

CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The schooling experiences of learners are characterized by a variety of issues such as the lack of parental involvement, sexual and physical abuse, bullying, stigmatization and discrimination, substance abuse, school violence, transition from primary school to secondary school, ill health and malnutrition as well as relationships with educators (Human Rights Watch, 2001; Parker and Agletton, 2003; Oosthuizen, de Waal, de Wet, Rossouw and Huyssteen, 2005; and Sullivan, Cleary and Sullivan, 2005). However, these issues seem to affect non-orphans and orphaned children differently.

The phenomenological approach was utilized to investigate the schooling experiences of orphaned children (OC). The aim of the phenomenological study is always to understand the human being within the context of his or her lived world (refer to Chapter Three for a comprehensive analysis of the phenomenological approach). This study, therefore, investigated how orphans at Mandini Secondary School in the Maluti District of Education experienced schooling?

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The number of orphans worldwide is rapidly increasing. The United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS, 2008) estimated that 15 million children under the age of

eighteen years worldwide became orphans. The total number of orphans was approximately 39.2 million by the year 2000 and it was estimated that the figure would increase to 50 million by 2010 (UNAIDS, 2004). According to UNAIDS (2008), United Nations International Children's Fund (UNICEF) and United Nations States Agencies for International Developments (USAID,2004) as cited in Thurman, Brown, Richter, Maharaj and Mangani (2006), there are roughly 43.4 million orphans in Sub- Saharan Africa. Furthermore, there are roughly one million orphans in South Africa who have lost a mother (maternal orphans) and around 2.13 million who have lost a father (paternal orphans); (Giese, 2004 cited in Streak, 2005). UNAIDS, UNICEF and USAID (2004), state that the frightening scale of orphaned children has particularly been linked to the HIV/AIDS epidemic that has devastated the African continent since the late 1980's. Apart from HIV/AIDS, there are many other causes of death that contribute to the significant increase in orphanhood around the world and South Africa in particular. These causes include road accidents, malaria, tuberculosis and natural causes.

UNICEF (2003) as cited in Thurman et al. (2005) has documented significantly lower school enrollment rates among orphans as compared to non-orphans. This lower school enrollment is caused by amongst others, exploitative situations such as sexual and physical abuse, as well as older children having to care for their younger siblings (Foster and Williamson, 2000, cited in Thurman et al., 2005). Orphaned school children can also become vulnerable in academic and emotional issues. Amongst the problems faced by orphaned learners is low morale, poor academic performance and discipline due to the lack of parental care and assistance (Holloway, Suzuki, Yamoto and Behrens, 2005). This implies that the lack of parental involvement in the schooling of the

child may result in these orphans becoming less interested in their schoolwork and their personal behavior can be disruptive.

Orphans are reportedly vulnerable to, for example, sexual and physical abuse, stigmatization and discrimination, as well as bullying (Human Rights Watch, 2001; Oosthuizen, de Waal, de Wet, Rossouw and Huyssteen, 2005 and Sullivan, Cleary and Sullivan, 2005). One out of every four school-going child under the age of sixteen years has been sexually violated. Furthermore, bullying affects all learners because it leaves the learner feeling helpless and defenseless, leading to depression and anxiety and damages his or her self-esteem (Oosthuizen et al., 2005).

Orphans also suffer from stigmatization. Parker and Agletton (2003) posit that learners who are stigmatized and discriminated against so often accept and even internalize the stigma that they are subjected to. Furthermore, stigmatization and discrimination must be understood as social processes linked to the reproduction of inequality and exclusion. Shilubana and Kok (2004) further argue that orphans are labeled, patronized, stigmatized and discriminated against, exploited and rejected. As a result they repeatedly face fear and harassment.

It is imperative for children to attend school and take full advantage of their education, which in turn is also important for their psychological development. Orphans are also disadvantaged educationally, because they do not have someone to interact with the school or the teachers on their behalf (Boler and Carroll, 2003). Thurman et al. (2005) state that a number of orphans are forced to stop their schooling due to the lack of

school fees and other school needs. In addition, orphans are less likely to be at the correct level than non-orphans (Case, Paxton and Ableidinger, 2003). '*Correct level*' here means that the orphans may not be in the correct grade because of their circumstances.

The South African government has introduced various education policies and legislation to ensure that orphaned school children benefit from an integrated system of education. Some of these policies and legislation are the South African Schools Act (SASA, Act 84 of 1996); the National Policy on HIV/AIDS (1996); Norms and Standards for Educators (1996); White Paper 6 (2001), the National Curriculum Statement (NCS): Grade R-9 (2002) and the School Nutrition Programme (SNP).

Dalen, Nakitende and Musisi (2009) highlights that the majority of studies in sub-Saharan Africa have focused on orphans from the perspective of socioeconomic and physical factors such as access to education, food, shelter and clothing. According to these authors, these are factors which are observable and easier to address, resulting in the psychological needs receiving less attention. It is reality that sexual and physical abuse, stigmatization and discrimination, as well as bullying do occur in schools (ibid). Thus, the ideal situation for teaching and learning to take place is where parents are actively involved in their children's education and issues mentioned earlier are constantly monitored and addressed. In the absence of the parent orphaned children (OC) may experience schooling differently than non-orphans. Hence, my study sought to get an in-depth understanding of the schooling experiences of OC. Thus, parental involvement is crucial to the schooling experiences of learners.

Parental involvement in schools is necessary to create a solid foundation for a student's achievements. Oosthuizen et al. (2005) argue that children identify schools as a place where they can meet friends, socialize and play with other learners. Furthermore, parental involvement at school affects achievement which in turn influences career and educational aspirations. Parents therefore are major contributors to the schooling experiences of their children (ibid). Parents who are more involved in their children's schooling, become more knowledgeable about school goals and procedures, communicate the importance of schooling to their children and help them learn strategies to enhance their perceptions of competence and control over achievement outcomes (Holloway et al., 2005). In addition, according to the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 (SASA, Act 84 of 1996), parents ought to:

- support the school and require learners to observe all school rules and regulations and to accept responsibility for any misbehavior on their part.
- take an active part in their children's schoolwork and make it possible for children to complete assigned homework.
- have regular discussions with their children about general school matters and
- to cultivate a healthy, open and cooperative relationships with the children's teachers.

The schooling experiences of children are likely to change dramatically to the negative in the absence of parental involvement. Schools and teachers are critical to the development of OC, especially in the wake of the loss of parents and parenting. These changes may include, for example, stigmatization and discrimination by teachers and peers; sexual and physical abuse; bullying and substance abuse. Thurman et al., (2006)

state that orphans experience a range of emotional and social problems; because of the loss of their parents. In addition, a number of orphans are forced to stop their schooling due to the lack of school fees or they have to become the head of their households and thus responsible to care for their younger siblings (ibid). The existence of OC and their experiences at school seem to be ignored by teachers and non-orphans.

The school system also provides an opportunity to provide psychological support- one of the needs of OC that is most often neglected in favor of meeting critical material, economic, nutritional and other physical needs (Smart, 2003). Thus, the researcher was interested in investigating the schooling experiences of OC at the secondary school under investigation in the Eastern Cape.

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

Literature indicates that orphans are vulnerable at school to a range of experiences such as stigmatization and discrimination, bullying as well as sexual and physical abuse (Human Rights Watch, 2001; Parker and Agletton, 2003; Oosthuizen et al., 2005 and Sullivan et al., 2005). There is also evidence that orphans have three times more chances of dropping out of school than children who have parents (Thurman et al., 2006). This is so because of the lack of emotional, financial and other material support; some have to become the head of the households and thus responsible for their younger siblings (UNICEF, 2006). As literature further indicates, orphans are also educationally disadvantaged because of the absence of the parent, who would otherwise have ensured that they are actively involved in their children's schooling experiences (Boler and Carroll, 2003). Many studies on OC were conducted (for

example Oosthuizen et al., 2005; Sullivan et al., 2005; Thurman et al., 2006; UNAIDS, 2008 and Dalen, Nakitende and Musisi, 2009), but it seems there is little research on their actual schooling experiences. It is within the above context that this study investigated how orphaned learners are experiencing their schooling.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTION

1.4.1 The main research question:

How are orphans at Mandini Secondary School in the Maluti District of Education experiencing schooling?

1.5 ASSUMPTIONS OF THE STUDY

In this study, the researcher assumes that there are barriers that inhibit the schooling experiences of OC. These barriers are:

- The orphans sometimes feel 'sad' and 'lonely' because of the loss of their parent(s).
- They feel lost without their parent(s), especially when it comes to their involvement in their education.
- These orphans feel that the teachers are not adhering to their plights that is, they are not interested in the challenges which they are facing.

1.6 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The aim of the study was to investigate the schooling experiences of orphaned children at Mandini Secondary School. This study further set out to obtain a better understanding of how orphaned children (OC) experience schooling with the view of making possible

suggestions to relevant stakeholders of how the schooling experiences of OC can be improved.

1.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The responses from the respondents concerning the concept of an orphan, seemed to be challenging the definition by UNICEF (2006) and others about the age factor attached to an orphan. The findings of this study may probably raise the awareness about the variables that significantly affect the schooling experiences of OC. Furthermore, creating an atmosphere of understanding and mutual respect, can improve the working relationship among all concerned, namely teachers, learners, principal and officials from the education department. It was further expected that these OC would develop a sense of ownership for their own learning which should subsequently enhance their schooling experiences. The results of the study could therefore be used by policy makers to examine the current situation of orphaned children at school.

1.8 RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

The researcher has been a teacher for thirty five years during which time he taught at a senior secondary school and later at two primary schools. Currently the researcher is an acting deputy principal at a primary school where he is teaching. The researcher served on the school management teams of two schools and was also tour organizer at those schools. During the researcher's teaching career he developed a passion to care for underprivileged children whereby he collected clothing and food and distributing it to them. A special interest developed around the issue of orphaned children. The researcher assisted some to obtain a social grant, get an identity document, as well as

some of them being taken in at childcare institutions. An incident at a school where orphaned children were excluded from attending classes because they did not wear school uniform inspired the researcher to undertake this study.

The reason for undertaking this study was to gain insight into the schooling experiences of orphaned children so that the problems that they experienced could be identified and addressed in order to negate the influence of the absence of the parent in their schooling. Furthermore, this investigation was undertaken in order to inform and shape intervention strategies to address the plight of these orphaned children (OC). The South African Schools Administration Management System (SASAMS) at the school highlights the fact that there are a considerable number of orphans enrolled at the school. This inspired the researcher to investigate the schooling experiences of orphaned learners at Mandini Senior Secondary School.

1.9 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study was confined to Mandini Secondary School (pseudonym) in the Eastern Cape, where the schooling experiences of four Orphaned Children (OC) were investigated. Participants comprised of four OC, one boy from grade eight, one girl from grade nine, one boy from grade ten and one girl from grade eleven.

1.10 OPERATIONALIZATION OF KEY CONCEPTS

- **An Orphan**

The definition of an orphan varies from country to country, but the variables are **age**: *children up to 15 or up to 18 years*; and **parental loss**: *mother, father or both parents*

dead. UNICEF (2006) states that orphans are those children under the age of eighteen years, whose mother, father or both parents have died of any cause. Literature also states that a child who has lost a mother can be regarded as a “maternal” orphan; a child that has lost his father can be regarded as a “paternal” orphan and a child that has lost both his parents as a “double” orphan (Case et al., 2003).

The study dealt with orphaned children (OC), hence it was important to define the term in order to compare it to the definitions provided by the respondents.

- **Experiences**

Polkinghorne (1989) cited in Grant (2005) posits that experience is seen to be a reality that results from the openness of human awareness to the world and it cannot be reduced either to the sphere of the mental or the physical. The term ‘experience’ had to be defined hence the study was about the experiences of orphaned children.

- **Schooling**

Schooling is the process of education or attendance at school (Longman Group, 1993). The term ‘schooling’ had to be defined because the study was about the schooling experiences of orphaned children.

STRUCTURE OF THE DISSERTATION

The chapters are outlined as follows:

Chapter One outlines the background of the study, statement of the research problem, research questions, and assumptions of the study, purpose of the study, significance of the study, rationale of the study, scope of the study and operationalization of key concepts.

Chapter Two discusses the literature review and theoretical framework. The theoretical framework is based on the Social Rupture Theory. In addition, this study discussed the conceptual framework of orphanhood. Furthermore, it focuses on the experiences of orphaned learners *before* and *after* the loss of a parent(s). Issues such as parental involvement, poverty, health and nutrition, sexual violation and stigmatization and discrimination, as well as experiences with educators and schooling are discussed.

Chapter Three focuses on the research paradigm (Interpretive paradigm); research approach (Qualitative research) and the research design (Phenomenology). The chapter further focuses on the research methodology, data gathering instruments, data analyses and ethical considerations.

Chapter Four consists of the profiles of the research site as well as the respondents. It further reports on the life stories of the respondents. In addition, this chapter discusses the respondents' understanding of an orphan. This chapter also provides information on the home and school environments *before* and *after* the loss of the parent(s).

Chapter Five focuses on the summary of the findings, conclusions, suggestions and recommendations for further study on the research findings.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter aims to review and examine literature regarding the phenomenon of orphaned children, as well as schooling experiences of orphaned children at school and in the home environment. This chapter explores the literature around schooling experiences of orphaned children in the context of the school environment, as well as the broad spectrum of environmental forces in the general polity. Accordingly, elements of psychology will be dealt with as they variously pertain to the overall picture of molding the child holistically.

This chapter is organized according to the following themes:

- 2.2 Theoretical Framework: Social Rupture Theory
- 2.3 Conceptual Framework of Orphanhood
- 2.4 Experiences of orphaned learners

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: SOCIAL RUPTURE THEORY

Social rupture, according to Chirwa (2002), is the breakdown of families and the reduction in community capacity as a result of the rapid increase in the number of orphaned children. Kalemba (2000) postulates that social rupture occurs when an unfortunate situation such as sickness such as that of HIV/AIDS attacks, weakens and

destroys the family inner circle (the nuclear family), and the effects spread outwards until they affect society at large. The nuclear family consists of the parents; extended family members and the immediate community. When the nuclear family becomes incapable of providing care through, for example disability, poverty or death, the responsibility is assumed by the extended family (Chirwa, 2002). However, according to Guarcello, Lyon, Rosati and Valdivia (2004), extended family relationships have weakened because of modernization, the extension of cash economies and labor migration. Furthermore, in relation to orphans, the impact starts before the actual death of the parent(s). As the deceases progress, the children fail to comprehend and understand the situation and why it cannot be controlled.

Orphaned children sometimes fail to comprehend the situation because they do not know what to do to assist their parent(s). Furthermore, they fail to understand why the medication used, cannot heal their sick parent(s). An anxiety of an unknown future might emerge (Giese, Meinjties and Chamberlain, 2003). This implies that they do not know who they might be staying with or where they are going to stay. Consequently, these children might become confused as to how their living conditions will be affected after the death of their parent(s). It is also an implication that the social roles of orphans could change after the death of the parent(s).

According to Kalemba (2000), social roles begin to change whereby children have to take up some of the adult chores such as fellow-childcare, parent care, fetching food, water and firewood and many other roles. Foster, Mafuka and Drew (1997) cited in Sengendo and Nambi (1997) argue that when a parent falls sick, children often shoulder

new responsibilities, these include domestic chores, nursing for ailing parents, agricultural or income generating activities and childcare duties. Workload of orphans may be greater than non-orphans living in the same household. In addition, according to Ledward (1997), cited in Sengendo and Nambi (1997), increased domestic workload is often disproportionately greater on girls than on boys.

The impact of these social roles may affect girls more than boys. Girls in these households have to take over the role of the mother, that is, they will have to take care of the sick parent/s and younger siblings (Kalemba, 2000). This implies that they will have to cook; do the washing and even have to wash the ailing parent/s and the siblings. Boys on the other hand will have to perform such chores as fetching firewood; water and working in the fields to generate an income or to provide food for the family (Kalemba, 2000).

Chirwa (2002) argues that the rupture of orphans may be compared by, or reflected in, other social risks such as reversion to prostitution, dropping out of school, crime and delinquency. In addition, after the parent(s)' death, the children may be alienated from the comfort of their home to live with a single parent or relatives. The relatives of the parents may further weaken the orphans' safety net by grabbing family property (ibid). Consequently, this leads to for example, feelings of uncertainty, fear, withdrawal, grief, trauma and shame and this may ultimately mark the beginnings of psychological and health problems such as malnourishment (Chirwa, 2002). These orphaned children might not be sure who will be caring for them and they may want to stay together in the same home with an older brother or sister (Oosthuizen, de Waal, de Wet, Rossouw and

Huyssteen, 2005). This means that the siblings would rather reside with an older brother or sister than with relatives (child-headed household).

According to Meintjes et al. (2009), child-headed households are commonly defined as households where all members are under eighteen years of age. Furthermore, most child-headed households have between one and three members. The eldest usually take over the duties of the parent. The effects of these households are discussed later in this chapter.

2.3 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF ORPHANHOOD

Chirwa (2002) argues that there are many conceptions of orphanhood depending on an individual's social exclusion and inclusion, as well as their economic position. De Haan (1998) cited in Chirwa (2002), states that social exclusion is a "process through which individuals or groups are wholly or partially excluded from full participation in the society in which they live". Thus, social exclusion constitutes the multi-dimensional character of deprivation. This means that individuals' rights are violated in various ways and, consequently, to less participate in the society in which they live. Social inclusion, on the other hand, denotes a process of full or partial integration in society in which one lives. This implies that individuals are allowed space to realize their rights; pursue a living and fully participate in all the affairs of life. De Haan (1998) further argues that orphans are most likely to fall into poverty, because they either have one parent to take care of them, or no parents at all to provide in their material needs. Thus, orphans may be deprived of material needs because of their economic position.

The dynamics surrounding orphanhood are complex and differ among youth, but it is also clear that they face a lot of disruptions in their lives (Thurman, Brown, Richter, Maharaj and Mangani, 2006). These disruptions are physical and psychological. With regards to physical disruption, some orphans may have to move away from their homes and be separated from their siblings (Foster and Williamson (2000) cited in Thurman et al., 2006). These orphans may have to go and stay with relatives or other caregivers. The separation of siblings following parental death constitutes another source of trauma for children. (Guarcello et al., 2004). This implies that the siblings will have little regular or no contact with each other and are at risk of being abandoned when their relative or caregiver passes on. Those who are well cared for may suffer psychological support, supervision and discipline due to the age and/or demand upon their guardian (Hunter, 1980, as cited in Thurman et al., 2006). Those orphans who are not well cared for may end up having to care for themselves or become street children.

Orphans who are not well cared for are those whose caregivers are physically absent due to the need to work away from home (Giese et al., 2003). Consequently, premature responsibility is placed on the orphaned child and this further result in these children not benefiting from adult supervision. This might lead to some of these orphans being forced to live on the streets. Abebe (2002) postulates, that many working street children have the social and material capacity to be active contributors to the livelihoods of their families.

With regards to psychological disruption, Minde (1988) cited in Sengendo and Nambi (1997), argues that these may be shown in symptoms of confusion, anxiety, depression, and behavioural disorders such as disobedience. This implies that orphans might become confused about their future; do not adhere to school rules or to boundaries set by caregivers. Psychological support is crucial because orphanhood can lead to the loss of consistent nurture, loss of guidance which makes it difficult for the child to reach maturity and to be integrated into society (UNAIDS, 2001).

Brodzinsky, Gormly and Ambron (1986), cited in Sengendo and Nambi (1997) posit that, like adults, children are grieved by the loss of their parents. However, unlike adults, children do not often feel the full impact of the loss simply because they may not immediately understand the finality of death. Thus, this prevents them from going through the grieving process which is necessary to recover from the loss. This means that orphans cannot comprehend the finality of death depending on the age; insufficient grasp of language to access knowledge about death, or to verbalize feelings and thoughts (Giese et al., 2003).

The above paragraphs, amongst others, suggest that orphans will have to deal with their loss- something that can take years to heal. Orphans will have to adapt to their new home environment- the guardian may not treat them equal to their own children, for example the orphans will have to do more work than the other children in the house and/or they may not get assistance with their schoolwork. The oldest of the orphans may have to leave school to seek employment which will help him or her to support the younger siblings.

According to De Haan (1998), the size of the families in which the orphans are found, the ages and gender of the orphaned children as well as the number(s) of losses of the family members may have an impact on the support being provided by the caregivers. This implies that the caregivers might face economic challenges which could impact on the care and living arrangements of these orphans. Chirwa (2002) concurs in stating that the economic status of the caregivers can have a bearing on the success or failure of the orphan care system. This implies that some guardians have too many orphans to take care of as well as the fact that they (the guardians) are sometimes too old to take proper care of such orphans. There are different types of orphans.

Orphans are also understood as those children under the age of eighteen years whose mother, father or both parents have died of any cause (UNICEF, 2006). Double orphans, according to Case et al., (2003), are children from whom either both parents are deceased, or one parent is deceased and the other parent has unknown vital status, or both parents have unknown vital status. Meintjies and Giese (2006) cited in Abebe and Kjørholt(2009) argue that the term 'orphan' is only applicable to a child who has no parent and no 'substitute' caregiver, putting more emphasis on the social than the biological aspects of parenting. Sengendo and Nambi (1997) postulate, that defining double orphans is complicated by the fact that some children have parents whose vital status is unknown to the children. This was also the case in this study because the respondents were either paternal, maternal or double orphans. Important to note in this study is the fact that two of the respondents can be regarded as double orphans because they had a mother who had died, but had a father with whom they never had any relationship with and even did not know.

Paternal orphans are children who have lost a father and maternal orphans are children who have lost a mother (Giese, Meintjies and Chamberlain, 2003). According to Sengendo and Nambi (1997), the percent of children who are paternal orphans generally exceeds the percent of children who are maternal orphans at all ages. This means that it reflects the higher age-specific mortality of men and the fact that women usually marry older men (Guarcella, Lyon, Rosati and Valdivia, 2004). Case et al. (2004) concur with Sengendo and Nambi (1997) and state they observed in their studies, that in some countries the fraction of children who has lost a father were markedly larger than those who had lost a mother. Children who lose a parent through death often experience changes in the set of adults who provide them with care (Sengendo and Nambi, 1997). This implies that the remaining parent may remarry and the 'new' mother or father may not treat the orphan the same as the deceased parent. Furthermore, deprivation of certain privileges such as not receiving any new clothes, pocket money and even having to receive their meals last, if there is any left.

Orphanhood can affect the time use patterns of children in many ways (Sengendo and Nambi, 1997). The 'time used patterns' imply that orphans may have to spend less time socializing with their friends after school; watching less television and even having to perform more chores in the new household. This indicates that the orphans' freedoms of movement is being controlled and sometimes are expected to do household duties as well. In addition, the effects may vary according to whether it is the mother, father or both parents who are stricken. This implies that the loss of a mother may mean that the child must shoulder more of the burden of running the household. The loss of a father might mean that the child must work outside the house to compensate for the father's

lost earnings (Guarcello, et al., 2004). Furthermore, double orphans moving to a new household may be under particular pressure to work to make up for the extra burden that their presence represents (ibid). The implication here is that the orphans may not enjoy the same type of treatment or privileges which they had enjoyed from their parent or parents prior to their death.

Thus, orphanhood is a social category and/or status, and is a situational and/or structural condition that can either be heightened and highlighted or suppressed, depending on the social and material conditions of the wider society of which orphans are a part (Chirwa, 2002). Ennew (2005) concurs and points out that orphans are parentless children who are socially and materially dependent on the wider society for their safe passage through childhood. Consequently, orphanhood is a social and cultural phenomenon and as such a dynamic process marked by diversity that can take on different characteristics over space and time (ibid).

2.4 EXPERIENCES OF ORPHANED LEARNERS

2.4.1 What do we mean by experience?

The experiences that this section will unpack are the experiences of orphaned learners in relation to the absence of parental involvement in their education; experiences of poverty, health and nutrition; experiences of sexual violation; experiences of being bullied, peer pressure and substance abuse; experiences of alienation, stigmatization and discrimination and experiences with educators and schooling.

Polkinghorne (1989) cited in Grant (2005) states that experience is not understood merely as a mental projection into the world or as a reflection of the world. The person is rather seen to be in an intricate relationship with the world. This implies that the individual forms part of the world in which he or she finds himself or herself. Experience is seen to be a reality that results from the openness of human awareness to the world and it cannot be reduced either to the sphere of the mental or the physical (ibid).

Colaizzi (1978) cited in Grant (2005) postulates that when considering experience objectively, the person is always in relation to how he or she behaves towards the world and acts toward others. For example, when a person is angry, his or her anger is experienced as being directed towards, say, a knot in a shoelace which cannot be undone or towards an impatient motorist who hoots when he or she passes in front of their car as the light changes. Experienced anger is tied in with what a person is doing in his or her dealing with the world.

Colaizzi (1978) further postulates that social experience is the experience gained through human interactions, which is any outcomes of socialization and contact with social institutions. This experience may be the outcome of primary, secondary, developmental, and/or anticipatory socialization (ibid). It is important to note that orphans do not encounter the same type of experiences; hence they will react differently according to the type of experiences which they may encounter. In this study the respondents reacted freely with the rest of the school community.

2.4.2 Experiences of orphaned learners in relation to the absence of parental involvement in their education

Dauber and Epstein (2001) argue that school and teacher practices are the strongest predictors of parental involvement. Specific practices that have been shown to predict parental involvement include: assigning homework designed to increase student-parent interaction; holding workshops for families, and communicating to parents about their children's education (ibid). Furthermore, parental beliefs and perceptions have also been shown to be a strong predictor of parental involvement. Hence, parents' educational aspirations and level of comfort with the school and staff have been shown to predict levels of involvement. Consequently, parents' beliefs about their responsibilities as a parent, their ability to affect their children's education, and their perceptions of their children's interests in school subjects have been shown to predict their involvement at home and at school. In addition, McDonald (2007) argues that parents are their children's first teachers and that they (parents) are lifelong teachers.

Parental involvement is typically defined as the initiation of home-based behaviors such as monitoring homework as well as school-based activities such as attending school events and communication with teachers (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005; cited in Holloway et al., 2005). Holloway et al. (2005) posit that the involvement of parents has a positive effect on children's achievements. These theorists further state that:

- parents ought to express encouragement and delight at a child's skills which in turn will help to build the child's confidence and self-esteem;

- parents ought to work in partnership with the school and class teacher to help their children learn;
- parents ought to keep the channels of communication open, allowing discussions and disagreements, listen as well as talk;
- parents ought to ensure that their children attend school regularly to assist them in their schooling, and
- consistent parental involvement throughout a student's educational experiences helps to improve grades and students are less likely to drop out.

Thus, parental involvement with the educators is of the utmost importance because it enhances trust and cooperation between the stakeholders.

The South African School Act (SASA), (Act 84 of 1996), concur with Holloway et al. (2005) stating that parents ought to support the school, ensuring that learners observe school rules; take interest in their children's work; attending school meetings and taking action against unlawful violation of the rights of their children. However, according to Hill et al. (2004), parental involvement in schooling often declines during adolescence, as involvement can lead to conflict with the adolescent's needs for autonomy, independence and detachment from the family.

It is expected that, when parents are alive, most children attend school (Sengendo and Nambi (1997). However, Hill et al. (2004) postulate that parental involvement in schooling often declines during adolescence, as involvement can lead to conflict with the adolescent's need for autonomy, independence and detachment from family. In

addition, parents with lower educational levels may not be comfortable or capable of assisting their children with school work. Consequently, this results in a lack of guidance, support and involvement from parents into their children's schooling. Furthermore, the lack of parental support can result in a failure of students to reach their potential (ibid). Okano and Tsuchiya (1999) cited in Holloway et al. (2005), argue that permissive or neglectful parenting has been cited by Japanese government officials and the media as the cause of problems in schools, including bullying, absenteeism, and disruptive behavior in the classroom.

Despite the importance of parental participation as indicated above, the phenomenon of orphaned learners is becoming more common. Although orphanhood is not always as a result of HIV/AIDS, it is common knowledge that the illness to a great extent, contributes to it (Giese, Meintjies and Chamberlain, 2002; as cited in De Witt, 2005). Oleke et al. (2006), states that there are variations in terms of experience and vulnerability between different categories of orphans. In addition, documentation has shown that those who ultimately assume responsibility for taking care of a particular orphan or groups of orphans are significant for the orphan's future.

2.4.3 Orphans' experiences of poverty, health and nutrition

Poverty is a direct result of unemployment and, according to Case et al. (2003), orphaned learners are less likely to be educated, often because they are unable to pay school fees; must work to survive, or discriminated against in foster households. UNICEF (2003) cited in Thurman, Brown, Richter, Maharaj and Magnani(2006)states that severe poverty and lower school enrolment rates were found among orphans.

Smart (2003) concurs and states that when breadwinners fall in and die, it causes incomes to dwindle and assets to shrink. Thus, poverty causes family structures to change and households to fragment, resulting in households to become poorer facing destitution, particularly those headed by grandparents or headed by children themselves (ibid). In addition, orphans may also experience emotional poverty.

Gardner (1983) cited in Strydom (2005) postulates that children lack multiple intelligences and emotional intelligences seem to be very prominent among children. Strydom (2005) highlights the fact that the concept of intelligence has an element of survival in it because the individual who has the ability to learn, understand and create meaning, will probably cope with living demands, stresses and trauma. Emotional intelligence according to Strydom (2005), can therefore be described as the ability to process emotion-laden information completely and to use it to guide cognitive activities. Furthermore, many learners have little experience in dealing with their own emotions and quickly see emotional reactions from others as a threat.(ibid). Ciarrochi (2002) cited in Strydom (2005) argues that many learners who are low in emotional awareness and who are poor in identifying, describing and managing their emotions, are least likely to seek help from people around them. In addition, such learners have the highest intention of refusing help from everyone. The poverty issue often causes girls from such families to engage in transactional sex with taxi-drivers and other older men to get free rides, clothes, food or other favours or goods (Morrell, Moletsane, Karin, Epstein and Unterhalter, 2002; Maree, 2007; Cohen, 2000).

In addition, a number of orphans are forced to stop their schooling due to the lack of school fees or they have to become the head of their households and thus responsible to take care of their younger siblings (Morrell et al., 2002). Furthermore, these orphaned children often drop out of school to provide for themselves and their siblings (UNICEF, 2005). Child-headed households, according to Meintjes et al. (2009), are households where all members are under eighteen years. In addition, there are roughly 122 000 children in South Africa who are living in child-headed households (ibid). However, the ability to run their households and care for their siblings is limited by the lack of experience, unemployment and poverty (Morrell et al., 2002). Sengendo and Nambi (1997) further postulate that children who are forced to live on their own, may behave more responsibly and more maturely out of the sheer need to survive. The survival instinct is further enhanced where some girls become involved in commercial sex or enter into early marriage in order to provide for the needs of younger siblings in their households (ibid).

When children are orphaned, they become vulnerable to a host of dangers in the form of supporting themselves and their siblings. These dangers include, among others, sexual exploitation; stigmatization and discrimination; child labor; property grabbing; bullying as well as physical abuse (Human Rights Watch, 2001; Oosthuizen et al., 2005; and Sullivan et al., 2005). The vulnerabilities referred to above, can also include loss of identity (self-, family- and cultural identity); coping with shame; stigmatization and discrimination and fear of abandonment and rejection (Eberson and Eloff, 2002, cited in Oosthuizen et al., 2005). This implies that orphans might be permanently separated from their siblings and other relatives resulting in the complete breakdown of family ties.

In addition, these orphans will have to face the challenges mentioned earlier on their own.

Some orphans may have limited or no access to, for example, *health and education*. In addition, orphaned children probably do not receive adequate medical treatment and this might develop illnesses that keep them out of school (Giese et al., 2003). These OC do get unhealthy, and according to Nielson, Coleman, Guinn and Robb (2004) unhealthy orphans are less likely to desire interaction with their peers. This means that they wish to avoid the pity of their peers or are too shy to share in the provisions of their peers. Boler and Carroll (2003) argue that OC may not participate in class because they are hungry. Streak (2005) further argues that hunger and malnutrition are constant threats for OC and attendance at school is often a luxury. The issue of hunger and malnutrition is being addressed by the National School Nutrition Programme and is referred to in chapter 4.

According to Meintjies et al. (2003), Giese et al. (2003), Heunis (2005) and Giese (2005), cited in Streak (2005), hunger and malnutrition are constant threats and attendance at school is often a luxury. This implies that because of their physical condition (always hungry and tired), orphans are not always attending school. In addition, peers sometimes mock and laugh at orphans because they do not have nice dresses to wear on festive days. Thus, poverty is a contributing factor which leads to a situation where a child might not get what his/her peer has. This means that there is a lack of finances to provide in the material needs of these orphans.

The biggest challenge faced by orphans is persistent hunger (Sloth-Nielson (2004) cited in Streak, 2005). This means that they may receive little or no food from their caregivers. This hunger is followed by a range of other poverty-related concerns, including the struggle to pay school fees; lack of school uniform and other clothing; lack of money for transport and health care; inadequate housing and insufficient warmth (ibid). Giese, Meintjies and Chamberlain (2002), state that some orphans do not open up because they are scared and ashamed of exposing their material needs. This is an indication that these orphans are internalizing their personal needs and thus annihilating themselves from their peers.

Cawood (2007) further argues that children do not complete tasks because they show signs of fatigue, are hungry and under-stimulated. Health has effects on cognitive development and school participation in both the short and long term. Boler and Carroll (2003) argue that OC are more likely to be tired and hungry at school- with the consequences of them fainting at school. The physical condition of orphaned children might influence their access to education. In addition, children may be enrolled at school, but not learning because they are hungry. These orphans may be unable to concentrate due to anxiety at home; or missing out on classes to look after their family (ibid).

According to Thurman et al. (2006), orphans experience a range of emotional and social problems because of the loss of their parents. These may manifest themselves in low self-esteem; hopelessness; anxiety; aggression; depression; behavior(al); cognitive and emotional difficulties; inadequate communication and life skills and poorly

developed problem-solving, decision-making and conflict resolution skills (Germann and Mandörin, 2002). Although many orphans live under very poor conditions and have no or little access to health and nutrition, others are very well cared for by their guardians (Oleke et al., 2006).

2.4.4 Experiences of sexual violation

Literature points to the potential influence of parental absence on increased adolescent sexual risk (Thurman et al., 2006). Orphans may also be more likely than non-orphaned adolescents sexually exploited and abused (Foster and Williamson, 2000, in Thurman et al., 2006). According to UNICEF (2006), orphaned children often fall prey to sexual exploitation and possible prostitution. In addition these orphaned children are subjected to physical, sexual and emotional abuse at the hands of teachers and other learners. This means that some teachers and learners are taking advantage of these orphaned children because of the absence of the parent(s). Consequently, they would continue with their abuse because they are aware that these orphans do not have adults (parent/s) to confide in.

The Human Rights Watch (2001) posits that girls, in this instance orphaned girls, are learning that sexual violence and abuse is an inescapable part of going to school every day. Furthermore, these girls are victims of sexual abuse at school: they are raped, sexually assaulted and sexually harassed by fellow learners and even their teachers (ibid). This statement is supported by Hepburn (2002) who states that sexual violence such as rape, assault and sexual harassment committed by teachers and learners, and the concern about HIV/AIDS transmission from teacher to learner and between peers,

have caused many girls to live in fear of being infected at school or on their way to and from school, and some even stay at home because of this fear.

Kemp (1998) posits that an orphan who has been physically abused is characterized by post traumatic memories and behavior, personality changes related to grief, trauma; especially fear, denial, repression, dissociation and even identification with the abuser. Whenever orphaned children had been sexually and physically abused, this may lead to stigmatization and discrimination (ibid). This means that the victims are exposed to continuous teasing, name-calling or unwelcome touching by some of their peers and teachers (Oosthuizen et al., 2005). The effect of these acts result in the victims finding the school a hostile place (ibid).

Maree (2007) argues that one out of every four school-going children under the age of sixteen years has been sexually violated. This also applies to OC who are very vulnerable during the absence of the parent or care-giver. This implies that there is a lack of guidance and protection from the caregivers for these orphans against sexual abuse by peers and adults.

Watton et al. (1989) postulate that child sexual abuse is a horrific violation of a person who happened also to be a child. Furthermore, experience of dealing with child sexual abuse is not unique to South Africa, but it is an international phenomena (ibid). Child sexual abuse is not confined to a small 'less respectable' section of the community, but is evident in all socio-economic groups. The sexual abuse of children is not a series of

isolated acts, but is situated within a complex of social and cultural arrangements and understandings rooted in the very fundamentals of our society (Watton et al., 1989).

School teachers are also found to be the largest group of perpetrators of sexual harassment. Fifty six educators were found guilty of raping minor learners during 1999 and 2000 (Anon, 2001(a); in Oosthuizen et al., 2005). Louw (2003), in Oosthuizen et al. (2005) postulates that in 2002 the South African Council for Educators (SACE) received about thirty complains with regard to educators engaging in sexual relationships with learners from their school, and that fifteen were taken off the roll after they were found guilty of this transgression. These statistics imply that orphaned children are being victimized by some of their teachers at certain schools.

2.4.5 Experiences of being bullied; stigmatization and discrimination, peer pressure and substance abuse

Neser et al. (2003) define bullying as “intentional, repeated hurtful acts, words or other behavior, such as name-calling, threatening or shunning committed by a child or children against another child or children”. De Wet (2003) refers to bullying as ‘predetermined, continuous, malicious and belittling tyranny’. This implies that bullying is a planned, ongoing, intentional and an unjust act of someone who is in power. According to Neser et al. (2003), bullying leaves the affected orphans feeling helpless and defenseless, leading to depression and anxiety, damages his or her self-esteem and may in severe cases even lead to suicide. Furthermore, children, especially orphans, who view themselves targets of bullying, show high levels of anxiety and depression that impede their schooling experiences (Juvonen and Graham, 2001).

Bullying of orphaned children may include physical, verbal and more indirect behavior (Griffiths and Jones, 2006). In addition, boys are more likely to experience physical bullying and threatening than girls who experience more verbal bullying like name-calling and gossip (ibid).

Orphaned children have to deal with *peer pressure* and they are influenced and they are influenced in the absence of the parent during his or her adolescent stage (Veal et al., cited in Oosthuizen et al., 2005). Furthermore, some OC rely on their friends for support and they identify schools as a place where they can make friends, socialize and play with other children (ibid). Thus, orphans associate schools with an area where they are supposed to be part of the whole school community. This means that orphans feel they belong at the school and should be treated as all other learners. Sullivan et al. (2005) argue that bullying of children, in this case orphaned children, can be physical and non-physical and can include damage to property. This is an indication that orphans can be attacked physically and also be called names (labeled) or their personal belongings can be taken or broken up by non-orphans.

Furthermore, schools are supposed to be safe and secure to ensure the safety of all learners, yet, especially orphaned children, are being bullied by their peers at school. Harassing behavior and other gender violence especially affect orphaned girls, leaving them with feelings of fear, shame, self-consciousness, embarrassment and without confidence (Selikow et al., 2002). Sullivan et al. (2005) argue that a substantial number of orphaned young children and adolescents experienced bullying as perpetrators,

victims or bystanders, and in some cases they have been involved in each of the three roles.

Juvonen and Graham (2001) argue that OC are fearful of and intimidated by other less serious forms of peer hostility. These include physical aggression such as shoving and pushing, face-to-face verbal harassment, public humiliation and rumor mongering. Furthermore, bullying is one precursor of more extreme forms of hostility and a small but potentially volatile group of youth not only perceive themselves as the victims of peer taunting and ridicule, but are also aggressive themselves. From the researcher's point of view, not all orphans allow their peers to intimidate and harass them, but that some of them would retaliate in a manner that warrants the situation.

Besides bullying, learners are further subjected to experiences such as *stigmatization and discrimination* (Skinner and Mfecane, 2004). This means that orphaned children are being treated differently by some peers and teachers at school. Skinner and Mfecane (2004) posit that the nature of stigma and discrimination is complex, varying across time, person and context, making analysis and especially intervention very difficult. It is therefore imperative to understand how this phenomenon is used by individuals, communities and the state to produce and reproduce social inequality and exclusion. Goffman (1963) as cited in Parker and Agletton (2003) argues that stigma, understood as a negative attribute, is mapped onto people, who in turn by virtue of their difference, are understood to be negatively valued in society. Parker and Agletton (2003) state that stigmatization and discrimination must be conceptualized as social processes that can only be understood in relation to broader notions to power and domination.

Stigma plays a key role in producing and reproducing relations of power and control (Parker and Agletton, 2003). It causes some groups to be devalued and others to feel that they are superior in some way. This implies that some people are discriminated against, while some feel more important than others. Furthermore, Parker and Agletton (2003), highlight not only the functions of stigmatization in relation to the establishment of social order and control, but also the disabling effects of stigmatization on the minds and bodies of those who are stigmatized (ibid). Consequently, learners who are stigmatized or discriminated against so often accept and internalize that stigma they are subjected to (Parker and Agletton, 2003). Makame, Ani and Grantham-McGregor (2002) argue that it seems that orphans who were likely to internalize their problems are those who do not have caring adults to confide in and those who are deprived of material needs.

Orphaned children will, because of peer pressure, indulge in *substance abuse* and are much more likely to engage in fighting, stealing, hurting others and involved in other misconduct than their abstaining peers. The behavior of these OC, especially boys, tends to change from being a calm and reasonable person to someone who is violent and aggressive (De Wet, 2003). In addition, orphaned children, because of poverty, are prone to be exploited by drug dealers in so far that they become sellers of drugs for these dealers. Furthermore, these OC quite often become addicted to these illegal drugs which they are unable to pay cash for. Consequently, these addicts may become involved in a variety of crimes to get hold of their expensive drugs, while girls turn to prostitution because of drug-related debts (ibid).

Nicholson (2001) cited in Clough et al. (2005) further states that children who experience emotional and behavioural difficulties are likely to take drugs. Maree (2002) as cited in Oosthuizen et al. (2005), concurs with De Wet (2003) stating that “the use of substances such as drugs and alcohol leads to violent actions/behaviours involving knife-stabbing or fights.” School violence, according to Juvonen (2001) is most common in large schools, and middle school students are the most likely targets of violent behavior.

Abuse of alcohol and other drugs is a growing problem throughout the world (World Health Organisation [WHO], 2003). Amongst others, young people use drugs because of peer pressure, to deal with difficult situations and to get rid of tension, stress and fear. However, a poor self-image is often the main reason why these adolescents use drugs(ibid). Many adolescents regard drinking as part of their self-esteem and have little awareness of their own vulnerability (Neser et al., 2003). Research has shown that especially within the poverty-stricken areas, youth are extremely vulnerable to alcohol abuse as unemployment, crime and the lack of positive role models within the community has a very negative effect on the schooling experiences of learners (Terblanche and Venter, 1999, cited in Oosthuizen et al., 2005).

According to De Wet (2003), children use drugs because of emotional disturbances which may be caused by parental rejection and indifferences, lack of acceptance by peers, emotional isolation and low self-esteem. However, according to Shear and Edward (2006), youth who are bonded by positive social ties are less likely to participate in illegal drugs. This implies that learners who have a positive relationship with the

school and all stakeholders involved in the teaching and learning environment will be no threat to them because of his/her behavior.

The above literature implies that orphaned learners may indulge in substance abuse because they might feel alienated and isolated. However, the respondents in this study were not indulging in any substance abuse.

2.4.6 Experiences of alienation and rejection

Orphaned children may become violent because they are alienated and isolated. These orphans are often withdrawn, isolated and they alienate themselves and they can be described as 'invisible kids' (Bender, Shubert and McLaighlin, 2001; cited in Oosthuizen et al., 2005). The 'invisible kids' are often prone to commit serious violent crime (ibid).

The withdrawn behavior may also be a response to a broken attachment resulting from the loss of the orphans' parents (Nielson et al., 2004). Orphans sometimes rely on their friends for support, especially when he or she experiences a lack of parental assistance. This relation, in many instances, involves mutual exchange of experiences since one child might have recognized something familiar in the other one. In addition, children learn from each other how to behave, especially when they wanted to be accepted in a group (Mullender, 2002). It is important to note that children have a tendency to try and belong somewhere (sense of belonging), and this was also the case in this study.

Orphaned Children sometimes exhibit behavioural tendencies to protect their status, especially when they are bullied or discriminated against (Roffey, 2004). This implies that these orphaned learners sometimes have to fight back to protect themselves or have to engage in verbal arguments to let their voices be heard. Roffey (2004) argues that psychological survival is a motivation for much behaviour, and underpins emotions that are associated with fear and defense. Orphaned children, sometimes exhibit behaviours such as being disruptive in class, does not do any homework, get into fights, shout at teachers and fail examinations. In addition these OC are shy, antisocial, withdrawn, depressed, do not have friends and are likely to take drugs (Nicholson, 2003, as cited in Clough et al., 2005). Nicholson (2003) further states that the term for children who are exhibiting these behaviours is emotional and behavioural difficulties (EBD). Furthermore, depending on the behavior, this type of student is likely to be stood down, suspended and even expelled from school.

Tantrums or emotional outbursts are common among orphaned children and it may occur because they have a very low self-esteem and cannot problem-solve their way out of a corner. Furthermore, they sometimes feel very inadequate and no matter what they do they will not be liked by others, or be successful in their learning. In addition, they desperately want to come out of a situation and have no other resource than 'fight or flight' (Griffiths and Jones, 2006). Roffey (2004) concurs with Griffiths and Jones (2006) who states that responses to the experiences of children often lead them to believe in ways considered unacceptable in school, which then reinforces rejection and disadvantage.

According to Griffiths and Jones (2006), not all orphaned children have tantrums and that this can help to establish the idea that different ways of responding are better. Cawood (2007) argues that orphaned learners misbehave at school for the following reasons:

- for attention,
- to try to express underlying negative feelings,
- insecurity,
- to draw attention to traumatic events at home, and
- they may be tired, hungry, over- or under-stimulated.

It is important to note that not all orphaned children behave in an unacceptable manner, but behave in such a way to draw the attention of the teacher or peers to the fact that they also want to be part of the school community. Orphaned children might feel alienated and isolated because of the attitudes/interactions with their educators.

2.4.7 Experiences with educators and schooling

UNICEF (2003) cited in Guercello, Lyon, Rosati and Vadiavia (2004), recently reviewed the effects orphanhood has on schooling and child labor in 20 Sub-Saharan African countries. In all countries, children aged 5-14 who had lost one or both parents were less likely to be in school and more likely to be working more than 40 hours a week (ibid). In addition, Suliman (2003) cited in Guercello et al. (2004) argues that in Tanzania orphans were more likely to work while attending school than non-orphans.

According to Lawton and Higginson (2002), the number of orphaned children in schools is growing and teachers themselves need to be capacitated to understand what is happening, and to have plans in place to deal with the psychosocial problems facing OC, both proactively and reactively. However, many schools lack formal policy of how to respond to an orphan who has suffered a major bereavement.

Miller and Bruwer (2003) posit that educators are also the perpetrators of misbehavior to learners through unfair treatment and use of corporal punishment. Recognizing the psychological needs of OC remains a predicament for educators. Sengendo and Nambi (1997), state that school educators lack the knowledge of identifying psychological and social problems and fail to respond to them. Giese et al. (2003) further report that educators lack formal mechanisms for identifying vulnerable children. Teachers may be able to support OC to some extent, but do not always know how to identify psychological and social or other problems. Consequently, teachers fail to offer individual and group attention that can meet these children's needs (Sengendo and Nambi, 1997).

De Witt and Lessing (2005) postulate that factors such as position, gender, age and phase of teaching play a role in the teacher's perceptions of these learners. Divine (2003) argues that there is a lack of reciprocity in pupil interactions with their teachers. Thus, the role of teachers and schools seems to play an increasingly crucial part in the absence of parents (UNICEF, 2005). Proper education opportunities are imperative to enhance the holistic development of OC. Education therefore represents the best

opportunity for guiding these orphaned children to adulthood. In addition, education is a powerful instrument and it can either reproduce social imbalances and inequities or transform societies (UNICEF, 2005).

It is imperative that teachers and educational institutions recognize and acknowledge *firstly* the differences that exist among orphaned learners. This implies that there are maternal (someone who has lost a mother); paternal (someone who has lost a father) and double orphans (someone who has lost both parents). *Secondly*, that such differences could have an impact on how these individuals learn and behave. This means that these orphans might behave in a manner that seeks attention or is disruptive in their interaction with others. *Lastly*, make place for these differences by planning and implementing programmes which respond to these differences (Nieto, 1996). Include activities in the education programmes which address disruptive or improper behavior. Some educators might not be aware of the fact that orphaned learners do get unhealthy and hungry.

Divine (2003) argues that children form perspectives, through their relations with teachers, on what is valued and important in their education, as well as how they themselves as children are valued and respected within the school. Orphaned learners are subjected to situations that influence their schooling experiences such as parental involvement, sexual and physical abuse, as well as stigmatization and discrimination (Human Rights Watch, 2001; Parker and Agletton, 2003; Oosthuizen et al., 2005 and Sullivan et al., 2005).

The education system is expected to be efficient and accountable to both orphaned and non-orphaned children. It is through education that (orphaned) learners gain knowledge, skills and attitudes which facilitate their experiences. To meet the demands of the ever prevailing technocratic age, these OC need to be inducted or formally installed in the school society of which they are part and guided so that they are able to attribute significance and meaning to those with whom they come into contact, in their ever-changing life-world. The assistance which is provided to these learners is actualized through education (Du Plooy, Griessel, Louw and Oberholzer, 1983; as cited in Oosthuizen et al., 2005).

Oosthuizen et al. (2005), state that it is through education that orphaned learners should be enabled to realize their innate abilities so that they are able to understand, accept and constitute [as well as to adjust themselves] to the world in which they live. Boler and Carroll (2003) argue that the concept of education is often restricted to one of enrolment. In addition, though enrolment is one of the most important educational indicators, education is far more complex: children may be enrolled at school but not learning because they are hungry; they may be unable to concentrate because of anxiety at home, or missing classes to look after their family. The above means that teachers are not adequately equipped to identify and assist orphaned children; hence they need to be capacitated to accommodate such learners.

Holloway et al. (2005) argue that the involvement of parents has a positive effect on children's achievements. This implies that, where parents show interest in the education of their children, these children would feel accountable for their own education.

According to Smart (2003), the schooling experiences of children will change dramatically during the absence of a parent. Thus, schools and teachers are critical to the holistic development of OC, especially in the wake of the loss of parents and parenting. In addition, the school system also provides an opportunity to provide psychological support- one of the needs of OC that is most often neglected in favor of meeting critical material, economic, nutritional and other physical needs.

The lack of parental role model and loss of love and affection from parents may also influence the schooling experiences of orphaned children (Thurman et al., 2006). Boler and Carroll (2003) posit that children whose parents have died are at a disadvantage educationally, because they do not have someone to interact with the teachers or the school on their behalf. Furthermore, losing their mother has a more detrimental effect on a child's primary school completion than losing their father. This means that the father often takes on a new spouse who is unlikely to prioritize the education of her step-children. In addition, these OC may have caregivers who cannot afford the costs of schooling, they (OC) may be needed for economic activities, or their caregivers may have less interest in their welfare. Thus, the involvement of parents in the holistic development of their children is of paramount importance.

According to UNICEF (2003) as cited in Thurman et al. (2006) there are different types of missed opportunities in education, including significant lower school enrolment rates among orphans compared to non-orphans, interrupted schooling and poor performance while in school, in a number of countries. Boler and Carroll (2003) further argue that current knowledge suggests that when parents die, the amount of resources available

for education decreases. Guercello et al. (2004) argue that parental loss particularly affects the child's chances of attending school. The death of both parents significantly reduces the likelihood that a child attends school fulltime in all analysed countries except Lesotho; while the death of one parent significantly reduces the probability of school attendance in all analysed countries except Gambia and Lesotho. As a result, these OC are more likely to drop out of school than non-orphans.

Case et al. (2003) concur with Boler and Carroll (2003) stating that orphans are significantly less likely to be in school or at the same level as non-orphans. Yamono, Shimamura and Sserunkooma (2005) concur with Case et al. (2003) by stating that under different circumstances, school attendance could be different between orphans and non-orphans who are not living with their parents. Furthermore, these orphaned children are less likely to be educated, often because they are unable to pay school fees, must work to survive, or discriminated against in foster households (Case et al. (2003). Therefore, some orphaned children are at a disadvantage educationally because of the lack of financial assistance.

Richter (2004) argues that not all orphans are affected to the same degree. Positive factors- in the form of compensating care from other people including teachers, as well as personality predisposition- may lessen the impact on children of reduced care in the school environment.

Guercello et al. (2004) argue that no study provided evidence that female orphans are more disadvantaged in terms of their schooling. In addition, Case et al. (2004) did not

find that female orphans are disadvantaged relative to males. Furthermore, Ainsworth and Filmer (2002) in cited Guercello (2004), observed that orphanhood did not appear to exacerbate the gender enrolment gap.

2.5 CONCLUSION

This literature review explored the schooling experiences of orphaned children. It also considered the variables which have a different influence on the schooling experiences of orphaned children. The most important variable which influenced the schooling experiences of the respondents was the absence of the parent(s).

The following chapter will focus on the methodology used in this study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to describe the design and methodology adopted in this study. It also describes the sample and data collection instruments used in the study. According to Kaplan (1973) cited in Cohen et al.(2007), methodology is a description and analysis of chosen methods, of their limitations and resources, of clarifying their presuppositions and consequences.

3.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM: INTERPRETIVE PARADIGM

Bassey (1999) states that a paradigm is a network of coherent ideas about the nature of the world and the function of the research which, adhered to by a group of researchers; conditions and patterns of their thinking and underpins their research actions. A paradigm is a basic set of beliefs that guide action or the researcher's worldview (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). Creswell (2003) and Maree (2007) further posit that paradigms are sets of assumptions and values which give rise to a particular world view and serve as a principle by which reality is interpreted.

According to Mackenzie and Knipe (2006) it is the choice of paradigm that sets down the intent, motivation and expectations for the study. This study was situated in the interpretivist research paradigm with its emphasis on the schooling experiences of orphaned children. This study followed an interpretive paradigm approach. The

interpretive paradigm is based on the qualitative research that involves broadly stated questions about human experiences and realities, studied through sustained contact with people in their natural environment, generating rich, descriptive data that help the researcher to understand their experiences and attitudes (Willem, 2003). This paradigm enhanced the researcher's approach to interview the respondents in familiar environments, which ultimately yielded rich, descriptive data on the phenomenon under investigation.

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) argue that the interpretive paradigm is characterized by a concern for the individual and it tends to be anti-positivist. This implies that anti-positivists would argue that the understanding of individuals' interpretations of the world around them has to come from the inside and not the outside. The central endeavour in the context of the interpretive paradigm is to understand the subjective world of human experience (ibid). According to Cohen et al. (2007) interpretive approaches focus on action. Furthermore, this may be thought of as behavior-with-meaning; it is intentional behavior and as such, future orientated. This paradigm also researches about experiences (Leedy and Omrod, 2005). Ullin, Robinson and Trolley (2005) also posit that this paradigm deals with the interaction with humans; how they experience things and issues; their behavior and show some certain patterns towards a certain phenomena. This, therefore, meant that the researcher had to obtain individual reports from the respondents on their experiences before their loss and how it influenced their lives after their loss.

Bearing the abovementioned perspective in mind, the researcher deemed an interpretive paradigm to be the most suitable paradigm for the research. The reason for this choice stems from the fact that the central knowledge of the research was to investigate the schooling experiences of four orphaned children. The researcher's choice of the interpretive paradigm is further supported by Blaxter, Hughes and Tight (2001) who posit that the interpretive paradigm is well suited to the social sciences, giving credence to the understanding of themes.

3.3 RESEARCH APPROACH: QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

This study was conducted using the qualitative research approach. Denzin and Lincoln (2000, p.3) state that:

Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations....

This means that the qualitative research method was employed to obtain rich first hand data from the respondents in their natural environment on the phenomenon and how they adapted to this environment. Furthermore, the respondents could provide in-depth explanations of their experiences because they were active participants in the phenomenon under investigation.

Patton (2002) ascertains that the qualitative approach describes the experiences of people in-depth. Furthermore, the data are open-ended in order to find out what

people's experiences mean to them in their own words and in their natural settings. Qualitative research was therefore appealing to this study because it sought to understand the schooling experiences of orphaned children (OC). The following key features of qualitative research are further highlighted by Babbie and Mouton (2001), namely:

- Research is conducted in the natural settings of the local actors.
- A focus on process rather than outcomes.
- The actor's perspective is emphasized.
- The primary aim is in-depth description and understanding of actions and events.
- The main concern is to understand social actions and events in terms of specific context rather attempting to generalize to some theoretical population.
- The research process is often inductive in its approach, resulting in the generation of new hypotheses and theories.
- The qualitative researcher is seen as the main instrument in the research process.

Denzin and Lincoln (2005) argue that qualitative research is a field of inquiry in its own right. It crosscuts disciplines, fields and subject matter. It further refers to a complex, interconnected family of terms which include the traditions associated with positivism, post structuralism, and the many qualitative research perspectives or methods connected to cultural and interpretive studies. This means that the qualitative researcher studies things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them.

Merriam (1998), cited in Cohen et al. (2007), postulates that qualitative research is an umbrella concept covering several forms of inquiry that help us to understand and explain the meaning of social phenomena with as little disruption of the natural settings as possible. He further states that there are terms used interchangeably with qualitative research which are naturalistic inquiry, interpretive research, field study, participant observation, inductive research, case study and ethnography. This means that the researcher did not build his/her findings on preconceived assumptions, but to let the data be provided directly by the respondents.

Ullin, Robson and Trolley (2005) argue that the **disadvantages** of this approach are that respondents can be biased when responding to the questions or irrelevant answers can be provided. To eliminate this, the researcher had to rephrase the question so that the relevant responses could be obtained.

Another limitation of this approach, according to Denscombe (2002), is the lack of rigour which is said to be associated to the lack of statistical analysis and the use of emergent samples. The researcher adopted the application of a systematic research approach which made it possible to maintain a high degree of rigour within this approach. To achieve rigour, the researcher adapted the approach by conducting the interviews in the respondents' mother-tongue, with the assistance of a co-researcher. The inclusion of a co-researcher was relevant because the researcher is not very fluent in the mother-tongue of the respondents.

3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN: PHENOMENOLOGY

This study used the phenomenological research design, because its aim was to investigate the lived experiences of orphaned children. Cohen et al. (2007) note that the phenomenological design is concerned with analyzing and interpreting the uniqueness of real individuals and situations through accessible accounts. Van der Mescht (2004) argues that phenomenology insists on description rather than explanation and while the line between these remain thin, the drive to stay with description until a holistic picture of the issue emerges is seen as fundamental to gaining a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under investigation.

The overall perspective of phenomenology is descriptive theory, phenomenology being but one theory of treating descriptions. Many important aspects of phenomena as lived and experienced have been either overlooked or distorted because the methods of the natural sciences are designed to deal with natural rather than experienced phenomena (Giorgi 1985; cited in Grant, 2005). This means that not all the aspects of the phenomena under investigation were explored and/or assumptions made on the possible outcomes of the said phenomena. Furthermore, the purpose of the phenomenological method is to do justice to the lived aspects of human phenomena and to do so, one first needs to know how an individual actually experiences what is lived. Obtaining a description becomes necessary to achieve this (ibid). This implies that the lived experiences of the respondents were reportedly descriptively described during the interviews which provided the researcher with a clear picture about the respondents' experiences.

Phenomenology seeks to understand the human condition as it manifests itself in our concrete, lived situations. Giorgi (1985) in Grant (2005) defines phenomenology as the study of phenomena as experienced by the person. Furthermore, the primary emphasis is on the phenomenon exactly as it reveals itself to the experiencing subject in all its concreteness and particularity (ibid). The phenomenologist looks at the fundamental structures of experience about the world and how it should be validly studied before scientific presuppositions are imposed (Van Kaam, 1996 in Grant, 2005).

What the researcher observes in phenomenology is not the reality as such, but an interpreted reality (Cohen et al., 2007). Thus, when the researcher develops the phenomenological attitude, he or she will first observe and study experience as it manifests itself. Only by being willing to study experience itself can he or she investigate the phenomenon in meaningful ways. Husserl spoke in relation to this of “back to the things” (ibid). This means that the respondents were interpreting their experiences to the researcher during the interviews exactly as they experienced it.

Haysamen (1994) postulates that phenomenology is rooted in the worldview that reality is not separated from individual experience. Thus, for the phenomenologist, there is therefore no absolute reality, which can be known separately from individual experience. Phenomenology is a move away from the epistemological belief that there is a world in-itself to which we can have access in such a way to grasp it as it is. Thus, the main aim is to determine what an experience means for those who have had the experience and their comprehensive description of it (Davey, 1999).

This study adopted a phenomenological approach because it intended to investigate the schooling experiences of the selected orphaned children, hence phenomenology has to do with the lived experiences of people involved or who were involved in the issue under investigation.

Willig (2001) further argues that phenomenology:

- is concerned with the ways in which human beings gain knowledge of the world around them.
- identifies different approaches to human understanding and it argues that certain forms of knowing may be more constructive than others and
- provides detailed guidance as to how such superior forms of knowing may be achieved.

The phenomenological method of gaining understanding, according to Willig (2001), involves three distinct phases of contemplation, namely *epoche*, *phenomenological reduction* and *imaginative variation*. *Epoche* requires the suspension of presuppositions and assumptions, judgments and interpretations to allow ourselves to become fully aware of what is actually before us. Furthermore, in *phenomenological reduction*, the phenomenon that presents itself to us is described in its totality. This means that we become aware of what constitutes the experience as it is lived (ibid).

In addition, *imaginative variation* involves the attempt to access the structural components of the phenomenon. Thus, phenomenological reduction is concerned with 'what' is experienced, while imaginative variation asks 'how' this experience is made possible. The fact that the aim of imaginative variation is to *identify* the conditions

associated with the phenomenon and without which it would not be what it is. These conditions can involve time, space or social relationships. Thus, textual and structural descriptions are integrated to achieve an understanding of the essence of the phenomenon under investigation (Willig, 2001).

According to Cohen and Omery (1994) a theoretical perspective supports the philosophical stance underpinning a methodology, and provides a context for the process involved and a basis for its logic and criteria. In addition, there are two main phenomenological approaches namely descriptive (eidetic) and interpretive (hermeneutic). Lopez and Willis (2004) argue that these approaches differ in how findings are generated and used to augment professional knowledge. This study was conducted using the interpretive (hermeneutic) phenomenological approach.

Polkinghorne (1989) cited in Grant (2005), suggests the following general format for the phenomenological investigation:

- Data gathering which includes gathering a number of naïve descriptions from people who are having or have had the experience under investigation.
- Analysis of these descriptions so that the researcher comes to a grasp of the constituents or common elements that make the experience what it is.
- Presentation of the findings in such a way that an accurate, clear and articulate description of an experience is given. The reader should come away with the feeling that he or she understands better what it is like for someone having that experience.

Only respondents who experienced the phenomena (those who have lost either a mother, father or both parents) were part of the investigation. Similarities and differences in the experiences of the respondents were taken note of by the researcher in order to understand their life world. The data collected and transcribed should be understood by the reader and that the reader should be able to conceptualize why the respondents acted in a certain manner when confronted by certain challenges.

Gray (2009) postulates that one of the **advantages** of phenomenology is that, because of its emphasis on the inductive collection of large amounts of data, it is more likely to pick up factors that were not part of the original research focus. It is further capable of producing 'thick descriptions' of people's experiences or perspectives within their natural settings. The rich, descriptive data collected during the interviews yielded the experiences of the respondents within their home and school environments.

According to Gray (2009) the **disadvantages** of phenomenology are:

- It is generally unstructured and it may be difficult to replicate.

The questions were not asked in the same order during the interviews in order for the researcher to obtain rich data from the respondents.

- It seeks to understand the world from the participants' of view.

This can only be achieved if the researchers 'brackets' their own preconceptions.

The researcher must not assume what the response from the respondents should be, rather understand it from the views of the respondents.

Although Gray (2009) refers to the disadvantages of phenomenology, it must be bore in mind that phenomenology is about the experiences of people and each person experience it differently.

3.5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research methodology dealt with the data collection method (instruments) and data analysis. The researcher adopted a phenomenological research methodology because the study was on how orphaned children at a secondary school experienced their schooling.

It is now widely accepted that children should be actively involved in any research project that seeks to understand and respond appropriately to children's unique perspectives and experiences (Noble-Carr, 2006). Furthermore, the challenge that lies ahead for those researchers committed to hear children's voices; is how to do this in a way that is both effective and ethical. This resulted in researchers choosing methodologies consistent with a child-centred participatory research framework (ibid). This was very important because the participants were children and needed to be the central part of the research in order to obtain rich description of their experiences.

3.5.1 Sampling

Kumar (2005) cites that in purposive sampling the consideration is the judgement of the researcher as to who can provide the best information to achieve the best objectives of the study. This study adopted a purposive sampling approach because the researcher wanted to include a school, as well as orphaned children who were not only data rich for

the study, but were also willing and able to participate in the study. Robson (2002) postulates that the principle of selection in purposive sampling; is the researcher's judgement as to typicality or interest. In addition, a sample is a selection of participants from the population (ibid). This type of sampling was also used by Sengendo and Nambi (1997) where they 'examined the psychological effect of orphanhood in a case study of 193 children in the Rakai district in Uganda.' The research site was the first to be sampled.

3.5.2 Access to the research site

The researcher adopted the principle of selection in purposive sampling, namely 'judgement', to identify the research site. The location of this study was a selected secondary school in the Maluti magisterial district in the Eastern Cape. The researcher sought permission to conduct the research and to gain access to the research site from the Eastern Cape Department of Education, the District Education Office Director and the principal of the selected school. The purpose of seeking their permission was to ensure both access to the research site and to the research participants and also to ensure that the provisions in the Departmental research policy were adhered to. Letters were written and dispatched to the principal as well as the District Education Office Director (see appendices A and C). The respondents were next to be sampled.

3.5.3 Sampling the respondents

The number and status of orphaned learners in grades eight to eleven (140) were obtained from the administration clerk, and from this data the researcher purposively

identified six (6) possible respondents to participate in the research. These six respondents were identified with the assistance of the administration clerk who was aware of their home environment. However, two of the selected respondents withdrew leaving the researcher with four respondents who, according to the researcher, comply with the criteria envisaged to obtain rich data on the phenomenon under investigation. The sample of the orphaned children then comprised of two females and two males, between the ages of fifteen and twenty years.

The purpose for selecting participants in phenomenological research is to generate a full range of possible elements and relationships that can be used in determining the essential structure of the phenomenon (Babbie and Mouton, 2001). To accomplish this, Stones (1998), cited in Grant (2005) suggests that the kind of individuals who are pre-eminently suitable for participating in this type of research, are those, for example who have had experiences relating to the phenomenon to be researched; secondly those who are verbally fluent and are able to communicate their thoughts, feelings and perceptions in relation to the research phenomenon, and lastly who expresses the willingness to be open to the researcher.

The researcher addressed the respondents to explain the reason for their selection in the study, as well as to ensure confidentiality and anonymity. The respondents expressed their willingness to participate in the research which enhanced the relationship between them and the researcher. Consequently, these respondents offered an authentic account of the research topic and shared sufficient common experiences among themselves. The researcher arranged to meet with the

respondents' guardians to explain and solicit permission to conduct the research. Letters were also written and dispatched to the selected respondents' guardians, seeking their permission to conduct the investigation (see appendices B-1 and B-2). Only once their permission had been secured, was the fieldwork mounted.

3.6 DATA GATHERING INSTRUMENTS

Data were collected through the use of unstructured interviews. The primary sources of data were the respondents themselves, and data was obtained by means of individual unstructured interviews.

3.6.1 Interviews: Unstructured

The interview is a widely used tool to access people's experiences and their inner perceptions, attitudes and feelings of reality (Fontana and Frey, 2005). Polkinghorne (1989) cited in Grant (2005) argues that the preferred method of gathering descriptions from subjects is the interview, which allows the researcher to assist the subject in moving towards non theoretical descriptions that accurately reflects the experience. The interview is the main method of data collection where participants' descriptions can be explored, illuminated and probed (Kvale, 1996; cited in Cohen et al., 2007).

Unstructured individual interviews were used in this study. Unstructured interviews are "the least structured form of interviews" (Payne and Payne, 2004). Williams (2003) posits that unstructured interviews are particularly valuable for examining people's attitudes, experiences and beliefs in-depth, and can give insight into some of the reasons behind their behaviour. Furthermore, this study made use of the

phenomenological interview which was conceived as a “conversation” or an interpersonal engagement in which subjects were encouraged to share with the researcher the details of their experience (Polkinghorne, 1989).

The researcher found this type of interview appropriate in development coming out of the relationship which was established with the selected orphaned children. Thus, the focus of the interview, in keeping with the aims of phenomenological research, was on the schooling experiences of the interviewee and was theme orientated rather than person orientated. Pain, Francis, Fuller, O’Brien and Williams (2002) cited in Noble-Carr (2006) assert that flexibility and openness to new ideas and ways of operating is crucial to reflective practice. When gathering data researchers need to be able to make careful observations and assessments on what is and isn’t working. The researchers must be prepared to adapt their techniques according to how well children are being engaged and whether or not key research questions are being answered.

Questions were asked to prompt the OC into describing aspects (that are critical to the study) which might not have been addressed in responding to the initial question. The researcher did interrupt the conversation when and how he deemed it necessary, and, according to Fontana and Frey (2005), the researcher should know when and how to interrupt the conversation so that the information would not seem irritating. Thus, it required the researcher to be good at questioning, probing and adjusting the flow of the conversation at an appropriate level. The respondents were interviewed a minimum of five times to obtain rich data on their schooling experiences.

According to Silberman (2005), the main *advantage* of unstructured interviews is the flexibility and open-ended conversation between the researcher and the interviewee. The researcher can rephrase questions and ask additional ones to clarify responses and secure more valid results. It furthermore has the benefit of generating a high response rate from appropriate participants (Payne and Payne, 2004). Respondents answer the same questions, thus increasing the compatibility of responses. In addition, it facilitates organization and analysis of data (Cohen et al., 2007).

3.6.2 Data Collection Process

3.6.2.1 The Profiles of the respondents

Table 3.1: The profiles of the respondents

Respondents (Pseudonyms)	Age	Gender	Grade	Type of orphan	When orphaned	Home environment
Nelisiwe	20	F	11	Maternal	2006	Guardian (eldest brother)
Kwezi	18	M	10	Double orphan	2006	Guardian (Aunt)
Naledi	16	F	9	Maternal	2008	Child-headed (Naledi)
Atang	17	M	8	Paternal	2004	Guardian (eldest brother)

Table 3.1 above shows that four respondents participated in the study. The respondents were allocated pseudonyms to protect their real identity. All the respondents are learners at the same secondary school where the research was conducted. The ages of the respondents range from sixteen to twenty years, the oldest being Nelisiwe who is in grade eleven. The respondents comprised of two males and two females who were from grade eight to eleven. It must be highlighted that no respondents were sampled from grade twelve because they would not have been learners at the school the following year during the research.

Fifty percent (50%) of the respondents are reportedly maternal orphans (someone who has lost a mother), another respondent (25%) is a paternal orphan (someone who has lost a father), while the last respondent (25%) is a double orphan (someone who has lost both parents). Both Nelisiwe and Naledi, who are maternal orphans, can also be regarded as double orphans because they reported that they had no relationship with their fathers; even before their mothers passed away.

Fifty percent (50%) of the respondents namely Nelisiwe and Kwezi became orphans during the same year (2006), while Atang became an orphan two years previously (2004) and Naledi became an orphan during 2008. This means therefore that Atang had been an orphan for seven years; Nelisiwe and Kwezi for five years and Naledi for three years.

Table 3.1 further shows different profiles, yet there exist similarities. These similarities are for example two of the respondents (Nelisiwe and Atang) reportedly stated that they are staying with their older brothers; while Kwezi reportedly stated that he is staying with his aunt and Naledi was reportedly taking care of her siblings.

The interview sessions were open-ended and were conducted in an informal, non-directive manner as suggested by Kruger (1989) cited in Grant (2005). They were conducted in a classroom and the local library, where there was privacy and no interruptions. This was to ensure that no outside interferences could disrupt the procedures of the interviews. A relaxed atmosphere was created and anonymity and confidentiality was guaranteed to the participants. Punch (2002) cited in Noble-Carr (2006) argues that the implications of research setting need to be considered with particular care, awareness and sensitivity in research with children. NSW (New South Wales) Commission for Children and Young People (2005) concurs and state that interviews should be conducted in a setting where the child feels comfortable, both physically and emotionally.

The study was conducted with children. Smith and Dunworth (2003) state that the principles underlying the use of qualitative research interviews with children are the same as with adults. The aim was to enable the participants to give as rich and detailed account of their unique perceptions and experience as possible. Various authors have emphasized the importance of focusing on children's own unique perceptions when the aim of the research is to develop an understanding of children's experiences (Amato

and Ochiltree, 1987; Bernheimer, 1986; Ireland and Holloway, 1996; Yoos, 1991) in Smith and Dunworth (2003).

Noble-Carr (2006) asserts that taking children's experiences seriously and recognizing that they have their own distinctive abilities to understand and explain their world, has had huge ramifications for the way we engage them in research activities. Thus, the researcher established a sound relationship with the children and encouraged them to talk; considered the length and number of interviews, as well as the children's cognitive, emotional and social development.

Therefore, in this study the researcher employed unstructured interviews as one of the methods of data collection. The researcher used unstructured individual interviews to ensure that the respondents felt free to express their feelings about their schooling experiences. Initially, the researcher used English as the medium to interview the respondents. However, the researcher had to switch to their mother-tongue which is Xhosa because some of them experienced difficulties to respond to the research question in English. As the researcher is not very fluent in Xhosa, a colleague who is fluent in the Xhosa, was requested to assist in the study.

The research assistant is an active member of the Orphaned and Vulnerable Committee at the school, therefore involving her was an asset to the study. The researcher briefed the research assistant about the topic and the research questions. The research assistant was also requested to treat the information gathered, as strictly confidential.

The permission from the participants were first sought to allow the research assistant to be part of the study, and they all agreed.

The researcher in total, made a number of five follow-up visits and each respondent was interviewed for about forty five minutes. The respondents were also allowed to ask questions for clarification during and after the interviews. The respondents were relaxed; hence they were eager to provide rich, descriptive data. The researcher conveyed his gratitude to the respondents for their participation in the research, and emphasized the confidentiality issue around the data provided.

3.6.3 LIMITATIONS TO THE STUDY

The study was confined to Mandini Secondary School, where the schooling experiences of four orphaned children were investigated. Travelling expenses was minimal, but the timeframe to the research was limited (after school hours) because the researcher is a full time PL1 educator. The sensitivity of the study posed challenges during the interview stage in a number of ways. Responses to some questions were brief and therefore did not provide sufficient information about the study. Some respondents had difficulty in expressing themselves in the language (English) used in the interviews. This resulted in some information being held back until further probing in their mother tongue (iSiXhosa) with the assistance of the research assistant.

3.7 DATA ANALYSIS

The data gathered from interviews was transcribed and analysed from a phenomenological perspective. Giorgi (1985), cited in Grant (2005), argues that

analyzing data within a phenomenological research involves uncovering essential structures of the phenomenon in question. Meanings must be discovered, thematized and interpretive procedures have to be used as meanings are not always known explicitly.

Van Kaam (1996) cited in Grant (2005), postulates that the primary endeavor by the phenomenologist is to change naïve perception explicitly into more detailed conceptual knowledge. This indicates that the phenomenologist attempts to change preconceived ideas or thoughts into more realistic and meaningful information. Furthermore, the implicit and obscure perception of complex phenomenon of behavior changes by this process into an explicit formulation of its foundational behavior (ibid).

The Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was employed in this study. The IPA, according to Smith, Flowers and Osborne (1999) cited in Smith and Dunworth (2003), shares the aims of other phenomenological approaches to data analysis in that it wishes to capture the quality and texture of individual experience. The study adopted the IPA as a suitable method to explore the impact the schooling experiences had on the orphaned children. Willig (2001) posits that the IPA is a version of the phenomenological method which accepts the impossibility of gaining direct access to research participants' life worlds. It further recognizes that, to explore the research participant's experience from his or her perspective, such an exploration must necessarily implicate the researcher's own view of the world as well as the nature of the interaction between the researcher and participant. Thus, the phenomenological

analysis produced by the researcher is always an interpretation of the participant's experience.

However, the IPA recognizes that such experience is never directly accessible to the researcher (Willig, 2001). Smith et al. (2003), the founders of IPA, characterizes it as 'an attempt to unravel the meanings contained in ... accounts through a process of interpretive engagement with the texts and transcripts'. Willig (2001) further argues that such engagement is facilitated by a series of steps that allows the researcher to identify themes and integrate them into meaningful clusters, first within and then across cases. Furthermore, IPA is idiographic (Smith, Harré, and van Langenhove, 1995), cited in (Smith and Dunworth, 2003) beginning with particular cases and only slowly working up to more general categorization or statements. This means that insights are produced as a result of intensive and detailed engagement with individual cases (e.g. transcripts, texts) and these are integrated only later in the research. The description of lived experiences was analysed in order to uncover the structures of experience constituted in consciousness. It therefore seemed appropriate to base the analysis of the study on a framework presented by Smith and Osborn (2003), in which *four stages* within the phenomenological method are delineated:

Stage One: *The researcher's initial encounter with the text*

This stage involved the reading and re-reading of the text. The researcher produced wide- ranging and unfocused notes that reflected the initial thoughts and observations he or she might wish to record in response to the text. Notes produced at this stage constituted the most open form of annotation and were quite different from 'open coding' as used in grounded theory (Smith and Osborne, 2003). These notes were simply a way

of documenting issues that came up for the researcher upon his or her initial encounter with the text.

The interviews were at first conducted in English, but the researcher discovered that the respondents could not explain their answers to the questions explicitly. Consequently, the interviews were then conducted in isiXhosa. However, the researcher was also not too familiar with isiXhosa, and permission was sought from the respondents to allow a co-researcher (educator) to assist in transcribing the data. All the respondents agreed that the co-researcher would be allowed to be part of the research. The co-researcher is a colleague (female educator) who is fluent in isiXhosa and who is also involved in the OVC (Orphaned and Vulnerable Children) programme at the school. As the researcher, assisted by the co-researcher, did the transcription, this provided him to be fully immersed in the data. Each text was then read several times, highlighting key words and significant statements. This process therefore set the groundwork for the identification of themes.

Stage Two: *Identification of themes*

The second stage of analysis required the researcher to identify and label themes that characterized each section of the text. Theme titles were conceptual and they captured something about the essential quality of what was represented by the text. Psychological terminology was used at this stage. For example, themes emerged from an interview with a chronic pain sufferer included 'loss', 'social comparison' and 'sense of self' (Smith et al., 2003). The transcripts were read and re-read before themes were identified. These themes were tentatively organized and then explored in more detail. Significant statements were collected, paraphrased and a theme assigned to each.

Stage Three: *Clustering of themes*

This stage involved an attempt to introduce structure into the analysis. The researcher listed the themes identified in stage two and thought about them in relation to one another. Some of the themes formed natural clusters of concepts that share meanings or references, whereas others were characterized by hierarchical relationships with one another. Cluster of themes were given labels that captured their essence. These were *in vivo* terms used by the respondents themselves, brief quotations or descriptive labels.

It was also important to ensure that clustering of themes identified at this stage made sense in relation to the original data. This meant that the researcher moved back and forth between the list of themes he or she attempted to structure and the text that generated the themes in the first place. The connections between themes identified on paper needed to be reflected in the detail of the respondent's account. The researcher examined each theme's relation to other themes and established the inter-relationships between these themes. Similar themes identified in the preceding stage, were then clustered.

The following stage focuses on the production of a summary table, which involves clustering of themes.

Stage Four: *Production of a summary table*

The fourth stage of analysis involved the production of a summary table of the structured themes, together with quotations that illustrate each theme. The summary table only included those themes that captured something about the quality of the participant's experience of the phenomenon under investigation. This meant that some of the themes generated in stage two were excluded. These were themes which were

not well- represented within the text or which were marginal to the phenomenon. The researcher's decision about which themes to be retained and which to be abandoned was inevitably influenced by his or her interests and orientation.

3.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical considerations seem to be given more importance when embarking on research with children. The National Health and Medical Research Council (2002) cited in Howard, Hoyer, MacGregor, Maltmann, Spencer, Skelly and Hardy (2002) and again cited in Noble-Carr (2006) argue that in any research involving people, the protection and the rights of the individual participants is of primary importance. Therefore, according to Davis (1998) as cited in Noble-Carr (2006) to not only meet ethical obligations, but to improve the validity and reliability of the research data, "A consensus has developed around the belief that the ethics, tools and roles employed in qualitative children's research should empower children".

The researcher abided by the Code of Ethics of the University of Fort Hare. Furthermore, the researcher ensured that the Eastern Cape Department of Education policy on Research was adhered to. Special consideration was given to the following issues:

3.8.1 Researching a sensitive topic

The topic of this study is likely to bring back trauma and anxiety in the respondents. Therefore, according to Noble-Carr (2006), "it is important to remember that some children may not feel comfortable talking about sensitive family issues...." Punch

(2002,p 328) cited in Noble-Carr (2006) postulates “that the implications for the research setting need to be considered with particular care, awareness and sensitivity in research with children.” In addition, NSW Commission for Children and Young People(2005,p57) cited in Noble-Carr (2006), argues that “interviews should be conducted in a setting where the child feels comfortable, both physically and emotionally.”

The researcher ensured that the respondents were informed about the interviews and that it was conducted in safe and comfortable settings. The researcher is a lay councilor and as such was aware of the sensitivity of the topic and possesses the necessary skills that would be needed if the respondents were to breakdown because of the “trauma tourism”. The respondents were free to use both English and Xhosa in answering the research questions. In addition, the research assistant was not only fluent in Xhosa, but she was also a woman.

3.8.2 Informed consent

The researcher requested written permission from the guardians, as well as the respondents, to conduct the research (see appendix E). Noble-Carr (2006) argues that the notion of informed consent does not end with an agreement given at the commencement of the research project; it should be seen as a continual process. He further stated that it is vital that children know and are reminded of the fact that they can withdraw from the research at any time.

3.8.3 Confidentiality

Pseudonyms were used to protect the identity of the respondents. Every effort was made to inform the participants in a manner that would encourage choice of involvement. These efforts include voluntary participation without physical or psychological coercion. Children's involvement in the analysis and reporting of the data generated is also important (Noble-Carr, 2006). Punch (2002) as cited in Noble-Carr (2006) argues that particular care must be taken when interpreting children's views, while Howard et al., (2002) state that systems of checks and balances must be employed to aid triangulation of data and make the filters through which young people's 'voices' are presented visible.

3.8.4 Trustworthiness

The phenomenology perspective tends not to speak about reliability and validity, but rather of trustworthiness. Babbie and Mouton (2001) argue that trustworthiness refers to ability of researchers to convince themselves and participants that the findings of the inquiry are trustworthy. This is further echoed by Creswell (2003) who states that trustworthiness is established when findings reflect as closely as possible, the meaning as described by the participants. The study employed credibility; member checking; dependability; conformability and authenticity to ensure trustworthiness. These methods employed are discussed in the following paragraphs.

Shank (2006) asserts that **credibility** deals with the degree of believability of the research findings. In credible research, the data is consistent and cohesive rather than

scattered and contradictory. In addition, credibility can be established through maintaining an extended contact with the participants in order to get to really know them and how they act (ibid). This implies that the researcher had to stay in contact with the participants to ensure that they provided consistent and cohesive data. The researcher made use of member checking to ensure the credibility of the study.

According to Creswell (2003) **member checking** is the process of going back to the participants to see if the analysis/interpretation makes sense to them and reflects their experiences. All the participants were asked to listen to their tape-recorded interviews and the transcripts made available. This was to ensure that the respondents could check if the data was a true reflection of their responses and to maybe add additional information that may have been omitted during the initial interview.

Dependability, according to Shank (2006), refers to the ability to know where the data in a given study comes from, how it was collected, and how it was used. Furthermore, qualitative researchers can increase dependability through member check which occurs when outsiders examine the notes and data of the researchers to make sure that these data are saying what the researchers claim they say. In this study dependability some of the data was done through verbatim transcriptions of the interviews to prevent distortion of data interpretation.

Shank(2006) postulates that **conformability** deals with the details of the methodologies used. It is determined via methodological audit trail addresses such issues as the type and nature of the raw data, how the data was analyzed, and how categories and

themes were formed. In order to establish conformability (objectively) and dependability (external reliability), the researcher acknowledges personal assumptions, beliefs and attitudes, defines an audit trail, and returns to the environment to confirm interpretations as the investigation proceeds (ibid). The researcher was well aware of the fact that he should remain self-aware that personal beliefs might influence the research and its credibility; therefore he bracketed himself from any preconceived beliefs about orphan learners in order to remain objective in his approach. In bracketing, the researcher suspended the belief in the 'outer world' to avoid judgements or having any preconceived ideas.

According to Shank (2006), **authenticity** is a plan for evaluating the potential impact of a piece of a research in the world at large. The researcher ensured that member checking was done so that categories, themes, explanations, interpretations and conclusions make sense to truly reflect the nature of the phenomenon being investigated. From this perspective, it is important that the interviewer does not have influence on the content of the descriptions of participants (Creswell, 1998; cited in Cohen et al., 2007). The researcher is thus expected to give descriptions that are consistent with the participants' experiences (Haggman- Laitila, 1999).

The use of unstructured interviews, avoiding making use of formal set of questions that may guide the responses of the participants, also aided in obtaining trustworthiness. The participants were allowed to verify the transcripts, ensuring that the researcher's descriptions were consistent with their experiences, also contributed to the trustworthiness of the study (Haggman-Laitila, 1999; Kruger, 1989). Creswell (1998)

cited in Cohen et al. (2007), states that phenomenology does not lend itself to generalizations. The researcher was therefore tentative to make generalizations in relation to the population from which the of the orphaned learners at the school because the study was limited to a small number (four) of selected orphans.

3.8.5. Privacy

Masson (2004), cited in Noble-Carr (2006), postulates that children be afforded the same right to privacy as would be done with adult research subjects. However, some children may not feel comfortable being left alone with an unfamiliar interviewer (ibid). The task of the researcher therefore was to gain the support and trust of the respondents, by providing them with appropriate choices for participation. The researcher also explained why privacy was sought and the theoretical premise from which the research was being based.

3.8.6 Free from harm

Laws and Mann (2004) cited in Noble-Carr (2006) argues that the duty to protect the physical, social and psychological well-being of those you study and work with, is central to the researcher's role. Smith and Dunworth (2003) concur and state that children must feel safe and comfortable with the researcher. Furthermore, children may feel more secure and relaxed being interviewed in familiar surroundings (ibid). The interviews were conducted in an empty classroom at the school here the study was conducted. Further interviews were conducted at the local library which was frequented by the respondents. This was regarded as a familiar environment for the respondents.

3.9 CONCLUSION

It must be bore in mind that working out how to best engage children in research about sensitive issues, involves more than a superficial examination of current research methodologies and data collection techniques. Furthermore, it is important to note that any decisions taken by researchers need to be continually reflected on the promotion of children's rights, respect for diversity and to also recognize the unique contribution that they make to research processes and outcomes.

The ensuing chapter will focus on the data presentation of the findings.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on data presentation, analysis, and the discussions of major findings. As stated in chapter three, the data were collected through individual unstructured interviews. The aim of the study was to explore the experiences of four orphaned learners at Mandini Secondary School in the Maluti District of Education* in the Eastern Cape.

The researcher began by qualitatively sketching a profile of the four orphaned learners. Thereafter, the researcher presented themes that emerged from the data relating to the life experiences of the participants. Verbatim interview excerpts supporting the themes are also presented in this chapter.

4.2 PROFILES

Firstly, data is presented in a profile, that is the profile of the research site. Secondly, a summary table of the themes which were derived from the unstructured interviews. Next the life stories of respondents are briefly highlighted. Lastly, data is presented and analyzed, followed by the findings of the study.

4.2.1 Profile of the research site

The number of orphans at Mandini Secondary School since 2007 to 2010 fluctuated and is illustrated in the following table:

Table 4.1: The school's profile on the number of orphans in the past four years.

Year	Grades	Age Range	Total number of orphans	Total number of student enrolment (whole school)	Percentage of orphans of total student enrolment
2007	8-12	15-19 years	157	953	16.4%
2008	8-12	15-19 years	155	1073	14.4%
2009	8-12	15-19 years	185	1057	17.5%
2010	8-12	15-19 years	140	1007	13.9%

This table (Table 4.1) shows the total number of orphans at the school from grade eight to twelve, from 2007 till 2010. However, only orphans from grade eight to eleven were sampled to participate in the research. Table 4.1 shows that the highest number of learners who experienced losing parents through death were 185 (17.5%) in 2009; whilst the lowest was experienced in 2010 (13.9%). In 2007 the total number of orphans enrolled at the school was 157 out of 953, which 16.4% of the total enrolment of the school. During 2008 the number of orphans enrolled was 155 out of 1073, and this made up 14.4% of the total school enrolment. In 2009 the number of orphans from grade eight to twelve increased to 185 out of 1057, and this constituted 17.5% of the

total number of student enrolment for the year. The number of orphans enrolled in 2010 was 140 out of 1007, which were 13.9% of the total number of student enrolment for that specific year. Important to note is the fact that the number of orphan enrolment and the total number of student enrolment for the school fluctuated on a year to year basis. This table however does not specify orphans per grade, gender, age, type of orphan or when they became orphans.

4.2.2 SUMMARY TABLE

The following table is a summary of the themes which emanated from the unstructured individual interviews held with the respondents.

Table 4.2: Summary table of themes

Clusters	Quotations
Cluster 1: Home Environment	
(a) Poverty	“earned low salary”; “street vendor”
(b) Attachments to parent(s)	“loved my mother very much”; “felt happy”
(c) Contribution to education	“attended school meetings”; “ help with homework”
Cluster 2: School Environment	
(a) Interactions with educators	“they help us a lot”; “...was scared..”
(b) Interactions with other learners	“..communicate and play together.” “..relationship is good...”
(c) Interactions with support staff	“..socialize freely...”; “..would assist them...”

The numbers of clusters and themes identified can vary widely and depend entirely upon the text being analyzed. Some clusters consist of many themes, whereas others are much more narrowly focused. Consequently, there may be very many quotations that support a particular theme, while others are less frequently invoked in the text. Furthermore, the summary should reflect the meanings that structure the participant's accounts rather than the researcher's expectations of what constitutes an acceptable number of clusters and themes. The researcher produced a summary table of the structured themes which also included quotations that illustrate each theme.

4.3 THE RESPONDENTS' LIFE STORIES

This section provides the narrated life stories of the four respondents as narrated by themselves. These life stories include who they are residing with, contribution of the guardians towards their education and their relationships with the school community that is the educators, learners and support staff.

4.3.1 Nelisiwe's Life Story

At the time of the field research in 2010, Nelisiwe was a 20 year old girl who was doing grade eleven. She further stated that she was born in April 1990 in Dengwana. The respondent stated that after birth, her mother left her with her grandmother until she was six years old. She also reported that she was seven years old when her mother came to fetch her to stay in Durban. They (herself and her mother) came back to Dengwana in 1998. The respondent further reported that they came back to Dengwana because her mother became unemployed.

Nelisiwe's mother became ill during 2005, and that she was sick for about six months. Consequently, as reported by Nelisiwe, her mother passed away in February 2006. After her mother's death, Nelisiwe stated that she first stayed with her grandparents, but later moved to stay with her brother because her grandparents consumed too much alcohol and used to swear at her.

Furthermore, Nelisiwe reported that she felt that her grandparents were not really interested in her education because they never attended school meetings. She also stated that because of her grandparents' attitude towards her and her education (they did not care about her education), she decided to go and reside with her oldest brother. Nelisiwe further reported that her other three siblings were not staying with her, but with her grandparents in a nearby town. In addition, she stated that it was through her own carelessness that she failed grade eleven the previous year (2009).

4.3.2 Kwezi's Life Story

Kwezi was a 18 year old boy in 2010 at the time of the research, and doing grade 10. He reportedly said that he was born in Mafube on 16 October 1992 at the Usher hospital. He added that he was one of three siblings in the family, while the fourth one, his brother, passed away. Kwezi also stated that they were staying in town. He reported that his sister is still attending school, while his brother is unemployed. The respondent further stated that his mother told him his father died a long time ago, and also did not know his identity. He also reported that he does not like crime and substance abuse.

Kwezi reported that his mother was sick from December 2005 and that she was complaining about pains in her stomach. Furthermore, she was beginning to lose weight. She then passed away in April 2006. Since his mother's death, Kwezi has been staying with his (maternal) aunt.

Before his mother's death, Kwezi was very happy; but since she died he was sometimes very unhappy. He also stated that after his mother's death, he had to try hard to concentrate in class, because he was missing her. He further reported that his aunt, who is forty two years old, is taking good care of him and is also very interested in his school work because she attends school meetings on a regular basis. Kwezi stated that this made him feel good.

4.3.3 Naledi's Life Story

Naledi was a sixteen year old female who was doing grade nine in 2010. She reported that she was born on 22 June 1994 in Mafube at the Usher hospital. Naledi was the oldest of three siblings in the family, and that they first stayed with their mother on a farm before she died. The respondent also stated that her brother as well as her sister were too young to attend school and was staying at home while she was attending school. She further reported that her mother became very ill and that she passed away in 2008; while they were still very young. Naledi stated that she first stayed with a friend of her late mother, however, the lady went to work in another town and she was left to take care of her siblings.

Naledi's home environment was different to that of the other respondents because she had to take care of her siblings; a task which was very challenging because she still had to attend school as well. This means that she was the "mother" in the house, thus this type of household can be referred to as a 'child-headed household'. Naledi also stated that she has to get up at four o'clock every morning during the week to go and do domestic chores at a neighboring farm to earn some money; she then returns home at about six o'clock to cook porridge for them. This work which she was doing was to ensure that she could buy food for herself and her siblings. The effects of her being the "mother" in the house on her education will be discussed later in the findings.

4.3.4 Atang's Life Story

Atang was a 17 year old boy who was doing grade eight in 2010. He reportedly stated that he was born in Pamlaville in 1993 and was one of four siblings in the family; the other siblings were a sister and two brothers. The respondent also reported that they were staying on the farm where his parents were employed as labourers. He further stated that his brother did not complete school and went to work in town where he later married. His father built a house in Maluti and that his mother went to stay there after his father's death. However, according to the respondent, he did not go and stay with his mother in Maluti because he was more attached to his brother and preferred to stay with him.

Atang stated that his father was sick from 1997 and until 2004. He further stated that his father became very ill in 2004 and had to be taken to hospital where he later died in his sleep. After his father's death, Atang reported that he first stayed with his aunt who was

very sickly and who was also caring for five other children. He further stated that he was always the last person to get food and that his aunt never really cared about him. Consequently, he decided to go and stay with his brother and his family. His brother was married and had one child.

The following section focuses on the reporting of the data.

4.4 REPORTING THE DATA

4.4.1 The respondents' experiences *before* and *after* their loss

This section will focus on the experiences of the respondents before and after the loss of the parent(s). It must also be highlighted that they experienced these differently. This implies that seventy five percent (75%) of the respondents became more matured during the time that they were caring for their ailing parents. Twenty five percent (25%) of the respondents eventually had to take care of her siblings. In addition, this section was structured according to the following themes, namely Home Environment and School Environment.

4.4.1.1 Home Environment

The respondents stated that, ***before*** their loss, they were happy while staying with their parent(s), in particular their mothers. Furthermore, they stated that a mother is a very important person in a child's life because she can provide guidance about the facts of life.

All the respondents (100%) commented that they come from a poor family background. This meant, according to the respondents, that they “did not live in big houses” and that “their parent(s) did not have a lot of money”. In addition, they stated that poverty can be linked to the lack of money or the low salaries which their late parents received. These respondents further stated that they knew that their parent(s) received a very low salary and they had to accept that they could not get the things which other children got from their parents.

Nelisiwe articulated the following:

“My mother was a domestic worker in Durban and my grandparents received a social grant. My mother did not earn a lot of money. We were four in the family, myself and my three sisters. My mother was a single parent and tried her best to provide food and clothes for us. I never knew my father.”

Kwezi stated the following:

“My mother was self employed, selling things on the street. She did not make a lot of money, but she tried to buy me things. We were four in the family, but my one brother died. My sister is still schooling and my older brother is unemployed. My mother was a single parent who worked very hard. We were staying in a small house in town and

some of us, my brother and myself, had to sleep on the floor.”

Naledi reported that:

“My mother was a domestic worker on a farm and she also had to milk the cows to get more money from the farmer. The money she got was not enough. She got R350.00 per month. We were three in the family, my younger brother, my sister and I. I never knew my father, so we did not get any help from him.”

Atang articulated the following:

“My father was a farm labourer and my mother was a domestic worker. The money they got, they tried to help us. We were four children in the family, that is my sister, two brothers and myself. We lived on the farm and had to walk to school every day.”

It also emerged that seventy five percent (75%) of the respondents came from single mother background. Nelisiwe stated that her mother was a single parent who worked as a domestic worker in Durban. She further reported that she was staying with her grandparents who were receiving a social grant. The respondent explained that the low income which her mother received; resulted in her not being able to pay school fees in full at times. She further reported that her mother’s low income affected the purchasing

of school materials, clothes and experiences with educational excursions. In addition, Nelisiwe said that she never knew her father and that she did not have a relationship with him.

Kwezi also stated that he stayed with his mother, who was a single parent and who was a street vendor. He further explained that his mother could get him the basic things such as clothing and food he needed; this despite of her weekly income that was relatively low. In addition, he reported that he sometimes could not participate in educational excursions because of his mother's low income.

Naledi echoed similar comments like the above and stated that she stayed with her mother, who was a single parent, on a farm. She further narrated that her mother was both a domestic worker and a labourer who had to care for her three siblings. According to Naledi, her mother received a wage of R350.00 per month which was not enough to purchase school materials, buy clothes or to allow her to be part of educational excursions. She further stated that her mother had to milk the cows of the same farmer where she was working to try and secure an extra income to satisfy their needs. Furthermore, Naledi alluded to the fact that she did not have a relationship with her father, because she never knew him.

Atang stated that he stayed with his parents on the farm where his mother was a domestic worker, while his father was a farm labourer. He further said that both his parents' income was insufficient to ensure that the material needs of their siblings could

be met when required. In addition, he stated he could not participate in educational excursions because of his parents' low income.

Seventy five percent (75%) of the respondents stated that they had to stay with extended family members **after** the death of their parent(s); while twenty five percent (25%) stayed with her late mother's friend after the mother's passing on. This was until her mother's friend went to work in another town. It must be emphasized that these respondents were staying with their late parent(s) before, and they therefore had to adjust to their new home environment. This implies that the respondents had to leave their original physical environment to either go or stay with guardians or to take care of their siblings. In addition, these respondents were never emotionally prepared to go and live with relatives or on their own. Thus, the new home environment came as a shock which they had to accept and live with. However, according to the reports from the respondents, the financial situation did not change because their guardians were either receiving a social grant or they received a very low salary. Hundred percent (100%) of the respondents stated that they did not get the financial support which they used to get from their deceased parent(s); although their parent(s) did not earn a lot of money for the type of work they were doing.

Nelisiwe stated the following:

"My guardian does not give me money when I need it. I sometimes got assistance from my aunt who buys me things that I need. I first stayed with my grandparents who receive

a social grant; but later went to stay with my brother who is employed by the local municipality.”

She further stated that her guardian did not earn a decent salary and has to care for her as well as his family. In addition, the respondent reported:

“I went to stay with my brother because my grandparents used to shout at me when they are drunk.”

Kwezi reported:

“My guardian is getting a grant and she has to look after us: my brother and me. I think that now things have changed and it was not like before my mother passed away. The things that I want, I don’t get.”

Atang echoed the same sentiments and stated:

“I had to stay with my aunt and she could not buy enough food, we were too many. She was also looking after other children and she was also sickly. I had to go and stay with my brother.”

Atang further stated that his brother was a truck driver for a local business company and that he (his brother) also had to care for his own family.

The last respondent, Naledi, stated:

“I stay with my siblings. It’s because you find that people do not want to assist you when you ask them to.”

This implies that the assistance they used to get while her mother was still alive, they no more enjoyed. This made her feel unwanted and lonely.

According to the respondent, she had to take over the responsibilities as a mother, yet she was still a child; and she had to try and remember how her mother used to take care of them so that she could do the same. She further stated:

“I have to do all the duties in the house. I have to look after my siblings alone. I have to get up at four o’ clock in the morning to go and work on the farm where we used to stay with my mother, and get back home at about six o’ clock to cook porridge for us before I go to school.”

Naledi, from the child-headed household, further highlighted the following:

“I sometimes don’t know where I am going to get food for myself and my siblings. This made me feel very unhappy because I was concerned about my siblings. The workload sometimes become too much because I have to do everything in the house myself.”

Naledi reported the following about her having to take care of her siblings:

“I am happy to take care of my siblings and I am sure that my mother would have wanted me to do that. I have to do

everything myself, but my siblings sometimes help me in sweeping the floor.”

The above quotations and statements are a clear indication that the respondents are living in an economically poor home environment which at times cause them not to obtain their basic needs.

Nelisiwe stated the following:

“I stay with my brother and his family in his house. He does not earn a lot of money, but tries to provide in my basic needs.”

Kwezi stated:

“I am staying with my aunt who is receiving a social grant. This is not enough, but she always tries to provide me with things which I need.”

Atang reported similar experiences and stated:

“I am staying with my brother and his family. He is a truck driver and does not get a lot of money. He tries to buy me things that I need.”

Naledi's situation was completely different, because she had to take care of her siblings. She stated: *“I have to cook, wash and dress my siblings.”* Naledi therefore, was the parent figure in the household and had to improvise to provide herself and her siblings

in their basic needs. She stated that: *“I have to get up early in the morning to go and work on a farm to earn some money to buy food.”*

The respondents stated that they had to accept their living conditions although they sometimes wanted things which their other more wealthy friends had. In addition, these respondents reported that they did not feel ashamed of having to live in their humble home environment. This was revealed by Naledi and Kwezi who respectively expressed the following: *“We were staying in a small house in town and some of us, my brother and myself, had to sleep on the floor.” “We were three siblings staying with my mother on a farm.”*

It is imperative to note that Naledi’s living conditions were completely different from that of the other respondents. This implies that Naledi lived in a child-headed household, where she had to take care of herself and her siblings. The other respondents stayed with their guardians.

While it appeared that all respondents interviewed lived in extreme poverty, it became apparent that one of them, namely Kwezi, was fairly well cared for by the proceeds of his late mother. This means that his mother was self employed and could somehow provide for him and his siblings. Fifty percent (50%) of the respondents, that is Naledi and Atang, stayed with their parent(s) on a farm and their mothers were domestic workers; while Atang’s father was a farm labourer. The other fifty percent (50%) of the respondents namely Nelisiwe and Kwezi stayed with either their parent or grandparents in town. It is therefore clear that some of these respondents grew up under very poor

living conditions whereby their parent(s) earned a wage which was insufficient to take proper care of them. Their living conditions changed after the death of their parent(s) because their guardians either received a social grant or had a family of their own to take care of.

The respondents stated that, despite their experiences of poverty, they were very happy with their parents. They were happy because their mothers always attended school meetings. Nelisiwe stated:

“She always attended school meetings while she was still well.”

In addition, the respondents stated that their parent(s) were trying very hard to provide them with their basic needs. Consequently, their parent(s) regarded their (the respondents’) education as very important.

Literature states that, because of poverty, orphaned learners are less likely to be educated, often because they are unable to pay school fees; must work to survive, or are discriminated against in foster households (Case et al., 2003). However, the respondents were reportedly attending school despite the low income of their guardians. Furthermore, all the respondents (100%) did not stay in foster households. Seventy five percent (75%) of the respondents are staying with relatives, while twenty five percent (25%) of the respondents was heading a household.

The following section focuses on the contributions made by the late parent(s) and the guardians towards the education of the respondents.

It became clear during the interviews that the respondents were very attached to their late parent(s) and they responded very passionately. This meant that the respondents responded with feeling, sometimes with a smile on the face to the question of how their parent(s) cared for them.

Hundred percent (100%) of the respondents referred to their parent(s) as people who cared (*they were very concerned about the respondents*); loved (*the parent(s) had a very strong and warm feeling for them*), and supported (*encouraged them to improve in their schoolwork*) them. In addition, the respondents answered with compassion, wanting to share the passion they had for their late parent(s). Although the respondents' parent(s) were reportedly not earning a lot of money, they always endeavored to do the best for them. Lastly, it appeared that relations were reportedly very healthy and the respondents reported the following:

Nelisiwe stated that:

"I felt very happy when my mother came to fetch me to stay in Durban. I was happy because it would have been the first time that I will be staying with my mother. I could discuss problems with her which worried me." The respondent further reported that: "I cared for my mother during her illness and I felt very sad when my mother passed away."

Kwezi stated the following:

“I was very happy while my mother was still alive because she was always buying me clothes and everything that I wanted. We sometimes would just talk about things that happened at school or in town.” He further reportedly reported that: “I was very close to my mother because she cared about me and my education.”

Naledi reported the following:

“My mother helped us a lot for example she bought us clothes and food and that she took care of us until she died... I loved my mother very much and I even stayed out of school to care for her while she was sick. I had to stay out of school sometimes for about four days. My schoolwork I always tried to do when I get back to school and my class friends helped me. We talked a lot, but she never told me where or who my father was.”

Atang reported the following:

“My father loved us very much and that he always ensured that we had food to eat. My father cared about us and he tried to buy the things which we needed. He even built a house in Maluti so that we could stay there as a family and I was very happy.”

The above views are an indication of the closeness that existed between these respondents and their late parent(s). A broad smile could be seen on their faces while they were relating their relationship with their late parent(s).

The following section describes the experiences of some of the respondents during the illness of their parent(s) and how it affected their education. It further highlights how the respondents had to cope with the situation. During the interviews, three of the respondents (75%), namely Nelisiwe, Kwezi and Naledi stated that the illness of their parent(s) influenced their attendance at school negatively. These respondents reported that they had to work extra hard to ensure that their work was up to date with the rest of the other learners. The fourth respondent, Atang, stated that his attendance was not affected at all, because he was still very young when his father passed away. The majority of the respondents, whose school attendance was disrupted by their parent(s)' illness, reported the following:

Nelisiwe stated the following:

"I stayed out of school because I had to bath her; doing the washing, cleaning the house and cook for her. I enjoyed doing that because I loved my mother very much. My mother was too weak to do the work in the house, so I had to do it. My mother was sick for six months and she died in 2006."
The respondent was the eldest of the siblings.

Kwezi stated:

“When she was sick, I was always there to hear what she wants, that is water or something; because my aunties were staying at their homes that time. I used to wash her upper body and it was painful to see her like that. She was complaining about pains in the stomach and she started to lose weight. My mother was sick from December 2005 until she died in April 2006... it affected my education because I had to stay out of school a lot and this resulted me failing grade eight in the same year when she died.”

Naledi narrated the following:

“I had to take over the duties as the ‘mother’ because my mother was too weak to work in the house. I used to take care of her because she could not walk. I made food for her, washed and dressed her.”

The respondent further stated:

“Her illness affected me very badly because there were things she used to do for us that she could not do any longer; so I had to take over the duties of my mother. My mother’s illness did affect my education because I sometimes had to stay out of school to take care of her. She was sick for two years and she died in 2008.”

The social foundations of these respondents were broken long before the parents died because they had to look after their parent(s) as adults. This is related to what the social rupture theory refers to as the changing of social roles. Naledi for example had to grow up before her time because she had to take care of her siblings while still attending school.

Atang also reported the following:

“My father was sick for a few years from 1997 to 2004.

During 1997 I did not worry because I was still very young

and was only interested in my friends. I attended school

because my mother looked after my sick father.”

The respondent also reported that he was very playful and did not really know how sick his father was at the time.

It was obvious that the respondents were still grieving the death of their parent(s), and this will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

During the interviews, the respondents emotionally expressed how they felt when their parent(s) died and about the existence of a “vacuum” concerning the absence of their parent(s) in their lives. The statements made by the respondents are referred to in the quotations below. Naledi reported that she was missing her parent because she had nobody, an adult, whom she could confide in when she was at home. The other respondents also indicated that although they had their guardians to talk to, they

sometimes missed their parent(s) whom they could talk to about anything that worried them.

One can therefore deduce that these respondents did not fully recover from the loss of the parent(s). These emotional experiences are expressed in the following excerpts.

Nelisiwe stated the following:

“It was very hurtful and it seemed as if it was the end of the world for me. I was in pain and no-one can give me the support that she was giving to me. I find it hard to cope without her. When I am alone, I think about my mother and everything she did for me. I also think about her when I have personal problems that worry me.”

Kwezi narrated the following:

“It was painful after she passed away. Some days I feel unhappy when I see other children have pocket-money. It is difficult to cope without her because she used to talk to me about life and buy me expensive clothes.”

Naledi stated the following:

“I felt sad when my mother died because I loved her very much. I’m trying to cope with the workload at home, although it is not easy, but the support I get from friends and teachers helps a lot. I sometimes miss my mother when things are not good at home.”

In addition, the respondent stated that caring for herself and her siblings sometimes become difficult because she occasionally has to comfort them (her siblings) when there is no food in the house. This made her feel very uncomfortable because she sometimes did not know what to say to them.

Atang echoed similar sentiments and stated:

“I felt sad when my father died and it was very painful. It was painful because parents always make a plan to get you what you need.

The respondent further stated:

“It was also painful when my mother left to go and stay in Maluti and I had to go and stay with my aunt. It was not nice there.”

The above quotations are clear indications that these orphaned learners sometimes feel lonely and are yearning for the presence of their parent(s) in their lives. The excerpts further imply that the respondents in the study could still be mourning the death of their parent(s). In addition, the reports tally with what previous investigations had discovered. Brodzinsky, Gormly and Ambron (1986) cited in Sengendo and Nambi(1997) argues that like adults, children are grieved by the loss of their parents. This means that orphans cannot comprehend the finality of death depending on the age; insufficient grasp of language to access knowledge about death, or to verbalize feelings and thoughts (Giese et al., 2003).

It is important to note that seventy five percent (75%) of these orphans did not absent themselves from school because of truancy, but to assist their parent(s) at home when the need arose. Furthermore, Nelisiwe, Kwezi and Naledi indicated that although it was heart sore to see their parent(s) in their helpless condition, it was comforting to attend to them.

Considering the above reports, it is imperative to indicate that seventy five percent (75%) of the respondents had to take over as the “parent” of the household and, according to them; they learnt what important role the mother played in the house. However, twenty five percent (25%) of the respondents did not take care of his ailing father, because his mother was responsible for that. The following section focuses on the respondents’ experiences with schooling.

The following is a discussion on the contributions made by their late parent(s), and later the guardians, towards the education of the respondents.

Even though the respondents grew up under poor conditions, their parent(s) seemed to have shown an interest in their education. All the respondents (100%) indicated that their parent(s) contributed towards their education. This made them feel very proud and happy because they realized that their parent(s) were interested in their education and that they were always eager to give them emotional support when the need arose. The following exemplify the experiences and views of the respondents with regard to their parents’ contribution towards their education, in different ways. These included attending school meetings, purchasing school books, school stationery and school uniform.

Nelisiwe stated the following:

“My mother used to attend school meetings while she was still well, and that made me feel very proud. I was happy because it showed that she supports me. If I have a problem in school, my teachers will tell my mother about it. She tells me what my teachers said about my work or my behavior. I sometimes had to wait until June before I got a new uniform but I knew she will buy it.”

Kwezi reported that:

“My mother used to attend school meetings and that made me very proud. She always encouraged me to do my best in school and not to be naughty. She used to tell me that the teachers said I talk too much in class. She always told me to respect my teachers, to do my work, not to make noise in class and to go to school.”

Naledi reported the following:

“My mother attended school meetings and it made me feel good because I had somebody standing for my progress. She cared about my education because she used to help me with my homework. My mother told me to always work hard in class and to respect the teachers.”

Atang echoed similar comments and stated the following:

“My mother attended school meetings and it made me feel very happy because she was interested in my education. She always told me to attend school and to listen to the teachers. She also helped me with my homework. My father was tired after work and did not help me with my schoolwork.”

This section is dealing with the academic experiences of the respondents. It is worth noting that, although the respondents grew up under very challenging conditions, seventy five percent (75%) of the respondents (Nelisiwe, Naledi and Atang) did not experience any difficulties in their academic performances. This may be due to the fact that their parent(s) were interested in their education. Twenty five percent (25%) of the respondents (Kwezi) repeated a grade while his parents were still alive, this despite the fact that his parents were supporting him in his schoolwork.

Nelisiwe stated the following:

“I never failed while my mother was still alive because my mother always encouraged me to work hard in school.”

The respondent further reported that she repeated grade eleven after the death of her mother. The respondent stated that she repeated grade eleven because of her not being serious about her schoolwork.

Naledi reported the following:

"I never repeated a grade while my mother was still alive."

The respondent also stated that after her mother's death, she did not repeat any grade.

Atang related the following about his academic performances:

"I never failed a grade while my father was still alive."

The respondent further stated that he repeated grade seven after the death of his father.

Kwezi stated the following:

"I repeated grade one in 2002."

The respondent reported that he repeated grade eight during the same year when his mother passed on, but never repeated a grade after that. However, he reported that he was condoned to grade nine. He further stated that his mother told him that she was informed by his teacher about him not wanting to do his work in class; and that was possibly the reason why he repeated grade one. His mother was by that time still alive.

The above quotations indicate that the respondents' parent(s), mothers in particular, were considered to be very interested in their education. It is important to note that the mothers always attended school meetings; this was accordingly reported by the respondents during the interviews. This could be because the fathers of Nelisiwe, Kwezi and Naledi were not known to them, while Atang who stayed with both parents, but understood that his father could not attend meetings due to his illness. The contribution by the parent(s) resulted in these respondents taking greater responsibility for their own learning.

Literature states that the involvement of parents in the education of the child has a positive effect on the child's achievements (Holloway et al.,2005). In addition, consistent parental involvement throughout a student's educational experiences, helps to improve grades and students are less likely to drop out(ibid). Parental involvement in this study reportedly contributed to the education of the respondents.

The discussions which follow, will focus on the contribution of the guardians towards the education of the respondents.

During the interviews it became apparent that the extended family members (guardians) were trying their level best to assist these respondents in their education. The following statements exemplify the responses by the participants:

Nelisiwe stated:

"My grandparents never cared about my education and that I went to stay with my eldest brother, because he was very interested in my education and would always attend school meetings; ensure that I get my school material on time and always encourages me to do my best in all my subjects."

Furthermore, she stated that he (her guardian) would make himself available to come to school at any time when his presence or input is needed concerning her education. In addition, the respondent also stated that her brother would ensure that she was part of any educational excursion organized by the school.

Kwezi narrated the following:

“My aunty is attending school meetings and she always tells me what happened at such meetings. She always encourages me to attend school and study hard for any test or examination.”

The respondent further stated that his cousin, a university graduate, assisted him with his homework. In addition, the respondent reportedly stated that his best friend, Lereko, also assisted him with his homework.

Naledi reported as follows:

“Ms Z, a friend of my mother is attending school meetings and sometimes assists me with my homework when she is around.”

She additionally stated that her best friend, “K”, also assisted her with her homework and that they talked about things that bother them. “K”, according to Naledi, is also an orphan.

Atang stated the following:

“My brother is attending school meetings now that my mother went to stay in a place with somebody else in another town, far from where we are staying.”

The respondent further stated that his brother always encourages him to attend school and to study hard to enable him to achieve his goal in life.

Furthermore, the respondent stated:

“I have two best friends, Thabiso and Luyanda with whom I go to the library to do research work or to study.”

The above statements clearly indicate that the guardians, as well as the friends of the respondents, are supportive and willing to assist these respondents with their education. The respondents' experiences in the school environment are discussed in the following section.

4.4.1.2 School Environment

This section reports on how the death of the parent(s) affected the schooling experiences of the orphaned children (OC). These experiences include the interactions they had with the teachers; other learners as well as the support staff. It also highlights the affect which the death of these orphaned children's parent(s) had on their academic performances.

This section describes interactions between the educators and the orphaned learners at school and how these were experienced and valued. These relationships, according to the respondents, were formed either during class group discussions or extra mural activities. The relationships, as reported by the respondents, are characterized by trust. This implies that the respondents could approach their educators, during breaks or after school, to explain something which they did not understand in the class. However, these

relationships also have underlying complexities. These complexities can include *trust*, *disappointment*, *betrayal* and *fear*.

(a) Trust

According to the researcher, *trust* is the belief that somebody is honest and will not hurt you in any way. Kwezi stated that he trusted his teachers and reported the following:

“My relationship with the teachers is good. I feel free to go to any teacher or the principal to talk about a problem. I can go to the principal any time to discuss a problem, because when I hide things that worry me, it makes me unhappy.”

Naledi also alluded to the fact that she trusted her teachers and stated the following:

“They help us a lot and make us feel safe and loved.” “I feel free to go and talk to the principal.”

Atang stated the following about his trust in his teachers:

“They tell us to come to them if we experience any problems with our work.”

Social rupture occurred because there was a breakdown of trust between the respondents and the educators. Kalemba (2000) argues that social rupture occurs when an unfortunate situation destroys the family inner

circle, and the effects spread outwards until they effect the society at large.

(b) Disappointment

Disappointment, according to the researcher, is a feeling of sadness because what a person wanted did not happen. Kwezi reported that teachers sometimes make him unhappy and stated the following:

“I don’t like it when teachers do not want to talk to me because of their problems at home, and now they want to take it out on us as learners. They sometimes tell me not to worry them because they have no time to listen to my problems.”

Naledi also referred to some unpleasant experiences she had with certain teachers. She responded as follows:

“I don’t like it when teachers are not teaching. All the children in class have to play outside, while children at other schools are in the class I feel bad about it. I don’t think it is good to any of us.”

In addition, Naledi further alluded to another unpleasant experience as follows:

“One Friday I did not go to study classes. On Monday afternoon when I came to study after school, teacher Z queried me being at school because I did not study with other learners the previous time. I tried to explain why I was

not in the study class, but teacher Z was not interested in my explanation. I felt very bad.”

Atang could not recall any incident where the teachers treated him unfairly, stated that teachers were treating all learners the same.

Nelisiwe was disappointed when the principal treated her unfairly. Two boys sexually harassed her and she reported the following:

“The principal only called the parents of the two boys, but did not call my guardian.”

The respondents were clearly disappointed by their educators' behavior in not showing support and understanding their situation. According to Lawton and Higginson (2002), teachers need to be capacitated to understand how to deal with psychological problems facing orphaned children, both proactively and reactively.

(c) Betrayal

According to the researcher, *betrayal* is when someone shares your personal information with somebody else. One of the participants, Nelisiwe, stated that she felt betrayed when her confidence in a particular teacher was shattered when the said educator went to discuss the content of their conversation with other staff members and learners. She described the situation as follows:

“Last month my class teacher asked me about a personal issue and she later went to shout about it in the staff room. I don't like what teacher P did to me. She went to my other

class mates and asked about my life. I confronted her and told her that I did not like what she was doing. After telling my guardian, he wanted to confront teacher P, but I told him not to do that because I may fail the teacher's subject."

The respondents' social foundation was ruptured because their personal information was shared with others. Furthermore, the respondent felt discriminated and stigmatized against through the actions of teacher P. Parker and Agletton (2003) argues that learners who are stigmatized or discriminated against so often accept and internalize that stigma they are subjected to.

(d) Fear

Fear, according to the researcher, is when someone is afraid of another person or thing. Fifty percent (50%) of the respondents narrated that they feared the principal, while the other fifty percent (50%) did not. This implies that some of the respondents were afraid of the principal while the others were not. Those who feared the principal expressed their experiences in the following excerpts.

Nelisiwe stated the following:

"I was scared to report to the principal how one lady teacher discriminated against me because I feared that I may fail her subject."

Kwezi reported as follows:

“.....but I am scared of him, because he is a very strict teacher and does not want anything that is wrong at the school.”

These respondents may live in fear of their educators. Neff (2002) cited in Oosthuizen et al. (2005) argues that teachers sometimes create a hostile environment at school.

Other complexities, apart from those mentioned above, may include sexual harassment and the abuse of trust on the part of the educators. Neff (2002) cited in Oosthuizen et al. (2005) argues that sexual harassment can occur when a teacher create a hostile environment at school. This type of harassment generally does not refer to one isolated event, but to repeated acts of harassment. These acts may include continuous grabbing or groping, teasing, name-calling or unwelcome touching, which has the effect that the victim finds the school a hostile place (ibid). This implies that educators are sexually harassing learners, an act which is contrarily to the South African Schools Act (SASA). The trust of these learners in their teachers can also be violated. This occur when a girl engage in sexual relations with her teacher because of his promise to give her good grades, or because of his threats to fail her if she does not sleep with him (Neff ,2002) cited in Oosthuizen et al., 2005). This means that some educators are promising girls good marks in their learning areas in exchange for sexual relations.

The majority of the respondents (75%), confided regularly in their educators. This indicates that the respondents saw their educators as motivators and councilors at the school. These teacher roles are highlighted by the respondents in the following excerpts.

Kwezi stated:

"I can go to them anytime when I have a problem. They will give me advice." "They treat me like anybody else and I feel that I belong here."

Naledi reported the following:

"They motivate us and tell us not to worry too much and that everything will be fine." "Some teachers tell us about the challenges in life." "The support they give us, make us strong."

Atang stated the following:

"They motivate us to be serious in our education. They also tell us to come to them if we experience any problems with our work."

Twenty five percent (25%) of the respondents however felt that some teachers did not provide her with any support. Rather, according to the respondent (Nelisiwe), they discriminated against her. She reported the following:

“They discussed my personal problems with other learners.”

They say I play with boys, and I don’t play with boys. This made me very angry.”

The above quotations indicate that the respondent did not have a particular conducive relationship with some of the educators. However, she revealed that her experiences with other educators, especially the deputy principal, were sound. She further stated that she had a pleasant surprise when the deputy principal bought her a school uniform. This was because she was the only girl in the grade who was not wearing a proper uniform. In addition, she also stated that the same deputy principal bought a school uniform for another learner in a different grade.

It is clear from the above reports that not all educators have the ability to identify the needs of learners, especially orphaned learners. Sengendo and Nambi (1997) argue that school educators lack the knowledge of identifying psychological and social problems and fail to respond to them. Furthermore, teachers fail to offer individual and group attention that can meet these children’s needs.

Giese et al. (2003) further postulate that educators lack formal mechanisms for identifying vulnerable children. Miller and Bruwer (2003) argue that recognizing the psychological needs of orphaned children, remains a predicament for educators. According to Lawton and Higginson (2002), teachers need to be capacitated to understand how to deal with psychological problems facing orphaned children, both proactively and reactively.

Hundred percent (100%) of the respondents were of the opinion that the atmosphere at the school was conducive for learning and teaching to take place. However, there was an apparent tension evident in the experiences with the respondents and the educators within the study, in that while fifty percent (50%) of them expressed a sense of non-commitment of educators towards teaching and learning, unprofessional behavior concerning professional matters and the low level of integrity with the students. The other fifty percent (50%) highlighted the fact that there were teachers who were equally and intensively committed and who would always motivate and listen to them.

Seventy five percent (75%) of the respondents reported that they had a very good relationship with the educators. These educators always encouraged them to work hard and that they (the respondents) could come to them whenever they needed assistance in their schoolwork. However, twenty five percent (25%) of the respondents did have some unpleasant experiences with some of the educators who discriminated against her and did not provide her with assistance when she was in need of them.

There is clear evidence that some of the educators did not know how to identify and interact with orphans at the institution. It is also true that orphans did not know how to identify themselves with certain educators at the school which can result in these respondents marginalizing themselves from these educators.

Hundred percent (100%) of the respondents reported that the principal always treat them (orphans) like all the other learners (non-orphans). In addition, some respondents reported that they could approach the principal at any time when they experience any

challenges as orphans at the school. However, one respondent Kwezi, reported that he was scared of the principal because he is a strict teacher and that he always wants things to be done in the correct way. In addition, Nelisiwe reported that she was a bit hesitant to approach the principal when she experiences a problem because of how he handled the situation where two boys abused her at school. Furthermore, Naledi reported that she once felt unhappy because the principal did not investigate why some teachers were not teaching them at times.

The principal of the school revealed that he had a passion for orphans and that he would do anything to ensure that they feel that they belong to the school and that they are included in the curricula of the institution.

It is evident that, according to the respondents, there is generally a good relationship between them and the educators. However, according to some of the respondents, they will not easily forget the unpleasant experiences they had with the educators; although they are not bearing any grudges against them. During the interviews, the researcher realized that the respondents did not internalize their feelings about their experiences as orphans, but that they needed somebody to talk to.

The above findings are in line with literature which indicates that educators are also the perpetrators of misbehavior to learners through their unfair treatment and use of corporal punishment (Miller and Bruwer, 2003). Giese et al. (2003) also argue that educators lack formal mechanisms for identifying vulnerable children. Consequently,

teachers fail to offer individual and group attention that can meet these children's needs(Sengendo and Nambi, 1997).

The following discussions are about the respondents' experiences with other learners at school.

This section describes experiences of interaction between the respondents and other learners (orphans and non-orphans) at school. The respondents stated that it was important to socialize with other learners, especially their class mates because they helped each other when one did not understand the work in class. They further reported that their relationship was important because they sometimes talk about things that worry them at home or at school.

The opinions regarding the experiences between the respondents and their peers also emerged during the interviews. In addition, the respondents reported that they got along well with their peers and described relationship as positive and supportive. They would, as friends, listen, encourage and support one another whenever needed. Additionally, they reportedly stated that they were aware of other orphans at school and that they always socialize with them for example, playing games and socializing with them. The following statements describe the experiences of the respondents with their peers.

Nelisiwe stated:

“The relationship with all the learners is the same. We communicate and play with each other. Other orphans are also supportive, because we talk to one another about things that worry us.”

The respondent also reported that she had a friend, Andiswe, whom she spoke to about everything that happen to her at school. She further stated that she feels she belongs in the classroom with the other learners.

Kwezi stated the following about his relationship with other learners:

“I like to make jokes with them and I like to laugh. They respect me and when I had been absent, they would want to know where I was the previous day.”

The respondent further reported:

“They feel happy when they see me. Yes I have a good relationship with orphans and other learners. I feel that I belong with them.”

He further stated that the learners (orphans and non-orphans) respect him and that he respected them.

Naledi reported that her experiences with other learners are beneficial. She further stated:

“My relationship with other orphans is good because we assist each other. If someone does not have something and the others have it, then we borrow each other.”

She also stated that she felt happy and that she belonged at the school. She further reported that they do things together. For example, they do their homework together and that they even played together when teachers were not teaching. Lastly, she stated that the other learners would always help her if she is in need of any type of assistance. For example, when she is in need of a pen or when she told them that she was in need of food because she was hungry.

Atang stated that his experiences with other learners are supportive. He further reported that:

“My relationship with other learners and orphans is good; I feel that I belong with them.”

In addition, Atang reported that the non-orphaned children had accepted him as an orphan. He further stated:

“My best friend is William and he always helps me with my homework. We visit the library together to do research work or other homework.”

The aforementioned experiences between the respondents and their peers at school imply that there was mutual understanding and respect between them. In addition, their relationship was built on trust and friendship, which enhances a sense of belonging in these orphans in my study. Furthermore, these respondents were not being marginalized by their peers; hence this relationship enhanced group work among them. The views of the respondents further suggest that orphaned learners do socialize with

other learners through play and tell each other their problems. The orphaned learners stated that it was important to have relationships with their peers because they could help each other with homework or talk about things that worry them.

According to the views and experiences of the respondents, one can deduce that orphans and non-orphans interact socially at school. Literature states that learners are exposed to bullying, sexual and physical abuse, stigmatization and discrimination (Human Rights Watch, 2001; Parker and Agletton, 2003 Oosthuizen et al., 2005, and Sullivan et al., 2005). In addition, learners are exposed to substance abuse, school violence, ill health and malnutrition as well as sexual relationships with educators (ibid). All the respondents (100%) were not involved in substance abuse, school violence and in sexual relationships with educators. Furthermore, all the respondents (100%) seemed to be healthy and well fed. It was reported that seventy five percent (75%) of the respondents were not exposed to bullying; stigmatization and discrimination; harassment; as well as to sexual and physical abuse. Only one respondent (25%) was exposed to some of the experiences mentioned above, and she narrated the following:

“I was sexually harassed by two boys. I was embarrassed and not happy and reported the matter to the principal. He (the principal) called the parents of the two boys, but not my brother and that made me feel very bad. I wanted to go to the police, but some teachers asked me not to do that. The principal asked me to forgive the boys, which I did.”

In addition, the respondent stated:

“One day a boy hit me on the buttocks and I reported the matter to teacher X. Teacher X sent me to teacher Y and that made me feel bad because it seemed as if they did not want to help me. No follow-up was made by the teachers on the matter and I was not happy at all.”

The respondent also stated:

“One boy also called me bad names, but later apologized. I was never harassed at school.”

The last part of the above statement was contradictory; maybe because the respondent was in denial of her experiences with the boys. Another reason may be that she wanted to forget about it because apparently nothing was done about it by the teachers whom she reported the matter to.

Nelisiwe's stated that her experiences with the boys had a negative impact on her schooling. This implies that she became withdrawn and felt marginalized by the teachers who did not want to take action against the boys who sexually harassed her. The experiences of the respondent (Nelisiwe) are similar to what was stated in literature that girls are victims of sexual abuse at school:they are sexually assaulted and sexually harassed by fellow learners and teachers (Human Rights Watch, 2001).

Kwezi reported that he was never bullied; harassed or discriminated against at school. He further reportedly said that the other learners respect him and that he respects them. In addition, he stated that they make him feel at home.

Naledi and Atang echoed similar responses and stated that they were never harassed, bullied or called bad names at school by either the teachers or the other learners. They further reported that most of the learners at school respected them and that they respect them. In addition, the respondents stated that they feel safe on the school premises.

Divine (2003) argues that a school represents a place where children form significant relationships with teachers and peers and these relationships can bring both challenges and opportunities. Some of the challenges, according to the researcher, were the issues of lack of parental involvement, substance abuse, bullying, stigmatization and discrimination, and sexual and physical abuse. Learners are subjected to situations that influence their schooling experiences such as parental involvement, sexual and physical abuse, as well as stigmatization and discrimination (Human Rights Watch, 2001; Parker and Agletton, 2003; Oosthuizen et al., 2005 and Sullivan et al., 2005).

Hundred percent (100%) of the respondents reported that they socialized with all *learners* and that their relationships at school was positive and supportive. In addition the respondents reported that they were aware of other orphans at school and that they interacted with them as well. This meant that orphans and non-orphans interacted socially with each other at school. However, one respondent, Nelisiwe reported that she

was exposed to some sexual and physical abuse by two boys and that she was not happy how the matter was handled by the principal and other educators. This had a negative effect on her schooling because it resulted in her becoming withdrawn and feeling marginalized.

It is furthermore important to note that all the respondents reported that they had friends whom they could confide in when they experience challenges at school. The respondents further reported that they either did homework together, or socialized with other learners either at school or in the community. In addition, these respondents proudly reported that they did not indulge in substance abuse because of the consequences attached to the use thereof. This is contrary to what previous research has shown that especially within the poverty-stricken areas, youth are extremely vulnerable to alcohol abuse as unemployment, crime and the lack of positive role models within the community has a very negative effect on the schooling experiences of learners (Terblanche and Venter, 1999; cited in Oosthuizen et al., 2005).

The responses by the participants indicate that they find themselves in an environment that is fairly free of derogatory remarks and exploitation. Furthermore, from the interviews with the orphans, they all stated that they were able to identify and socialize with other orphans with whom they share similar experiences. Experiences with support staff at the school are discussed in the following section.

The support staff referred to are the non-teaching staff as well as the teacher assistants. The support staff comprised of the security guard; teacher assistants; administration clerk; cleaners and the meal servers. During the interviews, it became apparent that the experiences of interaction between the respondents and the support staff at school were one of respect and understanding.

All the respondents (100%) in the study stated that their experiences with the support staff were always one of respect and understanding. They further reported that they felt free to approach the support staff because they associated them with their parents. The respondents reported that the relationship with the support staff was important because they felt more comfortable to communicate with them than with some of the educators.

The respondents (100%) stated that their interaction with the support staff starts with the *security guard* at the gate. They further reported that at this point the security guard checks whether their dress-code is appropriate, and that he deals with late-coming accordingly. The participants further reported that the security guard is always friendly, not only with them, but with all the learners.

The next support staff members, according to the respondents with whom they interact, are the *teacher assistants*, who are former grade twelve learners from the same school. The participants further stated that these teacher assistants would assist them in making photocopies for their projects. They also reported that the assistants would give them guidance and support with their school work.

The respondents reported that the other support staff member they interact with is the *administration clerk*, who according to them, is always friendly in her approach and that they feel free to answer any personal questions asked by her. In addition, the respondents reported that the administration clerk would always inform them that their personal information will be entered into the data base of the school.

The next support staff members, according to the respondents, with whom they interact, are the *cleaners* of the school. The participants (100%) stated that these support staff members are always friendly and that they (the respondents) sometimes help them to clean the classrooms.

The last support staff members the respondents deal with are the meal servers from the SNP (School Nutrition Programme), and the following quotations indicate their experiences with them. For example, Nelisiwe stated:

“When I am hungry, I go to the meal servers and ask for food. They always give me something to eat, they never refused to give me food.”

Kwezi reported:

“I am not shy and I would ask them for food. They will always smile when they give me food.”

Naledi narrated the following:

“The meal servers never refused to give me food. They always talk to me while I wait for them to dish up.”

Atang echoed similar experiences and stated:

“The meal servers are always friendly when they give me food.”

Hundred percent (100%) of the respondents reported that their relationships with all support staff at the school was one of respect and understanding. In addition, the respondents reported that they socialize freely with the support staff because they (the respondents) associated the support staff with their parent(s).

Needless to say, these respondents showed signs of respect for older people, something which might have been instilled by their parent(s), especially those who accepted and treated them like the rest of the learners at the school. This may link with Duku's (2006) dissertation that in an African context, children are expected to be respectful of the elders; for instance the way to talk to them; they are not supposed to talk back and are expected to greet the elders first.

The following section, focuses on the respondents' perceptions on the effect of their parent(s)' death on their academic performance.

4.4.3 Respondents' perceptions of the effects of the parent(s)' death on their academic performance

This section highlights what the respondents viewed to as the effect which the death of their parent(s) had on their academic performance. It is important to note that the experiences these respondents had after the death of their parent(s) would have an effect on their academic performances. A drop in academic performance was experienced by three of the respondents, while the fourth one, Naledi, experienced no drop in her performance (that is she did not repeat a grade) after the death of her parent. (A drop in academic performance entailed that the learners' levels of achievement were not maintained). These academic experiences are exemplified in the following quotations:

Nelisiwe stated the following:

"My grandparents were pensioners and they never used to care about my education. I felt sad when I had to repeat grade eleven in 2010 because it was the first time that I repeated a grade. I failed because of my carelessness and that I sometimes do not feel comfortable in class. I don't get enough support from the teachers."

The respondent also stated:

"I do not feel comfortable in class when teacher P is there, because she once asked my friends about my life and I confronted her."

The respondent further reported that she had to work extra hard so that she could not fail teacher P's subject.

Kwezi reported the following:

"I sometimes feel like dropping out of school when I think about my mother."

The respondent stated that he repeated grade eight in 2006, but was condoned to grade nine; it was the same year his mother passed away. Furthermore, the respondent responded as follows about his condoning to grade nine:

"I can say from my side I felt happy, but not so much to be condoned but I could understand the situation. I didn't learn the Xhosa language from grade R up to grade eight."

In addition, the respondent stated:

"Sometimes I don't feel I belong there. Some days are bad and then I just want to be outside the classroom."

Naledi's academic performances were to be affected negatively because she is the head of the house (caring for her siblings), but this seemingly did not happen. She stated the following:

"I had to be an example to my siblings and had to work extra hard at school to realize my dreams."

However, the respondent highlighted the following challenges:

“I sometimes do not get a chance to study at home, because I have to care for my siblings; that is I have to make food and wash them. I also have to clean the house and do the washing myself.”

Furthermore, Naledi stated:

“The workload at home is too much for me. Sometimes when the teacher is teaching, I’m busy thinking about where I will get food when I get home.”

In addition she boldly stated:

“I never felt like dropping out of school because I want to obtain grade twelve, and thereafter study to become a doctor.”

Atang reported the following:

“My performance dropped after the death of my father and I failed grade seven in the same year when he passed away because I was very playful.”

The respondent further stated:

“I did not understand myself and why I don’t have a father. I am now in grade eight and I’ve never been condoned to another grade.”

It was clear that the respondent was experiencing feelings of grief, helplessness and the need to be loved.

In addition the respondent stated that he never felt like dropping out of school after his father's death because he wants to be a responsible person and complete his schooling.

It is also important to note that the two male respondents repeated a grade at the end of the same year they became orphans. Kwezi reportedly repeated grade eight in 2006, while Atang repeated grade seven in 2004. This indicates that the death of their parent did have a negative effect on their performance at school.

Fifty percent (50%) of the respondents, that is Naledi and Atang, reported that they had a problem with English which is the language of instruction at the school. The problem which they face with English is that they have a poor background on the subject and that they only communicate in the language(English) in class. Naledi further stated that she is very poor in English, while Atang reportedly stated that the only time he communicates in English was in class. However, Atang also reported that he never felt like dropping out of school because he enjoyed school and wanted to be a responsible person one day. Nelisiwe and Kwezi on the other hand stated that although they are not fluent in English, they are able to cope with the language.

According to McDonald (2007), parents are their children's first teachers and that they(the parents) are lifelong teachers. Parental involvement is typically defined as the initiation of home-based behaviors such as monitoring homework as well as school-based activities such as attending school events and communication with educators (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005; cited in Holloway et al., 2005). Taking the above responses from the respondents into consideration, one can deduce that the lack of parental involvement has a negative effect on the child's scholastic performance. Furthermore, the absence of the parent(s) will negatively affect the holistic development of the child.

4.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter presented the data presentation and analysis. The data inter alia included the respondents' life stories; the respondents' understanding of an orphan, as well as the respondents' experiences before and after the loss of the parent(s). In addition, the study also focused on the respondents' perceptions of the effects of the parent(s)' death on their academic performances. The ensuing chapter deals with the summary, conclusions and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study was to gain insight into the schooling experiences of orphaned children so that the problems that they experienced could be identified and addressed in order to negate the influence of the absence of the parent in their schooling. Furthermore, this investigation was undertaken to inform and shape intervention strategies to address the plight of these orphaned children. The research question that guided this study were as follow:

Main research question:

- How are orphans at Mandidni Secondary School in the Maluti District of Education experiencing schooling?

When I wanted to understand their experiences I looked at their experiences with teachers and learners before and after their loss.

This chapter deals with the summary of the findings, lessons learnt as well as implications for practice. Suggestions and recommendations for further studies are mentioned.

5.2 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

The experiences reported by the respondents are as follows:

5.2.1 Home environment

- **Poverty**

The respondents' economic situation did not change because before their loss, their parent(s) received a low salary, and their guardians received either a social grant or earned a low salary. The change in economic status only applies to seventy five percent (75%) of the respondents, while one respondent (25%) had to take care of her siblings. Naledi who was heading a household, had to grow up before her time, thus her social foundation was ruptured while she was still at school. Sengendo and Nambi (1997) postulate that children who are forced to live on their own, may behave more responsibly and more maturely out of sheer need to survive.

- **Attachments**

There was a clear indication that the respondents were very fond of their parent(s) and that they sometimes yearned for their presence. Nielson et al.(2004) posit that the withdrawn behavior of orphans may be a response to a broken attachment resulting from the loss of the orphans' parents.

- **Contributions towards their education**

The respondents indicated that their parent(s) were interested in their education. This was shown by them (the parent[s]) in attending school meetings and assisting them with their homework. Their guardians also endeavor to assist them in their education. The South African School Act (SASA), (Act 84 of 1996) states that parents should take interest in their children's work, as well as to attend school meetings.

5.2.2 School Environment

- **Interactions with educators**

Seventy five percent (75%) of the respondents stated that they were disappointed in some of their educators and referred to: "...talk to other teachers about my personal information...", "...sometimes did not teach...." and "...they sometimes don't want to talk to us..." Twenty five percent (25%) stated that they had a good relationship with the educators. The respondents (100%) also stated that they did not receive preferential treatment from their educators.

It appears that, according to the findings, the educators were not trained to work with orphaned children in class, especially not how to render counseling to them. data According to the respondents, the principal does understand how to treat them, because he does not address them separately from the rest of the other learners. He therefore includes them in any discussions that concern the learners.

Another important finding was that the respondents were looking for someone more than a teacher, that is, an emotional friend; a confidant; someone more than just a social worker. As a result, they would feel disappointed when their expectations are not met.

- **Interactions with peers**

Hundred percent (100%) of the respondents reported that their peers make them feel that they belong at the institution. This implies that the respondents socialized with their peers and that they also assisted them with their schoolwork. It further implies that the orphaned children are included in activities within the classroom as well as outside the

classroom. Mullender (2002) argues that children learn from each other how to behave, especially when they wanted to be accepted in a group.

- **Interaction with support staff**

According to the respondents, their interactions with the support staff are based on respect and understanding. Furthermore, the respondents stated that they see the support staff as their parents. Consequently, these orphaned children feel free to communicate with them. According to Richter (2004), positive factors in the form of compensating care from other people, may lessen the impact on children of reduced care in the school environment.

5.3 CONCLUSIONS

This study had examined different schooling experiences of orphaned children namely the absence of parental involvement; poverty; health and nutrition; experiences with guardians and experiences with the school community. The respondents elaborated on the issue of the absence of the parents(s) who assisted them with their schoolwork, but such assistance is very seldom available from their guardians. These guardians seemingly are not educated or are too old to render any assistance with their schoolwork. The economic situation of these orphans did not change because their guardians are either receiving a social grant or are earning a very low salary. However, these respondents were very well cared for by their guardians. One of the respondents who is heading a household, also appeared well cared for because she was always neatly dressed in her full school uniform. Irrespective of their living conditions, the

support of these orphans was ruptured and they therefore looked for support from others.

Literature states that, some orphans may have limited or no access health and nutrition. Furthermore, orphaned children probably do not receive adequate medical treatment and this might develop illnesses that keep them out of school (Giese et al., 2003). However, the respondents appeared healthy and well fed. The school nutrition programme further assists in providing food for all the learners at the school, which is a stimulation for the respondents. In addition, the respondents did not absent themselves from school because of hunger, but only for circumstances beyond their control for example illness or severe weather conditions (heavy snow falls or rain storms).

Literature argues that sexual violence such as rape, assault and sexual harassment committed by teachers and learners result in girls living in fear of being infected to, at and from school; some girls even stay at home because of this fear (Hepburn, 2002). These scenarios are not prevailing among the two girls who were part of the study, although one reported that she was harassed by some boys previously.

It was also apparent that these respondents were “hungry” for their educators, parents and friends because they sometimes experienced feelings of belonging, helplessness, trust and love.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are recommendations made from the findings of the study:

- The Department of Higher Education should include in their training of educators the seven rolls which they will have to fulfill when they are part of the teaching profession.
- In-service training by the Department of Education to capacitate teachers on the Norms and Standards for Educators Policy (1996) and the intention of the policy.
- The Department of Social Welfare not to discontinue social grant when a learner has reached the age eighteen, but to provide assistance until learners have completed grade twelve.
- The Department of Education should:
 - (a) incorporate orphan awareness in Life Sciences to reduce the stigma experienced by some of the respondents.
 - (b) encourage continuous involvement of social workers to identify and find solutions to challenges faced by orphaned school children.
 - (c) reduce barriers to learning among orphaned children by creating an enabling environment.

In conclusion, it seems appropriate to recommend further research on:

- An orphan in an African context.
- The schooling experiences of orphaned learners at other schools should be investigated.
- The capacitating of educators in relation to identifying and responding to orphans and other vulnerable children.
- Orphaned guardians should be capacitated to monitor and assist orphans in their material as well as their emotional needs.

5.6 CONCLUSION

The discussions thus far have focused on the schooling experiences of orphaned children at a selected secondary school. In addition, the study also focused on how these respondents had to cope without the parental care they were used to. Conclusions are presented in this chapter in addition to the findings which emanated from data analysis and the literature study. In addition, recommendations are made which are related to this research study.

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7. APPENDICES

7.1 APPENDIX A - Letter to the Principal

15 O' Reilly Street
North End
MATATIELE
4730
3 September 2010

The Principal
Cedarville Public School
CEDARVILLE

Dear Sir

I am currently enrolled for my Master of Education Degree at the University of Fort Hare and I am doing research on the schooling experiences of orphaned children. Hence my research topic is: *Orphaned children as learners at a selected secondary school in the Maluti district of Education in the Eastern Cape.*

Permission is sought from the principal to identify those teachers who are dealing with orphaned children for sampling purposes during my research. Furthermore, permission is also sought to seek for information in some of the school's official documents such as the class registers, incident record book and staff meeting minute book. Documents on the school's data base containing information to my research topic, will also be looked at.

Participants will be purposefully sampled from grade eight to grade eleven, that is, one orphan per grade. Interviews will be conducted after school hours, at the school. All interviews will be audio-taped and then transcribed.

All information will be treated as *confidential*, and at no time will the names of the participants or teachers involved with them, be revealed. Participants will be assigned codes known only by me. Participation in this research is voluntary, and the participants can withdraw from the study at any time.

Should you need any clarity on my research at your school, please contact me at 076 7276 348. My supervisor is Doctor Prem Heeralal, and he can be contacted at 043 704 7225 during office hours.

Your cooperation is highly appreciated.

Yours faithfully

.....
D. M. Jackson

7.2 APPENDIX B: 1 – Letter to the parent/guardian

P. O. Box 38733
MATAIELE
4730

6 September 2010

Dear Parent/Guardian

RE: Participation in interview for research purposes

I am currently conducting a research project aimed at investigating the schooling experiences of orphaned learners. This research is conducted in fulfillment of a Master Degree in Education.

As a participant, the learners will be expected to be interviewed on their schooling experiences at school. You are free to ask me any questions about any of the information that is requested of the participants. Please note that you are not expected to reveal your real name.

Please sign the declaration on the next page and return it to me. This will be kept confidential and at no time will your identity be revealed to anyone.

My supervisors are Dr P. Heeralal and Dr N. Duku who can be contacted at 043 704 7225 at the University of Fort Hare, East London Campus. My contact details are: 076 727 6348 or 039 737 4552. You may either contact my supervisors or myself should you have any queries or questions you would like answered.

Yours truly

.....
Mr D. M. Jackson

7.3 APPENDIX B: 2 - Consent form for parent/guardian

P. O. Box 38733
MATATIELE
4730

6 September 2010

CONSENT FORM FOR PARENT/GUARDIAN

I(full name and surname) fully
agree that my child(full name and surname)
may participate in the research project of Mr D. M. Jackson in fulfillment of his Master
Degree in Education.

Signed aton the.....day of2010.

Signature of Parent/Guardian Date

Signature of Researcher Date

7.4 APPENDIX C - Letter to the District Director

15 O' Reilly Street
North End
Matatiele
4730

6 September 2010

The District Director
Attention: Mr Mtatyana
Maluti District Office
Maluti
4740

Dear Sir

APPLICATION FOR CONSENT: RESEARCH IN SECONDARY SCHOOL

I am currently enrolled for a Masters Degree at the University of Fort Hare (East London Campus). The title of my dissertation is "The schooling experiences of four orphaned children at a selected secondary school in the Maluti District of Education in the Eastern Cape."

The rationale of this study is to gain insight into the schooling experiences of orphaned children so that the problems that they experienced could be identified and addressed in order to negate the influence of the absence of the parent in their schooling. The instrument that I will be using is unstructured, individual phenomenological interviews. The interviews will take place after normal school hours, at the school, at a venue suitable for the purpose. Participants will be purposefully sampled from grade eight to grade eleven.

It would be highly appreciated if you could sanction/authorize my proposed research at the school listed in my topic. Needless to say, the identities of those interviewed will be treated as strictly confidential and will not be divulged under any circumstances. Please also be assured that the highest standard of professional and ethical behavior will be adhered to at all times.

I undertake to furnish you with any reports, findings and/or recommendations if I am requested to do so. I shall be deeply grateful for your support and endorsement and I look forward to hearing from you at the earliest convenience.

Thanking you for your cooperation.

Yours faithfully

.....
D. M. Jackson (Student Number: 200904954)
Cell: 076 727 6348

7.5 APPENDIX D – Interview Questions

1. How was your life before your parent(s) died?
2. How was your relationship with your parent(s)?
3. Were your parent(s) employed? If yes, where did they work and what salary did they earn?
4. Tell me about your experiences during the illness of your parent(s).
5. How did you feel after your parent(s) died?
6. Who are you staying with after your parent(s) death?
7. Tell me about your experiences with your educators and did it make you feel.
8. Tell me about your experiences with the other learners at school.
9. Tell me about your experiences with the support staff at school.
10. Who is contributing towards your education?