Learners' perceptions of feeding scheme programmes at secondary schools in the Nzhelele east circuit, Limpopo province

by

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DECLARATION

I declare that this full dissertation titled **Learners' Perceptions of Feeding Scheme Programmes(SFP) at secondary schools in the Nzhelele East Circuit, Limpopo Province** contained in this research is my own original work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

TG Muvhango   **2016/04/17**

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THINAVHUYO GLADYS MUVHANGO   **Date**

STUDENT NUMBER: 0865-688-6

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my late father, my mother and my family. Their love, care, support, encouragement and enthusiasm have inspired me to achieve this goal.

They have given me immense love, joy and support any individual could wish for.

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I wish to express my gratitude and appreciation to:

ABSTRACT

School feeding is a tool which, today, effectively enables many millions of poor children worldwide to attend school in developed and developing countries alike. This study evaluated the perceptions of learners on the school feeding programme in one circuit in a district of Limpopo Province. It describes the benefits of school feeding and how this well-proven tool can be improved and specifically targeted to address some of the key constraints to universal secondary school completion.

The findings suggest that school feeding programmes contribute to the education and well-being of children as hungry children do not grow; cannot learn; and face many health risks. School feeding can bring children into school and out of hunger; providing food for children at school can relieve immediate short-term hunger which is very beneficial for learning to take place. Alleviating short-term hunger among children at school helps to improve their performance in school tests and to promote a normal progression from grade to grade in completing their basic education.

The study used individual interviews, document analysis and observation to obtain data from selected participants from two schools in the Nzhelele East Circuit in the Vhembe District. Responses to questions were analysed and a statistical analysis provided positive answers which revealed that the school feeding programme was effective; that more should be done to improve its delivery; that there should be a stable infrastructure and that the geographical location of the community should be taken into consideration when it comes to menu options. A number of recommendations are made to improve the implementation of the school feeding programme.

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

- **ANC** : African National Congress
- **CARE** : Catholic Relief Services, Norwegian Refugee Council
- **CBNP** : Community-Based Nutrition Programme
- **CECANE** : Cooperation Centres for Student Food and Nutrition
- **DoHT** : Department of Higher Education and Training
- **FAO** : Food and Agriculture Organization
- **FFP** : Food for Education
- **FGD** : Focus group discussions
- **GSFP** : Ghana School Feeding Programme
- **HFBNP** : Health Facility-Based Nutrition Programme
- **INP** : Integrated Nutrition Programme
- **LED** : Local Economic Development
- **MOE** : Ministry of Education
- **MTEF** : Medium Term Expenditure Framework
- **NA ACT** : Nutrition Australia Act
- **NEPAD** : New Partnership for Africa's Development
- **NNSDP** : Nutrition and Social Development Programme
- **NPA** : National Programme of Action
- **NSNP** : National School Nutrition Programme
- **PED** : Provincial Education Department
- **PSNP** : Primary School Nutrition Programme
- **PSNP** : Primary School Nutrition Programme
- **SFP** : School Feeding Programme
- **SGB** : School Governing Body
- **SMME** : Small Medium and Macro Enterprises
- **SNP** : School Nutrition Programme
- **UK** : United Kingdom
- **UNICEF** : United Nations Children's Fund
- **US** : United States
- **WFP** : World Food Programme

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

A school feeding programme (SFP) is defined as an intervention that delivers a meal or snack to children in a school setting with the intent of improving attendance, enrolment, nutritional status and learning outcomes (Reddy, Panday and Jinabhai, 2003:4). It was introduced in South Africa as a Presidential Lead Project in 1994 with the specific aim to improve education by enhancing active learning capacity, school attendance and punctuality; to alleviate poverty and unemployment; and to empower poverty-stricken communities, particularly in rural areas (Report on the Evaluation of the National School Nutrition Programme [NSNP], 2008:4, 11). A SFP is a good strategy for addressing malnutrition among school children if it is regularly monitored (Musamali and Mbangaya, 2007:5). This scheme has been rolled out mostly in rural areas in all nine provinces of the Republic of South Africa. This study focuses on learners' views of the feeding scheme programmes at two secondary schools in the Nzhelele East Circuit in Limpopo Province.

This chapter focuses on the motivation for the study, significance of the study; the aims of the study; problem statement; methods to ensure the validity and reliability and trustworthiness of the study; ethical consideration; definition of concepts; and the framework of the study.

1.2 STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The general purpose of the study was to understand learners' perceptions of the school feeding programmes at secondary schools in terms of the kind of food they receive and whether it assists them with the reduction of hunger and improves their learning capacity and their school attendance. More specifically the research attempted

- to determine reasons for learners suddenly losing interest in the kind of food offered in schools.
- to identify the shortcomings in the selection of food offered by the programme.

- to explore whether a lack of interest has led to learner absenteeism in the participant schools.
- to analyse the impact that the set menu has on school attendance and learning in general.

1.3 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

A lack of education is part of the definition of poverty while education is a means for its diminution. The effective functioning of the Department of Education contributes to the South African government's objective to provide a better life for all. On 15 May 2008 in her budget speech the Minister of Education, Nalendi Pandor, stated that 2008 was the year in which education would change lives and communities. When properly delivered and effectively implemented, education changes lives and communities for the better and, therefore, the road to a better life begins with education. The challenge, however, is that the provision of education is hampered by the fact that a significant number of South Africans, like the people in the Nzhelele East Circuit in the Vhembe District, are plagued by high levels of poverty which results in learners attending school without having had a decent meal.

Poor nutrition and ill-health among school children contribute to the inefficiency of the educational system (Musamali and Mbangaya, 2007:7). Children whose cognitive abilities are impaired naturally underperform and they are more likely to repeat grades and leave school early than those who are not impaired. One of the key factors of poor performance amongst learners is irregular school attendance owing to malnutrition and constant ill-health. When children are hungry, the chances that they will attend school are slim; without education their chances of breaking out of poverty are significantly reduced (Van Stuijvenberg & Martha (2010); World Food Programme [WFP], 2006:67).

Therefore, a national school feeding scheme was initiated within 100 days of President Nelson Mandela's inauguration as South Africa's first democratically elected head of state in 1994, Report on the Evaluation of the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP, 2008:4, 11) which was initially known as the Primary School Nutrition Programme and classified as a Presidential Lead Project under the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP). It was initiated and managed for the first 10 years by the National Department of Health in conjunction with Provincial Health Departments. Schools in areas which have a concentration of poor households were targeted for intervention and all children at these schools benefited from the

programme, including the children in the Nzhelele East Circuit in Limpopo Province. The school feeding programme has been extended to the secondary schools and embraces those in the Vhembe District.

The Nzhelele East Circuit is in a predominantly rural area in Limpopo Province; it is a remote area characterized by high levels of poverty and unemployment as well as low levels of infrastructure development. Two of the schools in the Nzhelele East Circuit that are affected by these problems were specifically identified for this study. Learners at the selected schools are from poor families and, therefore, the school feeding scheme is important as it is clearly needed. However, to effectively and efficiently realize its intended objectives, it must be properly managed.

Education, health and nutrition cannot be considered in isolation as hunger, poverty and poor education are interdependent. Hunger is a barrier to learning and school feeding programmes throughout the world have successfully attracted children to school by offering them food or a nourishing snack. When children are hungry the chances that they will attend school are reduced and without education their chances of breaking out of poverty are significantly reduced (Department of Higher Education and Training DoHT (2005:27); World Food Programme (WFP, (2006:18). The relevant available research suggests that both acute and chronic hunger affect children's access to school; their attention span; their behaviour in class; and educational outcomes. Studies show that children suffering from short-term hunger - as a result of missing breakfast, for example - have difficulty in concentrating in class and performing complex tasks (DoHT, 2005:27; WFP, 2006).

School children are particularly vulnerable to short-term hunger, especially when the food in their diets is of a poor quality as is the case in the schools in the Nzhelele East Circuit. Factors, such as the long distances children walk to school; their having to complete chores before going to school; and poor quality and quantity of meals consumed at home, contribute to hunger in school children. Children who attend school hungry have diminished attentiveness are easily distracted and lack any interest in learning which results in failure, low achievement and repeating grades (DoH, 2005:32). The primary objective of a school feeding programme is to provide meals or snacks to alleviate short-term hunger and, thereby, enable children to learn.

According to Grantham and McGregor (2005:785), school feeding programmes have proved to be effective in encouraging enrolment, increasing attention span and improving school attendance. However, there is a growing concern that school feeding programmes contribute to high levels of absenteeism in schools. This research sought to investigate how set menus impact absenteeism in schoolchildren. It also aimed to provide guidelines on diet requirements to ensure a decrease in absenteeism.

A school feeding programme should be delivered at the right quality; in the right quantity; at the right time; and in line with the expectations of the recipients. In this study the researcher investigated the learners' views on the feeding schemes programme and their expectations in the Nzhelele East Circuit. According to an index prepared by the Provincial Department of Social Development, where the Nzhelele East Circuit is situated consists of barren plains with small hills and scattered greenish bushes. Areas such as this are inundated by poverty and fall within the quintile of most marginalized communities. The poverty index is based on indicators of household income, housing type, employment, literacy rates and school enrolment of 6 years old children as well as basic household services.

It is against this background that the study sought to understand the perceptions of learners regarding the school feeding programme.

1.4 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Since Limpopo has a large rural population, the majority of its schools and learners qualify for the school feeding programme. All the schools sampled fall into the poor to poorest categories which are categorised as Quintiles 1-3 (Report on the Evaluation of the National School Nutrition Programme, 2008:9). According to the information given by the Provincial Department of Education, of five district, learners from three districts participate in the SFP programme with the purpose of assessing it in terms of poverty reduction, improving learning capacity and improving levels of school attendance as well as health and nutritional status which would, in turn, lead to the implementation of quality education.

However, given the prevalence of poverty in communities across Limpopo Province, the learning process in schools tends to be negatively influenced by factors, such as malnutrition and hunger. The researcher was struck by this situation and wanted to understand - through the perceptions of

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learners involved in SFPs - whether such endeavours reduce hunger; improve the quality of education and have a positive effect on absenteeism. As a teacher from one of the participant schools, the researcher has keenly observed that in the majority of cases learners continue to absent themselves and that their interest in the kind of diet on offer was rapidly diminishing. Mbusi (2005:3) states that the government's ambitious poverty alleviation programme, introduced in 1995, has gone wrong as the programme that was intended to help poor children and to empower women is, today, used by those involved for self-enrichment. In support of this view Jack (2005:13) maintains that the food supplied as part of the school feeding scheme is often of poor quality and that those involved seek only to enrich themselves at the expense of destitute children. The empirical study of this problem has added valuable information to the existing knowledge based on the SFP selection of diet.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTION

Research questions are those that collected data attempts to answer during a study (Creswell 2003:88). This study was guided by the following main research question:

What are learners' perceptions and expectations regarding the feeding scheme programme organized in their poor rural schools?

1.5.1   Sub-questions

The research sub-questions that the researcher was trying to answer are:

- How does the school feeding programme for needy learners in rural secondary schools contribute to the improvement of performance and attendance?
- How can learners' perceptions and expectations be linked to school absenteeism?
- What are the processes followed by the secondary schools in acquiring as well as storage of SFP food.
- What are the views and experiences of learners involved in the school feeding programme
- Which roles and responsibilitiess programme organizers and coordinators play towards the implementation of SFP at Nzhelele East Circuit

1.5.2 Objectives of the study

The study sought to achieve the following objectives

- To determine how the school feeding programme for needy learners in rural secondary schools contribute to the improvement of performance and attendance.
- To analyse how learners' perceptions and expectations can be linked to school absenteeism.
- To evaluate critically the processes followed by the secondary schools in acquiring as well as storage of SFP feeding products
- To synthesise the views and experiences of learners involved in the school feeding programme.
- To describe roles and responsibilitiess programme organizers and coordinators play towards the implementation of SFP at Nzhelele East Circuit

1.6 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Maxwell (2005: 33) describes "theoretical framework" which is an interchangeable term with "conceptual framework" as a group of related ideas that provide guidance for a research project or business endeavour, i.e., a collection of interrelated concepts like a theory - but not, necessarily, so well worked out. The theoretical framework guided the researcher in determining what things were measured and what statistical relationships were looked for. A theoretical framework explains, either graphically or in narrative form, the main things to be studied as well as the key factors, constructs or variables and the presumed relationships between them.

In view of the above description of a theoretical framework, this research study was underpinned by the following theories.

1.6.1 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs is a psychology based theory proposed by Maslow (1943:370) in his paper, "A Theory of Human Motivation." Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs is often portrayed as a pyramid with the largest, most fundamental levels of needs at the bottom and the need for self-actualization at the top. Maslow used the terms 'physiological', 'safety', 'belongingness', 'love', 'esteem', and 'self-actualization' needs to describe the pattern that human motivation generally moves through. It is represented diagrammatically as follows (Maslow, 1943:370).
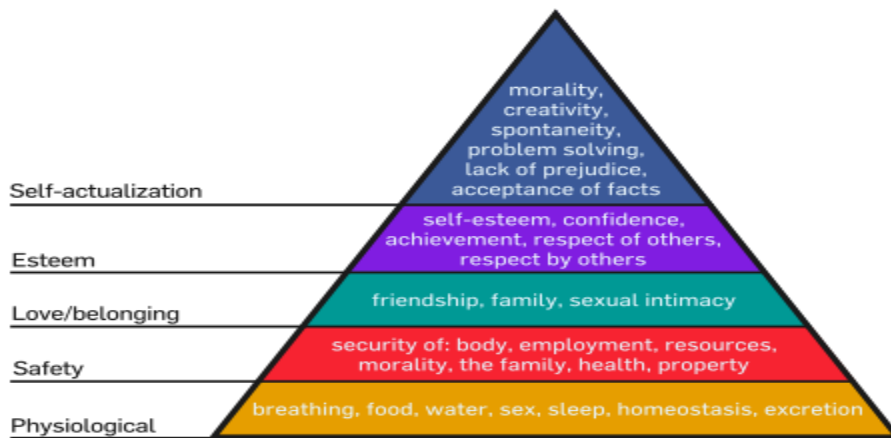
Figure 1.1: Pyramid Depiction of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

The researcher believes that when the Department of Education introduced the SFP its aim was to address the physiological needs of learners, the physical requirements for human survival. These needs are thought to be the most important and they should be met first (Maslow, 1943:370). Air, water, and food are metabolic requirements for survival in all animals, including humans. If these requirements are not met, the human body cannot function properly and, ultimately, will fail (Maslow, 1943:378). Physiological needs, such as food, water and warmth, are short term basic human needs (Rivera, 2005:311). The Department of Education deemed it necessary to introduce the SFP in order to enable learners to be motivated to learn because if their physiological needs are not met learning will not be possible.

1.6.2 Theories X and Y

Theory X and Theory Y are theories of human motivation created and developed by Douglas McGregor in 1960. Theory X and Theory Y relates to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs in terms of how human behaviour and motivation is the main priority in the workplace in order to maximize output. According to Theories X and Y, management assumes that employees are inherently lazy; they will avoid work if they can; and they inherently dislike work. These theories assume that employees show little ambition without enticing incentive programmes and that they avoid responsibility whenever they can.

Michael (2003:29) believes that if organizational goals are to be met, Theory X managers must rely heavily on threat and coercion to get their employees' to comply. The researcher is of the opinion that the SFP is used by the Department of Education as an enticing, motivational factor for learners to attend school without being absent - even though it could be extrinsic.

Theories X and Y and Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs are relevant in this study as they are related to motivating learners to attend schools and avoid truancy.

1.7 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The scientific method described by Allen (2008:23) comprises the "logical and systematic process to observation of phenomenon, which is used to solve problems and build a body of knowledge that is free from bias, prejudice and personal convictions." Mouton (2001:56) argues that research methodology focuses on the research process and the kind of tools and procedures to be used. Research methodology describes the source of data to be collected and the method used to carry out the research. The research methodology that was used in this study was qualitative because the researcher wanted to interpret and make sense of the phenomenon in terms of the meanings it has for participants. The research methodology clearly highlighted the research approach, research design, data collection procedures, target populations, sample population, site, validity and reliability as well as the data analysis.

1.7.1 Research Approach

A research approach refers to a researcher's overall research approach and justification of the use of such an approach regarding the problem under investigation Imenda & Munyangwa,

(2000:13). Mouton (2003:55) further defines a research approach as a plan or blueprint of how the research will be conducted. In this study the case study approach was part of the research design. Leedy and Ormrod (2001:150) define a case study as an approach where in-depth data is gathered which is relative to a single individual, programme or event for the purpose of learning more about an unknown or poorly understood situation. In the case of this study the learners' views on the feeding scheme programme were poorly reflected which made a case study an appropriate method.

1.7.2   Research Design

Cooper and Schindler (2003:224) define research design as the plan and structure of an investigation to obtain answers to research questions. They refer to a research design as a deliberately planned arrangement of conditions for analysis and the collection of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose with the economy of procedure. Here the researcher applied a narrative qualitative case study methodology to understand the experiences and expectations of learners regarding school feeding programme prescribed. The research design was narrative because learners were providing the researcher with information. Narrative inquiry is a means by which a researcher systematically gathers analyses and represents people's stories - as told by them.

1.7.3   Philosophical Assumption or Paradigm

The study used an interpretivist paradigm with a qualitative approach to comprehend how individuals in everyday settings construct meaning and explain the events of their worlds. It allowed the researcher to interact with the participants to gain insights and form a clear understanding of how the SFP supplied to needy learners in rural primary schools contributed to the management of absenteeism; what impact it had on attendance and performance of secondary school learners; what the experiences were of teachers connected to the SFP; how learner's experiences of, and views on, the SFP could be linked to school absenteeism; and the impact it had on teaching and learning. The study attempted to make sense of the participants' life-worlds by interacting with them and appreciating and clarifying the meanings they ascribed to their experiences (Kobus, 2012:291). Throughout the research process the researcher aimed to form a

holistic view of the participants within their contexts by exploring their experiences, views and feelings regarding SFPs.

1.7.3.1 *Ontological perspective*

The researcher operated under a constructionist ontological assumption that maintains that there is no single unitary reality. According to Taber (2006:54), a constructionist ontological assumption suggests that there is no objective reality but that there are multiple realities constructed by human beings who experience a phenomenon of interest. Similarly, Claire, Barbara and Mark (2012:57) maintain that on the question of what is reality, the interpretivists believe that it is socially constructed and that there are people constructing them. In other words, people impose order on the world in an effort to construct meaning. Reality depends on the individual mind and is, therefore, a personal or social construct. Ontologically the researcher's qualitative research was constructionist because it views the social world in terms of process and collective events, actions and activities which unfold overtime and in context.

1.7.3.2 Epistemological perspective

Epistemology is the theory of knowledge and how knowledge can be acquired. The study utilized an interpretivist epistemology which posits that knowledge is established through the meaning attached to the phenomenon under study (Krauss, 2005:35). Researchers interact with the subjects of a study to obtain data and the inquiry changes both researchers and subjects (Rabionet, 2011:562). Interpretivist/constructivists believe that knowledge is subjective because it is socially constructed and mind dependant; truth lies within human experiences. This means that statements on what is true or false are culture bound and historically and context dependant - although some may be universal (Claire *et al.*,2012:57). The researcher encouraged participants to talk; epistemologically, the researcher's qualitative research was interpretivist where participants told the researcher their stories that were captured in terms of their voices and experiences. The researcher wanted to know and understand learners' sentiments as captured through their perceptions regarding the SFP. The researcher listened and observed and allowed respondents speak in order to have deeper understanding of their perceptions.

1.7.4   Data Collection Methods

Data collection describes how data is collected; what methods are used to identify the sample of respondents to be used for research; and the way in which information is obtained from chosen respondents, analysed and interpreted to arrive at conclusions that may be the foundation or backbone of the research (Gillham, 2000:2).

Data was collected in two secondary schools using a qualitative data collection approach. Lichtman (2011:54) lists data collection techniques in qualitative research as including interviews, documentation, archival records, observation and physical artefacts. Semi-structured, one-on-one interviews and documentation were used to gather data on the SFP. A tape-recorder was used to record the participants' responses in interviews with their permission. Primary data was obtained through semi-structured one-on-one interviews and focus group discussions (FGD) and secondary sources used as a means of gathering data included research articles and dissertations.

1.7.4.1   *Semi-structured one-on-one interviews*

Greeff (2003:302) believes that a semi-structured interview is a method of research used particularly in the social sciences to collect data. A semi-structured interview is open which allows new ideas to be forthcoming during the interview as a result of what the interviewee says. The interviewer in a semi-structured interview, generally, has a framework of themes to be explored.

One-on-one interviews were conducted with 12 learners, 4 educators and 2 principals from the 2 selected schools; they were interviewed at their respective schools. According to Ary, Jacob and Razavieh (2006:480), an interview is a direct one-on-one situation which involves an interchange of views between two or more people on a topic of mutual interest. Open-ended responses permit the researcher to understand the world as seen by the respondents. The purpose of gathering responses to open-ended questions is to enable the researcher to understand and capture the points of view of participants without the prior selection of questionnaire categories (Patton, 2002:21).

1.7.4.2 The focus group discussions

Maxwell (2005:45) defines focus group discussions as being a group of typically 7-10 interacting strangers who have some common interest or characteristics, brought together by a moderator who uses the group and its interaction as a way to gain information about a specific or focused issue. Focus group interviews are described as organized informal group discussions between selected individuals about a specific topic relevant to the situation at hand. The goal of focus group interviews is to create a candid, normal conversation and address a selected topic in depth (Sinagub, 1964:4).

One of the major advantages of focus group interviews is their "loosening effect." In a relaxed group setting where their experiences are valued, participants are more likely to express their opinions and views openly. In this research project focus groups interview were useful in gathering information and ascertaining certain beliefs about the topic being researched. The focus groups included educators, learners, and principals from 2 secondary schools in the Nzhelele East Circuit.

In conducting the interviews with the learners, educators and principals the researcher began by, firstly, giving a brief background about herself to establish a relationship of trust. Rabionet (2011:564) suggests that when researchers introduce themselves the protocol should also include statements of confidentiality, consent, option to withdraw and purpose and aim of the research. The participants were told to relax and asked to respond honestly to the questions. The interviews were conducted in a friendly and polite manner; the researcher took an unbiased approach. At the end of the interviews, participants were given an opportunity to ask questions in order to clarify uncertainties as well as to establish how participants experienced the interviews.

1.7.4.3 Individual interviews

De Vos (2000:229) defines in-depth interviews with individuals as one or more face-to-face interactions between an interviewer and an interviewee where the purpose is to understand the interviewee's life experiences or situation as expressed in his/her own words. He strongly believes that the advantage of in-depth interviews is that reality can be reconstructed from the world of the interviewee which enables the researcher to obtain relevant information from the interview. Thus, the rich data which was collected from the principals, teachers, and learners

through this method was important in understanding the views and expectations of learners concerning the SFP. The researcher visited the sampled schools to interview the principals, teachers and learners. The advantage of this research tool is that it caters for individuals who cannot express their feelings well in group settings.

1.7.4.4 *Documents analysis*

Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2000:190) define documents as raw data sources as well as a storage medium for compiled data. These documents may include the minutes and agendas of meetings, financial records and annual reports.). In this research project, I examined and analyzed official or public SFP documents of TWO (2) sampled schools within Nzhelele East Circuit.. The analysis of documents is useful to researchers for a number of reasons. It allows for the gathering of new facts about a topic under investigation to understand why a programme is the way it is; determining the purpose or rationale of a program; helping in identifying major stakeholders involved; and assisting in determining the history and other retrospective information about a programme. The researcher collected and analysed documents to supplement the data from the interviews.

1.7.4.5 Observation

Observation is way of gathering data by watching behaviour and events and noting physical characteristics in their natural setting Lichtman (2011:56). Observation may be overt where everyone knows that they are being observed or covert where no one knows they are being observed and the observer is concealed. In this research overt observation was used because of ethical issues related to concealing the observation. This was been done despite the benefit of covert observation being that people are more likely to behave naturally if they do not know they are being observed. Robinson (2002:43) contends that by using observation researchers acquire real-life experiences in the real world.

Observation can also be either direct or indirect. Direct observation is when researchers watch interactions, processes and behaviour as they occur; for example, observing teachers teaching lessons from a written curriculum to determine whether they are delivering it effectively. Indirect observation is when researchers watch the results of interaction, processes and behaviour; for example, measuring the amount of plate-waste left by learners in a school eating area to

determine whether they find a particular meal acceptable or not. In this research indirect observation was used to observe learners eating habits on a day-to-day basis. Observation was used, more specifically, to determine on which days they participated in the SFP in greater numbers.

1.7.5   Data Analysis and Interpretation

The fieldwork, observation and interviews undertaken to collect data were followed by the interpretation of the data by means of a qualitative data analysis. Data analysis refers to the process of bringing order, structure and interpretation to the large volume of data collected Marshall & Rossman (1999:180). Bodgan and Bilken (2007:159) explain data analysis as the process involved in systematically searching and arranging the interview transcripts, field notes and other material that has been accumulated by the researcher in order to identify the findings.

The analysis of qualitative data is concerned with organising and working with the data, breaking it into manageable units, coding and synthesising it and searching for patterns. According to Burns and Grove (2003:46), data analysis is conducted to reduce, organise and give meaning to the data collected. Mazibuko (2007:160) sees data analysis as a dynamic and creative process through which the researcher continuously attempts to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under study and to continually refine the interpretation of the data. According to Creswell (2003:190), data analysis involves making sense of both texts and images which mean that the researcher has to prepare the data for analysis conduct different analyses and move deeper and deeper into understanding the data. In this study data analysis was done in two stages: during the process of gathering the data and after completing the process. During the data collection process the analysis of data involved checking for recurrent themes. Responses were tabulated using their original wording.

1.8 RESEARCH POPULATION AND SAMPLING

McMillan and Schumacher (2006:119) maintain that a population is either a target population or a survey population. A target population of learners, principals and teachers who were affected by the SFP was randomly selected from the total population. Breakwell, Hammond and Fifeschaw (2000:251) define sampling as the process of selecting a number of individuals for the study in such a way that the individuals represent the group from which they are selected.

A purposeful non-probability sampling technique was used in this research. Non-probability sampling takes place when decisions concerning the individuals to be included in the sample are taken by the researcher - based upon a variety of criteria, such as specialist knowledge of the research issue and capacity and willingness to participate in the research Patton (1990:58). As the researcher knew of individuals who were knowledgeable about issues concerning the SNP and who could provide appropriate data, a purposeful non-probability sampling technique was used because it was particularly suitable for this research project. This study used non-probability purposive sampling. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2001:219), as the name implies, in purposive sampling people are chosen for a particular purpose. The sampling frame of this study consisted of two selected schools out of sixteen schools in the Nzhelele East Circuit which is located in the Vhembe District.

The research participant sampling comprised of the 2 selected schools; 2 principals from the selected schools; 4 teachers – two from each school; and 12 learners - four from each school and two RCL members from each school. The participants were chosen on the basis of their knowledge and information connected to the phenomenon under investigation. The researcher attributed sequential alphabetical letters the participants to ensure confidentiality of the research ethic. It should be mentioned that the participants were selected based on their close proximity to the researcher as financial and time costs are involved in travelling to and from the schools for the purposes of collecting data. They were also selected based on similarities in their contexts and the provision of the SNP.

1.9   RESEARCH SITE

The two selected secondary schools are located in the poorest areas of the community in the Nzhelele East Circuit. This allowed the researcher to choose learners who were provided with food that was supplied in the two schools.

1.10   UNIT ANALYSIS

Babbie (2008:95) refers to units of analysis as that which the researcher examines in order to create summary descriptions of all such units and to explain differences between them. Unit analysis is a most basic element of scientific research project; it is the subject (who or what) of

the study which an analyst may generalize. In social science research typical units of analysis include individuals (most common), groups, social organizations and artefacts(Babbie, (2009), In this study of learners' perception of the SFP, I identified educators, learners and principals as the units to be studied in order to explore the learners' experiences and expectations regarding the feeding schemes.

1.11   DELIMITATION AND LIMITATIONS OF STUDY

Delimitations are restrictions or boundaries that researchers impose prior to the inception of the study to narrow the scope of a study. Delimitations define the parameters of the investigation. In educational research the delimitations frequently deal with such items as population/sample, treatment(s), setting, and instrumentation Merriam (2010:72). This research study was conducted in the Nzhelele East Circuit in the Vhembe District. Only two secondary schools from this circuit were selected.

McMillan and Schumacher (2006:110) maintain that limitations are influences that the researcher cannot control; they are the shortcomings, conditions or influences that cannot be controlled by the researcher that restriction the researcher's methodology and conclusions. There were number of challenges that limited the researcher in gathering relevant data in this study such as, amongst others, a lack of sufficient funds for interviews. It was anticipated that the respondents might not interpret questions the way the researcher expected because of their different literacy levels. Therefore, the researcher used structured interviews consisting of simple questions and short sentences which were easy to comprehend.

Other limiting factors included the fear of the school principals, of teachers of the school exposing the weaknesses of school feeding programme; for example, the incorrect choice of diet. The researcher explained the purpose of the research to the participants and assured them of the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses in order to curb their fears. Although English was used in the interviews, the language limitation was controlled by allowing those participants that could not speak English to respond to the research questions in Tshivenda.

1.12   TRUSTWORTHINESS

Trustworthiness and transferability are, at times, used interchangeably. Trustworthiness in research refers to a demonstration that the evidence for the results reported is sound and to when the argument made based on the results is strong (Denzin, & Lincoln, 2008:36). Trustworthiness is used to determine the quality of inferences. Transferability is used to determine whether the results of the study can be applied in another context. The researcher ensured that the research results were valid, reliable and trustworthy by doing the following:

- Collecting data by means of interviews and documentation on the SFP which addresses the needs of the poor in the Nzhelele East Circuit in Limpopo Province.
- Interviewing 18 participants from two schools in an ethical manner in order to triangulate the participant's experiences and interpretations of the SFP. Triangulation of data collected from the participants strengthened the validity and reliability of research conclusions.
- Triangulation of data was further ensured by tape-recording the responses of the participants and by playing a neutral role during interview sessions as well as by comparing data obtained from the interviewees within the same school and those at a different school.

Merriam (1998:198) believes that research consumers may say that research results are trustworthy if there has been some accounting for qualitative validity and reliability. Kelly (2000:4) and Morse *et al*. (2000:5) are of the opinion that qualitative researcher results are trustworthy if they are credible, transferable, dependable and confirmable. In this study the researcher used ethical behaviour, comparison, mechanization and minimization of researcher bias to ensure the trustworthiness of the study results. The use of these techniques in data collection and analysis produced reliable and trustworthy study results.

1.12.1   Ethical Behaviour

Ethical behaviour in qualitative studies is important to protect the identities and privacy of the participants; it is also important for the promotion of a sound researcher-participant relationship. Good researcher-participant relationships build mutual trust between the researcher and the

participants and, more importantly, enhance validity and reliability and the trustworthiness of qualitative results Merriam & Schumacher (2006:327). The researcher conducted the study in an ethical manner to establish the trustworthiness of the study results.

1.12.2 Comparison

In this multi-site qualitative case study, the researcher collected data from two different selected primary schools in the Nzhelele East Circuit. The analysis of the data led to findings that are either similar or different; the study's findings were compared to identify possible commonalities and differences. The differences in findings compelled the researcher to revisit the tapes to confirm them. Some researchers argue that the use of member-checking or respondent validation ensures the trustworthiness of the study Lichtman (2011:77).

1.12.3   Mechanization

McMillan and Schumacher (2006:326) maintain that tape-recorders provide accurate and relatively complete records. The researcher used a tape-recorder to capture the views of participants and the essence of their information; participants included principals, teachers, and learners from the two selected schools using face-to-face interviews. The recorded data was transcribed *verbatim* and analysed. The researcher constantly revisited the tapes during the data analysis process to confirm the captured responses of participants and to promote the trustworthiness of the study.

1.13 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The foundation of all research is ethics and with power comes responsibility. Researchers are unconditionally responsible for the integrity of the research process and their inherent power and, therefore, research interaction requires responsibility to ensure the dignity and wellbeing of the interviewees O'Leary (2004:50). Responsibility for the dignity, respect and welfare of respondents is central to research ethics and ensuring that no harm comes to interviewees is a prerequisite of any research study.

The chosen research design and methods allowed the researcher to observe and abide by the relevant ethics. Ethics refers to the evaluation of the human condition in terms of values and,

therefore, research involves both values and ethics. The researchers sought to obey and not to violate the human rights and values of all participants. They were informed that everyone was free to participate; to leave the study at any time; and that no-one would be harmed physically, psychologically or emotionally. All information collected was treated with respect and privacy.

Prior to the data collection process, the researcher requested permission to carry out the study from the Department of Education and the authorities of the selected schools as well as the parents of the learners participating in the research to ensure access to the respondents. The participants were informed of the nature and details of the research; that participation was voluntary; and that confidentiality and anonymity would be ensured. A copy of the research report would be given to the Department of Education and the office of the Nzhelele East Circuit.

1.14 CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS

In order to avoid any misconceptions which may arise related to the terminology used in this research, key concepts are explained so that the correct meanings be attached to them.

1.14.1 School Feeding Programme

School feeding programme is defined as an intervention that delivers a meal or snack to children in the school setting with the intent to improve attendance, enrolment, nutritional status and learning outcomes.

1.14.2 Learner Absenteeism

Learner absenteeism is when learners are not at school for an entire day. In this study learner absenteeism is absenteeism that takes place due to no meals being served on the particular day that learners absent themselves and because they do not choose the set menus themselves.

1.14.3 Motivation

Various researchers describe motivation in different ways. Martin and Dowson (2009:328) define motivation as a set of interrelated beliefs and emotions that influence and direct behaviour. According to the Motivational Systems Theory of Martin Ford Schunk, (2008:176), motivation provides energy and direction for behaviour. Ahl (2006:387) states that motivation is

conceptualized as something that energises human behaviour and that research on motivation is concerned with what creates human action. Goetsch (2011:89) and Ryan and Deci (2000:54) contend that to be motivated means to be driven to do something. In this study the SNP would serve as a motivational factor that should enhance learner school attendance.

1.14.4 Needs

A need is that which is necessary for organisms to live a healthy life or a motivating force that compels action for its satisfaction. In this study the SNP serves as a need or a driving force for learner school attendance.

1.14.5 Hunger

Hunger is the physical sensation of desiring food. In this research it refers to the poor nutrition that learners receive at their respective homes; this often causes difficulties concentrating at school and tiredness that negatively affects learners' behaviour at school.

1.14.6 Learning

Learning is the process by which new knowledge is acquired and old knowledge is modified in the light of new information. It is a process through which behaviour, skills and values are developed and changed over time.

1.14.7 Dietary Habits

Dietary habits are habitual decisions individuals or cultures makes when choosing what foods to eat. The word 'diet' often implies the use of a specific intake of nutrition for health or weight management reasons.

1.15 CHAPTER STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

The research report has been structured as follow:

- Chapter 1 is an orientation of the motivation of the research in which the research problem, aims, clarification of concepts and methodology are highlighted.

- In Chapter 2 a review of the relevant literature is presented with reference to school feeding programmes by comprehensively discussing the need for school feeding in South Africa and by using the Nzhelele East Circuit as a case study. The relevant sources relating to the topic include government gazettes, research articles, papers, theses and newspapers.
- Chapter 3 concentrates on research strategy and method.
- In Chapter 4 the data collected is investigated and analysed.
- Chapter 5, the final chapter of this dissertation, focuses on an interpretation of the findings and makes recommendations. Suggestions for further research are also included in the last chapter.

1.16 CONCLUSION

Statement of the problem, background to the study, problem statement, research aims, significance of the study were discussed in detail. Limitations and delimitations, trustworthiness and research ethics to be taken into consideration during the study were outlined; the concepts related to the study were clarified.

In the following chapter, Chapter 2, a review of the relevant available literature - with reference to school feeding programmes - is presented in a comprehensive discussion of the need for school feeding in South Africa, using the Nzhelele East Circuit as a case study. The relevant sources include government gazettes, research articles, papers, theses and newspapers.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the primary and secondary source literature that was consulted. A literature review is a survey of everything that has been written about a particular topic, theory, or research question. It may provide the background for a larger work or it may stand on its own. Much more than a simple list of sources, an effective literature review analyzes and synthesizes information about key themes or issues. A review of the relevant literature has three functions: it addresses what is known of the research topic; it positions the researcher in relation to that knowledge; and it suggests an appropriate methodology to investigate and report the writer's own proposed research on the topic. Together, these literature reviewing functions help researchers establish an authority to carry out their research (Burton, 2011:61)

A review of the relevant literature enabled the researcher to compare previous findings with the current ones of this study. The South African National School Nutrition Programme has evolved over the years since its inception in 1994, including factors that led to its transfer from the Department of Health to the Department of Education in 2004. The chapter also provides an international perspective of the school nutrition programme (Report on the Evaluation of the National School Nutrition Programme, 2008:6).

Knowledge garnered from the literature review related to the School Feeding Programme (SFP) formed the basis of the study in terms of methodology, analysis, discussion of research findings and the formulation of recommendations.

2.2 THE APPROPRIATENESS OF THE STUDY THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Theoretical framework for this study is based on motivation theory by Abraham Maslow. Motivation has the following functions: motivates, energize and sustain behaviour. It energizes the behaviour of the organisms and arouses it for action .It also sustains behaviour for longer periods in the activity. In Maslow hierarchy of needs, the physiological needs must be met .That children need food in the right quality and quantity .Food is necessary because it builds, protects

and repairs the body. The malnutrition and its effects on brain development have tremendous implications on child performance. The most significant immediate causes of malnutrition are inadequate food intake and illness UNICEF (1990). Poorly fed children are more exposed to disease infections and emotional frustrations as compared to well fed children. This is in line with Musamali and Mbangaya, (2007:7) assertion that, School feeding programs contribute to good children's performance. She stated that in most impoverished settings, short term effects are worthwhile (food as a human right). She also stated that there is impact of education and the link between hunger and learning. She also found out those children who are hungry or chronically malnourished are less able to learn regardless of the setting. According to Report on the State of Public Health in Canada (2008), Dr Butler Jones observed that:

When children go to school hungry or poorly nourished, their energy levels, memory, problem-solving skills, creativity, concentration and behaviour are all negatively impacted. Studies have shown that 31% of elementary students and 62% of secondary school students do not eat a nutritious breakfast before school.

2.2.1   Educational applications

Maslow's (1968) hierarchy of needs theory has made a major contribution to teaching and classroom management in schools. Rather than reducing behaviour to a response in the environment, Maslow adopts a holistic approach to education and learning. Maslow looks at the entire physical, emotional, social, and intellectual qualities of an individual and how they impact on learning.

Applications of Maslow's hierarchy theory to the work of the classroom teacher are obvious. Before a student's cognitive needs can be met they must first fulfil their basic physiological needs. For example a tired and hungry student will find it difficult to focus on learning. Jomaa et al. (2011: 84) state that "childhood under nutrition imposes significant economic costs on individuals and nations, and that improving child's diets and nutrition can have positive effects on their academic performance and behaviours at school as well as their long-term productivity as adults." Students need to feel emotionally and physically safe and accepted within the classroom to progress and reach their full potential.

2.3 HISTORICAL REMARKS ON NUTRITION IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

School feeding has its origins in the 1930s when schemes were introduced in the United Kingdom (UK) and the United States (US) with the explicit purpose of improving the health of learners Richter, Griesel and Rose, (2000:78). In the UK a programme that subsidised milk for school children was initiated in 1934 and milk was provided free from 1944 onwards Baker, Elwood, Hughes, Jones, and Sweetnam (1978:56). In the late 1960s and early 1970s this benefit was withdrawn from all children, except from those who were considered to be particularly needy - an early example of the targeting approach in school feeding. School feeding was introduced to South Africa in a programme to supply free milk to White and Coloured schools in the early 1940s.

It is a known fact that children learn best when they are not hungry or suffering from a nutrient deficient diet. However, thousands of South African children still arrive at school each day on an empty stomach which compromises their ability to learn and to achieve better results. It was with this in mind that former president, Nelson Mandela, called for a primary school nutrition programme to be introduced in 1994. Since then the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP) has benefited learners in the poorest schools across the country. In 1994 the South African Department of Health introduced a nationwide primary school feeding programme which was, subsequently, taken over by the Department of Education in 2004. The NSNP, previously known as Primary School Nutrition Programme (PSNP), was introduced in 1994 as one of the Presidential Lead Projects of the Reconstruction and Development Programme. The programme was introduced as a strategy to alleviate poverty (Report and on the evaluation of the National School Nutrition Programme, 2008:4).

The Ministry of Education's (MOE) mission is to provide a relevant education to all South Africans at all levels - irrespective of gender, tribe or religious and political affiliation. Since the election of the post–apartheid government in South Africa in 1994 attempts have been made to address the needs of marginalized groups, especially women and children suffering poverty Steyn and Schneider (2001:89). The school feeding programme was initially known as the Primary School Nutrition Programme (PSNP) but was later renamed the National School Nutrition Programmer (NSNP). In 1996 a different nutrition programme, the Intergrated

Nutrition Programme, was introduced and established by government as nutrition and health have a powerful influence on children's learning performance (Bourne *et al*.,2007:236).

The PSNP was implemented in 2004 as one of the Presidential Lead Projects to alleviate hunger amongst identified vulnerable primary school children by attempting to meet their nutritional needs with a daily snack. The United Nations Children's Fund UNICEF (2001:34) maintains that when a child lacks nurturing care or suffers from malnutrition, stress, trauma, abuse or neglect, the growing brain is the first casualty. Children who lack certain nutrients in their diet, particularly iron and iodine, or who suffer from protein-energy malnutrition, hunger, parasitic infections or other diseases are unlikely to have the same potential for learning as healthy and well-nourished children Kallman (2005:45). This is because learners who are hungry experience more difficulty concentrating and performing complex tasks - even if they are otherwise well nourished. The purpose of introducing the School Feeding Programme in schools was to solve the problem of hunger in schools so that learner enrolments would increase; they could concentrate on their studies; and learner dropouts would decrease.

Initially, the programme was coordinated by the Department of Health because it was regarded as a health promotion initiative, but in 2004 it was relocated to the Department of Education. To ensure the success of the programme, policy and operational guidelines, systems and procedures were established in the Republic of South Africa's White Paper on the Reconstruction and Development Programme (2004:34). Monitoring and evaluation tools were introduced and personnel were recruited and trained to manage the programme. Furthermore, community participation was a core facet of the implementation of the project and structures, such as School Governing Bodies (SGBs), were established to monitor the programme's implementation. Aspects of local economic development (LED) were factored in through the introduction of a tendering system that promoted the contracting of small, medium and macro enterprises (SMMEs) as service providers of food supplies to schools. Female volunteers were recruited as food handlers for the preparation of food at the respective schools and they were paid a monthly stipend Report and on the evaluation of the (National School Nutrition Programme, 2008:33).

Politicians see the school feeding programme as a means of gaining popularity and in 1955 the African National Congress (ANC) recognized nutrition as a crucial key issue, among others, that needed attention. According to the Constitution of the South Africa, Act 108 of 1996, every

citizen - regardless of gender, race, colour, sexual orientation or religion - has the right to adequate food and good nutrition. Many governments have enshrined this right in their respective constitutions and South Africa is no exception.

School feeding programmes occur in many different forms, depending on context and timing. Broadly speaking, the two major goals of SFPs are education and food security Bennett (2003:78). Educational goals include increased enrolment and attendance, particularly for girls, and improved concentration during teaching which would be aided by the food provided in terms of nutrition. The goals of food security include the reduction of short-term hunger and the improvement of the nutritional status of school children and, thereby, reduce levels of malnutrition.

The researcher's main aim was to learn from participants whether the school feeding programme, because of the food that it provided, increased enrolments and attendance in schools and improved concentration in class.

2.3.1   The Aims of the Primary School Nutrition Programme

The aims of the PSNP are the following:

- To improve educational outcomes by enhancing active learning capacity, school attendance and punctuality by providing an early morning snack;
- To improve health through micronutrient supplementation;
- To improve health through parasite control/eradication;
- To improve health by providing education on health and nutrition;
- To enhance broader development initiatives, especially in the area of combating poverty; and
- To link the PSNP to other RDP programmes and integrate it into a broader Integrated Nutrition Programme (Department of Health's National Policy Framework and Operation Guidelines for the PSNP, 1995:54).

2.3.2   Principles of the Primary School Nutrition Programme

The principles of the PSNP included the following:

- Community involvement and empowerment whereby community members, parents and education personnel are involved in the design, implementation and monitoring of projects.
- A holistic approach linking school nutrition activities to other initiatives to improve the quality of education, such as community development and health initiatives.
- A multi–sect oral and interdisciplinary intervention, jointly managed by the Department of Education and Department of Health and involving other departments, such as those for Welfare and Water Affairs.
- Projects are part of sustainable development processes aimed at achieving greater self-reliance; the provision of food is seen as only a short term measure which should be phased out as other RDP initiatives start having positive effects. Department of Health's National Policy Framework and Operation Guidelines for the PSNP (1995:55).

Several evaluations of the programme took place between 1996 and 2003. The overall purpose of the evaluations was to provide a comprehensive, but rapid, assessment of the main problems, weaknesses and strengths of the programme as well as of its management and implementation. This was in order to make recommendations to the Department of Health on how to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the programme and how it could best become part of the Department of Health's Integrated Nutrition Programme (INP). A host of issues, such as management and beneficiaries of the programme, were identified during the evaluations and they needed to be factored into the programme to improve it.

Emanating from the evaluations, the following critical issues were identified in the (Republic of South Africa's report on the NSNP, 2004:32):

- School feeding programmes are expensive and logistically complicated - as proven in the administrative challenges experienced at all levels of management.
- Capacity, both in terms of personnel and skills, is lacking and management systems - especially in rural areas - are inadequate and under-resourced.
- The quality and quantity of school meals are not being adhered to at provincial level.

The evaluations also provided an opportunity to reflect on whether locating the coordination of the programme under the Department of Health was appropriate. Based on the above critical issues, amongst others, the coordination of the programme was relocated to the Department of Education. The relocation was accompanied by a refinement of the aims of the programme which were as follows:

- The focus of the programme was to be on educational outcomes of school feeding and not, necessarily, on nutrition.
- As school feeding was being implemented in schools it was the functional responsibility of the Education Department.
- Managing the programme would provide an opportunity for the department to integrate school feeding into the broader context of educational development.

The NSNP was conceptualised, primarily, as an education intervention which was aimed at addressing children's ability to learn, rather than a health measure intervention to improve the learner nutrition (Kallman, 2005:32). It should be noted that when the PSNP was coordinated by the Department of Health, it was responsible for menu planning and the nutrition, while the Department of Education was responsible for implementing the programme in schools. With the programme under the jurisdiction of the Department of Education, provincial departments of education are responsible for both drawing up targeting criteria for schools and the selection of menus. The targeting process is based on the quintile system, which was determined by the Department of Education to rank all ordinary public schools from the "poorest to least poor" (Report on the Evaluation of the National School Nutrition Programme, 2008:10).

Schools are ranked on the basis of physical conditions, facilities, crowding and the relative poverty of the community surrounding the schools. Furthermore, provincial departments of education are responsible for the management of the programme, including the procurement of services and the facilitation of establishing school food gardens which are meant to be a source for vegetables to be served at the respective schools (Report on the Evaluation of the National School Nutrition Programme, 2008:12).

2.4 LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK RELATING TO THE NSNP.

The NSNP is based on the following legislative/policy frameworks.

2.4.1 The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act 108 of 1996, Section 28 [c] of the Bill of Rights. Section 28)

The section on the Bill of Rights provides children with the following basic rights:

(a) The right to basic nutrition, shelter, basic healthcare services and social services.

(b) Everyone has the right to have access to sufficient food and water and social security, including - if they are unable to support themselves and their dependents - to appropriate social assistance.

This study is aimed at examining learner perceptions of the school feeding programme – as a manifestation of poverty in the Nzhelele East Circuit where the focus is on children's rights to nutrition and access to sufficient food and water which is provided for by Section 28(l) (c) of the constitution. The researcher wanted to learn whether school children in the Nzhelele East Circuit enjoy these rights and, furthermore, to understand and determine whether learners are receiving sufficient food and if they are satisfied with the menu they are given.

2.4.2 The UN Convention on the Rights of Children as Ratified by the Republic of South Africa on 1st May 1996

The convention establishes the right to education on the basis of equal opportunity. It binds state parties to make "available and accessible to every child" compulsory and free primary education and options for secondary schooling, including vocational education.

The UN convention states that children have **survival rights** that include their right to life and the needs that are most basic to existence, such as nutrition, shelter, an adequate living standard and access to medical services (http://www.children rights.ie/ children-rights-South Africa/UN-convention-right-child). It further states that parties must provide children with the right of access to housing, health care, sufficient food and water, social security and basic education (http://www.safilii.org/za/cases/Zacc/1996/26.html).   This   study   intended   reaching   an

understanding of whether the school feeding programme was in line with the UN convention of providing children with sufficient food in order to reduce absenteeism and the dropout rate.

2.4.3 The National Programme of Action for Children Launched by the Government in May1996

The National Programme of Action (NPA) is the instrument by which government commitment to children is being carried out, including considering the needs of children as paramount throughout the government's programmes, services and development strategies (The National Programme of Action for Children, 1996). The priorities of the National Programme of Action for Children - launched by the government in May1996 and adopted by the Steering Committee for the National Programme of Action for Children in South Africa - includes the following items: child health; water and sanitation; early childhood development and basic education; social welfare development, including family environment and out-of-home care and social security; leisure and cultural activities and child protection measures.

Nutrition, as part of child health, has the following goals:

- The reduction of severe as well as moderate malnutrition to half of the 1990 level among children under five years of age.
- The virtual elimination of Vitamin A deficiency and its consequences.
- The assurance that all household members, regardless of age and gender, have adequate access to food to cover their basic nutrient needs.

This study set out to determine whether the school feeding programme was contributing to the reduction of hunger, poverty and malnutrition as well as to improving learning performance.

Within each of these policy areas, special attention is paid to the needs of children living in difficult circumstances or with special needs, such as children who are homeless, living in poverty, abused, orphaned, disabled, have chronic illnesses or are the victims of violence. In the study special attention was given to children living in difficult conditions and poverty and whether the introduction of SNP with its menu option reduces hunger, improves their attention and reduces absenteeism.

2.4.4   Children's Act, No. 38 of 2005

The objectives of the Children's Act, No. 38, promulgated in 2005, are:

    (a) To promote the preservation and strengthening of families.

    (b) To give effect to the following constitutional rights of children, namely, family or parental care, social services, protection from maltreatment, neglect, abuse or degradation and that the best interests of a child are of paramount importance in every matter concerning the child.

    (c) To make provision for structures, services and means for promoting and monitoring the sound physical, psychological, intellectual, emotional and social development of children (Children's Act, No. 38 of 2005:19).

In terms of the Children's Act, No. 38 of 2005, children's physical and emotional security should be ensured and their intellectual, social and cultural development should be encouraged. It also applies to this study which is underpinned by a theoretical framework of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs where the psychological and physical needs of children should be met. The researcher wanted to learn whether, indeed, psychological and physical needs play an important role for learning to take place.

2.4.5   The National Department of Education Business Plan

The National Department of Education Business Plan (2004:9) states that existing frameworks and provision are intended as broad principles only and that provinces should enhance the scope and depth of the programme in response to the unique challenges and dynamics of their respective environments (Limpopo Provincial Department; Department of Education; NSNP Business Plans, 2007/08). These legislative mandates guide officials on how to conduct themselves in terms of effectiveness and efficiency. According to Section 3 of the Children's Charter of South Africa, Part 2 of Article 6 of the summit held on 1 June 1992, under Family Life all children have the right to clothing, housing and a healthy diet. Section 6 of the Children's Charter of South Africa recommends that all children who do not have a family should be provided with a safe and secure place to live as well as with clothing and nutritious food within the community where they live.

The following are the rights of children enshrined in the Children's Charter of South Africa:

(a) All children have a right to education which is in the interest of the children and to developing their talents through education, both formal and informal.

(b) All children have the right to adequate educational facilities; transportation to such facilities should be provided to children in difficult or violent situations. Learners should have access to quality food - as enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996).

In terms of Section 28 (c) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996), every child has the right to basic nutrition, shelter, basic health care services and social services. The NSNP is one of the mechanisms that has been designed and implemented to realize these rights. Service providers must execute their duties and must deliver services in a satisfactory way.

It is clear that listening carefully to, and understanding, the experiences of learners regarding the school feeding programme will assist in addressing the needs of marginalized groups, especially women and children who suffer from poverty; result in a reduction of hunger and an increased school attendance; and improve health through micronutrient supplementation (Steyn and Schneider,2001:62).

From the above discussion, it can be seen that as a democratic country South Africa is attempting to give every citizen an opportunity by remedying the mistakes of the past. It should be noted that treating children in terms of the abovementioned legislation is a clear sign that the government is trying to build a better country for the future. It can be supported by effectively listening to, and understanding, the experiences of learners regarding the school feeding programme.

The above mentioned policies should be read, understood and applied in conjunction with the following legislative mandates - as informed by, and espoused in, the Blue Book of National Guidelines of 2004 and the NSNP Provincial guidelines revised in 2011:

(a) Access to quality food - as enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996 and the International Children's Rights Charter.

(b) Targeting of schools for feeding - as informed by the Norms and Standards for the Funding of Public Schools, General Notice 2362 of 12 October 1998.

(c) The roles and responsibilities of the three levels of governance, i.e., national, provincial and school level - as per Section 3 of the National Education Policy Act of 1996 and Sections 15 and 16 of the South African Schools Act, No. 84 of 1996.

(d) Provision of Grade R - as enshrined in the White Paper, No. 5, and the Cabinet Resolution of 2002 in which the transfer of the National School Nutrition Programme is addressed.

(e) Participation of educators in the School Nutrition Programme as an extra mural activity of the school - as espoused in the South African Schools Act, No. 84 of 1996; in the Employment of Educators Act, No. 76 of 1998 and in the Code of Ethics of the SACE Act of 1998.

The implementation of the NSNP gives effect to, and is based on, the following legislative provisions contained in the White Paper on Reconstruction and Development (1994). The provisions of the legislative framework within which the NSNP is implemented are summarized as follows:

• Access to quality food and basic nutrition - as enshrined in the South African Constitution and part of the International Children's Charter;

• Access to quality basic education and learner success - as stipulated in the National Educational Policy Act, No. 27 of 1996 and the South African Schools Act, No. 84 of 1996;

• Targeting of schools for school feeding - as informed by the Norms and Standards for the Funding of Public Schools, according to the Department of Education General Notice 2362 of 12 October 1998;

• Provision of Grade R - as enshrined in the White Paper, No. 5, and the Cabinet Resolution of January 2002 in which the transfer of the National School Nutrition Programme is addressed; and

• Caring for children affected by HIV/AIDS and regarding Orphans and Vulnerable Children - as espoused in the strategic objectives of the (Department of Education's Strategic Plan for the Department of Education, 2003-2005).

2.5 NATIONAL GUIDELINES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL SCHOOL NUTRITION PROGRAMME

The national guidelines for the implementation of the NSNP are designed to lead to the fair and just administration of the programme; they stipulate how people should carry out their responsibilities. These national guidelines seek to contribute to the sustained provision of quality nutrition for learners threatened by poverty and hunger. They also serve as a watchdog - in keeping with the principles of access, equity, redress and protection against unfair discrimination within or by an education department or institution on any grounds whatsoever.

The national guidelines should be used to ensure unreserved access to basic quality nutrition provided by the Department of Education and government, in general, for the benefit of learners from the poorest schools, such as Nzhelele East Circuit Secondary Schools. They are intended to boost universal primary education by increasing enrolment and retention; by reducing absenteeism; by improving attendance; and, simultaneously, by impacting on the nutrition of learners in primary schools. It is clear that if these objectives are met, school absenteeism, class attendance, leaner concentration and performance in the Nzhelele East Circuit will be improved.

2.6 OBLIGATIONS OF PROVINCES CONCERNING THE NSNP

The obligations of provinces concerning the NSNP are set to guide service providers from different provinces in performing their duties efficiently and effectively. According to a Report by the Department of Education (2004:6), provinces should offer standardized menu options; food specification and costing of options that include socially acceptable cooked and non-cooked food; and ensure the provision of the necessary utensils for preparing and serving meals. Menu options and food specification is of great concern at schools in the Nzhelele East Circuit and, where advised by the Department of Health, provinces may supply nutritional supplements in addition to regular meals.

In terms of the NSNP provinces should work out feeding schedules for a standard minimum of 156 feeding days and feeding should take place before 10:00 on at least 80% of annual school days. Provinces should implement effective and legally approved procurement strategies by entering into service level agreements with inter- and intra-sect oral partners and by drawing up contracts with all suppliers. Proper business planning and financial management systems should

be put in place to meet the requirements of both the conditional grant allocations well as funds from other sources, such as the Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) and donations. The Guidelines of the Public Finance Management Act of 1999 and the Treasury Regulations should be strictly followed.

Provinces are required to harness and replicate successful initiatives to increase the participation of women's groups; women and community-based organizations should be given preference through the procurement accelerated point system and/or management plans should be put in place for their full participation as service providers. At the commencement of the NSNP in April 2004 provinces had to ensure that, wherever possible, schools developed food gardens in order to complement nutrition and in terms of the curriculum begin to entrench a culture of food production in learners for a better life. To this end, provinces should solicit the cooperation of local government, the Department of Agriculture, local communities and NGOs.

National and provincial departments should develop and implement effective communication plans for a focused role in order to ensure the effective implementation of the school feeding programme. After the commencement of the NSNP in April 2004, they were expected to develop and implement a strategy of nutrition education through curricular activities in Life Orientation learning; a monitoring system to ensure regular school feeding, food quality and safety; and appropriate information systems. It must be noted that existing monitoring and evaluating strategies, such as the Whole School Evaluation, were to be used for verification purposes.

2.7   NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANISATIONS (NGOs)

The WFP's major international NGO partners in school feeding include World Vision International, Catholic Relief Services, Norwegian Refugee Council, CARE, Plan International and Joint Aid Management all of which provide a mix of implementation support and complementaryactivities(http://documents.wfp.org/stellent/groups/public/documents/newsroom/ wfp204709).A number of local NGOs also provide important support in the implementation of the WFP school feeding activities. Within the non-governmental sector there are numerous organizations, networks, alliances and community development institutions that dedicate their work to improving children's lives (National Programme of Action for Children in South Africa: Framework, 31 may 1996).

School feeding in the apartheid South Africa context was, largely, left in the hands of charity organizations, NGOs and semi-business organizations, such as *Ithuba.* Driven mainly by initiatives of the ANC, the policy of the Government of National Unity identified the area of school feeding as a prime policy concern from March 1994. At the core of the national nutrition policy was the Primary School Nutrition Project (PSNP).

Immediate action resulted in the establishment of the Primary School Nutrition Project (PSNP) as the lead project after specific intervention by President Mandela and the RDP. Despite the deliberate attempts of the Primary School Nutrition Project in the early days not to rely on the NGOs for delivery, this policy was not wholly carried out in practice. Areas, such as the Western Cape, continued to depend heavily on traditional NGO networks while elsewhere in the country delivery was based on tenders from big business and, later, numerous efforts were made to decentralize delivery and to incorporate small contractors Kallaway (1996:15). These developments resulted in sharp criticism from the NGO sector which had a strong track record in the area. By 1996 there were signs that the policy was under intense pressure. A number of accounts of corruption and a breakdown of the service indicated that all was not well with this needed initiative (Kallaway, 1996:15).

A question of note is whether any future government, elected by the people and committed to national reconstruction and development, can leave this area of central national concern to charity organizations SAIRR Survey (1955-77). The liberation movement's political and ideological traditions from the 1950s frequently express social democratic or even socialist and communist policy thinking which was inherited from the post World War II era and has been reflected in the politics of African nationalism since the 1960s. Such a tradition of public policy is fixed in opposition to Bantu Education which was epitomized in the moral outrage conveyed at the time of the state's discontinuation of the school feeding scheme in the 1950s (Kallaway, 1996:18).

The researcher believes that providing children with a strong basis to learn at school by eating more nutritious food will lead to healthier lives both emotionally and physically and will, significantly, improve their cognitive or mental abilities - enabling them to be more alert, pay better attention and improve their performance in the classroom. Poor diet or menu options could lead to greater absenteeism. If children have a proper diet their health care would be improved;

short term hunger and dropout rates at school would be reduced; and the number of school attendances would increase.

2.8 INTERVENTIONS TO REDUCE MALNUTRITION IN SOUTH AFRICA

Nutrition programmes have been in place in South Africa since the 1960s. These early programmes were not very effective in terms of reducing malnutrition for a number of reasons as they focused, primarily, on providing food to the needy and, therefore, only addressed the immediate causes of malnutrition (see Figure 2.1, below). They did not address the underlying causes of malnutrition and, hence, today malnutrition is still a problem in our country.

According to UNICEF (1990:19), the following diagram depicts causes of malnutrition
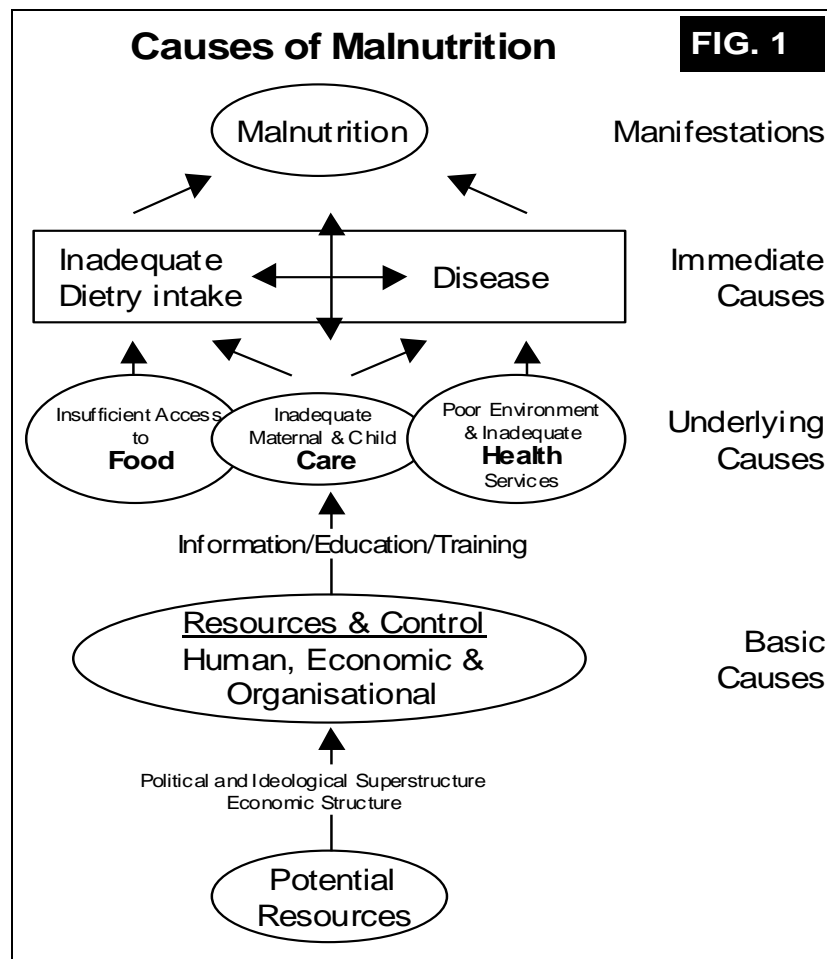
Figure 2.1: Causes of Malnutrition

The factors which contribute to malnutrition can be classified as immediate, underlying and basic causes - as outlined in the UNICEF conceptual framework. The most significant immediate causes of malnutrition are inadequate food intake and illness UNICEF (1990). Some of the underlying factors which result in poor food intake and illness include poor household access to food; inadequate maternal and child care; poor access to basic health services; and an unhealthy environment with limited access to clean water and safe waste disposal. Poverty and lack of resources are also basic factors that contribute to malnutrition.

In August 1994 the new Minister of Health appointed a committee to investigate and develop a more comprehensive nutrition strategy for South Africa. The outcome was the production of the Integrated Nutrition Programme (INP) of 1997. The INP differs from past nutrition programmes in that it emphasizes the need to address all the causes of malnutrition and stresses that in order to achieve this all sectors need to work in an integrated manner.

The researcher wanted to learn from the participants whether the introduction of the SNP helped to reduce hunger and improve their performance in class and their class attendance. The researcher also wanted to understand whether menu options really play a significance role in the reduction of hunger and of absenteeism.

Areas of focus identified for the delivery of nutrition services and retrieved from an internet health link, http://www.healthlink.org.za, are:

- **A Community-Based Nutrition Programme (CBNP)** which aims to strengthen household food security; improve knowledge about nutrition; support the care of women and children; and promote a healthy environment. Elements of the National Nutrition and Social Development Programme (NNSDP) and Primary School Nutrition Programme (PSNP) are incorporated in this programme.

- **A Health Facility-Based Nutrition Programme (HFBNP)** which is intended to be part of the primary healthcare package will focus on problems of under-nutrition, micro-nutrient deficiencies and chronic lifestyle diseases. The programme should provide education about nutrition, growth monitoring and micronutrient and food supplementation. It has been proposed that a Protein-Energy-Malnutrition (PEM) scheme should be integrated into this programme.

- **A Nutrition Promotion Programme** focuses on the promotion of nutrition by means of policy development, improved communication, advocacy and appropriate legislation. Some priority areas for this programme include the promotion and protection of breastfeeding, marketing of infant foods and food fortification.

2.9 EVALUATION OF SCHOOL FEEDING IN SOUTH AFRICA

A number of evaluations of the PSNP and the NSNP have been carried out. Perhaps the most comprehensive evaluation of school feeding in South Africa was conducted by the Child Health Unit (1997:99). While praising the aims of the PSNP, it outlined a number of significant weaknesses in the programme which included supplementation Child Health Unit, (2007:99). Supplementation has, generally, been a vertical school feeding programme rather than a comprehensive nutritional programme, making any proposed impact on nutritional status unlikely. School feeding is expensive and logistically complicated and, in the South African context, it has been beset by significant administrative difficulties and problems related to corruption. Many of the implementation problems have been due to management difficulties and coverage in South Africa has been poor and inconsistent. Unfortunately, the number of schools that were serviced by feeding programmes is often seen as a marker of success, but this is misleading because it says nothing about the quality of the food; which days were missed; which children were at school to receive the meal; or which schools were able to provide the food only later in the day and not for breakfast. In the mind of the researcher these anomalies triggered a desire to understand the experiences of the learners regarding school feeding programme. Other researchers have come out in support of SFPs. For example, Louw, Bekkerand, Wentzel and Viljoen (2001:37) suggest that the benefits of a properly designed and effectively implemented SFP far outweigh its costs. It should, however, be noted that their assessment is based on their evaluation of the government's programme in principle and not on the actual planning and implementation of the programme.

The Provincial Education Department (PED) of Limpopo complied with provincially specified menu options and served five cooked meals per week in both primary and secondary schools on all 194 school days. The quality of food items has improved due to an increase in the cost allocation per learner per day. However, there is still a need to improve the quality of soya

mince, especially in schools in the Nzhelele East Circuit of the Vhembe District. The researcher wanted to find out what secondary school learners had to say about the feeding schemes organised in their poor rural schools and how the kind of diet supplied to them as needy learners in rural secondary schools contributes to the management of absenteeism.

2.10   INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE OF SCHOOL NUTRITION PROGRAMMES

Internationally, many countries have school nutrition programmes. The school nutrition programmes of Brazil, India, Australia and Canada are highlighted for comparison purposes with the South African school nutrition programme, especially in terms of the poverty levels of these countries compared to that of South Africa.

2.10.1   Brazil

The Brazilian School Nutrition Programme (PNAE) is essentially the country's longest-standing public policy for promoting food and nutrition security. Considered to be one of the largest and most comprehensive school nutrition programmes in the world, the budget for the programme for 2012 was R$3.3 billion, benefiting 45 million learners (www.fnde.gov.br). Brazil has one of the largest school feeding programmes in the world and has been sharing its knowledge and expertise through south-south cooperation and work with the WFP to support school feeding programmes in a number of countries.

In Brazil the first government action geared to school nutrition was in the 1930s when nutritional diseases related to hunger and poverty, such as malnutrition, iron-deficiency anaemia, iodine deficiency and vitamin A deficiency, among others, represented serious public health problems. The embryonic project of the current PNAE programme, however, was established in 1955 with the creation of the Brazilian School Snack Campaign. This campaign - linked to the Ministry of Education and Culture - initially had international support in the form of food donations under the auspices of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and it was based on the dedication of Josué de Castro and other social actors imbued with the arduous and complex task of combating hunger in the country. These programs aim to enhance the concentration span and learning capacity of school children by providing meals in schools to reduce short-term hunger that may otherwise impair children's performance (Jomaa et al., 2011).

The progress that the PNAE has achieved over 58 years of its existence is clear for all to see, especially since 1995 and, particularly, in the period from 2003 to 2012. During this period there was a major expansion of the programme in terms of the allocation of funds and population coverage. Other advances relate to the establishment of technical and operational criteria striving for flexibility, efficiency and effectiveness in the management of the programme, including the stimulus for the expansion and strengthening of the role of the School Nutrition Councils, social control and regulatory strategies for the action of nutritionists as the technicians in charge. The enactment of Law No. 11.947/2009 brought new advances in the PNAE, such as extending the programme to the entire public grid for basic education as well as for youths and adults. It also ratified the requirement that at least 30% of the total funds transferred by the Brazilian Education and Development Fund (ENDF) for the implementation of the PNAE by executing agencies should be invested in the direct purchase of products from family farms - a measure that boosts the economic development of communities in a sustainable manner.

Another relevant development was the creation in 2007 of the Cooperation Centres for Student Food and Nutrition (CECANEs), following the decentralization of the FNDE budget to federal public universities. The objective was to develop programmes of teaching and research and extension activities that result in the enhanced management of quality and in the social control of the PNAE in the different municipalities and, thereby, promote and ensure healthy nutrition and food and nutrition security in public schools.

To the detriment of its comprehensiveness and relevance in the national and international arena of public policy there are, as yet, very few scientific publications on the historical trajectory, scope, efficiency and effectiveness of the PNAE. The new national epidemiological profile, characterized by the emergence and predominance of non-communicable chronic nutritional diseases, such as obesity, diabetes, dyslipidaemia, hypertension and certain types of cancer, etc. and the maintenance of nutritional deficiencies, requires constant monitoring of the PNAE. In this sense, the purpose and opportuneness of this special edition on the PNAE is to disseminate and promote the important academic contribution that the CECANEs made to the enhanced management of the PNAE and, consequently, the improvement of food and nutrition of Brazilian schoolchildren.

The same applies to this study as constant monitoring of the SNP and the right application of policies and guidelines of the programme will promote the importance of education and help in improving the cognitive level of learners as well as in reducing malnutrition.

2.10.2 India

The federal government in India launched the National Programme of Nutritional Support to Primary Education in August 1995 Government of India (1995). The programme mandated cooked meals in public primary - *not* in private primary - schools across all states in the country. In terms of the initiative, each enrolled child was to be served a free meal of 100 grams of raw wheat or rice grain, depending on whether it was a wheat or rice eating area, per school day on the school premises during the lunch break or at mid-day and, hence, called the mid-day meal (MDM programme). The state governments are responsible for financing the cost of converting food grain, provided free by the federal government, into cooked meals. States that could not raise the resources were allowed, in the interim, to distribute free grain rations to each enrolled child at the rate of 3 kilograms per month for a 10-month academic year - subject to a minimum monthly attendance of 80% by the learner. A Supreme Court of India judgment in 2001 directed all state governments that had not yet implemented the programme to provide cooked meals in all targeted schools within six months (Farzana, 2007:23).

The South African Government is responsible for financing its programme where cooked meals are prepared in both primary and secondary schools, especially in rural areas rather than in urban areas and in public schools with the aim of reducing hunger and malnutrition and increasing academic performance.

2.10.3 Australia

The Nutrition Australia Act (NA ACT) is a not-for-profit, non-government, community-based organisation and a division of one of Australia's major nutrition education bodies. Based on the latest scientific research, qualified health professionals and educators provide a range of services for ACT primary and secondary school communities, including canteens, after school care, parent and citizen associations, school principals and teachers. Australia's services are tailored to specific ages and learning stages as appropriate to the school community.

The *school nutrition programme* is a breakfast and/or lunch service for school-aged children from remote communities of the Northern Territory which aims to support better school attendance and to help with learning and engagement in education. The programme provides job opportunities and training for local community members. The Healthy Eating Advisory Service is jointly funded by the Victorian and Australian Governments and delivered by Nutrition Australia Victorian Division to provide Victorian primary and secondary schools with healthy food and drink and to meet the requirements of the School Canteens and Other School Food Services Policy (http://en, Wikipedia org/wiki/school-meal#-ref).

The programme is a sub-measure of the Northern Territory Emergency Response (NTER) announced by the Australian Government in June 2007 in response to the "*Little Children are Sacred*" report. The programme is administered by the Department of Education's Employment and Workplace Relations on behalf of the Australian Government. The department works with each community to establish and fund *school nutrition programme* providers so that they can employ local workers to prepare and deliver the meals; ensure that adequate kitchen facilities and equipment are available; and support any related professional development activity.

2.10.4 Canada

Canada has no national school meal programme and elementary schools are usually not equipped with kitchen facilities (http://www.parentcentral.ca/parent/Education/article/709051, *Toronto Star*, Students lack healthy food options). Parents are, generally, expected to provide packed lunches for their children to take to school or have them return home for the duration of the lunch period (http://en.wikipedia.org/wik/school.meal# citenote-26). However, some non-profit organizations that are dedicated to learner nutrition programmes do exist. Canada is one of the few Western countries that do not offer a comprehensive publicly subsidized national meal programme to learners. Even US government subsidies for school meals are more than 30-fold higher - even on a per learner basis - than Canadian subsidies.

However, during recent elections political parties in Canada identified children's health and nutrition as a major part of their campaigns. The Liberal Party's 2008 election platform stated: "Promoting good health is just as important as preventing disease." Likewise, the NDP's election platform promised: "Ensure a healthy head start for kids…. We will develop a Children's Nutrition Initiative to support and expand provincial and local programmes that provide healthy

meals to school children." The 2008 Conservative Party's election platform proclaimed: "A re-elected Conservative Government will continue to provide practical help to Canadian families to assist them with higher costs of living…" Brown, Beardslee, and Deborah, (2008:8) and the Conservative Party's 2006 election platform stated: "The most important part of health care is prevention, including ensuring that Canadians, especially children, have a proper diet and exercise."

Related to the Financially Supporting Healthy Eating for Canadian Children Public Policy, a 2008 scientific literature review by experts at Harvard University suggests that evidence from more than 100 published research articles provides the scientific basis for concluding that the US federal School Breakfast Programme is highly effective in terms of providing children with a stronger basis to learn at school; eat more nutritious food; and lead healthier lives, both emotionally and physically; significantly improve their cognitive or mental abilities; and enable them to be more alert, pay better attention and do better in terms of reading, mathematics and other standardized test scores.

Children who are given breakfast at school are sick less frequently; have fewer problems associated with hunger, such as dizziness, lethargy, stomach ache and ear ache; and do significantly better in terms of cooperation, discipline and interpersonal behaviour than their peers who do not get a school breakfast. In the Chief Public Health Officer's 2008 *Report on the State of Public Health in Canada,* Dr Butler Jones observed:

> When children go to school hungry or poorly nourished, their energy levels, memory, problem-solving skills, creativity, concentration and behaviour are all negatively impacted. Studies have shown that 31% of elementary students and 62% of secondary school students do not eat a nutritious breakfast before school.
>
> Almost a quarter of Canadian children in Grade 4 do not eat breakfast daily and by Grade 8 that number jumps to almost half of all girls. The reasons for this vary from a lack of available food or nutrition options in low-income homes to poor eating choices made by children and/or their caregivers. As a result of being hungry at school, children may not reach their full developmental potential – an outcome that can have a health impact throughout their entire lives.

Dr Butler-Jones featured Breakfast for Learning as a key Canadian non-profit initiative tackling hunger. According to the CPHO, members of school staff have reported improvements in scholastic performance, behaviour and attentiveness among students and volunteers in this

programme have suggested high satisfaction rates and a feeling of sense of community. The success of Breakfast for Learning in terms of reaching so many school children is largely attributed to community-level involvement and the management of each programme. The needs of each area are determined by the combined efforts of government, private business, community agencies, volunteers, food banks, parents and educators. Investing in school nutrition during the school year complements other investments in public transportation and utility infrastructure which must often be made during the summer months. Breakfast for Learning has fed 1.5 million learners across Canada since being established in Toronto in 1992. Its Honorary Patron is the Her Excellency the Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean, Governor General of Canada.

There is anecdotal evidence in Canada that subsidized school meals can improve school attendance and the likelihood of graduation, especially among high risk children; help equalize opportunities for life success among children from unequal families with little financial means; and relieve the time-pressure from all parents, but especially single parents and families where both parents work outside the home and, as such, have limited time to prepare nutritious individual lunches for their children on the 190 annual school days - especially parents with several children in school.

Properly designed funding eligibility can help to improve the health of Canadian K-12 school children by ensuring that only nutritious foods are eligible for funding. The House of Commons Standing Committee on Health was recently concerned that the present generation of children would live shorter, sicker lives than their parents. It was suggested that the natural environment should be protected by setting food eligibility standards that favoured environmentally sustainable products, production and manufacturing techniques, such as locally sourced and minimally processed and packaged fresh fruits and vegetables. Canadian farmers often sell their produce directly to end-consumers. If local programme administrators purchased directly from farmers and famers' markets it could stimulate community employment opportunities for part-time school meal administrators in up to 13,500 schools as well as regional financial stewards.

A national nutritious school feeding programme is supported by, and is consistent with, the World Health Organization's *School Policy Framework,* published in November 2008. It was developed in a close partnership between the WHO, the Government of Canada and a Canadian

technical conference held in Victoria, British Columbia in 2007. It is by emulating this study that South Africa can produce programmes that are relevant to this country.

2.11   SCHOOL NUTRITION IN AFRICA

The school feeding nutrition programmes of Kenya, Ghana and Angola have been investigated to check whether South Africa shares something in common with those African countries.

2.11.1   School Feeding in Kenya

The World Food Programme and the Kenyan Ministry of Education have been implementing school feeding in Kenya since 1980. Education is a challenge in Kenya because of extreme poverty and nomadic patterns of livelihood whereby 1.4 million children are not in school WFP (2009:3). However, according to a WFP 2008 survey, the net primary school enrolment rate for boys and girls in Kenya rose from 77% in 2002 to 92% in 2007 due, in a large part, to the institution of the Government of Kenya's free primary school feeding initiative in 2003 Lambers (2009:2). This increased the number of new learners by 1.3 million and brought Kenya closer to the Millennium Development Goal of complete primary education for all children and the achievement of gender parity Fleshman (2005:19). The WFP and the Kenyan Ministry of Education of the Government of Kenya support 1.2 million children in school feeding programmes in nearly 4,000 schools.

School feeding enhances free primary education by providing a meal at school so that children from food-insecure households do not need to miss school to search for food. There is also evidence that school feeding programmes attract more underprivileged girls to school, though gender ratios remain below parity in all schools (Lambers, 2009:3). Although progress is being made there continues to be significant regional disparities in access to education and school enrolment. For instance, in Nairobi's slums, more than 70% of primary school age children are not enrolled in school as compared to the national average of 8% (WFP, 2009:5).

In addition to promoting universal primary education, Kenya's SFP seeks to target socio-economically disadvantaged and nutritionally vulnerable children in pre-primary and primary schools in select districts. Specific objectives and expected benefits include improving the attention span and learning capabilities of children; improving school facilities; supporting

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school-based micro-enterprises; and providing a significant contribution to the nutrient intake of schoolchildren (Global Child Nutrition Forum, 2007:13). However, these goals will not be met without adequate facilities, food access, resources and training.

The WFP and the Kenyan Ministry of Education have been the main bodies supporting school feeding programmes in Kenya; their activities have targeted 1.2 million children in roughly 4,000 schools, comprising approximately 1/6th of the children enrolled in primary school, where they have expanded school feeding activities in food-insecure areas Global Child Nutrition Forum (2007:14). While a national school feeding programme has not been fully implemented in Kenya, school feeding was included in the 2005 Session Paper on a Policy Framework for Education that was approved by parliament and which highlights the need for school meals; calls for an expansion of the programme; and encourages communities to provide mid-day meals to needy children.

The Kenyan Education Support Programme provides an institutional framework by including school feeding as one of the main components of the School Health, Nutrition and Feeding Programme and the 2008 National Nutrition and Food Security Policy includes a section on school meals and the need to enhance and expand the school feeding programme WFP (2009:13). Currently, schools covered by the programme include pre-primary and primary schools in arid and semi-arid areas; schools in unplanned urban settlements of Nairobi; and early childhood development centres in arid districts Global Child Nutrition Forum (2007:12). Children in beneficiary schools receive a midday meal and children in slum schools and early childhood development centres receive an additional 40 grams of corn soya (Global Child Nutrition Forum, 2007:13). Some additional support for the unplanned settlements comes from the private sector and from non-governmental religious organizations operating in the area. The full cost of running the school feeding programme in Kenya, including community contributions, is estimated to be $28 per child per year (Buddy, Burbano, Grosh, Gelli, Jukes & Drake, and 2009:7).

A range of contributions are also made by parents and community members to school feeding programmes. The school management committee, generally, manages the programme and agrees on the fees that families of children in the school are charged to help support the programme. Parents who cannot afford to pay often provide services or make other contributions.

The WFP's new five-year development programme (2009-2013) emphasizes the need to hand the programme over to the Kenyan Government after 28 years of assistance in purchasing and providing food for the programme and being responsible for food distribution to each assisted school. The government's 2008/2009 budget included US$5 million for feeding an additional 550,000 children through a Home-Grown School Feeding Programme which brought school feeding and agricultural development together in terms of the local procurement of food; the support of school gardens; and agricultural education in the classroom.

The government used a targeting exercise to identify 28 marginal agricultural districts with access to markets to supply the new programme. A recent study conducted by the WFP in partnership with the International Food Policy Research Institute and the Gates Foundation maintains that if school feeding programmes in Kenya were to purchase maize from smallholder famers in a high-potential area for maize, the annual income of 175,000 farmers would increase by about US$50 per year (Brinkman *et al.,*2007:10). However, this local procurement scheme is contingent on a stable food supply and increases in farmers' yields so as not to cause a rise in price which would harm many buyers in the region.

Unpredictable weather forces also threaten the stability of local food supplies and as recently as July 2009 a severe drought prompted top education officials to produce an emergency plan to improve school feeding programme food-security in several drought stricken districts Muindi, Benjamin (Kenya, 2009:3). As a result of drought many families resort to taking their children out of school to work so that their families can eat one meal a day. However, in schools where meals are provided this is less likely to occur (Lambers, 2009:2).

The benefits of school feeding in Kenya have been cited in a number of studies. A random controlled trial of Kenyan preschoolers suggests that children receiving breakfast scored 8.5% higher in school participation than a control group (Vermeersch & Kremer, 2004). In order to demonstrate the ways in which school feeding programmes have the potential for improved educational attainment, (Whaley *et al,* 2003: 133). found that Kenyan school children in a school feeding programme who received meat improved their arithmetic scores by 0.15 standard deviations and their performance on a test of non-verbal reasoning improved by 0.16 standard deviations). Generally, attendance rates in assisted schools have risen dramatically, as has the number of girls attending school (Lambers, 2009:4).

However, numerous challenges continue to impede the progress and stability of Kenyan school feeding programmes. Schools that received an influx of pupils following the 2003 abolition of school fees have yet to acquire additional staff, facilities and supplies necessary to maintain quality educational standards; many districts remain unable to finance a school feeding programme.

For school feeding operations that are already in place, Kenya continues to be dependent on aid and voluntary contributions from the international community for the provision of food and technical expertise. In addition, a lack of adequate dining spaces and hand-washing facilities for children - in combination with poor hygiene practices - is not conducive to a healthy feeding environment. According to the WFP, this situation could potentially be improved with food-for-work, cash-for-work and projects to enhance sanitation facilities and sensitize communities about basic sanitation practice in schools (WFP, 2009:9). A 2008 baseline survey, conducted by the WFP, found that 94% of children in schools with feeding programmes agreed that school feeding improved attentiveness and the ability to learn but suggested that the programme should improve the actual cooking and preparation of the food and increase the quantity and variety of meals WFP, Kenya (2008:5).

Other challenges identified by Lambers (2009:23) and the Global Child Nutrition Forum (2009:8) include the following: seasonal migration of families which interrupts school attendance; cultural practices, such as early marriage that keep girls out of school; a lack of sustainable funding necessary for maintenance and expansion of school feeding programmes that remain dependent on donor funds; a lack of uniformity in school feeding standards and meal provision; weak institutional implementation arrangements; seasonal droughts and floods that impair the food supply and access to local markets; an unstable infrastructure and political instability; and a lack of community participation and ownership.

An interesting innovative approach to dealing with school feeding challenges in Kenya has been the development of a computer-based monitoring system, run jointly by the Ministry of Education and the WFP. This tool has been designed to gather timely reports from school feeding project review committees and has resulted in the identification of poor management practice and the need for assistance in vulnerable areas (Lambers, 2009:18).

In this study the researcher wanted to establish whether South Africa could learn something from the Kenyan school feeding programme, especially the ways in which Kenya addresses the challenges.

2.11.2   School Nutrition in Ghana

The Ghana School Feeding Programme (GSFP) was launched in 2005 with the goal of contributing to the reduction of poverty and increasing food security in Ghana. The three objectives of the programme are: 1) to reduce hunger and malnutrition by providing all primary and kindergarten learners in beneficiary schools with a nutritious meal each school day; 2) to increase school enrolment, attendance, and retention; and 3) to boost domestic food production by sourcing GSFP meals locally and, thereby, providing a sustainable market for local food producers in the community (Ghana School Feeding Programme Website, 2010). These objectives align closely with the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals concerning hunger, poverty and primary education. The key participants in the implementation of the GSFP are the Government of Ghana and the Dutch Government that is co-funding the project. The technical partners include USAID, the Netherlands Development Organization, and the (World Food Programme, Catholic Relief Services and the Adventist Development and Relief Agency Ghana School Feeding Programme website, 2010:23).

In an effort to boost enrolment rates and ensure that school-age children are well fed, the Government of Ghana has initiated two types of feeding programmes: 1) take-home rations for girls in schools in deprived communities in three Northern regions; and 2) the provision of one hot meal per school day to primary-school children using locally-grown food products (Lagarde *et al.,* 2008:23). Like most other African countries, Ghana uses a decentralized approach relying heavily on local structures to implement school feeding programmes Buddy *et al.* (2009:17). Although it was rolled out nationwide under high level political leadership, Ghana's school feeding programme varies at regional, district and school levels in structure; how food is obtained; menu development; and meal preparation (Buddy *et al.*,2009:18).
A 2007 review of the school feeding programmes in 5 Ghanaian regions, published by the Netherlands Development Organization (SNV), reveals that regional/district/school partnerships and organizational mechanisms are limited and many schools lack a functional school implementation committee Netherlands Development Organization (2007:28) and a number of

schools reported problems in the regularity of food and supplies. The findings of this report were based on a large-scale school-level inventory, and exposed irregularities in coverage and implementation, structural deficits and financial deregulation throughout the (GSFP Netherlands Development Organization, 2007:18).

Additional school feeding challenges in Ghana, included in the report Netherlands Development Organization (2007:19), were the following: a lack of kitchens, storage and dining halls in GSFP schools; insufficient supply of food to schools which created inadequate/irregular food portions; little training in hygiene and nutrition for school cooks; poor sanitation facilities and irregular safe water supply - a large proportion of schools are still without poly tanks; inadequate resources for students following an influx of learners in response to the availability of school feeding programmes; varying degrees of linkage to local farmers/local food supply for food procurement; difficulties in monitoring cooking done outside the school; a lack of transparency in records of food supply and payment procedures; learners not receiving their daily meal; a lack of communication with parents; cooks paid irregularly; low community involvement; a high regional disparity in the allocation of beneficiary schools; a lack of preparedness of most districts to pre-finance supplies; and an increase in school enrolment without a commensurate increase in food supply, number of classrooms and teachers.

Some notable successes in the implementation of the GSFP include increased school enrolment by 20% in pilot schools Netherlands Development Organization (2007:6); a reduction in truancy and absences; improved punctuality; a reduced dropout rate; improved school performance; a reduction in the number of children reported sick to the school authority; opportunities for local employment for school food vendors, cooks, and programme administrators; and the integration of nutrition education into school curriculum (World Food Programme, Ghana, 2007:6).

The GSFP continues to rely on financial and technical support from the government and from development partners. Additional partnerships between the GSFP and the Ministry of Agriculture are necessary to ensure that local products are purchased for use by beneficiary schools. While the GSFP initiative has led to an increase in enrolment and attendance, especially in poor and rural districts, it increases the likelihood that educational quality will be compromised if the number of learners exceeds available resources, such as teachers, desks and textbooks, etc. Indeed, in the 2006/2007 academic school year national enrolment increased by

21%. Attention should be given not only to consistent nutrient food provision and nutritional standards, but also to learning and educational conditions in beneficiary schools. The Ghanaian School Feeding Programme's objectives to reduce hunger and malnutrition; to boost enrolment rates; and to increase school attendance are the same as those of the South African Government; the researcher is aware of this and wanted to explore them with the participants of this study.

2.11.3   School Nutrition in Angola

According to the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP), initiatives to fight poverty, like school feeding, have become critical for the recovery of Angola Lambers (2009:4) as many communities have little or no access to basic social services, while more than a third of children are not enrolled in school. However, in terms of Angolan law education is compulsory and free for 8 years but many learners do not attend school due to a lack of infra-structure, such as buildings and teachers, or because families cannot afford additional school-related expenses, including fees for books and supplies. In addition, it is reported that nearly half of all schools were looted and destroyed in the Angolan Civil War, which resulted in the current problem of overcrowding (Bureau of International Labour Affairs, US Department of Labour, 2006: 16).

Various organizations are working in Angola in partnership with the government to implement school feeding programmes. Recently, the Government of Angola launched a three-year pilot school feeding programme in those provinces where it was previously assisted by WFP and this project will serve as the baseline foundation for the National school feeding programme to help school children countrywide (Lambers (2007:24).   Targeting efforts are underway to create policies and procedures for a national programme whose major aims are to reduce short-term hunger while improving nutrition and health education (New Partnership for Africa's Development [NEPAD], 2007:18).

2.11.3.1   Targeting mechanisations

The WFP has, traditionally, targeted school feeding activities in the most conflict affected zones as well as those with a high concentration of resettled people who have returned and are recovering from the war. Food insecurity in these areas is severe and most targeted families spend 60% of their income on food which allows for one meal per day (Lambers, 2009:5).

National, regional and individual targeting mechanisms for school feeding programmes have not been formally established (Lambers, 2009:6).

2.11.3.2   Successes

The Government of Angola has launched a 3-year pilot school feeding programme to serve as a baseline for a national school feeding programme with technical assistance from the Global Child Nutrition Foundation (Lambers, 2009:7). Various organizations currently provide school meals to 300,000 schoolchildren.

2.11.3.3   Challenges

Many Angolan learners do not attend school due to a lack of school facilities, such as buildings and teachers, or because their families cannot afford the school expenses (Bureau of International Labour Affairs, US Department of Labour, 2006:18). Education continues to be extremely underfunded and the reconstruction of the country's extensively destroyed physical, social and economic infrastructure remains a national challenge.

2.11.3.4   Future direction

Organizations working in Angola are shifting their focus away from food assistance to capacity development and the Angolan government should maintain its commitment to school feeding and a national nutrition policy as the country undergoes reconstruction.

2.12   SCHOOL NUTRITION IN THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES (SADC) REGION

For the purpose of this study, Malawi, Zambia and Mozambique received attention. Malawi and Zambia are among the countries that have implemented the School Nutrition Programme where it is being supported financially and technically by the United Nations through the (World Food Programme, 2006:23). SADC member states face challenges ranging from a scarcity of food and unpredictable changes in food availability due to factors, such as weather and climate; labour-intensive and dated agricultural methods; and HIV and AIDS and other health issues which affect agricultural production levels; they seek to improve the lives of their people by removing the serious obstacle of inadequate access to food.

Reliable access to adequate food is a fundamental requirement for human well-being and for building a better future. The core focus of food security in Southern Africa is sustainable access to safe and adequate food at all times. Poverty, drought and chronic disease can result in food system failures or chronically inadequate nutrition which makes food security a top priority for SADC (htt://www.sadc,int/themes/agriculture-food-security/food-security/).

Stable access to food and its availability, nutritional value and safety are important aspects of food security. Food access means that the local population have the means to purchase or barter for the food they require for appropriate diet and nutrition. Food availability means there is a consistent local supply of appropriate food types, either imported or produced locally. Available and accessible food must be of sufficient nutritional value and be safe to consume if food security is to be attained. There should also be a stable supply and access to food for longer periods. This can be achieved with appropriate food production, handling and storage.

According to the website, htt://www.sadc,int/themes/agriculture-food-security/food-security, SADC addresses the Agriculture and Food Security issues within the Southern African region by focusing on five key areas, namely: Food Security, SADC supports efforts to ensure sustainable access to safe and adequate food at all times; Crop production, this has to do with protecting seed sources, fostering better work methods, and building food reserves; Livestock, improving work methods, capacity building and disease control; and Fisheries, which has to do with developing a reliable food sources, improved handling and processing agriculture. The implementation of school nutrition programmes is discussed in the following SADC countries.

2.12.1   Malawi

The Malawian government's Free Primary Education Initiative has been successful in increasing school enrolments, but it has created a gender gap in favour of boys. Enrolment in primary schools in Malawi is estimated to be about 78%, but 30% of poor children do not even begin school and only 38% of children who enrol in primary school go as far as completing Grade 8 (World Food Programme, 2006:23).

Unlike South Africa, Malawi does not have a national government-run school feeding programme. At present, school feeding is conducted and funded by the World Food Programme (WFP) and organizations, like GTZ and Action Aid, which have supported school feeding

programme in emergencies. The WFP provides most of the support for school feeding activities in terms of both numbers and geographical coverage. There is no direct financial contribution from the Malawian government, although it does provide logistical staff from within various government ministries.

According to Roka (2004:67) and the World Food Programme (2006:23), the objectives of the Malawian school feeding programme are aimed at improving school enrolments and the attendance of girls and orphans; reducing short-term hunger which slows the learning process and, thereby, improving children's concentration and their assimilation of information; and reducing disparities in enrolment and drop-out rates between boys and girls, especially in Grades 5 to 8.

In Malawi the programme is called Food for Education (FFP); it serves in-school meals and/or snacks in order to reduce short-term hunger and achieve the commonly intended aspects of improving school enrolment, attendance and learning and community-school links. The Malawian FFP programme also provides 'take home rations' which target girl learners, orphans and vulnerable children. In Malawi the rations are only for learners attending school regularly.

2.12.2   Zambia

Unlike Zimbabwe and South Africa, in Zambia the programme targets learners from poor families. Because of high level of poverty in the country, Zambian schools appear to struggle to deny learners access to the food because every learner seems to come from a poor background.

According to Del Rosso and Miller (1999:89), seven steps were identified to develop school feeding programmes that would improve education in Zambia, namely:

1) An agreement had to be reached on policy and objectives that focus on how school feeding could improve education.
2) Agreement needed to be reached on what problems the feeding programme should address; who would benefit from the programme; and what methods were feasible.
3) Targeting criteria needed to be develop to reach high-risk children. Targeting was necessary to ensure that children who lack resources benefited from the school feeding programme.

4) An analysis needed to be done to identify alternative financial options for schools, including food aid, the private sector, food selection, community support and sustainability.

5) Appropriate guidelines needed to be developed for the ration composition and time of school meals. Managers should determine the nutritional and health needs of children; find out how the community could participate; and identify potential bottlenecks in implementation.

6) Monitoring programmes needed to be instituted that look at programme processes.

7) Opportunities needed to be found to integrate interventions. If feeding learners at school could be integrated with other school-based health interventions, such as treating children for parasites, it would improve their appetites and the nutritional benefit of the food.

2.12.3   Mozambique

Mozambique is plagued by extreme rainfall that results in droughts and floods that have harmed food production, destroyed harvests and displaced families. UNICEF estimates that currently 44% of children in Mozambique suffer from chronic malnutrition (http://www2.jamint.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/).

Both the Angola and Mozambique school feeding projects are made possible by the Foreign Agricultural Service's McGovern-Dole International Food for Education (FFE) and the Child Nutrition Programme, which helps promote education, child development and food security for some of the world's poorest children (http://www.fas.usda.gov/excredits/foodaid/ffe/FFE.asp. Among the criteria necessary to receive an FFE grant, a country must have a lower or lower-middle *per capita* income; a population with more than a 20 percent prevalence of undernourishment; and adult literacy rates of below 75 percent.

School feeding beneficiaries in the four Mozambican provinces of Gaza, Inhumane, Sofala and Manica receive food every school day. JAM's programmes in Mozambique have evidently promoted school enrolment, retention and regular attendance (http://www2.jamint.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/).

A review of the available relevant literature stimulated the researcher's curiosity to learn whether malnutrition is a major barrier to education and whether the participants in the research believe

2.13   Conclusion

In terms of a literature review, this chapter has provided the history of the primary school nutrition programme and indicated how it developed into a national school nutrition strategy - one which is highly regulated and of international importance. The chapter also provided an in-depth discussion of the legislative framework in an international context. The next chapter, Chapter 3, describes methods and techniques that were used during the research; it also explains the ways in which information was gathered and disseminated.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter, Chapter 2, examined the relevant available literature to establish a theoretical background of how the South African national school nutrition programme had evolved over the years since its inception in 1994, including factors that led to its transfer in 2004 from the Department of Health to the Department of Education. In addition, the chapter provided an international perspective of the school nutrition programme (Report on the Evaluation of the National School Nutrition Programme, 2008:35). This chapter outlines the research design and methodology employed in conducting the current study. The research procedures and techniques used were to find answers to the research questions raised in Chapter 1. An introduction to the methodology employed was given in the first chapter and this chapter builds on that information by presenting details of the type of research approach and research design executed in the study; the study area and sample size; the data collection instruments; and the data analysis process. The study adopted a qualitative research paradigm in order to describe and understand the experiences of learners regarding the school feeding programme. The chapter includes the ethical issues that were recognised in undertaking the study and the identified limitations of the study conclude the chapter.

Research is a process of discovering a phenomenon by critically looking at its significant attributes and behaviour which encompasses the application of a systematic and objective investigation to reach answers to an identified problem (Burns, 2000:259). Methodology, on the other hand, refers to the rationale and psychological assumptions that underline a particular study relative to the scientific method used with a view to explaining the researcher's ontological and epistemological views (Patton, 2002:69). Research methodology is the method a researcher uses to acquire and collect data either within a qualitative or quantitative paradigm or as a technique for data collection. The research design and method chosen for this research project was a qualitative one.

3.2 RESEARCH APPROACH

According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007:415), a qualitative research approach is an approach which attempts to understand human behaviour and the meaning people attach to their settings. Gary (1992:401) outlines some of the commonly utilized qualitative research approaches, including the case study, ethnography, ethnology, ethno-methodology, grounded theory, phenomenology, symbolic interaction and historical research. A qualitative approach allows for more diversity in response as well as the capacity to adapt to new developments or issues during the research process itself.

In this study a phenomenological research approach was employed to describe the meaning of a lived experience of a concept by several individuals - in line with Ary, Jacobs & Razavieh (2006:447) who point out that a phenomenological study is designed to describe and interpret an experience by determining the meaning of the experience as perceived by the people who have participated in it. Merriam (2002:7), is of the opinion that a phenomenological study focuses on the essence or structure of an experience. The researcher used this strategy to understand the perceptions of learners and their expectations regarding the school feeding programme (SFP).

Participants were given the opportunity to express their views and expectation about the SFP at their school. Qualitative research sets out to provide an impression which reflects what kinds of 'something' there are and indicates what it is like to be, do or think something (Gary, 2000:165). The interpretative qualitative approach in this study entailed the use of data collection methods to gather information in terms of participant observation, interviews and the analysis of SFP documents. Qualitative research often involves the simultaneous collection of a wealth of narrative and visual data over an extended period of time and data collection occurs, as much as possible, in a naturalistic setting. The researcher's role as an educator in the school where she is an educator also allowed her to collect data through participant observation. A major distinguishing attribute of a qualitative approach is that it requires the researcher to go into the field and be close enough to the people and circumstances to capture what is happening (Patton, 2002:48). Two secondary schools from one of the twenty-seven circuits which are part of the Vhembe district were visited and involved in this research project.

3.3 RESERCH DESIGN

Cooper and Schindler (2003:224) define research design as the plan and structure of an investigation to obtain answers to research questions. They refer to a research design as a deliberately planned arrangement of conditions for the analysis and collection of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose with an economy of procedure. Kumar (2005:84) asserts that a research design is a procedural plan that is adopted to answer research questions objectively, accurately and economically. A research design aims at resulting in a study that yields results, contributes to the theory and becomes part of a body of knowledge which can be used by other researchers.

The research design and method I chose was a qualitative approach. Mouton (1996:107) asserts that a research design is a set of guidelines and instructions to be followed in addressing the research problem. Huysamen (1994:20) defines the research design as the plan or blueprint which specifies how research participants are going to be obtained and what is going to be done to them with a view to reaching conclusions about the research problem. According to McMillan & Schumacher (1993:22), a research design indicates the general plan of the research. This includes when, from whom and under what conditions the data is obtained. It indicates how the research is set up, what happens to the subjects and what methods of data collection are used.

For this study, cross-sectional research design, which is exploratory, descriptive and interpretive, was carried out to gain insights into the theme of the research. Information on exploratory research can be collected through observation, questionnaires and interviews.

The study used an interactive mode of enquiry, employing face-to-face data collection techniques to construct an in-depth understanding of the participants'/ informants' perspectives. One–on-one interviews and focus group interviews were conducted to collect data. Interviews of one –on-one and focus group interviews were conducted to collect data. Observation and document analysis were conducted to complement and strengthen data through critical analysis, comparison of information gathered and thus reaching conclusions. Observation and document analysis complemented and strengthened data through critical analysis, comparison of information gathered and conclusions reached. The researcher used a combination of approaches because it would help her to access diverse information from the participants.

3.3.1   Characteristics of Qualitative Research

Maykut and Morse (1994:43-46) identify the following eight characteristics of qualitative research: An exploratory and descriptive focus; Emergent design; A purposeful sample; Data collection in a natural setting; Emphasis on human-as-instrument; Qualitative methods of data collection; Early and on-going inductive data analysis; and A case study approach to reporting research. In this study schools were visited to explore reality and, thus, become an instrument for data collection by using a purposive sample of learners, educators and principals. The situation was observed in a real setting. In order to achieve accurate results, a purposeful sample was applied in the investigation on how participants perceive the SFP in their respective schools (Jones, 2007:235).

The difficulties and weaknesses of qualitative research are, generally, that single qualitative studies cannot provide grounds for generalising across cases; immersion in the depth of a qualitative study can lead to both or either 'going native' and/or 'macro blindness'; qualitative research can be a high risk, low-yield enterprise; and qualitative studies are often accused of being impressionistic, subjective, biased, idiosyncratic and lacking in precision. However, the researcher overcame these limitations by comparing the data collected through interviews and the examination of SFP documents to identify the similarities and differences to verify the quality of data.

Most qualitative approaches concentrate on natural settings; an interest in meanings, perspectives and understandings; an emphasis on process; and a concern with inductive analysis and grounded theory. The central focus of qualitative research is to provide an understanding of social setting or activity as viewed from the perspective of the research participants. Qualitative researchers spend a great deal of time with participants and are immersed in the research setting. The focus of qualitative research is on individual, person-to-person interaction. Qualitative research avoids making premature decisions or assumptions about the study and remains open to alternative explanations. Qualitative data is analysed inductively and qualitative research approaches analysis holistically and contextually; its reports include clear and detailed descriptions on the study that include the voices of the participants. It is often used for policy and programme

evaluation research as it can answer certain important questions more efficiently than quantitative approaches.

3.4 PHILOSOPHICAL ASSUMPTION/PARADIGM

This study used a qualitative research paradigm in terms of what Creswell (1994:1-2) defines as an inquiry process of understanding a social or human problem based on building a complex, holistic picture which is formed with words, reporting the detailed views of informants in a natural setting. The study was based on a qualitative rather than a quantitative paradigm because it is narrative, rather than statistical, in nature. The data collected takes the form of words rather than figures. Furthermore, the study was based on an interpretive perspective as it attempts to "understand phenomena through the meanings that people assign to them" (Maree and Kobus, 2007:59).

Interpretivist researchers begin with individuals and set out to understand their interpretations of the world around them (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2005:23). The study used an interpretivist paradigm with a qualitative approach to comprehend how individuals in an everyday setting construct meaning and explain the events of their worlds. It allowed the researcher to interact with the participants to gain insights and form a clear understanding of how the SFP provided for needy learners in rural secondary schools and contributed to a reduction of absenteeism by improving the attendance and performance of secondary school learners; the views and experiences of teachers of the SFP in reducing learner absenteeism; and how learner perceptions and expectations can be linked to school absenteeism and performance.

This study attempted to make sense of the participants' life-worlds by interacting with them and by appreciating and clarifying the meanings they ascribed to their experiences. Throughout the research process the researcher aimed at forming a holistic view of the participants within their contexts by exploring their experiences, views and feelings regarding the SFP. Qualitative researchers enter the natural field of the participants and have direct contact with them during interviews.

3.4.1 Ontological Perspective

The researcher operated under a constructionist ontological assumption that maintains that there is no single unitary reality. According to Taber (2006:123), the constructionist ontological assumption suggests that there is no objective reality but that there are multiple realities constructed by human beings who experience a phenomenon of interest. Similarly, Claire, Barbara and Mark (2012:57) maintain that on the question of what is reality, the interpretivists believe that it is socially constructed and that there are people constructing them. In other words, people impose order on the world in an effort to construct meaning. Reality depends on the individual mind and is, therefore, a personal or social construct. Ontologically the researcher's qualitative research was constructionist because it viewed the social world in terms of process and collective events, actions and activities which unfolded overtime in a particular context.

3.4.2 Epistemological Perspective

Epistemology is the theory of knowledge and how knowledge can be acquired. This study used an interpretivist epistemology which posits that knowledge is established through the meaning attached to the phenomenon under study (Krauss, 2005:35). The interpretivist view is that knowledge is established through the meanings attached to the phenomenon being studied. Researchers interact with the subjects under study to obtain data and the inquiry changes both researcher and subjects (Rabionet, 2011:562). Interpretivist/constructivists believe that knowledge is subjective because it is socially constructed and mind-dependent.

Truth lies within human experiences and this means that statements on what is true or false are culture bound, historically and context dependent, but some may be universal (Claire *et al.*, 2012:57). The researcher allowed participants to talk freely and, therefore, epistemologically the researcher's qualitative research was interpretivist; participants were informing the researcher of their perceptions and experiences. The researcher wanted to know and understand learners' perceptions regarding the school feeding programme; she asked questions of the respondents in order to obtain a deeper understanding of their perceptions.

3.5 DATA COLLECTION METHODS IN QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

McMillan and Schumacher (2001:408) maintain that "most interactive researchers employ several data collection techniques in a study, but usually select one as the central method." Furthermore, they are of the opinion that these multi-method strategies permit the triangulation of data across inquiry techniques; that the different strategies may yield different insights about the topic; and that they increase the credibility of the findings (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:408). Data collection techniques are how data is collected; they are methods which are used to identify a sample of respondents for the research and the way information is obtained from the chosen respondents, analyzed and interpreted to arrive at conclusions that may be the foundation or backbone of the research (Gillham,2000:2).

According to Maluleka (2008:5), the qualitative research approach has various data collection strategies, including the use of interviews, observation, diaries, photographs, official documents and newspaper articles. Babbie and Mouton (2001:490) regard qualitative data analysis as all forms of the analysis of data that was gathered using qualitative techniques - regardless of the paradigm used to govern the research.

The forms used to collected data may include interviews and group discussions, observation and reflection, field notes, various tests, pictures and other materials. This researcher used mainly interviews and participant observation to collect data on the perceptions of learners concerning the SFP at their schools. The reason for choosing a combination of methodologies was to validate and verify the data and assure quality and reliability. Lichtman (2011:54) believes that data collection techniques in qualitative research are interviews, documentation, focus group, archival records, observation and physical artefacts.

3.5.1   Focus Group Interviews

A focus group interview can be described as an organised informal group discussion among selected individuals about a specific topic relevant to the situation at hand. De Vos (2000:206) defines it as a planned discussion designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, non-threatening environment and further assert that this method is meaningful if one

wants to explore thoughts and feelings and not just research behaviour (De Vos, 2000:291). Although De Vos (2000:305) sees it as a means of reaching a better understanding of how people feel or think about an issue, product or service, Mahlangu (2008:76) suggests that it is an opportunity to investigate that which cannot be observed visually and to obtain alternative explanations for what is visually observed.

One of the major advantages of focus group interviews is their loosening effect in a relaxed group setting where the participants sense that their opinions and experiences are valued and, therefore, they are more likely to express their opinions and perceptions openly. The goal of focus group interviews is to create a candid, normal conversation that addresses a selected topic in depth (Vaughn 1996:4).

Synagub (1997:2) identifies three basic uses of focus groups in current social sciences research: as a self-contained method in studies where they serve as the principal source of data; as a supplementary source of data in studies that rely on some other primary method, such as a survey; and as multi-method studies that can combine two or more means of gathering data.

3.5.2   Interviews

Shurink (2003:2-14) and Merriam (1998) point out that the purpose of interviewing is to find out what is in someone's thoughts and since this cannot be directly observed or measured the interviewer asks questions in such a way as to obtain meaningful information. Spark, Winberg and Pointer (1994:3) maintain that it is not just what is asked that is important; it is also how the questions are asked. If the interviewer seems to be aggressive, insensitive or rude, s/he will receive very little co-operation from the interviewees and might cause some hostility towards project. In this study the researcher was extremely careful about how the interview questions were posed to the participants to avoid any misunderstanding and unnecessary conflict. Interview schedules were conducted on time and at venues suitable to the participants.

Johnson and Christensen (2011:178) define an interview as a data collection method in which the interviewer asks interviewees questions. Interviews are comprised of open response questions to obtain information from participants about how they perceive and give meaning to their world and how they explain events in their lives. Gubrium and Holstein (2002:85) add that qualitative

interviewing is a type of guided conversation in which the researcher listens carefully in order to hear the meaning of what is being conveyed. Patton (2002:21) agrees, explaining that the open-ended responses permit one to understand the world as seen by the respondents. The purpose of gathering responses to open-ended questions in this study was to enable the researcher to elicit more knowledge and understanding of the participants' perceptions of the school feeding programme.

According to Maree and Kobus (2007:87), the aim of qualitative interviews is to "see the world through the eyes of the participant" and to extract rich descriptive data that will assist in understanding the participants' construction of knowledge. In this study the researcher used the interview to understand learner perceptions of SFP through the responses of the interviewees.

Guthrine (2002:119-123) suggests definitions, types and characteristics of unstructured, semi-structured and structured interviews. In this research, individual structured interviews were used in the collection of data from the two secondary schools sampled in the Nzhelele East circuit in the Vhembe District. These structured interviews allowed for more open discussion of the research problem as participants were provided with an opportunity to freely express their ideas (Esterberg, 2002:87). The questions and order of presentation was pre-determined (see Interview Schedule, Appendix G). The rationale for the choice of the guided interview approach is that it includes topics or subject areas within which the interviewer is free to explore, probe and ask questions that will elucidate and illuminate the research topic.

Researchers use a number of techniques in the natural course of the conversation to aid clarity, depth and validity. Woods (2000:13) gives the following guidelines to obtain data through interviews:

- Check on apparent contradictions, *non-sequiturs*, imbalance, implausibility, exaggerations, or inconsistencies. The researcher posed the same questions to different participants from the same residential areas and working stations.
- Search for opinions. The researcher asked questions that were able to provoke the thoughts of the participants, for example, "Based on your understanding of the school feeding programme, do you think the programme can improve the performance of

learners in the classroom as well as school enrolment? If yes, then how can this be done?"

- Ask for clarification. The researcher posed follow-up questions for further clarity and understanding.
- Ask for explanations, pose alternatives. The researcher asked other sub-questions related to the main question.

This researcher used Wood's guidelines to conduct interviews that would possibly yield quality data from which meaningful conclusions and recommendations could be drawn. The research questions consisted of main questions and sub-questions to enable the participants to provide more information in order to arrive at answers to the research questions posed in Chapter 1. In this research clarification was sought on concepts; comparisons were made to arrive at a logical presentation of data; and the interview schedule involved the translation of the research objectives into the questions that made up the main body of the schedule (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2005: 274). The themes explored during interviews included the following:

- The roles and responsibilities of programme organizers and coordinators of the SFP
- Levels of SFP satisfaction
- Improvements in learners performance;
- School absenteeism and dropout management
- Overall SFP logistical school support

3.5.3   Unstructured, Semi-structured and Structured Interviews

Gubrium and Holstein (2002:324) describe unstructured interviews as a research strategy that permits the participants being interviewed to tell their stories at their own pace; in their own ways; and within their own timeframe. They recommend that when setting up appointments for the interviews, the researcher should inform the interviewees about the purpose of the interview; how long it will take; and that the interview will, for example, be tape-recorded. They also suggest that the researcher should tell the respondents that when the interview was completed, it would be transcribed *verbatim* and that part of what respondents have said may appear in

articles, but that all respondents' identities would be protected. The interviewer can probe a topic in-depth and this is appropriate for obtaining sensitive information.

Semi-structured interviews use interview guides that facilitate the direct comparison of information from different interviews. They usually have standard introductions and conclusions but allow for flexibility to vary the order of the interviewing questions to provide a natural flow (Guthrie, 1986:120)

Structured interviews use formal, standardised questionnaires. All interviews are conducted the same way to generate reliability by using set questions and set response codes. This researcher used structured interviews to collect data from the participants. A guiding interview schedule was drawn up and during the interviews follow-up questions were posed for an in-depth understanding of the topic under investigation.

3.5.4   Individual Interviews

De Vos (2000:299) defines in-depth individual interviews as one or more face-to-face interactions between an interviewer and interviewee where the purpose is to understand the interviewee's life experiences or situation as expressed in his/her own words. Furthermore, De Vos (2000:300) asserts that the advantage of in-depth interviews is that reality can be reconstructed from the world of the interviewee which enables the researcher to obtain an "insider view" of the social phenomenon as well as to explore other avenues of research emerging from the interview.

In this study four educators and two principals were interviewed individually and tape-recorded and the audio-tapes were clearly marked and stored to safeguard the collected data. The researcher used the following interview protocol:

- Appointment letters of consent and assent were distributed to the participants.
- Dates, venues and times for the interviews were set.
- Permission was obtained from the participants to use a tape-recorder.
- *Verbatim* transcriptions of the tape-recordings were used as a basis of data analysis.

- The participants were assured that their names as well as those of their schools - and their responses - would remain confidential.

The data collection steps advocated by Creswell (1994:142) were followed. They include the collection and recording of data; managing data; reading, memorising; describing, classifying and interpreting; and representing and visualising. Two schools responded to the interview questions as a group in a discussion form.

3.5.5 Observation

Johnson and Christensen (2011:164) define observation as the watching of behavioural patterns of people in certain situations to obtain information about the phenomenon of interest. According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000:115), observation allows the investigator to see things that might otherwise be unconsciously missed or discover things that the participant may not freely talk about in an interview situation. Denscombe (2003:192) agrees when arguing that observation draws on the direct evidence of the eye to witness events first hand, rather than rely on what people say they do, or what they say they think.

There is a need for observation to obtain first-hand information and this is possible through participant observation as it enables the researcher to obtain individuals' perceptions on reality expressed in their actions and expressed as feelings, thoughts and beliefs. In this study the researcher was the participant observer. Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2000:219) define participant observation as a situation where the researcher attempts to participate fully in the lives and activities of the subjects and become a member of their group, organisation or community.

The researcher used the Nzhelele East Circuit for her purposive sample because she is an educator at one of the schools under the jurisdiction of that particular circuit. According to Woods (2000:9), the advantages of participant observation are: blending in with natural activities; having access to the same places, people and events as the subjects; being in a position to access to confidential documents, records, reports and first-hand information; and ease of facilitating the use of mechanical media, such as tape-recorders and cameras.

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3.5.6   Document Analysis

Document analysis is the most frequently used data collection measure used in qualitative research. Written records, comprising documents, reports, statistics, manuscripts, and other written, oral, or visual materials, were analysed. Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2000:190) define documents as raw data sources as well as a storage medium for compiled data; these documents included the SFP menu option time-tables.

Primary documents are documents that are produced in the course of routine activities of social organisations or in the daily lives of individuals, like notes, diaries, agendas, etc. Secondary sources include documents which include books, articles, census reports and development plans. In this research project, the researcher examined SFP documents of the sampled schools in the Nzhelele East Circuit, such as the menu option time-tables and the SFP policy document to gather information about the implementation of the SFP.

3.6   DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION STRATEGY

Since the study was grounded in perceptions and facts rather than statistical data, the researcher could categorise the obtained findings as qualitative. The mode of inference was inductive and data analysis was used to identify similar and conflicting ideas. To analyse data correctly, similar themes from interviews, documents and observations were coded; similar patterns were examined; and data was sorted to address the research question. In this study the words and actions of the participants were carefully analysed. McMillan and Schumacher (2001:466) describe qualitative data analysis as, primarily, an inductive process of organising the data into category identifying patterns or relationships.

Ryan and Bernard (2000:781) describe coding as "the heart and soul of whole-text analysis." In order to achieve this, the researcher organised, reduced and described the data. By doing so, she divided the data into smaller more meaningful units for it to be classified in examining the similarities, regularities, variations, peculiarities, correlations, relationships and the formation of patterns (Henning, 2004:129). Furthermore, use was made of comparisons to build and refine categories; to define conceptual similarities; and to discover patterns (Henning *et al.* 2004:127;

Merriam, 1996:179). This entailed grouping together words and actions that were of a similar nature to form a category.

3.7 RESEARCH POPULATION AND SAMPLING

McMillan and Schumacher (2006:119) maintain that a population is either a target population or a survey population. Gary and Airasian (2003:102) define population as the group that interests the researcher; the group to which the results of the study will ideally be generalized. Ellenberger (2002:3) explains that population does not, necessarily, mean a body of people and indicates that the term population refers to all cases about which a researcher wishes to make inferences.

The target population for this study was randomly selected from the total population and it comprised a selection of learners, principals and teachers who were affected by the SFP. Mancos's study guide (2007:70) defines sampling as the process of selecting a number of individuals for a study in such a way that the individuals represent the group from which they are selected and, therefore, sampling is the process of drawing a sample from a population. A sample is a set of elements taken from a larger population (Burke & Larry, 2011:216-217). According to David and Sutton (2011:227), one of the key requirements of sampling is that the selected sample is not biased by either over- or under-representing different sections of the population.

David and Sutton (2011:233) maintain that the quality of the final sample will depend on a well-defined research problem; a clearly defined and identifiable population to be researched; the availability of a suitable sampling frame that holds an accurate list of the sampling units in the population; identifying a sample size large enough to gather enough evidence on the target group and any subgroups of interests; identifiable bias in the response and non-response in the sampling units; and other, as yet unidentified, forms of bias in the research process.

In this study a purposeful non-probability sampling technique was used because the participants who could provide the relevant information were learners experiencing the school nutrition programme. Non-probability sampling is a sampling in which decisions concerning the individuals to be included in the sample are taken by the researcher, based on a variety of criteria which may include specialist knowledge of the research issue or a capacity and willingness to participate in the research (Patton, 1990:58). Purposive sampling - as described by Babbie

(2008:204) - is a type of non-probability sampling in which the units to be observed are selected on the basis of the researcher's judgment about which one will be the most useful or representative.

Based on the fact that the researcher was acquainted with individuals who are knowledgeable about issues concerning the SNP as well as those who could provide appropriate data, she purposefully used a non-probability sampling technique because was it was most suitable for this research project.

Leedy and Ormrod (2001:219) explain that in purposive sampling people are chosen - as the name implies - for a particular purpose. The sampling frame of this study was made up of two selected schools out of sixteen schools in the Nzhelele East Circuit in the Vhembe District. Learners, educators and principals were selected on the basis of their knowledge and the fact that they were from the same circuit clusters in the Vhembe District; the assumption was that they would be most representative of the Vhembe District.

The participants were chosen specifically on the basis of their knowledge of, and connection with, the phenomenon under investigation. Two principals, eight teachers and twenty learners were interviewed. The researcher named the participants using sequential alphabetical letters to ensure confidentiality which is part of research ethics. It should, however, be mentioned that the sample selected were chosen based on their close proximity to the researcher to limit financial and time costs in terms of travelling to and from the schools for the collection of data. They were also selected based on similarities of their contexts and their provision of the SNP.

Gay, Mills and Airasian (2006:125) identify several basic issues that need to be considered in determining sample size: the type of research approach to be used (quantitative or qualitative); the number of variables to be controlled, i.e., the more the variables controlled, the larger the sample will have to be; the representation of the sample with respect to the community; and the amount of time, money and effort required of the researcher. In this study, budgetary and time constraints only allowed the researcher to interview eighteen participants drawn from one circuits and two schools of the Nzhelele East circuit within the Vhembe District.

3.7.1   Characteristics of the Sample

Sampling is the process of selecting a small number of individuals for a study in such a way that the individuals chosen will be able to assist the researcher to understand the phenomenon under investigation. The purpose of qualitative sampling is to choose participants who will be good key informants who will contribute to the researcher's understanding of a given phenomenon. In this study the Nzhelele East Circuit was chosen for the following reasons:

- An abundance of multi-cultural schools representing most ex-departments of education as they were demarcated in the previous apartheid era.
- Schools with different levels of infrastructure – dilapidated buildings as well as modern well-built classrooms.
- A range of schools, producing poor academic results and which have been classified as academically dysfunctional by Limpopo Department of Education.
- Schools within poorest of the poor community.

3.8   RESEARCH SITE

Two secondary schools located in the poorest part of the community in the Nzhelele East Circuit were selected. This allowed the researcher to choose learners who are experiencing the SFP.

3.9   UNIT ANALYSIS

Babbie (2008: 95) refers to units of analysis as the things that the researcher examines in order to create summary descriptions of all such units and to explain the differences among them. Unit analysis is the most basic element of a scientific research project. It is the subject (who or what) of the study about which an analyst may generalise. In social science research, typical units of analysis include individuals, groups, social organisations and artifacts (Lang, 2011:12). In this study of a critical analysis of learners' perceptions of the SFP the researcher identified educators, learners and principals as units to be studied in order to explore learners' experiences and expectations of their feeding schemes.

3.10   DELIMITATION AND LIMITATIONS OF STUDY

Delimitations are restrictions or boundaries that researchers impose prior to the inception of the study to narrow its scope. In educational research the delimitations frequently deal with such items as population/sample, treatment(s), setting and instrumentation (Merriam, 2010:72). This study was limited to secondary schools in the Vhembe District and more particular in the Nzhelele East Circuit. The focus of the study was the sampled secondary schools in the area and the participants were restricted to principals, learners and Post Level 1 educators. McMillan and Schumacher (2006:110) believe that limitations are influences that the researcher cannot control; they are the shortcomings, conditions or influences that cannot be controlled by the researcher and that place restrictions on the methodology and the conclusions. There are a number of challenges that could have limited the researcher in gathering the most relevant for this study. The limiting factors included, amongst others, a lack of sufficient funds for interviews. It was anticipated that in this study the respondents might not interpret questions the way the researcher expected because of differing levels of literacy. Therefore, the researcher used structured interviews consisting of simple questions and short sentences which were easy to comprehend.

The researcher explained the purpose of the research to participants and assured them of confidentiality and anonymity of their responses to curb their fears. In using English in the interviews, the language limitation was controlled by allowing those participants who could not speak English to respond to the research questions in Tshivenda.

3.11   TRUSTWORTHINESS

Trustworthiness and transferability are - at times - used interchangeably; trustworthiness in research refers to the demonstration that evidence for the results reported is sound and that the argument made, based on the results, is strong (Kreting, 2011:23). Trustworthiness is used to determine the quality of inference. Transferability is used to determine whether the results of the study can be applicable to another context. The researcher ensured that the research results were valid, reliable and trustworthy by collecting data using interviews and documentation related to the SFP to address the needs of the poor in the Nzhelele East Circuit in Limpopo and by interviewing eighteen participants from two schools in an ethical manner. In doing so, the

researcher was able to triangulate the participants' experiences and opinions of the SFP. The triangulation of data obtained from the participants strengthened the validity and reliability of research conclusions which were further ensured by tape-recording the responses of the participants; by playing a neutral role during interview sessions; and by comparing data from interviewees within the same school as well as that from a different school.

Key (1997:4) and Morse *et al.* (2000:5) are of the opinion that qualitative researcher results are trustworthy if they are credible, transferable, dependable and confirmable. McMillan and Schumacher (2001:407) believe that validity refers to the degree to which the explanations of phenomena match the realities of this world. Therefore, the testing of validity rests on the collection of data, its analysis and the techniques used in analysing the data.

Maree *et al.* (2007:113-115) provide a few guidelines that can be used to enhance the trustworthiness of a study which include the use of multiple data sources; the verification of new data; keeping notes related to research decisions that were taken; greater trustworthiness in the coding of data; the verifying and validating of the findings; controlling for bias; avoiding generalisations; selecting quotes carefully; the maintenance of confidentiality and anonymity; and stating the limitations of the study upfront.

The trustworthiness of this study was ensured by implementing a combination of the above mentioned strategies to achieve what Seale (1999:468) maintains when he writes that validity is the degree to which the findings of a research study are true. In this study the researcher focused on ethical behaviour, comparison, mechanisation and minimisation of researcher bias to ensure the trustworthiness of the study results. The use of these techniques in data collection and analysis produced reliable and trustworthy study results.

3.11.1   Ethical Behaviour

Ethical behaviour in qualitative studies is important to protect the identities and privacy of the participants, but it is also important in the promotion of researcher-participant relationships. Good researcher-participant relationships build mutual trust between the researcher and the participants and, more importantly, enhance validity and reliability and, therefore, the trustworthiness of qualitative results (Merriam & Schumacher, 2006:327). The researcher

conducted the study in an ethical manner to guarantee the trustworthiness of the study results. Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2000:130) define ethics as the appropriateness of the researcher's behaviour in relation to the rights of those who are participants in the research or who are affected by it. White (2003:57) sees ethics as a set of moral principles, as suggested by an individual or group, which offers rules and behavioural expectations about the most correct conduct towards experimental subjects and respondents while Babbie (2008:67-72) explains that the most important ethical agreements that prevail in social research are voluntary participation, no harm to the participants, anonymity, confidentiality and no deception.

3.11.2   Comparison

In this multi-site qualitative case study, the researcher collected data from two selected secondary schools in the Nzhelele East Circuit. The analysis of the data led to findings that were both similar and different. The findings were compared with one another to highlight possible commonalities and differences. The differences in the findings compelled the researcher to revisit the tapes to confirm them. Some researchers argue that the use of member-checking or respondent validation ensures the trustworthiness of the study (Lichtman, 2011: 77).

3.11.3   Mechanisation

McMillan and Schumacher (2006:326) maintain that the use of tape-recorders provides accurate and relatively complete records. The researcher used a tape-recorder to capture the perceptions and opinions of the informants which included principals, teachers and learners from the two selected schools during the face-to- face interviews. The recorded data was transcribed *verbatim* and analysed. The researcher constantly revisited the tapes during the data analysis process. The audio recordings and the original transcripts of the proceedings of the interviews which ensured an accurate record of dates, time and persons were securely stored. This procedure confirmed the captured responses of participants and, finally, promoted the trustworthiness of the study.

3.12   VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

The criteria for good measuring instruments are validity and reliability. Validity is the degree to which a test measures what it is supposed to measure and, consequently, permits the appropriate interpretation of scores. Validity is best thought of in terms of degrees, namely: highly valid, moderately valid and generally invalid.

This study employed investigator triangulation in "the use of more than one participant in a research setting in order to increase validity and reliability of data" (Cohen, 2007:143). Twelve learners, four educators and two principals from two different schools were interviewed to ensure that the data collected from the interviews was valid and reliable. Some qualitative researchers are not concerned about validity as it is commonly understood, preferring to aim for 'understanding', which might be achieved by 'rigorous subjectivity'. Validity or rigour in qualitative research commonly depends on unconstructive measures; respondent validation; and triangulation.

According to Leedy (1989:27), validity looks at the end results of the measurement. It asks the question: *Are we really measuring what we think we are measuring?* Validity may be categorised as internal or external. According to MacMillan and Schumacher (2006:472), external validity is the extent to which the results can be generalised to other subjects, conditions and situations. In other words, it refers to the degree to which findings can be generalised to populations other than those from which the population was drawn. In this study the participants were principals, educators, and the learner component of the schools that had experience and knowledge of what happens in the school nutrition programme. Ary *et al*. (1990:434) suggest that the other variables that influence the validity of the questionnaire or interview questions are the importance of the topic to the respondents and whether the questionnaire or interview schedule protects the respondents' anonymity

In this study the topic was important to the respondents who were principals, educators and learners who all experience challenges in terms of the choice of diet at their respective schools. Ary *et al*. (1990:311) further suggest that anything that contributes to the control of a design

contributes to its internal validity and Schumacher and MacMillan (1993:391) define internal validity as the degree to which research findings can be distorted by extraneous factors.

The study was validated by conducting both one-on-one interviews and group interviews with all learner members from the sampled schools. The researcher asked the same questions to different respondents so that their responses could be compared for verification purposes. Questions posed to principals were also directed at educators in order to compare their views.

The concept of reliability also adds value to the trustworthiness of the research study. Reliability deals with the accuracy of the instrument employed. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2006:183-189), reliability refers to consistency in the results of an assessment. It can also refer to the extent to which measurement is fair in terms of assessing what is to be learned. Reliability asks the question: *How accurate is the instrument that is used in making the measurement?* Leedy (1989:28) defines reliability as the degree of consistency that the instrument demonstrates.

The research instruments need to be tested before being applied to respondents. According to Ary *et al*. (1990:428), pre-testing helps researchers to identify ambiguities, misunderstandings and other inadequacies in the questionnaire or interview questions. In this study the researcher gave the interview questions to colleagues who were familiar with the study so that they could examine the questions and give their opinions on whether the instrument would help to obtain the relevant data or whether there were problems that were overlooked by the researcher. After receiving feedback the researcher made some adjustments and then administered the interview schedules personally and individually to a small group of persons drawn from the population of the study.

Reliability in the study was ensured by logically linking the formulated interview questions and the aims of the study. Questions were worded in a language form that was easy for the respondents to understand and comprehend. The researcher guarded against ambiguity and the risk of differing interpretations by the participants (Kumar, 2005:156-157).

In this qualitative study the researcher was part of the data-collecting process and she captured what was actually taking place, including a pure descriptions of activities, interactions and settings (Patton,

2002:14-28). Her personal values and beliefs were suspended, as far as possible, to ensure objectivity or conformability in the study (Denscombe, 2003:300).

3.13   ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The foundation to all research is ethics and with power comes responsibility. Researchers are unconditionally responsible for the integrity of the research process and the power inherent in the researcher; researched interactions require responsibility to ensure the dignity and well-being of the interviewees (O'Leary, 2004:50). Responsibility for the dignity, respect and welfare of respondents is central to research ethics and ensuring that no harm comes to interviewees is a prerequisite of any research study.

The chosen research design and methods allowed the researcher to observe and abide by the ethical measures that are given below. Ethics refers to the evaluation of the human condition in terms of their values. Clearly, research involves both values and ethics. The researcher sought to obey and not to violate the human rights and values of all the participants.

Babbie (2008:67-72) explains that the most important ethical agreements that prevail in social research are voluntary participation, no harm to the participants, anonymity, confidentiality and no deception. Research ethics provide researchers with a code on how to conduct research in a morally accepted way. In this case, permission was requested from the Department of Education, Vhembe District. Permission was also requested from circuit managers and principals.

In line with Segwapa's (2008:62) recommendation that the participants should be told that they are free to withdraw at any time if they feel uncomfortable with the research process, the researcher applied ethical considerations which included privacy, informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality. She informed participants that they were free to participate and to quit at any time and no one would be harmed physically, psychologically or emotionally; all information collected was treated with respect and privacy.

Prior to data collection, the researcher requested permission from the Department of Education and authorities at the selected schools to carry out the study as well as from the parents of the learners participating in the research to ensure access to respondents. Anonymity was ensured by means of utilizing numbers or codes instead of the real names of the participants and the

information was treated as confidential (Schulze, 2002:18). In terms of what McMillan and Schumacher (2001:421) maintain when they state that "participants should not be identifiable in print", the participants and their institutions were allocated pseudonyms to protect their anonymity. Participants were assured that all the information or data collected would be treated confidentially before they signed letters of consent where the researcher had also signed a declaration of confidentiality and the anonymity of respondents. A copy of the research report would be given to the Department of Education and the office of the Nzhelele East Circuit. Other aspects of ethics that were adhered to were: obtaining informed consent, feedback and honesty.

3.13.1   Informed Consent

The participants were requested to sign a form that indicated their understanding of the research; its aims; their free choice to participate in the study; and the freedom to withdraw from participating. Consent forms were prepared in duplicate and the participants who were willing to take part in research study signed both. A copy was given to the participant and the researcher - as part of documented evidence - filed the other copy.

3.13.2   Feedback

The researcher provided all participants who were interested in the findings and recommendations, based on the collected research data, with feedback. She also distributed copies of compact disks (CDs) to the two schools that participated in the research study.

3.13.3   Honesty

The researcher has reported the findings exactly from the data collected. There was no intentional, subjective and biased interpretation of data on the part of the researcher. Under no circumstances did the researcher fabricate data to support a particular opinion.

3.14   CONCLUSION

This chapter has outlined the objectives of the study which were followed by the research design, research methodology and the methods used to select the participants for the study. It included the motivation for conducting the study and the reasons for choosing the selection methods. The

ethical issues adhered to in this current study was described and, finally, the limitations of the study were dealt with. The next chapter, Chapter 4, presents the stories that emerged from the field as well as a transcription of the raw data and an analysis of the data obtained from interviews and from the school nutrition programme files of the sample schools.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 3 provided a discussion on the research design and methodology, the theory underpinning the method, data collecting instruments as well as data analysis procedures. In this chapter the findings are given which are underpinned by the philosophical overview, design and methodology which were used. The analysed data collected from the eighteen participants located in two secondary schools is presented. In order to provide possible answers to the topic the following main question was used to explore the phenomenon: *What are learners' perceptions and expectations regarding the feeding scheme programme organized in their poor rural schools?* The findings are grouped in the following categories:

- Data collected from interviews with school principals, educators and focus groups composed of learners.
- Data collected through participant observation.

The main and sub-questions were designed to capture participants' perceptions of the school feeding scheme (SFP) and the following data collection instruments were used for that purpose: structured interviews, observation and available relevant documents.

The following sub-questions assisted in narrowing down the study's focus:

- How does the school feeding programme for needy learners in rural secondary schools contribute to a reduction in absenteeism?
- How does the school feeding programme improve the attendance and performance of secondary school learners?
- What are the views and experiences of teachers of the school feeding programme for learners as a way of reducing absenteeism?
- How can learners' perceptions and expectations be linked to school absenteeism and performance?

According to Ary, Jacob and Razavieh (2006:490), data analysis involves reducing and organizing the data, synthesizing it, searching for significant patterns and discovering what is important (see 3.1 to 3.6). In this study the analysis of the collected data was performed manually and according to predetermined research elements or categories. As typically happens in qualitative research, a preliminary data analysis was started while the interviews were still underway (Cohen, Manion and Morrison *et al.,* 2007:147; Mouton, 1996:38). The data was then organized, coded, re-organized and interpreted. The process of data analysis was performed in terms of the following qualitative steps (De Vos 2002:334):

- Data collection and preliminary analyses
- Organizing the data
- Coding the data
- Generating categories, themes and patterns
- Searching for alternative explanations
- Presentation of the data in writing the report.

Creswell (2003:185) describes following the steps as setting the boundaries for the study; collecting information through unstructured or semi- structured observations and interviews, documents, visual materials; and establishing the protocol for recording information. For this study collecting information through structured interviews, documents analysis and observations were most important. According to Creswell (2009:23), thematic analysis (TA) provides the opportunity to code and categorise data into themes and, for example, how issues influence the perceptions of participants. In thematic analysis processed data can be displayed and classified according to its similarities and differences (Creswell, 2009:56; Braun and Clarke, 2006:88). As data was collected it was critical for the researcher to start making sense of what the data. In due course themes began to emerge that spoke to the main question and sub-questions. The following themes emerged:

- The roles and responsibilities of programme organizers and coordinators of the SFP
- Levels of SFP satisfaction
- Improvements in learners performance;
- School absenteeism and dropout management

- Overall SFP logistical school support

An examination and analysis of the SFP documents from the schools was conducted in order to supplement data collected during focus group interviews. The following documents were analysed to contextualize, verify and clarify the data obtained from the interviews:

- Feeding scheme calendar
- Approved menus
- Guideline for the management of the SFP
- National school nutrition programme mandate, 2008
- Meal and preparation workshop mandate.

Data from the transcribed interview responses and the examined SFP documents were organized and analysed in order to identify significant patterns that were interpreted and grouped according to different categories.

4.2 PARTICIPANTS IN RESEARCH INTERVIEWS

The participants sampled for interviews are listed in the table below.

Table 4.1: Statistics of Participants in Research Interviews

Positions or designation of participants	Number that participated
Principals	2
Educators	4
Learners	12
Total Number of Participants	18

One particular circuit among the twenty-seven in the Vhembe District was identified from which two secondary schools were selected to participate in this qualitative research. Two principals, four educators and twelve learners took part in the interviews. Both the sampled schools have SFP documents and classified as Quintile 2 schools. To enhance triangulation the selected sample was purposive in nature; focus group and individual interviews were conducted; and interview questions were structured in terms of the main research question and sub-questions as

follow-up questions for the collection of further data. The SFP documents from the two schools were examined in order to verify and supplement data collected by means of the interviews.

4.3 PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

Presentation can be understood in terms of the process of developing answers to questions through the examination and the interpretation of data. The basic steps in the analytic process consisted of identifying issues; determining the availability of suitable data; deciding on which methods were appropriate for answering the questions; applying methods; and evaluating, summarizing and communicating results.

Findings are invariably major outcomes of a research project and what the project suggested, revealed or indicated; they are usually referred to as the totality of outcomes rather than the conclusions or recommendations drawn from them. In the findings section, sometimes called results, it is reported what the analysis revealed - only the factual results, not their implications or meanings.

The findings from this study are categorized and discussed in terms of five themes, namely**:** roles and responsibilities of programme organizers and coordinators of SFP; levels of SFP satisfaction; learner's performance and attendance; school absenteeism and dropout rate; overall SFP logistical school support.

4.3.1   Thematic Analysis and Presentation

4.3.1.1 The roles and responsibilities of programme organizers and coordinators of the SFP

Individual interviews were conducted with two principals and four educator coordinators of the two sampled schools. Each interview with the principals comprised eight structured questions while individual interviews with educator coordinators consisted of 10 questions. One principal used in the study has been in the post for more than thirty years and the other has been in the post for more than eight years. Data was also collected from documents and analysed and observation was undertaken.

4.3.1.1.1 *Data collected from interviews with principals*

School principals are the key sources of information regarding the management of school affairs, including the SFP. The participant principals were both asked the following question: *What are your roles and responsibilities regarding the SFP?* The study sought to establish whether schools were complying with the Guidelines provided by the Department of Basic Education (DoBE). Both principals indicated that their roles included the following:

- Supervising the programme;
- Ensuring food delivered were kept in safe place;
- Authorising invoices for payment of food handlers; and
- Keeping records of the SFP documents.

They indicated that they are responsible for the overall management and administration of the SFP activities. According to RSA Implementation, Monitoring and Reporting Manual (2004:20), "the roles and responsibilities of principals in the management of the SFP include overall supervision of the programme, quality control and monitoring of food provision to learners." The principals' responses regarding their roles and responsibilities are supported by the Guideline for the Management of the National School Nutrition Programme (2013:8) that states:

> The ultimate responsibility for the programme rest with the principals as the responsible officers of the school who put systems in place to ensure the proper implementation of the SFP programme, including the safekeeping of the delivered food stuffs; the correct record keeping of the SFP; and regular monitoring and review, where necessary.

The findings also indicated that they complied with the SFP guidelines and that they had the same level of awareness of the roles and responsibilities that they were expected to play in the implementation of the SFP. According to the South African Schools Act (No. 84 of 1994), Sect 16 (3) - read in conjunction with the Personnel Administrative Measures (PAM) Section 4.2 (e), "the core responsibilities of the principal regarding the SFP are that school principals are expected to manage and account for the proper implementation of the programme at their schools

in line with the policy document and as outlined in the (NSNP Operational Guidelines, 2009, 10:13)."

It seems that the efficient and effective implementation of the SFP is not compromised because it appears that principals are not negligent in their roles and responsibilities. Generally, from the principals' responses it seems that they are fully involved in the programme and that they are aware of their duties in the overall supervision of the programme; its quality control; and the monitoring of food provision to learners. The principals comply with what has been set out in the RSA Implementation, (Monitoring and Reporting Manual, 2004:8) and the National School Nutrition Programme, 2013:8).

The SFP seems to be well-organized and managed in schools at Nzhelele East Circuit in the Vhembe District. It appears that principals use the available legal tools such as laws, guidelines and policies to make certain that learners are fed in accordance with guidelines.

4.3.1.1.2 *Data collected from interviews with educator coordinators*

Educator coordinators are educators who were appointed to coordinate the SFP at school level and their input regarding the implementation of the programme is important. The question which was asked was: "*What are your roles and responsibilities as a school feeding programme coordinator*?" The question was aimed at finding out what was expected of the SFP coordinators and to check whether they were fulfilling their responsibilities. These key stakeholders in the programme said that they made sure that learners were getting food on time every day; that the food delivered was of good quality; that they tasted the food before it was served to the learners; that they monitored food handlers; that food was prepared according to a time-table; and that they reported all irregularities to the circuit. The educator coordinators indicated that they were aware of, and were carrying out, their roles and responsibilities in the programme.

All four educator coordinators were found to comply with their roles and responsibilities as outlined in the Guidelines for the Management of the National School Nutrition Programme (2013:8). According to the guidelines, educator coordinator must know the number of feeding days per month as well as which week and what quantity of each food item is required; check calculated quantities on delivery notes; take note of any shortages; make sure that food handlers are paid on time; and that food is prepared according to menu time-tables.

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Since these stakeholders are central to the successful implementation of the programme, their understanding of their roles and responsibilities guarantee the positive and successful implementation of the programme and that its intended goals are reached. The finding show that all participant educator coordinators are involved in the operation of the programme in terms of ensuring that food is delivered on time and prepared and served to learners according to the timetable provided in the guidelines to the programme. According to Guidelines for the Management of the National School Nutrition Programme (2013:8), delegated educator coordinators should meet the following responsibilities in schools where SFP is provided:

- Ensure that the food delivered to schools is of a specified quality
- Not accept inferior quality food items
- Monitor and support food handlers
- Ensure that food is prepared correctly and according to menu time-tables
- Immediately report any irregularities to the circuit.

The data analysed in terms of this theme provided relevant evidence that educator coordinators are complying with what is outlined in the Guidelines for the Management of the National School Nutrition Programme (2013:6) and the Implementation, Monitoring and Reporting Manual (2005:24) regarding their roles and responsibilities. Compliance with the guidelines of the programme is important in realising the overall objectives of the programme. The responses of the educator coordinators concerning the SFP were consistent.

4.3.1.1.3   *Data collected from documents analysis*

Key documents were reviewed as part of data collection in this theme. The SFP has a number of guidelines and documents for programme implementation. The schools visited have some of these guidelines and circulars which keep all schools informed on SFP regulations and standards. Principals and educator coordinators of the sampled schools made the following key documents available:

- The White Paper on the Reconstruction and Development Programme (1994)
- The guideline for the management of the NSNP
- Menu time-tables and meal and preparation workshops mandates.

The analysis of these documents shed some light on whether the sampled schools implemented SFP programme according to Guidelines.

An analysis of the Menu time-tables (2014:2) information indicated that "feeding should take place by 10h00 on every school day." It became evident that all the schools were providing meals according to menu time-tables; meals were provided five days a week as required; and learners were receiving food during the first break period which is between 10h00 and 12h00. This analysis was in line with what educator coordinators said, for example: *"We make sure food is prepared according to time table"*.

According to the White Paper on the Reconstruction and Development Programme (1994:29), learners must have access to quality food and basic nutrition as enshrined in the South African Constitution and in the International Children's Charter. It was evident that educators' roles and responsibilities are in line with these documents as the educator coordinators indicated during interviews: *"We make sure that food delivered are of good quality"*(Educator Coordinator ?).

An analysis of the Guideline for the Management of NSNP (2004:8-9) revealed that principals' responses were in line with this guideline, i.e., that their roles were to put systems in place; to ensure the proper implementation of the programme and the safekeeping of the resources supplied for the NSNP; and to authorize invoices, etc. It was also found that educator coordinators responses were supported by these documents which stipulated that delegated educator coordinators should carry the following responsibilities in school where SFP is provided:

- Ensure that food delivered to school was of specified quality;
- Not accept inferior quality food items;
- Monitor and support food handlers;
- Ensure that food is prepared in the right way and according to menu time- tables;
- Immediately report any irregularities to the circuit.

The findings from the document analysis corroborate the responses recorded from the structured interviews as well as from observation.

4.3.1.1.4 Data collected from observation

Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2000:219) define participant observation as a situation where the researcher attempts to participate fully in the lives and activities of subjects and become a member of their group, organization or community. This enables them to share experiences by not only observing what is happening but also feeling it, without changing the situation. De Vos *et al.* (2000:280) define participant observations as a qualitative research procedure that studies the natural and everyday set-up in a particular community or situation.

Exposure to the site settings enabled the researcher to gather first-hand experience as she interacted with principals and educator coordinators. Guided by the observation schedule tool she was able to actively participate on site whilst assuming a participant-observer role. It was observed that all meals were being served between 09h35 and 10h10 in the schools visited; meals were prepared in accordance with the provincial menus; the schools served their hot meals as specified in the menu; and they complied with menu time-tables. These findings were in line with the responses given by the educator coordinators when they said that their role *"[was] to make sure learners are getting food on time and daily and that food is prepared according to time table"*. The observation was also supported by what is stated in the Menu time-tables (2014:2) that *"feeding should take place by 10h00 every school day."*

It was also observed that the monitoring of SFP activities in the schools visited were mainly undertaken by the educator coordinators which include daily quality control activities, like tasting the meals served to the learners; ensuring correct invoicing; checking deliveries from the suppliers in terms of quantities and quality - no expired goods. During the interviews with educator coordinators it was said that *"we make sure that food delivered is of good quality, we taste the food before learners eat and monitoring food handlers"*.

In one of the schools visited, one educator coordinator was busy checking the calculated quantities on the delivery note; signed for the delivered items before the supplier left; and checked the quality of the delivered food in the presence of the supplier. This was according to what is stated in the Guideline for the Management of the National School Nutrition Programme (2013:8). It was also observed that principals' files for SFP documents and circulars were kept on their bookshelves in support of their saying: *"Our roles are to authorize invoices for payment*

of food handlers as well as record keeping of SFP documents, and we are responsible for the management and administration of the programme".

The researcher became aware of one or two challenges regarding the role and responsibilities of stakeholders in the schools. Firstly, as a result of challenges experienced in the delivery of food, there was a time where menus were substituted with the food that was available. Pap was the main food item that was seen, and mentioned, to be often substituted with rice. It may be conclude that key food items should be regularly served to the learners if the programme is to be effective. Secondly, as key stakeholders at their respective schools, educator coordinators and principals may be called at any given time, including during periods; over weekends; and late after school, if a delivery is to take place. As one of their roles and responsibilities delivery of food can only be done in the presence of these stakeholders to ensure quality and accuracy of items reflected on the invoice.

4.3.1.2 *Levels of SFP satisfaction*

Individual interviews were conducted with two principals, four educator coordinators of the two sampled schools and two focus groups - each comprising six learners. Data collected from observation was done only with learners in the focus groups.

The SFP documents at the two schools were examined in order to verify and supplement data collected by means of the interviews.

4.3.1.2.1 *Levels of SFP satisfaction of principals*

The school principals indicated that food was well-prepared and that it was tasty and acceptable. They maintained that the majority of learners participated in the programme. However, one principal said: " *few learners, especially those coming from well to do families, may enjoy food that they bring from their homes"*. The general findings related to well-prepared and tasty of food seemed to complement each other. It was evident that the SFP was successfully attracting children to school by offering them food - which is an encouraging sign. According to the Meal Planning and Preparation Workshop mandate (2008:11), *"For people to remain healthy, the food that they eat should not only be nutritious, but also clean, acceptable and safe for consumption."*

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It was revealed in the interviews with principals that there was food that learners seemed to dislike, such as soup and *tshidammba* which is made of soya beans and maize.

The findings show that school principals believe that food for the SFP was well-prepared. They also seem to suggest that, generally, there is compliance with the Guidelines for the Management of the NSNP (2004:9) on how food should be prepared.

4.3.1.2.2   *Levels of SFP satisfaction of educator coordinators*

Educator coordinators confirmed that the prepared food was tasty; they agreed that *"The majority of learners like the food that is provided"*. They were of the opinion that the food was tasty and nutritious but that there was food that learners did not like, such as beans, *tshidammba* (samp) and soup which was in line with what the principals said. It was evident from the similar responses of the four educator coordinators that the SFP service was good and that educator coordinators needed continuity in providing the programme. They confirmed that the food was healthy and of a good quality and that it was well-prepared and acceptable as well as tasty. This is in line with National School Nutrition Programme Mandate (2008:7) that states: *"School menus should offer tasty and adequate meals which must meet at least 20-30% of the daily nutritional needs of learners for energy, protein, calcium, iron, zinc, and vitamin A per day."* Apart from the high levels of satisfaction, there were serious concerns with the kinds of food that learners were not interested in, such as *tshidammba,* samp, soya beans, maize and soup.

4.3.1.2.3   *Levels of SFP satisfaction of learners from the focus groups*

Two focus group interviews, each comprised of six learners, were conducted. The SFP documents from the two schools were examined in order to verify and supplement data collected by means of the interviews and by observation. The findings reflected in Figure 4.2, below, show that the majority of learners (75%) were satisfied with the food provided.
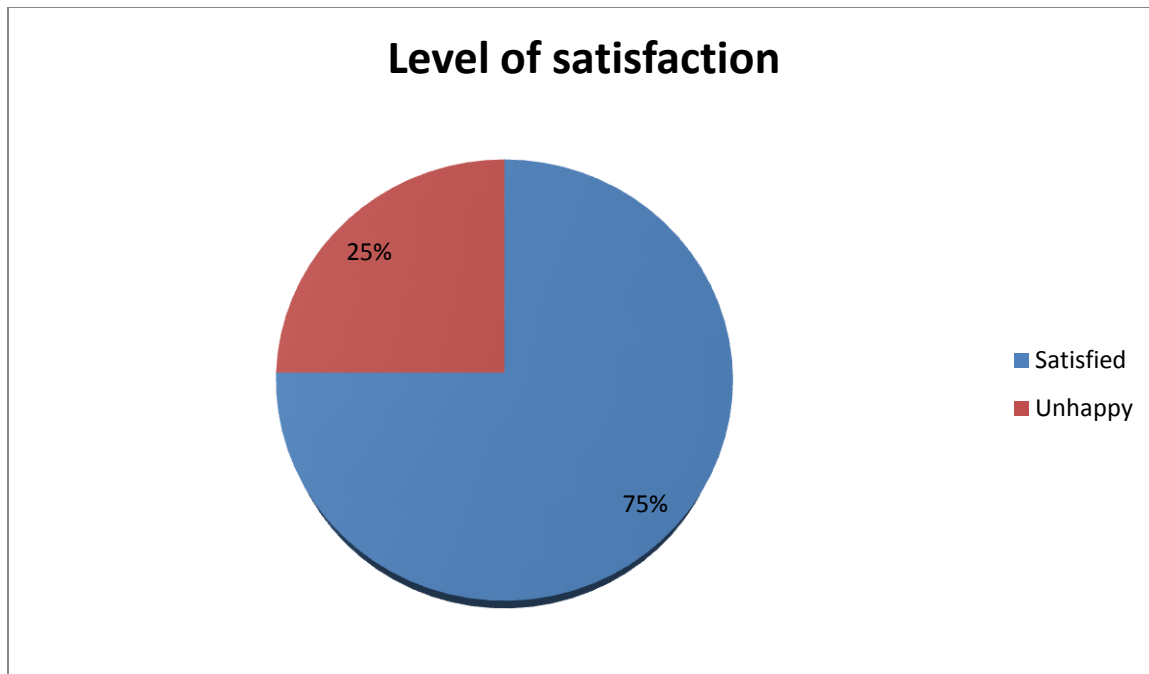
Figure 4.1: Learner Satisfaction with the SFP Meals

The question posed, regarding learner satisfaction with food, was: "*Are you enthusiastic about the meals provided?"* The study sought to establish learner satisfaction with the meals provided by the programme. Nine (75%) learners indicated that they enjoyed the food but not all the food types. Three (25%) said: "*No, not interested.*" The learners (25%) that did not like the food served at their respective schools seem to come from well to do families. Three quarters of the learners (75%) indicated that they enjoyed pap, rice, fish and beans.

The majority of the learners maintained that they did not like the soup and samp *(tshidammba)* that was served as it was not tasty. It is possible that the learners in this circuit were not used to the menu options that were served or came from well to do families where were food/meals readily available.

Most learners (75%) expressed satisfaction with the food. The views of the learners supported those of the principals and teacher coordinators respectively. This suggests that the programme complied with the National School Nutrition Programme Mandate (2008:7) that stipulates that schools should offer tasty adequate meals that meet at least 20-30% of the daily nutritional needs of learners for energy, protein, calcium, iron, zinc, and vitamin A each day.

It seems that the majority of the learners who participated in this study generally enjoy the SFP. The type of food they prefer is pap, rice, fish and beans. However, there was a small percentage of learners who found the food tasteless. The learners who did not seem to like the food served at their respective schools were ones in this circuit who, apparently, were not used to the menu that was served or came from well to do families where food/meals were readily available. The findings from the learner responses confirm that the SFP programme meets the following objectives of the SFP as outlined in the (Evaluation of South African School Nutrition Programme, 2008:3):

- To ensure an improvement in children's nutritional status, as the SFP programme provides important nutrients and, for many children, the food that they eat at school is the most nutritious they will get all day.
- To improve school enrolment rates and attendance.
- To increase the attention span of children in the classroom.
- To possibly improve children's social behaviour and their attitude to school as a result of consuming school meals together.

Learners also maintained that the food served was of a good quality. The findings seem to suggest that, generally, there is compliance with the guidelines of the NSNP in the province. However, in terms of learners' dislike of certain kinds of food, it may be recommended that learner preferences should be taken into account to meet the above objectives of the programme.

4.3.1.2.4   *Data collected from learner observation*

Observation showed that the majority of learners enjoy the food that the department provides particularly the pap, cabbage, rice and fish. It was, however, also seen that learners were not happy with soup and samp (*tshidammba)* as on days when these were served there was a large amount of leftovers. This finding is supported by the responses of the principals, educator coordinators and the learners themselves. It was observed that on the days that learners were provided with their favourite food, such as *pap*, rice and fish, they were quick to line up and there were no leftovers.

The researcher was provided with the following key documents: Menu options and Meal and Preparation Workshop records. When analysing menu options, it was found that schools were complying with the set district menu options. Learners were provided with meals on 195 days. According to the Meal and Preparation Mandate (2013:20), *"the school menu should offer tasty and adequate meals which must meet at least 20-30% of the daily nutritional needs of learners in terms of energy, protein, calcium and vitamin A per day."*

The mandate also recommends that food should be acceptable to children in appearance and taste with a range of flavours. The educator coordinators responses confirmed that the food served was healthy and was of a good quality. The responses of learners that the food was tasty, acceptable and of a good quality underlined the fact that school meals do comply with what has been stipulated in the documents, such as the Meal and Preparation Mandate (2013:20). In order for the learners to remain healthy, the food that they eat should not only be nutritious but also clean and safe for consumption National Department of Education: Operational Guidelines (2004:12).

4.3.1.3 Improvement of learner performance and attendance

Structured individual interviews with the principals of the sampled schools were conducted, basically comprised of eight questions. Four educators coordinator were involved in the study (N=4) and their individual interviews were comprised of 10 questions. Two focus groups, each consisting of six learners from the two sampled schools, were interviewed. Data obtained from observation was used to verify, supplement and corroborate the data obtained from participant interviews with principals, educator coordinators and learners to establish the impact of the SFP on the attendance and performance of learners.

4.3.1.3.1   Principals' perceptions of improvement of learner performance and attendance

The two both principals suggested that the SFP had improved learners' health which had contributed significantly to their performance in the classroom. They maintained that the programme had considerably increased the enrolment, attendance and pass rates at their schools on a quarterly and yearly basis. This finding agrees with Mitchell's (2003:11) assertion that

school feeding results in higher enrolment and attendance rates, a decrease in drop-outs and an increased student performance.

Both principals were of the opinion that the SFP had had a significant impact in the lives and the learning of the children. One principal said *"learners are coming to school in numbers since the inception of the SFP''*. School meals have a great impact on recipient children's education by increasing school enrolment and attendance, decreasing drop-out rates and improving their cognitive abilities and learning achievements (*Masset, Edoardo and Aulo Gelli, 2013:10).* It may, therefore, be concludes that as a result of the programme the attendance of learners at schools has increased and their performance in the classroom has also improved. School feeding is a tool which now effectively enables hundreds of millions of poor children worldwide to attend school — in both developed and developing countries (WFP, 2004:13). A study in Nepal found that the probability of children attending school was 5% for stunted children as opposed to 27% for children with normal nutritional status (Moock and Leslie, 1986). A recent evaluation of an on-going school feeding programme in Burkina Faso found that school canteens were associated with increased school enrolment, regular attendance, consistently lower repeat rates, lower dropout rates in disadvantaged provinces and higher success rates in national examinations, especially among girls (Moore, 1994).

4.3.1.3.2   Educator coordinators' perceptions of improvement of learner performance and attendance

The interviews of educator coordinators followed the same procedure as those of the principals. Educator coordinators believed that communication between educators and learners had improved throughout all lessons because learners were energized after they had received their food. The teachers maintained that it was difficult for learners with empty stomachs to concentrate on learning. According to the National School Nutrition Programme Mandate (2008:1),

> "Hunger may increase levels of aggression and anxiety in children, with the result that these children are not productive in class and that they may be present at school but if they are hungry they may not pay attention to classroom activities."

Simeon and Grantham-McGregor (2000:7) agree that "*Children who are hungry have more difficulty concentrating and performing complex tasks, even if otherwise well-nourished.*"

The educator coordinators are convinced that the SFP is alleviating hunger among the learners and that their attendance had improved since the beginning of the programme. School feeding programs may serve as an incentive for learners to attend school to receive food rather than miss out on food by staying at home *(Ahmed, 2004:8)*.

Providing food at school may be beneficial for learning despite the fact that it only relieves immediate short-term hunger. Children who are not hungry are more attentive and demonstrate higher cognitive abilities (Simeon, 2000:78). This was supported by the responses of the principals; two educator coordinators maintained that before the school breakfast programme, children did not want to participate in class and they scored significantly lower in achievement tests. After the introduction of the programme, however, the test scores of the children participating in the programme improved as well as their attendance (Meyers, 2011:17). Both educator coordinators agreed that children came to school to receive something to eat. In Bangladesh a programme of school-based food distribution was seen to increase enrolment and attendance by 20% *versus* a 2% decline in non-participating schools (Ahmed and Billah, 2000:3).

The educator coordinators are of the opinion that the programme has considerably increased the performance of learners in the classroom because they were receiving nutritional food at school. Kazanga *et al.* (2009:67) support this by expressing the view that the SFP increases enrolment, concentration, pass rates and attendance. A study conducted by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) in 2003 also found that school feeding improved academic achievement. It seems that these findings all suggest that healthy bodies produce healthy minds and that alleviating short-term hunger among children at school may contribute to improved performance in school tests and promote normal progression from grade to grade in completing a basic education (Simeon, 2000:76).

4.3.1.3.3   *Learners' perceptions of improvement of performance and attendance*

The objective of this theme was to gauge the impact of the food that schools provided on learner performance in the classroom. In terms of the question whether the school feeding programme improved their performance in the classroom, the learners from the two sampled schools responded in the same way; they maintained that the SFP did make a significantly positive impact on their lives and their learning. One learner stated: *"I become strong when I eat the food".* Their views were supported by Levinger (1994:13) who suggests that"*the school feeding programme helps children to concentrate and assimilate knowledge."* The learners also referred to the fact that they come to school without having had food because their parents are unable to afford food. *According to Lawson (2012:16),*

> *"*Sending children to a school in which school-meals are served offsets the financial and opportunity costs of schooling and, thus, families are incentivized to send their children to school."

The table below reflects this in showing the number of learner respondents who believed that school feeding improves their nutritional levels and health and, by extension, their learning in class.

Table 4.2: Perceived Impact of the SFP on Learners Performance in the Classroom

Participant	Site	Response	
		Yes	No
A	A	√	
B	A	√	
C	A	√	
D	A	√	
E	A	√	
F	A	√	
G	B	√	
H	B	√	

I	B	√	
J	B	√	
K	B	√	
J	B	√	

4.3.1.3.4   *Data collected from documents analysis*

The analysis of the SFP documents was used to verify the data obtained from participant interviews. Verification entailed studying documents, such as class registers, admission books, period attendance register and statistical performance analysis as well as schedules. An analysis of statistical performance in both sampled schools showed that the performance of learners had improved between 2010 and 2015. Before 2010 the performance of learners in both schools visited was approximately 30-65%. The pass rate then increased dramatically to 50-98, 4 % after the introduction of the school feeding programme in 2010. Tables 4.3 and 4.4, below, reflect improved percentage pass rate in terms of the learning performance of learners in Grades 10-12 at Sites A and B from 2007 to 2015.

Table 4.3: Impact of the SFP on the Average Percentage Pass Rate of Learners in Grades 10-12 from 2007-2015: Site A

Percentage pass rate														
SITE A														
Grades	**2007**		**2008**		**2009**		**2012**		**2013**		**2014**		**2015**	
	No wrote	No pass	No wrote	No pass	No wrote	No pass	No wrote	No pass	No wrote	No pass	No wrote	No pass	No wrote	No pass
Grade 10	205	75	208	28	206	58	148	131	170	116	169	98	153	87
Percentage		36.6		13.5		28.0		91.6		68.2	169	58.0		56.9

Grade 11	97	23	155	44	103	23	109	60	86	63	105	97	97	94
Percentage		23.7		27%		19.4		55.0		73.3		92.4		96.9
Grade 12	138	64	79	13	125	40	48	45	64	63	69	65	97	89
Percentage		44.4		16.5		32%		93.8		98.4		94.2		91.8

Table 4.4: Impact of the SFP on the Average Percentage Pass Rate of Learners in Grades 10-12 from 2007-2015: Site B

PERCENTAGE PASS RATE														
SITE B														
Grades	2007		2008		2009		2012		2013		2014		2015	
	No wrote	No pass	No wrote	No pass	No wrote	No pass	No wrote	No pass	No wrote	No pass	No wrote	No pass	No wrote	No pass
Grade 10	112	48	132	63	104	59	122	69	104	59	220	123	243	123
Percentage		42.9		47.72		56.73		56.6		56.73		55.90		50.6
Grade 11	114	51	97	74	108	53	96	60	92	66	87	70	115	58
Percentage		44.7		76.2		49,07		62.5		71.7		80.45		50.43
Grade 12	35	23	53	18	102	44	39	37	61	55	63	55	71	41
Percentage		65.7		34.0		43.1		94.9		90.2		87.3		57.7

The above tables attest to the fact that the SFP has had a positive impact on the academic performance of learners receiving food at school.

An analysis of admission books in both sampled schools showed that the enrolment of learners increased significantly; at Sites A and B the enrolments of learners before the inception of the programme was below 600 but since the introduction of the programme in 2010 enrolments have ranged between 695and 770. This finding is supported in the responses of the principals, educator coordinators and the learners. Branca and Ferari (2002:56), Grantham-Mcgregor (2005:19) and Levinger (1994:13) agree that the attendance of the learners at schools with a SFP increases and that their performance in classroom also improves. This finding is in line with what has been outlined in the National School Nutrition Programme Mandate (2008:2) that school feeding programmes throughout the world have successfully attracted children to school by offering them food or a nourishing snack. Munagai (2004), in his research on the impact of the SFP on education development, concludes that the SFP is a valuable instrument for stimulating enrolment and establishing attendance.

An analysis of class registers revealed that since the inception of the programme only 2, 1 or no learners missed class for a whole week which confirms what the educator coordinators believe - that "learners come to school to eat." School feeding leads to increased time spent at school, increased enrolment and attendance and decreased drop-out rates (Ahmed, 2004).

From the school attendance registers, the survey enumerators collected retrospective information on school attendance before the introduction of the SFP and during the programme in participant and control schools. The rate of change in attendance after the introduction of the SFP appeared to be slightly higher. According to periods registers, especially of Grades 10-12, dodging or missing periods was rare.

The Guideline for the Management of the SFP (2008) indicates that the SFP can have a positive effect on rates of enrolment, attendance, consistently lower repeat rates, fewer dropouts and improved learner performance in the classroom which is supported in the responses of the principals, educator coordinators and learners

4.3.1.4 Participants perceptions of school absenteeism and dropout management

Two individual interviews, in which eight pre-prepared questions were asked, were conducted with the principals of the sampled schools. Four educators coordinator were involved in the study (N=4), the purpose of which was to find out whether or not the school feeding programme reduces absenteeism and dropout rates. Documents were examined to verify and substantiate data obtained in participant interviews with the principals, the educator coordinators and the learners.

4.3.1.4.1 Principals' responses regarding school absenteeism and dropout rates

Both Principals believe that the school feeding programme reduces school absenteeism as they were convinced that learners were coming to school to enjoy the food. One principal said: *"The programme has considerably decreased the rate of absenteeism at the school"*. The impact of the school feeding programmes on educational outcomes is in that it appears to increase school enrolments and attendance and reduces absenteeism and the dropout rate (Ahmed, 2004:18; Dreze and Kingdon, 2001:23; Lazmaniah 1999:14). Principals were uncertain as to whether the SFP made a significant difference when it came to the dropout rate as they maintained that there were several reasons why learners left school, including personal problems, such as illness, and criminal as well as rape cases. In the two sampled schools it was reported that two learners left school because of poverty.

4.3.1.4.2 Educator coordinators responses regarding school absenteeism and dropout rates

All four participant educator coordinators acknowledged that the SFP reduces school absenteeism and the dropout rate. They also believe that the level of learner absenteeism has dropped in schools that participate in the programme. According to Ahmed (2004), school feeding leads to an increase in time spent in school; increased enrolment and attendance figures and a decrease in drop-out rates It may be conclude that the SFP, generally, meets the aims set by the department. The responses from educator coordinators support those of the principals when they maintain that the level of learner absenteeism has dropped in the schools that participate in the programme.

4.3.1.4.3   *Learner responses regarding school absenteeism and dropout rates*

In terms of school absenteeism, the learner participants were asked the question, *"Are you still sometimes absent from school even if you have the SFP? If so, why?"* The researcher's reason for asking this question was to ascertain whether or not the SFP was responsible for keeping children in schools. The following figure attests to the fact that the SFP has, indeed, had a positive impact on reduction of school absenteeism.
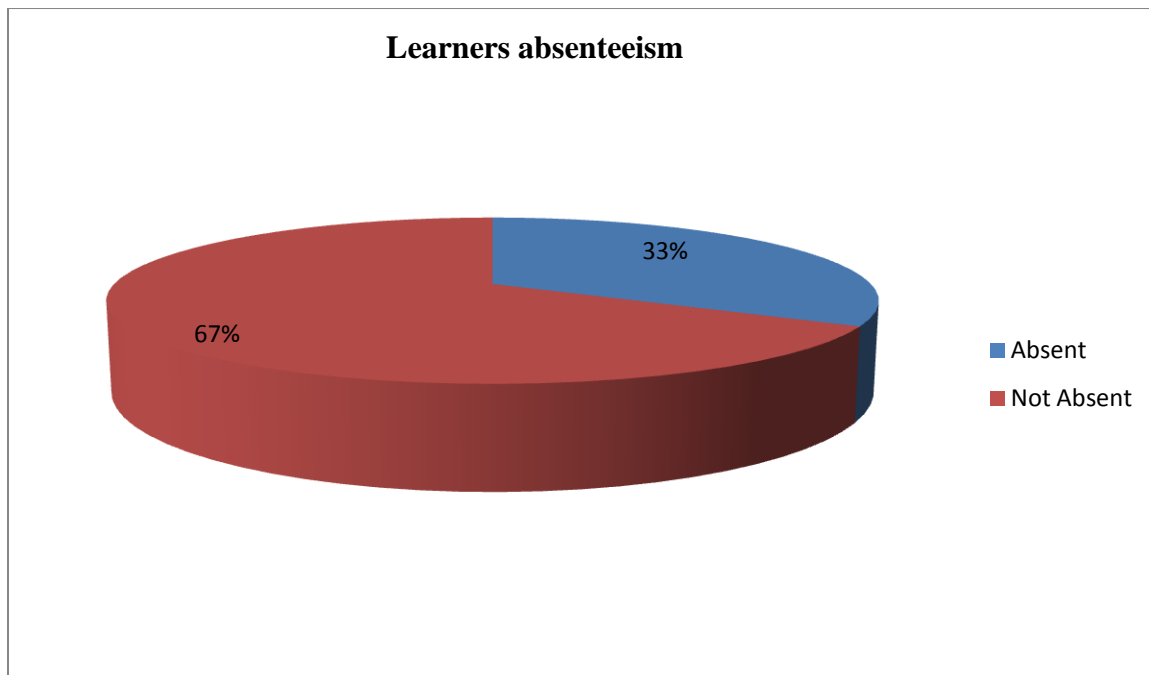
Figure 4.2: Perceived Impact of the SFP on Learners Absenteeism

Four learners (33%) admitted that they still absent themselves from school because they were not interested in certain types of food provided by the department on particular days, such as samp, soup, and fish; their reason being that samp and soup are tasteless and the fish smells. Eight of the learners (67%) said that they would not absent themselves from school as they would, then, spend the day on an empty stomach; they do not have much food at home. This finding is in agreement with the UNESCO document (2005:56) that states that the role of food is instrumental in providing school children with nutritional supplements, increasing access and establishing attendance in targeted areas.

It is possible that the learners in this circuit are not accustomed to the food that is served. However, it may be suggested that the availability of the programme considerably decreases the rate of absenteeism at schools if the community, educators and learners are involved in the menu options.

4.3.1.4.4   Data collected from a document analysis

School documents were used to verify the data obtained during participant interviews. Verification entailed studying documents, such classroom registers, period registers and admission books. An analysis of class and period registers revealed that at least one or two learners reported absent per class due to illness or that there were no absences at all. According to the analysis of period registers, therefore, few learners were reported to be dodging periods. It may be conclude that, indeed, the SFP does reduce school absenteeism.

An examination of the admission books showed that enrolments were between 520 and 550 before 2010 when the feeding programme was introduced and daily absenteeism hovered around 6%. This situation changed with the introduction of feeding programme in 2010 in terms of a rise of enrolment in the capacity of the school, between 650 and 700 enrolments in each year in both sampled schools.

4.3.1.4.5   Data collected from observation

The researcher observed that learners were attending school in large numbers in both sampled schools; class attendance registers were marked seriously; and only little absenteeism was recorded. According to Del Rosso (1996:33), "*the problems of malnutrition and ill health cannot be overcome by a school meal programme which provides less of the recommended daily allowance, but the SFP improves school attendance and academic performance as well as reduces the school drop-out-rate.*" Nutrition appeared to be a most important determinant of scholastic performance. This findings was supported by principals' responses although they appeared to be sceptical about whether the SFP brought about a significant difference when it came to the dropout rates as some learners were leaving school because of personal problems, such as illness, as well as because they were involved in criminal and rape cases.

According to the observed documents, such as the period registers, the school feeding programme has led to a decline in school absenteeism. The researcher observed that on days when learners were fed rice, fish and papa, one or two learners would be reported as being absent or while on other days there were no absences per class. Learners seemed to be coming to school as early as possible. This finding is supported by what the UNESCO document (2005:56) states - that food is instrumental in providing school children with nutritional supplements, increasing access and establishing attendance in targeted areas.

4.3.1.5   Overall SFP logistical school support

Two individual interviews were conducted with principals of the sampled schools. Four educator coordinators were involved in the study (N=4). At the end of this theme documents were also verified to substantiate data obtained from participant interviews with principals and educator coordinators. Data was also collected through observation. The study wanted to establish the availability of facilities in schools that were implementing the SFP.

4.3.1.5.1   Principals' overall SFP logistical school support

Both principals confirmed that they identify and nominate an educator/administrator as a SFP coordinator for the safekeeping of the delivered food and for checking that food gets delivered and served to learners according to the stipulated guidelines of the programme. One principal complained about the inadequate infrastructure to support the effective implementation of the SFP. He said: "*Our school does not have infrastructure such as storage facilities for food supplied, and kitchen*". This response indicates a possible short-coming of the programme that the Guidelines on NSNP (2008:10) cite: "*The shortage of resources affects quality and efficiency of food preparation*". A case study conducted by Dlamini (2008:114) confirms that inadequate resources play a major role in the poor quality of teaching and learning in schools and the successful implementation of the feeding programme.

4.3.1.5.2 *Educator coordinators' overall SFP logistical school support*

According to educator coordinators, procurement is done by the province which transfers funds directly to schools; service providers are then contracted by the district to deliver food and the suppliers who are selected by the District Office are up to the task. They maintained that when goods are delivered to the school they are inspected by the principal and the educator coordinators.

The educator coordinators reported that they receive and reconcile all supplies delivered with the delivery note and/or invoice; ensure that the food delivered to school is according to specified quality and quantities. This is in line with the Guidelines on NSNP (2008:8) that stipulate that educators should ensure that the food delivered is of a good quality and the specified quantity; they should also check the calculated quantities. Educator coordinators confirmed that the food was delivered promptly. When they are satisfied with the delivery, a claim form - accompanied by an original suppliers invoice and delivery note - is submitted to the District Office for approval, processing and subsequent transfer of payment into the supplier's bank account.

However, besides the above-mentioned levels of satisfaction, the educator coordinators expressed serious concerns about shortages and the delivery of poor quality products, such as bananas that are small and of a lower grade and the number of cabbages - sometimes short by 6 or 8). The educator coordinators complained that although facilities and equipment, including storage space and kitchen are available, they are inadequate. They said the available infrastructure was not adequate to meet the expected quality service delivery of the programme. For example, refrigerators are not available in the majority of schools that participate in the programme. Most schools use classrooms for storage and, as a result, perishable foods, like carrots, are easily spoiled.

In one of the schools visited educator coordinators were upset about the delay in the supply of fuel/wood and a lack of clean water. One participant said: *"We are using water from the river with no purification facilities"*. According to the Management and Preparation of NSNP (2004:8-9),

"For people to remain healthy the food that they eat should not only be nutritious, but also clean and safe for consumption and, in addition, the water that is used for drinking or for preparing food should be clean and safe."

4.3.1.5.3   Data collected from observation

During school visits it was observed that one school kitchen was a small structure constructed of corrugated iron with an opening for a door. The structure only had one window, so cross-ventilation was minimal. This confirmed what the one principal said: *"Our school does not have adequate infrastructure".* It was also seen that the SFP food was stored in a classroom.

Further observation showed that although there was inadequate infrastructure, storerooms are kept in a clean condition and in the absence of shelves schools adhered to healthy practices of stacking food on pallets and not on the floor - as practiced in the past; this practice is in line with Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) regulations.

It was also observed during school visits that compliance with hygiene standards was poor as the learners received their meal in an open serving area rather than, as recommended, in classrooms. This finding was in line with Van Deventer and Kruger's (2003:8) assertion that sufficient and decent physical facilities create a positive environment in the distribution of food to schoolchildren and that a neat and clean physical environment influences hygiene and flexibility in feeding and that it reduces the amount of confusion during feeding times.

4.3.1.5.4   Data collected from documents analysis

An analysis of the available SFP documents was used to verify the data obtained from participant interviews and observation. Verification entailed going through documents, such as the Guideline for the Management of the SFP (2004), the National School Nutrition Programme Mandate (2008) and the Meal and Preparation Workshop Mandate (2004).

In the Guideline for the Management of the SFP (2004:9), it is stated that the effective implementation of the SFP requires the provision of a necessary infrastructure and equipment at the respective schools. This requirement was measured against the responses from educator coordinators who maintained that facilities and equipment, such as storage space and kitchens

were available but that they were inadequate. One of the principals said: "*Our school does not have infrastructure such as storage facilities for food supplied and kitchen*".

It was confirmed during visits to both sampled schools that the SFP food is stored in a classroom. According to several studies, such as those by Dlamini (2008:114) and Van Deventer and Kruger (2003:6), facilities play a crucial role in facilitating and improving the school feeding programme. The case study conducted by Dlamini (2008:114) specifically confirms that inadequate resources play a major role in poor quality teaching and learning in schools and in the successful implementation of the feeding programme.

In terms of the Meal and Preparation Workshop Mandate (2004.9), "*food safety and hygiene standards require that learners receive their meals in a completely closed serving area and if schools have no dining halls, classrooms are better options for the health and safety of learners.*" During the researcher's visits to the participant schools it was found to be different as learners were receiving their meal in an open, dirty serving area rather than, as recommended, in classrooms. Van Deventer and Kruger maintain that sufficient and decent physical facilities create a positive environment in the distribution of food to school children. They further suggest that a neat and clean physical environment could influence hygiene and flexibility in feeding as well as reduce the amount of disorder during feeding times.

With regard to procurement, the province transfers funds directly to schools after which service providers are contracted by the district to deliver food. This finding was supported by the educator coordinators' comments that suppliers who were selected by the District Office were up to the task.

4.4 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The findings indicate that the educator coordinators and principals are aware that they are responsible for the overall supervision of the programme, its quality control and the monitoring of food provision for learners. These two key stakeholders (educator coordinators and principals) in the programme also acknowledged that they were responsible for the management and administration of the programme. The roles and responsibilities of the SGBs, principals, and teacher coordinators in the management of the SFP are defined in the Implementation,

Monitoring and Reporting Manual (2004:20) which states that "*the roles and responsibilities of principals in the management of the SFP include overall supervision of the programme, quality control and monitoring of food provision to learners.*"

According to the findings, all educator coordinators are involved in the operation of the programme in terms of ensuring that food is delivered on time, prepared and served to learners according to the timetable provided in the guidelines to the programme. Educator coordinators are aware of their expected roles and responsibilities in the implementation of the programme. According to the Guideline for the Management of National School Nutrition Programme (2013:8), delegated educator coordinators should assume the following responsibilities in schools where the SFP is provided:

- Ensure that the food delivered to school is of specified quality;
- Reject inferior quality food items;
- Monitor and support food handlers;
- Ensure that food is prepared in the right way and according to menu time-tables; and
- Immediately report any irregularities to the circuit.

The data analysed in the theme related to the roles and responsibilities of the principals and educator coordinators confirmed that these two stakeholders do comply with what has been outlined in the Guidelines for Management of the National School Nutrition Programme (2013:6) and the Implementation, Monitoring and Reporting Manual *(*2005:24) regarding their roles and responsibilities. Compliance with the guidelines for the programme is important in realising the overall objectives of the programme. The responses of the educator coordinators concerning the SFP were consistent; the findings gleaned from the document analysis corroborated the responses recorded in structured interviews that were held with them. The findings seem to suggest that, generally, there is compliance in the province with the guidelines to the NSNP.

Both teacher coordinators and principals indicated that food was prepared on the premises of their respective schools and they complained about the inadequacy of kitchen space. According to the case study conducted by Dlamini (2008:114),

"inadequate resources play a major role in the poor quality of teaching and learning in schools and the successful implementation of the feeding programme."

It was found and observed that the preparation of food was properly done and prepared according to the district menu time-tables. The majority of learners were satisfied with the food provided to them and most of them indicated that they liked the food. According to the learners, principals, and educator coordinators, the meals were nutritious and the food contributed to the good health of the learners. The Meal Planning and Preparation Workshop Mandate (2008:11) states that *"for people to remain healthy, the food that they eat should not only be nutritious but also clean, acceptable and safe for consumption."* However, the majority of learners (87%) disliked the soup and samp that was served as they complained that it was not tasty. it may be recommended that learner preferences should be considered.

The findings suggest that the SFP impacts positively on school attendance and attentiveness in class which enhances pupils' participation in the teaching and learning process and leads to an improvement in their academic performance. In Burkina Faso it was found out that the SFP was associated with an increase in school enrolments and attendance (Moore, 1994:98) while in Jamaica providing breakfast to secondary school students significantly increased attendance and arithmetic scores (Simeon and Grantham–McGregor, 2001: 17). According to the teacher respondents, communication between educators and learners is good throughout the day because learners are energised after being fed. Learner and teacher respondents support the claim that the school feeding programme significantly affects enrolment and attendance. This is in agreement with the assertion of Russell and Nobuntu (2005) that when food is provided to children at school their educational outcomes improve and the rate of absenteeism decreases.

From the focus group interviews it was found that the learners (100%) believe that the SFP improves nutrition, school performance, attendance and educational outcomes. This response is supported by Branca and Ferari (2002:56) who maintain that "*the SFP increases concentration levels which are relevant to the educational question."* It can, therefore be said that as a result of the programme, the attendance of learners at schools increases and their performance in class also improves. According to Grantham-Mcgregor (2005:19), when food is provided to children at school, their educational outcomes improve, a finding that was supported in the responses of

the principals who were of the opinion that the SFP had improved learners' health which, in turn, contributed significantly to the performance of the learners in the classrooms.

The findings of this study suggest that absenteeism was positively affected as the levels of learner absenteeism had dropped in schools participating in the programme. According to the school principals, learners now came to school on time with fewer cases of absenteeism. Cheung and Perrotta (2010:16) maintain that *"children in communities with any of the SFP programmes are 10% more likely to be in school and remain in school than in communities without any intervention (i.e., the SFP programmes)."*

Bundy *et al.* (2006:45) and Burbano *et al.* (2011:22) also found that the provision of the SFP increases access to learning and education for schoolchildren by improving enrolment and attendance rates. Both principals reported that the enrolment rate was between 486 and 588 before the introduction of the feeding programme from 2000-2009 with daily absenteeism hovering around 6%. This position changed rapidly with the introduction of the feeding programme in 2010 with enrolments rises to reach the capacity of the schools which is between 220 and 260 every year. This increase was evident after the introduction of the programme as well as a minimal rate of absenteeism or sometimes no absenteeism at all. This finding echoes what is reported by the World Food Programme in Lao PDR that *"enrolment has been increasing in districts with school feeding interventions (World Food Programme, 2008, 2009a)."* The learners indicated that without the SFP they could spend the day on an empty stomach as at home there was no food, such as that which they were getting at school. The 33% of learners that still absent themselves from school - even when they are provided with food – said that the reason for this was that they disliked certain types of food which were served, such as *samp*, soup and fish. This again leads to the conclusion and recommendation that learner preferences should be taken into consideration regarding menu options.

However, when asked about the importance of the SFP, the majority of learners were in support of the SFP. They believe that the SFP is important and necessary because the programme has considerably decreased the rates of absenteeism at their schools; their performance in class has improved; it alleviates hunger and poverty among learners; and it improves the levels of learner attendance and participation. The effects on other possible outcomes, such as dropout rates, are included in the points made about absenteeism and require further research because, principals

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suggested that the SFP did not make a significant difference when it came to dropout rates as some learners left school because of personal problems, such as illness and being involved in criminal and rape cases.

Determining the quality of the food supplied for the SFP and the quality of service delivery was an important aspect in this study. In this regard the study sought to establish if key stakeholders were satisfied with the quality of food and service delivery from the suppliers. According to the findings the educator coordinators and principals agreed that the suppliers mostly delivered the required food promptly and both groups of respondents were of the opinion that the food was usually well-packaged, correctly labelled and fresh. However, it was reported that occasionally there were cases of late deliveries of poor quality food; a lack of clean water was also reported in both sampled schools. It was observed that there were concerns about shortages and the delivery of poor quality products, such as bananas which were small and of a lower grade; sometimes the number of cabbages 6 or 8 short. It is, therefore, important that a tight system is introduced to monitor the supply of food as without such a system, suppliers may incorrectly invoice the department for supplies of food to the contracted schools that is not of the required quantity and quality.

The findings show that infrastructure, such as storage space for food, and kitchens are not sufficiently adequate at the majority of schools. According to World Food Programme (2009:21), storage areas should be well-ventilated, reinforced, adequately roofed and offer protection against pests and vermin. Furthermore, the findings show that both educator coordinators and principals stated that food was prepared on the school premises of their respective schools and that they complained about the inadequacy of kitchen and storage space.

It was found and observed that when goods are delivered to the sampled schools, they are inspected by the educator coordinators and the principal for quality and quantity assurance. If they are satisfied with the delivery a claim form, accompanied by an original supplier's invoice and delivery note, is submitted to the District Office for approval, processing and subsequent transfer of funds to the supplier's bank account.

In terms of the procurement of supplies, the findings show that local produce is bought whenever possible. According to the WFP (2005:21), locally produced food provides the most sustainable

and is often the most nutritious food source for school feeding programmes. The procurement of food for the SFP and its distribution to the participating schools is managed by means of district tenders.

According to the educator coordinators, the suppliers who were selected by the District Office are up to scratch; they delivered goods to the schools upon demand with only a few delays being reported. Interviews of one –on-one and focus group interviews were conducted to collect data. Observation and document analysis were conducted to complement and strengthern data through critical analysis, comparison of information gathered and thus reaching conclusions.

It was found that suppliers met the requirements of the District Office in terms of submitting the names of manufacturing companies, technical specifications and costing relating to all commodities. Finally, in accordance with the National Environmental Health Policy (2013:12), the suppliers had to ensure that their staffs were tidy and clean at all times.

4.5 CONCLUSION

This chapter presented and interpreted the data collected for the study. It covered the roles and responsibilities of principals and educator co-coordinators; levels of SFP satisfaction; improvement of learner performance and attendance; school absenteeism and dropout management; and principals' overall SFP logistical school support. The school feeding programme at the sampled schools has benefited learners in many ways; the attendance, attention and cognitive development of learners have probably improved due to the existence of this programme in the schools. The study also found that the nutritional and health status of the learners has improved to more acceptable levels, potentially making it possible for learners to accept their required educational responsibilities. It is also evident that the successes of the programme were not without challenges, including inadequate infrastructure; the delivery of poor quality and short quantities of fruit and vegetables; and the late delivery of food during school time or late after school which could lead to the disruption of teaching time - especially that of educator coordinators. The next and final chapter, Chapter 5, will draw conclusions from the findings of this study and make recommendations for improving the SFP at schools.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF CONCLUSIONS FROM FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a consolidated discussion of conclusions drawn from the study's findings and recommendations are made. The SFP appears to have had a significant impact in secondary schools as learner performance in classrooms seems to have improved as well as the levels of attendance and enrolment. Compliance with menu time-tables, number of feeding days, roles and responsibilities of stakeholders reflect that the programme is making an important contribution to improving the learning capacity of children - the primary objective of the programme. Conclusions are drawn in terms of the findings and recommendations are made related to the objectives of the study; it is hoped that if the recommendations are successfully implemented, the SFP could be improved and the programme could significantly contribute to hunger reduction in secondary schools in the country.

5.2 CONCLUSIONS DRAWN FROM THE FINDINGS

In terms of the findings the SFP has had a significant impact in the circuit where the study was undertaken. The learners who benefited from the programme seem to have improved their performance in the classroom; levels of learner enrolments and regular attendance have increased. The learners and other significant stakeholders, such as principals and educator coordinators, share a common understanding of the value of the programme and appreciate the value that the programme has added to the lives of members of the community. The SFP has contributed significantly to the local community in which the participating schools are located; local people are employed to serve as wood suppliers and food handlers and their appointments contribute to local economic development (LED).

From the findings it is also clear that dissatisfaction with certain kinds of food is one of the major contributors to absenteeism among secondary school children. In scrutinising the school feeding programme factors, like the quality and frequency of food served to the school children, were

considered. It was found that the programme has its challenges during implementation; the key challenges identified are the following:

- Lack of adequate infrastructure to implement the programme;
- Delays in the delivery of food and other related products;
- Poor quality food delivered to schools, such as fruit and vegetables; sometimes the food does not meet the stipulated standard;
- Dissatisfaction with some meals provided which are regarded by the learners as tasteless and smelly; and
- Poor school environment where learners are fed in an open dirty environment.

In the Guideline for the Management of the SFP (2004:9), it is stated that the effective implementation of the SFP requires the provision of a necessary infrastructure and equipment at the respective schools. According to The Meal Planning and Preparation Workshop Mandate (2008:11) for people to remain healthy, the food that they eat should not only be nutritious but also clean, acceptable and safe for consumption.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of the findings, the following recommendations are made:

- An adequate infrastructure should be established to implement the SFP as schools in the Vhembe District seem to have inadequate infrastructure and facilities to implement the SFP effectively and successfully.

Although meals for learners are said to be prepared on school premises, many schools do not have refrigerators, kitchens and storerooms. Basic infrastructure, such as kitchens, refrigerators and storerooms should be budgeted for and provided to the schools. As rural schools are, generally, poorly resourced in terms of insufficient and proper constructed classrooms and teaching facilities, the recommended provision of infrastructure might be regarded as less important. Dlamini (2008:114) pointed out that, "Inadequate resources play a major role in the

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poor quality of teaching and learning in schools and the successful implementation of the feeding programme."

However, provincial departments of education should seriously consider developing a plan that would result in the provisioning of such infrastructure.

- Where school feeding is implemented, the quality of acceptable meals should be of a sufficiently high standard to improve the learning capacity of children. Several cases of late-delivery and delivery of poor quality of food were reported and observed in both sampled schools. Therefore, it is important that a secure system should be put in place to monitor the supply of food as without such a system, suppliers may purposely incorrectly invoice the department for supplies to the contracted schools that do not meet the required quantity and quality of food; the departments of education could be paying suppliers for services not satisfactorily rendered. The respective departments will only know to stop unnecessary payment to the food suppliers if they are supplied with the correct information. A reliable system should be developed and put in place to ensure that there is regular quality checking and control during the delivery of food in the respective areas. In cases of late delivery where stakeholders which include educator coordinators and principals are called at any given time, such as when classes are in session; over weekends; and late after school an ordinary member of the community should be employed and trained to take charge of the management of the programme to avoid any disruptions to teaching and learning. This is in line with the Guidelines on NSNP (2008:8) that stipulate that educators should ensure that the food delivered is of a good quality and the specified quantity; they should also check the calculated quantities and that they are delivered in time.

- The food served to learners should be acceptable, palatable and appropriate. In both the sampled schools, learners, principals and teacher coordinators indicated that there were certain kinds of food that learners do not like, such as soup, samp which is made from soya beans and maize and – sometimes - fish which is considered to be too smelly.

National School Nutrition Programme Mandate (2008:7) states that: *"School menus should offer tasty and adequate meals which must meet at least 20-30% of the daily nutritional needs of learners for energy, protein, calcium, iron, zinc, and vitamin A per day."* Therefore, the food preferences of learners should be taken into account when selecting menu options. Unacceptable meals lead to wastage and means that children do not receive their intended nutritional input. The meals should consist of locally sourced food which is culturally acceptable and commonly consumed in the community. It is clear that a poor school environment may diminish the positive effects of school feeding and nutrition education; therefore, the Provincial Department of Education should provide schools with proper infrastructure to avoid learners being fed in an open dirty environment which hinders the efficient and effective implementation of the programme.

5.4 CONCLUSION

Extensive research has proved that the SFP affects the chances that children will attend school; stay in school; and perform well. Therefore, the SFP should be extended nationally to improve the nutritional intake of school children as well as their educational experience in general. The study has shed some light on the implementation of the school feeding programme; its impact on leaner development and poverty alleviation; and the challenges involved.

A few of the limitations of the study need to be highlighted. One limitation of this study is that it does not explore any differences to school enrolments, attendance, and performance in terms of gender. This issue can be further explored to determine whether the SFP is responsible for girls and boys attending schools equally regularly and whether it has the same impact on their performance; if not, what measures or programmes need to be put in place to correct this. Studies and SFPs supported by the WFP have shown that girls are less likely to attend schools in impoverished settings and from poor economic communities which led to the incentive of providing home-rations for families who send their girls to schools. Another limitation is the geographical scope of this study which was done in only one circuit in one district. Future research can be extended to other circuits, districts and regions in the country to see if there are major differences with respect to the outcomes in terms of geographic location; it would be useful for national government and donors to focus on any underserved areas and school

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Declaration of Language Editing

DECLARATION OF LANGUAGE EDITING

07 April 2016

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to confirm that I have language edited and proof-read the dissertation by Thinavhuyo Gladys Muvhango entitled:

LEARNERS' PERCEPTIONS OF FEEDING SCHEME PROGRAMMES AT SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE NZHELELE EAST CIRCUIT, LIMPOPO PROVINCE

The language editing/proof-reading process included the checking of spelling, punctuation, syntax and expression. An attempt was made to simplify complex sentences and, where necessary, combine short sentences to clarify meaning. Attention was given to the use of various language elements, such as prepositions, consistency in language usage and formatting as well as tenses and capital letters.

Prof. Walter Greyvenstein (D Litt et Phil; TTHD; LTCL)

44 Second Street
Linden
Johannesburg
2195

Tel, No.: 011 782 6174
E-mail: wgreyven@lantic.net

ANNEXTURES

ANNEXURE A:

Permission letter to conduct research study by the University of South Africa

UNISA | college of education

Research Ethics Clearance Certificate
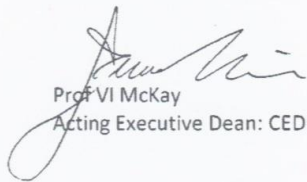
This is to certify that the application for ethical clearance submitted by
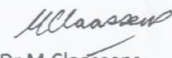
TG Muvhango [08656886]

for a M Ed study entitled

Learners' perception of feeding scheme programmes at secondary schools in the
Nzhelele East Circuit, Limpopo

has met the ethical requirements as specified by the University of South Africa

College of Education Research Ethics Committee. This certificate is valid for two

years from the date of issue.

Prof VI McKay
Acting Executive Dean: CEDU
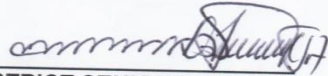
Dr M Claassens
CEDU REC (Chairperson)
mcdtc@netactive.co.za

Reference number: 2015 February /**08656886**/MC   18 February 2015

UNISA
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
2015 -02- 2 4
Office of the Deputy Executive Dean
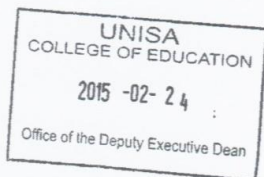
ANNEXURE B:

Permission letter to conduct research study in Vhembe district

LIMPOPO
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

VHEMBE DISTRICT

REF: 14/7/R
ENQ: RAVELE N.P
TEL: 015 962 1029

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
VHEMBE DISTRICT

2015 -03- 2 7

PRIVATE BAG X2250 SIBASA 0970
LIMPOPO PROVINCE

THINAVHUYO GLADYS MUVHANGO
P.O BOX 1539
MAKHADO

APPLICATION FOR CONDUCTING RESEARCH AT THE DISTRICT SENIOR MANAGER: THINAVHUYO GLADYS MUVHANGO: STUDENT NUMBER 08656886.

1. The above matter refers.

2. We acknowledge receipt of your letter dated 09.03.2015 on the above stated subject.

3. You are hereby granted permission to conduct your research in schools in Nzhelele east circuit on the tittle: "Learners perceptions of feeding schemes programmes at Secondary Schools in the Nzhelele East Circuit Limpopo Province"

4. We are appreciative of the fact that you are familiar and committed to research ethics such as confidentiality, anonymity, voluntary participation etc.

5. In addition you are expected to ensure that normal teaching and learning times are not disrupted.

6. Ensure that prior to your research visits Circuit Manager(s) and School Principals are informed in advance for the sake of proper arrangements.

7. We wish you success in abundance in your research journey.

_____
DISTRICT SENIOR MANAGER

2015-03-27
DATE

Thohoyandou Government Building, Old Parliament, Block D, Private Bag X2250, SIBASA, 0970
Tel: (015) 962 1313 or (015) 962 1331, Fax: (015) 962 6039 or (015) 962 2288

The heartland of southern Africa - development is about people!

ANNEXURE C:

LETTER: DISTRICT SENIOR MANAGER

REF: 08656886   P O BOX 1539

ENQ: MUVHANGO T.G   MAKHADO

CELL: 082 222 0742   22 December 2014

The District Senior Manager

Vhembe Education Department

Private Bag x 2550

SIBASA

0970

Dear Sir

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH FROM DISTRICT SENIOR MANAGER

 The above matter refers.

I, Thinavhuyo Gladys Muvhango , am conducting research with   Dr J. NYONI who is a senior lecturer in the Department of Educational Leadership and Management for a Master's degree at the University of South Africa. He can be contacted at 0846886226. I am currently engaged in a research project entitled, "Learners' perceptions of feeding scheme programmes at secondary schools in the Nzhelele East Circuit, Limpopo Province."

The primary goal of this study is to understand learners' perceptions of feeding scheme programmes in secondary Schools in the Nzhelele East Circuit so that the objectives of the programme can be met and to find out how best school feeding contributes to their learning performance, as well as reducing hunger and absenteeism.

Vhembe District has been selected because most of the schools are in a deep rural area, some are in rural areas and others are in informal settlements; these schools are targeted by the Department of Education to participate in the school feeding programme. The researcher is also located within the district and sampled schools will, therefore, be accessible to the researcher.

The researcher needs to conduct confidential interviews to collect data on the perceptions of learners regarding the school feeding programme at public schools. Interviews will last for approximately 30-45 minutes and will be tape-recorded and transcribed *verbatim* by the researcher and a qualified independent coder who will verify the findings. The venues, dates and time for the focus group and individual's interviews will be communicated well in advance. The information gathered from the study will be used for the purpose of the research study and it will contribute to an understanding of the school feeding programme at public schools in Limpopo Province. The information may also be used for presentations at conferences and for the preparation of an article in an educational journal.

The researcher will ensure anonymity by omitting names in any of the data collected. Instead, a code will be allocated to each participant and a master list will be kept in a separate place under lock and key. Should confidentiality be threatened all records and identifying links will be destroyed.

Furthermore, confidentiality will be ensured in that only the researcher and the independent coder will peruse the transcribed material. Participation is strictly free and voluntary and participants are under no obligation to take part in the study. They may withdraw their consent to take part or stop participating at any time and without penalty, negative consequences or loss of benefits to which they are otherwise entitled.

The benefit of the study will be to highlight the importance of the feeding programme in public schools as a measure to promote learner attendance; to reduce the school dropout rate; and to increase the pass rate. An empirical study of this project may offer a deeper understanding of the impact of the feeding programme on school attendance in rural areas and it is intended that the results of this study will lead to the improvement of the feeding

programme at secondary schools. The immediate benefit of the study is that learners' perceptions regarding the feeding programme will be communicated in terms of the provision of quality education at public schools.

There will be no risk or harm involved in the participation in the research study. Should you require additional information concerning the study before, during or after its completion, please feel free to contact the researcher by telephone or email. I will provide you with the summary of the findings on request. You will automatically receive a summary of the research findings and recommendations on an electronic version of my dissertation after final approval by the university. The University of South Africa has developed research ethical guidelines and it is responsible for ethical approval before the researcher can embark on the collection of data from the participants.

Yours sincerely

———

T.G. Muvhango (Student Number: 08656886)
Student

ANNEXURE D:

LETTER: CIRCUIT MANAGER

REF: 08656886   P O BOX 1539

ENQ: MUVHANGO T.G   MAKHADO

CELL: 082 222 0742   23 December 2014

The Circuit Manager

Nzhelele East Circuit

Private Bag 717

NZHELELE

0993

Dear Sir

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE NZHELELE EAST CIRCUIT

The above matter refers.

I, Thinavhuyo Gladys Muvhango, am conducting research with   Dr J. NYONI who is a senior lecturer in the Department of Educational Leadership and Management for a Master's degree at the University of South Africa. He can be contacted at 0846886226. I am currently engaged in a research project entitled, "Learners' perceptions of feeding schemes programmes at secondary schools in the Nzhelele East Circuit, Limpopo Province."

The primary goal of this study is to understand learners' perceptions of feeding scheme programmes in secondary schools in the Nzhelele East Circuit so that the objectives of the programme can be met and to find out how best school feeding contributes to their learning performance and to reducing hunger and absenteeism.

Your circuit has been selected because it covers one of the predominately rural areas in Limpopo Province; it is a remote area characterized by high levels of poverty and unemployment and the school feeding scheme at the schools is important as it is clearly desperately needed. Factors, such as the long distances children walk to school; having to complete chores before going to school; and the poor quality and quantity of meals consumed at home contribute to hunger in school children and Nzhelele East Circuit school learners are no exception.

The researcher needs to conduct confidential interviews to collect data concerning the perceptions of learners regarding school feeding programme at public schools. Interviews will last for approximately 30-45 minutes and will be tape-recorded and transcribed *verbatim* by the researcher and a qualified independent coder who will verify the findings. The venues, dates and time for the focus group and individual interviews will be communicated well in advance. The information gathered from the study will be used for the purpose of the research study and it will contribute to an understanding of the school feeding programme at public schools in Limpopo Province. The information may also be used for presentations at conferences and for the preparation of an article in an educational journal.

The researcher will ensure anonymity by omitting the names of participants in any of the data collected. Instead, a code will be allocated to each participant and a master list will be kept in a separate place under lock and key. Should confidentiality be threatened all records and identifying links will be destroyed.

Furthermore, confidentiality will be ensured in that only the researcher and the independent coder will peruse the transcribed material. Participation is strictly free and voluntary and participants are under no obligation to take part in the study. They may withdraw their consent to take part or stop participating at any time and without penalty, negative consequences or loss of benefits to which they are otherwise entitled.

The benefit of the study is to highlight the importance of the feeding programme in public schools as a measure to promote learner attendance; to reduce the school dropout rate; and to increase the pass rate. An empirical study of this project may offer a deeper

understanding of the impact of the feeding programme on school attendance in rural areas and it is intended that the results of this study will lead to the improvement of the feeding programme at secondary schools. The immediate benefit of the study is that learner' perceptions regarding feeding programme will be communicated in terms of the provision of quality education at public schools

There will be no risk or harm involved in the participation in the research study. Should you require additional information concerning the study before, during or after it is complete, please feel free to contact the researcher by telephone or email. I will provide you with a summary of the findings on request. You will automatically receive a summary of the research findings and recommendations on an electronic version of my dissertation after final approval by the university. The University of South Africa has developed research ethical guidelines and it is responsible for ethical approval before the researcher can embark on the collection of data from the participants.

Yours sincerely

———

T.G. Muvhango (Student Number: 08656886)
Student

ANNEXURE E:

CONSENT LETTER: PRINCIPAL

REF: 08656886   P O BOX 1539

ENQ: MUVHANGO T.G   MAKHADO

CELL: 082 222 0742   23 December 2014

The Principal

Dear Sir

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH WITH SCHOOL MANAGER

I, Thinavhuyo Gladys Muvhango, am conducting research with   Dr J. NYONI who is a senior lecturer in the Department of Educational Leadership and Management for a Master's degree at the University of South Africa. He can be contacted at 0846886226. I am currently engaged in a research project entitled, "Learners' perceptions of feeding schemes programmes at secondary schools in the Nzhelele East Circuit, Limpopo Province."

The primary goal of this study is to understand learners' perceptions of feeding scheme programmes in secondary schools in the Nzhelele East Circuit so that the objectives of the programme are met and to find out how best school feeding contributes to their learning performance and to reducing hunger and absenteeism.

You have been selected because as a researcher I believe that you are knowledgeable and informative about the phenomenon the researcher wishes to investigate.

The researcher needs to conduct confidential interviews to collect data on the perceptions of learners regarding the school feeding programme in public schools. Interviews will last for approximately 30-45 minutes and will be tape-recorded and transcribed *verbatim* by the researcher and a qualified independent coder who will verify the findings. The venues, dates and time for the focus group and individual interviews will be

communicated well in advance. The information gathered from the study will be used for the purpose of the research study and contribute to an understanding of the school feeding programme at public schools in Limpopo Province. The information may also be used for presentations at conferences and for the preparation of an article in an educational journal.

The researcher will ensure anonymity by omitting the names of participants in any of the data collected. Instead, a code will be allocated to each participant and a master list will be kept in a separate place under lock and key. Should confidentiality be threatened all records and identifying links will be destroyed.

Furthermore, confidentiality will be ensured in that only the researcher and the independent coder will peruse the transcribe material. Participation is strictly free and voluntary and participants are under no obligation to take part in the study. You may withdraw your consent to take part or stop participating at any time and without penalty, negative consequences or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You are requested to be one of 12 participants who will participate in the interviews individually at a specified time of your choice.

The importance and benefit of the study is to highlight the importance of the feeding programme in public schools as a measure to promote learner attendance; to reduce the school dropout rate; and to increase the pass rate. An empirical study of this project may offer a deeper understanding of the impact of the feeding programme on school attendance in rural areas and it is intended that the results of this study will lead to an improvement of the feeding programme at secondary schools. The immediate benefit of the study is that learners' perceptions regarding the feeding programme will be communicated in terms of the provision of quality education at public schools.

There will be no risk or harm involved in the participation in the research study. Should you require additional information concerning the study before, during or after its completion, please feel free to contact the researcher by telephone or email. I will provide you with a summary of the findings on request. You will automatically receive a summary of the research findings and recommendations on an electronic version of my

dissertation after final approval by the university. The University of South Africa has developed research ethical guidelines and it is responsible for ethical approval before the researcher can embark on the collection of data from the participants.

Yours sincerely

‾‾‾‾‾

T.G. Muvhango (Student Number: 08656886)
Student

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE: PRINCIPAL

I (surname and initials) -- voluntary consent to participate in the above-mentioned research project; give permission for this research project and for its being tape-recorded. I confirm that I have read and understand the consent form and have received a copy of the form to keep.

---   --------------------

Signature of principal   Date

ANNEXURE F:

CONSENT LETTER: EDUCATORS

REF: 08656886   P O BOX 1539

ENQ: MUVHANGO T.G   MAKHADO

CELL: 082 222 0742   23 December 2014

The Educator

Dear Sir/Madam

I, Thinavhuyo Gladys Muvhango, am conducting research with   Dr J. NYONI who is a senior lecturer in the Department of Educational Leadership and Management for a Master's degree at the University of South Africa. He can be contacted at 0846886226. I am currently engaged in a research project entitled, "Learners' perceptions of feeding schemes programmes at secondary schools in the Nzhelele East Circuit, Limpopo Province."

The primary goal of this study is to understand learners' perceptions of the feeding scheme programmes in secondary schools in the Nzhelele East Circuit so that the objectives of the programme are met and to find out how best school feeding contributes to their learning performance and to reducing hunger and absenteeism.

You have been selected because you are one of the school feeding programme co-coordinators at your school who is acquainted with the performance of learners before and after receiving food. I believe that you are knowledgeable and informative about the phenomenon I wish to investigate.

The researcher needs to conduct confidential interviews to collect data on the perceptions of learners regarding the school feeding programme at public schools. Interviews will last for approximately 30-45 minutes and will be tape-recorded and transcribed *verbatim* by the researcher and a qualified independent coder who will verify the findings. The venues, dates and time for the focus group and individual interviews will be communicated well in advance. The information gathered from the study will be used for

the purpose of the research study and will contribute to an understanding of the school feeding programme in public schools in Limpopo Province. The information may also be used for presentations at conferences and for the preparation of an article in an educational journal.

The researcher will ensure anonymity by omitting the names of participants in any of the data collected. Instead, a code will be allocated to each participant and a master list will be kept in a separate place under lock and key. Should confidentiality be threatened all records and identifying links will be destroyed.

Furthermore, confidentiality will be ensured in that only the researcher and the independent coder will peruse the transcribed material. Participation is strictly free and voluntary and you are under no obligation to take part in the study. You may withdraw your consent to take part or stop participating at any time and without penalty, negative consequences or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You are requested to be one of 12 participants who will participate in the interviews individually at a specified time of your choice.

The benefit of the study is to highlight the importance of the feeding programme in public schools as a measure to promote learner attendance; to reduce the school dropout rate; and to increase the pass rate. An empirical study of this project may offer a deeper understanding of the impact of the feeding programme on school attendance in rural areas and it is intended that the results of this study will lead to the improvement of the feeding programme at secondary schools. The immediate benefit of the study is that, learners' perceptions regarding feeding programme will be communicated in terms of the provision of quality education at public schools

There will be no risk or harm involved in the participation in the research study. Should you require additional information concerning the study before, during or after it is complete, please feel free to contact the researcher by telephone or email. I will provide you with the summary of the findings on request. You will automatically receive a summary of the research findings and recommendations on an electronic version of my dissertation after final approval by the university. The University of South Africa has

developed research ethical guidelines and it is responsible for ethical approval before the researcher can embark on the collection of data from the participants.

Yours sincerely

‾‾‾‾‾

T.G. Muvhango (Student Number: 08656886)

Student

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE: EDUCATOR

I, (surname and initials) -- voluntary consent to participate in the above-mentioned research project and give permission for this research project to be tape-recorded. I confirm that I have read and understand the consent form and I have received a copy of the form to keep.

--   ---------------------

Signature of Educator   Date

ANNEXURE G:

CONSENT LETTER: PARENT

REF: 08656886   P O BOX 1539

ENQ: MUVHANGO T.G   MAKHADO

CELL: 082 222 0742   23 December 2014

Dear Parent

PARENTAL CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION OF A MINOR IN THE RESEARCH PROJECT

I, Thinavhuyo Gladys Muvhango, am conducting research with   Dr J. NYONI who is a senior lecturer in the Department of Educational Leadership and Management for a Master's degree at the University of South Africa. He can be contacted at 0846886226. I am currently engaged in a research project entitled, "Learners' perceptions of feeding schemes programmes at secondary schools in the Nzhelele East Circuit, Limpopo Province."

The Purpose of the study is to understand learners' perceptions of the feeding scheme programmes in secondary schools in the Nzhelele East Circuit so that the objectives of the programme are met and to find out how best school feeding contributes to their learning performance and to reducing hunger and absenteeism. The possible benefit of the study is the improvement of the school feeding scheme at secondary schools.

The researcher needs to conduct focus group interview to collect data concerning the learners' perceptions of the feeding scheme programme in secondary schools in the Nzhelele East Circuit so that the objectives of the programme are met. I am requesting permission to include your child in this study because she/he is knowledgeable about the phenomenon I wish to investigate.

Each interview will last for approximately 30 to 45 minutes and will be recorded and transcribed *verbatim* by the researcher and a qualified independent coder who will verify the findings. I expect to have 11other children (learners) participating in the study.

Your child is requested to be one of 12 participants who will participate in the focus group interview at a specified time at their respective school. Two principals and four educators will also be interviewed individually. Your child is, therefore, requested to be one of the 18 participants who will participate in interviews individually (6) or as a group (12). Your child is kindly invited to participate in a study entitled, "Learners' perceptions of the feeding scheme programme at secondary schools in the Nzhelele East Circuit, Limpopo Province." I am undertaking this study as part of my Master's research at the University of South Africa.

The information gathered from the study will be used for the purpose of research and it will contribute to an understanding of the importance of the school feeding programme in public secondary schools as a measure to promote learner attendance; to reduce the school dropout rate; to increase the pass rate; and to reduce absenteeism. An empirical study of this project may offer a deeper understanding of the impact of the feeding programme on school attendance in rural areas and it is intended that the results of this study will lead to the improvement of the feeding programme at secondary schools. The immediate benefit of the study is that learners' perceptions of the feeding programme will be communicated in terms of the provision of quality education at public schools. The information may also be used for presentations at conferences and for the preparation of an article in an educational journal

Participants will be selected using purposeful sampling. I will request educators who have been appointed as school feeding programme coordinators at the sampled school to select 6 learners from Site A and 6 learners from Site B to participate in the research (for focus group). Learners will be given assent form to confirm their participation in the research. They are likely to be knowledgeable and informative about the phenomenon the researcher wishes to investigate. The sample is likely to answer the research questions for this study.

There are no foreseeable risks to your child participating in the study. Your child will receive no direct benefit from participating in the study. Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with your child will remain confidential and will only be disclosed with your permission. His/her responses will not be linked to his/her name, your name or the school's name in any written or verbal report based on this study. Such a report will be used for research purposes only.

Your child's participation in this study is voluntary. He/she may decline to participate or to withdraw from participating at any time. Withdrawal or refusal to participate will not affect him/her in any way. Similarly you may agree to allow your child to be part of the study now and change your mind later without any penalty. The study will take place after school with the prior approval of the school and your child's teacher.

In addition to your permission, your child must agree to participate in the study and your child will also be asked to sign the assent form which accompanies this letter. If your child does not wish to participate in the study, he/she will not be included and there will be no penalty. The information gathered from the study and your child's participation in the study will be securely stored on a password locked computer in my locked office for five years after the study. Thereafter, records will be erased.

Should you have questions about this study please asks me or my study supervisor. My supervisor is Dr J. NYONI , Department of Educational leadership and Management College of Education, University of South Africa. My contact number is 082 222 0742 and my e-mail is thinavhuyog@gmail.com.The e-mail of my supervisor is nyonij@unisa.ac.za and he can be contacted on 0846886226.

If you would like additional information concerning the study before, during or after it is complete, please feel free to contact me by telephone or email. You will receive summary of the research findings and recommendations of my research after final approval by the university. The University of South Africa has developed research ethical guidelines and it is responsible for ethical approval before the researcher can embark on the collection of data from the participants.

Thank you for your support.

Thinavhuyo Gladys Muvhango

Parental consent for participation of minor in the research project

I (surname and initials) --- acknowledge that I have read and understood the rationale and purpose of the study. I have received a copy of the consent form to keep.

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Parent /guardian' name (Print)   Signature   Date

ANNEXURE H:

ASSENT LETTER: LEARNERS

REF: 08656886   P O BOX 1539

ENQ: MUVHANGO T.G   MAKHADO

CELL: 082 222 0742   23 December 2014

Title of study: "Learners' perceptions of the feeding scheme programme at secondary schools in the Nzhelele East Circuit, Limpopo Province."

Dear Learner

LEARNER ASSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE RESEARCH PROJECT

I, Thinavhuyo Gladys Muvhango, am conducting research with   Dr J. NYONI who is a senior lecturer in the Department of Educational Leadership and Management for a Master's degree at the University of South Africa. He can be contacted at 0846886226. I am doing a study on "Learner's perceptions of feeding schemes programmes at secondary schools in the Nzhelele East Circuit, Limpopo Province" as part of my studies at the University of South Africa. Your principal has given me permission to do this study at your school.

The purpose of the study is to understand learners' perceptions of the feeding scheme programme in secondary schools at Nzhelele East Circuit so that the objectives of the programme are met and to find out how best school feeding contributes to their learning performance and to reducing hunger and absenteeism. The possible benefits of the study are the improvement of the school feeding scheme at secondary schools.

This letter is to explain what I would like you to do. There may be some words you do not know in this letter. You may ask me or any other adult to explain any of the words that you do not know or understand. You may take a copy of this letter home to think about my invitation and talk to your parents about this before you decide if you want to be part of this study.

I need to conduct a focus group interview with you to collect data on "learners' perceptions of the feeding scheme programme in secondary schools at Nzhelele East Circuit" so that the objectives of the programme are met. You are requested to be one of 12 participants who will participate in the focus group interview at a specified time at your respective school. You have been selected using purposeful sampling. I will request educators who have been appointed as school feeding programme coordinators at your school to select 6 learners from Site A and 6 learners from Site B to participate in the research (for focus group interviews).

You will be given an assent form to confirm your participation in the research. You have been selected because you are knowledgeable and about the phenomenon I wish to investigate. Each interview will last for approximately 30 to 45 minutes and it will be recorded, transcribed *verbatim* by the researcher and a qualified independent coder who will verify the findings. I expect to have 11 other children (learners) participating in the study.

I would like to ask you 10 questions. I will read them one by one. You need to listen to my questions carefully and you need to answer them in a chronological order. These questions are all about the school feeding scheme at your school. I will re-listen to your answers afterwards, but your name will not appear on the tape and your participation will not count for any marks at school. I will not share your answers with your teachers or parents. Interview will last for approximately 30-45 minutes and will be tape-recorded, transcribed *verbatim* by the researcher and a qualified independent coder who will verify the findings.

There are no foreseeable risks or harm to you by participating in the study. You will receive no direct benefit from participating in the study. Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and can be identified with you will remain confidential and will only be disclosed with your permission.

I will write a report on the study but I will not use your name in the report or say anything that will let other people know who you are. You do not have to be part of this study if you do not want to take part. If you choose to be in the study, you may stop taking part at any time. You may tell me if you do not wish to answer any of my questions. No one will blame or criticise you.

You may take a copy of this letter home to think about my invitation and talk to your parents about it before you decide if you want to be part of this study. I would like to invite you to be a very special part of my study. I am doing this study so that I can find ways that your teachers can use the school feeding programme better. This will help you and many other learners of your age in different schools.

Your parents or a legal guardian will receive a copy of the child assent form and will also be asked for the permission of interviewing in the focus group on your behalf. When I have completed my study, I will return to your school to give a short talk about some of the helpful and interesting things I found in my study. I shall invite you to come and listen to my talk.

If you decide to be part of my study, you will be asked to sign the form on the next page. If you have any other questions about this study, you can talk to me or you can have your parent or another adult call me on 082 222 0742. Do not sign the form until you have all your questions answered and understand what I would like you to do. Do not sign written assent form if you have any questions. Ask your questions first and ensure that someone answers those questions. My contact number is 082 222 0742 and my e-mail is thinavhuyog@gmail.com.

 Thank you for your support.

Thinavhuyo Gladys Muvhango

CHILD ASSENT

I (surname and initials) --- have read this research information letter which requests me to be part of a study at my school. I agree to be part of the study and I will participate on my free will.

--- -------------------------------   ------------------
Learner's name (print):   Learner's signature   Date

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Researchers name (print)   Researcher's signature: Date:

ANNEXURE I:

FOCUS GROUP ASSENT AND CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

REF: 08656886   P O BOX 1539

ENQ: MUVHANGO T.G   MAKHADO

CELL: 082 222 0742   23 December 2014

Title of study: "Learners' perceptions of the feeding scheme programme at secondary schools in the Nzhelele East Circuit, Limpopo Province."

Dear Learner

ASSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS

I, Thinavhuyo Gladys Muvhango , am conducting research with Dr J. NYONI who is a senior lecturer in the Department of Educational Leadership and Management for a Master's degree at the University of South Africa. He can be contacted on 0846886226. I am doing a study on "Learners' perceptions of the feeding scheme programme at secondary schools in the Nzhelele East Circuit, Limpopo Province" as part of my studies at the University of South Africa. Your principal has given me permission to undertake this study at your school.

The purpose of the study is to understand learners' perceptions of feeding scheme programme in secondary schools in the Nzhelele East Circuit so that the objectives of the programme are met and to find out how best school feeding contributes to learning performance and to reducing hunger and absenteeism. The possible benefit of the study is the improvement of the school feeding scheme at secondary schools.

This letter is to explain what I would like you to do. There may be some words that you do not understand in this letter. You may ask me or any other adult to explain any of the words that you do not know or understand. You may take a copy of this letter home to think about my invitation and talk to your parents about this before you decide if you want to be part of this study.

I need to conduct a focus group interview with you to collect data on "learners' perceptions of the feeding scheme programme in secondary schools in the Nzhelele East Circuit" so that the objectives of the programme can be met. You are requested to be one of 12 participants who will take part in the focus group interview at a specified time at your school.

You have been selected using purposeful sampling. I will request educators who have been appointed as school feeding programme coordinators at your school to select 6 learners from Site A and 6 learners from Site B who will participate in the research (for focus group interviews).

You will also be given an assent form to confirm your participation in the research. You have been selected because you are knowledgeable and informative about the phenomenon I wish to investigate. Each interview will last for approximately 30 to 45 minutes and will be recorded and transcribed *verbatim* by the researcher and a qualified independent coder who will verify the findings. I expect to have 11 other children (learners) participating in the study.

I would like ask you 10 questions. I will read them to you one by one. You need to listen to my questions carefully and answer them in a chronological order. These questions are all about the school feeding scheme at your school. I will re-listen to your answers afterwards, but your name will not appear on the tape and it will not count for marks at school. I will not share your answers with your teachers or your parents.

There are no foreseeable risks or harm to you by participating in the study. You will receive no direct benefit from participating in the study. Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will only be disclosed with your permission.

I will write a report on the study but I will not use your name in the report or say anything that will let other people know who you are. You do not have to be part of this study if you do not want to take part. If you choose to be in the study, you may stop participating at any time. You may tell me if you do not wish to answer any of my questions. No one will blame or criticize you.

You may take a copy of this letter home to think about my invitation and talk to your parents about this before you decide if you want to be part of this study. I would like to invite you to be a

very special part of my study. I am doing this study so that I can find ways in which your teachers can use the school feeding programme better. This will help you and many other learners of your age in different schools.

Your parents or a legal guardian will receive a copy of the child assent form and will also be asked for the permission on your behalf to interview you in the focus group. When I have completed my study, I will return to your school to give a short talk about some of the helpful and interesting things I found in my study. I will invite you to come and listen to my talk.

If you decide to be part of my study, you will be asked to sign the form on the next page. If you have any other questions about this study, you can talk to me or you can have your parent or another adult call me on 082 222 0742. Do not sign the form until you have all your questions answered and understand what I would like you to do. Do not sign the written assent form if you have any questions. Ask your questions first and ensure that someone has answered those questions. My contact number is 082 222 0742 and my e-mail is thinavhuyog@gmail.com.

   Thank you for your support.

Thinavhuyo Gladys Muvhango

ASSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS

I (surname and initials) -- assent to participate in focus group discussions (focus group interviews) which may be used by the researcher, Thinavhuyo Gladys Muvhango, for research purposes. I am aware that the group discussions will be digitally recorded and give permission for these recordings which will not be shared with any person outside the group in order to maintain confidentiality.

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Participant Signature: Date

ANNEXURE J:

 INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. **Opening**

A. Rapport

I will shake hands with the participants, greet them and introduced myself.

Good morning or afternoon (Mr.; Mrs.; Ms; Miss A, B, C; Learners)

My name is Thinavhuyo Gladys Muvhango. I am conducting research in the Department of Educational Leadership and Management for a Master's degree at the University of South Africa. I am currently doing a research project entitled: "Learners' perceptions of the feeding scheme programme at secondary schools in the Nzhelele East Circuit, Limpopo Province."

Thank you for granting me permission to interview you. I would like to assure you that I will adhere to all the ethical codes of conduct in terms of conducting the research - as stated in my application letter and your letter of informed consent or assent. Feel free to use the language you understand better and do not hesitate to ask for clarity when there is a need to do so. May I tape-record the interviews to assure the quality of data and its interpretation? Thank you, we may start... I will not use your name or say anything that will let other people know who you are. There will be no harm to you by participating in the study.

B. Purpose

I would like to ask you questions about your experiences regarding the school feeding programme at your school in order to learn more about the SFP and to share this information with your educators, principal and the department.

C. Motivation

The immediate benefit of the study is that learners' perceptions regarding the feeding programme will be communicated in terms of the provision of quality education at public schools

D. Time line

The interview will last for approximately 30-45 minutes and will be tape-recorded and transcribed *verbatim* by the researcher and a qualified independent coder who will verify the findings.

Let me begin by asking you some questions about your names and grades and your favourite food.

2. Body

Topic: Learners' perceptions of the feeding scheme programme at secondary schools in the Nzhelele East Circuit, Limpopo Province.

QUESTIONS FOR ALL PARTICIPANTS

A. Interview schedule for focus group discussion - leading questions

Good morning or afternoon (learners.) Thank you for giving me permission to interview you. I would like to assure you that I will adhere to ethical codes of conduct when conducting research - as stated in my application letter and your letter of informed consent. Feel free to use the language you understand better and do not hesitate to ask for clarity in case there is a need to do so. May I tape-record the interview to assure the quality of the data and its interpretation? Thank you, we may start.

1. Do you eat breakfast before coming to school every day? If not , why not?
2. Are you enthusiastic about the meals provided?
3. What kind of food do you enjoy most and why?
4. Do you think you can move from the school where there is a SFP to another school where

the SFP had stopped? Why?

5. Are you still sometimes absent from school even if you have the SFP? If so, why?

6. Does school feeding programme assist you in your performance in the classroom?

7. In your opinion, why is the school feeding programme important?

8. In your opinion, what do you think can be done to improve school feeding meals in public secondary schools?

B: Interview questions for Educators Co-ordinator

Good morning or afternoon (Mr., Mrs., Ms, Miss A, B, C ….) Thank you for granting me permission to interview you. I would like to assure you that I will adhere to the ethical codes of conduct for conducting research - as stated in my application letter and your letter of informed consent. Feel free to use the language you understand better and do not hesitate to ask for clarity in case there is a need to do so. May I tape-record the interviews for quality data collection and interpretation? Thank you, we may start.

1. Were you appointed as a SFP co-ordinator?
2. Did you receive training for the programme?
3. What are your roles and responsibilities as a school feeding programme coordinator?
4. Have you ever tasted the food?
5. If yes, how best do you rate the standard of meals?
6. Which type of food do most learners enjoy most?
7. Based on your understanding of the school feeding programme, do you think the programme can improve the performance of learners in the classroom and learner school enrolments? If yes, how?

8. Do you think the programme can reduce absenteeism and the drop out rate?

9. In your own assessment, how do you rate the standard of school feeding programme in public secondary schools?

10. What recommendations can you make regarding the improvement of meals?

C: Interview questions for principals

Good morning or afternoon (Mr., Mrs., Ms, Miss A, B, C ….) Thank you for granting me permission to interview you. I would like to assure you that I will adhere to the ethical codes of conduct for conducting research - as stated in my application letter and your letter of informed consent. Feel free to use the language you understand best and do not hesitate to ask for clarity in case there is a need to do so. May I tape-record the interviews for quality of data and its interpretation? Thank you, we may start.

1. In which quintile is your school and what are your roles and responsibilities as a school feeding programme coordinator?

2. Do you have copies of School Feeding Programme?

3. Do you have learners who do not participate in the programme? If yes, why do you think that is so?

4. Have you ever tasted the food? If yes, how do you rate the standard of the meals?

5. Based on your own understanding of the school feeding programme, do you think the programme can reduce learner absenteeism and improve school enrolments as well as learner development? If yes, then how?

6. In your own view, how do you rate the standard of school feeding programme meals in public secondary schools?

7. What are the challenges facing school the feeding programme, especially in your circuit?

8. In your opinion, what measures can be taken to improve the school feeding programme in public secondary schools

It has been pleasure learning more about your experiences.

1. **CONCLUSION**

A. List of themes explored during the interview

A List of themes explored during the interview will be listed, for example:

The roles and responsibilities of programme organizers and coordinators of the SFP, Levels of SFP satisfaction, Improvements in learner's performance, School absenteeism and dropout management and Overall SFP logistical school support

B. Thank you for your time. Your responses will be part of the data interpretation of the research study. You may obtain the summary of this study should you wish to have one. Have a nice day.

ANNEXURE K: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR FOCUS GROUP

Interview questions for focus group discussions - leading questions

1. Do you eat breakfast before coming to school every day? If not , why not?

2. Are you enthusiastic about the meals provided?

3. What kind of food do you enjoy most and why?

4. Do you think you can move from a school where there is a SFP another school where the SFP has been stopped? Why?

5. Are you still sometimes absent from school when you are provided with the SFP? If so, why?

6. Does the school feeding programme assist you to improve your performance in the classroom?

7. In your opinion, what is the importance of the school feeding programme?

8. In your opinion, what do you think can be done to improve school feeding meals in public secondary schools?

Thank you for your participation.

ANNEXURE L: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR EDUCATORS CO-ORDINATORS

1. Were you appointed as an SFP co-ordinator?

2. Did you receive training for the programme?

3. What are your roles and responsibilities as a school feeding programme coordinator?

4. Have you ever tasted the food?

5. If yes, how best do you rate the standard of meals?

6. Which meal do learners enjoy most?

7. Based on your understanding of school feeding programme, do you think the programme can improve the performance of learners in the classroom and school learner enrolments? If yes, how?

8. Do you think the programme can reduce absenteeism and the dropout rate?

9. In your own view how do you rate the standard of the school feeding programme in public secondary schools?

10. What recommendations can you make to improve the meals?

Thank you for your participation.

ANNEXURE M: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR PRINCIPALS

1.   In which quintile is your school, and what are your roles and responsibilities as a school feeding programme coordinator?

2.   Do you have copies of the School Feeding Programme?
3. Do you have learners who do not participate in the programme? If yes, why do you think this is?
4. Have you ever tasted the food? If yes, how do you rate the standard of meals?
5. Based on your own understanding of the school feeding programme, do you think the programme can reduce learner absenteeism and improve school enrolments and learner performance?
6. In your own view how do you rate the standard of school feeding programme meals in public secondary schools?
7. What are the challenges facing the school feeding programme, especially in your circuit?

8. In your opinion, what measures can be taken to improve the school feeding programme in public secondary schools?

Thank you for your participation.

ANNEXURE N: OBSERVATION SCHEDULE

UNISA | university of south africa

Research title:

Learner's perceptions of feeding schemes programmes at secondary schools in the Nzhelele east circuit, Limpopo province.

Date of the observation--------------------------------

Time and duration of the observation-------------------------------------

Name of institution---

Focus areas of observation--

Day	Meal	Least	Less	Little
Monday				
Tuesday				
Wednesday				
Thursday				
Friday				

Findings

3.Recommendations:_____
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Signature of the researcher:_____