EDUCATIONAL DECISION MAKING AMONG GRADE 9 LEARNERS IN CAPE TOWN

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BGBCEC001

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COMPULSORY DECLARATION

This work has not been previously submitted as a whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

Signature: Signed by candidate Date: 19 February 2018

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Glossary

EDM: Educational Decision Making

EST: Ecological Systems Theory

FET: Further Education Training

GET: General Education Training

HET: Higher Education Training

NQF: National Qualification Framework

SES: Socio-economic Status

UCT: University of Cape Town

Abstract

The need for higher skill levels in South Africa's labour market warranted an investigation into why some learners from poor communities make the decision to leave high school at the end of Grade 9, whilst other learners continue to Grade 12 or tertiary education. This exploratory, longitudinal study investigated the Educational Decision Making (EDM) of 16 Grade 9, Coloured, male learners from poor neighbourhoods in Cape Town. This study identified the socio-economic factors that influenced participants' EDM to consider leaving the school system at the end of Grade 9, or continue their education. The study applied Miles and Huberman's (1994) approach to identify links between the socio-economic factors that influenced EDM, and to understand the learners' educational context. These interactions were investigated using Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Framework, comprising 5 traversing layers, namely, the micro-system, meso-system, exo-system, macro-system, and chrono-system (Watts, Cockcroft & Duncan, 2009). This qualitative study drew on semi-structured, one-on-one interviews with learners in their Grade 9 year in 2015, and makes use of follow-up telephonic interviews (2016) and enrolment records (2017) to verify the findings. All learners made the decision to continue to Grade 12 or tertiary education. Examples of negative influences on EDM included socio-economic challenges presented by South Africa's transition to democracy (Chrono-system), which impacted on other systems, including inadequate school facilities (exo-system), a family history of school dropout (meso-system), and financial instability (micro-system). Examples of positive influences on EDM included financial stability in the household (mesosystem), and the resilience and agency of learners (microsystem).

Keywords: Educational decision making, educational outcomes, high school dropout, skill development.

Introduction

As a 'Coloured' person growing up in Post-Apartheid Cape Town, I have experienced a variety of social contexts due to my parents' work in social upliftment. These experiences developed a desire within me to understand the influential factors that bring about social phenomena. I recalled that while completing my Grade 9 year at high school I observed that a few learners in my grade, specifically male, Coloured learners, were not interested in completing high school, and dropped out as soon as they were aged 16 and of legal age to commence employment. Among other reasons, these learners seemed motivated by the fact that one could earn an income.

My observation of these learners conflicted with my educational value system. I held the belief that the higher one's level of education, the higher one's earning potential. My educational value system was fostered by my father, who grew up in poverty yet attended university and thus encouraged all his daughters to attend university. In the rarest of circumstances during the apartheid era, my father received a full scholarship to study a Bachelor of Divinity degree at London University, and this lead to numerous positive, professional opportunities once my parents returned to South Africa. Being exposed to the success associated with tertiary education meant that it was a natural progression for me to complete high school and attend university, as it was too for my siblings.

Throughout my undergraduate and postgraduate studies, I observed that some students dropped out and did not complete their studies. This fostered my interest in the demand for scarce skills in South Africa and the fact that the majority of poor South African youth were not employable because they had not acquired scarce skills at high school and tertiary level (Hall, 2017). This skills shortage has an adverse impact on poor youth who are not able to find employment, earn an income, and support themselves or their families.

During my studies in Human Resource Development I learned that the issue of low skill levels was linked to the poor quality of primary and secondary education in South Africa. The factors influencing the quality of education include inadequate learning facilities and building structures, lack of learning resources and teaching staff, and the lack of teaching ability for challenging subjects such as mathematics. The poor quality of basic education in South Africa today is not only influenced by the inequity of the distribution of funds and support between 'White', 'Black', 'Coloured' and 'Indian' schools due to the previous apartheid education system, but also by the post-apartheid government's failure to remedy these inequalities (De Lannoy, 2008).

The issues of low quality education and high levels of school dropouts in South Africa constitute a 'poverty trap' for many young people (Spaull, 2015). These issues ignited my interest in which factors influence high school dropout after Grade 9, and in particular why *Coloured male* learners from a disadvantaged socio-economic background in Cape Town would voluntarily drop out of high school despite the benefits of completing their education. The historic and current South African dynamics that influence the quality of education and skills shortages will be discussed in this dissertation, with the main research question of the dissertation being:

What influences the educational decision-making (EDM) of Grade 9, male Coloured learners from poor socio-economic backgrounds in Cape Town to drop out of high school, while other male learners aspire to complete their high school and/or tertiary education?

This research question was addressed by answering three specific sub-questions that were informed by relevant literature (refer to Chapter 2). These sub-questions explored Grade 9 learners' educational intentions and EDM to continue their schooling to Grade 12 or tertiary level, and sought to identify both the negative and positive socio-economic factors that influenced their EDM in Grade 9.

This dissertation will begin with an overview of education in the South African context before introducing Urie Bronfenbrenner's psycho-social developmental theory (Watts, Cockcroft & Duncan, 2009). This developmental theory was selected to understand the broader factors and processes that may influence Grade 9 learners' EDM. Miles and Huberman's (1994) approach to identifying key nodes in the EDM process was helpful in understanding EDM which will be described in the methodology of this study.

This study will refer to local and international research to locate factors that influence educational outcomes and EDM. This dissertation will then discuss the qualitative research undertaken in the current study. Finally, with the application of Bronfenbrenner's development model, the findings of the current study will be discussed, followed by research limitations and recommendations for schools, policy makers, and researchers.

Chapter 1: Research Focus Area: Education in South Africa and High School Drop-out

The Impact of Apartheid on Education

Apartheid policies and expenditure prohibited the upward mobility and prospects of so called Blacks, Coloureds and Indians (De Lannoy, Leibbrandt, & Frame, 2015; Newman & De Lannoy, 2014).[1] The systematic exclusion of these demographic groups was implemented in areas such as education, employment, business opportunities, land and housing. Government expenditure on services was differentiated according to race, with the lowest levels of spending in education, housing, healthcare, and other essential services, allocated to the African majority.

De Lannoy, et al. (2015, p.23) explain that the legacy of apartheid created a financial, human, and social capital deficit in the parents of today's "Born Free" generation.[2] For example, the 1996 census data indicates that the majority of young White adults graduated from high school or enrolled in tertiary education, whereas only 18% of African youth and 24% of Coloured youth had the same level of education attainment. On average, White adults had an average of 12 years of education, whereas Coloured adults had an average of 8 years of education and African adults had an average of only six years of education (De Lannoy et al., 2015). Although the Bantu education system was accessible to African citizens, it had been designed to equip Africans with lower levels of skills compared to other race groups. The resulting educational deficit created further inequalities in employment prospects, which were reinforced by formal discriminative policies in the apartheid labour market (Newman & De Lannoy, 2014).

[1] The Apartheid government categorised South African citizens according to their race groups of White, Black, Coloured and Indian.

[2] The term 'Born Free' refers to those born as of 1994 which is the year that South Africa became a Democracy (De Lannoy, 2015).

Although South Africa has been a democratic society for the past 20 years, young people are still being born into a context of inequality (De Lannoy et al., 2015; Newman & De Lannoy, 2014). The new South African government has developed a range of policies and interventions aimed at mitigating the inequalities of apartheid and facilitating the upward mobility of previously disadvantaged groups (De Lannoy et al., 2015; Newman & De Lannoy, 2014; Spaull, 2015). [3] These include a single education system that legally has to accept all children without discrimination, and a no-fee policy for parents of poorer learners (Department of Basic Education [DBE], 2011).

However, many young people remain in vulnerable positions. For example, De Lannoy et al. (2015) reported high levels of poverty among African (65%) and Coloured (40%) youth in 2011. However, the upliftment of these groups does not just require economic capital, but also cultural, symbolic, and social Capital (Bourdieu, 1990). These capitals are included in our habitus, which is a mental architecture that one acquires in relation to external social institutions, and our habitus and external social structures therefore exist in a mutually influencing interplay. Our habitus influences but does not determine how one behaves.

Bourdieu (1990) holds that cultural capital refers to a symbolic culture, and is a culmination of ones' beliefs, attitudes and values, possessions, credentials, and outward expressions of the self (e.g., choice of clothing and expression of social interests). These characteristics of symbolic cultural capital are acquired by belonging to a particular social class, and are generally believed to form the foundation of a one's social life and position within the social order.

Drawing on De Lannoy et al. (2015), the current study illustrates how the transmission of capital and the intergenerational transmission of poverty may be applied to the educational context, where the issue of high school dropout can be explored.

[3] South Africa is currently governed by the African National Congress (ANC).

The Intergenerational Transmission of 'Capital' and Poverty in the Lives of Youth

The issue of capital is especially relevant to educational opportunities in lower-class contexts, and is transmitted inter-generationally in the following ways (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990; De Lannoy et al., 2015, p.25; Moor, 2001):

- Financial capital (e.g., assets, debt, or cash, etc.);
- Human capital (e.g., education level, or coping strategies);
- Cultural capital (e.g., the knowledge of systems such as education);
- Social capital (e.g., networks between individuals or groups);
- Symbolic capital (e.g., status in society).

The transfer of capital is influenced by factors both internal and external to the household, which is also where resources play a significant role (De Lannoy et al., 2015). An example of an internal household factor would be the socio-economic status of the household: A child born into a poorer family household may be more restricted to opportunities than a child born into a wealthier household, as wealthier households could have better access to resources, services, support, and knowledge (Spaull, 2015). This access will ultimately influence the child's EDM by, for example, the type of school they can attend, and their approach to schooling. Examples of external household factors include broader social determinants, such as a shortage of jobs, and discrimination based on gender, class, or race.

Income Poverty is transmitted inter-generationally, and is strongly associated with age, gender, and race, with Africans, females, and youth overrepresented among the poor. In 2011, 65% of children and 59% of young people fell below the upper-bound poverty line of R620 household income per month, compared to 43% of the adult population (De Lannoy et

al., 2015). There are various forms of capital and poverty that affect EDM and skill development in South Africa (De Lannoy et al. 2015; Spaull, 2015).

The following section looks more closely at the dynamics between skill development and high school dropout in South Africa.

South Africa's Educational Context

As a result of shifts in the post-apartheid economy, various sectors, including education and health, now require higher levels of learning outcomes (Mateus, Allen-Ile, & Iwu, 2014). At the same time, there are jobs that cannot be filled because of a lack of certain skills (Ribeiro, 2009; Spaull, 2015).

The Quarterly Labour Force (QLF) Survey of (April to June) 2018 indicated a 27.2% unemployment rate (Statistics South Africa, 2018). Similarly to a report by Spaull (2015), the QLF Survey (April-June 2018) showed rates of 'employment by occupation' to be higher in semi-skilled (56%) and unskilled (29%) positions in comparison to higher skilled positions (14%). [4]

With a shrinking number of jobs in primary and secondary industries, higher levels of skills are required in the post-apartheid economy. For example, there is a high demand for artisans in the manufacturing sector, nurses and doctors in the health sector, and teachers in the education sector. However, the required skills can only be acquired by completing high school and entering Post–School Education and Training (PSET; Mateus et al., 2014;

[4] Quarterly Labour Force Survey calculation details (proportions listed in thousands): Employment of occupation total for April to June 2018: 16288. Highly skilled positions included managers (1416) and professionals (878); Semi-skilled positions, included technicians (1448), clerks (1704), sales and services (2635), skilled agriculture (64), craft and related trade (2007), plant and machine operators (1364); and Unskilled positions, included elementary (3775) and domestic workers (996). Note from survey (p. 4): The total includes 'other' occupations. Due to rounding, numbers do not necessarily add up to totals.

Ribeiro, 2009; Sims, 2006). The current study indirectly investigates the issue of why South African youth are not entering PSET where they may acquire scarce and critical skills.

Further Educational Training (FET; Grades 10-12) and Higher Education Training (HET; tertiary education) begin after Grade 9, and provide scarce or critical skills training. The demand for skilled youth highlights the importance of the function and outcomes of these education levels (Bloch, 2009; Hall, 2015; Kraak, 2011; Spaull, 2015; Ribeiro, 2009). Despite the benefits of FET and HET, many youth are still leaving school before entering these phases as the South African education system does not make education after Grade 9 compulsory for learners (Education Statistics SA, 2012, 2014; Hall, 2017; South African Schools Act, 1996).

Thus, students who have completed Grade 9 face an important decision regarding whether they will pursue FET or HET before beginning their working careers (Bloch, 2009; Kraak, 2011; Spaull, 2015). The current study draws attention to the EDM processes that occur at the end of Grade 9.

A breakdown of South Africa's National Educational Framework (NQF) is depicted in Table 1 (Appendix A).[5] Research indicates that youth are not accessing adequate career guidance, for example, information about advancing in the NQF levels, options for Grade 10 subjects, or understanding the differences between qualifications offered at HET institutions such as universities or colleges (Branson, Hofmeyr, Papier, & Needham, 2015; Spaull 2015). By not receiving adequate career guidance, Grade 9 learners may have unrealistic expectations about employment realities or HET, yet they are faced with the responsibility of choosing whether to continue to Grade 10, and, having decided to continue, which subjects to pursue (Branson et al., 2015). Limited information about subject choices and career options can be obtained through the compulsory high school subject of Life Orientation (LO;

[5] Figure 1 indicates an overlap between the 10 NQF levels and South Africa's accredited education grading system, which covers the GET, FET, and HET phases.

Branson et al., 2015; Jacobs, 2011; National Curriculum Statement: Life Orientation, 2011; Western Cape Government, 2017).

According to research, LO is intended to assist learners to cope with social issues such as peer pressure, Aids, drug abuse, and career guidance and options (Jacobs, 2011; Theron & Dalzell, 2006; Theron & Dalzell, 2008). Focus group research has found that learners from previously disadvantaged schools had positive perceptions about the value and application of LO, whereas privileged learners did not find LO to be useful (Jacobs, 2011). With limited research on the effectiveness of LO on EDM and educational outcomes, the current study highlights this issue for learners in Grade 9, and explores whether learners receive adequate career guidance.

Despite the socio-economic benefits associated with completing FET education, local literature reports a negative correlation between the number of learners in the education system and grade of study (Harrison, 2017; Hall, 2017; Spaull, 2015; DBE, 2011). Recent statistics show a decline in the proportion of ordinary school learners enrolled from Grade 1 (9.8%) to Grade 12 (4.8%), with a significant proportional decrease specifically between Grade 11 and 12 (6.7%; DBE, 2015). These statistics indicate that 60% of Grade 1 learners will leave school before reaching Grade 12, only 52% of Grade 12 learners will be at the appropriate school-going age at the time of completing grade 12 (DBE, 2015).

Thus, the issue of early school leaving as a contributing factor for the proportional decline of learners in the school system is particularly prevalent at the transition into the FET phase, as learners have to choose whether to further their education. To develop appropriate interventions it is essential to understand why learners are leaving school. Research related to 'learner dropout rates' has primarily been conducted in developed countries (Harber & Mncube, 2011). Research in South Africa pointed out the impact of various socio-economic factors on EDM and school dropout, with the four most prominent reasons for high school

dropout being (1) a lack of finances[6], (2) seeking employment, (3) failing a grade, and (4) teenage pregnancy (Spaull, 2015; Branson, Hofmeyer, and Lam, 2014; Gustafsson, 2011). Other studies have also linked dropout to issues such as leisure boredom (Wegner, Flisher, Chikobvu, Lombard & King, 2008); HIV-Aids, or various socio-economic issues which may, through a range of pathways, influence learners' EDM (Bollinger & Stover, 1999).

The South African Department of Basic Education (2015) found that the proportion of males (46.7%) in the FET (Grade 10 to 12) phase was less than females (53.3%). Research shows that predominantly Coloured, male learners from poor neighbourhoods in the Western Cape leave high school early, and complete school at lower rates than females (Bray et. al., 2010). Although statistics are useful indicators for indicating dropout rates in the FET phase, such quantitative data is limited to unravelling the learners' specific socio-economic circumstances; quantitative methods cannot capture the subjective experiences, or complex motivations prior to making the decision to drop out. By using a qualitative approach, the current study aims to understand which specific socio-economic factors influence the EDM of Grade 9 Coloured male learners from poor neighbourhoods in the Western Cape.

[6] Refer to Appendix B showing how insufficient funds were still experienced by learners' families receiving social grants

Chapter 2: Review of Theory and Literature

The current study considers Bronfenbrenner's (Watts, Cockcroft & Duncan, 2009) human psycho-social development framework to be the most relevant and appropriate to the research context. The principles of Bronfenbrenner's theory provide an overarching understanding of the factors within a learner's milieu which may influence EDM. These factors include socio-economic circumstances, community factors, family structure, individual level factors (e.g., resilience), and educational support in the household (Bray et al., 2010; De Lannoy et al., 2015; Spaull, 2015).

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory

Psychologist Urie Bronfenbrenner developed the human psycho-social development model of Ecological Systems Theory (EST; Louw & Louw, 2007; Tudge, Mokrova, Hatfield, & Karnik, 2009; Watts, et al., 2009). Bronfenbrenner theorised that each individual in society is one part of a much larger social structure. The social structure comprises a nexus of layers that are made up of relations and interactions, which in turn forms one's 'milieu'. An individual's milieu in turn influences and shapes experiences and determines one's skills, knowledge, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours (Louw & Louw, 2007). EST holds that development is a function of interactions between social structures like families, peers, the media, the economy, politics, geographic location, gender, and ethnicity (Louw & Louw, 2007). As we are socialised our values and beliefs are formed as a result of these complex social structures (Louw & Louw, 2007; Tudge et al., 2009).

Bronfenbrenner divided human ecology into five layers which radiate outwardly around the individual (refer to Figure 1 below). These are, from smallest to largest: (1) the Micro-system, (2) the Meso-system, (3) the Exo-system, (4) the Macro-system, and (5) the Chrono-system (Tudge et al., 2009; Watts, et al., 2009; Louw & Louw, 2007).

EST considers the entire lifespan and examines how socio-environmental factors affect a child's development, as conflict or synthesis within one layer would impact on other layers (Watts, et al., 2009).

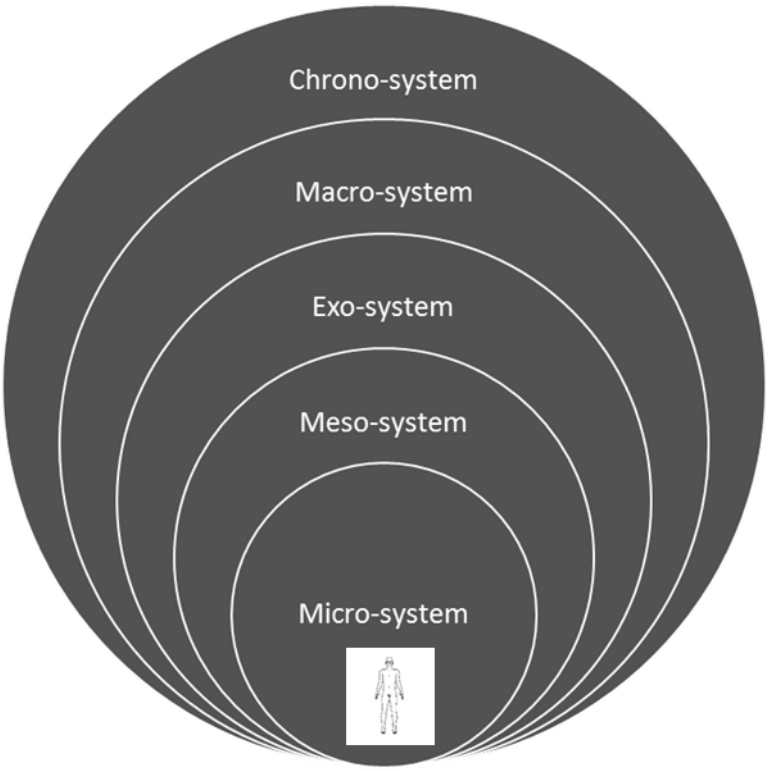


Figure 1. Five layers of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Framework.

Note: This diagram depicts Bronfenbrenner's five ecological systems which can influence the behaviour of individuals, namely the Micro-system, Meso-system, Exo-system, Macro-system, and the Chrono-system (Watts, et al., 2009).

The *Micro-system* has the strongest influence on the individual and relates to one's immediate environment, including relations with family, peers and religious groups and schools. The *Meso-system* consists of the interactions *between* the person's microsystems such as members of a family, school and church. The *Exo-system* consists of the environmental settings that a child is influenced by but does not interact with directly. Social factors such as religious affiliation, community resources, and parental employment status or type of work would have an impact on a child's development (Watts, et al., 2009).

The *Macro-system* includes institutions such as state and arms of state, the economy, and political systems. Conflicts such as wars or political unrest could affect an entire society and ultimately individuals within the group. The Macro-system can be considered as the overall structure that holds the person's culture and belief systems, which, in turn, include large social structures such as groups of common heritage or religious ideology. Furthermore, Bronfenbrenner asserts that the layers within the macro-system be examined as carriers of information and discourses, and that human development occurs as a result of interactions and relations among the layers (Watts et al., 2009).

Lastly, and particularly significant to the South African context, is the *Chrono-system*, which is characterised by significant events that occur during one's lifetime, including major life transitions such as adolescence or moving to another city (Watts et al., 2009). The Chrono-system also accounts for historical events, such as South Africa's apartheid regime, and the effect these have on socio-economic structures, both past and present. Such events have a direct impact on an individual's lifestyle and life experience. The legacy of apartheid, for example, may influence the intergenerational transmission of poverty among those who developed within lower social strata (De Lannoy et al., 2015).

Literature Relating to Bronfenbrenner's Model of Ecological Development

The current study investigated which of the five EST layers may impact EDM. By using the EST framework, the literature which follows explored the impact of various socio-economic factors on EDM and learning outcomes. The impact of apartheid's legacy on SES and education. Apartheid as a chronosystem is understood as a significant historical period with causal effects which endure post 1994. For example, it was found to have an effect on SES and educational outcomes. 'Disadvantaged' or poor communities in South Africa are thus considered a legacy of Apartheid (De Lannoy et al., 2015).

The status of being ‘poor’ relates not only to income, but to a range of dimensions of deficit that could also be captured in the concept of ‘disadvantaged’, such as poor-quality housing and a lack of access to quality education in the exo-system (De Lannoy et al., 2015). Research indicates that these circumstances are unlikely to be conducive for educational progression.

Disadvantaged SES and educational outcomes. Both local and international research found learners from lower SES backgrounds to have relatively lower levels of academic performance compared to learners from higher SES backgrounds (Fleisch, 2008; Spaull, 2015; Wang, Li, & Li, 2014). The lack of employment opportunities, located in the macro-system, may also affect a learner due to insufficient resources at the household level. In the chrono-system, the intergenerational transmission of poverty may be influenced by the legacy of apartheid as it affected the access to resources and education for generations of South Africans who were not racially profiled as White. Specifically, family income, race, geographic location and levels of parental education significantly affect reading ability and performance in subjects such as mathematics (Wang et al., 2014; Fleisch, 2008; Spaull, 2015). These different aspects related to poverty are linked to academic underachievement in South Africa (Gravin, 2013).

Applying Bronfenbrenner’s framework; the effect of a low SES on education can be linked to factors that are situated in all five system levels, and may thus influence a learner’s EDM. Low household income places learners in a precarious or deprived environment and related socio-economic issues may inhibit educational progress for the learner at a micro-level. A low income may add additional pressure on families which may mean less time and resources are directed towards a learner’s educational endeavours. A parent of a learner for example may not have completed high school and may work long hours at a low waged job which limits their ability to spend time assisting their children academically, or being able to

afford to live in a safe community. Consequently, low income may influence a learner's interactions with others from a similar socio-economic context, which may include family or friends in the meso-system.

Exposure to violence in community and school. In post-apartheid South Africa; many young people experience violence within the community and school context, located in the mesosystem. Research indicates that issues of local segregation, crime, violence and bullying at school are prevalent in many poor communities in Cape Town (Samara, 2011; Harber, 2001; Jensen, 1999).

Hanover Park is one of a few communities in Cape Town known for gang-related activities that have impacted learners' psychological health, personal safety and security (Reckson & Becker, 2005). At the micro- and meso-levels, learners may personally experience life threatening situations, and their communities may expose them to individuals who are involved in or similarly affected by violence. The experience of violence on the level of community and school affects, among others, the freedom of mobility and learning (McIntyre & Weiss, 2003).

A study from the United States found that deviant behaviour, such as drug-use and violence, combined with poverty and antisocial peer relations, increases dropout rates (Battin-Pearson et al., 2000). A Canadian study found lack of student engagement to be a strong predictor of early high school dropout, but over a short period of time (Archambault, Janosz, Fallu, & Pagani, 2009). Student engagement at school was understood to comprise of three dimensions, specifically behavioural (such as school attendance and discipline), affective (liking school and interest in school work), and cognitive (willingness to learn French and willingness to learn mathematics). The behavioural dimension was shown to be the strongest predictor of dropout in comparison to the effective and cognitive dimensions.

Thus, school non-attendance and undisciplined behaviour were strong influencers for dropout.

Similarly, local studies show that gangsterism, bullying, and corporal punishment are aspects of school-based violence, which can result in reluctance to attend school, poor academic engagement and performance and school dropout (Archambault et al., 2009; Gustafsson, 2011; Mncube & Madikizela-Madiya, 2014; Tugli, 2015). Furthermore, learners miss more school days as they feel unsafe both in their communities and in the classroom; (Gustafsson, 2011). Violence, particularly related to gang-life in poor communities and at schools, can impact on learning outcomes and EDM, and these interactions occur in the micro- and meso-systems.

Impact of bullying, corporal punishment and gang violence on EDM.

Effects of corporal punishment. Gustafson (2011) reports that 19% of high school learners in South Africa experience verbal or physical abuse at school via corporal punishment by teachers. Similarly, findings by Shields et al. (2009) show that adults who are in close contact with the child are more likely to be the perpetrators of the violence at school, than in the neighbourhood.

This draws attention to learners' interactions with schooling staff (meso-level), such as teachers, who may be perpetrators. Here, the use of corporal punishment as a disciplinary measure for learners becomes apparent, as this form of discipline remains to be practiced in township schools in South Africa even though it has been outlawed since 1996 (Morrell, 2006). Corporal punishment by teachers can threaten the wellbeing of learners, which may lead to learner absenteeism and drop out (Bray et al., 2010; Burton, 2008; Gustafsson, 2011; Tugli, 2015).

Effects of bullying. Bullying involves the bullied and the bully, and is prevalent in South African schools (Greeff & Grobler, 2008; Tugli, 2015).[7] Bullying impacts learner performance by leading to social withdrawal and absenteeism (Townsend, Flisher, Chikobvu, Lombard, & King, 2008). A study of 1470 learners found that bullying correlated with fear of school, absenteeism, and poor academic performance, which leads to higher dropout rates (Townsend et al., 2008).

Liang, Flisher, and Lombard (2007) suggest that male learners at school are more at risk of being both perpetrators and victims of violence than females. Furthermore, victimisation at school was found to be more strongly associated with distress than victimisation in the neighbourhood.

Furthermore, bullying at school can be linked to gang violence as peers who are involved in 'gang-life' outside of the school can apply the same associated behaviours within the school context which could impact learning (Bray et al., 2010).

Effects of gang violence. Local research on gangsterism in Cape Town, although rare, found that residents of the disadvantaged areas, including Hanover Park, use various coping mechanisms to manage the extreme violence they are exposed to daily (Jensen, 1999). People cope by "constantly renegotiating and reinterpreting violent events, and thereby containing violence in a symbolic order in which they feel safe" (Jensen, 1999, p. 92). Learners from neighbourhoods such as Hanover Park may have no choice but to continue to walk to and from school during times of gang violence, risking losing their lives each time they do so. Incidences where children are killed or injured as a result of gang violence are common in the Hanover Park community.[8] Young people who are exposed to gangs may be tempted to become members of the gangs themselves (Pinnock, 1997), which may increase drop-out

[7] According to Greeff and Grobler (2008), 'bullying' is described as a behaviour that requires two or more persons, and involves those who bully (the perpetrator) and those who are bullied (the victim).
[8] Refer to news article headlines reported by 'Eye Witness News' between 2012 and 2016 as per Table 3, Appendix C.

rates (Bray et. al., 2010; Pyrooz, 2014). A local study by Salo (2006) showed that gangs have complex, internal social and cultural relationships, and social relations within households and communities.

Salo (2006, p. 149) explains that gang members "are also sons, brothers, husbands, fathers, lovers, friends, and social mentors". Hence, learners are likely to socially interact with gang members who are already integrated into the community. Learners thus have to actively define themselves in this context, and may negotiate friendships with gang members despite intentions for social upward mobility through education (Bray et al., 2010; Swartz, Harding, & De Lannoy, 2012). These factors may impact on learners' EDM as gang-related violence may deter young people from attending school, as they may be lured to join a gang as a 'rite of passage'.

In a society that offers few other routes to a sense of adulthood in the meso-system (Pinnock, 1997); young people can resist and contest this identity of inaccurate and negative representations of their community. They may have the opposite reaction of working hard at school to prove it wrong (Bray et al., 2010).

Findings by De Lannoy (2008) indicate fluidity in EDM, where learners may decide to drop out of high school and engage in gang-related activities, but then later decide to remove themselves from gang-life and explore possibilities to progress in their education. Thus, in may be considered that violence through corporal punishment, bullying and gangsterism can negatively influence EDM at the micro- and meso-levels.

The effects of such elements associated to violence leads to questions around how learners remain resilient and thus in the education system, under these circumstances. The following section explores resilience in more detail.

Effects of exposure to various risk factors at the micro and meso-level on learner behaviour, learning, and EDM. Resilience may be described as the process whereby a learner overcomes the negative effects of risk exposure and is able to cope successfully with traumatic experiences and avoids negative consequences associated to those risks (Fergus & Zimmerman, 2005). Adversities presented to learners from impoverished backgrounds may make it difficult for them to remain resilient in the academic space (De Lannoy et al. 2015). Research suggests that young people can influence change in their lives by acting, strategizing, and making use of the opportunities available to them (Bray et al., 2010; Reay, David, & Ball, 2005). South African youth in poor communities use their hopes and dreams as a coping mechanism for survival (De Lannoy, 2008). Local and international research indicates various influences on the relationship between resilience and educational outcomes.

An American study explored the stability of resilience of learners who experienced abuse and neglect in their homes, and who had a pattern of higher-than-average academic functioning (Herrenkohl, Herrenkohl, & Egolf, 1994). They found resilience at school to be fluid and not stable over time and limited to an academic area.

The study also found a learner's positive response to supportive influences from extended family and community, and the desire to not be abusive, as essential to remaining resilient at school (Herrenkohl et al., 1994).

Local research has demonstrated the importance of learner behaviour and resilience to positive educational outcomes. A study of learners in the Mamelodi township found that supportive learning environments enabled learners who drew on available support to be more resilient, indicating that schools can enable learner resilience (Mampane & Bouwer, 2011). In another study, Johnson and Lazarus (2008) found Grade 9 learners from Historically Disadvantaged Schools (HDS) remained absent from school for reasons such as feeling unsafe, and being fearful of violence in their neighbourhood. However, some HDS learners

received adequate support through caring relationships, high expectations, and meaningful participation in the school, home, and community environments (Johnson & Lazarus, 2008). These studies show that the school is another source of constructive and supportive conditions that may be absent in the home context of the learner, and contribute to their resilience (Mampane & Bouwer, 2011).

Similarly, a study in Masiphumelele and Ocean View found that resilience was achieved by the "mutual interaction of intrapersonal factors (including behavioural choice and perceptions of self), and protective factors in the wider environments of family, neighbourhood, peer group and school" (Bray et al., 2010, p. 295).

Learners could, for example, use their agency to improve their grades by befriending peers who could assist them in their goal to complete high school (Bray et al., 2010; De Lannoy, 2008; Solomon, 2013). Family structure and educational support at the meso-level supports this objective.

Findings related to family structure and educational support on EDM. Research shows that family structure influences the level of care and support available to learners. Family structure and the dynamics of family life play a role on whether families live in poverty and can accomplish parenting tasks, and moreover, it plays a role in education (Ward et al. 2015; Cavanagh, et al., 2006). Research suggests that children from homes with two biological parents, otherwise known as nuclear families, exhibit fewer problems in school performance than families comprising of single-parents, step-parents, or non-biological parents, theoretically categorised as alternative family structures, which are common in African contexts. Youth from alternative families may experience sustained family instability, which can increase drop-out rates or affect tertiary level performance (Bengston, 2001; Cavanagh, Schiller, & Riegle-Crumb, 2006; Heard, 2007; Ward, Makusha, & Bray, 2015). Furthermore, parental involvement in education was found to be associated with lower

dropout rates and higher grade averages (Anderson & Minke, 2007; Gutman & Midgley, 2000; Lee & Bowen, 2006; Rumberger, 1995).

The present study explores the influence of family structure on EDM, but also the effect that poverty may have on this dynamic. Though the aforementioned findings link positive educational outcomes to nuclear families, the present study was open to finding instances where alternative family structures had a positive rather than negative influence on educational outcomes. Furthermore, the present study investigated the influence of social interactions on EDM in the household and school contexts.

According to Legault et al. (2006), parents play an essential role in the household to socialise their children to value education, and this value is demonstrated by learners in the school context, such as by showing self-determination, commitment to or interest in schoolwork. Furthermore, insufficient socialisation of school values by parents were found to be strongly associated with intentions to drop out (Legault et al., 2006). Interactions between parents and learners may therefore assist in fostering the value of learning and education. However, fewer children are experiencing intimate interactions with their fathers, and boys with absent fathers in gang prone areas are more likely to get involved in gangsterism (Bray et al., 2010; Pinnock, 1997). Female role models were however found to play an essential role in providing additional education and emotional support (De Lannoy, 2008). As a form of social support, role models, which may include parents, are essential for the socialisation of values that promote educational progression and success (Legault, Green-Demers, & Pelletier, 2006). The affiliation of three social figures, namely teachers, parents, and friends, are important in developing academic values, but the affiliation-value link is strongest with parents.

In conclusion to this sub-section, the present study thematically discussed some of the socio-economic factors, community factors of violence, and family structure dynamics which influenced EDM and learning outcomes of high school learners. The aforementioned findings assisted to inform the following research motivation and aims.

Research Motivation and Aims

Exploring the EDM of Grade 9, male Coloured learners from poor neighbourhoods may bring focus to the key factors that influence EDM and dropout among this demographic group. Thus, based on this demographic criteria, the current study aims to address the following specific research questions:

1. What are the 'intentions' of Grade 9, male, Coloured learners' with regards to furthering their education to HET levels?

For the purposes of this study, a learner's 'intention' relates to their future plans regarding their educational future after high school or FET levels.

2. What 'decisions' have Grade 9, male, Coloured learners taken to action their intentions towards their education at high school or FET levels?

For this purposes of this study, a learner's decision relates to how their current EDM in Grade 9 aligns with or contradicts their near future educational intentions and outcomes at high school level or FET levels.

3. What positive or negative factors influenced Grade 9, male, Coloured, learners' EDM to continue their education?

For the purposes of the present study, this refers to an exploration of the learners' educational outcomes after completing Grade 9, with the intention of gaining an understanding of the negative and positive influences which contributed to their EDM. The following section describes the current study's approach to data collection and analysis before moving on to the presentation of findings.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

Research Design

Prior to the commencement of an 'extensive' quantitative research study, the entire research process is determined and is typically rigid in structure in terms of use of quantitative methodology (Sayer, 1992, p.242). Though initial research planning may be determined prior to data collection, a qualitative research design allows the researcher to refine the focus of the study as it progresses, and assists in exploring, through research questions, the dynamics and causality of a phenomenon under study (Fielding & Lee, 1998; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Sayer, 1992, 2000). It also enables the researcher to explore links between causal factors and understand the interdependencies which may exist between individuals and events, and considers that a convergence of factors can contribute to a particular phenomenon (Louw & Louw, 2007; Sayer, 1992).

My research process was thus qualitative in nature, and was relatively flexible and exploratory, allowing for the sample and research design to be further developed during the research process. For instance, during the data collection phase, I made the decision to increase the number of participants to gather more interviews and improve the quality of the data. Utilising a qualitative approach also allowed me to apply Bronfenbrenner's theory to identify how factors of circumstance may influence outcomes in society (Sayer, 1992; Louw & Louw, 2007).

In Bronfenbrenner's application to the current study, it was evident that certain events or factors influenced the educational outcomes for the learners who were participants. These educational outcomes at high school might not result from a single factor, but rather from many, which may be shared and unique to the learners' contexts. The complexity of these factors is discussed in relation to Bronfenbrenner's framework in the results section, and the process of identifying these elements was assisted by the work of Miles and Huberman (1994).

Participants

I employed a non-probability purposive sampling technique to recruit Grade 9 Coloured male learners from poor neighbourhoods. [9] I decided to approach the high schools in Hanover Park to invite learners to participate. The final sample included a total of 16 learners who were recruited from two high schools in close proximity to each other, Mount View High School in Hanover Park and Groenvlei High school in Lansdowne.

Selecting learners from Grade 9 meant that all participants were enrolled for the last year of their compulsory education of the GET phase, and were preparing, or considering whether, to enter the optional FET phase (i.e., Grades 10 to 12). All learners were between 14 and 16 years old.

I confirmed that all learners met the study requirements during the school visits, specifically described in an information sheet, and the first interview. Ten of the learners resided in Hanover Park, three learners were from Philippi, one learner was from Grassy Park, and one learner from Manenberg.[10] These are similarly impoverished areas with similar socio-economic conditions, and all four suburbs warranted the investigation of EDM.[11]

[9] Refer to Table 5 , Appendix D for a summary of the sample demographics.
[10] Refer to Map 1, Appendix E to view the proximity of areas of residence between Hanover Park, Grassy Park, Manenberg, and Phillippi.
[11] Refer to Appendix F, G, H, I

Sample Recruitment

The first step in the data collection process was to seek access to institutions or community organisations that would allow me to invite Grade 9 learners who met the sample criteria to participate in my study. I approached a community soccer club, a church youth group, and a local non-profit organisation in Hannover Park. These initial attempts proved unsuccessful, as were my first attempts to reach out to schools.

I then approached two public high schools in the Hanover Park and Lansdowne vicinity, namely Mount View High School, and Groenvlei High School. The close proximity of Mount View and Groenvlei improved the likelihood of accessing learners from lower SES neighbourhoods, such as Hanover Park.[12] Inviting learners to participate through a high school also meant that it was easier to access Grade 9 learners. After agreeing to be assist with the study, the two schools made the necessary arrangements for me to proceed.

I visited Groenvlei High school and explained the purpose of the study to each of the Grade 9 classes (males and females included). I then asked the learners who identified themselves as 'Grade 9', 'male' and 'Coloured' learners to indicate their interest in participating in the study.

I provided each of these learners with an information sheet and consent form, which had to be read and completed by themselves and their parents in order to participate in the study.[13] Once the consent forms were completed, I asked the Groenvlei learners to submit the forms to the teachers at a pre-determined date. I followed a similar process of recruitment at the Mount View high school. However, the Vice Principal of Mount View was more actively involved in the recruitment process, and assisted in providing and collecting the information sheet and consent forms from Grade 9 learners who showed interest in participating in the

[12] Refer to Map 2, Appendix J to view the close proximity between the two participating high schools.
[13] Refer to Appendix K to view the present study's information sheet and Appendix L for the consent form.

study. The ethical dynamics and practicalities involving the Vice Principal in the sample recruitment process is discussed further under the section for Ethical Considerations.

The transparency of the research process was essential to create trust between myself as the researcher and the parents/guardians and learners (Cozby, 2009). The information sheet and consent form therefore explained the nature of the research, its purpose, and procedures, as well as important aspects about parent or guardian permission and confidentiality. Parent or guardian contact details were also requested so that I could contact the parent and the learner.

Overall, I received a total of twenty consent forms from both schools. These were shuffled, after which I randomly selected eight learners from each high school, thus amounting to a total of 16 participants. Random selection at this stage was used to prevent sample bias or any preference over learners. As an example, some consent forms were more informative or legible than others, and a random selection would ensure a fair selection of learners despite such differences.

Procedure

The first stage of the study involved one-on-one in-depth interviews. In a later stage, as a follow-up procedure, I used telephonic interviews and collected enrolment records from the two high schools. These interviews and records aided in the exploration of the learners' educational outcomes. At first, the current study was only going to make use of the first phase of one-on-one interviews during the March to May 2015 period. As the research process developed, it became clear that telephonic interviews would be beneficial (June 2016), as

would reviewing enrolment records to understand the educational outcomes of the learners (January 2017).[14]

Prior to the commencement of the data collection period in March 2015, a pilot interview was conducted with a non-sampled participant who was a Grade 9, male, Coloured learner from Cape Town. The pilot interview was used to improve the quality and focus of the final interview schedule. The changes made to the final interview schedule involved the removal of questions which were repetitive or similar, and questions which were not clear or confusing were revised and articulated in a simpler or more understandable way.

One-on-one interviews. The one-on-one interview schedule was divided into three sections. The first section included the reiteration of the study information (such as the purpose of the study and ethical stance), the second section asked closed-ended questions about demographic information, and the third section asked open-ended questions in relation to the research questions.

The third section was divided into six specific categories of interview questions relating to personal and family dynamics, education, schooling, teaching, student experience, and a check-list of questions.[15] The final interview schedule consisted of a total of 65 semi-structured questions (Appendix M). All interviews were recorded via laptop recording software, and transcribed verbatim in preparation for the data analysis. The interviews were approximately 1 to 1.5 hours in duration.

Telephonic interviews. As time allowed, I obtained an additional round of data collection to follow up on the EDM and outcomes of learners in June 2016. This experience corresponds to the flexibility of qualitative research (Cozby, 2009; Sayer, 1994). Due to school holidays and contact numbers changing, fewer interviews of shorter durations were

[14] Family members and school administration staff assisted in the follow-up data collection phase if learners could not be contacted.

[15] The check-list of questions provided the opportunity to address questions which may not have been adequately addressed during the interview.

conducted during the second phase; eight of 16 participants were telephonically interviewed in June 2016. Learners answered twelve questions, which took approximately 20-minutes to complete (refer to Appendix N for the telephonic interview questions). The questions asked in the telephonic interviews explored the learners' educational outcomes and perceptions about their progress since the initial Grade 9 interview. They also aimed at reassessing the congruency between educational intentions, EDM and outcomes. The information obtained from the telephonic interviews in 2016 and the enrolment records obtained in 2017 were used to verify the data obtained from the initial Grade 9 interviews in 2015. The telephonic interviews further provided an in-depth understanding of the complex dynamics and influences on EDM.

School enrolment records. In January 2017, I followed up on the participants' educational trajectories by accessing learner enrolment records from the two high schools (refer to the section on ethical considerations for more information about this process). At Mount View High School, I was provided with a list of learners and their grades in 2017, while Groenvlei High School provided me with class lists of learners in Grades 9 to 11. I was aware that some learners may not have progressed from Grade 9 in 2015 to Grade 11 in 2017. In one case, I called the guardian of a learner to understand why he had not enrolled for the year 2017 (refer to results section, theme 5). This process is important, as it allowed me to gain deeper insight into the educational outcomes of the learners, and the factors that influenced these. It allowed me to assess if the learners EDM aligned to their earlier intentions determined two years prior in Grade 9, how they enacted on these intentions, and if their intentions were congruent to their EDM and outcomes. This understanding assisted to identify the negative and positive influences which influence EDM (as per research question 3 of the present study).

Throughout the process, I remained conscious of the sensitive nature of the information I was collecting and made sure to comply with the ethical principles of qualitative research (Cozby, 2009).

Ethical Considerations

The present study was approved by The University of Cape Town's (UCT) Research Ethics Committee in the Faculty of Humanities. UCT's Ethical guidelines and South African law require parental or guardian consent for children who are younger than 18 years old to participate in research. As all learners were minors, permission for their participation was requested from the parents or guardians of the learners and the learners themselves. In addition, each of the two participating high schools were asked to provide permission as well (Children's Act 38 of 2005; National Health Act 61 of 2003/2004; UCT, 2006). I noted that a copy of the thesis would be given to learners and the schools. Information sheets and consent forms were sent to the parents via the learners at the school to inform them about the nature of the research.

Mount View was the only high school which provided more interactive assistance during the recruitment phase. In this instance, I considered the power dynamics this may have had on the learners' willingness or ability to participate on a voluntary basis. The Vice Principal briefed the Grade 9 learners about me and my research intentions prior to the time I spoke to them, and the Vice Principal was also present when I provided a comprehensive explanation about the study to the learners.

Those who indicated interest in the study were then provided a consent form by the Vice Principal in my presence. As an authority figure, the Vice Principal's involvement in the recruitment process somewhat endorsed the significance and authenticity of the study for the learners, however this may have contributed toward sample bias which is further discussed in the study's in limitations. The Vice Principal's involvement was helpful for a long term study

which required voluntary participation of learners, and required a level of commitment from all participants. Through the teaching function, the Vice Principal had regular contact with the learners which made it convenient and optional for interested learners to voluntarily submit the consent form over a period of time and until the pre-determined due date for me to collect them. This was beneficial when considering the time constraints during the data collection phase.

Furthermore, I explained and emphasised the learners' rights, such as voluntary participation and anonymity in the presence of the Vice-principal. I also emphasised that none of the school representatives would have access to the interview information (such as interview recordings and notes) at any stage of the research process.

Essentially, all terms and conditions of the study were agreed on, and signed by all 16 learners and their parents or guardians. Their signatures also confirmed their understanding of the learner's rights to participate in the study, and the purposes of obtaining all information. It was explained on the consent forms and verbally prior to the interview that learners could exercise their right to withdraw from the study at any time. For confidentiality reasons, learners' names were replaced with pseudonyms.

Before the one-on-one interview, I made sure that all learners understood and agreed that they would be recorded via a laptop recording program. It was reiterated to the learners before the interview commenced that questions would be based on and related to the topic of socio-economic issues and learners' EDM, and that the study would impose no threat or bodily harm. Participation in the present study was voluntary, and light snacks and drinks were provided to the participants before or after the interview.

At all stages of data collection, the management of information and topics that were sensitive in nature was considered. The parents and the learners signed and agreed to the terms and conditions in the consent form which granted me permission to access and protect

information obtained from other parties involved in the study, and use this information for the purposes of the study. I thus requested permission from Groenvlei and Mount View to access the enrolment records for 2017 to assess the learners' educational outcomes.

The enrolment records offered an objective, reliable source of information which enabled me to track the learners' progress since the initial interviews two years prior in Grade 9. I anticipated that learners' would have made favourable progress since I interviewed them in Grade 9. But, more than half of the learners' contact details provided by them were no longer operational and unreliable, which limited me from accessing most of the learners to understand their educational outcomes. The learners' identities were also protected by the use of pseudonyms, and their personal enrolment records could thus not be linked to the learner in the public domain once the present study is published.

During the interviews, I remained mindful of the learner's body language, and voice-tones so that I could respond appropriately and encourage dialogue. I was respectful when the learner did not wish to answer certain questions. Learners were also notified verbally and via the information sheet that counselling services were available should the learner require the service after the interview. The process of referral for counselling services was explained in the Information Sheet. Strict confidentiality and safe-keeping of all information was ensured throughout the research process.

Data Analysis

The data analysis technique considered most appropriate to organise the data and address the research questions was the approach of Miles & Huberman (1994; Fielding & Lee, 1998). They explain that data analysis involves an interconnected process of three activities: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing.

The first step involves the process of 'data reduction', where material is selected and condensed to form a conceptual framework that is continuously developed. The data reduction process is enabled by 'coding' and 'memo-ing' the data. Here, 'codes' are created and used to extract relevant information in relation to the study area, and assist with the identification of themes in the data. The coding process was simplified by adopting Miles and Huberman's (1994) technique to create 'first-level codes' and 'pattern codes'. First level codes are purely descriptive, and the aim is to develop a working set of codes to organise the data. Pattern codes are more explanatory, and facilitate in finding the patterns or connections in the data.

Although a grounded theory stance may argue for a purely inductive approach to extracting themes from the data, a start-list of codes is useful to prevent the collation of a bulky and incoherent list of codes (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

A concern here is that this may impose a framework on the data, however comparison and modification of the codes can be made throughout the analysis process as new categories emerge to ensure the saturation of codes that are central to the theory (Fielding & Lee, 1998; Glaser & Strauss, 1999; Miles and Huberman, 1994).

Because the interview schedule was divided into sub-sections, all interviews exhibited a similar flow of discussion, although care was taken to maintain the flexibility of the interviews and the conversation was free to move in any direction relevant to the study. Because of the similar flow of discussions, the sub-sections of the interview schedule assisted in the formation of the start-list of codes. Some themes became apparent as each learner was interviewed, and the interview topics supported existing codes while new ones were formed as the analysis developed for each of the 16 transcriptions.[16]

[16] Refer to Table 7, Appendix O for the data analysis list of codes

The start-list codes included themes such as the EDM of learners to drop out or continue their schooling (EDM-DROPOUT or EDM-CONTINUE). Although some codes were descriptive (e.g., the name of High School), most codes related to certain socio-economic contexts, and reflected certain conditions, such as household circumstances, school conditions, or family structure. Once the first level and pattern codes started to develop, the process of creating the 'data display' could begin and continuously be developed as new codes were formed or modified. In the data display process, data were arranged to discover and select possible interpretations of the data (Fielding & Lee, 1998). By using arrows to indicate connections between major codes or themes, the data were displayed in a way that would depict the relationship or influential connections between the codes, thereby facilitating the discovery of patterns within the data.

For example, the aforementioned code of EDM-CONTINUE showed that learners were agents in their quest to complete their schooling, which aided in their resilience. The data display assisted the process of drawing and verifying conclusions.

Trustworthiness and Authenticity of the Study

Schwandt, Lincoln, and Guba (2007) established criteria to determine the trustworthiness and authenticity of qualitative research findings. Authenticity was assessed by the study's ability to demonstrate *fairness*, and trustworthiness was assessed by demonstrating the *credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability* of the data. The criteria of trustworthiness are paralleled in quantitative terms to measure a study's internal validity (credibility), external validity (transferability), reliability (dependability), and confirmability (objectivity). The application of the aforementioned criteria is applied.

The present study demonstrates *credibility* (internal validity) by meeting the following criteria set by Schwandt et al. (2007). The *prolonged engagement* with the participants over a

period of three years with three points of follow-up data collection assisted to verify the findings. This prolonged engagement enabled *persistent observation* which helped me to comprehensively identify the complex dynamics and influences of EDM. The approach of *triangulation*; consisting of different data collection methods, included in-depth interviews, telephonic interviews, and the collection of school enrolment data, which facilitated the cross-checking of data over the research period.

The follow-up data further enabled the implementation of a *negative case analysis* where the initial in-depth interview findings were compared and verified. *Peer debriefing* through research supervisory support, feedback from learners and professionals in the education industry, and a pilot interview were used to inform the development and improvement of the present study. *Member-checks*, involving consistent informal and formal verification of the study findings was also achieved by consistent research supervision and other stakeholder liaison and feedback. The verification process included the use of the pilot interview results, and data obtained from the study sample.

The comprehensive data obtained from the three data collection methods assists with what Schwandt et al. (2007) describe as the *transferability* (or external validity) of thick descriptive data, which can be assessed by other researchers to determine similarities to their study findings. Two research supervisors and other external parties who were competent in research and academia provided critical feedback during the research process. This audit trail examined and provided constant critique, such as during the data collection process, and thus contributing towards the *dependability* (or reliability) of the data. The same process was followed during the interpretation and analysis of the data, which contributed to the *confirmability* (or objectivity) of the results.

The criteria set by Schwandt et al. (2007) to assess research authenticity comprised of the study's ability to demonstrate *fairness*. Fairness is defined as "a balanced view that

presents all constructions and the values that undergirds them" (Schwandt, et al., 2007, p.20). Fairness was achieved by gaining perspective of the different values and understandings associated with the issue of high school dropout and EDM by continuous and consensual interaction, consultation and verification of information with various stakeholders throughout the research process, such as those in research and supervisory support roles, academics, parents or guardians, and education and school representatives.

As an example, one teacher may value the promotion of Grade 9 learners to complete matric, whereas another teacher may hold the belief and value for Grade 9 learners to work towards entering tertiary education after matric. In either example, a mother of a Grade 9 learner may, at the same time, encourage her son to leave high school and enrol in an alternative pathway of education, such as a technical FET college, because of the belief that the learner may not be academically inclined or challenged to complete matric. Values as such, as well as research supervisory input and research of theoretical perspectives which may explain such phenomena also assisted to inform me of values towards educational progression.

The values towards achieving certain levels of education allowed me as the researcher to understand the different ways of how Grade 9 learners can be influenced in their EDM by various stakeholders and role models in education. I understood that my own values towards education may be different or similar to other expressions in the study, and my willingness learn, negotiate, consult, and provide information about the study intentions, would need to be thorough in order to obtain quality and relevant data. This contributed to creating a 'fair' approach, especially during data collection, analysis, and interpretation phase, and assisted to formulate appropriate and relevant recommendations to stakeholders in education.

Moreover, *fairness* was further achieved by what Schwandt et al. (2007) term as ontological authenticity, educative authenticity, catalytic authenticity, and tactical

authenticity. *Ontological authenticity*, which considers that one's reality is constructed and reconstructed through experience and interactions; was achieved through the improvement of one's conscious experiencing the world, which in this case would be in the context of educational progression.

As a way of raising the consciousness relating to educational progression and influences on EDM, the present study displayed *educative authenticity* by providing an increased understanding of this phenomenon through the study data obtained, which in turn informed recommendations for stakeholders in education. *Catalytic authenticity*, achieved through stimulating action from the research, was intentioned to inform and incite change at national and local level through policy creation and implementation, and investment by stakeholders in education such as teachers and parents. This is further discussed in the study recommendations, which were informed objectively from the data collected in the study. *Tactical authenticity*, which assesses the study's ability to be empowering or impoverishing towards the study stakeholders, was addressed by responding to the educational needs identified by learners, which further contributed to empowering them by formulating recommendations which would promote their educational development to matric and tertiary education levels.

Chapter 4: Study Findings

The aim of this chapter is to present five themes extracted from the interviews of 16 Grade 9, male, Coloured learners from socio-economically challenged neighbourhoods in Cape Town.[17] Themes 1 to 4 explain the socio-economic factors that influenced these learners' EDM in Grade 9 in 2015 and Theme 5 explains their educational outcomes in 2016 and 2017. The contexts of the learners are presented before exploring how these contextual factors influenced EDM. Socio-economic factors which impacted on EDM interacted across ecological systems and are thematically demonstrated in this Chapter within the contexts of the household, community, school, family and educational role models.

To reiterate, the application of Miles and Huberman's (1994) approach to identify key influences on EDM precedes a discussion of these findings in relation to Bronfenbrenner's framework (Tudge, et al., 2009; Watts, et al., 2009; Louw & Louw, 2007) in Chapter 5. This study addressed three research questions:

(1) What are the intentions of these learners with regards to furthering their education at HET levels?

(2) What decisions have these learners made with regards to how far they would like to develop their education at high school or FET levels?

3) What themes emerge from the study that negatively and positively influence their EDM to continue their education?

Participant Characteristics and EDM

Table 5 (Appendix D) indicates the participants' demographic details. The follow up interviews indicated that all 16 participants decided to continue their schooling to Grade 12 or HET.

[17] Learners from Hanover Park, Philippi, Grassy Park, and Manenberg. Refer to Map 1 in Appendix E

Theme 1: The Influence of Household Income as an aspect of Socio-economic Status (SES) on EDM in the Meso- and Micro-systems

The low household income and 'poor neighbourhood' status of the participants placed them into the low SES category, and the current study found that this status influenced EDM. In this section, learners were divided into two groups based on their income:

(1) those participants from financially 'stable' households

(2) those participants from financially 'unstable' households.

This division was determined by:

(a) the number of adults in the household who were employed on a full-time basis

(b) analysing participant narratives around financial standing.[18]

Household Income: Learners with financially unstable households. Eight of the participants experienced financial instability, limiting their access to basic living necessities, educational resources and quality learning experiences in the micro and meso-systems. Three learners were from families accessing social grants.[19] Of these three learners, Dave could not afford to bring meals to school which affected his ability to learn and Emlyn could not afford a computer for educational use and had to access the library to do schoolwork. The remaining five participants who were financially unstable but did not receive social grants had more pronounced experiences of deprivation. For example, Noel had to travel to his extended family to access a computer to complete schoolwork.

Financial instability further impacted these learners by delaying payments for educational costs or by preventing access to educational resources such as stationery. At times, Grant's family struggled to pay his school fees and his brother's college tuition. However, Grant's family still prioritised educational costs and organised a loan to ensure payments were made.

[18] Refer to Appendix P and Q.

[19] Refer to Appendix B for information on social grants.

Learners and their families experiencing financial instability managed the non-payment of school fees by delaying payments or negotiating a fee waiver. Some school teachers were reported to consult with the learners to notify them about the non-payment of school fees, and some learners would be victimised because of this (refer to the section on the 'Exposure to violence in the school context and its impact on EDM' on page 50). For some learners, basic needs (e.g., food) needed to be obtained before education-related costs could be covered. For example, Ian's mother often borrowed money to buy food before paying for education-related costs.

Financial instability resulted in uncertainty, frustration or the need to work part time. This influenced participants such as Oscar and Emlyn to seek employment while completing high school. The shortage of household income was often due to unemployed family members in the home.

Financial instability and EDM. Despite the variance in household income, all 16 participants associated completing high school or HET with an improved standard of living. They believed their education meant financial security, independence and ability to take care of their families. They hoped to achieve financial independence by owning their own businesses and excelling in their career and planned to take care of their families by living in larger houses or safer areas. Grant decided to continue to HET like his brother to avoid poverty, while Oscar desired to be successful and financially secure by completing Grade 12.

> …If you don't have education you won't be successful… I think it's very important in my life because I want to become something in life. I don't want to sit on the streets, asking for money I want to take my family out of this environment and move like somewhere that there's quietness and that stuff.
>
> (Oscar, 14)

Oscar was one of four learners who intended to continue their schooling until Grade 12. Of the remaining 12 learners, eight were from financially stable households and these eight, intended to continue their education to HET.

Household Income: Learners from financially stable households. The remaining eight learners reported financial 'stability' in the household and this encouraged educational engagement and reportedly stronger academic performance in the meso- and micro-systems. Financial stability secured faster access to basic needs and educational resources. For example, Bob could acquire a calculator to improve his mathematics performance.

Financial stability and EDM. Financial stability further enabled learners' families to save money for short and long-term use such as monthly groceries or university fees. Financial planning influenced learners' ability to think about furthering their educational career. For example, Abe's family had already started saving funds for university.

> I actually am studying because my parents saved up already for me for after matric, because then I will be the third person in my family to study further.
>
> (Abe, 14)

Comparison of financial conditions and EDM. All eight of the financially stable learners intended to continue their education to HET, whereas only four of the financially unstable learners (50%) intended to continue to HET. Despite the general value placed on education and desire to continue schooling after Grade 9; financial stability was associated with more conducive conditions for learning and pursuing HET, whereas financial instability presented challenges to learning with a lower proportion of these learners making the decision to pursue HET.

Most of the financially unstable participants reported lower academic performance levels than those in relatively financially stable households.[20] Following are elements in the community and school context which influenced EDM.

Theme 2: The impact of community factors on EDM in the meso and micro-systems

The data indicated that violence was an important community factor that influenced EDM. Incidents related to gang violence, corporal punishment and bullying were reported by most of the participants. Drug addiction and the gang affiliation of family members also presented challenges to the learning.

Exposure to gang violence and its impact on EDM. All participants were at risk for exposure to the gang violence occurring in Hanover Park as both schools fell within this area. Three learners, including Emlyn and Martin, had witnessed killings more than once, either on their way to school or near their homes.

> I was… just around the corner…they shot him [a family friend] dead in front of our gate…I was like just about to come home, so they shot him.
>
> (Emlyn, 14)

Participants expressed a constant feeling of anxiety about gangs and gang violence. For example, Martin was on his way home from school when he witnessed a neighbour who was shot in the throat.

[20] The current study was limited to only receiving the perceived academic performance of all 16 learners at the time of the first one-on-one interviews and during their first academic semester in Grade 9. In the 'financially unstable' category, Emlyn, for example, admitted to failing one subject (specifically maths)while other learners

> I just walked home and so I saw a bullet … a bullet [went into his] throat… I felt very scared because I just thought what if it was me? I came out of school because I was walking so I just saw he went 'so' like he kept his throat because it was bleeding.
>
> (Martin, 15)

Although learners expressed their vulnerability to gang violence, none of them indicated that this influenced their EDM to drop out. The unpredictable threats of gang violence from the neighbourhood did, however, affect school attendance and implied a disruption to their learning. Henry remembered being absent from school for two-and-a-half weeks due to gang violence. The learners' decision to remain home from school for protection from violence in the community was made not for the purpose of missing out on school, but because they prioritised their safety. The effect these movements or decisions made regarding their school attendance was greatly influenced by their families (refer to Theme 5 which demonstrates another example of Frank, who was later relocated to another school in another province by his grandmother due to gang violence in the community). Two additional types of violence were experienced by learners at school: corporal punishment and bullying.

Exposure to violence in the school context and its impact on EDM. Half of the participants witnessed or experienced corporal punishment at school. Such punishment included hitting or smacking the back of the head, grabbing the ear, hitting the board duster over the knuckles, using a stick or hand to smack the learner and pinching the skin. Corporal punishment was meted out for incomplete homework, disobedience, skipping lessons and not

having textbooks.[21] Clint recalled how a teacher smacked him on his head for not having a textbook and blamed learners for not paying their school fees which was generally believed to be the reason for the shortage of text books at school. Learners like Clint were not only intimidated by teachers but also bullied by peers.

The participants spoke about the threat of bullying by gang members who are learners themselves and who victimise other learners in the community and school context. Two participants recalled criminal offenses committed by gang-affiliated learners such as intimidation, theft and threats of rape and bodily harm.[22] Such violence was associated with 'gang-life', and used to enforce power over others. Bob recalled gangsters from within and outside the school regularly robbing and intimidating younger learners who in turn considered leaving or changing schools.

> Other people like gangsters... They want to rob the youngsters on the school…they bully them.
>
> (Bob, 15)

As was the case with gang violence, corporal punishment and bullying did not influence participants' EDM to be absent or dropout, although it did contribute to an unsafe learning environment and affected the school attendance of other learners. For example, Luke was bullied by the same children at school and in his community yet he believed in his academic capabilities and still attended school.

[21] Teachers were regarded as 'less strict' if they used more formal routes of discipline such as sending learners to the principal's office or to detention.

[22] For safety reasons some learners, mostly females, were forced to attend another school. .

> Some people don't like me here at school and at home…they're not friends of mine… [they tell me] that I am dumb and stuff… [it makes me feel not] normal because I know I am not dumb.
>
> (Luke, 14)

Emlyn chose to deal with threats of intimidation from gang members by acting 'brave' and defending himself despite the risk of being killed. Emlyn was the only participant to express that he was also a bully as well as a victim of bullying. He regretted this behaviour which he said was fostered by social adversities at home. Emlyn is aware of the emotional impact bullying had on himself and other children. Emlyn, and other learners believed bullying was associated to gang behaviour. After his mother told him that bullying was wrong, he stopped this behaviour and focussed on completing high school.

Emlyn's example demonstrates how learners can be enticed by hardships to join gangs; a common reality for many families in Hanover Park, but also positive role models can have positive effects on EDM which will be discussed later on.

The link between gangsterism, drugs and EDM. Drug addiction and the income earned by selling drugs can entice youth to join a gang Gangs are reportedly strategic in their recruitment of new members and use constant surveillance methods to select children who are at risk of dropping out of school; a common trend reported by learners of this study. School learners who exhibited antisocial behaviour are reportedly vulnerable targets for recruitment into gangs.

> Dropping out of school is like a trend, because if you look, if you had to ride just through one road then you see about twenty to fifty children who didn't even finish primary school. They don't even care about school.
>
> (Abe, 14)

Gang violence is associated with drug addiction. For example, Ian expressed sadness for his father who had a drug addiction and was absent from the home for seven years. This situation influenced Ian to consider dropping out if school.

> It was very hard because my daddy...I feel like just I don't want to go to school anymore. But my mommy [encourages me].
>
> (Ian, 15)

Gangsterism and drugs may also influence parents to consider removing learners from high school. For example, Emlyn moved from Mount View High School in Hanover Park to Groenvlei High School in Lansdowne even though the threat of gang rivalry was still present there. Oscar's mother wanted to place him in an FET college in another area because she was concerned that her son might join a gang or be killed. Her strategy was to protect her son by removing him away from Hanover Park and into an alternative branch of the education system. Despite his mother's fear, Oscar made the decision to remain in Hanover Park and complete his high school education.

> I need education and I need to study but my mom want to take me to a college next year because of the shooting because I'm tall and they wanted to shoot me.
>
> (Oscar, 14)

The fear of joining a gang was evident for learners with family members who were gang members.

Gang membership in the family and EDM. Three participants had relatives who belonged to a gang. These affiliations had implications for these learners as they were at high

risk of being targeted by rival gangs. However, all participants perceived the focus on education and the completion of high school as an alternative to gangsterism. Despite their choice to disassociate from gangs, six participants described being cautious to not disrespect gang members and acknowledged that they attempted to interact with such individuals in (a) an attempt to secure their safety in the presence of gang members and (b) to respect them as members of the community.[23]

Participants reported that some of their family members practised manifold strategies to mitigate the impact of gang violence on EDM. These strategies included deterring learners by warning them about the consequences of gang membership such as death, social rejection, jail time, stigma or risk of becoming a family outcast). Parents instilled the value of education and the completion of high school as a symbolic and physical measure of protection to keep learners safe from the impact of gangsterism.

Choosing education over gangsterism was a symbolic choice between death and survival. Education was perceived to offer an alternative to a life of violence as the family relation to gangsterism made learners such as Abe inevitably vulnerable to the threat of death.

> They want to come and attack where we live in, it's not that good for me to be outside also because the people that are in my family like the siblings, most of them are part of gangs.
>
> (Abe, 14)

Kay had a brother who dropped out of school in Grade 9 and became a gang member and Luke had a relative who did not complete high school for the same reason. These family members are examples of some of those learners who are influenced to drop out of school to

[23] A phenomenon also found De Lannoy and Swartz (2015) and Salo (2006).

join a gang. However, all participants perceived early school leaving as a waste of talent and opportunity. This sentiment contributed to learner resilience when dealing with challenges in the school context.

Theme 3: Challenges and Strategies of Grade 9 Learners in the School context

My findings corroborate existing evidence regarding several challenges that teachers and learners face (Bray et al., 2010; De Lannoy, 2008; Johnson & Lazarus, 2008; Mampane & Bouwer, 2011; Solomon, 2013).

The following sections describe:

(1) the conditions of school context (micro- and meso-systems)

(2) how these conditions influenced EDM

(3) how participants used agency and resilience to cope under challenging conditions and maintain their EDM to complete school.

Challenges in the school context and its impact on learning.

Shortage of teachers. Six participants reported a shortage of teachers at their school. This shortage resulted in cancelled lessons and overcrowded classrooms which negatively affected learning due to inconsistent teaching practices. Teacher shortages were a regular occurrence and were reportedly caused by illness, death and teachers leaving for better positions. Schools used their own strategies to mitigate these effects, sometimes employing teachers for short contracts or having teachers hold extra classes during breaks.

Shortage of textbooks and learning resources. Nine participants reported insufficient textbooks at school, usually due to theft for personal use, overcrowding and damage. These shortages made engaging in learning more challenging and in some cases prevented effective learning. Insufficient textbooks meant that some learners such as Abe had to share textbooks

with uninterested peers. Students regarded as 'disciplined' were prioritised for textbook use, resulting in many students who were already at high risk for dropping out not having access to necessary resources.

Participants also reported stationery shortages. The theft of stationery was said to occur on a regular basis and learners had to deal with having to find stationery at a moment's notice or otherwise work without it.[24]

Inadequate facilities at school. Participants reported many issues with their school facilities including broken windows, doors, gates and furniture; insufficient electricity cables, dysfunctional latrine facilities and a lack of laboratory tools. Participants identified links between crime, vandalism, inadequate facilities at school and the challenges these implied for learning. Abe for example complained about broken windows and doors which meant it was often cold and uncomfortable and hindered learning. The school staff toilets were reportedly functional and hygienically cleaner than the learners' toilets.

Overcrowding in the classroom. All participants reported issues with overcrowding in their classrooms. Most participants recalled classes of 40 to 50 learners and indicated that grade repetition contributed to the large classes. Kay explained that the large number of learners in the classrooms led to higher noise levels and disruptive behaviour, affecting his concentration and performance ("I can't concentrate with noise like that", Kay 14). This meant that he received a "lower mark" for that subject. Teachers struggled to give learners individual attention and were unable to manage undisciplined learners who disrupted other students during lessons.

Influence of teaching practices on learning. Seven learners raised concerns about the teaching practices at school.

Favouritism by teachers. The 'favouritism' exhibited by teachers influenced the way they taught, addressed and assisted certain learners. This affected the quality of learning experiences for those not favoured. Some learners received relatively lenient discipline and some were excluded from classroom discussions. Favouritism was said to be directed more toward female learners, disciplined learners, top performing learners and learners in higher grade levels. For example, Clint believed favouritism toward female learners was due to the association between male learners and 'gang life' or undisciplined behaviour.

Perceptions of teachers and teaching practices. The description of negative teaching practices existed alongside a generally positive perception of teachers 'teaching' and 'supporting' learners. Martin *for instance* distinguished between teachers who were considered 'good' and 'lazy' and said that, at times, the lazy teachers would stop teaching because they felt tired. Some learners also reported about the late arrival of teachers, which limited lesson time. Despite this, all sixteen participants perceived most of their teachers to be 'good' and saw them as educational role-models and parental-figures.

Teachers were considered 'good' if they did not resort to corporal punishment. The teacher's ability to speak 'nicely' to learners was associated with demonstrating 'respect'. The 'respectful' approach was found to facilitate learning interactions between learners and teachers.

All participants expressed that teachers made use of motivational and reward techniques such as verbal encouragement to encourage academic performance and promote educational progression.

…Because there's a lot of people that encourages you like especially the teachers and that… They will speak about how well you are doing in your work… or like if you, they will like see who's struggling with something, then they will like explain it to you

(Emlyn, 14)

…Some teachers always buy you sometimes a chocolate or something when you do good in your work and at the end then they say; 'Excellent job son' when you did do well… then I know that I did good um, I did good in that subject, then I don't feel like I have a problem with that one…after school and they always want to help you with your career

(Clint, 14)

Grade 9 knowledge of the NQF and HET institutions. All high school learners take 'Life Orientation' (LO)[25] as a subject. This compulsory subject should provide career guidance about FET and HET options (Jacobs, 2011; Spaull, 2015). Four out of the 16 learners reportedly received inadequate career guidance from LO and felt unprepared for their FET or HET journey. Although learners understood the significance of obtaining a matric or HET education for socio-economic benefits, they were not aware that they would advance in the NQF, nor did they understand what this meant. Noel was the only learner to associate the NQF with an educational hierarchy but he did not fully understand it or how it applied to his education.

None of the participants were aware that the GET stage is lawfully compulsory, however they knew that a Grade 9 certificate is not considered sufficient to secure employment or improve their standard of living. Six participants understood that there is a difference between Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions and universities but they were uncertain about what exactly those difference are. There was a general perception that colleges offered a lower quality education than university.

I think it's better to go to university then you've got more intelligence to do what you want to do.

(Ian, 15)

[25] Refer to Theme 5's discussion about the effectiveness of LO

Furthermore, only four of the participants were uncertain or unrealistic about the duration to complete a HET qualification. When Jack was asked how long he would take to study at university, he answered 'one year', which is less than the duration of a degree course.[26]

> Long…Like one year… [I will be about] twenty or nineteen [years old when I finish my education after high school] …I want to be a scientist and an artist.
>
> (Jack, 14)

The participants also lacked knowledge about the application process for HET institutions. For example, Abe assumed he could submit university applications in the year after high school when he intended to enrol for his degree.[27] If learners are not adequately informed about their educational-career options at school, they could access this information from their social capital by means of family and role-models. However, this source of information was limited for most participants.

How school conditions influenced EDM.

Inadequate facilities and EDM. The issue of inadequate facilities extended to the types of equipment available in the classroom and this had a knock-on effect on the types of subjects offered at the schools. For example, Martin was not able to take Physics due to a lack of scientific equipment in the classroom such as electrical circuits. Martin understood this limitation would prevent him from studying mechanical engineering at university which usually requires high school Physics.

[26] At UCT for example a Bachelor of Science or Arts degree takes approximately 3 to 4 years to complete.
[27] Most programmes at FET and HET institutions have application deadlines in the year prior to the enrolment year.

> He doesn't have electric circuit but when the new school is built where they will have a science lab and show us an electric circuit, how the electricity flows through the circuit and stuff like that. Education, taking the subjects that fall into place with mechanical engineering like physics. Our school don't give physics but I think maybe next year they will give physics because of the new school.
>
> (Martin, 15)

Overcrowding, undisciplined behaviour and EDM. Noel provided insight as to why learners like himself are undisciplined in the classroom. He associated disciplined behaviour with maturity and did not feel ready to exhibit this behaviour as a Grade 9 learner. Noel's undisciplined behaviour was dependent on his mood and because he felt tired. This made him despondent about learning and decreased his ability and interest to engage in school.

> I wouldn't say [I am a] well behaved [learner] but maybe one day I'll be. When I don't *'lus'* [ifeel like it] then I'll be rude in class [and] that depends on my mood…. [I feel moody when I'm] still tired… I just do [my homework]. I sit there, and then I'll try and I don't put any answer in but a lucky guess.
>
> (Noel, 15)

These conditions resulted in some participants, like Bob, failing Grade 8, which was one of the reasons participants considered dropping out of school. However, positive teaching practices motivated continued learning.

Positive teaching practices and perceptions on EDM. Some participants perceived teachers as role-models who had their best interests at heart. This was particularly related to a

teacher's perceived goal to keep learners in school. For example, Bob saw his teacher as a father-figure because he ensured Bob had everything he needed at school and enforced disciplinary methods to ensure student safety at school. Oscar confided in his teacher after the death of his sister and the teacher provided social and educational support so that Oscar could maintain focus on his schoolwork.

> He did say he is our father now in the class because she was our mother… anything we want to ask, then must go ask him and he will help you… his a dad to you…Nothing comes between you [and him].
>
> (Bob, 15)

> I have a great teacher, like um, understands me…Like when my sister passed away, I was absent like for 3 days, so she understands and just talk to me and help…When they like sit with you and talk a lot and talk with you and explain you the work and so on.
>
> (Oscar, 14)

Teachers also discouraged high school dropout. For example, Emlyn believed that his teacher could relate to the struggles he dealt with at school and he was motivated by his teacher's completion of high school. The positive perception and roles of teachers may be motivating for learners who are faced with social adversity and are tempted to drop out. All sixteen participants indicated the resilience and agency to remain in school.

> They also encourage you not to drop out of school and go further with studying and all of that stuff… For me it's because they also went through tough times and that and through that they finished their Matric.
>
> (Emlyn, 14)

Strategies used by learners in the school context to support EDM in Grade 9. I identified signs of agency in (a) the participants' desire to execute certain actions that would enable them to complete high school and (b) their ability to take initiative and use the resources available in their context. Participants showed resilience (a) through their efforts to remain in high school despite their socio-economic adversities (b) by consciously changing their behaviour in a way that would benefit their learning and (c) by reducing their exposure to factors that distracted them from learning.

Signs of resilience in education and EDM. Bob, who repeated Grade 8, showed resilience as he could recall the mistakes that resulted in him failing a grade. These mistakes included disobedient behaviour, school absenteeism, and associating with 'bad' friends. After failing Grade 8, Bob changed his behaviour to promote academic success, and invested more time in studying.

> And some of [my friends] will drop out because they think that, if I fail too much then I'm not going to come. But then you must have faith in yourself, and study.
>
> (Bob, 15)

Factors which impacted resilience and EDM. While all 16 participants associated dropout with negative consequences, Abe, Emlyn and Ian still considered this option. These participants provided insight into the precipitating conditions that could increase the likelihood of young learners dropping out of high school and impact upon resilience. These participants considered dropping out if (a) they failed a grade (b) they had to find employment to meet financial needs (c) if social issues at home influenced depression (refer

to theme 2 on community factors) (e) if they felt like remaining absent from school and (f) if they used drugs.

> If I had to fail this year and if I did not have an understanding of what education means, then I will probably also drop out, because for me it would have been like - I will be the clown, the joke of the school for failing that grade.
>
> (Abe, 14)

Furthermore, Emlyn spoke about a classmate who considered dropping out of high school. According to Emlyn, this learner had a history of family members who dropped out and considered the same option, even consulting his mother about it. Unlike Abe, who had financial 'stability' and considered dropping out if he were to fail a grade, Emlyn and Ian who experienced financial 'instability', considered dropping out at the end of Grade 9 due to the social adversities at home. Both learners' biological fathers were absent but they were both motivated by their mothers to remain in school. Abe, Emlyn and Ian, along with 12 other participants, expressed their self-agency to remain in school.

Signs of self-agency: The strategy of 'association' and EDM. Corroborating previous research, I found 'social connections' at school to be an important factor affecting learning engagement (Bray et al., 2010; De Lannoy, 2008; Solomon, 2013). Participants recounted how they befriended certain learners as a strategy to enhance their learning and sense of educational support and how they acted on their intention to remain in school.

Participants associated themselves with senior learners and peers who (a) had similar career intentions (b) were reportedly better behaved during lessons and (c) assisted others with homework. Participants described how they also received social and emotional support from their peers at school. For example, Martin received much needed social and emotional

support from his friends and Dave had friends who assisted him academically and provided him with meals[28] at school when he could not afford to do so himself

> Maybe I don't bring bread to school, they will give me bread, help me out with work maybe. Ja…
>
> (Dave, 14)

> They also sometimes like worry about like stuff that happen at home, I can tell them because I know they will keep them to themselves.
>
> (Martin, 15)

However, some social connections hindered learning engagement, such as when participants befriended other learners for interaction in the classroom. Learners who entertained others during lessons caused distractions and posed a risk to their own and their peers' educational performance and outcomes. For example, Bob reported feeling 'bored' in the classroom and was more excited to talk to his friends. Although Wegner et al. (2008) found that boredom at school was linked to dropout. Bob's resilience (through the prioritisation of schoolwork) was illustrated by his commitment to complete homework and attend lessons. Bob was an agent in his ability to adjust his behaviour to be more conducive to his learning. The data illustrates the importance of educational support on educational progression.

[28] The lack of food is one of the common challenges poorer learners face daily at school, community, and household level.

Theme 4: The Influence of Educational Support on Educational Progression in the Mesosystem

By considering the various socio-economic challenges that participants faced in the household, community and school context; I explored how Grade 9 learners are supported in their EDM to progress in their education. My research understood how family structure and role models in education influenced participants' EDM in Grade 9.

Family structure and its influence on career aspirations and educational support. I did not find that family structure influenced participants' career aspirations and educational support. Six participants came from nuclear family structures. In some instances, participants had older siblings who were old enough to not be living with the family anymore. For example, Bob lived with his parents and had two older brothers who lived elsewhere.

> It's me, my brother…I did have two brothers. So one is a drug addict and the one is married now… We were five, but we are three now.
>
> (Bob, 15)

Two of the six participants from nuclear families aspired to complete Grade 12, whereas the other four intended to continue to tertiary level. The tendency to aspire to a tertiary education, as opposed to just a high school education, could also be seen among most learners in alternative family structures. Ten participants came from single-parent, separated or divorced homes where the participant lived with either the biological mother or father and the step-parent.

In these alternative families, extended family assisted some parents (Ward et al., 2015). Some single-parent households included other caregivers to assist with raising the

child such as aunts, uncles, and grandparents (Meintjes, Hall, & Sambu, 2015). Jack had the largest family of, 11 members in one household. He lived with his biological mother, biological father and step-father in addition to four siblings, two uncles and grandmother.

> Yes three [brothers]…And a sister that's here by [X] Primary School, grade six…. [I live with] my [two] uncles… my real daddy [and] my other daddy… When I wake up, then I am getting ready for school, then my sister and my brother they put their clothes on and all that stuff and my mommy and my daddy and my grandma they are cleaning…We share.
>
> (Jack, 14)

Eight out of the 10 participants from alternative families intended to continue their education to tertiary level, whereas only two learners intended to complete only Grade 12. Whether learners were from alternative or nuclear families, the sample group was skewed toward those who wanted to pursue 'tertiary' education, rather than just 'high school'. Despite different family structures, all participants indicated that they received different types of educational support, which encouraged their educational progress even in less than ideal circumstances.

The availability of educational support in nuclear and alternative families. A social-power dynamic at home prevented Emlyn from accessing educational resources. Emlyn, who had never met his biological father, expressed a sense of sadness as he believed his step-father had no interest in taking care of his mother and him.[29] His step-father did not prioritise his educational needs. Research indicates the importance of parental relationships with

[29] Refer to Themes 3 and 5 to understand how the social and financial issues at Emlyn's home linked to thoughts of dropping out of high school.

children and that few children, like Emlyn, experience intimate interactions with their fathers (Bray et al., 2008).

> I don't live with my daddy now. They separated long ago. I don't even know how he look… [I feel] Angry so at everything and everybody.
>
> He [the step-dad] always buys [stationery] at the last moment…I will go the first day [at school] without stationery, then maybe in the following week or so then he will buy it…
>
> (Emlyn, 14)

Fortunately for Emlyn, his mother had an interest in Emlyn's education (refer to the sub-section on educational support later on). When Bob, who resided in a nuclear family, had to complete homework, he would receive assistance from both of his parents. Bob's parents, who may be considered educational role-models, have also shown educational support in other ways, such as ensuring his attendance at school, offering affection towards Bob and ensuring that school administration is in order.

> My mommy wakes me up early at half past six, then she makes me bread for the education so that I can function and she gives me hugs for school so that I can function also and my daddy just makes sure that my school fees is updated and that stuff and keep me in school.
>
> (Bob, 15)

Educational support: Role-models and educational progression. In line with findings by Legault et al. (2006), I found that most participants had been socialised to believe

in the value of education by acknowledging the economic benefits associated with completing a high school or HET.[30] This association reflected the intention of national policies to eradicate inequalities in education and provide opportunities for upward mobility in the labour market, which is achieved through higher education (DBE, 2011; De Lannoy et al., 2015; Newman & De Lannoy, 2014; Spaull, 2015). The participants referenced their parents, close family members and adult friends as educational role-models. These role-models provided different versions of educational support and influenced participants' ideas and outlook on their education by envisioning the possibilities that they themselves demonstrated (refer to Figure 2, Appendix R for a depiction of the three objectives of educational role models). The most commonly perceived possibility was the ability to complete high school.

Promoting schoolwork engagement. Fifteen participants had role models who promoted schoolwork engagement. Similar to findings by Bray et al. (2010), role models who promoted schoolwork engagement did so by either engaging with the participants in schoolwork tasks or by promoting the participants' involvement and progression in schoolwork. The latter was most common with participants from families that lacked the 'cultural capital' to engage or assist with learning (Bourdieu, 1990; De Lannoy, 2008). Despite this limitation, participants like Abe were still encouraged to engage in their schoolwork tasks and showed an interest in improving their performance.

> But she [my mother] also encourages me, but mostly my aunties. Because they study with me and they help me study and because they have a better understanding of what education is.
>
> (Abe, 14)

[30] Refer to Theme 1; learners considered the completion of high school to be a basic requirement for all job prospects and thus improved standard of living.

The educational support from Abe's family supported his aim to succeed and improve his schoolwork performance. This influenced Abe to have the same value system to progress to higher grades, and meet future grade requirements to attend university.

> I think I'm happy [with my marks now] because last year my marks wasn't that good. It's just now this year that I'm paying more attention and I know the work already… [my performance is] definitely dependent on myself… I will study harder to [improve my grades for university] … I don't want to go up to grade 12, I want to at least reach university.
>
> (Abe, 14)

Furthermore, Abe's biological mother and aunts completed their high school education and could assist Abe in his quest to complete high school. In some cases, parents had not completed high school and were unable to assist the participants in their learning. However, most of those participants would still be encouraged to complete school and were assisted by other members of the family network, teachers or fellow peers who were competent in the subject matter. For example, Emlyn had limited parental engagement with schoolwork tasks in the home, yet his mother, who had not completed matric, still promoted schoolwork engagement and academic success despite her limited ability to assist in certain subjects. Emlyn showed determination to succeed in his schoolwork.

Although most participants had role models in the home who promoted schoolwork engagement, Martin was the only participant to lack this type of support. In his case, the educational responsibility to succeed was solely dependent on his agency, rather than a co-dependent engagement between him and his parents. I identified that this put pressure on

Martin to progress through high school as his parents may place unrealistic expectations on him and anticipated positive educational outcomes despite limited educational involvement (Bray et al., 2010). Although Martin lacked adequate parental involvement in his education, he received some support from his siblings.

Martin was unable to complete homework timeously and this may have impacted his ability to perform and progress to higher grades (Bray et al., 2010). At times, Martin had the agency to go to the homes of fellow peers for educational support but this was insufficient to secure continuous schoolwork engagement or delivery. The teachers at school were not supportive and lacked an understanding of the reasons why Martin could not complete his homework.

> I go to my friend like I said I go do my homework there by them…Like my teachers like if I don't do homework they will always give me like a hiding or they give me or they scold me, scolded me so that I can know for the next time I must do my homework so.
>
> (Martin, 15)

Whether participants received parental or adult engagement in homework, learners were still encouraged to complete high school.

Promoting the completion of school. All 16 participants had access to role-models who promoted the completion of high school, and were accessible from the household, school or community context. Fifteen of the participants had family members in the household such as older siblings, who completed high school and seven participants had at least one parent who had matriculated. Luke was the only learner to have both parents who completed matric and Grant had an older brother who had completed high school.

Both [my parents completed] Grade 12… [It does encourage me to do matric] Because ja to make my mother and my father proud one day if I am like.

(Luke, 14)

Yes, like my brother… The nineteen-year-old one, Yes [he completed matric and] he also went to this school.

(Grant, 14)

Bob was the only learner who appeared unsure about whether his parents' highest level of education and expressed that his older brothers had dropped out of school after completing Grade 9. Despite the low matriculation rate in his family, Bob was determined to complete high school and study further and he believed that his family desired the same outcome.

They want me to get a better life because they didn't finish and now they want me to finish…I would like to go study further.

(Bob, 15)

A relatively low rate of matriculations in the family generally did not deter participants from wanting to complete high school. All learners expressed a sense of responsibility for their educational outcomes, and regarded their decision to complete high school as 'up to them' and that their parents' or siblings' failure to do so was not considered an influential factor in their EDM. Emlyn, for example, stated:

> I don't actually care if they finish school or not that's not my problems because they made that decisions for themselves… I am just like looking forward to my future.
>
> (Emlyn, 14)

Emlyn had access to role models who promoted educational engagement as well as the completion of high school. Despite the limitation of schoolwork engagement, Emlyn's mother verbally encouraged him to complete high school by initiating discussions that associated a matric qualification to positive life outcomes.

Participants were more informed about what to do in their educational career if they had access to role-models who promoted a career aspiration.

Promoting career aspiration. All 16 participants were inspired by an adult who provided direction or inspiration to follow a career field. The adult may not have been in the desired career occupation, but had the cultural capital to direct the learner onto the desired career path. In most cases, the cultural capital although limited, was available. Six participants had direct access to these role-models. The other ten participants did not personally know of anyone within their desired career field but were encouraged to pursue the desired occupation by their family or community network.

For example, Emlyn had direct access to a role-model in his desired profession. He obtained career advice from his rugby coach who inspired him to become a professional rugby player. The coach did not deem it necessary for Emlyn to continue his studies after high school as a tertiary education is not required to play sports on a professional level. Emlyn thus received information about the industry and the educational pathway to achieve his career aspiration.

> Yes, my dream is to be like at the moment a professional rugby player but I don't know yet.
>
> No [I am not interested to study further] because like my coach told me you just like need [matric] Physics and Maths to be a good player and you must be fit and that.
>
> (Emlyn, 14)

Similarly to Emlyn, Clint aspired to become an airplane pilot like his uncle who also informed him about the occupational requirements to become a pilot. Clint was determined to not only complete high school but chose Grade 10 subjects which were required for entry into HET level for pilot studies.

> My dream when I'm done with school are to go 3 years for studying to be a pilot… I want to travel places that I don't know that I might want to learn and go out and see that place… It's 3 years of studying… Yes I'll do it after Grade 12… I did look up to my uncle, he was a pilot – so now I want to follow his footsteps.
>
> (Clint, 14)

Unlike Emlyn and Clint, Abe did not have direct access to a role model in the field of medicine. Although he was encouraged by his family to complete high school and study medicine, this was not enough for Abe to secure this desire outcome. Family encouragement may have aided his resilience to complete school but he still lacked knowledge about his desired career, such as the timeframe in which to submit university applications (refer to Theme 3, the 'influence of teaching practices on learning'). Moreover, participants indicated

that female role models were more oriented towards promoting educational engagement, while male role models promoted career aspirations.

Gender, role models and educational support. In the household context, participants were more directly supported by female role models in their education. Ten participants, including Emlyn, indicated that they received various forms of educational support from their mothers, sisters, grandmothers and aunts; some of whom lived with the learners in the same household. The common types of support provided by female role models included assistance with homework tasks, ensuring the availability of meals for the duration of the day, showing affection and providing emotional support, such as using words of encouragement to attend school or giving the learner a hug before going to school. Six participants, including Kay, received educational support from both genders, within their immediate or extended family.

> My mommy will like every afternoon then she ask me if I have work, do I need help. If I ever need help and she can't help me I must ask my sister.
>
> (Emlyn, 14)

> Like there is some work like I don't understand, there is always my parents to ask or my brothers and explain the homework.
>
> (Kay, 14)

Thus, all participants had access to a source of educational support which encouraged their educational progression in their Grade 9 state. The fifth theme explored the educational trajectories of the 16 participants after they completed Grade 9.

Theme 5: Educational Outcomes of Participants between 2015 and 2017

The first four themes were based on the initial one-on-one interviews in the 2015 academic year. Theme 5 presents the findings of the follow-up telephonic interviews with eight participants (conducted in 2016; refer to Table 13 of Appendix S for a summary of the telephone interview findings). Two years after the initial interview (2017), school enrolment records indicated that 15 of the 16 participants were still in high school in the 2017 academic year (refer to Appendix T for a summary of the learner educational outcomes over the two-year research period). One learner, Frank, was not listed on the enrolment list at Groenvlei High school in 2017, as he had transferred to another school.

Thus, all 16 participants completed Grade 9 and remained in school. Although my study was limited by time constraints to obtain the same quantity of information from the learners as in 2015[31], the follow-up methods in 2016 and 2017 were useful for validating some of the findings from the one-on-one interviews in 2015.

The 16 participants had limited or no knowledge about the NQF when they were in Grade 9 (2015) and did not understand the significance of advancing up the education hierarchy. A year later, none of the eight participants who were interviewed telephonically indicated that they had obtained further knowledge about the NQF.

Although participants were limited to receiving career information from LO, they still used their agency to obtain information from other sources about their career and subject choices for Grade 10, although this was also limited in some instances. The data showed that the proportion of participants who successfully progressed to Grade 11 was low, with just 8 of the 16 participants passing their grades between 2015 and 2017. Following the initial interview in Grade 9, 11 participants passed to Grade 10 in 2016 and the remaining five repeated Grade 9.

[31] Time constraints allowed only for telephonic interviews in 2016 and the collection of enrolment records in 2017.

Frank was Included in the group of 5 learners who failed Grade 9. Frank's grandmother and the school administration confirmed his relocation from Hanover Park to his father's family in another province to attend another school in the hope that he would be positively influenced to progress in his education.

Of the 11 participants who passed to Grade 10 in 2016, 9 progressed to Grade 11 in 2017 and 2 failed and repeated Grade 10 in 2017. From the remaining group of 5 learners who repeated Grade 9, 4 (excluding Frank who was relocated) passed to Grade 10 for the first time in 2017 after failing Grade 9 in 2016.

Although the findings indicated the generally positive outcome of remaining in high school in the FET stage, some learners were more successful than others in their educational journey. The telephonic interviews in 2016 provided insight into some of the challenges experienced by learners once they entered the FET stage as well as their EDM and intentions to remain and complete high school or HET despite their socio-economic and learning challenges.

Of the eight participants who were telephonically interviewed in 2016, three progressed successfully to Grade 11 and the remaining 5 failed and repeated either Grade 9 or Grade 10.[32] The following themes were extracted from the telephonic interviews.

The influence of educational and occupational intentions on EDM. Overall, the intention to complete high school manifested in all 16 participants still being enrolled in school in 2017. However, the telephonic interview findings in 2016 indicated that only three out of the eight participants had similar occupational intentions to 2015.

Despite the change in career intentions, the participants had not dropped out of high school. In addition and contrary to previous research, some learners who progressed to higher

[32] Included in this group were Frank and Ian who failed and repeated Grade 9, and were the only two learners in this group who were not available to be telephonically interviewed in 2016However, their parents or guardians could provide an update about their educational progress.

(more demanding) grade levels and those who failed a grade between 2015 and 2017, indicated that they were not influenced to drop out despite the socio-economic challenges (Branson et al., 2014; Bollinger & Stover, 1999; Gustafsson, 2011; Spaull, 2015).

The three participants who's occupational intentions in 2016were similar to 2015; repeated a grade between 2015 and 2017, yet they remained in school. This included Dave and Kay who repeated Grade 9 and Oscar who repeated Grade 10. Thus, failing a grade did not influence occupational intentions or the decision to drop out.

The other five participants changed their occupational intentions between 2015 and 2016. This included Emlyn, who in Grade 9 had wanted to complete high school to become a professional rugby player. One difference to Emlyn's occupational intention was that he witnessed the struggle of limited job opportunities for youth in his community who obtained a matric qualification and realised that this was not sufficient to secure employment. By Grade 10, Emlyn had been persuaded to work towards attending university as he believed this would secure future employment.[33]

One of the ways for learners to obtain information and advice about career options and to choose FET subjects which aligned to their intended careers, was from the high school subject LO.

The effectiveness of Life Orientation (LO) on learner career guidance and Grade 10 subject choices. During the 2016 telephonic interviews, some learners either repeated Grade 9 or were halfway in their Grade 10 year; all learners would have completed LO.[34] In line with findings by Spaull (2015), some participants expressed that they were not

[33] Learners understood that jobs that are associated with a tertiary level education were also associated with higher pay and a higher standard of living (refer to Theme 1).

[34] The subject of LO prior to Grade 10 is essential in assisting learners to make informed decisions about the types of careers they intend to follow, and which high school (or FET) subjects would gain them entry into the associated career fields after high school (Jacobs, 2011; Spaull, 2015). Certain subjects chosen in the FET stage may limit career options if non-related subjects are chosen. The lack of information about subject choices may for example, influence learners to complete subjects which are not desirable, and this may impact on academic performance and educational outcomes on FET and HET levels.

adequately informed about how ‘exactly’ their subject choices in the FET stage would prepare or influence their career. LO was reported by participants to provide general, although somewhat limited, career information to inform them about FET subject options.

Learners reported that LO was geared more toward topics of health, life skills, general knowledge, HIV/Aids, environmental and community issues, water shortages, entrepreneurship, study skills and the importance of role-models to prevent gang involvement. For example, Abe and Emlyn stated that Grade 10 LO provided general information about careers and ‘how to study’ and that when learners were in Grade 9 they were advised to choose subjects they were ‘comfortable’ with for Grade 10. Abe reported that no information was provided about which subjects would match his career path and felt that most of the information taught in LO was not helpful. Learners understood that jobs that are associated with a tertiary level education were also associated with higher pay and a higher standard of living (refer to Theme 1).

Emlyn for example changed his occupational intention from a professional rugby player to studies in tourism or airplane pilot studies.[1] The subject of LO prior to Grade 10 is essential in assisting learners to make informed decisions about the types of careers they intend to follow, and which high school (or FET) subjects would gain them entry into the associated career fields after high school (Jacobs, 2011; Spaull, 2015).

For example, a learner may choose to complete subjects in Maths and Science from Grade 10 to 12 for the purpose of following a particular career after high school or when furthering to HET studies which require these subjects as basic entry requirements, such as in Engineering or Finance. Similarly, certain subjects chosen in the FET stage may limit career options if non-related subjects are chosen.

The lack of information about subject choices may for example, influence learners to complete subjects which are not desirable, and this may impact on academic performance and educational outcomes on FET and HET levels.

Sources of knowledge and agency for choosing Grade 10 subjects. The telephonic interviews indicated that six of the eight participants were informed about their Grade 10 subject options by family, community members and teachers. For example, Oscar, who failed Grade 10, obtained career advice from his uncle to complete high school and become a fire fighter. It was unclear as to how Oscar made his final decision to choose his FET subjects. However, despite the limited educational support from his mother, who insisted that he leave high school to attend an FET college, Oscar remained adamant in his EDM to continue his schooling.

Family may guide learners to follow careers in the FET stage which may not be aligned to their interests, especially if they are unsure about which careers to pursue. Some family members who provided career advice to participants lacked the cultural capital to inform them adequately about their FET subject and career choices.

For example, Grant, who failed Grade 10, had conversations about his career with his mother and father who worked in low-wage, part-time jobs. Grant was not satisfied with their career advice and intended to approach his brother who also worked in low-wage labour. Grant thought that there were limited subject options to choose from in Grade 10, and he lacked sufficient support to guide him appropriately on which subjects to choose.

Similarly, Emlyn who progressed to Grade 11 was encouraged by his unemployed mother to become an airplane pilot as opposed to a professional rugby player. However, there was insufficient information to understand his mother's motivation for wanting Emlyn to become a 'pilot' and whether this was connected to Emlyn's interests or skills.

Emlyn obtained information from his rugby coach about how to become a rugby player, but could not be informed by his mother about how to become a pilot. Emlyn then approached his teacher to discuss which FET subjects would be appropriate. Thus, if the career guidance from family members were deemed unreliable, learners either made their own decisions, or were agents in their ability to approach other sources for information.

For example, Dave and Kay showed such agency. Dave expressed interest to speak to a consultant at a local college to guide him in his FET subject selection and inform him about the application process for HET. Despite Dave's failure in Grade 9, he was eager to choose FET subjects that aligned to his career interests. Similarly, Kay, who progressed to Grade 11, intended to become a lawyer and was advised in his FET subject choice by his sister who was studying law and business at a Technicon. In addition, Kay did extensive research at the library about the types of FET subjects he needed, and the grades required in matric to meet the entry requirements for HET. Most other learners, however, did not have this kind of cultural capital to make informed decisions about their career.

Thoughts about dropping out of high school. Whether learners failed or passed their subjects and Grades after Grade 9, the findings indicated a perception among learners that dropping out of high school was not an option. For example, Abe, who progressed to Grade 11, expressed that he did not once think about dropping out of high school. In line with the 2015 interview findings, learners remained in school because they perceived the consequences of dropout to be unemployment and poverty and felt that they would be perceived as lazy by the community.

Self-resilient goals used to complete high school. Learners referred to their agency in maintaining academic performance and attendance at school, and refraining from joining a gang, as strategies that supported their EDM to complete their schooling. These findings are in line with the data obtained in the 2015 one-on-one interviews.

Six out of the eight participants who were telephonically interviewed in 2016 indicated signs of resilience. Abe, who progressed to Grade 11, said that he was working 'harder' to be able to study after high school and he was more focused on his education and aimed to behave in a disciplined manner. Dave, who repeated Grade 9, believed that he was 'different' and he knew he could complete matric. To do this, he had to attend school regularly to achieve his dream of becoming a graphic designer. Emlyn, who progressed to Grade 11, was determined to work hard, attend school, and not socialise with the 'wrong' friends. Grant and Kay maintained focus on their learning to complete matric. Oscar, who repeated Grade 10, aimed to complete school and not get involved with gangs.

Furthermore, Bob, who was not telephonically interviewed in 2016 and had failed Grade 8, demonstrated his resilience through his progression from Grade 9 to Grade 11. Thus, whether participants passed or failed before or after entry into the FET phase, or faced various socio-economic challenges, they all indicated signs of resilience to complete their schooling.

Overall, the socio-economic challenges of learners in this study did not influence outcomes of dropout. The follow-up data assisted in verifying the findings from the first interviews in 2015, and enhance the understanding of EDM once learners entered the FET stage. The following section will discuss these EDM processes.

Chapter 5: Exposition of the Findings and Discussion

This study aimed to understand factors influencing the EDM of Grade 9, male Coloured learners from poor socio-economic neighbourhoods in Cape Town. It also aimed to explore the intentions of such learners to continue their education past Grade 9. Three sub-research questions addressed this overarching query by: (1) exploring learners' educational intentions for further study to HET levels, (2) exploring how far learners' intended to take their education at FET levels and (3) understanding the contextual factors within learners' environments that influenced their EDM during Grade 9. The findings indicated varying intentions and trajectories of continued learning despite socio-economic hardships. This chapter aims to address the above research questions in relation to my findings and conclude with a discussion on the research limitations and recommendations for several stakeholders in education.

Themes 1 to 5 provided insight into the socio-economic factors that influenced the learners' EDM. Although the themes were presented in distinct segments, the data analysis applied Miles and Huberman's (1994) approach to identify the influential links and interdependencies between socio-economic factors influencing EDM. These links are depicted in Figure 3 and address Research Questions 1 and 2. The links revealed how a combination of two or more factors influenced learner EDM in grade 9 to pursue further study at FET or HET levels. Factors that influenced EDM were more broadly identified and located across Bronfenbrenner's ecological system's framework[35], and this allowed for a more integrated understanding of the learners' social environment, attitude towards 'education' and EDM in Grade 9 (Louw & Louw, 2007; Tudge, et al., 2009; Watts et al., 2009).

[35] The Micro-system, Meso-system, Exo-system, Macro-system, and the Chrono-system.

It was clear that the EDM of all 16 learners to remain in school was the result of a combination of factors which interacted in several ways across the layers of Bronfenbrenner's framework. Those interdependencies and the influences on EDM, will be addressed in Research Question 3 and are depicted in Figure 4. Although Figures 3 and 4 are based on the findings from the first interview in 2015, when learners were in Grade 9, the analysis of their EDM is supported by the follow-up data gathered in 2016 and 2017.[36] This information is therefore included in the discussion of the findings.

[36] The follow-up data collection methods included the telephonic interviews in June 2016, and the enrolment records from January 2017.

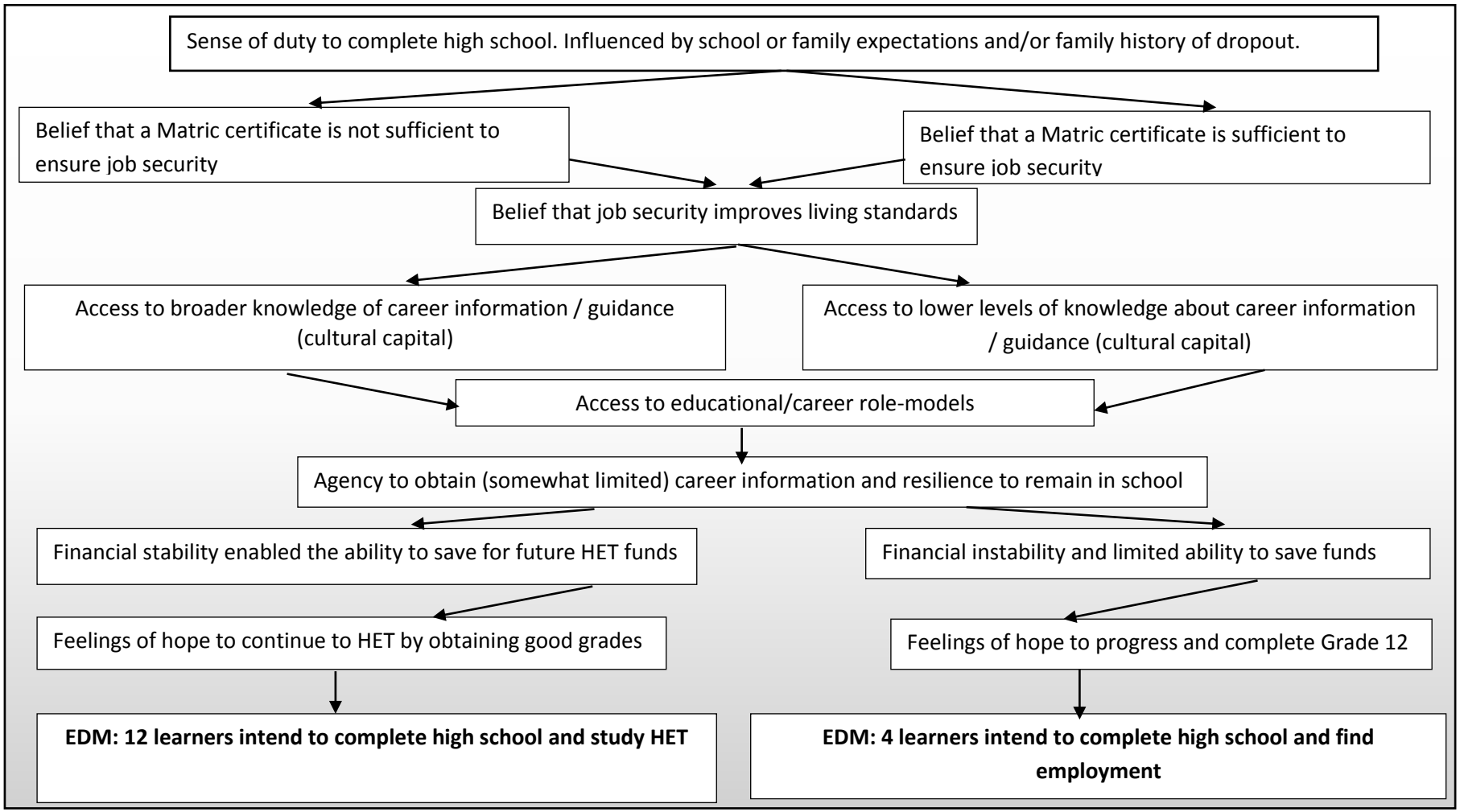


Figure 3. Influential relationships between key nodes that influenced participant EDM.

Note: Similar to the approach used by Miles and Huberman (1994), the data display in Figure 3 depicts several socio-economic factors which are presented as key nodes which influenced learner EDM to complete high school or study further to HET. There is no significance to the order in which the factors are displayed or discussed. Each key node is linked by an arrow which points towards another key node and this represents the influence on EDM. These factors play out at different levels of young people's lives and interact in complex ways.

Ecological systems	Negative influences on EDM	Positive influences on EDM
Chrono-system (Significant/historical events)	Legacy of apartheid and the challenges presented by the transition to democracy (e.g., low levels of parent education and family income).	-
Macro-system (Impact of economic/political systems on learners)	-	National policies aiming to eradicate inequalities in education. Labour market and economic demands are perceived to reward those with higher education levels.
Exo-system (Indirect influence of environmental settings)	Funding shortages and inadequate facilities at school	-
Meso-system (Interactions with micro-system)	Inadequate career guidance. History of family dropout. Violence in school, community, and household context	Value associated with education. Financial stability in the household, and associated benefits to learning. Evidence of educational support
Micro-system (Direct contact with learners)	Absent fathers. Social adversities (e.g., drug addiction of family members) Financial instability in the household, and associated socio-economic challenges impacting on learning.	Resilience and agency to educational progress. Belief in the upward mobility associated with education.

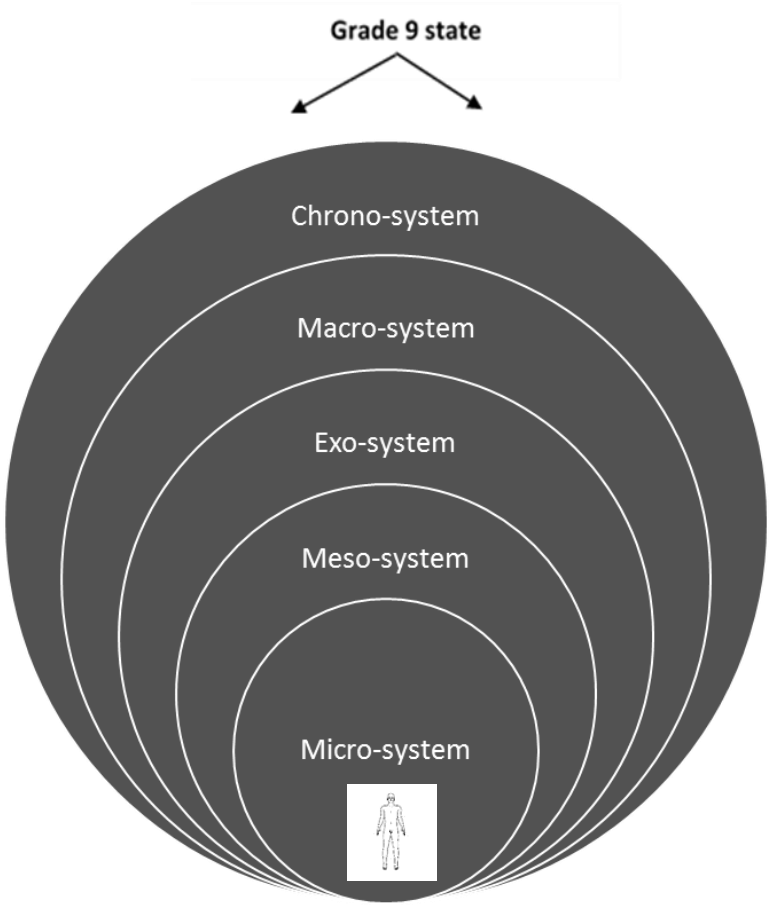


Figure 4. Negative and positive socioeconomic factors that influenced learner EDM; based on Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Framework (Watts et al., 2009).

Note: The table on the left summarises the negative and positive socio-economic factors which influenced the Grade 9 learners EDM across Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems framework, depicted on the right

With reference to Figure 3, the following section aims to answer Research Questions 1 and 2. Some learners intended to continue to HET levels after high school, whilst others believed a matric certificate was sufficient to obtain for upward mobility in their career.

Some learners had direct access to role models in their desired profession, such as teachers, family or in the community. The learners witnessed their role model's lifestyle and career opportunities which were obtained through high school or HET education. Role models promoted continued education and some learners were directly informed by people who were already practicing in their desired occupation about how to proceed to Grade 12 or HET. These learners were able to navigate their high school subject choice accordingly to meet entry requirements for a desired career. Learners who lacked direct access to role models, were motivated by their families to continue studying, but this meant that they relied largely on their agency to obtain the required career information. They obtained this information from networks and resources, such as school, family and community members, or the local library.

Research Question 1: What are the intentions of Grade 9 learners with regards to furthering their education to HET levels?

Factors influencing intentions to complete HET. Twelve of the 16 participants intended to continue to HET levels after high school. These Grade 9 learners expressed a sense of duty to complete their schooling and believed that a matric certificate was insufficient to achieve career goals and job security. They valued job security as key to improving their living standards and it was perceived that this would more likely be achieved through HET. These learners were often exposed to elements of poverty (e.g., limited finances) similar to learners who intended to only continue to Grade 12.

However, most of the HET-intended learners had access to a broader knowledge about career options (cultural capital). Their cultural capital informed their EDM to regard HET as their ultimate career goal.

The desire to study at HET existed despite unconducive circumstances in Grade 9. Some families who were slightly more stable financially, could save funds for tertiary tuition, but poorer learners relied on feelings of 'hope' to maintain their focus on pursuing HET and on the assumption that if they worked hard and achieved good grades, funds could be provided through other means, such as scholarships or loans. In line with findings by De Lannoy (2008) and Solomon (2013), the encouragement of learners to study at HET created as sense of 'hope' that their dream of an improved standard of living would manifest into reality. Like De Lannoy (2008), the youth in this study used their hopes and dreams as a coping mechanism to survive their current circumstances. Such resilience was similarly expressed by the remaining four learners who also expressed a sense of 'duty' to continue their education, but only to Grade 12.

Research Question 2: What decisions have Grade 9, male Coloured learners taken to action their intentions towards their education at high school or FET levels?

Factors influencing EDM to complete high school. The four learners who wished to complete high school, but not proceed onto HET, believed that a matric certificate was sufficient to achieve their career goals and job security. All four learners resided in financially unstable households. These participants believed that job security was key to improving their living standards and in some cases were chronically exposed to poverty (e.g., insufficient funds and family unemployment). They hoped that a matric certificate would break the cycle of poverty being experienced by their families and a high school education was therefore their ultimate career goal as Grade 9 learners.

The intention to complete Grade 12 was often influenced by the regrets expressed by a family member who had dropped out of high school and were therefore experiencing a lower standard of living due to, for example, unemployment.

Participants were reminded verbally by their family, school and broader community about their 'duty' to complete matric. Thus, the cultural capital in the meso-system guided participants to complete their schooling, although in most cases there was limited information available about (a) how to select high school subjects and (b) what HET studies entailed. This impacted on some learners' performance and ability to choose subjects that matched their competencies or career aspirations in Grade 10.

For some learners who did not intend to study after Grade 12, occupational and educational intentions changed over time with the influence of career guidance (cultural capital) from family members. Between the Grade 9 and 10 interviews, Emlyn's mother persuaded him to continue his education after Grade 12, resulting in him choosing subjects that would enable him to study at university. Emlyn therefore demonstrated that despite his thoughts of dropping out or living in adverse circumstances that were not conducive to educational success, learners can later change and aspire to increase their level of education. This finding highlights how youth can change their EDM during high school and that career guidance, particularly focused on 'how to choose subjects' is essential for learners progressing to Grade 10. Adequate career guidance may make the process of completing high school less challenging.

Moreover, previous studies indicate that the emotional support shown by Emlyn's mother is an important element which may influence learners' ability to discuss educational decisions in the home (Bray et al., 2008; De Lannoy, 2008). Although Emlyn's mother did not complete high school or have the competence to assist him in schoolwork, she motivated him to achieve his educational goals.

By addressing Research Question 3, I identified specific factors that influenced Grade 9 EDM across all five systems of Bronfenbrenner's framework.

Research Question 3: What positive or negative factors influenced Grade 9, male, Coloured, learners' EDM to continue their education?

Factors influencing Grade 9 EDM: Application of Bronfenbrenner's framework.

Contrary to the high levels of school dropout reflected in previous research and South Africa's education statistics, this study found that none of the 16 learners made the EDM to drop out of high school between Grades 9 and 11 (Branson et al., 2014; Bray et al., 2010; DBE, 2015; Gustafsson, 2011; Hall, 2017; Harber & Mncube, 2011; Harrison, 2017; Spaull, 2015; Report on Dropout and Learner Retention Strategy, 2011). However, this study did support previous findings that only a small proportion of learners progress from Grade 9 to Grade 11, with just over half (9 out of the 16) participants passing both grades in two years (DBE, 2015; Hall, 2017; Harrison, 2017; Spaull, 2015).

The decision to remain in school after Grade 9 was not influenced by an isolated factor, but by multiple socio-economic elements that were predominantly located in the learners' micro- and meso-systems. A few factors within the exo- and chrono-systems also influenced EDM with some systems linking to the macro-system. The following section discusses how the participants navigated their resources and cultural capital in their ecological systems to make decisions about their education in Grade 9. The factors that negatively influenced Grade 9 EDM will be discussed, followed by those which positively influenced EDM (refer to Figure 4). The discussion is based on the initial interviews with learners in 2015 when they were in Grade 9. The follow-up data collected in 2016 and 2017 will be used to verify the 2015 findings.

Factors negatively influencing EDM in Grade 9.

Chronosystem (Significant / historical events): The influence of the legacy of apartheid and the transition to democracy. The socio-economic deficits arising from the legacy of apartheid (chrono-system) contributed to challenges in other ecological systems and this influenced some learners to consider dropping out of school at the end of Grade 9. All learners resided in suburbs that were previously reserved, under apartheid's law of segregation, for predominantly Coloured or Black people and the learners' narratives reflected experiences of poverty and inequality in their communities. My participants were thus from similar backgrounds to those of other South African studies investigating EDM (Bray et al., 2010; De Lannoy et al., 2015; Solomon, 2013).

Despite national policies that aim to eradicate the inequalities of education (macro-system), the legacy of apartheid (chrono-system) continues to influence the intergenerational transmission of poverty among these 'born free' learners and their families (De Lannoy, 2008; Spaull, 2015). Learners' families lacked several forms of capital and the social mobility to improve their living standards in post-apartheid South Africa (Bourdieu, 1990; Moor, 2001; Newman & De Lannoy, 2014). I found that these conditions were influenced by the high school dropout of learners' family members, which supports previous studies that have found an intergenerational transmission of poverty (De Lannoy et al., 2015; Newman & De Lannoy, 2014). High school dropout resulted in limited employment and income prospects of learners' family members, and at times placed strain on learners who adopted the responsibility to earn and contribute income to the household whilst in high school.

Obtaining a high school education is one way in which learners' can improve their standard of living. The government controls the implementation of public policy (macro-system) and is tasked with rectifying the inequalities that were created in the educational system by the previous apartheid government (De Lannoy et al., 2015).

Despite national interventions, learners were experiencing educational challenges in addition to socio-economic challenges. Some learners managed these challenges better than others but they still experienced stress in their educational environments, which sometimes made dropping out of school an attractive option. The process of transforming and improving the quality of education was central to participants' narratives. Schools were reported to rely on limited financial resources to deal with deficits in the school environment (exo-system).

Exo-system (indirect influence of environmental settings). Learners perceived the government (exo-system) to be providing limited financial support to adequately maintain school infrastructure (meso-system), despite both schools receiving minimal or no school fees, with which to maintain school facilities. Corroborating with previous studies; this affected education quality by limiting the schools' ability to obtain educational resources and maintain adequate learning facilities (De Lannoy, 2008; Spaull, 2015).

As described by other research investigating teaching and learning in South Africa's under-resourced schools, the funding deficit contributed to a shortage of teachers and overcrowded classrooms, which caused disruptions to the learning function (meso-system), and negatively affected the academic performance of learners (micro-system; De Lannoy, 2008; Spaull, 2015). These disruptions contributed to some learners failing a grade prior to Grade 9, which was a contributing factor to considerations of dropout.

A lack of school funding also limited subject options for learners in the FET phase. Some subjects (e.g., science) could not be taught effectively, resulting in some participants being unable to meet the requirements for certain HET courses. This affected participants' decisions to pursue certain, desired fields of study at HET (micro-system), and could create future challenges in terms of obtaining jobs that may be critical or scarce in the labour market (macro-system), because such jobs rely on high levels of skills and education. This finding provides a more nuanced understanding of why South African youth are not meeting the skill

demands for certain professions and may therefore remain unemployed (Bloch, 2009; Branson et al., 2015; Kraak, 2011; Mateus et al., 2014; Ribeiro, 2009; Sims, 2006; Spaull, 2015).

Meso-system (Interactions with microsystem). There were other factors situated in the meso-system that contributed to participants' not pursuing subjects at high school that aligned with their career aspirations. This study agrees with Mampane and Bouwer (2011) that the school was often the last source of constructive and supportive conditions that were, at times, absent in the household or community context. Contrary to previous research, all 16 learners attended previously disadvantaged schools and some of them had a negative perception of LO and its ability to provide career guidance in Grade 9 (Jacobs, 2011; Theron & Dalzell, 2006; 2008).[37] As indicated by previous research, the provision of inadequate career guidance negatively impacted some learners' EDM by limiting their ability to choose appropriate FET subjects that matched their career interests (Branson et al., 2015; Jacobs, 2011; Spaull, 2015). Learners often did not receive the information that they needed to prepare for FET or HET education, and some participants ended up choosing FET subjects that were not aligned to their career aspirations.

All 16 learners discussed their agency to access career information from various sources (e.g, teachers, family, community members or the internet). However, not all these sources were necessarily adequate or reliable. For example, some families did not have the necessary experience to provide participants with career-related information. The lack of reliable and adequate sources of information later presented a challenge for learners who changed their career intentions after completing Grade 9 as they had to make uninformed decisions regarding Grade 10 subjects.

[37] This study was unable to explore if the learners negative perceptions of LO were the result of the actual LO curriculum material or due to a failure of schools or teachers to adequately cover the curriculum material during the year.

Inadequate career guidance was particularly prevalent for learners with a family history of high school dropout and influenced some learners to consider this option.

A family history of high school dropout (meso-system) influenced Emlyn's friend to consider dropping out after he discussed this option with his mother who had not completed her schooling. Corroborating with previous research; dropping out is therefore not always a spontaneous decision but may arise after a period of careful consideration (micro-system; De Lannoy, 2008). Although this consideration period may allow opportunities for intervention, it also shows that learners may still consider the option to drop out for various reasons. Similarly to previous studies, violence at school (e.g., corporal punishment or bullying), drug addiction, gang-related violence and threats to safety and wellbeing or even wanting to join a gang may influence the decision to leave school early (Archambault et al., 2009; Battin-Pearson et al., 2000; Bray et al., 2010; Burton, 2008; Gustafsson, 2011; Harber, 2001; Jenson, 1999; Johnson & Lazarus, 2008; McIntyre & Weiss, 2003; Mncube & Madikizela-Madiya, 2014; Pinnock, 1984; 1997; Reckson & Becker, 2005; Samara, 2011; Tugli, 2015).

Corroborating with previous research, this study found that violence, especially violence related to gangsterism on the Cape Flats, was a multifaceted phenomenon that extended across the community, school and household context (meso- and micro-systems) and elicited distress from male learners, who were both victims and perpetrators of violence (Jensen, 1999; Liang et al., 2007).

In line with previous research, learners associated school dropout with gang membership and saw this as a 'trend' in the Hanover Park area (De Lannoy, 2009; Johnson & Lazarus, 2008). Learners resorted to absenteeism to escape the gang violence in and around Hanover Park and renegotiated and reinterpreted violent events to feel safe in their communities (Jensen, 1999; Johnson & Lazarus, 2008).

Gang violence and drugs also impacted EDM in other ways. Although gang violence did not directly result in learners dropping out of school (a finding that is contrary to Archambault, et al., 2009) it negatively affected student compliance, the learning function, school attendance and academic performance (Gustaffson, 2011; Mampane & Bouwer, 2011; Mncube & Madikizela, 2014; Pinnock, 1997). For example, gang violence prompted Oscar's mother to insist on removing him from his Hanover Park school to place him in a FET college away from this environment. Though Oscar made the decision to remain in school, this event demonstrated the parental dynamics that challenged EDM. A Learner leaving the school system for alternative education options is one of the primary contributors to the lower proportion of learners in the FET phase (DBE, 2015).

In addition to external safety considerations, some learners were dissatisfied with the use of corporal punishment by teachers at school and this had a negative impact on learning experiences (Herrenkohl et al., 1994; Morrel, 2006; Shields et al., 2009). Disciplinary measures by teachers were reportedly not applied fairly to learners and favouritism and leniency towards female learners, which is common in the FET phase contributed to feelings of frustration and discrimination in male learners.

Male learners were associated with undisciplined behaviour at school. Some participants witnessed or exhibited undisciplined behaviour associated with gang life, which would often be displayed as a resistance towards authority figures such as teachers, or bullying other learners in the school or community[38] (Bray et al., 2010; Mncube & Madikizela, 2014; Pinnock, 1997; Pyrooz, 2014; Townsend et al., 2008).

[38] The antisocial behaviour reported by learners which related to gang life included intimidation, threats of rape, and bodily harm, and influenced younger and female learners who were often targeted, to be absent or to change schools.

Undisciplined behaviour in the classroom was associated with lower academic performance but not dropout, a finding supported by Branson et al. (2014) and Mncube and Madikizela (2014).

In the household context, learners with gang-affiliated family members were presented with the temptation to drop out of high school and join a gang. However, as was found in previous research (e.g., Bray et al., 2010; De Lannoy, 2008), negative representations of the community, such as high rates of school dropout, unemployment, drug abuse and the temptations to join a gang were refused and contested by learners and they opted to focus on their educational progression. This direction of thought, however, was more challenging for learners with other social adversities experienced in their micro-system.

Micro-system (Direct contact with learners). Contrary to earlier findings on gang violence and EDM in Cape Town, learners in this study who had absent fathers did not gravitate towards dropping out to become gang members (Pinnock, 1997). However, learners such as Ian and Emlyn, both of whom had absent fathers, were presented with other social adversities, such as funds being directed away from educational needs or feelings of depression from strained step-father relationships (Bray et al., 2010). These factors influenced them to consider dropping out at the end of Grade 9.

Ian also experienced thoughts of dropping out as a result of his father's drug addiction and the impact that this had on his emotional well-being and academic performance (micro-system; Battin-Pearson et al., 2000). Drug addiction in the family interacted with other micro-level factors, such as Ian's father's inability to offer support, engage with his school, or provide career guidance for Ian's future to result in Ian considering leaving school. The financial instability in Ian's household also presented challenges for his EDM to complete his schooling, as it did for other learners.

Financial instability played out in the learner's home environment (micro-system). All 16 participants resided in 'poor neighbourhoods,' but could be divided into those with relative 'financial stability' and those with 'financial instability' in the household. The division of financial conditions in the household (micro-system) was a useful tool for identifying the diversity of living conditions and identify poorer or more vulnerable learners in the sample, even though all 16 learners were from a low SES background. Although learners from financially stable households experienced some financial shortages, their EDM was not impacted by financial considerations to the same extent as learners from financially unstable households.

Financial instability interacted with other factors, such as the school and household in the meso-system to negatively affect learners' health and their ability to learn and succeed at school (De Lannoy et al., 2015). For example, insufficient funds, limited access to meals at home and at school and delayed access to stationery. These challenges to learning may explain some of the association between a lower SES and lower academic performance levels in South Africa (Fleisch, 2008; Gravin, 2013; Spaull, 2015; Wang et al., 2014).

The challenges associated with financial instability made it more difficult for poorer learners to obtain positive educational outcomes and consider the possibility of continuing to HET, thus limiting their social mobility (Bourdieu, 1990; De Lannoy, 2015; Spaull, 2015). This may explain why more of the financially unstable participants opted to study until Grade 12 and not to HET. Financial limitations also tempted poorer participants to seek employment during high school, a decision which then increased thoughts of dropping out of school (Spaull, 2015).Financially unstable learners who were interested to study HET intended to source external funding (e.g., government scholarships), although this may be a challenge to access if their academic performance is poor.

Although the socio-economic factors that negatively influenced EDM did not

influence dropout, they did create challenging experiences that influenced some learners to consider this option. The socio-economic factors which positively influenced EDM may have prevented this negative outcome. These positive factors were largely located in the learners' meso- and micro-systems.

Factors that positively influenced EDM in Grade 9.

Meso-system (Interactions between two microsystems or more). Varying levels of low household income and challenging socio-economic conditions did not affect learners' understanding of the 'value' of studying beyond Grade 9 (Bray et al., 2010; De Lannoy, 2008; Solomon, 2013). Despite a lack of knowledge about the NQF, educational role-models and motivation from the school, family or community in the meso-system reinforced the value of education and encouraged educational progression. This value was largely conveyed verbally or by gestures such as checking that homework tasks were completed. The idea of dropping out of high school was further stigmatised as a waste of talent and opportunities, especially for those who did so with the intention of joining a gang.

The value of education instilled from the meso-system was, for some learners, influenced by the intention of national policies in the macro-system to eradicate inequalities in education (e.g., by providing HET scholarships). Education was also associated with upward mobility in the labour market (macro-system) as it provides better employment opportunities and a higher standard of living, which meant that participants could afford to live in a safer area, or obtain a stable-income job. Some Grade 9 learners with financial stability understood this system and observed these benefits in their own families (meso-system).

Although financial stability influenced EDM on the micro-level, it also influenced EDM by interacting at the meso-level where parents are more able to engage with the school. Furthermore, financial stability presented the opportunity for saving funds to access HET

institutions after high school. In addition, financial stability enabled learners' to have quicker access to educational resources at home (micro-level) and at school (meso-level), which further enhanced the learners' interaction with learning and the ability to perform academically (Bourdieu, 1990; De Lannoy et al., 2015). Despite all 16 learners residing in poor neighbourhoods, the 8 learners from financially stable households reported similar (higher) academic performance levels to higher SES learners in previous studies (Fleisch, 2008; Gravin, 2013; Spaull, 2015; Wang et al., 2014). More financially stable learners chose to continue to HET than financially unstable learners. Despite varying levels of household income and academic performance levels, all 16 learners had access to different types of educational support, and expressed their resilience and agency to progress in their education.

Contrary to previous research, family structure did not influence the participants' career aspirations, and educational support for educational progression was accessible to all learners through educational role models in the meso-system (Cavanagh et al., 2006; Heard, 2007; Pinnock, 1997; Ward et al., 2015). As might be expected, most learners in the sample resided in alternative family structures (Ward et al., 2015). Where social adversities were present in alternative families (e.g., absent fathers), the influence on EDM to dropout was mitigated by the motivation and support from educational role models. These role models socialised the values which promoted educational progression and different social figures fulfilled different roles and dimensions of educational support (Legault et al., 2006). Educational role models in the mesosystem promoted (a) educational progression through schoolwork engagement (b) the completion of high school and/or (c) a particular career aspiration.

Most participants were motivated and encouraged to complete high school and study at HET institutions by their sisters, mothers and aunts, which complimented their own resilience and agency to do so. This emphasises the importance of female support systems

and role models in the education of youth from poor communities (De Lannoy, 2008). Resilience was further influenced by positive responses, support, and involvement from parents, extended family, school and community members (Anderson & Minke, 2007; Gutman & Midgley, 2000; Herrenkohl, et al., 1994; Rumberger; 1995).

Micro-system (Direct contact with learners and their immediate environment). Learner resilience tended to be fluid, yet it was effective enough to influence the micro-system of learners to remain in school (Herrenkohl et al., 1994; Mampane & Bouwer, 2011). An important factor in resilience is a supportive learning and teaching environment (Mampane & Bouwer, 2011). Thus in some ways, educational support from schools positively contributed to participants' resilience.

Learners' resilience was supported by the agency to invest in more study time, limit playtime, remove distractions to focus on learning, and direct efforts to sustain academic competency (Bray et al., 2010; De Lannoy, 2008; Solomon, 2013). As found in previous research, learners expressed a sense of responsibility to meet school obligations to signify their willingness to complete high school, despite their socio-economic adversities (Bray et al., 2010).

In line with research by Battin-Pearson et al. (2000), learners who exhibited deviant behaviour, bonded with antisocial peers, and experienced household poverty were more likely to consider dropping out of school than other participants. Dropout was also considered as an option if participants experienced academic difficulty or failed a grade, a finding which supports previous research (Battin-Pearson et al., 2000; Branson et al., 2014; Gustafsson, 2011; Harber & Mncube, 2011; Spaull, 2015). These outcomes would often be linked to learners befriending peers in the meso-system who did not take learning seriously. However, the fluidity in the EDM of learners such as Bob who took learning seriously after he failed Grade 8 influenced successful academic progress from Grade 9 to 11 (De Lannoy, 2008).

Other justifications for leaving school at the end of Grade 9 included financial instability and the associated social adversities at home, drug addiction and unemployment of family members, the temptation to work to earn an income, feeling depressed, and deliberately remaining absent from school, which in some ways symbolised an environment of deficit. This study was limited in its ability to monitor any gradual reductions in school attendance of learners, which has been suggested to indicate possible future dropout (Gustafson, 2011; Spaull, 2015). Some learners reported to consider dropping out if they felt like remaining absent from school. Despite the multiple reasons for considering dropout, all learners' maintained their resilience during the research period.

Some learners made the strategic decision to interact with peers who took learning seriously, and who therefore aided in their educational progression and academic performance. These friendships were either maintained over the research period, or were activated when participants required this type of support during academically challenging times, such as before tests or exams. Learners were aware that this positively influenced their behaviour and academic performance. In some cases, the peers also provided social and emotional support to the learner, which aided in their resilience.

This study supports previous research which showed that resilience, through agency, was influenced by a mutual interaction of (a) "intrapersonal factors", such as the learner's "choice in behaviour" in the learning context; (b) "perceptions of self", such as the belief in the ability to cope with the academic workload in Grade 9 or higher grade levels; and (c) "protective factors in the wider environment of the family, peer group and school" that include, for example, the discouragement of learners to join gangs and dropout (Bourdieu, 1990; Bray et al., 2010, p. 295; De Lannoy et al., 2015; Johnson & Lazarus, 2008).

Similar to findings by Bray et al. (2010), were participants' expressions of their ability to influence change in their lives by the extent to which they could act and bring about

change in their contexts, especially through educational progression. According to Fergus and Zimmerman (2005, pp. 400-401), the resilience and vulnerability of this study's sample places them in the category of "adolescents who are exposed to high levels of risk but achieve positive outcomes".

The value placed on education by members of the meso-system supported the resilience of all 16 learners. Learners witnessed at a micro-level how the labour market demanded higher skills. As indicated by De Lannoy et al. (2015) and Newman & De Lannoy (2014), this further influenced the micro-level belief that a matric or HET education can be used as a tool for upward mobility, and this belief is also part of post-apartheid South Africa's national culture (macro-system). Overall, the EDM to remain in school after completing Grade 9 in 2015 could still be observed two years later.

Verification of initial findings. The findings from the telephonic interview in 2016 and school enrolment records in 2017 assisted with verifying some of the findings from the 2015 interviews. One year after initially being interviewed, learners were all either repeating Grade 9, or had progressed to Grade 10 (FET). This section provides additional insights into what has been found before in 2015. Factors influencing EDM were generally located in the meso-and micro-systems.

Meso-system. The follow-up interviews verified that LO was still ineffective at providing adequate career guidance for both learners now in Grade 10, and for learners who were repeating Grade 9. In line with the findings of Jacobs (2011), the follow-up interviews reported 'career guidance' topics in LO to include life-skills, social issues, HIV/Aids, and entrepreneurship.

Some learners who passed Grade 9 reported that they were encouraged to choose FET subjects that they felt 'comfortable with', and some learners had therefore made uninformed decisions about their Grade 10 subjects.

Microsystem. Despite the existing challenges, learners made decisions to work harder, maintain focus on their schoolwork, and exhibit disciplined behaviour. They believed that they were 'different' from other learners because they had made the decision to complete their schooling. After the initial Grade 9 interviews (2015), all eight of the participants who were telephonically interviewed in 2016 had decided to stay in school. This decision was expressed even by Emlyn, who considered dropping out in Grade 9 (2015). Thus, EDM is fluid over time, and can be influenced by multiple factors to produce positive educational outcomes. This outcome was verified by the follow-up data in 2017, showing that all 16 learners enrolled at school.

Summary and conclusions. Overall, participants' attitudes demonstrated that they valued their education, and that despite social adversities in their ecological systems, they were motivated during Grade 9 to complete high school or HET. The findings of this study contribute to existing literature on EDM, and factors affecting the skills development of South African youth (Bloch, 2009; Harber & Mcube, 2011; Kraak, 2011; Mateus et al., 2014; Ribeiro, 2009; Sims, 2006). The data supports previous research indicating that despite social adversities, South African youth living in poverty are resilient and have the agency to progress in their education (Bollinger & Stover, 1999; Branson et al., 2004; De Lannoy, 2008; De Lannoy et al., 2015; Gustafsson, 2011; Spaull, 2015). In the following section, I highlight the limitations of this study, and provide recommendations for stakeholders in education.

Research limitations. This study provides valuable insights into the EDM of male, Coloured Grade 9 learners from low socio-economic communities. This demographic group was chosen to present as coherent an understanding of a particularly vulnerable youth subgroup. Considering the significance of the dropout phenomenon, the small sample size did not allow for generalisations of the findings. More learners may have added to the diversity

of the group and possibly prevent sample bias towards learners with positive EDM. In addition, it was difficult to obtain observational data in the school, community, and household context. This study would also have benefited from a more longitudinal approach that allowed for more regular contact with learners over time, or for the exploration of EDM after Grade 12. Such follow-up data would have allowed (a) for verification of the originally collected data, and (b) to assess the factors that influenced learners to complete or leave high school since Grade 9.

The sample was biased towards learners who made positive decisions about their education, and who indicated signs of resilience in comparison to many of their peers. There were no participants in the sample who left school after Gr 9. This limited the ability of the study to comment on factors that influence drop out. This bias may have been influenced by the involvement or association of school representatives in the sample recruitment process at Mount View. For example, it is possible that certain learners may have been drawn to participate in the study to gain approval from the Vice Principal.

More academically inclined learners from both schools may have been more enthusiastic about participating in the study, with the expectation that their involvement might assist their educational progression, for example by obtaining knowledge or guidance during the interview process.

The learners could have also assumed that their involvement in the study concerning EDM would make an impression on school representatives, by implying that they take their education seriously, with the hope that it could influence favourable treatment at school. This assumption and the aforementioned sample bias may have influenced a level of social desirability of answers during the interviews, where more positive accounts of EDM could have been expressed rather than answers which were honest.

Furthermore, the findings were based only on the participants' accounts of what they perceived to influence their EDM, and time constraints prevented obtaining other useful data from key stakeholders. For example, data such as reports or test results would have been useful in assessing the learners' academic performance, and interviews with parents about their perceptions of the value of education and the educational outcomes of their children could have added valuable insights to this study. A series of focused group discussions with teachers and parents may have also have been valuable. However, based on the findings of this study I am able to make some recommendations for stakeholders in education.

Recommendations. This section provides recommendations for stakeholders in education (e.g., schools), policy-makers, and future researchers.

***Schools*.** Given the preference for higher level skills in the South African labour market, school stakeholders (e.g., government, head teachers, and teachers) should promote a 'learning culture' that prepares high school learners for HET studies. This would be an important shift in an education system that (a) previously did not consider HET education an option for Black and Coloured learners, and (b) does not make FET education compulsory. This study identified factors that may foster learning in a young person's micro and meso-systems, such as sufficient teachers, textbooks and stationery, adequate school facilities, social support, and non-corporal punishment.

Furthermore, the ability of teachers to deal appropriately with undisciplined learners in overcrowded classrooms is an issue that requires attention by school management and teaching staff. Although corporal punishment is illegal, the approach to discipline at some schools is not adequately addressed. I encourage more research in this area, and suggest that teachers and school management receives training around (a) the negative effects and illegalities of corporal punishment at school, and (b) how to manage alternative forms of discipline.

I emphasise the importance of cultural capital, and encourage participants to research and discuss potential careers with teachers, parents, and fellow learners. Peers were recognised as a potential source of career-related information. For example, Clint's knowledge of the pilot profession, which he 'inherited' from his uncle who is a pilot, could potentially increase the cultural capital of Emlyn, who had a way to directly access information about this profession. Thus, the peers of learners who are knowledgeable about certain careers and educational pathways could support other learners who lack this knowledge. Furthermore, the lack of information or variability of career guidance contributing to the cultural capital of learners in the meso-system (such as from the family or community) may threaten positive EDM and continuous learning. The school represents an accessible resource that can provide adequate and regulated educational and career support that promotes positive educational outcomes.

Additionally, psychologists and social workers can play an essential role in providing career guidance and social support at school. This study observed that younger learners strategically befriended older learners for educational knowledge and social support. Stakeholders should investigate low cost mechanisms to provide 'intermediate' psycho-social support in poorer schools that lack this resource.

For example, senior learners who are viewed as role models, can be trained by social workers and psychologists to provide intermediate assistance at school to younger learners by providing information about subject and career options, social support services, or accessible resources.

Such interventions could provide a space for learners thinking about dropping out of school and give them the opportunity to renegotiate their options and maintain their resilience and agency in the process of EDM. This type of social support may lessen the pressure on teachers to assist learners with such issues, and focus more on their teaching function,

although teachers would need to be available to deal with more serious issues that cannot be managed by senior learners. It would also provide more senior learners with additional mentoring and skill development opportunities (e.g., through training courses).

Moreover, schools can educate parents about career options, and provide career guidance to strengthen this support base for learners in the 'household space', which schools often lack access to. Parental involvement in the school context can include volunteer activities, attendance at parent-teacher conferences, or events where learners participate (Lee & Bowen, 2006).

***Policy-makers*.** Given the multiple forms of deprivation faced by young people that impact on learning outcomes, schools and policy-makers at national and local government level are encouraged to be innovative to find intermediate social support solutions for learners from low socio-economic backgrounds. The aforementioned solution involving senior learners is one example. Another solution is for policy-makers to recognise the importance of female role models who influence positive educational outcomes for poor youth. Policy-makers should thus advocate for the empowerment of women, through education, in poor communities.

Despite challenging socio-economic circumstances, it was mostly female role models at the school, household or the community level shown to invest more time and interest to learners by providing educational support, career guidance, and promoted continuous learning. At the school level, policy-makers should investigate and create procedures for alternative forms of discipline to guide teachers at school, and eradicate the use of corporal punishment.

For the subject of LO; policy-makers, career advisors, and curriculum specialists can work together to ensure relevant and adequate career guidance is provided at all school levels. The LO curriculum should also advise learners about subjects required for different

types of careers, and be flexible in the provision of career information when learners change their career aspirations in the FET stage (as was the case for some of the learners in this study).

Researchers. Future researchers could assess whether LO has the capacity and effectiveness to assist the different career needs of learners, despite changes to career intentions over time. High school learners must be prepared to make informed decisions about career and subject choices before and during the FET stage. LO is an educational resource which all high school learners can access, and it should be used effectively to increase positive educational outcomes, especially for poorer learners.

From a theoretical perspective, Miles and Huberman's (1994) approach to identifying key nodes and influential relationships between factors which influenced EDM was helpful to explain *how* Grade 9 learners decided to continue their education. Although the coding of themes during the analysis was time consuming, it was nonetheless thorough and easier to implement for a study that did not utilise computer software. Bronfenbrenner's ecological development framework was a valuable tool in identifying factors that influenced learner EDM.

The longitudinal nature of this study was conducive to validating and comparing findings from when students were in Grade 9 to when they had completed this grade. Future studies should make use of Bronfenbrenner's model, and should take into consideration that its application will be beneficial for longitudinal studies in EDM. Moreover, this study could be expanded by future researchers to include Grade 9 learners from other racial groups, socio-economic backgrounds, and demographic groupings, to creating a model framework that promotes continuous learning.

The sample bias towards learners who make positive EDM could be prevented by limiting the involvement of school representatives in sample recruitment processes, and

strategizing ways of encouraging diversity in the sample, but which still honours the target sample criteria. For example, the researcher could explain the study intentions to the target sample group without the presence of school representatives, and encourage all types of learners to volunteer, despite variances in academic performance, intentions, or EDM.

Social desirability bias in interview responses could be managed by encouraging honest responses prior to commencing the interview, ensuring confidentiality and voluntary participation, and probing questions which assists to verify the information.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

This study was concerned with the low educational outcomes of youth in South Africa, where high drop-out rates are reported at high school and HET levels. At high school, South African youth are given the responsibility to decide the educational level they desire to reach. It is the EDM in Grade 9 that allows learners to begin to influence the possibility of an improved standard of living. This makes it pertinent for learners from poorer neighbourhoods to take the opportunity to complete their FET or HET education to become more employable and increase their income potential. This study focused on the EDM of male, Coloured learners from poor communities which previous research findings show to be the most likely demographic group in the Western Cape to drop out of high school after Grade 9.

This study focused on the end of the compulsory phase of schooling (i.e., Grade 9). The aim was to explore the socio-economic factors that influenced the EDM of Grade 9 learners to either continue or end their education. By obtaining qualitative interview and enrolment data over an extended period (2015 to 2017), I gained insight into the educational intentions and identified socio-economic factors that influenced the EDM of 16 Grade 9 learners from two high schools. These findings addressed three sub-research questions that aimed to explore the phenomenon of why learners decide to dropout or continue their education.

By addressing Research Question 1, I identified that the intention of 12 of the learners' to engage in HET was influenced by several elements. Learners' had a sense of duty from the family, which in most cases had a history of dropout, to complete high school. A matric certificate was considered insufficient to ensure job security, which required HET.

Some learners had a broader knowledge of career-related information (cultural capital), however in many cases this knowledge was limited. Several learners had direct access to (mainly) female educational role models, who supported their educational journey, while other learners used their agency to obtain career or educational information from other sources. Financial stability enabled some learners' families to save funds for HET, whilst learners from financially unstable households relied on feelings of hope around obtaining good grades to continue to HET.

By addressing Research Question 2, I identified factors that influenced the EDM of four learners to complete high school. These learners shared a similar sentiment of 'duty' to complete high school which was largely influenced by a family history of school dropout. To these learners, a matric certificate was sufficient to ensure job security. Learners hoping to complete Grade 12 also believed that job security would improve their standard of living, and relied on feelings of 'hope' to progress to Grade 12. These participants were generally supported by female role models in their education; however they had a lower level of career knowledge (cultural capital) to guide them in their educational careers.

By applying Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems framework to Research Question 3, I was able to identify several factors that influenced the EDM of learners during their Grade 9 year. The negative influences on EDM included: (a) the legacy of apartheid and the challenges presented by the transition to democracy (chrono-system), which negatively influenced low levels of parent education and family income; (b) funding shortages and inadequate facilities at school due to limited funding (exo-system); (c) ineffective career guidance; (d) a history of family dropout, (e) violence in the school, community, and household contexts (mesosystem); (f) absent fathers in the home, and (g) various social adversities that led participants to consider dropping out of school, such as the drug addiction of family members, and financial instability in the household (microsystem).

The positive influences on EDM included: (a) belief in the value of education; (b) financial stability in the household; (c) educational support (mesosystem); (d) the resilience and agency of learners; and (e) belief in the upward mobility associated with education (microsystem).

The follow-up data collected in 2016 and 2017 verified the findings obtained from the initial interviews (2015). However, limitations of this study included (a) a small sample size; (b) difficulty obtaining observational data; (c) sample bias towards learners with positive EDM; (d) social desirability to report positive accounts of EDM during interviews; and (e) time constraints to obtain useful data from stakeholders. Time constraints limited the ability to obtain other useful types of data (e.g., focus group interviews from teachers and parents). This study has implications for stakeholders in education (e.g., schools), policy-makers, and future researchers.

As the researcher of this study, I am pleased that the participants continued their education after Grade 9, and exhibited strong intentions to complete Grade 12 or HET. It gives me hope that South African youth in poor communities are defying their socio-economic adversities and breaking the cycle of poverty through education.

I conclude this dissertation by motivating educational stakeholders, such as policy-makers, schools, and researchers to take the opportunity to influence policy and develop interventions that will improve the quality of educational experiences for youth in poor communities. I believe this will contribute to positive social transformation by improving educational outcomes, socio-economic status, and living standards for the future generations of South Africa.

Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.

- Nelson Mandela

Appendix A: Breakdown of South Africa's National Educational Framework (NQF)

NQF Level	Band / Phase	Qualification Type	School level	Providers
10	HET	Doctoral degree (professional)		University
9		Masters degree (professional)		University
8		Bachelor honours degree Postgraduate diploma		University
7		Bachelor's degree Advanced Diploma		University
6		Diploma advanced certificate		University
5		Higher certificate		TVET/University
4	FET	National certificate	Grade 12	TVET
3			Grade 11	TVET
2			Grade 10	TVET
1	GET	General certificate	Grade 3 to Grade 9	ABET courses

Table 1. National Qualifications Framework.
Note: An image of the National Qualification Framework depicted from the South African Child Gauge 2015 (Branson, et al., 2015, p. 43).

In South Africa, accredited training which enables the provision of formal qualifications is based on the National Qualification Framework (NQF), which ranges from NQF levels 1 to 10 (Department of Basic Education, Republic of South Africa, 2018; Department of Higher Education and Training, Republic of South Africa, 2015b). In addition to the 10 NQF levels, the Department of Basic Education (2018) has an education grading system that is divided between the General Education and Training (GET) and the Further Education Training (FET) phase. The GET phase expands from Grade 0/R to Grade 9, and is sub-divided between the 'Foundation' Phase (Grade R or 0, and Grades 1 to 3), the 'Intermediate' Phase (Grades 4 to 6), and the 'Senior' Phase (Grades 7 to 9). The FET stage includes Grades 10 to 12, and is generally completed at Secondary or high school institutions. The GET and FET phases are implemented in ordinary schools, which are traditional Primary and Secondary schools that are inclusive of public and independent schools (Department of Basic Education, Republic of South Africa, 2015). Further to the GET and FET phase is the Higher Education Training (HET) phase, where tertiary qualifications, such as Bachelor degrees, are acquired. Though Psychologists argue that learning begins from birth (for example, Erikson's eight stages of development theory), accredited learning in South Africa begins as of NQF level 1 in Grade 9, and learners have the option to stop or continue their learning once they have completed this level (Basic Conditions of Employment Act 75 of 1997; Franz, & White, 1985). Hence, each level of Grade 10, 11 and 12 in the FET phase presents an opportunity for learners to practice their freedom of choice to continue with their high school education.

Appendix B: Social Grants Issued

Grant Type	Year		
	April 2013	April 2014	April 2015
Older persons grant (old age pension)	R1270	R1350	R1410
Older persons grant (older than 75 years of age)	R1290	R1370	R1430
Disability grant	R1270	R1350	R1410
War veteran's grant	R1290	R1370	R1430
Grant-in-Aid	R300	R310	R330
Child support grant	R300	R310	R330
Foster child grant	R800	R830	R860
Care-dependency grant	R1270	R1350	R1410

Table 2. Grant amounts issued per grant between April 2013 and April 2015
Note: Old persons' grants are differentiated between those below and above 75 years of age.
Retrieved from the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA): You and Your Grants 2015/16 (2015).

Grant Type							
OAG	WVG	DG	GIA	CDG	FCG	CSG	Total
300,541	76	153,335	13,096	12,381	31,450	958,692	1,469,571

Table 3. Total number of social grants issued per grant type in the Western Cape as at 30 September 2015
Note: The Western Cape Social Grants include the following: Old Age grant (OAG), War Veteran's grant (WVG), Disability grant (DG), Grant in Aid (GIA), Care Dependency grant (CDG), Foster Child grant (FCG), and Child Support grant (CSG). Retrieved from the Statistical Report No 9 of 2015, South African Social Security Agency (SASSA).

According to the Statistical Report No 9 of 2015 (SASSA, 2015), the three highest number of grants issued to households in the Western Cape as from September 2015 was the Child Support Grant (958,692), followed by the Old Age Grant (300,541) and the Disability grant (153,335). Table 2 (Appendix B) displays the value (in Rand) issued for each social grant as from April 2013 to April 2015. During this period, there was a relative increase in all grants; but more so for the Child Support grant which was increased from R300 to R330, the Old Age grant from R1270 to R1410 (or R1290 to R1430 for persons older than the age of 75), and the Disability grant from 1270 to R1410 (SASSA: You and Your Grants 2015/16, 2015). As the highest number of grants issued, yet at the least value, the Child Support grant has become the biggest programme for alleviating child poverty in South Africa (Hall & Sambu, 2015).

Appendix C: Headlines from 'Eye Witness News' which relate to gang violence in Hanover Park between 2012 and 2016.

Date	Article Headline	Reference
06 January 2016	Calls for increased police visibility in Hanover Park: Residents have called for increased police visibility to deal with the many social ills.	Fisher, S. (2016). Calls for increased police visibility in Hanover Park. *Eye Witness News*. Retrieved from http://ewn.co.za/2016/01/06/Calls-for-increased-police-visibility-in-Hanover-Park
24 December 2015	Boy (4) killed in overnight Hanover Park gang crossfire: The little boy from Hermanus was visiting his grandmother when the shooting broke out last night.	Koyana, X. (2015). Boy (4) killed in overnight Hanover Park gang crossfire. *Eye Witness News*. Retrieved from http://ewn.co.za/2015/12/24/Boy-4-killed-in-Hanover-Park-gang-crossfire
05 November 2015	Gang violence forces Hanover Park clinic shut down: The Hanover Park CPF claims seven people have been killed in gang shootings in the last week.	Koyana, X. (2015). Gang violence forces Hanover Park clinic shut down. *Eye Witness News*. Retrieved from http://ewn.co.za/2015/11/05/Gang-violence-leads-to-Hanover-Park-clinic-shut-down
11 June 2014	Hanover Park residents vow to take back community: Residents intend marching to the homes of gangsters to request them to stop shooting.	Malgas, N. (2014). Hanover Park residents vow to take back community. *Eye Witness News*. Retrieved from http://ewn.co.za/2014/11/06/Hanover-Park-residents-vow-to-take-back-community
11 May 2014	10 people killed in Hanover Park in 2 weeks: In the most recent incident, police apprehended a suspect following a fatal shooting in the area last night.	Fisher, S. (2014). 10 people killed in Hanover Park in 2 weeks. *Eye Witness News.* Retrieved from http://ewn.co.za/2014/11/05/10-killed-in-Hanover-Park-in-two-weeks
31 March 2014	Boy 13 killed in gang crossfire: Police say no arrests have been made in connection with the murder of a 13-year-old Hanover Park boy.	September, C. (2014). Boy 13 killed in gang crossfire. *Eye Witness News*. Retrieved from http://ewn.co.za/2014/03/31/Boy-13-killed-in-gang-crossfire
30 September 2013	Cape gangs on recruitment drive: Hanover Park parents fear the worst for their sons who are being recruited by gangs.	Sesant, S. (2013). Cape gangs on recruitment drive. *Eye Witness News*. Retrieved from http://ewn.co.za/2013/09/30/Hanover-Park-gangs-recruiting-youths
04 September 2013	Man shot dead in Hanover Park: It remains unclear whether the shooting of a 20-year-old man is linked to gang violence.	Fisher, S. (2013). Man shot dead in Hanover Park. *Eye Witness News*. Retrieved from http://ewn.co.za/2013/09/04/Man-shot-dead-in-Hanover-Park
26 August 2013	Communities need to fight gangs with police: Nathi Mthethwa appealed to residents to help police rid their community of drug dealers and gangsters	Fisher, S. (2013). Communities need to fight gangs with police. *Eye Witness News*. Retrieve from http://ewn.co.za/2013/08/26/Police-urge-Mitchells-Plain-resident-to-join-forces
10 May 2013	Cape gang violence on the rise: Cape communities are worried innocent people may be killed in a fresh spate of gang violence.	Isaacs, L. & Fisher, S. (2013). Cape gang violence on the rise. *Eye Witness News*. Retrieved from http://ewn.co.za/2013/05/10/Fresh-gang-violence-outbreak-in-the-Cape
27 November 2012	Gang-shooting victim fighting for his life: The six-year-old boy shot in a Hanover Park gang crossfire remains in critical condition.	September, C. (2012). Gang-shooting victim fighting for his life. *Eye Witness News*. Retrieved from http://ewn.co.za/2012/11/27/Hanover-Park-gang-shooting-victim-alive
26 November 2012	Hanover Park on edge following shootings: Hanover Park residents are living in fear due to the ongoing gang violence in their community.	September, C. (2012). Hanover Park on edge following shootings. *Eye Witness News*. Retrieved from http://ewn.co.za/2012/11/26/Hanover-Park-on-edge-following-shootings
19 November 2012	Man killed in gang violence: The ongoing gang violence in Hanover Park has claimed the life of a 22-year-old man.	Fisher, S. (2012). Man killed in gang violence. *Eye Witness News*. Retrieved from http://ewn.co.za/2012/11/19/Man-shot-dead-in-gang-violence
17 November 2012	Gang violence affects schooling: Hanover Park children are forced to stay away from school due to ongoing gang violence in the area.	Fisher, S. (2012). Gang violence affects schooling. *Eye Witness News*. Retrieved from http://ewn.co.za/2012/11/17/Gang-violence-affects-schooling
02 November 2012	Cops struggle with gang violence: The fight between CPT police and gangsters is becoming increasingly difficult to control.	Raubenheimer, G. (2012). Cops struggle with gang violence. *Eye Witness News*. Retrieved from http://ewn.co.za/2012/11/02/Cops-struggle-to-cope-with-gang-violence

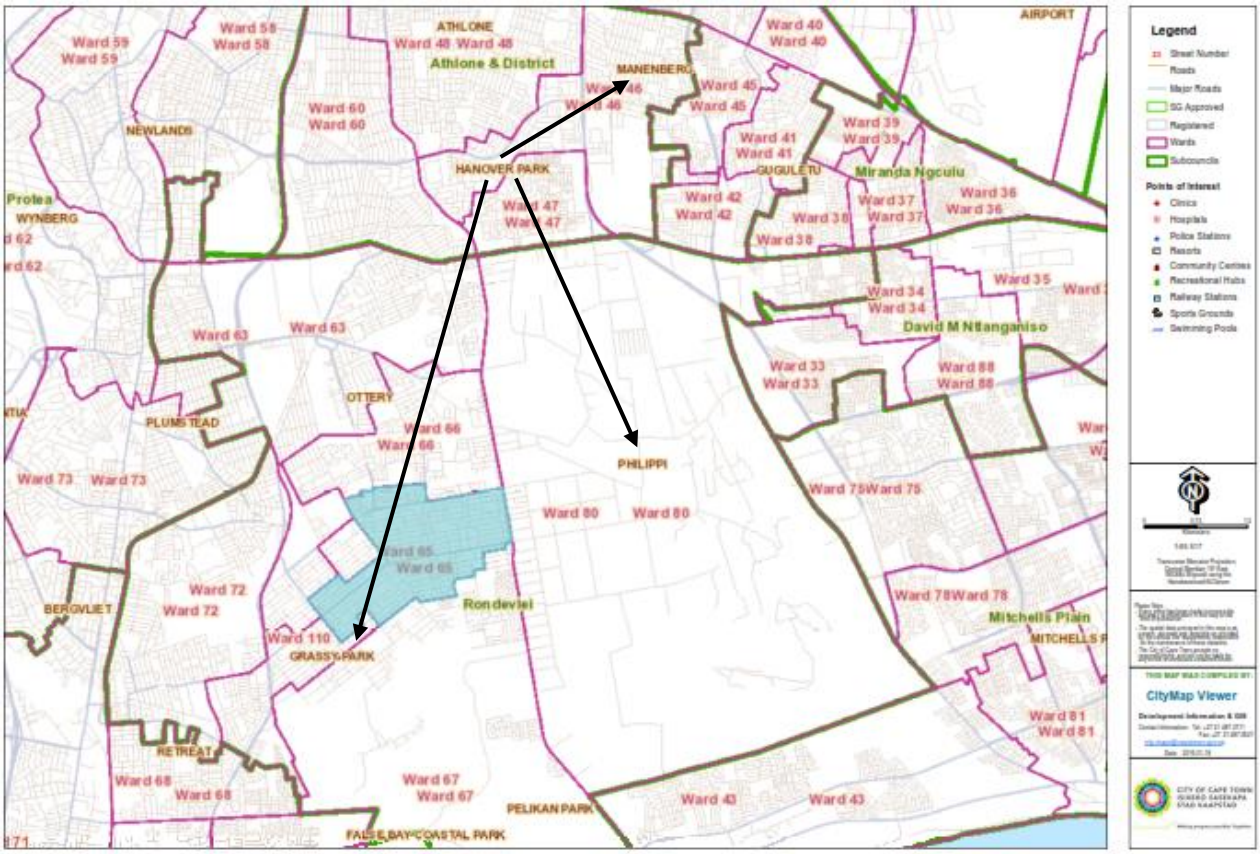
Table 4. Headlines from 'Eye Witness News' which relate to gang violence in Hanover Park between 2012 and 2016.

Appendix D: Summary of the sample demographics.

Name and Age	Family /Household Composition	Area of Residence	High School	Intention to Continue Education	Career Aspiration
Abe, 14	• Father and step mother • Grandparents • 2 Aunts, 1 Uncle • 3 other related children	Philippi	Groenvlei	University	Doctor
Bob, 15	• Mother and father • 2 brothers (1 living outside the home)	Hanover Park	Groenvlei	Navy education	Navy
Clint, 14	• Mother and step father • Grandmother • 1 sister, 1 brother	Philippi	Groenvlei	A pilot training institution	Pilot
Dave, 14	• Father • Grandmother	Manenberg	Groenvlei	College	Graphic Designer
Emlyn, 14	• Mother and step father • 1 younger brother	Hanover Park	Groenvlei	High School	Professional Rugby Player
Frank, 14	• Mother (Father not residing with the family) • 1 sister, 1 brother	Hanover Park	Groenvlei	Technicon / College / Army	Professional/ technician / join the Army
Grant, 14	• Mother and Father • 2 older brothers	Philippi	Groenvlei	Army / College	Army/Soldier
Henry, 16	• Mother • Grandmother (in a separate dwelling) • 2 brothers	Lansdowne *(home located in the Hanover Park vicinity)	Groenvlei	College	Lawyer
Ian, 15	• Mother • 1 brother, 2 sisters	Hanover Park	Mount View	University	Mechanical Engineer
Jack, 14	• Mother, step father, and biological father • Grandmother • 2 Uncles • 3 brothers, 1 sister	Hanover Park	Mount View	University	Scientist/Artist
Kay, 14	• Father and step mother • 3 brothers, 1 sister	Hanover Park	Mount View	University	Lawyer/ Advocate
Luke, 14	• Mother and Father	Grassy Park	Mount View	College	Mechanical Engineer
Martin, 15	• Mother and father • 1 sister, 1 brother in law	Hanover Park	Mount View	University/College	Mechanical Engineer
Noel, 15	• Mother and father • 1 sister	Hanover Park	Mount View	High School	Professional Cricket Player
Oscar, 14	• Mother • 4 sisters	Hanover Park	Mount View	High School and then fire fighter training	Fire Fighter
Peter, 14	• Mother and father • 2 brothers, 2 sisters	Hanover Park	Mount View	High School and religious school afterwards	Professional Singer/Bank Teller

Table 5. Summary of the sample demographics.
Note: Although one learner resided in the Pinati Estate area of the Lansdowne suburb, the position of the learner's residence had geographically overlapped into the Hanover Park vicinity, and was therefore considered as part of the sub-area of Hanover Park (City of Cape Town, 2013c).

Appendix E: A Map of the areas of residence of learners in relation to the area of Hanover Park.



Map 1. A Map of the areas of residence of learners in relation to the area of Hanover Park.
Note: A map of where the learners of the present study reside in relation to the area of Hanover Park, which includes Grassy Park, Philippi and Manenberg. Retrieved from https://citymaps.capetown.gov.za/EGISViewer/

Appendix F: Socio-economic statistics for each suburb

Youth Explorer showed youth from the four suburbs reside in relatively high rates of income-poor households, ranging from 63.5% in Hanover Park; 62.4% in Manenberg; 59.1% in Philippi; and 44.7% in Grassy Park (https://youthexplorer.org.za/). Further socio-economic conditions of the four suburbs are described in the following Appendices: Socio-economic statistics for each suburb in Appendix F; An overview of a few key statistics from the Census 2011 in Table 5 in Appendix G; A description of the SES level index and service level index for the suburbs of the present study in Appendix H; and a display of the actual SES Level index and Service Level index indicators of learner suburbs in Tables 6, 7, 8 and 9 in Appendix I.

According to a report from the 2011 Census supplied by the City of Cape Town (2013c), Hanover Park showed a population of approximately 45497 which was predominantly Coloured (94%), and included approximately 9375 households, with an average household size of approximately 4.85 persons[39]. Furthermore, only 64% of the Hanover Park labour force (aged 15 to 64) was found to be employed, and 58% of households had a monthly income of R3200 or less. The other three areas of Grassy Park, Manenberg and Philippi showed similar findings, obtained by the City of Cape Town (2013a,b,c,d).

Grassy Park (88%) and Manenberg (85%) also consisted of predominantly of Coloureds. Though Philippi comprised predominantly of (94%) Black Africans, a small percentage (4%) of Coloureds were reported in this suburb, and this may include the three Coloured learners of the present study who resided in Philippi. Interestingly, Philippi had the highest population (191025) in comparison to the other three areas, with also the highest proportion (78%) of households with a monthly income of R3200 or less, and the highest rate of unemployment (38%). Hanover Park (36%) and Manenberg (36%) followed closely in their rates of unemployment, with Grassy Park (14%) obtaining the lowest rate of unemployment by comparison. All four suburbs obtained low proportions of those 20 years and older who completed Grade 12, with Hanover Park ranking the lowest proportion at 24%, followed by Manenberg with 26%, Philippi with 32%, and Grassy Park with the highest at 50%. Thus, the four areas of the present study are characterised with relatively low rates of educational progression at the high school level.

[39] Refer to Appendix G, Table 5 for an overview of a few key statistics from the Census 2011.

Further to understanding the socio-economic conditions of the four suburbs; Van Heyningen's (2007) report on the 'Planning Districts Socio-economic Analysis' measured the SES Level and Service Level index for each of the suburbs in Cape Town from the 2001 Census. All four suburbs of the present study were located in the 'District G: Klipfontein / False Bay' region, and the region as a whole was ranked between the 'middle' and 'worst off' of suburbs with a SES Level index of 40.43, and ranked as the 'worst-off' of suburbs with a Service Level index of 10.90.

Van Heyningen (2007) reported District G as the second worst-off of all districts (with the worst-off area being Nyanga), and was characterised with some of the most marginalised areas with high unemployment rates and a low standard of living. The District G region; which includes other vulnerable areas such as Guguletu and Nyanga, has one of the largest populations of all the districts in Cape Town with a high population density (total population at 512958, representing 18% of the City's population in 2001).

Out of the four suburbs of present study located in District G, Van Heyningen (2007) reported Grassy Park to be the only suburb ranked just below the 'best-off' of suburbs, with a SES Level index region between 21.69 to 29.56, and a Service Level index region between 1.61 and 3.12.[40] Van Heyningen (2007) further reported Hanover Park, Philippe and Manenberg to have the same lower SES Level index range between 43.48 to 54.51, which is rated to be just below the 'worst-off' of suburbs. These three suburbs obtained a Service Level index range of 3.13 to 5.69 (middle level), 10.96 to 73.49 (worst-off level), and 3.13 to 5.69 (middle level) respectively.

[40] Refer to Appendix H and Tables 7,8,9, and 10 in Appendix I for a description of the SES level index and Service level index for the suburbs of the present study, namely Hanover Park, Philippi, Grassy Park, and Manenberg.

Appendix G: An overview of a few key statistics from the Census 2011

Suburb	Population	Households	Household size	Dominant race group of suburb	% of those 20 years and older who completed matric	% of labour force (15 to 64 years) found to be employed	% of households with a monthly income of R3200 or less	Rate of unemployment
Hanover Park	45497	9375	4.85	94% Coloured	24%	64%	58%	35.55%
Philippi	191025	61797	3.09	94% Black African	32%	62%	78%	38.18%
Grassy Park	19212	4707	4.08	88% Coloured	50%	86%	32%	13.58%
Manenberg	61615	12834	4.80	85% Coloured	26%	64%	61%	36.20%

Table 6. An overview of a few key statistics from the Census 2011 (City of Cape Town, 2013a, b, c, d)

Appendix H: A description of the SES level index and service level index for the suburbs of the present study (Van Heyningen, 2007)

According to Van Heyningen (2007), the District G region of Cape Town includes, amongst other areas, all four of the sample suburbs of the present study, namely Hanover Park, Philippi, Grassy Park, and Manenberg. The SES index and Service level index for District G for each of the four suburbs are ranked between 'better off', 'middle', or 'worst off' in Appendix I in Table 6, followed by the statistics in provided in Table 7, 8 and 9. In order to measure the social and economic wellbeing of suburb residents, the SES index is calculated by taking the average of four SES dimensions; namely,

- The percentage of households earning less than R19 200 per annum
- The percentage of adults (20+) with highest educational level less than matric
- The percentage of the economically active population that was unemployed, and
- The percentage of the labour force employed in elementary/unskilled occupations.

The higher the score on the SES Level indicator or index, the worse off is the particular suburb concerned. Van Heyningen (2007) reported overall averages of 'District H: Southern' region as the best off (22.16), whilst the 'District F: Mitchells Plain / Kayelitsha' region was reported as the worst off (54.12), followed by the District G: Klipfontein / False Bay region (40.43), which includes Hanover Park, Philippi, Grassy Park, and Manenberg.

The Service Level index is described to reflect a "partial understanding of deprivation" for each suburb, and it is an average of the following indicators from the 2001 Census data which measure the level of access to basic services (Van Heyningen, 2007, p.28); namely,

- The percentage of households living in informal dwellings,
- The percentage of households with no access to electricity for lighting,
- The percentage of households with no flush or chemical toilets,
- The percentage of households with no potable water on the site or in the dwelling, and
- The percentage households with no refuse removal by local authorities weekly or less.

Similarly to the SES Level index, the higher the score on the Service Level indicator or index, the worst off is the particular suburb concerned. According to Van Heyningen (2007), the 'District D: Tygerberg' region has the best off average of 3.30, with 'District F: Mitchells Plain / Khayelitsha' as the worst off average of 26.37, followed by District E: Easter region with an average of 13.04. The 'District G: Klipfontein / False Bay' region which includes the four suburbs of the present study is rated with an overall Service Level index average of 10.90 (Van Heyningen, 2007).

Appendix I: SES Level index and Service Level index indicators of learner suburbs

Table 7
Legend for index indicator range (Van Heyningen, 2007)

SES index range	Rank category	Service level index range
13.32 – 21.68	Best off	0.34 – 1.60
21.69 – 29.56		1.61 – 3.12
21.57 – 43.47	Middle	3.13 – 5.69
43.48 – 54.51		5.70 – 10.95
54.52 – 69.00	Worst off	10.96 – 73.49

Table 8
SES level indicators and Service Level indicator range by suburb (Van Heyningen, 2007)

Specific suburb of District G (covering the Klipfontein / False Bay region in Cape Town)	SES Index range	Service level index range
Hanover Park	43.48 – 54.51	3.13 – 5.69
Philippi	43.48 – 54.51	10.96 – 73.49
Grassy Park	21.69 – 29.56	1.61 – 3.12
Manenberg	43.48 – 54.51	3.13 – 5.69

Table 9
Socio-economic status (SES) indicator of District G based on Census 2001 statistics (Van Heyningen, 2007)

District in Cape Town	% of Adults (20+) with highest qualification < matric	% of economically active unemployed	% of Households earning < R19200 pa	% of labour force in unskilled occupations	S.E.S. Index
District G: Suburbs in Klipfontein / False Bay region in Cape Town. Inclusive of Hanover Park, Philippe, Grassy Park and Manenberg	70.52	31.05	40.28	19.86	40.43

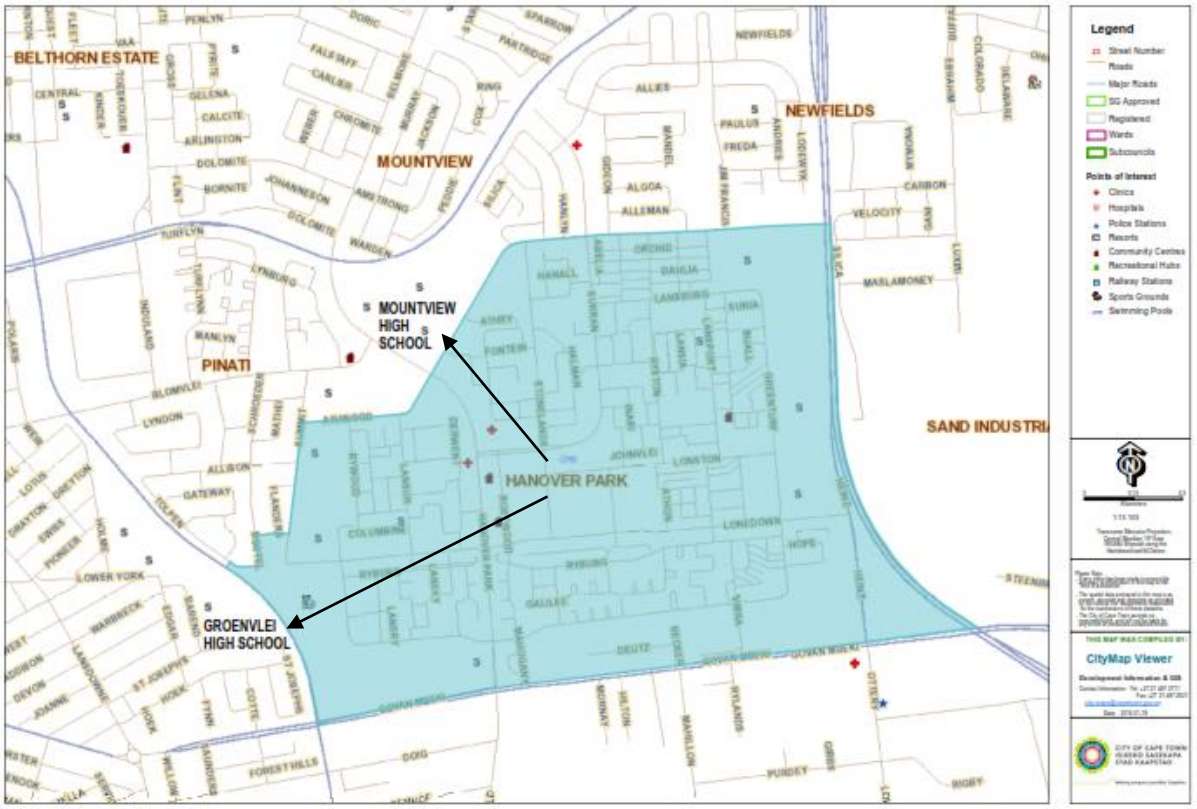
Table 10
Service level index indicator of District G based on Census 2001 statistics (Van Heyningen, 2007)

District in Cape Town	% of households living in Informal dwellings	% of households with no access to electricity for lighting	% of households with no flush or chemical toilet	% households with no potable water on-site or in-dwelling	% Households with no refuse removal by local authority weekly or less	Service Level Index
District G: Suburbs in Klipfontein / False Bay region in Cape Town. Inclusive of Hanover Park, Philippe, Grassy Park and Manenberg	15.19	8.96	12.61	14.95	2.80	10.90

Appendix J: Map 2 illustrating the vicinity to which Mount View High School and Groenvlei High School are in relation to the area of Hanover Park

Map 2

Map of Hanover Park in relation to Mount View High School and Groenvlei High School



Note: Map 2 illustrates the vicinity in which Mount View High School and Groenvlei High School are in relation to the area of Hanover Park. Retrieved from https://citymaps.capetown.gov.za/EGISViewer/

Appendix K: Information sheet

Educational Decision-Making among Grade 9 Learners in Cape Town

Department of Sociology, University of Cape Town

Information Sheet for Male, Grade 9 learners.

Hallo, I am Ceclin Begbie. I am a masters student at the Department of Sociology at the University of Cape Town. I am conducting a study about how male grade 9 learners make decisions about their education, and whether they intend to study further above the grade 9 level. By talking to grade 9 learners like yourself, I hope to gain a better understanding about the different reasons of why some youth drop-out of school, while others continue with their education above the grade 9 level. I will be working specifically within the area Hanover Park, as learners from this area are faced with various challenges that may impact on their decisions to continue above the grade 9 level. When the study is completed, I hope to provide policy makers (such as community leaders, schools, or state departments) with insight into the decision-making and intentions of young male learners in the Hanover Park area in Cape Town. This may assist with ways of creating support for high school learners to continue with their education, and promote future learning.

Should you decide to participate in my study, I would like your parents to give permission for you to participate. Consent from your parents to participate is necessary, because you are considered a minor in South African law. Once I receive consent from your parents for me to interview you, I would then like to meet with you for about two hours. We can meet at a time that is convenient for both you and ourselves, in a private space. During our meeting, I might bring another woman with me for interpretation purposes, so that you may feel comfortable to speak in the language you prefer. This woman is a family relative, who can understand and speak Afrikaans, and will assist me in my understanding if you choose to speak Afrikaans during the interview.

During our meeting, we will ask you questions about your thoughts on education, your family, friends, school life, and future plans. There will be a list of questions that I will ask, and you can freely express your answers for each one. I may ask that you explain certain things a little bit more in detail so that I can get a better understanding. For example, I might ask you to tell me a little more about your home life, but also how this may impact on your learning. I will ask questions about your experiences at school, and how you feel about the teaching, and ways of learning in that environment. I would also like to ask you if believe that education is important, how your family or friends support you to learn, and your future plans that you may have for your education. I would like to digitaly record the meetings that we have, so that I can listen to what you have said at a later stage. These recordings will be kept in a secure place at my home and will only be accessible by myself and other members of the research team. All team members will keep the information private and confidential.

For my final report, I would like to quote some of the things that have been said by the you and various participants in the study. This will only be done if you, with your parent's consent, agree to partipate in the study. It is important to note that your name will never be mentioned in the study, and you will remain anonymous. Other desciptions may be used that will not reveal who you are as a participant, for example, Participant A or Participant B.We

will always try to avoid asking about topics that are too sensitive or personal. However, if anything we ask you, makes you feel worried or sad, please tell us so. We will try to help you by referring you to people and organisations that are trained to listen to people's feelings and problems and finding a solution to those problems.

I would now like to ask whether you agree to participate in this study. Please understand that your participation to this study should be entirely voluntary. Declining to take part in the research will NOT affect you in any possible way. If you wish to participate but, at any given time, you do not want to answer a certain question, or you decide you do not want to be part of the research anymore, please just tell us so and we will respect your choice!

If anything is still unclear and you would like more information about this research, please feel free to call or sms me on xxx xxxx xxx, and I will try to answer your questions.

Appendix L: Consent Form

University of Cape Town
Faculty of Humanities: Department of Sociology

CONSENT FORM
Educational Decision-Making among Grade 9 Learners in Cape Town
Researcher: Ceclin Kirsty Begbie

Conditions of the study

1. It is because the study participants will be below the age of 18 years that consent to participate will need to be granted by the learner's parents or legal guardian, as well as the learner.
2. There will be no mention of any of the participants' names, or identification of the parties involved in the research study. Learners will not be allowed to participate in the study if their consent forms are not signed by their parents.
3. Interviews will be recorded, and participants will be aware of the recording before the interview takes place. The interview will then be transcribed, and a narrative analysis will be used to explore common themes that emerge from each interview.
4. An interpreter may be used for the purpose of interpreting a participant's native language into English. The participant has the option of not allowing the interpreter to be present, should the participant not feel comfortable in this instance.
5. Participation is based purely on a voluntary basis, and participants may leave or discontinue with the interview at any time.
6. Participants may only consist of Coloured Grade 9 Male learners from poor neighborhoods
7. All information regarding the participants or other parties involved are considered as strictly confidential. Research content or information obtained from any research activities in the study will be safely stored and protected.

Ethical considerations
The researcher will maintain all ethical measures throughout the study, and adhere to all ethical requirements as stipulated in the UCT 'Guide to Research Ethics' manual.

Incentives for Participation in the Study
Participants will be provided with drinks and snacks. If required, transportation costs will be covered by the researcher.

Risks
The present study will impose no threat or bodily harm to any of the research participants, and care and sensitivity will be used to engage with the participant during the interview.

Consent to participate in the above study:

- I have read and understood the research study information sheet for the present study
- As the parent / guardian, I permit this participant to participate in this research project on an anonymous basis
- As the participant of this study, I agree to participate in this research project on an anonymous basis
- I have read this consent form and the information it contains, and had the opportunity to ask questions about them.
- I agree to my responses being used for education and research purposes by the researcher, supervisor and co-supervisor (contact details available below)
- I understand that I am under no obligation to take part in this project.
- I understand I have the right to withdraw from this project at any stage.

Parent/Guardian Consent

Signature of Participant / Guardian (if under 18): _____

Name & Surname of Parent / Guardian: _____

Date: _____
Contact Details:
(1) Name: _____ Number: _____

(2) Name: _____Number:_____

Participant / Learner Consent

Name & Surname of Participant (Grade 9 learner): _____

Signature of Participant / Learner: _____

Date: _____
Contact Details:
Cell Number: _____

Email: _____

Contact Details of Researcher and Supervisors
Should you have any questions or concerns about the research study, kindly email the following persons:

	Email Address:
Researcher: Ceclin Begbie	*Email and cellular / mobile number provided*
Supervisor: Kathy Luckett	*Email provided*
Co-supervisor: Ariane De Lannoy	*Email provided*

Appendix M: Final Interview Schedule

A. Researcher Introduction to learner:

- Occupation of researcher
- Description and motivation of research focus
- Role of learner in his participation in the study

B. Demographic Information: Closed Ended

The participant will be asked to provide answers to the following:

Age: _____Gender: _____Grade:_____

Name of High School: _____

Area of residence/Suburb: _____

C. In-depth Interview questions: Open Ended

- **Subsection A: Personal and family**

1. Can you tell me a little bit about yourself; how would you describe yourself?
2. What do you do in your spare time?
3. What kinds of things would you say are important in life?
4. And could you maybe tell me a little more about you and your family? Who do you live with? How many siblings do you have, if any?
5. And how do you all go about on your daily lives?
6. What is it like living in your home? What would you say are the great things? What are the not so great things?
7. Thank you so much for sharing all that with me. Can I ask you some more? I am interested in the dreams that young people in SA have. We all have some kind of dream about where we would like to get to in life. Can you tell me whether you have any such dreams: What would your dreams for the future be? What makes you want to become_____?
8. What do you think you would need to do to be able to reach those dreams?
9. Some people tell us that education is really important for their future. Others say it is not that important. Young people have different views about these things. What do you think? Is education important for your life? How come? Would it be important to be able to reach your dreams? Why/why not?

- **Subsection B: Education**

10. I would like to talk a little bit more about education. I have been told that our educational system in South Africa can sometimes seem a bit confusing. How would you explain our system to someone who does not know it very well?
11. People often ask me what matric is. How would you explain that?
12. And what about NQF levels? Can you explain that to me?
13. You are in grade 9 now and many pupils in your grade ask us whether they should continue with their education after grade 9. What do you think about that? Is there a law that says students must continue with education?
14. Some learners decide to continue to study above grade 9, to matric or into university levels? Why do you think that is?
15. Do you think there are any advantages or disadvantages to studying further than grade 9? And further than matric (such as a university of college level)? Why/why not?
16. Would you like to continue / discontinue studying after completing grade 9, and why? What influences your decision?
17. Do you think you will be able to pass grade 9? If so, why?
18. And do you think this may be true for grades 10, 11 and 12? Or even at university level? What makes you say so?
19. We have spoken about how you feel about education, but what about your parents? How do they feel about school and education? How do you know this (do they speak about school at home)?

20. What level of education have your parents or siblings completed? And does this influence your decision on whether to continue your studies above grade 9, or matric? How?
21. How does your family support you in your education?

- **Subsection C: Schooling**
  22. Thank you so much. Now I would also like to learn a little bit more about what it is like for you to be at school. Could you please tell me about your experience as a student from the time you began grade 1?
  23. And can you tell me about your experience as a high-school learner specifically?
  24. Now can we talk a bit about the school that you attend?
  25. How do you travel to and from school?
  26. Are your classrooms equipped with everything that is needed to help you learn?
  27. Approximately how many students are in an average class at your school? And how does this influence your experience of learning in the classroom?
  28. Do you think that your school is a good place to learn? Why/why not?
  29. Do you have everything you need that will help you to do, or learn your school work? Can you explain that a bit more?
  30. What do you think works well in your school, and what doesn't work well?
  31. Do you think things can be done to differently in your school? How?

- **Subsection D: Teaching**
  32. Can you describe how your teachers deal with, or interact with other teaching staff?
  33. What are your feelings about your teachers?
  34. How are things being taught and tested at your school? Give an example
  35. In what language are classes taught? How does this make you feel?
  36. Do you find that your teachers are helpful in making you understand the work?
  37. Do your teachers show that they are pleased or happy when you achieve good marks?
  38. Are the teachers strict at your school?
  39. Are your teachers at your school available when you need their help with something?
  40. Do you think that your teachers are good? And why?
  41. What do you think a 'good' teacher is?
  42. Do you think the teachers at your school treat all students fairly?
  43. Are girls and boys treated any different at your school?

- **Subsection E: Student Experience**
  44. What is it like as a student?
  45. Do you think your school appreciates and respects you as an individual?
  46. What kind of student would you say you are?
  47. What are your feelings about homework? How do you deal with it?
  48. Does anyone help you with your homework?
  49. What homework do you normally need help with?
  50. On a typical weekend during the term, how many hours do you spend on homework?
  51. What is it like being in your class?
  52. What are your school friends like?
  53. Why are you studying this year?
  54. Can you tell me what subjects you are currently taking? Why did you choose those?
  55. Could you tell me what your marks are at the moment?
  56. Do you expect that you will pass matric even if you have to take it more than once?
  57. Do you expect that your marks or grades will be good enough for you to be admitted into college, technikon, university, or other post matric institution?
  58. Taking everything into account, what do you intend to do after matric, that is, after leaving school?
  59. How old do you think you will be when you finish all of your education?
  60. Do you think you will end up with more, less, or about the same level of education as most of your current friends? What makes you say that?

- **Subsection F: Check List**
  61. Where do you see yourself in 5 and in 10 years' time?
  62. What steps do you think you will need to take to get there?
  63. What subjects do you do, and what are your marks like?

64. As it stands now, how much education do you think you will complete (such as grades 10, 11, 12, college or university education)?
65. Do you expect that you will pass matric the first time you take it?

Appendix N: Telephonic Follow-up Questions: June 2016

1) What Grade are you in now?
2) How have your marks been since Grade 9, up until now?
   Or if failed: how have your marks been since the previous year? Any improvement?
   - Grade average in Grade 9:
   - Present grade average in grade 10 (or Grade 9 if failed):
3) How do you feel about your performance now that you passed/failed Grade 9? Why?
4) What subjects are you doing now in Grade 10? And Why?
   Or if failed: Have you thought about what subjects to do in Grade10? And Why?
5) What subjects will help you in your career/job/future studies one day?
6) How did you find out that certain subjects will help you in your career/job/future studies?

- Do your family or friends assist you in your career in any way? How?
- Do they know a lot about what you need to do to follow a certain career path? If not, where do you find information about what you want to do one day?

7) Does the subject 'Life Orientation' help prepare you in any way for your career?

- Did it help you choose certain subjects? How?
- Did it help you choose your career path? How?
- What are the important aspects which stood out for you about LO?
- Is there information you wish LO could provide?
  a) Do you understand what to do if you want to study at university or college after matric?
  b) Do you know or understand the steps to take on what to do if you want to work after matric?

8) Are you still interested to continue studying till matric? And why?
9) Have you thought, or are thinking about dropping out of high school, and why?

- What makes you want to stay in school, and complete matric?

10) Are you (still) interested to study at university/college after matric – or just up till matric? And why?
11) What will you do to make sure you complete high school?
12) Again, what do you intend to do after matric?

- How will you make sure this happens?

Appendix O: Data Analysis; List of codes

Table 11

Data Analysis: List of codes

MOUNT	Learners from Mount View High School
GROEN	Learners from Groenvlei High School
HOUSE-COMP	Household composition of the learners
AREA-RESIDE	Area of residence
EDM-CONTINUE	EDM to continue studies after Grade 9
EDM-DROPOUT	EDM to dropout in Grade 9 state
CAREER-ASPIRATION-G9	Career aspiration in current Grade 9 state
FINSTBL-RES+ED	Financial stability enables access to resources and promotes educational engagement and progression
FINSTBL-SAV+ED	Financial stability enables the practice of saving funds for university: A positive influence on EDM and educational progression
FINSTBL-STAB	Educational progression means future financial stability and sustainable wellbeing
FINUNS-RES	The lack of finances in the household impacts on the learner's ability to access learning resources
FINUNS-ED-EXP	Prioritising payments for education expenses promotes added value to education
FINUNS-FAM	Extended family support with educational resources promotes educational engagement
COMVIL-EXPOS+EDM	Exposure to gang violence in the community context and its impact on EDM
COMVIL-GANG+DRUG+DROP	The link between gang activities, drugs, and school drop out
COMVIL-SCHOOL+EDM	Violence in the school context and its influence on EDM
COMVIL-SCHOOL+CORP+EDM	Corporal punishment: The effect on learner EDM
COMVIL-SCHOOL+BULL+EDM	Bullying at school and its impact on learner EDM
COMVIL-FAM+GANGMEM	Family relatives who are gang members
COMVIL-STRAT	Learner disassociation from gangs and gang-related activities
COMVIL-FAMSTRAT	Family strategies to protect learners from gang life
FAMSTRUC-CAREER	Educational support: Family structure and career aspirations
FAMSTRUC-NUC+EDM	Nuclear families and career aspirations
FAMSTRUC-ALT+EDM	Alternative families and EDM.
FAMSTRUCT-EDSUP+ASP	Family structure, educational support and career aspirations
FAMSUP-ROLE+OBJ	Three objectives of educational role models.
FAMSUP-PROMENG	Promoting schoolwork engagement
FAMSUP-SCHOOLCOM	Promoting the completion of school
FAMSUP-CAREERASP	Promoting a particular career aspiration
FAMSUP-GENDER+ROLE	Gender, role-models and educational support
CHALSCHOOL-SHORT TEACHERS	The shortage of teachers and its impact on learning
CHALSCHOOL-SHORT BOOKS	The shortage of textbooks and learning tools, and its impact on learning
CHALSCHOOL-FACILIT+LEARN	Inadequate facilities at school and its impact on learning
CHALSCHOOL-	Overcrowding in the classroom and its impact on learning

CROWD+LEARN	
CHALSCHOOL-TEACHING+LEARN	The influence of teaching practices on learning
CHALSCHOOL-LEARNERSTRAT	Signs of resilience and self-agency in education
CHALSCHOOL-LEARN+AMBIT	Learner ambitions: The pursuit of two career paths
EDOUTCOME-OCC+INTENT	Occupation intention alignment between Grade 9 state and present state
EDOUTCOME – ED+INTENT	Education intention alignment between Grade 9 state and present state
EDOUTCOME-DROPOUT+TH	Thoughts about dropping out between Grade 9 state and present state
EDOUTCOME-RESIL	Self-resilient goals to complete high school
EDOUTCOME-PASS+FET	Learners who passed to FET Stage since Grade 9 in 2015
EDOUTCOME-KNOW-SUB	Source of knowledge about how subjects in Grade 10 will assist them in their career
EDOUCOME-USE+LO	The usefulness of the subject of Life Orientation in FET / Grade 10 subject choices

Appendix P: A Description of the Household Income Used in the Present Study

Financially 'stable' households were classified as those who received a relatively stable income, and where learners indicated that their basic needs were met, such as access to food, clothing and shelter. In this category, learners still experienced some financial limitations, however they reflected their wellbeing to be more secure than learners who experienced regular financial shortages in the home. Learners from households which are classified as financially 'unstable' were more exposed to the elements of poverty, such as inconsistent or unreliable income, scarcity of food, and the lack of access to basic and learning resources. The everyday experiences of all 16 learners between the financial stable and unstable categories varied considerably.

Due to the nature of the present study, the 16 learners were the prime sources used to collect information about household income. As a result, limited information was received about the learners' household income, however the data available could assist to determine their financial conditions (ie: stability or instability). As an example, the data was particularly limited for learners whose parents were temporarily employed, as the amount of income varied considerably and inconsistently for learners to recall. Most learners from 'financially unstable' households had other adults in the home who were either pensioners or unemployed, and only some learners from 'financially stable' households could reflect on the incomes received by adults who were full-time employed. Such was the case with Clint, who was able to recall actual monthly incomes received by his father who worked on a part-time and full-time basis.

Despite the limited data available, the majority of 12 out of the 16 learners could reflect some information about their household income, and they were able to understand the nature of employment of family members, and if they were dependent on government grants. Six out of the 16 learners indicated the number of adults in the household who received a government grant, although none of the learners revealed the type of grant received, nor the grant amount.

Based on the information available, the per capita monthly income of only 4 out of the 16 learners could be determined, and all 4 of these learners lived above the upper bound poverty line of R620 per capita monthly income, as determined in 2011 (De Lannoy, et al., 2015). Although this indicated lower levels of deprivation than many other learners in South Africa, all 16 learners of the present study still experienced levels deprivation in the household which impacted their quality of living.

Of the 4 out of the 16 learners who could be identified to live above the upper-bound poverty line; it was evident in the case of Oscar who resided in a financially unstable household, and did not reach an annual household income threshold of R100 000; that he experienced more hardships than those from relatively financially secure households. The per capita monthly income was calculated by dividing the total household income by the total number of occupants in the household, thus revealing the approximate amount of income allocated for each person in one household. The per capita monthly income of the remaining 3 of the 4 learners from financially stable households; namely Clint, Abe, and Martin, respectively ranged from R1417, R1591, and R3900. The per capita monthly income of the forth learner, namely Oscar from a financially unstable household equated to R1340.

As explained in the results of the present study, the differences of household income showed a significant impact on each of the learner's educational experiences, and their EDM. Refer to Table 8 in Appendix U which presents a detailed summary of findings for learner household income.

Appendix Q: Summary of Reported Findings of Learner Household Income

Table 12

Summary of reported findings of learner household income

Learner	Total number of household occupants (including learner)	Approximate monthly income by learner with PT work	Approximate household incomes from adults with FT work: A breakdown of monthly PT salaries and weekly wages (learner PT income excluded)				Approximate household income from adults with PT or Entrep work on a monthly basis		Income from adults with monthly government grants (GG)		Approximate annual household income based on reported incomes (learner PT income excluded)	Per Capita Monthly Income	Financial Status: Stable (S) or Un-stable (US)
			Number of FT adults	*Total FT monthly salary income*	*Total FT weekly wage income*	Total of all FT incomes over a 1 month period	Number of adults	Total PT or Entrep monthly income	Number adult GG	Est total income from GG			
Abe	11	N/A	4	R17500	N/A	R17500	1	N/A	2	N/A	R210,000	R1591	S
Bob	3	N/A	2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		S
Clint	6	R800	2	R3500	R800	R6700	1	R1000	1	N/A	R102,000	R1417	S
Dave	3	N/A	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	1	N/A	1	N/A	N/A		US
Emlyn	3	N/A	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	1	N/A	1	N/A	N/A		US
Frank	4	N/A	2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		S
Grant	5	N/A	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		US
Henry	4	N/A	1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	2	N/A	N/A		S
Ian	5	N/A	2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		US
Jack	11	N/A	4	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		US
Kay	7	N/A	6	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		S
Luke	3	N/A	1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		S
Martin	5	N/A	2	R9500	R2500	R19500	*1	NA	N/A	N/A	R234,000	R3900	S
Nole	4	N/A	1	N/A	N/A	N/A	*1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		US
Oscar	5	N/A	3	R3500	800	R6700	1	N/A	1	N/A	R80,400	R1340	US
Peter	6	N/A	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		US

Note: FT = Full time; PT = Part time; Entrep. = Entrepreneurial; Est. = Estimated; GG = Government Grants; S = Stable household; US = Unstable household; N/A = Not Applicable; * = adults who work FT and PT/Entrep. The above table depicts the different sources of household income reported by each learner of the present study. Total income estimations are based on approximate amounts reported by the learners. Sections where learners were unaware of incomes are indicated as N/A. Despite this, the present study was able to depict from the findings of the interviews the financial status of each learner (ie: financial stable or unstable household). Based on the data available, the Per Capita Monthly income of only four learners could be calculated. Per Capita Monthly Income is calculated by dividing the total monthly income by the number of occupants in the household.

Appendix R: Three Objectives of Educational Role Models

The educational role-models of all sixteen learners were found to promote certain attributes. These role-model attributes are based on one or more of the following objectives; those who 1) promote schoolwork engagement, 2) those who promote the completion of high school or matric, and 3) those who promote a particular career aspiration. A learner for instance may have access to a role model who promotes schoolwork engagement and the completion of matric, whereas another learner may have a role-model who only promotes a particular career aspiration, and not the former attributes. All sixteen learners had access to one or more role-models who were from the immediate or extended family, or in a few cases, outside of the family network such as a soccer coach or even a local celebrity. Overall, all three role-model objectives promoted educational progression by influencing learning behaviour, by influencing how learners' perceived their capabilities at school, and by influencing how they envisioned their educational aspirations (refer to Figure 2 below).

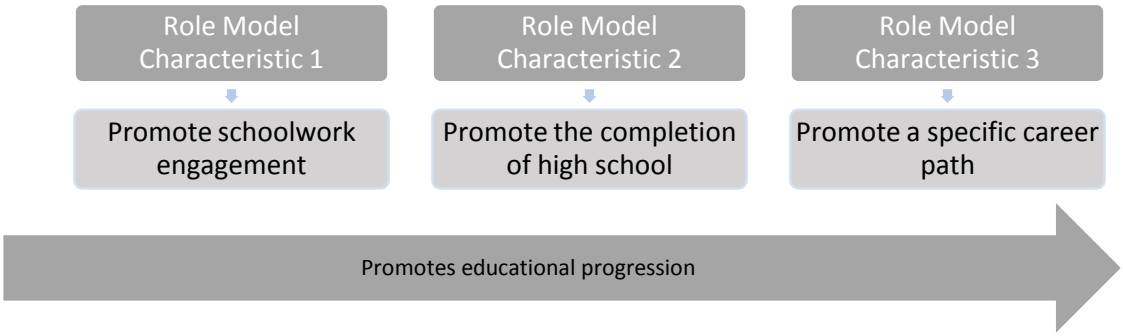


Figure 2. Educational role-model objectives.
This figure illustrates how three role model objectives can singularly and collectively promoted educational progression for the Grade 9 learners who took part in the study.

The study provides insight into the dynamics of how role models with their different attributes promoted educational progression at the Grade 9 level, before learners' embarked to the non-compulsory FET phase of high school.

Appendix S: A Summary of 8 out of the 16 learner Telephonic Interview Findings in June 2016

Table 13

A summary of 8 out of the 16 learner telephonic interview findings in June 2016: One year after Grade 9 interviews in 2015

Learner, Age	Grade 9 Education Intention	Grade 9 Occupation Intention	Grade 10 Occupation Intentions	Intention to study after matric	Thoughts about dropping out of high school since Grade 9	Self-resilient goals used to complete remaining years of high school	Learners who passed to Grade 10 in 2016 from Grade 9 in 2015	Source of knowledge about how to choose subjects for Grade 10 (other than LO)	The effectiveness of 'Life Orientation' in Grade 10 subject choices
Abe, 14	University/ College	Doctor	Not sure	No interest to become a doctor. Intends to complete matric and HET	No	Work hard, stay focused, keep out of trouble.	Yes, Passed to Grade 10	Aunt	Not helpful
Dave, 14	University/ College	Graphic Designer	Graphic Designer	Intends to complete matric and HET	He used to think about dropping out, but changed his mind.	He believes he is different, works hard, and attends school	No, Failed Grade 9	Mother. Learners also intends to speak to a college consultant.	Not helpful
Emlyn, 14	High School	Professional Rugby Player	Career in tourism, or a pilot	Intends to complete matric and HET.	Drop out was previously considered. It is no longer an option	Work hard, no absenteeism, and will not mix with the wrong friends	Yes, Passed to Grade 9	Mother and English teacher	Not helpful
Frank, 14	University/ College	A professional/ join the Army	No data	No data	No data	No data	Yes, Passed to Grade 10	No data	No data
Grant, 14	University/ College	Army/Soldier	No sure	Intends to complete matric and HET	No	Work hard, and focus on learning	Yes, Passed to Grade 10	Mother, father, brother.	Not helpful
Ian, 15	University/ College	Mechanical Engineer	No data	No data	No data	No data	No, Failed Grade 9	No data	No data
Kay, 14	University/ College	Lawyer/ Advocate	A lawyer or a businessman	Intends to complete matric and HET	No	Work hard	Yes, Passed to Grade 10	Sister, and own library research	Somewhat helpful
Oscar, 14	High School	Fire Fighter	Fire Fighter	Intends to complete FET/matric only	No	Complete high school, and keep away from gangs	Yes, Passed to Grade 10	Uncle	Somewhat helpful

Note: Frank and Ian were not available for the telephonic interviews in 2016, although family members and school administrators were able to provide limited information about their educational outcomes since the Grade 9 interviews in 2015. Both learners remained in school after Grade 9.

Appendix T: Summary of the Learner Educational Outcomes Over the Two-year Research period (2015 to 2017)

Table 14

Summary of the learner educational outcomes over the two-year research period: From Grade 9 in 2015 to 2017

	Learner, Age	High School	Educational outcome of learners since Grade 9 in 2015: Learner Grades in 2017
1	Abe, 14	Groenvlei	Grade 11
2	Bob, 15	Groenvlei	Grade 11 (failed Grade 8)
3	Clint, 14	Groenvlei	Grade 11
4	Dave, 14	Groenvlei	Grade 10 (Failed Grade 9)
5	Emlyn, 14	Groenvlei	Grade 11
6	Frank, 14	Groenvlei	Failed Grade 9 in 2015, moved to E/N Cape for 2016 academic year
7	Grant, 14	Groenvlei	Grade 10 (Failed Grade 10)
8	Henry, 16	Groenvlei	Grade 10 (Failed Grade 9)
9	Ian, 15	Mount View	Grade 10 (Failed Grade 9)
10	Jack, 14	Mount View	Grade 10 (Failed Grade 9)
11	Kay, 14	Mount View	Grade 11
12	Luke, 14	Mount View	Grade 11
13	Martin, 15	Mount View	Grade 11
14	Noel, 15	Mount View	Grade 11
15	Oscar, 14	Mount View	Grade 10 (Failed Grade 10)
16	Peter, 14	Mount View	Grade 11

Note: Frank was the only learner who was unaccounted for in 2017. During the 2016 telephonic interviews, a family member confirmed he moved to another province in South Africa, and enrolled in another school after he failed Grade 9 in 2015. Frank's high school confirmed this information in 2017 when the enrolment records were reviewed.

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