates a problem in rural areas. Because of the problem of factors such as lack of facilities, not all the required types of schools are available. This is unfair to children with special talents, interests and ability. Their needs are not catered for.

This lack of facilities can partly be ascribed to a lower government expenditure per capita in Black education (Mohlamme, 1992:35). In 1990 the government was spending
seven times more on a white child than on a Black child. In 1992, the education of a white child cost the government R3 082 per child as compared with R764 per Black child. There is no impetus for Black rural pupils to pursue education because, in general terms, the conditions in schools are not conducive to remaining in school. The lower expenditure until recently caused scarcity of equipment and textbooks, scarcity of sporting activities, lack of education facilities and lack of schools.

Lack of schools caused strategies such as double sessions and the platoon system. Under the double session arrangement, the same teacher teaches two different groups of children at different times of the day in the same building or classroom. There were 458 schools with double sessions in 1989 with a combined enrolment of 76 103 pupils (Annual Report, 1990:12,24). This kind of arrangement discourages pupils from regular school attendance and contributes to school dropout because parents are also unable to monitor school attendance of children, particularly if children attend school in the afternoon. If they attend school in the afternoon, the chances are that they are neither at home nor at school and may eventually end up dropping out of school.

In the platoon system the same school building is used twice a day by two different groups of pupils, each group having a principal and a separate teaching staff. Each school has a different name and registration number as well as a different set of admission and attendance registers. In 1989 there were seven schools where the platoon system was operating (Annual Report, 1990:12,24).

The school hours of the first school are from 7:15 to 12:15 and second one from 12:15 to 17:15. The two "schools" take turns at teaching during the morning or afternoon sessions respectively. This strenuous, unpopular arrangement adversely affects regular school attendance and subsequently culminates in dropping out. We were told by one of the headmasters that the attendance during the afternoon sessions was poorer than during the morning sessions, because it happens so easily that children whose parents are not at home, get off to somewhere during the morning hours and are not back in time for school in the afternoon.
4.2.1.2 Teachers' influence

As has been indicated in 3.2.1.2, teachers may contribute in different ways to pupils' decisions not to complete their school career.

a. Discipline

In the discussion of results in chapter 3 it became clear that at-risk pupils often experience their teachers as overly strict, thereby discouraging pupils to attend school. According to Mizell (1986:21) 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, regards the teacher as being 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. Garbers (1980 In van Rooyen, 1990:56) states that the economically deprived child yearns for the security which is contained in the strictness of the school situation. Although these two points of view seem to be conflicting, it can be argued that there is a difference between a strictness that contributes to security, and a strictness which is seen as "bullying", and resulting in a pupil's decision to drop out of school. In this respect Engel (1994:11) reports that many pupils saw teachers mainly as authority figures dispensing subject matter.

b. Teacher qualifications

A relatively low level of teachers' qualifications is a major obstacle in Black education. At the end of 1985, of the 45 059 Black teachers employed by the Department of Education and Training, 42 000 were under-qualified, according to the Minister of Development and Education (Mohlamme, 1992:28). Alfreds (The Star, 14 May 1996:5) reports that a government investigation into teacher training found that the quality of South African teachers is generally poor.
If the teacher is ill-qualified then it can be assumed that he is not *au fait* with the contents of the syllabus, or with proper teaching methods. His understanding of the needs of children is suspect, especially if he is working with adolescents - notorious for their high demands for acceptance while rebelling against authority. Poorly qualified teachers can hardly be regarded as a positive factor in the creation of a positive school climate. At-risk pupils who may have been helped by well-qualified teachers, may be totally alienated by under-qualified teachers (Turner, 1983:49).

In teacher qualifications, farm schools are comparable with other DET (Department of Education and Training) schools, and are certainly no worse off. Given that farm schools are almost entirely primary schools, the basic qualification needed is standard 8 (tenth grade) plus professional training, and this is a common level for urban DET primary schools as well. However, this level of teacher qualification is in strong contrast to white schools, where all teachers have completed at least standard 10 and nearly one-third are university graduates (Christie, 1985:116).

This aspect cannot be substantiated by many references to relevant literature, probably because most developed countries do not have the problem of inadequately qualified, or even unqualified teachers.

c. Negative attitudes of teachers

If a child experiences his teachers as hostile and negative towards him, it may contribute to a decision to drop out of school. Ntlhe (1995:39) states that discrimination is one of the reasons given by dropouts for their decision to leave school. If teachers humiliate children by using derogatory nicknames, they will feel isolated (Ntlhe, 1995:58).

Teacher attitudes can be seen as an important attribute of school climate, which is described by Kruger (1985:58) as the spirit or atmosphere which prevails within each school.
If the school and class atmosphere does not mean a safe learning and social space for the pupil, his social maladjustment could cause underachievement and dropout (Crawage, 1992:21). It is also reported that when a pupil feels welcome in the class, his work improves (Pretorius, 1979:201). Relaxed communication in the social interaction in the classroom means successful learning to the pupil while discommunication has a laming effect on the pupil.

When a comparison was made of pupils of similar backgrounds, 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). It can be argued that a positive school climate will influence pupil involvement and achievement positively, and in this way prevent dropout. Grannis (1991:2) states that pupils' positive experience of the school environment affects their commitment to school at least as much as the academic curriculum does.

Engel (1994:12) in a study to determine reasons for early school leaving, found that dropouts cited lack of caring by teachers as one of the causes. 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 studies agree with the finding (Reich & Young, 1975; Watson, 1976; Archer, 1978; Larter & Eason, 1978; Cipywnyk, Pawlovich & Randhawa, 1983 In Pawlovich, 1983:42).

Although dissatisfaction with school can have more than one cause, negative attitudes of teachers much surely rank amongst the most important reasons. Purkey (1986:8) refers to practices that degrade, discourage and demoralise pupils, causing harm to the relationship between teacher and pupil. Several respondents in this research mentioned name-calling and other negative practices by teachers as a cause of dropout. The ideal situation is that the teacher should use his authority to create mutual trust, acceptance, pedagogic love and motivation in his pupils (Ntlhe, 1995:48).
d. Teacher awareness

Respondents cited a lack of teacher awareness of problems that individual pupils may have as a cause of dropout. In Black high schools it is difficult for teachers to get to know each pupil and form a supportive relationship with every pupil in the class, on account of the overcrowding in these schools (Ntlhe, 1995:39). It is clear that there is a strong link between this category and that of overcrowding (see 4.2.1.7.). It may probably also be linked with poor teacher qualifications, because half-trained teachers may lack knowledge of child development and child psychology.

e. Abuse of pupils by teachers

Respondents in this research mentioned harassment and sexual abuse, the latter especially with regard to girls. The Sowetan (April 25: 1996) recently reported about the suspension of four teachers following sexual malconduct in a school in Mpumalanga. These teachers allegedly forced the pupils to simulate and perform sexual act. Being a victim of sexual abuse is also cited by Naylor (1989:1) as a cause of dropout.

4.2.1.3 Farm schools

Farm schools, according to the respondents in this research, are characterised by low standards and the employment of underqualified teachers.

When looking at the overall provision of education for Africans in the erstwhile "White" South Africa, one of the most striking features is the large number of schools for Black children on white farms, generally known as "farm schools" (Gaganakis & Crewe, 1987:67). Seventy three percent of all the former Department of Education and Training (DET) schools are farm schools (5,399 out of 7,362). They accommodate 27% of DET students and employ 25% of DET teachers. Not only are farm schools the largest
category of African schools in South Africa, including all former homelands, they are part of the system of Black education. The inadequacies of Black education are well documented and will thus not be handled specifically in this study. Instead, the author will concentrate on farm schooling as an aspect of Black education and outline the reason why farm children drop out of formal schooling.

Regarding facilities, there is no doubt that farm schools were the poorest in apartheid education. Since 1976, the state has attempted stricter building standards together with increased subsidies, and schools are provided with desks, chairs, blackboards, chalk, a radio, and a limited stock of textbooks and wall charts. However, there are numbers of schools that do not meet the basic requirements. Old farm buildings and huts are often used as schoolrooms, and many schools do not have toilets or piped water, electricity or telephones (Nasson, 1990:27). The influence of the farmer as patron can be seen in the greatly differing standards of schools. In the same neighbourhood, one school may have broken desks and chairs, while another has a television set and a photocopier. Overall, however, facilities are meagre.

Little comprehensive research has been conducted into farm schools, but what research there is paints a dismal picture. The work of Levy (1976), Plaut (1974), Harvey (1980), the Farm Labour Project (FLP) (1982), Nassan (1984) and Gaganakis and Crewe (1987) describe limited levels of schooling, extremely poor facilities, paternalistic social relations, and limited opportunities for school-leavers. This research has been invaluable in providing information, particularly in regional studies.

Farm schools should be considered both within the social relations of capitalist farming and the legislative provisions that control the lives of farm workers. They should also be considered within the policies of the Black education system and the patterns of educational provision that it has generated.

A distinctive feature of farm schools is that they offer primary education only. Special permission is required from the DET to provide secondary education; and, in fact, there
is only one secondary farm school as such. Fifty-four farm schools have standard 6 (grade 8) classes and only five have standard 7 (grade 9) classes. Moreover, 45 percent of farm schools are one-teacher schools that do not go beyond standard 2 (fourth grade) (Christie & Collins, 1992:59-75). In short, they offer extremely limited educational opportunities, and this encourages dropping out of formal schooling. At best children can only pass primary school education and drop out. To have secondary education is almost impossible because of financial constraints especially when viewed against the background of the kind of meagre wages they earn. The one teacher school system also contributes to school dropout because a single teacher cannot teach 6 or 7 classes alone simultaneously.

In this respect, it could be argued that farm schooling shows in stark form a major pattern of Black education: the provision of schooling at lower levels to as many students as possible. Christie and Collins (1992:59) have argued that, by concentrating on the expanded provision of basic schooling, Black education in the 1950s was geared towards the reproduction of an African working class. Since the 1950s, and particularly in the 1970s and 1980s, this pattern has altered with regard to urban schooling, in that retention rates are greater, and higher percentages of African children reach secondary school and even matriculation (twelfth grade). However, the pattern of lower-level schooling was entrenched in farm schools, where there were virtually no legal or actual possibility of reaching post-primary education within the farm school system itself.

Again it could be argued that the picture of farm school facilities shows an exaggerated form of Black education in general. But this is not true for the changes that have been introduced into Black education in recent years. The conditions that shape farm schools are related to the particular form of racial capitalist development in rural South Africa (Christie & Collins, 1992:65). In the protracted class struggle over land and labour power, white farmers have been able to establish their political and economic dominance and to control Black workers by a series of coercive measures. Deprived of access to land, prevented by a network of segregationist and apartheid legislation from within the quasi-feudal forms, and forcibly relocated as "surplus people" into already overcrowded
homelands, Blacks in rural areas have become increasingly proletarianised and impoverished.

Farm schooling in South Africa is best understood in terms of overall state provision. Viewed as a whole the traditional Black education system presents a picture of social inequality, especially when compared with White education. Although the education system is being reformed under the new government, the heritage of the past still has negative effects.

Farm schools are that part of the Black education system that provides for the labouring poor in the rural areas - they are the face of rural apartheid. They are not simply Third World schools in a First World setting but rather a specific aspect of state schooling provision for a particular social group in apartheid South Africa.

As with the previous category, not much has been found in the literature with regard to farm schools, probably because this is a condition unique to the South African situation.

Farm schools were neglected by the 1981 De Lange report on education. Instead, an urban emphasis prevailed in its recommendations. In 1983, the state's white paper in response to the De Lange enquiry addressed the issue of farm schools as follows: "The Government is of the opinion that farm schools make a very important contribution to the provision of education at present and will continue to do so in the future. The Government also accepts that the standards at farm schools will have to be raised to acceptable levels in cases where they are not acceptable at present" (Republic of South Africa, 1990:19).

While acknowledging the deficiencies of farm schooling, the state's strategy has been to undertake a series of investigations. A special task group was appointed within the DET to look into the education of rural Africans. When its final report was released in 1986, the DET announced that any far-reaching implications would be referred to further committees before action was taken.
In short, the reform initiatives in education have concentrated on urban issues, neglecting rural education and leaving farm schools in a marginalised position. Because of this neglect, the rate of dropout is escalating.

4.2.1.4 Lack of guidance

The fact that lack of guidance, either vocational or with regard to morals and study habits, were mentioned by respondents in all four focus group interviews, stresses the importance of this aspect. It was mentioned that pupils in Black rural schools are "... ignorant of the various occupations that can be followed." In this regard Miller (1988:105) found that Blacks focus on an extremely limited range of occupations. Furthermore, Walters (1994:69) reports that lack of vocational guidance in schools may lead to adolescents' dropping out of school.

Respondents mentioned that the lack of role models may contribute to school dropout. On the other hand, the more highly educated the parents, the more likely they are to serve as positive role models. Such parents positively influence their children's aspirations for advanced schooling; they spend more "quality time" with their children; they actively increase the academic abilities and opportunities of their children (Rumberger, 1983 In Tidwell, 1988:956). 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 parental involvement.

In this regard, Garbers (1980:33) reports that parents of dropouts have low educational qualifications. Lichter (1964:151-152) also found that dropout could be the result when parents do not value school education enough. Imitation of the example of such school indifferent parents is the reason why so many children do not see the sense and meaning of school and school education. The conclusion is "... dropout parents breed dropout sons." (Schreiber, 1966 In Du Plessis, 1976:52).
The middle class family has been characterized in terms of its total socialization pattern as being achievement-orientated, with all the family's efforts directed towards success in school and in later life. Du Bey, Edem and Thakur (1990:27) maintain that the milieu retarded family on the other hand lacks the abovementioned characteristics. Children in such a family are not encouraged to achieve and to compete.

4.2.1.5 Overcrowding of schools

Respondents mentioned that overcrowding contributes to school dropout. This is supported by the literature.

Overcrowding is a pervasive problem, with schools having to turn away hundreds of pupils. To keep the lid on overcrowding, the DET sets an upper limit to the pupil-teacher ratio at one teacher to 55 pupils (already a large class size) but there are certainly schools with larger classes than this. Double sessions are common, as is combined class teaching with, in extreme cases, as many as four to six standards in the same classroom with one teacher (Levy, 1989:23). Overcrowding has subsequently resulted in high pupil-teacher ratios in Black rural schools. This state of affairs does not augur well for continued and regular school attendance. This is supported by the Times (January, 1996:19) which states that "Overcrowding is causing damage to school attendance."

The inequalities in education are reflected in the high pupil-teacher ratios. Every Black teacher has to teach 41.5 children compared with 26.9 in the case of Coloureds, 21.4 Indians and 15.7 for Whites (Mohlamme, 1992:27). The implications of this kind of arrangement are that the Black teacher has to put up with serious pedagogical problems such as lack of individualised teaching, inability to focus on every child in class, failure to carry out remedial teaching and this may lead to a high failure rate of Black children. This is true if one juxtaposes the matriculation examination results of Blacks, Coloureds,
Indians and Whites. The highest results are obtained by Whites, Coloureds and Indians and the poorest are the Blacks. Although there may be other causes for this, such as inadequate teacher qualifications, lack of motivation, and lack of parental involvement, the influence of overcrowding on academic achievement cannot be denied. In this way it can lead to dropout, because pupils who sit in crowded classrooms - or even stand, as respondents in this study reported - may never acquire the basic academic skills and study habits that are necessary for handling the subject matter of the secondary school (Walters, 1994:65). Ntlhe (1995:46) and Rice (1992:506) also report that many high schools have large enrolments; as a result too little attention can be given to individual pupils' needs.

4.2.1.6 Irrelevant curriculum

A lopsided and short-sighted education system, more inclined towards academic training and giving very little, if any, attention to technical training which is the order of the day. Pallas, et al. (1985:23) mention an increased emphasis placed on academic training as a cause for dropout. This is supported by Walters (1994:69), who cites too much emphasis on academic subjects and university preparation as a cause of dropout. When teachers are seen as authority figures dispensing subject matter, school and academics may become boring; as a result pupils are not engaged in the learning process and schools become irrelevant in terms of their aspirations (Engel 1994:11; Knoff, 1983:550). Many young people leave school because it does not meet any of their vocational needs (Ntlhe, 1995:47). Pawlovich, et al. (1983:41) describes dropping out as a symptom of a fundamental mismatch between pupil and school. It is a collision between an individual with "basic problems and limitations" and the "typical high school environment". This may be ascribed to the fact that schools have been largely fashioned to serve well-motivated White, middle to upper income pupils whose families are relatively stable (Hodgkinson, 1991:9).
4.2.1.7 Failing and retaining pupils

Grade retention as a cause of dropout was mentioned by respondents as a possible cause of early school leaving.

Opponents of grade retention policies cite a strong association between grade retention and early school leaving (Roderick, 1993:46). Failing a grade is associated with poor academic achievement, which, together with absenteeism and early school departure, are links in a long chain of interconnected problems. Tidwell (1988:952) found that school failure was one of the reasons dropouts usually give for not completing their school career.

Zeller (1966) and Green (1966) write that a poor reasoning ability, failing grades and irregular attendance are among the primary predictors of dropout. One predictor of future dropout is retention in one or more of the early grades (Grannis, 1991:2; Wehlage, 1989:37; Barrington & Hendricks, 1989:317; Lloyd, 1978:1197). Kaplan and Luck (1977:121) 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 & Anderson, 1978; Elliot, Vos & Wendling, 1986; Sewell, Palmer & Manni, 1981) found this to be inaccurate (Larsen & Shertzer, 1987:165). Deci (1985 in Rice, 1992:502) argues that pupils who had to repeat a grade will most likely miss their friends and Hahn (1987:259) found that they had fewer friends. They may feel that they are social misfits, may develop an intense dislike for school, and lose all interest and desire to learn.
4.2.1.8 Language difficulties

In South Africa, as in the United States, some school districts confront populations that include pupils from many linguistic backgrounds (Hahn, 1987:260). Encountering language difficulties may, understandably, cause pupils to experience frustration and to feel alienated in their school situation. This is supported by the research of Pillay (1996:64).

4.2.1.9 Age grouping

That fact that rigid age grouping negatively affects some pupils was mentioned by some respondents in this research. Finn (1991:24) states that meeting the core learning standard for entry into adult society will take different amounts of time for different individuals. As an age-grade link may prevent some pupils from progressing at their own pace, it may be a cause of dropout for some pupils.

4.2.2 Social systems

The categories that were identified under this theme are family situation, teenage pregnancy, and peer pressure. These will now be discussed with reference to the relevant literature.

4.2.2.1 Family situation

Different aspects of the family situation were mentioned frequently by respondents in this research (see 3.2.2.1). Ntlhe (1995:41) and McCann and Austin (1988:315) argue that the home environment could contribute to dropout. This is supported by a vast body of research, as will be discussed in the following section.
a. Family values

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 (authoritarian) or no control (permissive) at all whereas the parents of the achiever apply positive and discreet control.

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 conflicting parents may 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 the child to become rebellious against all forms of discipline and eventually drop out of school (Van Wyk, 1989:82).

One result of a 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; Sonnekus, 1973 In Du Plessis, 1976:66). It is thus extremely important that parents assert their authority in such a way that their children are willing to obey them.

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

Rimm (1988:38) stated that children may learn to underachieve by their parents. Sometimes parents try to sympathise with their struggling children and they share with them some unfortunate memories. These may help parent and child to feel closer, but it also conveys a negative message of expectation regarding their education. 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" (Rimm, 1988:42). Obviously, his family influence and his identification with his father have not contributed positively to his attitude about learning. As poor academic achievement can be linked with early school leaving, this attitude of parents should be discouraged.

Rush and Vitale (1994:331) found that the attitude of parents who do not stress the importance of regular school attendance and the responsibility of being at school on time, places children at risk of early school leaving.

b. Absence of parents

According to respondents in this research, absence of parents is a common occurrence in rural families. This is seen as contributing to poor academic achievement and dropout. Rimm (1988:43) links emotional deprivation to maternal and paternal absence, which cause insufficient warmth and affection. A marginal or weak relationship with parents, which can be aggravated by parental absence, is one of four factors that Dunham and Alpert (1987:45) found important in predicting school dropout.

This category links with the category of parental involvement, because absent parents cannot be properly involved with their children's school work. In the South African context, the migratory labour system is one of the main causes of absence of parents. It also causes pupils to change schools often, when parents move from one place to
another with schoolgoing children. "Migrant pupils" have the highest dropout rate (Salerno, 1991:2).

The break-down of family life, as a result of urbanisation and industrialisation, has resulted in a number of social problems arising in the rural communities. Family life in the tribal society was stabilised by relatives and the male's role as head of the family (Rimm, 1988:57). The modern rural family, with both parents often working away from the children, tends to break up because of the lack of stabilising factors such as security and continuity. Furthermore, recognition of the woman has changed the roles that both parents played in a home (Bernard, 1989:172). In the absence of parents, children do as they please. They do not even attend school regularly, take to bad habits such as smoking and drinking, girls fall pregnant and there is no-one to keep an eye over school work and the general behaviour and conduct of children.

c. Home environment

Respondents in all four focus group interviews referred to home environment of the potential dropout as a contributing factor. This category involves various aspects, which are all supported by available literature.

According to Rumberger, et al. (1990) "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. Different parenting styles can be distinguished (Van Wyk, 1989:16, 17).

Permissive parents are the one 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 almost always feel that nobody loves them and they experience feelings of unsafety and insecurity (Van Wyk, 1989:17). These children tend to be disrespectful towards their parents and other people and become very selfish.
Authoritarian parents. Franklin and Streeter (1992:147) report that families of dropouts are characterised by lack of closeness, authoritarian leadership, inflexible roles and statuses, strict discipline, and little or not capacity to change.

Supportive 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; they 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).

If a child feels rejected at home, the resulting negative evaluation of himself may lead to poor academic achievement in school, ultimately causing dropout (Nthe, 1995:40). This supports Cohen and Cohen's (1974:848) statement that there are positive correlations between family structures and school achievement. Moreover, problem school behaviour usually has its roots within the home.

Pupils lacking the necessary encouragement at home may arrive at school predisposed to non-participation and non-identification; they do not fully enter the classroom with a background of supporting educational climate at home (Dorn, 1993:353). In this regard Naylor (1989:1) reports that parents who have low expectations of their child's success or who place little value on education contribute to a debilitating discontinuity between home and school. While exceptional teachers may engage the interest of some of these children, many may begin to resist first-level participation, becoming restless or distracted, avoiding the teacher's attention and failing to respond appropriately to questions. Later, as opportunities for participation increase, the pupils may remain withdrawn. They are less likely to manifest second-level participatory behaviour, but nominal compliance or total non-compliance with basic course requirements persist. As academic requirements become more extensive and school more evaluative, this behaviour can only result in course grades that are marginal or failing. These pupils do
not have the encouragement to continue participating that is provided by positive outcomes. If this pattern is allowed to continue, identification with school becomes increasingly unlikely and the pupil may drop out.

Bernard (1989:170) maintains that, "cultural deprivation and emotional disturbance are inimical to optimum mental development. Good health, proper diet, rich intellectual opportunity, and environments that produce emotional stability, independence, and self-confidence are productive of optimum developmental rates". Underachievement, dropping out of school and alienation, are evidence of lack of emotional stability and self-confidence as a result of problems of poverty, crime, alcoholism, divorce and illegitimacy.

Parental attitudes are therefore crucial in so far as they affect the child's performance in a school. Kahl (in Du Bey, et al., 1990:27), for instance, demonstrated that in the United States of America, parental attitudes were significant in predicting student aspirations towards continuing their schooling and success in school. The educationally deprived child, that is the child that grows up under non-school directed circumstances, is not prepared for school and is at a high risk for school dropout.

Single parent families or "broken homes" may also contribute to dropout. The term "broken homes" 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, 1988:6). Broken homes leave children upset, with guilt feelings as well as behavioural problems; they may even become ill (Friedrich, 1988:46).

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). However, divorce is the
single most important disturbing factor in the home situation of the potential dropout (Friedrich, 1988:49).

As there are a rocketing number of divorces in rural areas (Friedrich, 1988:51) as a result of breakdown in communication, lack of mutual respect, jealousy and possessiveness, sexual problems, unemployment among husbands, alcoholism and infidelity, it can be argued that school dropout of pupils from such families will increase correspondingly.

Dissolving marriage means breaking the relationship between children and at least one of the parents. This has an emotional and psychological effect on the child. Having to explain to friends at school that his parents are divorced may make a child develop a feeling of inferiority. Because of this attitude and also because of the negative emotional experience of a child when his parents separate, the child may not learn successfully and subsequently drop out of formal schooling (Du Bey, et al., 1990:26).

A new home without one of the partners creates a problem of reorientation and adjustment for the child. Should the remaining partner remarry then the question of a step-parent comes in with its problem of relationship (Du Bey, et al., 1990:39). This discourages the child at school, affects his academic performance and the chances for the child to drop out of formal schooling are higher.

d. Parental involvement and support

This is an important aspect of the child's situation, as it affects both his home and school experiences. It was mentioned repeatedly by respondents in this research.

According to a survey in a California High School (Rumberger, et al., 1990:293) parents' involvement in their children's education influences dropout behaviour. This is supported by Dryfoos (1991:634). Some pupils need academic assistance to succeed and remain engaged in school. Parental involvement includes parents' monitoring and
helping pupils with homework, attending school functions and creating 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 (Rumberger, et al., 1990:296). When there is no interest from his parents, the child does not strive to improve his circumstances (Ntlhe, 1995:44).

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 evaluation can reduce a pupil's desire to remain in school (Rumberger, et al., 1990:296).

When addressing parental involvement, firstly the relationship with the father will be discussed. 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 school work that motivates the child to see the importance of his school work (Gallagher & Harris, 1964:49). The more highly educated the parents, the more likely they are to serve as positive role models. Such parents positively influence their children's aspirations for advanced schooling; they spend more "quality time" with their children; they actively increase the academic abilities and opportunities of their children (Rumberger, 1983 In Tidwell, 1988:956). 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 parental involvement.

However, 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), with the result that the child could then withdraw from his school environment and become a school dropout.
Secondly, with regard to the relationship with the mother, majority is opinionated that the mother-child relationship has a broader and stronger influence on the total development of the child than the father-child relationship (Kapp, 1989:152). It is for this reason that Liddle (1962:16) maintains that in cases where there is a good relationship between mother and child, there are few reasons for the child to become school dropout.

When the relationship between mother and child is dissatisfactory the attitude of the child toward school also changes in most cases. Achievement which is of crucial importance 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). If the mother is working, her co-operation in helping the child with his homework may be stifled by work commitments (Sarafino & Armstrong, 1980:308).

One aspect of parental involvement that was mentioned by respondents in this research could not be substantiated by the vast body of literature concerning dropout: no reference was found with regard to parents embarrassing pupils at school, thus causing dropout. This seems to be a unique finding of the study.

e. Lack of education of parents.

Parents who did not have the opportunity to become educated themselves, may have a negative attitude towards school, thereby causing their children to view school and education as unimportant. This view of respondents is supported by available literature (Ntthe, 1995:43).

The research of Rush and Vitale (1994:331) and Steinburg, Blinde and Chan (1984:118) indicates that the educational level of the mother would affect the language development of the child in combination with limited English-speaking proficiency. This is extremely important in the South African context, where a backlog in language development may aggravate the child's problems with education through English, which is a second -
sometimes even a third-language. The complexity of causes of dropout is supported by Ensminger and Slusarcick's finding (1992:110) that the impact of maternal education and poverty was through their interaction with individual characteristics.

Rumberger (1983 in Larsen & Shertzer, 1987:165) reported that children of dropouts have a greater chance of dropping out of school than do other pupils whose parents are not dropouts themselves. In this regard, Garbers (1980:33) reports that parents of dropouts also have low educational qualifications. Lichter (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 reason why so many children do not see the sense and meaning of school and school education. The conclusion is "dropout parents breed dropout sons" (Schreiber, 1966 in Du Plessis, 1976:52). 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.

4.2.2.2 Alcohol abuse

Alcohol abuse by parents may contribute to dropout, according to respondents in this research. Although respondents only mentioned alcohol, available research also points to drug addiction as a probable cause of early school leaving. This is supported by Naylor (1989:1) who cites family drug and alcohol abuse as one of the factors that places pupils in serious jeopardy of dropping out.

Parents who drink to the point of being alcoholics will invariably affect the lives of their children in a negative way (Kronick, 1994:527). For instance, a young girl may be compelled to stay away from school to take care of younger children at home if the
mother is indisposed as a result of alcohol abuse; young boys may turn truant and become juvenile delinquents because of lack of parental control due to alcoholism.

Because of alcohol abuse, parents may lose their jobs and lower the family's income. As a result, their children may be forced to stay out of school because the family cannot afford to educate them (Ntthe, 1995:44). Many Black pupils have suffered this fate and what was a promising, sometimes even brilliant youth has turned into an alcoholic himself because of thwarted ambitions.

Pupils who drop out of school in many instances do so because of the lack of motivation from alcoholic parents. An alcoholic parent spends so much on liquor that he forgets about the basic needs of his children (Moraba, 1996), let alone emotional needs, and involvement in educational matters. Thus a pupil from an alcoholic's home may experience an abnormal and unbalanced emotional life. His emotional disturbance and instability may influence negatively his proper and regular attendance at school. As a result his achievement may suffer, and his experience of his school work and the school climate may be negative.

4.2.2.3 Peer influence

The influence of peer groups on a pupil's decision to complete his school career was mentioned by respondents. The available literature abounds with research supporting this assumption.

In the peer group, the pupil gets the opportunity to test his ideas against those of the other members. It this experience is positive, a feeling of belonging to and acceptance by the group is created. In this way, the pupil can develop a feeling of being welcome in the group (Du Plessis, 1976:76). Dunham and Alpert (1987:45) cite the negative influence of peers as one of four factors predicting dropout.
According to the research of Williams (1987:318) non dropouts attached a greater importance to friendship than did the dropout and non-dropouts were more likely to have had non-dropout friends than were dropouts. Dropouts more frequently perceived themselves as being older than their classmates.

With regard to peer group influence, Niewoudt (1976:30) stresses that one of the reasons for poor school attendance of the at-risk pupils is the gangs that attract the children away from school. In their different school diagnoses of the at-risk pupils in comparison with the non at-risk pupil, 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:

- dropouts participate more readily in activities outside the school;
- the dropout at-risk girl tends to have heterosexual relationships with men that are not attending school;
- dropouts prefer participating in clubs, organisations and societies outside the school to the activities of the school;
- dropouts are to a greater extent linked to peer groups outside the school which are working already;
- 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).

Another aspect of peer influence is that of not being accepted by fellow pupils. Ntlhe (1995:40) points out that a pupil may drop out of school because he feels he does not
belong anywhere. Coming from an unhappy family situation, he may feel that his interests, social level, physique and personality are not the same as that of his peers.

4.3 SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS

A large portion of the remarks made by respondents during the focus group interviews pertains to the socio-economic status of pupils and, ipso facto, their parents.

4.3.1 Finances and poverty

The data analysis clearly shows that respondents regard poverty as the main issue with regard to socio-economic factors contributing to dropout.

With regard to poverty of the potential dropout, various forms of deprivation are important. Although material deprivation, socio-economic status and family background are closely linked, they will be discussed separately because they encompass various factors.

(i) Material deprivation

Poverty was stressed and repeatedly mentioned by most respondents in this research. There are also many indications in the relevant literature that poverty is indeed a cause of dropout.

Material deprivation is caused, inter alia, by matters such as the poverty of parents, low educational qualifications, low occupational status, unemployment, and large families which, in turn, increase stress.
People who are materially deprived come from a background with bad housing, monotonous and drab conditions, limited privacy, over crowdedness, poor amenities and a high crime rate. In South Africa, education is not the only area which has suffered from decades of neglect. The backlog in housing for Blacks is terrifying. An estimated 43 000 people live in shacks in the rural areas alone, accommodating an average of five people per unit (Mohlamme, 1989:24). The situation today is even worse with so many shacks mushrooming throughout the country. Accommodation in rural areas is also mostly of a low standard.

Poor families are characterised by a lack of proper housing: they do not have accommodation at all or have small houses with very big families. There is a lack of clothing, food, rest, medical care, hygiene, and recreation facilities, insufficient space and no privacy in such families. Not only are the houses for such families not conducive to healthy upbringing, the areas in which such houses are built are equally very poor. This includes poor streets, no space where children can play, no street lights and public telephones, and no protection in general whatsoever (Du Bey, et al., 1990:27; Walters, 1994:37).

Shacks are, among other problems, not conducive to study (Pillay, 1995:58). Children from these "homes" can thus be considered as at-risk pupils, in terms of early school leaving.

Coming from poverty-stricken families and neighbourhoods, children are often undernourished, and vulnerable to malnutrition. These children are normally poorly dressed, tending therefore to be rejected by others (Du Bey, et al., 1990:27). Their family situation can be described as follows:

- The family is often in a state of poverty with family members either unemployed or receiving a meagre income.
Owing to low income generally, both partners in such families are from time to time involved in some form of employment and none or very little time is given to children in general.

Inadequate care is often the rule in such families resulting in illness which tends to impair the children's performance and affect their school attendance.

Authority of the parents is often very rigid with explicit lack of communication among members of the family.

Because of some of the characteristics outlined above, such as lack of space, inability to utilise leisure time properly and over-crowded settings that are experienced, children may be poorly motivated. They are usually despondent and do not make any effort to compete and achieve. Youngsters from households in which the family has little income must often scramble to attain the emotional and material support they need to continue their studies (Hahn, 1987:259). Some of the outcomes of such children's social plight include the following:

- These children find it difficult to socialise freely and are unable to compete with others.

- They do not attend school regularly because of factors such as lack of transport and money, ill-health, having to look after younger ones and social rejection. They experience failure in school education. Being unable to live up to the standard expected of them by the school, these children prefer to be absent rather than face ridicule at school.

- They often do not concentrate because certain needs have not been satisfied. These include physical needs such as food and security. Kronick (1994:527) remarks that the child cannot learn if he comes to school tired and hungry.
Garbers (1980:52) describes the educational 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 statement:

"As long as the human being shows initiative and wants to be someone; as long as he has freedom, the economically deprived child can escape from the "spiral of poverty".

In the context of this study, this implies that a child may persever at school in spite of negative factors. The fact that children from poorer families may find it necessary to seek employment to supplement their family's incomes, is supported by Borus, et al. (1980 In Tidwell, 1988:941) and Salerno (1991:2). Some researchers found that children from homes where only a single parent is present are least likely to remain in the formal setting until graduation, possibly because of financial difficulties rather than the structure of the home environment per se (Shaw, 1982 In Tidwell, 1982:141).

The parents' financial position as one of the direct indexes of socio-economic status shows a correlation with dropout (Rumberger, 1983 In Tidwell, 1988:941). The fact that parents cannot carry costs for school and university may cause dropout. However, it stays difficult to isolate the influence of financial circumstances from other factors like the education level of the parents (Garbers, 1980:34) because poorly educated persons normally have low-paying jobs; they also tend to have large families.

Low socio-economic status is closely linked to material deprivation. Numerous studies have shown that family background, particularly socio-economic status (SES), exerts a considerable influence on educational attainment in general, as well as on dropout behaviour. That is, pupils from families of lower socio-economic status exhibit higher

Another serious home situation problem which may encourage school dropout in South Africa is Black unemployment. According to the Department of Statistics, the number of Blacks out of work in March 1991 was 1 612 000 compared to 83 000 white, 43 000 Indians and 202 000 Coloureds (RSA, Statistics in Brief, 1992:4).

Loss of earnings by parents who are unemployed could have an adverse effect on the education of the children. To meet the school requirements of the child, a parent must earn a salary. To the Blacks who still pay for books and stationery, unemployment is a serious problem. Because of unemployment some people resort to crime as a means of obtaining the necessary money. Crime is thus, as a result of unemployment, part of the background of the potential dropout (Kruger, 1989:70).

A number of researchers found a significant relationship between the career of the father and school dropout of their children (Elliot, *et al.*, 1986; Hathaway & Monachesi, 1964 In Van Rooyen, 1990:48). In families where the father is a day-labourer 38% of boys and 32% of girls left the school before they completed high school (Van Rooyen, 1990:48). In comparison the dropout rate of children from professional fathers was only 5%. 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 socio-economic circumstances of the family, as determined by the career of the father, show the quality of the family structure (for example, housing, aspirations, intellectual climate, cultural educational level) which is connected to the children's progress at school. 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.

Poverty also affects involuntary relationships, like close family ties, characterised by the absence of conflict and verbal as well as non-verbal expression of affection (Duck,
For a healthy relationship between parents and children the ingredients should be unconditional acceptance, mutual trust and a feeling of security (Sonnekus, 1984:49). Unfortunately, however, this is not always the case. In many families conflict characterises the relationships because hardships, such as poverty, can actually cause conflict.

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 acceptance than economically deprived children. Children may drop out of school because they do not feel at home (Garbers, 1980:23).

(ii) Sensory deprivation

Sensory deprivation means inadequate sensory stimulation from birth as a result of living in a deprived and monotonous environment which has no facilities for the proper development of the mind of the child (Rumberger, et al. 1990:299). Because of the conditions under which they live the disadvantaged pupils of rural areas generally experience a paucity of educationally and culturally stimulating conditions. Another cause of this is neglect and lack of interest, mainly on the part of the parents or guardians of children.

Sensory deprivation occurs mostly in homes of uneducated, poor parents. These parents usually have large families; the larger the family the greater the demand on the resources of the parents, and conditions of material hardship may prevail. Chazan and Blackwell (1976:11,12) point out that a monotonous environment, which is particularly prevalent in homes of lower-income families, can be a form of sensory deprivation. The inevitable result is that the disadvantaged child unknowingly becomes the victim of inadequate sensory stimulation from the moment of birth. His perceptual development is retarded and it is with this backlog of less well-developed visual, tactile, auditory and discriminatory abilities that he is introduced to the formal school situation. This
immediately puts him at a disadvantage, because he may experience himself as being inferior to his fellow pupils (Ntlhe, 1995:42), this may contribute to a negative self-concept.

(iii) Linguistic deprivation

Because the environmentally disadvantaged family usually operates on a low cultural level, it is understandable that their language usage may also be extremely limited. The growth of speech is affected by many detrimental language factors, which are present in homes of all social levels, but, as research (Chazan and Blackwell, 1976:10) and the facts have so often shown, unfortunately to a far greater degree in the environment of the disadvantaged child. Before formal education commences, many distinct and separate language patterns have been repeatedly reinforced, without the child acquiring the vocabulary to verbalise the contents of an ever-expanding world being revealed to him.

Chazan and Blackwell (1976:12) mention that the speech patterns of the lower working class are rigid, their grammar is simple and their sentence construction is usually restricted. Unlike the middle-class child, who is exposed to a much "richer" and "elaborate" language, the child who has become sensitive to a "public" or "restricted" code, understands that "action" is more vital than "explanation". Although the spoken word of the disadvantaged is a language which is often colourful, it is not acceptable in the formal school situation. The child is only able to think in concrete terms, resulting in his being unable to verbalise concepts which require a measure of analysis and synthesis. As a result the development of abstract thinking may suffer.

Steyn, et al. (1989:239) state that these pupils' understanding and mental handling of facts, theories and abstract subjects such as the worlds of art, love, faith, sport, interpersonal relationships (in short, their intellectuality) is limited and there is a handicap, which is invariably passed on to their dependants. One of the basic necessities for the conducting of conversations on an intelligent basis, is an appropriate
vocabulary and reasonable command of the language. If the child does not have this, he will not be able to understand the teachers' commands and instructions, thereby experiencing frustration and failure in the school situation.

Another tragic aspect of disadvantaged home life, is the restricted reading habits of the parents, if any, which are mainly limited to magazines and comics featuring topics on love, sex and violence. This lack of interest in good literature is usually emulated by their children, who never develop a liking for enriching literature, dictionaries, encyclopedias or libraries. The result is that even though many children are able to read from a simple storybook, they are unable to read a newspaper or magazine dealing with actual matters intelligently. The question one may ask is whether such children are illiterate or semi-literate (Steyn, *et al.*, 1989:241).

4.3.2 Distance from school

This aspect was mentioned by respondents in three of the four focus groups. It is especially significant in rural and farm areas, as pupils often have to walk long distances to reach their school. Not surprisingly, this affects their school attendance negatively, and may contribute to early school leaving. This is supported by the research of Boocock (1980:40) and Helge (1991:1) who cite distance from school as a cause of absenteeism, leading to school dropout.

Distance from school and travelling problems also create a serious problem for Black rural pupils. Unsubsidized travelling to and from school discourages pupils. Pupils have to walk to and from school. Many parents are poor as a result of unemployment. Transport is not subsidised. The child cannot afford other means of transport like taxies
and trains. The child does not attend school regularly. He loses interest in school and becomes at-risk. Finally he drops out of school.

4.4 CULTURAL-POLITICAL FACTORS

As can be expected, the factors mentioned in this regard are unique to the South African situation. Although cultural deprivation is mentioned by various researchers as a cause of dropout (Smilansky & Nero, 1990:28), the respondents in this study did not refer to culture in this context. The two aspects that were mentioned are forced removals of families through indictments of tribal chiefs, and the initiation practices of some ethinical groups in South Africa. No reference to cultural factors such as these was found in the relevant literature.

4.5 PERSONAL FACTORS

In this section, support from the relevant literature for causes of dropout due to personal factors will be discussed, taking note of lack of motivation, truancy and absenteeism, teenage pregnancy, alcohol and substance abuse by pupils, intelligence and academic achievement, and self-concept.

4.5.1 Lack of motivation

Respondents pointed out that both the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation on the part of the pupil may be a problem because parental aspirations are often low, there is a high failure rate and fading interest. Most parents in the rural environments have no schooling background, there are not part-time school (adult-education schemes) and their
earning capacities are generally low. They cannot even motivate their own children to study further because they themselves are not literate enough. They cannot even monitor the school progress of their children. If the children perform poorly at school, they may subsequently lose interest and become at-risk. Ultimately they may drop out of school.

The relevant literature supports the assumption that lack of motivation contributes to early school leaving. Knoff (1983:550) found that lack of motivation is one of the reasons for early school leaving. In 1980 the Human Sciences Research Council (Projek Talentopname, 1980:60) linked dropout to inadequate achievement motivation. Rumberger, et al., (1990:286) argues that a pupil's marks can help or hinder the pupil's 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 may improve their academic performance and reduce the risk of dropping out.

In this research lack of motivation was also linked to job reservation, which made academic achievement seem like a waste of effort. Limited opportunities for further study aggravated this problem.

At the inception of Black education in 1953, 259 Blacks passed matric. Only eight years later, the number had dropped to 115, a deterioration of 44,4 per cent (Garbers, 1988:67). The government's main objective was to institutionalise the apartheid policy through Black schools. In outlining these objectives, the architect of Black education, Dr H F Verwoerd, said: "When I have control over native education, I will reform it so that natives will be taught from childhood that equality with Europeans is not for them" (Harvey, 1990:23).

Under this policy not only did the government separate Black schools on ethnic bases, they also prevented Blacks who were not previously registered as students in the established universities to register there in future without special permission from the government.
4.5.2 Truancy and absenteeism

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

According to Hersov (1980:7-19), the following factors are contributory to truancy: boredom with the school curriculum; moving from the 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, 1968:63).

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, were suspended from school, had a higher rate of absenteeism and tardiness than stayers (Ekstrom, et al., 1986:116). Being chronically truant is also cited by Naylor (1989:1) as a cause of 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 & Ratcliff In Hersov, 1980:71).
With regard to absenteeism, Barrington and Hendricks (1989:316) point out that success in high school is highly dependent upon the pupil's school attendance. If a pupil is chronically absent, he is apt to meet with failure, which places him in at-risk situations (Rush & Vitale, 1994:332). Interrupted school attendance and lack of continuity in curriculum from interruption of studies are conditions that raise the dropout rate for migrant students (Salerno, 1991:2). According to Wehlage (1989:37) poor academic performance is a virtual certainty for 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.

Absenteeism can have various causes, such as chronic illness, poverty, distance from school, etcetera (Boocock, 1980:40-41). Many of these have been mentioned by respondents, and will be discussed under the relevant categories. This supports Larsen and Shertzer's (1987:163) observation that the problem of school dropout is difficult to solve, primarily because no single, clear-cut relationship between cause and effect has been found.

Some causes of absenteeism also seem to be highly unique, especially in the context of farm schools, where pupils are often kept from school by their parents to perform tasks such as looking after cattle, cultivating fields and harvesting. Not surprisingly, not much confirmation of this aspect has been found in the relevant literature.

On farms, child labour is common. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) estimates indicate that more than 60 000 farm children are labourers in South Africa, most of them between 8 and 14 years of age (New Nation, 31 July 1986; and Haysom & Thompson, 1989:22).

The common law does not prohibit child labour. In the absence of statutory protection against the employment of farm children, such children over the age of 7 (that is, capable of consent) may enter contracts of employment which are ratified by their guardian and in which they consent. In terms of the Black Labour Regulations, written
parental consent is needed if the minor is employed on a farm separate from where his guardian or parent resides. From this we may assume that a farmer may employ his own worker's children without obtaining the worker's written consent. This undoubtedly encourages dropping out of formal schooling.

Not only is it a common practice for children to be involved in production and service work on their own farms, but they are also used for seasonal labour away from home, sometimes illegally (FLP, 1987:32).

There is no doubt that their wages are minimal - sometimes they are paid only in kind (FLP, 1987:33), a practice that further undercuts the employment conditions of adults and encourages school dropout.

The effect of child labour on schooling attendance varies. In some families where the child's income is needed, there is little or no time for schooling anyway. A common pattern is involvement in wage labour at a young age, with broken school attendance, or none at all. Where children do attend school, it is not uncommon for them to render paid or unpaid labour to farmers and their households on holidays, weekends and after school. And, on many farms, it is common practice for farm work to take precedence over schooling, especially at harvest time. Children are frequently taken out of classes for 1 - 2 hours daily during harvest. Gaganakis and Crewe (1987:10) and Levy (1976:12) cite instances of schools being closed for 1 or 2 weeks during peak harvest times. This directly causes dropout because no regular school attendance takes place, as a result of the fact that farm work takes precedence over schooling.

Though DET officials have expressed concern over the use of child labour, they have little power to prevent it, even during school time. Even if there were more adequate inspection services, the employment of children in general could not be prevented since it is not illegal. And the DET is generally prepared to leave the matter to the farmer. In the words of Schoeman, publicity officer of the DET, "This sort of thing is very difficult to control, and we have to rely on the farmer's sense of fair play" (Gaganakis &
Crewe, 1987:15). This is an instance of the general concern for farm schools that the DET periodically expresses, but seldom acts on.

In farm schools, where access to schooling depends on the goodwill of farmers rather than on legal entitlement, school attendance and levels of enrolment are even more variable than in other DET schools. The educationist Auerbach (1992:32) estimates that "half of African children on white farms get no schooling". The Farm Labour Project's estimation is that 31% of farm children attend farm schools (Farm Labour Project, 1987:32). Moreover, regular school attendance rates vary greatly from farm to farm; according to Nasson's (1990:27) study, two-thirds or more of the children attend school on some farms, while on others attendance rates are very low.

For those farm children who do go to school, attendance is likely to be broken or irregular, and the dropout rates is high. Auerbach (Johannesburg Star, June 18, 1982) estimates a 60% dropout by standard 2 (fourth grade) and according to the Farm Labour Project only 13% of children complete standard 5 (seventh grade) (Farm Labour Project, 1987:32).

4.5.3 Illegitimacy and teenage pregnancies

Respondents mentioned that illegitimacy and teenage pregnancies contribute to school dropout (see 3.2.2.2.).

Illegitimate children are children born to unwed mothers. The legitimacy of birth is recognised if the father and mother are legally or subsequently married (legitimatio per subsequens matrimonium) and by subsequent adoption of the child.

Because of practical considerations like single parenthood and lack of funds, illegitimate children can easily drop out of formal schooling. This kind of a situation may have a
stifling and negative effect on the child and is not conducive to proper school attendance. Unfortunately these children seem to be caught up in a vicious circle, because illegitimate children often bear illegitimate children. This is supported by the findings of Upchurch (1993:441) that teenagers from disadvantaged backgrounds were the most likely to dropout of school and/or to become teen mothers.

In the Black community, the greater tendency for girls to drop out may be attributed to teenage pregnancy. Rauch (1994:101) reports that academic difficulties may have a significant relationship to the high rate of school dropout associated with adolescent motherhood.

Teenage pregnancy is a serious problem in the rural areas because of the lack of sex education (Natriello, 1987:55). It can also be ascribed to lack of acceptance or love or be the result of rape. Anderson (1993:43), Naylor (1989:1) and Hahn (1987:259) found that pregnant pupils are much more likely to drop out of school than pupils who are not pregnant, and that the net effects of the elevated risks associated with motherhood can continue for several years.

In some cases, children of unmarried mothers attending secondary school are abandoned because of the inability to support or feed the little ones. If these children start school, they are most likely to drop out of school. The Citizens Policy Centre (Fagan & Pabon, 1990:309) found four major types of social explanations for school dropout, one being pregnant female adolescents or male pupils whose partners are pregnant.

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 & 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 the mother 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 (Bernard, 1989:170). 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., 1989:16-17). This affects the child's school attendance. It also contributes to an alarmingly high growth rate, which in turn affects school provision.

The Theron Commission (In Lötter et al. 1979:3.8.6.) emphasised that the uncontrolled and unplanned natural growth rate in the lower socio-economic strata is a very important facet of their low standard of living. Unwanted pregnancies can lead to social problems such as negligence and child abuse as well as other behavioural problems, which may all affect dropout.

4.5.4 Alcohol and substance abuse by pupils

Many pupils have discovered that alcohol is the "answer" to stress. Pupils in secondary schools abuse alcohol more freely than was the case some ten years ago (Van den Aardweg & Van den Aardweg, 1988:18). Although, at this stage, they cannot be classified as alcoholics, most of them have become excessive drinkers. They patronise shebeens even during school hours. It stands to reason that a pupil who returns to school after visiting a shebeen will be unable to study successfully (Steyn, et al., 1989:50).

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 offenses (Wolfgang et al. 1987 In Fagan & Pabon, 1990:307). Dropouts appear
to use drugs more frequently and require treatment more often than their school attending peers (Select Committee or Narcotic Abuse and Control, 1986 In Fagan & Pabon, 1990:307).

4.5.5 Intelligence and academic achievement

The concept "ability" brings intelligence to mind. 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 socially neglected adolescent is not brought up towards adequate school progress and this leads to failure. The result is a strong tendency to escape from the unpleasant school situation (Pretorius, 1979:204-205).

School failure, which is an aspect of ability, is frequently cited as a cause of problem behaviour. According to one common paradigm (Pretorius, 1979:209), poor school performance is hypothesized to lead to an impaired self-view and in turn to the pupil's opposing the context that is seen as responsible. Poor school performance emanating from poor ability is indicated at times by scores on standardised or teacher made tests, by a history of low grades, and by IQ scores. The blame for poor performance is more commonly attributed to the school's failure to provide an adequate instructional or emotional environment.
Ability has been widely investigated as a factor of school dropout and it is possible that high school dropouts have lower average intelligence quotients (IQ's) than those who stay in school (Sewell, Palmo & Manni, 1981 In Rumberger, 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). In conclusion this implies that even pupils with a relatively high IQ can drop out of school. It can probably be assumed that the situation in South Africa is much the same as it is in America.

4.5.6 Self-concept

Respondents in this research referred explicitly and implicitly to the relationship between dropout and self-concept. A vast body of research supports the assumption of a link between early school leaving and a negative self-concept of pupils (Ntlhe, 1995; McCaul, 1988:24). Trusty and Dooley-Dickey (1993:31) report that, in their research, dropout was significantly related to low self-concept of pupils. The fact that many dropout prevention programmes incorporate actions aimed at improving pupils' self concepts confirms that low or poor self concepts are indeed part of the make up of at-risk pupils.
4.6 ASPECTS FOUND IN RELEVANT LITERATURE BUT NOT IN THIS RESEARCH

Only one cause of school dropout found in the relevant literature was not reported in this research. Hahn (1987:259) cites fear as a reason why youngsters in America dislike school so much. The cause of tremendous insecurity for these pupils, when they enter the school building each day, is the activities of gang members in the school (Felgar, 1992:9). Hahn (1987:259) reports that studies in the Chicago area have found that young people list fear of gang members in and around schools as the primary reason for leaving school.

None of the respondents in this research referred to such activities; this may be ascribed to the rural context. Had the focus been on urban schools, this factor may have emerged as well.

4.7 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the literature review in the form of a literature control has been presented. Although the majority of themes and categories could be substantiated by the relevant literature, unique contributions of the study have been discovered. Reading each theme with its categories, it becomes clear that some of these overlap. This supports researchers' views, as mentioned in the discussion, that causes of dropout are not simple, but complex and intertwined. A prevention strategy will have to keep this in mind.
CHAPTER 5
PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION STRATEGY WITH REGARD TO
SCHOOL DROPOUT IN RURAL BLACK SOUTH AFRICA

"... dropping out is a problem not confined to a handful of minority students who couldn't learn. It is a systemic failure." (Hahn, 1987:257)

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 5 the description of the intervention strategy aimed at reducing and curbing school dropout in rural Black South Africa will be presented. Methodology was outlined earlier in Chapter 2. Based on the causes for dropout identified through analysis of focus group interviews, in conjunction with a review of the relevant literature, the researcher describes a broad strategy for curbing the problem of school dropout, followed by guidelines for the implementation of the strategy. The proposed strategy will then be discussed with experts in educational guidance and psychology, to obtain peer group evaluation. Their recommendations will be applied in order to refine both strategy and guidelines.

Before the actual strategy is discussed, it is necessary to look at the at-risk pupil and his situation. The secondary school pupil as an adolescent is a product of a home and a school. As a child in the home, he is deeply influenced by the behaviour and attitudes of his parents. The family environment may encourage him to attend school regularly or discourage, dissuade and, in the final analysis, preclude him from regular and prolonged school attendance. Factors within the home and the school may also lead to the development of a negative self-concept (Power, 1984:115).
On account of the reasons for dropout given in this research, in conjunction with the literature review, the following conclusion can be drawn: if a child does not have security and stability, if his world is characterised by home and school problems, his regular school attendance may be adversely affected, eventually leading to his decision to leave school and not complete his school career.

According to Lecompte and Preissle (1992:848) researchers utilising the approach of Functionalism were interested in identifying, describing, and enumerating the principle components and processes in educational systems. This involved exploring what the role of pupils was, how they participated in school activities and what the consequences were for children as a result of their participation in various kinds of educational experiences. Conflict theorists began to question this approach as to whether or not the interpretations rendered were accurate or beneficial. The primary contribution of conflict approaches was to introduce the concepts of asymmetries of power and access into research in education. Their research focused on the lack of fit between schools and pupils as a problem of schools, not clients, and to seek ways of amending it which emphasised changing school organisational patterns and social characteristics, rather than pupil attitudes and behaviour. The prevention strategy described in the following section inclines towards the conflict theory approach.

5.2 DESCRIPTION OF THE PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION STRATEGY

A programme or strategy to decrease the dropout rate of secondary school students should entail a two-fold approach: both intervention and prevention should be considered. Intervention should be aimed at adolescents who are already burdened by a large number of the characteristics of a typical dropout. Prevention strategies should focus on early prevention, meaning that it will not only target adolescents but also
primary school pupils and their home and school environment. This can be substantiated by the observation that dropout is only a symptom of a condition that started early in the pupil's life (Rush & Vitale, 1994:326). Van Rooyen (1990:52) argues that dropout could be prevented if the economically deprived child attends a good creche. This supports Hunt, et al.'s (1972:12) statement that early intervention is a challenge to incompetence and poverty; Mann (1986:311) argued that "The earlier we start, the less damage and the greater the dividend".

Any programme designed for dropout prevention should take cognisance of existing programmes and their weak and strong points. Although available dropout prevention programmes were studied, it must be kept in mind that the focus of this research is highly contextual. Some general facets of available strategies may therefore be incorporated, but specific aspects will have to be tailored to the needs of the community for which the strategies are designed. Oxley (1988:14) remarks that most available programmes are characterised by a categorical approach, which renders them inadequate, because they provide special services to only a limited number of students under a rigid format for a limited time. In addition, Webb (1987:5) points out that inadequate planning can be one of the main problems hampering programme effectiveness. Taking the last two statements into account, it becomes clear that a dropout prevention programme should be neither too general, nor too specific; planning should take heed of a specific context, without becoming too rigidly designed.

Furthermore, a strategy for the prevention of dropout should keep the complexity of the phenomenon, and the inter-relatedness of causes into account. Dwyer and Heckt (1992:55) and Hoyle (1993:27) stress school-parent communications and school-community collaboration as the key to any prevention and intervention effort. The basis of the strategy described in the following section will therefore be a multi-faceted approach, involving the school, the home and the community, bearing in mind that the primary responsibility for dropout prevention lies with policy makers. Hahn (1987:262)
summarises the requirements for a viable dropout prevention programme in the following words: "What will work is a comprehensive, integrated approach in which each element is strengthened and reinforced by the other components".

In Figure 5.1 the parameters for the proposed prevention and intervention programme are presented.

In the following discussion it will become clear that, once again, separate aspects overlap. The responsibility of one stakeholder does not end where that of another begins. If prevention programmes are not implemented through complementary actions of stakeholders, the chances of success are minimal.
5.2.1 THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE GOVERNMENT

The responsibility of the government in this respect has two dimensions. The first can be seen as a financial responsibility, with regard to its economic policy, while the second refers to its educational responsibility as executed by the Department of Education.

5.2.1.1 Economic policy

Gage (1990:280) states that poverty plays a major role in determining who drops out. As respondents in this research repeatedly mentioned the role of low socio-economic status as a cause of dropout, and it is common knowledge that rural communities in South Africa are characterised by extreme poverty, it can be argued that an important step in dropout reduction will be the improvement of the financial situation of communities and families in rural areas. Baas (1991:1) states that solutions to the dropout problem are inseparably tied to combatting poverty. Increasing the opportunities for employment of workers in the rural areas should be a matter of priority. If rural people are given employment opportunities in their own areas, dropout prevention will be advanced in two ways: firstly the dropout rate in rural areas itself will be lowered; the dropout rate in cities may also be reduced if the migration of people to cities, with the accompanying pressure on schools in urban areas, is restrained.

5.2.1.2 Educational policy (Department of Education)

The second dimension of government responsibility with regard to dropout prevention is contained in its educational policy, as implemented by the Department of Education. State departments of education should serve as resources and encourage decision-making with regard to dropout-prevention programmes to be made at the local level (Baas:
LeCompte and Preissle (1993:140) report that there has been a shift in dropout research from viewing students as conscious "dropouts" who choose to leave school prematurely, to viewing them as "pushouts" who are actively encouraged in their departure by school practices such as the bureaucratic organisation of schools and the time schedule, the behaviour of teachers and staff, the structure of the curriculum, as well as the general relationship between schools and the structure of opportunity in the larger society.

Various aspects of the educational policy were referred to in reasons cited for dropout, namely teacher qualifications, irrelevant curriculum, overcrowding of schools - which is reflected in the untenable teacher-pupil ratio - discipline, and farm schools. Although the educational policy with regard to these factors may be sound, the practical implementation is often fraught with problems, which should be noted and acted upon by the Department of Education. Each of these factors will be discussed in the following section.

a. Teacher qualifications

The issue of teacher qualifications should be made a matter of priority, with surveys to determine the level of teacher qualifications, especially in rural and farm schools. Respondents mentioned that well-qualified teachers were unwilling to go to rural schools, preferring to be appointed at urban schools.

Where standards of teacher qualifications are found to be unacceptable, in-service training should be provided. Keller (1991:400) argues that effective, long-term dropout prevention will not occur without broad-based, in-depth and ongoing staff development. Staff development that empowers teachers can improve the achievement or at-risk pupils (Altieri, 1991:25), thereby reducing their risk of dropping out. Boschee and Mehrer (1988:23) and Reyhner (1995:12) also stress in-service activities for staff as a dropout prevention measure.

Basic training of teachers should not only be concerned with transfer of knowledge, but also include child psychology. Presumably this is already the case. The importance of
knowledge of the child for success in the teaching situation should, however, be stressed. This will enable teachers to develop an understanding for different personality types and ways of positively influencing the self-concept of the pupil. However, emphasis on interpersonal relationships between pupil and teacher does not mean that the knowledge transfer aspect can be neglected. Teachers should continuously be encouraged to take note of innovations with regard to their subject matter and teaching strategies (Clifford, 1990:23).

b. Curriculum planning

Curriculum planning should be structured, taking the needs of different pupils into account. Not all pupils aspire to futures requiring purely academic qualifications. Teaching of subjects that are relevant to the career aspirations of pupils should be made available. Gage (1990:282) found that schools providing strong vocational emphasis with pupils learning practical, job-related skills in school, applying their academic learning to real life situations, reduced their rates of absenteeism, while average grades of pupils were higher. According to Grannis (1991:2) relevance of school invokes the connection between education and employment. Subject content must be relevant to pupils' interests, but should also promote higher-order thinking and problem-solving and provide good preparation for employment. In this regard Naylor (1989:11) recommends that vocational educators should motivate at-risk pupils by shifting their programmes from a subject-focused to a career-focused curriculum.

Another aspect of the curriculum that is important is cultural relevance. This is especially important in rural areas, where pupils have not been exposed to the western culture as much as their urban counterparts. Reyhner (1995:12) and Hoyle (1995:35) remark on the necessity of in-service programmes to make rural teachers more responsive to the needs of their pupils, to increase educational relevance by integrating material from the native culture, and to be culturally sensitive. Although these authors refer to the Native American pupil, their remarks are relevant for the South African context as well.
c. Overcrowded schools

Overcrowding of schools goes hand in hand with the economic situation in the country. The building of more schools, not only in the cities, but also in rural areas, should be made a priority when budgets are planned.

Grannis (1991:3) reports that mini-schools or schools-within-a-school, where at-risk pupils are separated from not at-risk pupils, have become common in the United States of America, on account of the fact that positive relationships with teachers can be established more easily in smaller groups. This should be considered in South Africa as well, as dropout prevention programmes will only succeed where there is a low pupil-teacher ratio (Nevares, 1992:52; Herdman, 1994:16). Hahn (1987:258) also reports a correlation between dropout and pupil/teacher ratio; the obvious solution - that of improving the pupil/teacher ratio - requires employing additional teachers.

d. Disciplinary measures

Another aspect of educational policy that should be addressed is the fact that a good policy is often not applied correctly in schools; for example, disciplinary measures and rules regarding teacher conduct. Respondents in this research mentioned styles of discipline such as corporal punishment, bullying, derogatory remarks, and even torture as causes of dropout. An extremely negative aspect of teacher conduct is the sexual abuse of children, mostly girls, by teachers. Strict disciplinary measures should be applied when teachers are found to be guilty of such unacceptable conduct.

e. Farm schools

Farm schools were traditionally at the mercy, so to speak, of the farmer. Every farmer could decide whether or not to have a school for children of employees or not (Harvey, 1990:89). Decisions about equipment and standards were also largely left to the farmer's discretion. If a farmer decided not to have a school on his farm, he could decide whether children of employees could attend a school on another farm.
As farm schools more often than not have only one teacher, children of different ages and levels of development are taught in one class. On account of this, the practical solution for all the problems experienced by farm schools (see 4.2.1.3), seems to be to do away with farm schools altogether. This would mean that schools in rural towns would have to be upgraded to accommodate all the pupils from farms. Only where farm schools comply with reasonable standards as far as equipment and personnel are concerned should these schools be allowed to continue.

Designing the best options for children of black farm workers would also mean putting a stop to the employment of these children during cultivation and harvest times. It would require the provision of subsidised transport for farm pupils to the schools.

Various studies point to the fact that the provision of pre-school development can reduce the risk of dropout (Slavin & Madden, 1989:6). Therefore, the possibility of at least one pre-primary school per region should be investigated; transport for pre-school farm children to the school should be provided.

5.2.2 THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL AND PARENTS' ROLE

Specific solutions to dropout must be school-based, rather than delivered from above (Baas, 1991:2). According to Hamby (1989:22) schools should realise that dropout is indeed a problem, that schools contribute to dropout, and can make a difference. In his words,

"To set standards for young people, have them fail these standards, and then blame the failure entirely on them, their families, or some other element outside of school is an abdication of our roles as educators."
The principal as the key figure in the school environment will have to initiate the dropout prevention measures for his school. Each school should create a programme that fits its individual needs (Evans, 1995:21), developing programmes for specific situations and pupils (Wylie & Hunter, 1994:74). Nevertheless, the framework for multifaceted solutions can be similar, involving a systematic approach consisting of the following (Hergert, 1991:11):

- identification and intervention policies: it is essential that at-risk pupils should be identified as soon as possible;
- intervention by educational leaders, teachers and parents;
- academic support programmes;
- small scale prevention practices.

Hahn (1987:260) includes the following:

- mentorships and intensive, sustained counselling for troubled youngsters;
- an array of social services, including health care and family planning education;
- concentrated remediation using individualised instruction and competency-based curricula;
- involvement of parents and community organisations in dropout prevention;
- heightened accountability for dropout rates.
Developing an effective programme furthermore calls for identifying needs that can be addressed through using a holistic approach (Rogus & Wildenhaus, 1991:22), combining different components of dropout prevention into a coherent whole by coordinating the efforts of the school, the family and the community into a comprehensive set of strategies (Altieri, 1991:25).

Specific aspects of the school and home environment will be discussed in the following section.

5.2.2.1 Lack of facilities

Although lack of facilities can be primarily seen as the concern of the government, schools and parents should not consider themselves as having no responsibility in this regard. Communicating with the business community in order to make them aware of the problem is advocated in a report by the City University of New York (1988:14) and by Hamby (1989:22).

5.2.2.2 Teachers' influence

Teachers should be made aware of their contribution to the dropout problem. Some of the aspects mentioned below (such as discipline) should not only be addressed in the school, but also by the Department of Education.

a. Discipline

The aim of discipline should be made clear to all teachers, in order that they may apply it correctly. Findings show that pupils do better in schools that support their needs and where they are valued and not coerced (Trusty & Dooley-Dickey, 1993:21). Mayer, Mitchell and Clementi (1993:135) reports that where teachers were provided consultation
to make the classroom environment less punitive, the environment became more positive and dropout decreased. A principal who achieved remarkable success in keeping pupils in his school interested in education says:

"I hire only teachers who agree to treat students with respect at all times, and I discard those who, despite their good intentions, infantilise or ridicule students." (Gross, 1990:625).

Teachers should never forget that respect for the pupil is the cornerstone of teaching.

b. Teacher qualifications

As this was dealt with under Educational policy (see 5.2.1.2.), it will not be discussed in much detail here. In that section it was pointed out that teacher education should not only stress the transfer of knowledge, but also knowledge of the child. With regard to subject matter teachers should continuously take note of innovations (Clifford, 1990:23). This author states that it is time for educators to replace coercive, constraint-laden techniques with autonomy-supportive techniques and to supplant error-proof lessons with risk-taking opportunities. Keller (1991:407) states - with regard to dropout prevention programmes - that staff development planners should realise that pupils do not respond to programmes, but to individualised, personally delivered solutions.

Specific measures with regard to teacher qualifications will be discussed in the guidelines for the implementation of the dropout prevention strategy, which will be presented in the second part of this chapter.

c. Negative attitudes of teachers

This aspect will be discussed in conjunction with the self-concept of pupils, for reasons which will become clear in the discussion.
Teachers should be prepared for pupil diversity, in order to take care of the affective needs of pupils. A negative attitude of teachers may lead to negative attitudes in pupils. Hamby's (1989:23) remark that our attitudes and values are learned from our experiences, and from what other people tell us about the world and about ourselves, is supported by the research on self-concept. He adds that we continuously seek confirmation of ourselves as individuals. Teachers should constantly keep this in mind in their interaction with pupils.

A negative self concept is often emphasised as contributing to school dropout (Ntlhe, 1995; Bucci & Reitzammer, 1992:64). Constructive intervention with regard to creating positive self concepts in at-risk pupils should therefore be an essential part of a dropout-prevention programme. Blum and Jones (1993:207) report that a programme designed to provide potential dropouts with support systems that help them develop positive attitudes about themselves resulted in improved academic achievement, which may prevent early school leaving. The best dropout prevention programmes give students a chance to succeed, promote a sense of personal responsibility, and build self esteem (Trevino, 1991:31). Building self-esteem through experiencing success in the classroom is suggested by George (1992:36), Bucci and Reitzammer (1992:65) and Power (1984:123).

The research findings of Williams (1987:317) - that the primary characteristic distinguishing potential dropouts from pupils who are not at risk is the dropout's pervasive feelings of isolation, disconnectedness and rejection - support what has been said in Chapter 4 (see 4.2.1.2). When pupils perceive teachers as hostile, the school becomes a negative place and they want to flee from the aversiveness they feel there. Grannis (1991:1) found that pupils' positive experience of the school environment is one of the essential categories of dropout prevention programme characteristics.

The essence of this discussion can be summarised in the observation that a positive school climate should be created for all pupils (Baldwin, 1992:357; Dryfoos, 1991:630; Mayer, et al., 1993:144). School climate is stressed as an important aspect in the prevention of school dropout (Sinclair, 1994). In this regard Grannis (1991:2) states that administrators with positive regard for staff, pupils and parents are essential to a safe
and responsive environment. This is supported by Arhar's (1992:14) suggestion that principals can improve a feeling of school membership by removing impediments to membership through fostering a sense of support for both pupils and teachers. Schools should be staffed by teachers who believe they can make a difference and who foster positive self-concepts in their pupils (Reitzammer, 1990:288).

d. Teacher awareness

Pupils' awareness in class is highly dependent on teacher awareness of the individual pupil's personality, learning style and situation at home. It should therefore be considered in conjunction with teacher qualifications and teacher-pupil ratio, as these aspects may contribute to teacher awareness of problems their pupils may have.

Slavin and Madden (1989:9) recommend that, for the provision of the best possible classroom instruction, teachers should use instructional methods with a demonstrable capacity to accelerate student achievement, especially that of students at risk. Success in school is highly dependent upon the pupil's being taught the way he learns best (Barrington & Hendricks, 1989:312), and this requires that teachers should be aware of differences between pupils, and individual pupils' needs (Naylor, 1989:1).

Furthermore, Rush and Vitale (1994:331) warn that pupils who are socially withdrawn are just as at risk as those who act in a manner unacceptable within the school culture. This stresses the importance of teacher awareness in the classroom, as one of the characteristics of successful dropout prevention programmes is teachers' awareness of individual pupils' needs (Naylor, 1989:1).
5.2.2.3 Truancy and absenteeism

Pupils should be encouraged to attend school regularly. As truancy and absenteeism can be linked with overcrowded classrooms, negative attitudes of teachers, irrelevant curricula, and lack of parental involvement, it will only be discussed briefly, the rationale being that truancy and absenteeism will decrease if schools become interesting, inviting places, and parents become interest in their children.

Rush and Vitale (1994:332) link attendance with continued failure which places students in at-risk situations and negatively affects their self-esteem and their motivation to participate in and to attend school. As a pattern of poor attendance is one of the most obvious early signs of the potential dropout, educators must make early and continuous contact with students who miss school often and devise ways to keep them coming to school (Hamby, 1989:22). In this regard Bucci and Reitzammer (1992:65) advocate absence monitoring. This strengthens the argument for smaller classes, because determining who is absent daily in classes of fifty or more pupils becomes almost impossible.

5.2.2.4 Lack of guidance

Lack of guidance was seen as having two dimensions, namely the lack of role models (linked with lack of guidance by parents), and lack of vocational guidance. The strategy dealing with this aspect should, therefore, consider cooperation between the school and parents.

Hamby (1989:24) points out that rapid changes in society necessitate that schools accept a variety of responsibilities that once were fulfilled by other segments of the community. In addition to teaching basic academic skills and transmitting general cultural knowledge, schools have found it necessary to provide students with job training and personal coping skills. As a result schools should involve students at all grade levels
in both instructional and real-life situations that force them to confront issues of personal living, for example, interpersonal skills, money management, leisure time management, personal hygiene and self-care, lifelong learning, and citizenship responsibilities.

Evans (1995:140), referring to vocational guidance, suggests participatory visits to tertiary institutions for high school pupils. An annual career carnival, where businesses, industries and service groups set up booths at school to explain job requirements and distribute information, should be considered (Hamby, 1989:25). Cragar (1994:61) reports that a dropout prevention programme that involved community leaders and employers as mentors for pupils achieved remarkable success with adolescents-at-risk.

Where parents as role models are concerned, as well as the influence that parents' attitudes have on their children's decision to stay in school, principals will have to take the responsibility of "educating" parents in this regard. With reference to migrant farm workers, Martinez (1994:334) states that, although these parents may value education, their children often confront obstacles such as mobility, poverty and hostility that encourage them to drop out of school.

With regard to parental involvement, Baas (1991:1) states the following:

"Parents must affirm their children's educational goals; watch their health, sleep, and study patterns; talk to them regularly about their school work; and be truly interested."

Furthermore, school-parent communications are the key to any prevention effort. Parent involvement programmes should be linked to both school and parent needs to realise the greatest benefits (Dwyer & Hecht, 1992:52).

Teenage pregnancy was mentioned as a cause of dropout. Sexual guidance should therefore be included in the school curriculum taking note of research with regard to the practical implication of this sensitive issue (Matthews, 1995). Various authors suggest health care and pregnancy prevention education as ways to curb school dropout (Bucci

"Preventing students from dropout out may also involve ... implementing a comprehensive health and family planning programme..."

5.2.2.5 Lack of motivation

The motivation of pupils should be seen as a short term and long term issue. Teachers should take responsibility for motivating their pupils for their present school work and a life-long commitment to work of a high standard. Motivation is a complex phenomenon, and teachers should be informed with regard to motivation strategies. Lack of motivation can be seen in conjunction with harsh discipline, criticism and negative remarks, all of which are notorious for not motivating people. According to Cohen and deBettencourt (1991:263) early instruction interventions with regard to school dropout should address motivation, self-concept and learning strategies.

Failing and retaining pupils can also be discussed as a strategy that does not encourage or motivate. Slavin and Madden (1989:4) phrase it thus:

"One of the most frequently used strategies to deal with at-risk students is also the least effective: flunking them."

Specific measures that can be taken by teachers to enhance pupil motivation will be discussed in section 5.3.2.3.

5.2.3 THE ROLE OF THE COMMUNITY

Various studies emphasise involving business and community-based organisations in successful dropout prevention programmes (Baizerman & Compton, 1993:17; City
University of New York, 1988: Hoyle, 1993; Keller, 1991: 407). Phelps (1993:16) emphasises increased communication between school and community in dropout prevention, and suggests that social services should provide better coordination of services for children and parents. Respondents in this study also mentioned the involvement of social services and the community in dropout prevention programmes.

5.2.3.1 Social services

Community organisations can render services with regard to particular social problems which may contribute to a pupil's decision to terminate his school career prematurely. In research on parental alcoholism by Moraba (1996), it was pointed out that this is an important contributing factor to chronic absence of pupils which may eventually lead to dropout. The involvement of social services - both to support at-risk pupils from homes where one or both parents are alcoholists, and to try and rehabilitate the parents - was recommended.

Social services and related organisations should also take note of families where both parents are unemployed. These families, especially, will have to be supported with regard to:

* proper and adequate feeding in order to prevent malnutrition and illness;

* provision for basic necessities for school, such as school uniforms, books and school fees.

5.2.3.2 The business community

Specific measures for dropout prevention that can be implemented by involving the business community are described by Adler and Cragin (1993:19). These include
partnerships such as adopt-a-school, which enable schools to serve at-risk youth by providing increased access to employment and work experiences and personal attention. School principals should realise that the initiative for involving the business community have to originate as a result of their actions: they will have to contact businesses in the vicinity of the school and enlist support for their school and their dropout prevention measures.

An important factor to take into consideration where role models from the business community are concerned is stressed by Docherty and Davis (1992:59), who reported on a successful cooperation between a school and business community in Louisiana in the United States. They found that these adult role models were especially effective if they were from the same racial background as the pupils. This finding is supported by Lincoln and Higgins (1991:7).

The general discussion of various aspects of the prevention and intervention programme or strategy with regard to dropout was presented in the first part of this chapter. More specific guidelines for the implementation of the programme will be discussed in the next section.

5.3 GUIDELINES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DROPOUT PREVENTION STRATEGY

In this section guidelines will once again be presented, referring to the role of the government (including the Department of Education), the school and the community.

5.3.1 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE GOVERNMENT

In view of the causes of dropout, where poverty stands out as the most conspicuous overall factor (Gage, 1990:281), the following can be suggested:
A fiscal policy that is sound and that will stimulate the economy.

The national budget should make adequate provision for education; it should, in fact, be one of the most important items, if not the first, because the very soundness of society rests on high quality education. It is encouraging that the government recently announced that a substantial amount of money was allocated towards education. This testifies to the importance that is attached to education.

The socio-economic situation of families in rural areas should be made a matter of priority; specific measures should be taken to provide more job opportunities in rural areas, probably in conjunction with business communities.

The importance of education should be stressed, not only by politicians on television, but by specific measures, such as seminars for parents and pupils.

The possibility of implementing the German model of "tracking" pupils around the fifth or seventh grade to different secondary schools (Gage, 1990:284), should be investigated. In this model pupils of middle-ability attend technical secondary schools, with the students going to work as apprentices in commercial or technical occupations after standard eight. These pupils continue in full-time or part-time vocational school during their apprenticeships. This apprenticeship, rather than school, constitutes the educational setting for pupils not planning to go to a tertiary educational institution. According to Salerno (1991:3) work-study could be an effective feature of dropout prevention programmes for two reasons: Firstly, it can help students develop new occupational skills, and, secondly, it can couple education with the income many students from poverty-stricken homes need. Although it may be difficult to integrate academic study and vocational training, there are many successful examples that can be used as models (Von Borstel, 1992:269).

Hamby (1989:25) points out that providing alternative goals and alternative means to the same goal can be a logistical nightmare, but that it can be done,
especially with the development of advanced technology, the use of volunteers, and creative staffing procedures.

* Annual reports on dropout prevention measures should be presented by the Department of Education to the government.

* More schools should be built and more teachers trained, to alleviate problems of overcrowded, understaffed schools. A teacher-pupil ratio that enables teachers to diversify their methods according to individual pupils' needs should be maintained.

* Strong disciplinary actions should be taken, to the full extent of the law, against any teacher found guilty of molesting a child, or applying illegal methods of discipline. Systems that enable pupils to report such incidents without fear of retribution should be created.

* The laws with regard to child labour should be very strictly adhered to in order to prevent employers from tempting children to leave school.

The Department of Education should consider the following aspects:

* Teacher training:

Urgent measures should be taken to improve the standard of teacher training, both basic and in-service training. In this, two aspects should be emphasised, namely skills in the transfer of knowledge (pertaining to specific subjects), and interpersonal skills (where the emphasis should be on child psychology, on account of the fact that many dropouts are actually "pushouts" as a result of a negative school climate).

School principals should receive ongoing training with regard to management and leadership skills, especially with regard to the dropout problem.
Varied curricula should be considered, taking into account multiple intelligences (Gage, 1990:284).

- Dropout prevention measures:

An overall dropout prevention strategy should be designed, by a committee specifically structured for the cause. The Department of Education should require each school to have its own specific dropout prevention strategy, which is adapted to the specific needs of the school, within the framework of the overall strategy. Programmes for at-risk pupils should be made an ongoing priority (Vandermolen & Nolan, 1993:40). These programmes should be evaluated continuously in order to determine which strategies work, and to refine programmes.

- Annual career exhibitions should be held, in cooperation with the business community. These exhibitions should not only be presented in the larger metropolitan areas, but countrywide to enable pupils from all communities to attend. A specific day for each province can be set aside on the school calendar for this purpose. Attendance should be compulsory for all standard seven pupils, because they are at a stage where career decisions become crucial. Transport to decentralised exhibition venues should be provided to all pupils, free of charge.

- The practice of failing and retaining students should be researched, and alternative ways of dealing with pupils who do not progress in school should be considered. This does not mean that all pupils should automatically be promoted, because illiterate school graduates will not benefit society, and will be frustrated in themselves. Grannis (1991:12) states aptly that promotion on social
grounds alone also puts pupils at risk. The causes of failure should rather be determined and addressed.

* Initiation practices of different cultures should be researched in order to determine ways in which to reconcile these practices and normal education for adolescents.

5.3.2 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SCHOOL, HOME AND COMMUNITY

In the previous chapters school and home were discussed separately; in the following discussion, these sectors will be discussed jointly, because causes are seldom singular; more often there is an interplay between the school, home and social environment of potential dropouts. Franklin and Streeter (1995:433) support this statement:

"School, psychological and family factors ... coexist and interact in the creation of this social problem. In addition, these factors interact with larger sociocommunal and sociopolitical realities that may influence students, families and school systems".

5.3.2.1 Guidance and counselling

Every school should provide guidance and counselling, not only through professionally trained school counsellors, but also through knowledgeable and skilled teachers and administrators. Frequent group and individual counselling for pupils’ personal problems must be provided at all levels of schooling (Hamby, 1989:25). Gage (1990:282) urges principals to see to it that every at-risk student has a close relationship with a counsellor
or teacher who has high standards and clear goals and who has won the pupil's confidence and trust. A disturbing aspect of black education in South Africa is that the guidance teacher is often not utilised correctly (Moraba, 1996; Madigoe, 1996). Guidance periods are used for teaching other subjects. This seems to be the result of overcrowding. Principals of schools where this is the case should realise that the guidance period is of the utmost importance, especially for pupils who experience problems such as those related with early school leaving.

Training in life skills such as those mentioned in 5.2.2.4 should become part of the curriculum.

Vocational guidance should be considered in cooperation with the business community. Community resources should be used, both by bringing people into the school and by taking pupils on field trips. The principal should involve teachers and pupils in organising these experiences. The aspect of field trips is discussed in more detail in 5.3.2.6.

The use of role models seems to be important in the context of this study. A principal visiting another school in his academic regalia was highly impressive, with the pupils enquiring whether he was a "sangoma". Subsequently he was presented to them as a sangoma of learning. Principals should arrange for people from different job environments to visit the school with applicable "regalia" and organise video information sessions, showing a wide variety of occupations, with explanations of the relevant requirements. Hill (1992:23) reports success with a dropout prevention programme that offered pupils some role models who informed the pupils about their own careers and to provide an occasional field trip. Pupils should be guided explicitly with regard to the requirements for each occupation. Stereotyping of jobs with regard to gender should be avoided.

With regard to counselling, principals should involve experts from the community, even on a volunteer basis. When communities are made aware of the needs of students, the
response may be surprising. The guidance teacher can be entrusted with the responsibility of acting as facilitator between the school and the community.

Parental involvement normally poses a difficult problem, because parents who are not involved with their children's education are difficult to reach. This may be even more of a problem in the context of this study, because many parents are migrant labourers. Principals will have to devise creative and innovative ways of reaching all parents in the rural community and involving them with their children's school work. Working together with people in the community, involving volunteers and the business community, adult education centres can be considered. If more parents become literate, their involvement in their children's education may not seem such a burden. Encouraging parental involvement by informing parents of school endeavours and creating a school climate that welcomes parents is the responsibility of the school (Phelps, 1993:15).

The importance of education for everyone should be communicated to parents. This should be done in interesting ways, and not in the form of boring lectures, by people who seem to be performing a burdensome duty.

Sexual education programmes should be considered, taking note of research in this regard.

5.3.2.2 Truancy and absenteeism

It has been pointed out in paragraph 4.2.1.4 that truancy and absenteeism are linked to other causes of dropout, such as boredom with the school curriculum (Hersov, 1980:7) and unhappiness at home (Tyerman, 1968:63). As poor attendance can contribute to poor academic achievement which leads to failure, a negative self concept and, eventually, dropout, urgent measures should be taken to prevent it. Hamby (1989:22) suggests the following:
Develop a comprehensive attendance policy and communicate it to students, parents and community leaders. This policy should reflect the beliefs that every pupil should be in school and that the school values attendance.

Develop a systematic accounting system for early identification and continuous monitoring of student absences with special attention to students who are chronically absent.

Let parents know immediately when their child is absent.

Develop a makeup programme for excessive absences that is flexible enough to accommodate a range of situations but rigid enough to discourage abuses.

Develop incentives for good attendance for individuals, classes, and schools. Reward individuals and groups for perfect and almost perfect attendance for a month, a semester, or the entire year, for example, by recognising them in local newspapers or on radio and television or by issuing tickets with which students can select items from a menu of prizes that they helped establish. Schools can also acknowledge attendance with ribbons, buttons, trophies, plaques, certificates, savings bonds, and coupons from fast-food restaurants.

Encourage teachers to communicate the importance of being in school by using anticipation statements daily (e.g., "I'll see you in the morning," "Tomorrow we will talk about why the leaves change colours," "Next Tuesday is the day our special guest will be here").

Organise peer groups to encourage pupils to attend school regularly.

Reward teacher attendance. In many school districts, the rate of teacher absenteeism is higher than that of the students. Teachers need incentives, too.
5.3.2.3 Motivation

In this respect Hamby (1989:26) advises that teachers should communicate to pupils in explicit ways that the school is for them and that it supports them in their efforts to learn. As the school climate will add or subtract to the motivation of pupils, the principal and teachers should be actively concerned with creating a positive, motivating climate. One way of doing this may be to involve the pupils, as much as possible, in their education, for example by asking them what would motivate them, and discuss this with them within the framework of the requirements for passing subjects and standards, in order to reach solutions that will satisfy both their needs and the needs of the school. As success is a powerful motivator (Lamprecht 1988:25), it is vital that all pupils are given opportunities for experiencing success.

One of the reasons that pupils fail is that they often do not know how to study. Every subject teacher, therefore, should teach not only his subject, but also the correct way of studying the subject. Pupils should be assisted in designing their own timetables for study, taking their unique environments and circumstances into consideration.

It can also be said that an unmotivated teacher will hardly be able to motivate his pupils (Viljoen, 1989:89). Therefore principals should ensure that their teachers are motivated, through their management and leadership styles. Keeping abreast of the latest developments with regard to teaching methods and technology in the classroom will keep teachers interested and interesting. In this regard Grannis (1991:2) recommends multi-media environments, especially utilising computers, and independent learning contracts, which have been found to be more engaging than conventional workbooks and recitation. Although most Black rural schools still have little in the way of modern technology, all efforts should be made to upgrade their teaching aids.

Positive ways of motivating pupils should be encouraged. It was already pointed out in paragraph 5.2.2.2 that motivation through experiencing of success in the classroom encouraged pupils to stay in school. Teachers should create ways of enabling every pupil to experience success in this school work, within the limits of his potential.
Variation in daily activities can increase pupil motivation and productivity (Naylor, 1989:3). Teachers should constantly rate themselves with regard to their success in motivating their pupils.

5.3.2.4 Teacher awareness

The aspect of teacher awareness is closely linked with motivation of pupils, as teachers who are unaware of their pupils' needs and who do not take note of individual differences between pupils, will hardly be able to succeed in motivating their pupils. Webb (1987:16) emphasises that successful dropout prevention programmes necessitate that a learning plan should be developed for each student who is at risk. It stands to reason that teachers will only be able to do this if they know which pupils are at risk and what the particular circumstances and needs of every at-risk pupil are.

Naylor (1989:1) reports that successful dropout prevention programmes share, among other characteristics, the following: teachers who are able and willing to establish relationships with their pupils that go beyond the conventional teacher-pupil-relationship, who devote time to pupils' personal needs and who use individualised teaching and learning. Teachers should also ascertain how much and what kind of learning has already taken place; educational objectives should be stated clearly so that pupils can have a clear understanding of what they are expected to learn before they apply their own learning styles to accomplish the objectives set for them.

5.3.2.5 Curriculum

In this respect teachers also have a responsibility. According to Naylor (1989:3) they should explain the curriculum so that the pupils know what it entails; they should
ascertain that the curriculum challenges all the pupils in the class, regardless of their ability, so that pupils experience that they are achieving in meaningful activities.

Furthermore, teachers should become actively involved in curriculum planning, by urging the people normally responsible for curriculum design to take note of recommendations by interested teachers.

5.3.2.6 Business-Education partnership

As has been pointed out earlier, the initiative for cooperation between schools and the business community should come from the school principal. The following guidelines are proposed with regard to school-business partnerships:

* Discovery expeditions can be planned (Docherty & Davis, 1992:58). These should be arranged so that each standard has an appropriate theme that relates to the science/social studies curriculum, for example "Transportation and communication." Trips should be well planned to eliminate repetition in trips from year to year. Once themes are identified, teachers should research area businesses to ascertain that they can accommodate the number and age level of the pupils.

* People visiting schools from the business community, as role models, should be from the same racial background as the pupils.

* The adopt-a-school strategy, which was referred to in 5.2.3.2, should be initiated. Businesses should be made aware of the eventual cost of a high dropout rate for everyone, so that they will be motivated to become involved.
5.4 CONCLUSION

In this chapter an approach to the prevention of dropout has been discussed. The discussion incorporated insights gained from the analysis of the field work that was done in Phase I of the research, which means that it linked prevention to the causes that had been identified by respondents in this research, and which could be supported from the relevant literature. It became clear that dropout prevention is difficult, on account of the fact that the causes of early school leaving are complex and interlinked. It was pointed out that dropout prevention involved various role players, namely the government, the department of education, the school, parents and the community. Many of the recommendations made require much effort from the teachers' side. It can, therefore, be said that a dropout prevention programme will only succeed when schools are staffed with enthusiastic, dedicated teachers. In the next chapter, the study will be concluded with an overview, a discussion of limitations of the research, and recommendations for further study.
6.1 INTRODUCTION

This study forms part of a project - focusing on the unacceptable high dropout rate of secondary school pupils that seems to be a universal phenomenon - jointly undertaken between the Rand Afrikaans University and the Ben Gurion University in Israel. The overall purpose of the project is to identify the kinds of students who drop out and their reasons for dropping out in order to devise preventative measures. This supposes that conditions that lead to or precede early school leaving must be determined so that measures can be taken to structure education in such a way that fewer pupils will decide to terminate their school career prematurely. Faced with alarming dropout rates, which threaten a nation's productivity and represent an appalling and unacceptable waste of young lives, educators must find ways of encouraging pupils at risk of dropping out to remain in school, and to become actively involved with their school work. One way of doing this is to identify and recommend changes in schools that would improve education for at-risk students.

As the dropout rate of Black rural pupils is among the highest in the nation, this study focused particularly on causes of dropout in these schools. The aim of the study was to determine the causes of dropout in Black rural schools in order to describe an intervention and prevention programme that would incorporate the needs of the school dropout within a family and community context in a rural area in South Africa.

The study was conducted in two phases, the purpose of Phase I being to explore and describe the viewpoints of principals, teachers, parents and pupils in order to identify causes of school dropout in their particular context and possible preventative measures. The purpose of Phase II was to describe a dropout intervention and prevention strategy or programme for policy makers, teachers and parents, and to develop guidelines for the implementation of the strategy.
6.2 INVESTIGATING THE FIELD

In the literature one of the key factors of dropout prevention is defined as identification of the characteristics of the particular population. In this study a qualitative research paradigm (see chapter two) was chosen on account of the fact that qualitative research enables the researcher to obtain firsthand knowledge of the subject under investigation by interacting with the very people who experience the problem: the main aim is to reconstruct the perspectives of respondents in the research. The focus group interview technique was employed and interviews were conducted with four different groups of rural respondents concerned with early school leaving, namely school principals and teachers, at-risk pupils, and their parents. The study focused on adolescents on account of the fact that this is the age when school dropout is most likely to occur.

All interviews were audiotaped and transcribed verbatim for analysis. Field notes taken by the researcher during the interviews also formed part of the available data. Trustworthiness of the study was provided for through this practice of gathering data from different sources, as well as through different methods of analysis of data. Furthermore member checking was done, where results of the analysis were discussed with some respondents to ascertain that what was found was indeed what they had said or meant. A combination of inductive and deductive analysis was employed, using independent coders to ensure objectivity.

6.3 RESULTS

Analysis of the data yielded a rich and varied volume of results on the perceived causes of early school leaving. Various main themes, categories and subcategories were identified. This was presented in chapter three. Although five main themes were distinguished, it must be kept in mind that none of these exist independently of others, and that there is a constant interplay between causes and effects in different sections of a pupil's life. The following five main themes were identified:

* The school situation of at risk pupils. This theme contained nine categories with several sub-categories (See 3.2.1).
Social situation, where three categories were identified (This is discussed in 3.2.2).

Socio-economic status, with two categories (See 3.2.3).

Cultural/political factors, where two categories were discussed (Section 3.2.4).

Personal factors, with two categories (This is discussed in 3.2.5).

The themes were discussed, using substantiating quotes from the transcriptions of the focus group interviews.

6.4 LITERATURE REVIEW

As has been pointed out in chapter 2 (2.1) the literature review in this study is presented in the form of a literature control in chapter four; furthermore, the researcher read extensively on dropout prevention programmes, taking note of reported strengths and limitations, in order to describe the strategy or approach in this research; therefore, chapter five also contains part of the literature review.

In chapter four it was found that reasons given for premature school leaving by respondents in this study echo the main causes as reported in the relevant literature. Only one theme - that of cultural-political factors such as initiation practices of different Black cultural groups and forced removal of villagers - could not be substantiated by the relevant literature. Therefore it seems to be a unique finding of this research. On the other hand, gang activities, which causes fear in pupils, were reported as a cause of early school leaving in the literature; this was not mentioned at all by respondents in this research. Taking this into account, it becomes clear that the causes of dropout are universally the same, with small variations for particular cultures and contexts. Therefore a strategy for prevention and intervention with regard to dropout in South Africa can benefit by studying what is done in other countries in this respect.
The strategy that was described, focuses on two dimensions, namely the government with its responsibility for proper education for all pupils, and the school with its roots in the home and the community.

6.5 THE INTERVENTION AND PREVENTION APPROACH

After studying some of the available literature on dropout prevention programmes, a strategy for the South African rural context were described, taking into account the characteristics of the particular rural population studied in this research, as well as recommendations made by respondents. The main themes of the strategy is presented in chapter five (x.x.x). The basic premises on which the strategy is based are the following:

- The government, through the Department of Education, should become actively involved in dropout prevention programmes. They should also finance ongoing research to evaluate such programmes.

- Prevention must start with schools acknowledging that there is indeed a problem and taking responsibility for their at-risk and dropout population.

- What will work is a comprehensive, integrated approach in which each element is strengthened and reinforced by the other components.

- Establishing collaborative partnerships among schools, homes, the community and businesses can increase the effectiveness of schools in preparing disadvantaged students for a future as contributing citizens. This means that dropout prevention programmes in schools must work with the community to meet the needs of students and families.
6.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Although successful dropout prevention assistance programs depend on effective implementation, casework, and long-term follow-up activities, the literature only occasionally addresses these practices. In this study, as well, the proposed strategy was not implemented. The scope of the study - both in length and with regard to the time limit - precluded the implementation.

6.7 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

The following recommendations are made against the background of what has been found in this study:

• The strategy proposed in this research should be implemented and evaluated. This will reveal strengths and weaknesses, and eventually result in a refined and workable strategy for rural South Africa.

• As the principal plays a pivotal role in the prevention of dropout, the leadership and managerial roles of school principals with regard to dropout prevention should be studied.

6.8 CONCLUSION

As has been shown in this study, the causes of dropout are complex and interlinked. What became clear as well, is that researchers unanimously feel that it is time for schools, parents and the community to take planned and coordinated action to try and curb the high dropout rate, and not to leave dropouts to find their own way - if ever - out of their dismal situation. Dropout prevention programmes should focus on ways to support at-risk adolescents, and even younger children, within their household, school and community context in ways that will eliminate circumstances that contribute to their plight.
One aspect that should be seriously scrutinised is the fact that schools seem to willingly accept the phenomenon of premature school leaving. This should not be the case, because it means that educators admit and accept defeat, in not realising the educational goal of self-actualisation for so many of their charges. Educators should rather take the issue of accountability very seriously and accept the challenge to make teaching interesting to all pupils through innovation and an invitational stance. If this challenge is not heeded the dropout population will continue to increase at great cost to every individual who finds himself without a proper education, and to the community at large.
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ADDENDUM A: PROTOCOL FOR EXPERTS TO ANALYSE DATA

Protocol for independent experts:

A protocol for use by the independent experts which will include guidelines or instructions pertaining to their modus operandi in reviewing the analysed data. The instructions will follow the same format of content analysis that the researcher used to generate conclusions. The findings of the experts will be used to validate findings of the study.

The following method of coding will be used both for the focus group discussions.

* Modus of operandi for independent experts (coders):

A list of definitions of the universal categories of Education for the Whole Person Theory is attached, along with unmarked copies of transcriptions of aforesaid interviews. You are required to read these transcriptions and do the following:

Phase One:

* Every transcript of every interview has to be analysed separately. First read the transcript in its totality to get a general understanding of the transcript. Coders utilise "bracketing" and "Intuiting" when the transcripts are read. The universum consists of all the data. Coders are to identify the major categories represented in the universum.

* Major categories in the universum are defined operationally with Eduction for the Whole Person Theory for this project.
The major categories for the community include the following:

- Internal environment: Body, mind (intellect, emotion, will) and spirit.
- (External environment: socio-economic factors, social support, political factors and issues relating to the school itself)

Coders read through the data and underline words/phrases/themes which fit the defined universal categories and emergent themes that are reflected.

The words/phrases/themes are then classified in major categories using unrefined (raw) data.

Subcategories are identified under each of the major categories by clustering data together in a logical manner. (A subcategory is a group of words/phrases which do not reflect the same theme but do describe the same subject). At this stage use can be made of interpretations.
ADDENDUM B: FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS WITH PRINCIPALS, PARENTS AND PUPILS

Ladies and gentlemen, you have been invited to participate freely in this fact finding mission. You are invited and specially selected to be respondents, on the basis of your wealth of experience and expertise built up over many years as teachers, heads of department, deputy principals and finally principals. You have also been invited as parents who have school going children and who have also served in a myriad of posts like school committee members, mothers and fathers. To you ladies and gentlemen, you have been invited as pupils, who can be subjected to the problem of school dropout and who have friends, who have also ultimately dropped out of school.

A special word of welcome goes to all of you, parents, principals of schools and you, my pupils. Please feel free to participate, its a "free for all" exercise, ask questions, help answer questions posed by fellow respondents, and criticise wherever possible. The idea is that you should feel free and contribute as much as you can because we want to gather more information on this subject. Please note that the information thus gathered will be treated with the utmost confidentiality.

Before dealing with our business for the day, let me take this opportunity to introduce myself to you. I am Neo Elliot Raikane, a student at Rand Afrikaans University (RAU) in Johannesburg. I am writing about the problem of pupils having to leave school before successful completion of their studies. I am sure everybody is aware of the fact that during the course of the year, we have pupils in our high schools having to leave school as a result of certain problems they encounter. My area of interest is what, in your opinion, causes this problem of pupils having to leave school during the year,
which factors contribute to this problem and, finally, let us feel free to talk about what can be done to prevent this problem, called school dropout.

Kindly note that in our midst we have the following parties who have been invited to participate in this meeting; myself, parents from rural areas and farms, principals of schools from rural areas and farming communities, and, finally, these six pupils from neighbouring schools.

Ladies and gentlemen, please feel free to participate and, without further delay, let us make a start. You are now requested to form groups. Groups 1 and 2 will be made up of principals in the area as well as of parents of pupils from our neighbouring schools and finally, Group 3 will be made up of pupils. Let us follow this procedure: We will start immediately with Group 1 (Principals) and Group 2 together and finally deal with Group 3. Can the pupils of Group 2 hang around and help themselves to refreshments in the meantime.

Researcher:
In your opinion, ladies and gentlemen, what do you think causes school dropout?

A1:
There are many factors which cause dropout in our schools. Take, for example, the situation in a community school where one teenager falls pregnant. The chances of her being readmitted are very slim and in some instances such a pupil even forfeits her place in the school for the rest of her life simply because she fell pregnant whilst she was a scholar in that school.
A2:

There are other factors such as socio-economic standing for parents of school going children, The background from which most of the pupils come does not cater for continued school attendance in many respects.

Researcher:

What do you mean? Can you explain further?

A2:

I am encompassing everything, Mr Chairman. Social life at home which is not appealing for the child to attend school, also in connection with bad morals, causes dropout. Such that another aspect which I experienced as principal at my school was the question of the community, of the community problem, for example at Phokeng (a nearby village) if I were to be exact, there was a stage when I was still principal, that at our village certain homesteads had to be removed out of the village at any time of the year because they are not Bafokeng (a tribe) people and this was such that parents of many children of the school came to me with problems such as "where am I taking my children to?". When I wanted to know what they meant, they would say "Your chief is chasing us out of the village" and eventually they took these children to faraway places, to remote areas where education is not provided and because I used to follow them up, especially the bright children, to check and find out how they were progressing in education only to find that they were not in school and they were dropouts and this causes dropout where they are taken away to very far away and remote places where proper education was not taking place. You know the community faces such a situation.

A3:

I can also say, in some instances, students become dropouts as a result of, say, the stopping of some activities at schools. You know there are some students who only
come to school with an aim of participating in sporting activities. As you know, these do not occur throughout the year. Say, for instance, an athlete may be registered at the beginning of the year, but once the finals of the athletics competitions have been reached and there are no more athletics events for that particular year, such a scholar tends to leave school, because the activity in which he participated had ended for that part of the year.

A4:

Well, I will mention peer pressure. You find that these adolescents want to conform, they want to be part of the group. If his peers are doing this, say for instance they drop out of school, they are working on the mines, they are able to buy themselves nice clothes, they can have entertainment, at all times, and so on, so this friend of theirs, this peer in school feels that he is wasting his time at the same time, and showing off to him school does not mean anything, they have money, so the pressure from this group will ultimately result in this child, leaving school, thinking maybe to enjoy that type of life; and actually this peer pressure seems to be strong because of family values which are not clear. Some values are not clear.

Researcher:

Which values? Can you explain that?

A4:

For instance, as a parent I might fail to show my children the correct direction. Okay, this is the time for you to attend school, you attend school, you must aim at passing Standard 10, thereafter you follow a particular career or you choose a career and so on. I just keep on telling my child that I want you to look after yourself, you must look after yourself.
Researcher:

What does it mean to look after yourself?

A4:

The child does not actually understand what I am trying to put across in her mind; I must be clear, I must say you must have time, time for your studies, time for your relaxation, but the main priority must be getting your matric certificate; thereafter going for higher education and so on, so we the parents are sometimes part of the problem, because we never just give our values clearly, that this is what I wish you to achieve and so on.

A6:

So once the child is left on his own, there is lack of motivation and there is no one trying to show her the right way. That is why the peers are just going to overcome her because she just follows the group, she just delights in being a member of the group, she is not stupid, she is also clever like all other members of that group; just like her friends.

A2:

One other factor that contributes to dropout is also related to peer pressure though I would like to regard it as environmental influences. In some areas you find that there are people who are more educated, who work very hard, who have acquired higher degrees and so on, that is why I want to mention that as parents we used to call graduates to come and display their gowns during farewell functions, so that they can show them and try to motivate them that life does not end at matric, that instead matric is the beginning of the academic life. So when we don't have role models the graduates; our pupils are not fully motivated.
A3:

A serious problem to me that contributes to school dropout is lack of schools. A lot of children do not get space (admission) in schools to continue with their education especially when parents have to shift from one place to another.

Researcher:

What do you mean by "shifting"?

A3:

If, for example, parents leave Rustenburg for Brits, this is called the migratory labour system. You find that there are not enough schools in Brits, so this is one factor that encourages dropping out of school. You find that schools are territorial. If in Rustenburg you move from Kgatseng Secondary School, then you must go to Rauwane High and if you were not in Kgatseng, then you have no space in Rauwane High.

Researcher:

I am sorry, Mr X, are you talking about the feeder school system?

A3:

Yes, I am. So, in some places you find that there is a long distance that children must walk to get to a nearby higher school. In some places, they only have a primary school, and you have to walk long distances to get to a high school, and there is no transport.

A4:

Another point I would say is lack of proper guidance. Students just attend school, the only professions they know of are teaching and nursing; so if a student feels that he is academically not guided, he is going to feel discouraged. I am not going to be a teacher, I am not going to be a nurse, I must just stay home and I will be a labourer somewhere. But if there has been proper career guidance, a child even at standard eight level will know that after I have passed, I can do, say electricity, I can do welding and
so on. So they can aim at getting entrance qualifications and get to the areas where the course is offered so, if there has been proper guidance, the number of dropouts would really decrease because we are actually affected by this "apartheid thing". It seems that not all these doors were open to us. Some of the careers were hidden from us and an additional thing was that we were not motivated to get better marks like, say a child is weak in Mathematics because if you knew that there is engineering, you could have arranged for extra lessons in Mathematics, so that we could finally help this child to get better results in Mathematics. This is the cause of lack of proper career guidance. Our children are ignorant of the various occupations that can be followed. They only know of white collar jobs.

A1:
There are two other causes. I find that one is related to finance. Most of our pupils' parents are not well to do to afford school funds and as a result this leads to the dropping out of these students. Now the other point is that limited to the system of migrant labourers. You find that in most instances small children are left on their own. They are "mini parents" because the father and mother are working in Johannesburg and seldom come home. They come, say, twice a year during Good Friday and Christmas.

And, as a result...

Researcher:
Only twice a year? Are you exaggerating?

A1:
They are miniature parents. Yes; no such a problem usually will cause pupils to deviate because there is nobody to keep an eye.

Researcher:
How often do they come home?
A1:

Say sometimes once a month. In other areas, they come home once a week.

A4:

For example, in Phokeng (which is 14 kilometres from Rustenburg) there are parents working in the kitchens (domestic servants). They stay in town, Rustenburg, and come home early on Friday. They leave home on Monday and only come back home on Friday.

Researcher:

What is the reason for this?

A4:

They are saving money for transport. When they are grown-up their children will also be dropouts because of continuing poverty.

Researcher:

What other things?

A3:

The other cause of dropout is low IQ (Intelligence Quotient). No, not necessarily low IQ. Sometimes our children are not committed enough. I mean if you are not committed enough, you don't pass but if you are committed enough you will pass. Just like that. There are pupils who just pass, you know they pass, fail, pass, not that they cannot do well. They tend to have no direction.

Researcher:

Lack of directionality? Lack of proper arrangement of one's academic programme.

A4:

Look at the middle school, high school arrangement. You become a senior student twice. If you graduate from a middle school, you have been a senior student, now
suddenly you become a junior student in the high school. Pupils coming from the middle school into the High School are more wild than the Std 10s. You see the Std 10s are cool. To get them right up to say ten of them will leave school: of those who cannot cope with school because they now have their seniors they cannot do all these other things.

Researcher:

What do you mean by that, Mister?

A4:

The discipline of the standard eight is too much for them because the previous year they were seniors and they are juniors now. They tend to be wild and when teachers tame them, they thin out by dropping out of school. Not all students who passed Standard 7 will pass Standard eight because when they get to the high school, the kind of things they expected are not what is taking place.

A6:

One once encountered this problem of parents frequently coming to request their children to be given holidays to come and help at homes; especially farming communities. For example, during cultivation times, half the student population is not there and this is against the regulations. The regulations say if you are absent for more than 2 weeks consecutively (one after the other) you are struck off the roll. This will recur during harvest time when parents come and demand their children to help up in the fields. Now once such a student returns to school he will find that the scope of work that is already covered in his or her absence is unbearable and as a result such a student will decide to leave the school.

A7:

One other thing is, eh....
Researcher:

Excuse me, to add onto what you have been saying, this is an appendage to that point you said is that those schools have to leave because it is reaping time or sowing time.

A7:

There are still others in the rural areas who alternated, say if there are two boys and two girls in a home, this week it is so and so's week to go and look after cattle, they alternative like that, the parents made that arrangement that each one of them had a turn of looking after cattle, so this week its so and so, just like that and they miss out; the school and you find out that the work covered is much.

Researcher:

Can you tell us more about it? What causes that?

A7:

I don't know, it looks like the mother was teaching like a girl. The place was still rural. You taking a long turn (draai) you find that during cultivation time, 50% of the students are not there and during harvesting time the other 50% are not there.

A8:

Now, one other problem that of oversleeping on the part of parents, you find a scholar committing some mistakes at home, now the parent comes to school and embarrasses this poor child by saying you have not poured out a "seruwa" (a chamber pot which has to be emptied into an outside toilet). Such pupils will decide to stay away from school but leaving home everyday but not arriving at school that is the poor pupils move between the home and the school without arriving at school.

Researcher:

I am sorry, looks like you want to say something. I did not get your comment, Mister Segodi.
A4:
The teacher helps to discipline such children. The parents come to school with the child because the teachers can discipline them, and the parents cannot.

Researcher:
So, you don't see it as a cause? Do you?
A4:
The cause of what?
Researcher:
Of dropout.
A4:
Well I am not denying that but I am giving the reason why. Well, the parents are not too strict. It is a question that the teachers are strict. No, you don't interpret the situation the way I would like you to. Can I add...
A6:
I still remember quite vividly a parent coming to school and saying "Where is so and so" ga a tsholla seruwa" (she has not emptied the chamberpot). "Ga a tsholla le metsi a a neng a tshapa ka ona" (neither has she poured out the water in the basin that she washed with). Just imagine such an embarrassment.

Researcher:
The question of uneducated parents.
A5:
Authoritarian parents (families). The types of families. We have democratic families, authoritarian families and laissez faire parents. The father only has the authority or the parents have the authority. A very authoritarian family will do something like that. Its not democratic, is very authoritarian.
Lack of education on the part of parents. We have parents who are not educated.

Researcher:

By not educated you mean...?

Parents who have no manners. Parents who lack manners. Not it's not like that, no they think if they embarrass this child, she is going to stop that behaviour. They think the only way to make her stop that is to embarrass her.

No, that's education, informal education. No, they are uncultured. It is when a student becomes so slippery that they will embarrass him/her in front of friends. That's the best medicine, because he is slippery.

Still on that score, you mentioned that there are some parents who leave the discipline of their children solely on the hands of the teachers.

Now, that child will soon adopt an attitude, a negative attitude against the school and say while I am still in school things are very hot; here at home its very nice. So that particular child will obviously drop out of school.

Can we get to the last lap of the topic that we are busy with? What can be done to reduce dropout?

I think students must be given proper guidance, proper career guidance. They should know if I have this type of ability, I can obtain this type of diploma or this type of
education. They must know that there is a variety of choices; not only one thing to follow.

A4:

And, in addition, there must also be some proper guidance, each child must understand the family values that are right. Say, for example, my parents are not educated but they want me to be educated and I must not disappoint them. Its not just obeying them. There must be something interesting, something motivating, to sort of motivate that is not only extrinsic motivation but also intrinsic motivation. The child must really feel fulfilled to be somebody in the community. I want to be a teacher because my mother was just a domestic servant or I want to be a social worker or things like that. This must come from within. I think intrinsic motivation is very important, in addition to proper career guidance.

A3:

On the question of teenage pregnancies, I have two prompt solutions here. One being that sex education should be introduced both at home and at school. It should no longer be taboo to discuss sex matters with these children.

A5:

The other item is that those who were unfortunate to fall pregnant while being students should be given a second chance; and they must not permanently forfeit their places in school. We must give them a second chance to come and proceed where they have ended.

A7:

On that point of socio-economic status or standing of parents, I am sorry, what about sex education? Can you tell us more about it? Ja, in our culture when a girl is pregnant, she is no more a girl and she must forfeit her place in school and give others
a chance. She is a big woman now. So there is no proper guidance. The child does not know why he/she has gone back to school. The nurses must teach them about prevention measures, give them contraceptives and so on; so "she is just a "itlogelle" (that is she does not prevent anymore).

A3:

Some of them, I think its the classes, you know things like lack of schools. So schools may be a long distance from home, so its not possible for them to attend school. No transport. So there must be some financial assistance, given to them. It not just that.

A2:

Also lack of facilities and available schools which can also play a role in raising the level of dropout. No. I just want to say we need to equip our schools with relevant facilities. For instance I passed matric without knowing the colour of hydrochloric acid. I only encountered it at university. In other words our education system should try to be more practical than theoretical.

A4:

I see the socio-economic status of parents at home as difficult because we can't just say we give parents money to improve this. The only remedies, or let me not say "the only", one of them is that such homes if the teacher picks up that such a child comes to school from such a background, teachers should liaise, the principals also, with the social welfare for these people to visit the homes so that in another year this child should be helped to attend school because the poor background is not able to pay for the fees or whatever. The child should be given a bursary on merit.

A5:

I don't know this one of the community, how to solve that. I was thinking along the lines, even about a certain school councillor. In a village where the chief has decided
to chase away certain families. This is what I have said, it's a question of forced removals. It's the question of getting a child from a town school to a rural school where now it works on interest. When you get there you find that there is no standard.

A2:

There was this problem of age restrictions in our schools where you find that somebody is impregnated this year, next year that particular student is no longer at school. It is going to hit back, the year thereafter when she comes she has outgrown the class she was supposed to be in. Now I should think that age restrictions should be thoroughly looked into.

A3:

One other thing is that the community through its institutions such as churches should work hand in glove with schools because you find in some instances that community members do not know what is happening in some schools and teachers also do not know what is happening in the community and I think it can be a better approach "ge re ka tlhakanna bana ba ba sekolo" (if we can be partners in the schools). There must be objective partnership in matters related to the schools, and this should be encouraged.

A4:

How can this be achieved? By Parents Teachers Associations, School Committees, you know by involving the teachers. Parents are absent from school activities, that is why "ke re" (I say) parents need to be utilised by the schools. The importance of being involved in school matters as parents, the disadvantages of staying away from your family, working too far, parents not being able to supervise their children, they don't know what is happening, they are even being influenced by what is going on.
Researcher:

How does a parent stop working far from home? How do they bring children closer to them? You can encourage that parent to get temporary accommodation somewhere. If she feels like, maybe she can lodge a room somewhere where she can stay with the child and see to it that the child goes to school.

A1:

One other thing is, still on the question of migrant labourers. You can get a shelter at places like Boitekong (a new settlement next to Rustenburg) and stay there with the child. The question of migrant labourers does not necessarily imply both parents, there is a situation where you now have the problem of a single parent.

Researcher:

What is a single parent?

A4:

This is where there is only one parent. I was going to say it is very important for commuter workers to show keen interest in the schoolwork of their children; because some parents never give themselves a chance of going through the books of their children. I think it is advisable for parents to go through their children's books, especially Mathematics. You will easily realise if the child was absent or not. Mathematics is a subject where exercises are written on a daily basis. That will give an indication to the parents as to whether the child is attending regularly or not; and also it will afford the parents the opportunity to assess the progress of the child, whether the child is improving or there is no change.

Researcher:

Can we get back to what was mentioned earlier about parents' education?
A1:
Do you mean if the parent is not educated?

Researcher:
Yes.

A2:
I should think that the neighbours should now step in. The parent should get the assistance of, eh...

Researcher:
Why?

A2:
"Go na le bana ba bareng Ꙡ ꙡ ba ya Sekolong ge ba bala dibuka ba a foufala" (There are children who it is alleged go blind when studying). "Dibuka di a utswiwa" (Books get mysteriously stolen/missing). Or "ba tebelwa ke bontlokwe" (They are made to run by ostriches). Or "ga ba libile "gate" ya sekolo ba bona bontlokwe" (When a pupil approaches the school gate, he sees only ostriches). "E bonwa ke ena fela" (She is the only one who sees the ostrich). These are psychological problems.

A4:
Still on that one of, eh..., finding the assistance of members of the community. You know, in rural areas, a teacher is still regarded as a custodian of knowledge. You know if any problem arises, the first person to be consulted is a teacher. So, if you have illiterate parents, such problems can be referred to teachers who are resident within the village, or with the area where these students are. I should think the teacher will not say, No I am tired, I am tired, I have just knocked off. Teachers will create that opportunity and sit down with the parents and explain to the parent and say now look
your child here, your child's performance is below par. Here there is an improvement, here and so on.

Let's get back to the PTSA (Parents Teachers Student Association) once a month or so or once a quarter can meet and discuss pupils' problems in the school.

A5:

Now on the question of sporting activities. Really it is in the best interest of the children that various sporting codes should be provided and at a particular point in time, but unfortunately that is not what usually happens. There are no facilities.

Now I should think we use the interest of that particular child, that is there in sport, we use it as a starting point and develop interest in other fields of study such as classroom situation because that will go a long way in alleviating that problem; because I am aware that most students who were very good athletes, but now today they are in the streets; once the sporting code comes to an end, at the end of the year, that particular child is out. Teachers will only be interested in that particular child next year when they know that athletics meetings, soccer matches are going to be played and so on. So, I should think it is the duty of teachers to use this talent or interest of the child to develop other interests especially in various subjects, that is relate what is going on in the classroom with extra-mural activities.

A3:

Can I add something to that point, in addition to that, I would say generally there should be some provision of recreational facilities whereby a wide choice, say for instance the football league matches and so on, students should know there is dancing, there is a drama society that takes place and so on, not only sporting activities that are for inter
school purposes, and so on. There should be a wide variety of recreational facilities provided and so on.

**Researcher:**

Recreational facilities ...where?

**A4:**

Within the school, yes. Not only when the football season is over then the child can go to dancing, can go to join the drama society and so on; because the child will have something to break the monotony of looking at the books all the time.

I think those are the steps that parents can implement. Yes, implementation of... Ja, parents can do that, they want teachers too. Yes, implementation is always the problem. So, if there is a PTA, then these other parents will be helpful. They should meet and come up and one of the parents will volunteer to form some committees and so on and see to the implementation of this.

**A5:**

Also on the matter of lack of role models. I should think educated people who are better qualified should be role models. They must be spread throughout the province and also they should try at all cost to sort of invite better qualified people to such areas. People who can motivate students. Like for instance during farewell functions we normally call better qualified people in their academic regalia to come and motivate these children. Generally most of the rural children do not know anything after matric. I still remember when we once invited Mr Raikane to our place during a farewell function. When I introduced him most of our students thought he was a sangoma.

**Researcher:**

A sangoma?
A4:

Yes, because he was wearing his academic regalia. So they thought this man must be one of the top sangomas; and I explained to them that he is not a sangoma in the true sense of the word, he is a sangoma within education. He appealed to them that this meant to us that most of the rural people think that school and ethnicity, that after having completed matric there is nowhere you can go. Now if you bring better qualified people at least there is an eye-opener; pupils start realising that after matric I can go to such an extent of being a better qualified person.

A6:

Any maybe, perhaps in relation to what George has said I actually regard as lack of exposure. I would think that in terms of vocational careers like technicians, electricians and so on; educational tours could really be valuable. Students can be taken to these centres where there are particular technicians and so on. Say, maybe they are taken to a firm producing this and that, or a centre where welding is done and so on and so on. If they are exposed to these other different vocations then they will actually find that they have a different interest or they have something more interesting to follow than what they have thought of before. Exposure is very important. They must not just read about these things theoretically. They must have practical experience about what is happening.

Researcher:

Is this career tuition?

A4:

That's right.
Researcher:
You are pupils from farms and rural areas and you have been invited to discuss reasons why pupils leave school before the end of the year and prematurely. Feel free and let us discuss this problem. In your opinion, what causes pupils to leave school prematurely?

A2:
I was thinking about financial problems and maybe if we focus more on the problems they have. They drop out more because of lack of finance.

Researcher:
What do you mean "because of lack of finance"?

A6:
Money for tuition fees, for transport, for school fees, uniforms. Sometimes they run short of money because they do not have parents.

Researcher:
You are talking about orphans? Orphans or single parents?

A7:
I am talking about orphans. They do not have persons to pay for them. Sometimes their parents have separated or divorced and the children have to stay with their grandparents and also the grandparents are pensioners and so they have to finance to get them food, clothes and so on.

Researcher:
 Aren't there bursaries for such children? Don't they get some financial help?
A4:

No, sometimes teachers are not aware they don't know about such children and whether they have problems because such children keep quiet. Teachers won't be able to help them, so they end up dropping out.

A2:

Sometimes you find that there are children who work in the afternoons, they have to pay for their school fees. Sometimes you find that they have to work much during month end and sometimes you find that the school work is just too much for them. They don't get salaries. By so doing, their employees will deduct from their salaries for absence from work. The idea of working is to pay for the fees.

Researcher:

I understand that but does it cause problems regarding school work? Does the idea of working interfere with their school work?

A5:

Yes. They can't do them both successfully.

To me the idea of working is the solution to the problem. They work in the afternoon in order to pay school fees. Because they have problems with finance, they have to work in the afternoon.

Researcher:

Doesn't the fact that they have to work interfere with their school work? Is that what you mean?

A4:

Yes.

Researcher:

It is a solution but at the same time it causes problems. Is that right?
A5:
Yes.

Researcher:
Any other contributions? Think along lines of migration, madam. Migration? Distance from school. How does it affect school dropout?

A6:
Farm children have to travel a long distance to get to school. During the changing of seasons, like for example when it is raining, you find that they don't go to school.

Researcher:
So for that long distance they can't go to school. Don't they use raincoats?

A5:
No, they don't have raincoats. They can't afford them. They think the best is to stay home. So by so doing they lack interest in school work.

A4:
They also have a problem of food. They go hungry. Sometimes they make like they are going to school, parents think they have gone to school, meanwhile they are between school and home. When those that went to school come back home, then they just join them on their way home. Parents think they were at school, when they were not (truancy).

Researcher:
Now can't parents check their books to make sure if they went to school?

A7:
No, they are illiterate themselves. Most of them don't have light. They were never at school. They also take it to be the problem of the school. It is the responsibility of the
school to see to it that children attend school. In fact they don't have light to supervise the education of the children.

Researcher:
You have raised the problem of illiteracy on the part of the parent. Do you think it can create a problem as well?

A5:
Yes.

Researcher:
How?

A7:
The carefree attitude of some of the illiterate parents. They take it the child must himself see to it that it goes to school. No one cares and the child finally drops out. It's true, there is that thing of dropouts produce dropouts. There is that likelihood.

Irresponsible parents who both work and buy liquor and drink excessively. They set a very bad example to follow. This leads to early pregnancy.

Researcher:
How does early pregnancy feature?

A3:
Parents do bad things when drunk in front of children. Even in schools, particularly middle schools, they don't lecture to them about sex education that is why so many of them fall pregnant.

Such parents also leave children to drop out of school after having fallen pregnant. No one says now stand up and continue with your schooling.
Teachers also discriminate against children because of the nature of the family the child comes from. They send around children from poor families. Those from rich families are never sent around. This is unfair and it makes children feel unhappy. They are not considered. Say it aloud madam!

Teachers also contribute to dropout. Because they discriminate against children.

If the environment is not conducive. There is also the problem of the environment not being conducive.

Researcher:

What do you mean by that?

A4:

I mean there are no facilities at school. Environment at school in black communities is not conducive to learning. There are no books in the libraries, no libraries, no facilities in general. Some children are slow learners. They need teaching aids, concrete things to make it easier to understand. I have seen a library for the first time in urban areas. We don't have them in rural areas. Some principals are outdated in their approach. They have qualified a long time ago and they are no more relevant; they are not innovative. They can't even bring about meaningful changes. They employ unqualified and private teachers. The HOD (head of department) and everybody is unqualified. They have no career guidance. They don't update themselves. There is no in-service training of teachers. Qualified teachers also don't want to go and teach in rural areas and on farms.

Researcher:

What are the qualifications like of teachers in rural areas? Unqualified? Qualified?
A7:

No. They are unqualified.

No proper schools, corrugated iron used as schools. No proper school buildings. This does not enhance the spirit of education.

Researcher:

Any other contribution?

A6:

Age restriction is a major problem. There are relatively very old students in school and they ill-treat others (us) as younger pupils. This makes us lose interest in school. It's not nice in school.

Researcher:

Any other contribution?

A5:

Yes there is that problem of peer group pressure. We have gangsters and a pupil associates with gangsters then the pupil wants to have nice clothes, drive a car of his own, a new lifestyle and this entices the pupil to leave school and join the gangsters.

Researcher:

We have now identified the causes of school dropout; Can we now focus on what can be done to prevent school dropouts or to reduce the rate of school dropout. In order to do this properly, perhaps we should make a summary of the causes so that we can suggest the solutions adjacent to every cause. I have made a summary of these causes and they are as follows:

- Problem of finance
- Teenage pregnancy
— Distance from school (farm schools)
— Teachers discriminating against children
— Change in seasons (rainy seasons)
— Illiteracy of parents
— Teachers focusing on brilliant children
— Poor environments in schools which are not conducive to schooling, e.g. there are no TV sets, no books, no libraries, no properly qualified teachers
— Slow learners
— Private teachers, no proper qualified teachers
— No career guidance
— No in-service training of teachers
— Building structures of schools are poor - corrugated iron
— No age restrictions
— Influence of peer groups - gangsterism - changed lifestyle
— Lack of recreational facilities; and
— Overpermissiveness of parents.

Can't we look at solutions? What can be done so that we can reduce the problem of dropout? If you remember the causes then it is going to be easy for us to come up with solutions. But, we should not necessarily follow the same order. Should we, Mr Keikabile?

Mr Keikabile:

No, not necessarily, just feel free to contribute with solutions just as you remember causes. Tell us what can be done to solve the problems that cause school dropout. If for example you remember the problem of teachers not been properly qualified you can
come up and say fine I think this and that can be done so that this problem can be sorted out. Can we start?

A5:
I have discovered that teachers don't know the background from which their pupils come and I think teachers should call pupils one by one or so, converse with them, knowing their children and their home background; so that they can address these problems.

Researcher:
Please remember you should not come up with a solution to a problem because you have necessarily raised that problem - come with any other solution to any problem even if you have not raised the problem.

A4:
Regarding teenage pregnancy, I will encourage parents to visit the school, encourage the school to have sex education irrespective of their age. Yes. Last week there was sex education discussed with pupils right from Grade One to senior classes. This is important because child abuse starts right from junior classes. Social workers should also be involved to enlighten parents, social workers to talk to parents who will also have to talk to their children.

Researcher:
Isn't this taboo to talk to children about sex in our culture?

A6:
Yes, it is, but culture must wait. We should make a complete departure from culture because it is in our best interest. Teenage pregnancy in my opinion is essential because lots of children drop out of school because of this problem. Children (girls) start falling in love and being naughty say right from age 10 or 12.
Researcher:

What can be done to reduce the problem of illiteracy of parents?

A6:

We can arrange parents' meeting, have adult education in schools and have literacy programmes.

Researcher:

What can be done about distance from school?

A5:

The government should subsidise buses to ferry pupils to and from school. The government should also build more schools.

Researcher:

Yes, but that can be too expensive. But it is a good idea.

The problem of squatter camps, doesn't it create problems?

A7:

Yes, corrugated iron is hot in summer and very cold in winter.

Researcher:

Parents moving, migrating, isn't it a problem?

A4:

Yes, it is a problem particularly for language reasons. If parents move to a Zulu-speaking community and the child is Pedi-speaking then the child will have problems of language at school, and this might encourage school dropout.

Researcher:

Somebody spoke of the environment not being conducive, e.g. there are no schools, no teaching aids, no materials, no facilities.
A5:

Donations from companies to help provide these will be very helpful. Fund raising campaigns will help. If a parent works for a company, she can arrange finance from that company.

Researcher:

What about qualifications of teachers?

A6:

Workshops to be organised, the standard of education to be raised, teachers to be encouraged to study further. They must be encouraged to improve their qualifications. Posts should be properly advertised and teachers be properly screened before appointment.

Researcher:

Peer group influence. What can be done?

A4:

Teachers must identify naughty children in schools. Talk to their parents to keep an eye on such children, check other friends of your child so that these children can be encouraged not to be naughty.

A7:

Educational facilities should also be provided in schools. The government must subsidise schools and provide schools with more educational facilities.

A5:

Parents should be strict and control their children well, children must be grouped in classes on grounds of same age because they reason the same way when they are of the same age.
Researcher:

Any other related problems and solutions? Are we finished?

A7:

Children staying with grandparents. Parents should be encouraged not to stay with grandparents. Permissiveness on the part of the parents. This should also be addressed. Parents should also be encouraged to respect their children and get on well with them.

Researcher:

Any other thing left out?

A1:

No, I think we are finished.

Vote of thanks: Proposed by Mr Keikabile, my colleague.
ADDENDUM C: FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS WITH PARENTS OF PUPILS (POTENTIAL SCHOOL DROPOUTS)

Ladies and gentlemen, you have been invited to participate in this talk and discussion and before we make a start, can I welcome you cordially and warmly. Thank you very much that you ultimately found time to be present. Please feel free to contribute, make comments, butt in while someone is talking if you feel like, ask questions in between our discussion and please don't mind if someone asks you questions. This discussion is going to remain confidential and you need not even identify yourself when talking or asking questions. This is strictly confidential.

I want to quickly brief you on the topic of our discussion. I want us to talk about the problem of pupils leaving school early. Without any further waste of time, let us embark on our project; and please feel free. I have already introduced myself and I want to pose one question to you: Why do you think pupils leave school early?

Researcher:

A15, I see your hand is up. Do you want to break the ice for us?

A15:

Yes, sir. I know what you are talking about and I feel there are many factors causing that.

Researcher:

Can you mention some of them?

A15:

Yes, they are as follows:
Poverty, which gives rise to illness, malnutrition and absenteeism

Inappropriate curricula and examinations designed to prepare minority of pupils for secondary and higher education

Underqualified teachers

Overcrowded schools

High fees of schooling among poor families and cultural factors that affect girls in particular

Boredom

Fear and anxiety because they are exposed to many influences

Low self-worth and low self-esteem since it is prominent in primary schools

High cost for poor families

School funds are too high for the unemployed families and that leads to the dropout of children because they cannot afford to provide themselves physically, socially and so forth. Pupils are short of learning materials.

Researcher:

Thank you A15. Can we take those factors one by one and discuss them so that you can tell us more about them? Let us start with poverty. I heard you mention this. How does poverty cause school dropout? Everybody can participate now. A13 do you want to set the ball rolling for us?

A13:

Yes, sir. Poverty may give rise to illness, malnutrition and absenteeism. If a person is hungry the chances of concentrating on school work are limited.

A14:

Can I, A14 make further comments on this.
Researcher:
Yes, do so.

A14:
Children from poverty stricken families are more likely to drop out of schools. This may be because their parents are unable to pay for their education. They therefore have to leave school and go and find work.

Researcher:
Is there anybody else who wants to add on that?

A15:
Yes, sir. I am A 15 and I want to make the following contribution on poverty. Poverty will create malnutrition. When a child is not well fed he or she will fail to continue with his schooling. If he is hungry, he will not be able to concentrate in class. This will lead to poor performance of a child, the child will lose interest in schooling and eventually drop out.

A17:
Sir, I am A17, and poverty is linked to low socio-economic status.

Researcher:
A17, what do you mean by that? Can you explain it for us?

A17:
Low socio-economic status is a cause of dropout in schools. Pupils that come to school without the necessary requirements such as books and materials and usually with an empty stomach will generally lose interest in school and choose to stay home.

Researcher:
Thank you very much. Can we go on to another cause?
A18:

Excuse me, sir, I am A18 and I want to remark before we tackle another cause. Poverty is the most common element in African schools that causes dropout especially in lower grades level. Poverty leads to illness, malnutrition and absenteeism in lower grades. Pupils end up with school-phobia or playing truant.

Researcher:

I am sure we have exhausted that aspect, and I want us to get on to the second cause of school dropout. A18, I see your hand is up. Please come up with the next cause of school dropout in your opinion.

A18:

Thank you, sir. Corporal punishment and other methods of punishment. In the past, pupils were tortured both mentally and physically. To torture a child mentally is when a teacher scolds, shouts at him, tells him/her how stupid he/she is, tells him/her about his family problems, history background and so forth. Children were physically tortured and even today in some schools pupils are still physically and mentally abused by teachers.

A17:

I also want to make additions. The type of punishment that the teachers administer to the child is another factor. Some children become so scared of teachers that they choose not to come to school at all. Punishment should be given in a mild, reasonable and constructive manner, such that the pupil will learn something worthwhile from punishment given to him/her.

A16:

I am A16 and closely related to that is general maltreatment of our children in schools by teachers.
Researcher:
Can you tell us more about that? I don't follow you.

A16:
Ill-treatment at school means a child who is being bullied at school may find dropping out as the only solution to the problems.

Researcher:
Oh, I see.

A18:
Again, sir, some teachers molest and harass our children.

Researcher:
What do you mean by that, A18?

A18:
A child who is molested or being sexually abused cannot proceed well with his/her education. This will affect her psychologically.

A14:
Thank you, sir. I am A14. Can I take you to some social problems related to poverty? I am thinking of malnutrition, illness and family problems which disturb children and make them leave school earlier.

Researcher:
Can you take them one by one?

A14:
Regarding malnutrition; there is no way in which education can be successful on a hungry child. These pupils ultimately drop out of school because they have to look for work and support their younger brothers and sisters.
Researcher:

Thank you, sir. I heard you mention illness and family problems. Can you quickly explain that to us and show us how that makes children leave school earlier.

A14:

Regarding illness, I want to say the following: This is also influenced by malnutrition. For effective learning the body of a child needs to be healthy and strong. The problem of illness disturbs a child's learning. A child will have a short spell of concentration in a class. A duration from the morning till afternoon being at school, will be a very long time for this child. He cannot cope with being in class for such a long time.

Finally, I mentioned family problems or social problems and I want to explain that now and show how this contributes to school dropout. Family social problems can also affect the child's education, e.g. a child whose parents have divorced may be stressed to such an extent that he/she no longer concentrates in class and ultimately drops out.

A15:

I am A15 and I also want to help A16 explain family problems and how they cause school dropout.

Family matters, for example, conflict between the child's parents. Continuous conflict between the child's parents disturbs a child psychologically. As his mind is affected, his learning, too, will be badly affected.

This is also connected to poor family background and a lack of support by parents of the child's education.
A18:

I am A18 and I have always been concerned about the poor environments in which our children live.

Researcher:

What do you mean by that?

A18:

I mean the crime rate and violence in our neighbourhood and how it affects our children. Crime rate also leads to the disturbance of the smooth running of the schools because there is a lack of protection and security. School properties are vandalised, there is hooliganism in school assets and those acts make it difficult for students to be at school.

Researcher:

Can we hear from you, A13. You have been quiet all the time.

A13:

Added to that, schools also show the following problems.

Lack of educational resources: Most of the African schools are disadvantaged. Some of them don't even have desks for pupils to sit on.

Researcher:

Can this cause dropout and, if so, how?

A13:

Children lose interest in school, are not encouraged to learn and finally leave school.

Overcrowding: In some schools there are more children than the required number. As a result, education becomes meaningless.

Unqualified teachers: Unqualified teachers destroy the morale and the spirit of learners, because they are not trained to teach the pupils or students.
A14:
Lack of qualified teachers on technological subjects like mathematics and physical science has long prevailed in our schools and even today this has remained unsolved.

A15:
I am A15 and I feel dropout is caused directly by improper teacher training or underqualified teachers: This type of teacher fails to motivate pupils in their learning. He sometimes fails to deliver the matter properly. He uses words such as "fool" or "stupid" which discourages the pupils. This can hurt the pupils, they will be demoralised. Their spiritual and emotional life will be crippled. The child then leaves school.

A12:
I want to talk about lack of guidance, sexual abuse, absenteeism and lack of schools in some areas.

Lack of guidance and counselling: Students go to the extent of choosing subjects which hinder their learning. No one guides our children. When the child cannot cope, he leaves school.

Sexual abuse: This happens mostly to girls. A child will be psychologically affected. At school, she will be absent-minded and the performance will be poor then the child leaves school.

Absenteeism: A child who used to absent himself from school shows that he has no interest in schooling. He will ultimately drop out.
Lack of schools in other areas: A child is required to take a long journey daily to go to school. When he arrives at school, he is tired, even hungry. His learning cannot be successful.

A17:

I want to talk about inaccessibility of the school in terms of it being too far from where some pupils stay will accelerate the level of dropouts. Pupils who stay in very rural or farm areas where the nearest school is about 10km away will lose interest in school eventually. More schools should be built even in remote and rural areas.

I am also concerned about the unprofessional attitude of some of our teachers towards our children. The attitude of a teacher is also an important factor. Teachers who show some favouritism and subjectivity in class will lead the unfavoured pupils into being dropouts because somehow they will feel as if they do not matter and they do not belong. Teachers should learn to treat pupils fairly and with compassion.

A17:

I have observed that physical disability is a serious problem.

Researcher:

Can you tell us more about that?

A17:

Physical disability at a later age may also cause the child to drop out of school. This may be caused by things like accidents. A child may be forced to attend special schools.

A15:

When we were discussing problems within the schools, I forgot to mention uninteresting lessons and classroom activities. Can I discuss this now?
Researcher:

Yes, sir, feel free to do that.

A15:

Lessons should be such that pupils participate actively. Lack of teaching resources like good teaching aids and apparatus for experiments will render most lessons dull and most students will not understand and will thus not see the importance of coming to school any more. We should have well dedicated teachers who use resources well and mostly involve the pupils in the learning process.

Repeating a particular class too often leads to pupils leaving school. Automatic promotion at some levels should be introduced. This is also to the advantage of a child who is "gifted" such that a particular class will not bore him/her.

Researcher:

Ladies and gentlemen, have we exhausted every other cause? Anybody still prepared to contribute. I see your hand is up, A14. Can you help us.

A14:

I feel bad company makes the child leave school earlier.

Researcher:

What do you mean by bad company?

A14:

This is peer group influence. A child may be influenced by his peers who have already left school. This is usually common in street kids. They easily influence and entice others.
A16:

I maintain that bad influence is not only coming from outside. Even in the same school bad friends will dissuade the child from attending school.

Attitude from teachers and pupils. A negative attitude from fellow pupils and staff can also influence the child to drop out of school.

Researcher:

Thank you very much for your comments. I see A18 wants to say something.

A18:

I want to focus on a too academic curriculum that has no room for everybody. Pupils get bored and drop out because the schools do not cater for their needs, expectations and interests. They are forced to be stereotypes and are encouraged to be dependent rather than creative and think critically. Automatically they lose interest.

A16:

I feel also, whilst on that issue of the curriculum, if the subject matter is too theoretical, some pupils will not see the worth of attending school any more. The curriculum should be academic and vocation orientated.

Badly trained teachers or underqualified. Some of these types of teachers do not have love, respect and psychological attitudes towards the children they teach. They do not even have interests to know more about the children. They do not prepare thoroughly for these poor children. So how will the pupils be well-equipped for the world outside?

A15:

I have a problem with some of the subjects prescribed in our schools. These subjects do not help our children in the labour market. Unmarketable subjects at schools.
Unmarketable subjects that had been introduced by Apartheid Bantu Act of 1953 in South Africa also aggravated problems in our schools.

**Researcher:**

Can I ask you, how does this now cause school dropout?

**A15:**

Well, if the subjects are unmarketable our children discover this during the course of the year and start losing interest in school. They then drop out.

**Researcher:**

Any other comment? I see we have now exhausted this aspect. Can I ask you another question? This is the last question ladies and gentlemen. We have now identified and discussed the causes of school dropout, what do you think can be done to curb this problem? Yes A15, I see your hand is up. Help us!

**A15:**

In a nutshell feeding schemes should be introduced at schools. Crime and violence should be curbed and controlled by introducing strong measures on how to deal with criminals. Decent punishment should be introduced that will respect humanity and UBUNTU. Free and compulsory education should be introduced especially at lower grades levels. Curriculum should be reviewed and promotion should be granted to different grades. Teachers should be retrained and new skills, approaches and methods introduced to all teachers. Marketable subjects such as art, music, agricultural science, physical science, housecraft, etc, should be introduced. Expertise should be invited to assist from abroad on training of our teachers to fit well in those positions and able to deal with any different situation. They should be trained on how to deal with individual differences, intelligent or gifted children, handicapped children, etc. Pre-service teachers
should be well-equipped with new methods, approaches and developmental skills that will be improved time and again to suit the changing curriculum.

Researcher:

Thank you very much for such a lengthy and brilliant contribution. Anyone else? Yes, A18, can you take the floor?

A18:

Poverty can be remedied by providing free education even to some extent, for example, by providing textbooks and feeding schemes.

Researcher:

A16, I see you nodding, can you also contribute?

A16:

To deal with all the abovementioned problems, the feeding scheme or school meal is needed. A guidance teacher/counsellor is needed. Free education is also needed. The training of teachers should be improved.

A13:

I want to make the following comments. The government should introduce feeding schemes to provide food for those who come from poverty-stricken families. More schools should be built to avoid overcrowding. The government should encourage investors to come and invest in the country to uplift the standard of economy, to cater for all. Educational resources should be provided to allow children to work on their own. The guidance counselling group should be well equipped to assist the dropouts with more information.

A14:

I want to round up proposals by making the following contribution.

— Introduce feeding schemes to provide pupils with meals
— Improve the quality of the curriculum to suit the pupils' interest, understanding and surrounding.
— Improve teacher training through teacher in-service training.
— Establish learning institutions to cater for pupils.
— Create facilitating methods (discovery) to involve pupils in the lesson - specially at primary level.
— Bursaries should be issued and businessmen and educated people who understand the meaning of education and care for the Africans may volunteer to help children in their schooling.
— Appropriate methods should be implemented to minimise high dropout in primary schools so that pupils are moulded positively towards establishing self-confidence.
— The primary schools curriculum should include activities such as singing, counting, running, jumping, since they cannot concentrate for a long time.

**Researcher:**

We have come to the end of the proceedings and thank you very much for all your comments, contributions, time and the manner in which you participated in the discussions. Thank you very much and may God bless you. Thank you.
ADDENDUM D: FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS WITH PUPILS

Ladies and gentlemen, you have been invited to participate in this talk and discussion and before we make a start, can I welcome you cordially and warmly. Thank you very much that you ultimately found time to be present. Please feel free to contribute, make comments, butt in whilst someone is talking if you feel like, ask questions in between our discussion and please don't mind if someone asks you questions. This discussion is going to remain confidential, and you need not even identify yourself when talking or asking questions. This is strictly confidential.

I want to quickly brief you on the topic of our discussion. I want us to talk about the problem of pupils leaving school early. Without any further waste of time, let us embark on our project; and please feel free. I have already introduced myself and I want to pose one question to you: Why do you think pupils leave school early?

A1:

What do you mean by pupils leaving school early? Do you mean school dropout?

Researcher:

That's right.

A1:

Dropping out may result from economic factors i.e. lack of finance. If the child feels that he suffers more than the others do, he gets discouraged and is forced to leave school and find a job.

Researcher:

It looks like you wanted to make a contribution on this aspect?
A4:
Some children/students cannot proceed with their studies because of their family background. Such students are forced to abandon school as dropouts to help their families.

A6:
One of the causes of dropout can be the socio-economic status of the family?

Researcher:
What do you mean by "socio-economic status", Mister?

A6:
Well, I mean children from low socio-economic status families have problems at school because they do not get enough facilities to use at school or study materials. Therefore they resort to dropping out of schools because they have already the negative attitude towards school and don't see the reason for going to school.

A2:
I also want to make some comments regarding socio-economic status of the family. I think low socio-economic status means poverty of family. Most of the children end up being dropouts because their parents are not able to supply them with school requirements like textbooks, pocket money and uniforms. The child stays for the whole day not eating anything and at the end he leaves school in order to look for a job.

A3:
Poverty-stricken families cause the children to be dropouts because their parents are unable to buy their books so they do not have material to write on and even textbooks. Parents are also unable to pay school fund for those pupils. Sometimes it is up to them to become dropouts because they do not work well with their teachers. In other words, they become stubborn and not respecting their teachers. They also become aggressive.
When all other children in the class have uniforms we, who cannot afford it, feel out of place, rejected and neglected and some teachers ridicule us, scold us and make us feel bad. Other pupils laugh at us. Because we feel that we are the laughing stock of others, we feel we must leave, go and work so that we can also earn money for ourselves.

Researcher:
Ladies and gentlemen, please feel free to come up with some more causes of school dropout.

A4:
I feel pupils leave school earlier because of the serious problem of distance from home to school. Most African and South African schools are built far from residential areas. Some communities reside where there is not a single school and students have to travel six to seven kilometres to attend schools.

Researcher:
Looks like you want to add, I see you nodding.

A3:
Sometimes the distance between the school and home cause the child to drop out for example Modise travels twelve kilometres to school everyday, and he is bare-footed. The problems come when winter arrives especially. He suffers from cracking of feet more especially on the heels, small stones enter on the cracking of heels and make them open more until blood flows out. And that is really painful and the sore itches more in winter. So eventually the boy decides to forget about the school and remain at home next to the fire.

A2:
Sir, can I also say something about lack of transport?
Researcher:

Yes, do so.

A2:

Some of the pupils, especially in rural areas and farms have to walk for a long distance to go to school. You will find the child wakes up early in the morning to go to school and comes back home in the evening. When he arrives at home, he is tired and goes to sleep without doing his school work because he goes to school on foot. At the end, the child leaves school as he is not able to go for a long distance.

Researcher:

Your hand was up, A2, you can continue making your contribution known to us. What do you think, in your opinion, also causes dropouts?

A2:

Thank you, sir. I feel our schools are poor, sir. Some schools do not have textbooks, they have few chairs and tables and this makes the child restless when he is at school. The child will not have textbooks to read, chairs are not comfortable to them and at the end, he sees school as something which has not value at all.

A4:

I think historically we also have a serious problem. Some schools in African communities are unable to provide for teaching facilities such as textbooks, maps, etc, in order to assist the teacher with planning. In South Africa the situation was worsened by the Bantu Education Act of 1953 whereby teaching resources for the Black community were minimised and maximised for whites.

A2:

Another serious problem we have in our schools on farms is lack of qualified teachers. Some schools do not have qualified teachers and also have few teachers especially in
remote rural areas. You will find that there are many pupils with few teachers and teachers are not able to teach their pupils properly. Some unqualified teachers will lack information and at the end the child will become a dropout. On most farms there are one teacher schools, and when the teacher is sick or absent there is no schooling. This discourages learning and retards progress and pupils have no other option but to fail and drop out of school.

Researcher:

A6, I see your hand is up. Its your time now to talk.

A6:

Thanks. I have a problem with the attitude of some of the teachers.

Researcher:

What do you mean?

A6:

Teachers who have developed a negative attitude towards pupils will cause pupils to drop out of school because they criticise them openly in front of other pupils, give them funny names and the whole class laughs at such pupils.

Another problem is autocracy on the part of teachers. By this I mean teachers who do not allow pupils to participate in classroom matters and whose decisions are final may cause pupils to drop out of school.

A6:

We also have lazy teachers who waste our children's time. We have teachers who do not do their work properly. Teachers who do not do the school work they are supposed to do (i.e. that of educating the child) may cause children to drop out of school. The
child will not see the importance of going to school because he/she will be knowing that 
the teacher will not come to class. Eventually the child will drop out of school.

Whilst on teachers, I feel I should also mention that there are teachers who do not care 
about the children they are teaching.

Researcher:
I don't understand what you mean. Can you tell us more about that?

A1:
Under this we have the teachers of a child. If the teacher is non-comforting, non-
upportive, irresponsible, scornful to the child, not caring and non-loving, that teacher's 
personality will at last force the child to resort to dropping out of school.

A4:
As a result of the national call by President Nelson Mandela for pupils to go back to 
school, our schools now have the problem of overcrowding. It has been the prevailing 
situation in most African communities. This is because of a shortage of classrooms and 
a lack of teachers. Students are forced to occupy a single class with the maximum 
number of 50 to 60. A student at the back cannot afford to stand on his feet thus 
decides to leave school.

A2:
Some of the schools are so overcrowded that the child is not able to listen attentively. 
At the end he finds school boring and he will be less interested in doing the school work 
and coming to school. This later on causes the child to leave school.

A1:
Another serious problem facing our children is exposure to bad elements.
Researcher:

Can I interrupt? What do you exactly mean by that?

A1:

Sir, I mean peer group influence or bad friends. The child sometimes finds himself associated with peers with bad influences and that particular child will at last lose direction and join gangsters hence dropout results.

This is sometimes called peer group pressure and this shortly means that some of the pupils are influenced by peer group. You will find that the child or pupil is influenced by her peer groups because they have told her that there are many beautiful things outside there, they are given money, they have everything. When the child realises that it is true her friend has everything, but she must ask her parents to get what she wants, she will start to think that she is wasting her time and she will leave school.

A3:

Sir, can I help him with explaining that concept?

Researcher:

Yes, feel free to do that.

A3:

Sometimes it depends on the type of peer groups which the child is committed to. If he chooses to join the peer group which is addicted to drugs, he will eventually leave the school and join them. Sometimes they are thieves and robbers. He will decide to be a thief because he will be seeing that his peer group is able to make money. So he will see school to be useless and a sheer waste of time.

Researcher:

Thank you for that explanation. Any other problem worth mentioning?
Can I raise the issue of malnutrition?

Researcher:

Please explain so that we all understand you.

A2:

Most African and South African schools do not offer food assistance to those students from low socio-economic status families. Some students leave school only because they cannot live on empty stomachs. However, they decide to move around searching for food.

I have seen very strict parents who make it difficult to give their children freedom. We call these families autocratic families and I want to explain this. Some families are very strict. Parents do not want their children to play. They will tell the child that he must do his school work at school not at home, because when the child is at home, it is the time for him to do what he is supposed to do. You will find that the child does all the work, he is being sent to the shops, everywhere his parents would like him to go. At the end, the child left school as he is not able to do his school work. I also want to give some suggestions on how to deal with such parents. I feel that parents should be told that they must give their children a chance to rest and allow them to do their work. Pupils must be told that they must not listen to everything they are told by their peers because some of the things have negative effects later on in life. The government must do something regarding those children whose parents are not able to pay for their fees at schools, to buy them books as they do not earn enough money.

I want to talk about lack of parent control, whilst still busy on parents.
Researcher:

Can you tell us more about that?

A2:

Some parents are not able to control their children. The children do as they wish, they do not care for the school work, being absent from school and their parents do not take pains to look at their school books or even ask him why you were absent from school.

A6:

Again, another problem concerning parents is divorce. Parents who are divorced can cause problems in their children. The child can experience learning problems and eventually drop out of school because he/she will not cope at school as he/she will be thinking of his/her parents every time he/she is at school.

A1:

As a result of social problems at home pupils leave school early. This we call social problems. This means that the family can be one of the causes of dropout, e.g. if the parents are non-supportive, especially in a child who is not doing well at school.

Cultural factors practised by black pupils cause school dropout.

Researcher:

Tell us more about that.

A1:

Most African and South African students tend to be dropouts because of their traditional belief. African communities practise initiation school which removes students from formal education. The poor student tends to be a dropout to satisfy his cultural norm.
A6:

I want to mention the problem of poor behaviour. African students may become dropouts because of behavioural and learning aspects. Many become dropouts because they fail to cope with regulations laid down by the authorities.

Our children can be very disappointing because they get addicted to alcohol and drugs. Pupils who are addicted to alcohol can easily drop out of school because when a pupil is at school he will not concentrate on school work but will be thinking of the places he used to get alcohol from. He will feel that the school is wasting his time and drop out of school or duck classes and go and have a beer or two at a shebeen.

Can I add on that?

Researcher:

Yes.

A6:

This means children to fail to pay attention to their school work and perform badly. Some children who have low intellectual ability see the school as the place to which they don't belong. After writing maybe a test or classwork when the child fails it, he/she loses interest in the particular subject and concludes to drop out of school.

I still want to talk about the type of pupils we have in our schools and how this contributes to school dropout. Pupils who do not receive good motivation at school or even at home will tend to drop out of school because he/she will not know the importance of education.
A3:
The advent of TV (television) has brought untold sorrow to our pupils. As a result of uncontrolled watching of TV sometimes the child does not perform well at school. He fails tests and he does not write homework. So eventually he decides to leave the school. If corporal punishment is used harshly at that school, he will eventually run away from it.

A2:
The child himself can cause school dropout. In the case of a more gifted child, if he is overly gifted, the child will feel that the school delays him because he already knows what the teacher was going to teach.

A less gifted child can also have serious problems. This child needs to be attended to and not isolated. If the teacher and the school do not help the child to feel accepted, and also feel that he is being attended to in order for him to be helped to reach the standard, that child will automatically leave because he will feel inferior and small.

A4:
A lot of our pupils will drop out of school because of the curriculum they have in schools.

Researcher:
Please explain that for us.

A4:
Most dropouts leave school because they cannot cope with the curriculum imposed on them. Many students fail to study but can highly depend on their hands. Most African and South African schools do not offer first hand experience at an early stage thus students drop out.
A1:
The material or subject content is a problem also. If the material or the content does not meet the needs of a child, the child may lose interest in school.

Researcher:
Thank you very much for your contributions. Before we close our discussion, can we now concentrate on what, in your opinion, do you think should be done to reduce the rate of school dropout. Please feel free to contribute. I see your hand is up. Can we get your views on this issue?

A1:
My genuine feeling is that school should deliver the goods to the pupils. The schools should cater for both gifted and the non-gifted child. For those who lack money, bursaries should be granted.

A4:
I want to focus attention on the issue of overcrowding. Most classrooms should be built to meet the demands of the ever-growing population. Regarding the issue of malnutrition which emanates from poverty, I feel the Red-Cross should assist in giving pupils food at their respective schools.

The curriculum should cater for all students, that is intellectuals, mediocre, and below average. Cultural factors should not be allowed to hinder school attendance and retard progress. Initiation ceremonies and periods of attendance should be during school holidays. The hospital system can also be introduced.

Because charity begins at home, parents should assist in motivating and moulding the pupil in order to have proper social behaviour among his peers.
A5:
The government should offer bursaries to further requirements needed for development and in order to assist and finance them.

A1:
There should be education for adults so that they too can learn, hence they will be supportive towards their children. Pupils should be encouraged not to be too close with friends as they will sometimes mislead them. Social activities for young children should be constructed.

The government should see to it that necessary school equipment is available. Professional and qualified teachers should be employed and they need to be trained on how to reduce the amount of dropouts. Motivation be inculcated in the minds of the society. The curriculum should be at the level of the learner so that his needs could be met.

A5:
Distance from school and home can be addressed if both government and community should jointly build schools in each community to minimise the distance.

More money should be put aside to cater for the resources needed to uplift the standard of education.

Researcher:
Ladies and gentlemen, I feel we have exhausted this topic and we have now come to the end of the proceedings. Thank you once more and may God bless us. Thank you.
ADDITIONAL E: FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS WITH PRINCIPALS OF SCHOOLS

Ladies and gentlemen, you have been invited to participate in this talk and discussion and before we make a start, can I welcome you cordially and warmly. Thank you very much that you ultimately found time to be present. Please feel free to contribute, make comments, butt in whilst someone is talking if you feel like, ask questions in between our discussion and please don't mind if someone asks you questions. This discussion is going to remain confidential, and you need not even identify yourself when talking or asking questions. This is strictly confidential.

I want to quickly brief you on the topic of our discussion. I want us to talk about the problem of pupils leaving school early. Without any further waste of time, let us embark on our project; and please feel free. I have already introduced myself and I want to pose one question to you: Why do you think pupils leave school early?

I know that you people are principals of schools and you are very experienced. Please contribute as much as you can, ask questions and also if you can provide answers to questions asked by fellow interviewees.

Can we break the ice? I see A11's hand is up already ladies and gentlemen. Can you set the ball rolling for us, A11?
A11:

Yes, and thank you, sir. I have been a guidance and counselling officer in my school before I became principal and please allow me to make a long list of general problems which cause school dropout and then we will discuss these one by one.

Researcher:

Okay, feel free, sir. The floor is yours.

A11:

I want to just firstly mention without discussing some of the problems and I will just mention them as they come to mind.

1. A weak interpersonal relationship between teachers and pupils.
2. Extreme strictness or permissiveness
3. Punishment of children by subtracting marks
4. Style of teaching on the part of the teacher
5. Social pressure by a peer group
6. Making pupils cram work they do not understand
7. Circumstances of the learning milieu
   — Bad organisation and ineffective control (Absence of order with teachers and pupils walking around during lesson time and in the classrooms children making as much noise as they can).
   — Size of classes which may deny the teacher an opportunity of implementing the principle of individualisation
8. Incomplete families (children without parents, divorced parents, illegitimate children, etc)
9. A child who lives with one of his parents who has remarried, which makes him a stepchild
10. When both parents are working the child spends a lot of time unsupervised in the afternoon.

11. Wealth in the family can also lead to pupils dropping out of school. Wealth offers certain privileges to the child in that the child has an opportunity to travel and also to go to places of entertainment. Such privileges may make a child neglect his schoolwork.

12. Poverty in the family. In certain instances children are expected to help to provide for the needs of the family.

13. If the child is rejected by both the parents that may affect the child's schoolwork adversely.

14. Arguments and clashes between parent may prevent the child from acquiring a feeling of family unity which may lead to anxiety and confusion on the part of the child.

15. Giftedness can also cause a child to drop out of school particularly when the curriculum does not cater for needs of such a child. Mostly our curriculum caters for the average child and neglects the gifted children.

16. When parents have different views about the education of their children, the children become confused. The father may be too demanding and the mother too permissive and concerned. This lack of agreement may lead to the problems on the part of the child.

This is all I can remember at this stage.
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8. Incomplete families (children without parents, divorced parents, illegitimate children, etc)
9. A child who lives with one of his parents who has remarried, which makes him a stepchild
Researcher:

Thank you very much, sir and can we at this stage, ladies and gentlemen, against the backdrop of this wonderful contribution, take these points one by one and discuss them fully where possible and relate them to school dropout. Start with any other factor.

I see A12 nodding all the time. Can we start with you at this stage?

A12:

I want us to start with poverty in homes of such children. Regarding poverty stricken families I feel most of the African states including South Africa are poor families who cannot afford to buy necessary school materials for their children. Another thing is the long distance which they have to travel before reaching school. They arrive there being so tired and they cannot concentrate for a long period. That results in poor performance at school and they decide to leave school. Some travel for long distance without food. Ultimately a child will end up being a dropout.

A9:

I am A9 and I want to add the following. Many pupils in African schools drop out because of poverty. Poverty leads to many things which give rise to dropouts.

In the first place a pupil form a poverty-stricken family cannot cope with his education until he/she has achieved his goals. If the parents are unemployed the pupils are unable to pay the school funds. Malnutrition also results from such a family. The child from that family ends up leaving the school before he/she can complete the course.

Researcher:

A6, I see you hand is up.
A6:
The Africans suffer from poverty which is caused by unemployment. If the parents are unemployed how can they be able to maintain their children or educate them? This poverty may lead to malnutrition. The pupils cannot go to school without breakfast or even lunch for the day. Hunger may kill one. Malnutrition may lead to illness that may cause a pupil to drop out of the school.

A11:
Can I also make a contribution regarding this issue of poverty?

Researcher:
Oh yes, why not?

A11:
Pupils can drop out of school because of:

1. **Financial problems**

This one is a very sensitive issue because in African homes, only a father used to be a breadwinner and they also used to have more than five children. Financing the family was not an easy task.

Even nowadays, when people are expected to limit the number of children and both parents work, it is not simple but better. Some good families unite and act against children dropping out of school by financing their studies and organising feeding schemes to feed them. This at least has made the dropout rate less.

I also suggest that doctors should also be concerned about this. They have to be financed by somebody to finish their studies so they should also extend their thanks to someone else in return, as I have not heard of this kind of thing.
A7:
There are also some problems within schools such as underqualified and unqualified teachers. Lack of knowledge can result in a dropout. Some unqualified teachers fail to cope with the intellect of students. A student becomes bored whenever Mrs X enters the class because she has no relevant information that the students are looking for.

A10:
Another serious problem in this regard is private teachers. Many of our teachers are not qualified, but they are employed as private teachers. Apart from that, those who are qualified they are trained on some subjects. We are lacking enough mathematics and physical science teachers.

A9:
Can I butt in and explain it further? When in the school there are unqualified teachers, this can cause dropouts because the teacher will be unable to treat the introverts in the expected way. He will treat him in a bad way without considering the situation of a child.

A12:
Secondly the unskilled teachers are not able to transmit knowledge and, as a result, high rates of failures occur and most of the pupils see repetition as a waste of time and ultimately drop out of the school.

A11:
Still on teachers, we also experience the following problem, which finally contributes to leaving school earlier; namely teachers' high expectations.

Some teachers tend to love other children too much and expect some things they are unable to do for them. He, like, expects a child to perform the way he is unable to
perform, i.e. score high marks. He/She sits on this poor child until she does not cope any more. At the end of this, the child drops out of school.

Mwamwenda says, teacher; because we know that children are different and though they perform differently, they should be treated the same.

A7:
Regardless of incessant and repeated efforts by the Department of Education to repeal the Act of corporal punishment, we still see it practised. Methods of corporal punishment are not good for the students. Punishment was mostly applied. Most of the dropouts decided to leave school because of corporal punishment.

A10:
Another serious problem is inappropriate curriculum. The inappropriate curriculum can lead to dropouts. When the curriculum is not written to the interest of the pupils, and also when the curriculum is not relevant to job opportunities.

A11:
I am A11 and am very much concerned about teachers' manners. As teachers we act as the pupils parents at school and we must not bully children by beating them with fists or always calling them names. If they do not organise a gang our students also contribute to school dropouts; such as being delinquent, yielding to peer pressure, and being victims of teenage pregnancy.

Researcher:
Can we deal with one problem at a time? Let us start off with delinquency. A10 can you deal with that first?
A10:

Sometimes parents spoil their children by bringing them up in a bad manner. They give them whatever they want, send them to special schools and maybe in the end, they buy them cars. Unfortunately, not all of these children end up somewhere. Only a handful do. They end up delinquent.

Researcher:

Can you focus on peer pressure?

A11:

About peer pressure I have the following to say: Friends can be your killers sometimes. Almost all the children who have done wrong, it is because of friends. He smokes dagga, he persuades his friends to try and they ultimately become dagga smokers. She loses her virginity, she gets her friend to do the same thing and, most unfortunately, to a boy she does not love. The dagga smoker drops out of school because school does no longer become a conducive place for him. She becomes unfortunate too, she falls pregnant and it is a sure case she is going to drop out. The Parent Teacher Student Association must intervene in this one and try to do counselling on the pupils. Student teachers should also help by visiting the schools.

Researcher:

A13, can you tackle teenage pregnancy for us?

A13:

Teenage pregnancy causes dropouts. Sometimes one becomes unfortunate because she became a permanent dropout because her parents cannot afford to support her and her child, pay for a nanny, buy new uniforms because she will have put on weight, buy baby formula and take the baby to the doctor when sick.
A11:
Our families are also bereft with lots of problems emanating from the side of our parents such as lack of parental care. Some pupils have to drop out of school because their parents do not take care of them. They are three kids in a family and the oldest has to parent them because parents sleep out, are drunkards, fight a lot and maybe only the father is the breadwinner.

Researcher:
Can I raise the sensitive issue of culture problems? Can you tell us more about that?

A10:
Cultural constraints?

Research:
What do you mean by that?

A10:
Culture can also lead to dropouts in the schools. For instance, you may find the child going to initiation school and after that he is no longer interested in going back to school. There are some people, especially black people, who believe that you should not educate the woman too much if she knows to write her name, she can leave the school. This also causes dropouts.

A9:
I am A9 and I want to talk about the standard of education of parents who should be role models. Illiteracy of parents due to the apartheid may cause dropouts. Pupils are not motivated to go to school as their parents have not done it, e.g. at the farms they only live for food, nothing is considered about the future.
A8:
I am A8 and I want to focus on conditions of our schools. Again our schools are not conducive to learning. There are various problems such as: Lack of facilities and overcrowdedness. I want to start right away with lack of facilities.

A10:
Lack of facilities contributes towards dropout. You can find that in a certain school there are types of gifted children who always need to practise when they are taught and there are no facilities to be used at school. Such a child will, at the ultimate end, drop out. Can I continue with overcrowding?

Researcher:
Yes, do so!

A10:
This is the main problem in our schools. It is found mostly in our Black schools. When the pupils are congested in one classroom, they start by absenting themselves from school thinking that the teacher will not realise who is not in.

A12:
I am A12 and whilst on conditions in the school, can I mention and discuss lack of schools?

Researcher:
Of course, yes, do that.

A12:
In some areas there is a lack of schools. You find one primary school, one middle school and no high school. Pupils attend until middle school and drop out because they have to travel on foot to a high school. No buses are available to ferry pupils to and from school.
Gifted children are categorised under disabled pupils, therefore they should be catered for. Not only the gifted but also the deaf and other disabled children.

A14:

Can I add on that? In some areas you may find the community building only one school as primary school, after the child completes his standard 4, he is unable to proceed further because there is no secondary school in the area and there are no tertiary institutions.

Researcher:

A13, I heard you whispering "Lack of Motivation". Another serious problem is lack of motivation. Can you tell us more about that?

A13:

When the pupils are not motivated, when the teachers do not show the pupils the importance of education, pupils will drop out of the school.

In African countries, schools have no facilities which causes lack of motivation. There are no libraries, laboratories and sports activities. Some students can do well in sports and they might follow sport as a career but because of lack of this, they become discouraged and leave school.

Lack of textbooks, stationary and facilities also causes lack of motivation. When in the schools there are no books, people will leave the school. For instance, in Standard 4 and Standard 5 classes, pupils read from one book in combined classes. This makes pupils to be bored and, as a result, they leave school.
Another problem is lack of transport for commuting pupils. They have to travel long distances in hot summers, rainy and cold winters. Others are barefooted or without jerseys due to unemployment or underemployment of adults.

I am A10 and I served in a curriculum committee. The curriculum of the schools is out of step. Students do not see the need of going to school because the types of jobs they are going to find do not correspond with what they are taught at school. They maintain it is better to drop out and work.

Can you tell us more about how you relate the type of education provided to pupils to school dropouts?

The type of education does not prepare pupils for the future. Some students are good in academic issues and others are good at technical subjects. These students who are good in technical subjects are not given enough chances to prove themselves. Our schools do not cater for these students. At the end they leave the school.

Most dropped out of schools because they failed to chose a career which suits them. Failure to understand the contents of the course makes him decide to drop out and leave the institution.

Can I take you back to what was discussed earlier concerning the educational system? Because I feel we left out an important issue. If the school offers the kind of
curriculum which is irrelevant to the demands of the society, the children will drop out of the school because the education offered is not related to the situation they are in.

Researcher:

Any other contributory cause of school dropout? It looks like nobody wants to comment. I feel we have exhausted the causes of school dropout, and thank you once more for your expert opinions on the subject. At this stage, I want us to continue with the second part of our discussion, namely that of making proposals as to what can be done to reduce the rate of school dropout. I see A10's hand is up. Can you take the floor?

A10:

This situation should be remedied by improving all these causes. Students must be granted bursaries. More schools must be built. Teachers must be upgraded.

A9:

I am A9 and my feeling is that social workers must intervene, see to it that these children are well taken care of by putting them up for adoption. Or, if there is a home for such children, they must be kept there until they are independent if their parents consent.

A11:

I am A11 and my proposals are as follows: This problem may be solved if there may be enough jobs for employing the people - the economy of the country. There should be catering at the schools (feeding schemes, I mean), food catered to all students.

Schools should be built in each and every area to minimise the problem of travelling and lack of transportation system. Schools be facilitated with equipment, the government provide the school with laboratory and library equipment.
The curriculum be of use to the future. Learning has to correspond with what they will be doing for earning.

Career guidance and counselling provided to the school. You may find that a student leaves school because he does not know what he wants to be. Career awareness, exploration and preparation must function to these poor African kids.

A9:
I am A9 and I think sex education and not pornography should be taught in schools. School nurses will help again on this issue. They will also be able to teach them about the use of contraceptives because it is clear nowadays that people are unable to live without one another.

A8:
I am A8 and I propose that free and compulsory education can be practised in African countries. All pupils from poor family backgrounds can attend school. The system of the feeding schemes should be introduced.

A14:
I am A14 and my tangible suggestions regarding how the situation can be remedied are as follows: The government should not only build schools and tertiary institutions in urban areas only, but also in the rural areas. The government should also employ more qualified teachers. The government and the department should provide books at schools. They should also make the curriculum relevant to the working fields. They should also provide parents with job opportunities so that they should be able to send their children to schools.
The teachers must also play an important role in helping to remedy this situation. They must motivate the pupils. They must be able to treat them in the respectful manner.

A7:
I am A7 and I feel in-service training is necessary. Teachers should be supplied with new methods of teaching which students will understand better. Teachers should acknowledge that students have individual differences, therefore corporal punishment is not only the solution to rectify the mistakes of pupils.

A9:
I am A9 and I feel a social security system and family grants should be introduced amongst blacks to help parents in maintaining the family.

I further feel that the government should subsidise the education of blacks and whites equally.

Previously in RSA the education budget from the department was not the same. The whites were heavily subsidised when the blacks were not. Black parents had to pay more money for their children and some families could not afford. To make matters worse, blacks were not earning enough. Students decided to drop out of school and help their parents.

More schools should be constructed near the people so as not to travel long distance. The government should supply food in the schools particularly for those who have no food.

Curriculum should be changed. It should cater for all students.
Researcher:

Diversified you mean?

A9:

Yes, the curriculum should be more diversified so that almost all pupils are accommodated in the school system.

A13:

I am A13 and I feel more qualified teachers should be hired and in-service training should be put into practice.

A15:

I am A15 and my feeling is that students should be guided in choosing a career.

Researcher:

By whom?

A15:

I think by the school guidance officer. Schools should be supplied with many facilities. Teachers should be taught how to search the students talents.

Researcher:

Any other remedy suggested? I see no hand up and I am fully convinced that we have exhausted all the suggestions. Ladies and gentlemen thank you very much. Your contributions meant so much to me and thank you very much.
ADDENDUM F:
REPORT ON THE VISIT TO THE NETHERLANDS ON THE SCHOOL DROPOUT PROBLEM

JULY 1994

N.E. RAIKANE

M A MADIGWE
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1. **Introduction**

The aim of the visit is threefold:

- investigate how the Dutch system of education defines the school dropout problem;
- investigate the causes of school dropout in the Dutch education system;
- investigate prevention measures used in the Dutch system of education.

In order to reach the aims as stipulated above the course leader, Drs Peter Lindhoud, liaised with a variety of people to draw an itinerary which was pursued to the latter. The people visited were chose on grounds of their expertise and positions they hold in the various departments. Focus group interviews were held with these people on different dates as can be inferred.

2. **Exposition**

2.1. **Methods of collecting data.**

2.1.1. **List of people interviewed**

2. Drs Peter Lindhoud: Lecturer in history department, Faculty of Education of CHW. 26 May 1994.
4. Drs Ronald Donk: Head of department of history and civics, Faculty of Education of CHW. Specialist of "allochtonen" and education. 31 May 1994.


24. Drs Jaap Verhoog: Director of Faculty of Education of Chr. Hogeschool Windesheim Zwolle. 5 July 1994.

2.1.2. Literature Control and contextualising issues

In order to verify the information solicited from interviewees, a myriad of books were read.

2.2. The phenomenon of Drop-out in the Netherlands

2.2.1. Introduction
With regard to the phenomenon of drop-out in the Netherlands attention was focused on the following three relevant aspects:

2.2.2. Definition and the Nature of Drop-out in the Netherlands

2.2.3. The Causes of Drop-out in the Netherlands

2.2.4. Prevention Networks and Programmes in the Netherlands

2.2.2. Definition and the Nature of Drop-out in the Netherlands

The school system which is part of the education system is typified according to the primary school, secondary school and tertiary institutions. In line with the above categorisation there is the primary school drop-out, the secondary school drop-out and the tertiary institutions drop-out. Central to this notion of typification the drop-out would be any pupil or student who leaves any school niveau without a diploma or successful completion.

In secondary education there is a great deal of diversification on grounds of interest and potential. This means that certain pupils receive Pre-university Education, titled VWO; Senior General Secondary Education, titled HAVO; Junior General Secondary Education, titled MAVO; and Junior Secondary Vocational Education, titled LBO. These have been arranged in order of the challenge posed by a particular niveau. This makes us speak of a "VWO" drop-out, "HAVO" drop-out, "MAVO" drop-out and an "LBO" drop-out.
This categorisation is so designed that in the event of a child dropping out for one reason or another from one niveau; this child can have recourse to the subsequent niveau. But because of this education system the real problem of drop-outs is in the lower categories "MAVO" and "LBO". A pupil who drops out from "VWO" will continue in "HAVO", who drops out from "HAVO" will continue in "MAVO". But those who drop out from "MAVO" and "LBO" cannot continue anymore. See diagram at end.

2.2.3. The Causes of Drop-out in the Netherlands

The causes of drop-out in the Netherlands are multiple and varied. They range from problems in the family, problems in school and problems in the environment in which the child lives.

2.2.3.1. The Problems in the Family

Children in the Netherlands encounter the following problems in the family: divorce, separation of parents, incest, child abuse, cultural differences, gypsy nomads, limited parental involvement in education, poor housing, language problems, alcoholism, premature teenage pregnancy and poor parent-child relationship.

2.2.3.2. The Problems in the School

Children in the Netherlands encounter the following problems in the school: language problems, cultural differences and traditions, inadequate school sporting activities,
negative teachers' attitudes, negative pupils; attitude and unwarranted absence from school.

2.2.3.3. The Problems in the Environment

Children in the Netherlands encounter the following problems in the environment in which they live: drug abuse, youth criminality and its related problems, vandalism, graffiti, gambling, gangsterism, theft, shoplifting, rape and poor motivation.

3. Prevention Networks and Programmes in the Netherlands

3.1. Introduction

There are a variety of prevention networks and programmes of drop-out in the Netherlands. These programmes and networks can be divided into three basic categories. These are as follows:

3.2. Prevention Networks and Programmes in lieu of Problems in the Family

3.3. Prevention Networks and Programmes in lieu of Problems in the School

3.4. Prevention Networks and Programmes in lieu of Problems in the Environment

4. The Next Steps: suggested Solutions
4.1. Introduction

In order to give suggested solutions to curb school drop-out there is categorisation such as:

4.2. Short-term Solutions (cheap to implement solutions)

4.3. Medium-term Solutions (intermediate solutions)

4.4. Long-term Solutions (a bit more expensive to implement solutions)

In discussing the abovementioned kinds of solutions, by implication attention will also be focused on problems in the family, the school and the environment.

4.2. Short-term Solutions (cheap to implement solutions)

- Strict control measures for relative and complete absence of pupils (Regular attendance enforcement)
- All principals must receive managerial skills training for efficient enforcement of compulsory education.
- Appoint social workers, doctors, psychologists, nurses, psychiatrists, police, speech therapists and have co-operation networks for them to help address problems in schools. Analyse the behaviour of naughty pupils.
- Networks to involve parents to help address educational problems.
- Provide all schools with necessary educational facilities.
- Introduce homework clubs supervised properly.
- Introduce guidance and counselling in all the schools and by selecting and upgrading teachers in the schools and making this an examination subject so that
it is taken seriously. Guidance and counselling should be introduced as subjects in teacher training programmes.

- Have more school excursions and educational trips to make the school environment enjoyable, lively and vivacious and to increase the holding power of the schools.

- Introduce remedial education and teaching to assist those pupils with learning difficulties.

- Pre-occupy pupils positively with constructive activities in the school.

4.3. Medium-term solutions (intermediate solutions)

- Build more schools and provide books and stationery
- Pay teachers a living wage
- Introduce second language acquisition programmes (for minority groups and people from outside the country)
- Codes of conduct of teachers to be formulated and strictly enforced
- Establish youth centres to help inculcate a culture of regular school attendance and to enable students to have a place for doing school homework, especially those pupils who come from milieu deprived environment
- Build more libraries in the environments in which pupils live
- Provide more recreational facilities
- Appoint more clerical staff in the schools and improve general working conditions
- Involve pupils in more administrative and leadership tasks in the schools, for an example, in the form of students representative councils.
— Have networks and programmes to improve good working relationships between pupils themselves and pupils and teachers

4.4. **Long-term Solutions (a bit more expensive to implement solutions)**

— Introduction of compulsory education

— Introduction of diversified schools with networks and programmes for vocational training

— Introduction of free education for all

— Build more technicons to cater for diversified needs and/or enlarge the capacity of existing technicons

— Attention must be paid to provision and proper functioning of Adult Education Centres

— Improve the relationship between pupils and the police force and bring the police much closer to schools.

— Make a concerted effort to fight vandalism and graffiti in schools.

— Fight illiteracy amongst parents to help maximise the potential of full participation in school matters

— Relax undue strictness on school uniform policies

— Have network schemes on late-coming which has a detrimental effect on school performance of pupils

— Provide pupils with transport means to and from school.
5. Conclusion

There are differences between the causes of drop-out and prevention networks and programmes in the Netherlands as compared to the position in the Republic of South Africa. These prevention networks and programmes have been evaluated and relevant recommendations will be made to ameliorate the conditions in South Africa.