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**LOCUS OF CONTROL AS A CAUSE OF SCHOOL DROPOUT**

by

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**JUNE 1984**

\* \* \* \* \*  
\*  
\* As sunshine is to flowers, \*  
\* \* \* \* \*  
\* so smiles are to humanity \*  
\* \* \* \* \*  
\* \* \* \* \*

\* \* \* \* \*  
\*  
\* Each day is given to us, \*  
\* \* \* \* \*  
\* as an eternity to be happy in \*  
\* \* \* \* \*  
\* \* \* \* \*

- Kahlil Gibran

*to my mother,*

*Maria*

## FOREWORD

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

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

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

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## SINOPSIS

Die feit dat 'n onaanvaarbare getal leerlinge die skool vroeg verlaat, wek allerwee kommer by opvoeders. Navorsingspanne van die Departement Opvoedingswetenskappe aan die Randse Afrikaanse Universiteit en die Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Social Ecology aan die Ben Gurion Universiteit in Israel het 'n gesamentlike projek onderneem om die oorsake van vroeë skoolverlating te bestudeer. Daar is algemene ooreenstemming dat gekonsentreerde pogings aangewend moet word om die oorsake van vroeë skoolverlating te verstaan met die oog op die ontwerp van programme ter voorkoming van hierdie verskynsel.

Elke lid van die navorsingspan aan die Randse Afrikaanse Universiteit het 'n spesifieke aspek and vroeë skoolverlating ondersoek. Faktore wat bestudeer is, is konsepte soos gesinsfaktore, selfkonsep, lokus van kontrole en skoolklimaat. Die onderhawige studie het gefokus op lokus van kontrole by risiko en nie-risiko leerlinge vir soverre dit vroeë skoolverlating betref.

Die ondersoek het in die eerste plek gefokus op 'n literatuurstudie van lokus van kontrole as 'n oorsaak van vroeë skoolverlating, met die klem op interne en eksterne lokus van kontrole; in die tweede plek is 'n veldondersoek gedoen met behulp van 'n lokus van kontrole-vraelys wat deur standaard sewe leerlinge in geselekteerde hoerskole in die Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vereeniging-area voltooi is.

Die doel van die studie is om te bepaal of risiko en nie-risiko standerd sewe-leerlinge verskille ten opsigte van hul lokus van kontrole-oriëntasie openbaar en of lokus van kontrole as 'n bydraende faktor ten opsigte van vroeë skoolverlating beskou kan word. Die twee groepe leerlinge is vergelyk ten opsigte van die volgende veranderlikes:

- \* gesinsgrootte
- \* gesinsituasie
- \* huistaal
- \* skoolvordering
- \* geslag
- \* ouderdom

Volgens die lokus van kontrole-teorie kan individue geklassifiseer word in twee kategorieë, naamlik die wat 'n interne lokus van kontrole het - verwysend na persone wat die resultate van hul handelinge toeskryf aan persoonlike inset en vermoë - en die wat 'n eksterne lokus van kontrole het. Laasgenoendes skryf hul suksesse of mislukkings toe aan eksterne faktore soos geluk of toeval. Leerlinge met 'n interne lokus van kontrole, wat hulself gewoonlik beskou as in beheer van hul skoolsuksesse en mislukkings, beskik oor 'n groter gevoel van persoonlike kontrole oor stresveroorsakende faktore soos eksamens, toetse, en gesins- en portuurgroepdruk as persone met 'n eksterne lokus van kontrole. Vir die intern-georiënteerdes kom stresfaktore minder bedreigend voor, met die gevolg dat hulle nie geneig is tot vroeë skoolverlating as gevolg daarvan

nie. Ekstern-georiënteerdes, daarenteen, voel dat hulle geen kontrole oor stresfaktore het nie en aanvaar dus gewoonlik nie verantwoordelikheid vir hul dade nie. Die gebrek aan motivering as gevolg hiervan kan tot vroeë skoolverlating lei.

Beduidende verskille is in die navorsing gevind met betrekking tot lokus van kontrole tussen risiko en nie-risiko-leerlinge (ten opsigte van vroeë skoolverlating) betreffende die volgende faktore: gesinsituasie, gesinsgrootte, skoolvordering, geslag en ouderdom. Risiko-leerlinge het hoër gemiddelde tellings as nie-risiko-leerlinge op die Lokus van Kontrole-vraelys gehad; dit kan beskou word as 'n geneigtheid tot 'n eksterne lokus van kontrole.

Voorkomingsprogramme - wat op die oorsake van vroeë skoolverlating fokus - behoort ontwerp te word; faktore soos gesinsgrootte, enkelouer-gesinne en druiping van leerlinge - wat deur hierdie studie as bydraend tot risiko ten opsigte van vroeë skoolverlating aangedui is, behoort in gedagte gehou te word by die ontwerp van sodanige programme.

Aangesien vroeë skoolverlating meebring dat 'n leerling nie sy potensiaal tot volle verwesenliking bring nie, behoort verdere navorsing in hierdie verband onderneem te word.

## SYNOPSIS

The high dropout rates in many schools are causing widespread concern amongst educators. To address this problem, research teams from the Department of Educational Sciences at the Rand Afrikaans University and the Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Social Ecology at the Ben Gurion University in Israel, pooled knowledge, experience and expertise to investigate the causes of school dropout. It is the opinion of the various researchers that every effort must be made to understand the causes of dropout, in order to develop programmes to counteract this phenomenon.

Each member of the research team at the Rand Afrikaans University researched a specific facet of school dropout. These facets include concepts such as family relations, self concept, locus of control and school climate. This study specifically deals with pupils at risk and those not at risk of dropping out.

The method used in this study is two-fold: it firstly contains a literature study in which locus of control as a cause of school dropout is investigated with emphasis on the internal and external locus of control; secondly it contains a questionnaire pertaining to locus of control which was completed by standard seven pupils of selected secondary schools in the Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vereeniging area.



The purpose of the study is to determine whether "at risk" and "not at risk" standard seven pupils display differences in their locus of control orientation and whether locus of control can be regarded as a contributing factor in school dropout. The two groups are compared with regard to the following variables:

- \* family size
- \* family situation
- \* home language
- \* school promotion
- \* gender
- \* age

According to the Locus of Control Theory, people can be categorised into persons who either have an internal locus of control - which refer to those who attribute performance outcome to personal effort or ability - or those who have an external locus of control , which refer to people who attribute success or failure to external factors such as luck, fate or chance. Pupils with an internal locus of control, who generally think of themselves as capable of controlling their school success or failure, have a greater sense of personal control over stressors like exam/test stress, family pressure and peer pressure than externals. To internals stressors appear less threatening. This could prevent them from dropping out of school. Externals, on the other hand, feel that they have no control over these stressors and would thus deny responsibility for their deeds. The resulting demotivation could cause them to leave school prematurely.

Significant differences were found with regard to locus of control between pupils "at risk" and those "not at risk" of dropping out, when variables such as family size, family situation, school progress, gender and age were investigated. "At risk" pupils had a higher average score than their "not at risk" counterparts on the Locus of Control Questionnaire: this is indicative of a tendency toward an external locus of control.

Prevention programmes - focussing on causes of dropout - should be designed taking cognizance of factors highlighted by this study such as family size, single parent families and retention of pupils who fail.

As dropout prevents a pupil from realising his potential to the optimum, further research would be recommended to support the results of this study and to actually design prevention programmes that would help reduce the high dropout rate.

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# CHAPTER 1

## CONTEXT, PROBLEM, AIM AND METHOD OF INVESTIGATION

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

The Rand Afrikaans University of South Africa and the Ben Gurion University of Israel, are currently undertaking a group project to investigate the school dropout phenomenon. The aim is to identify the pupil "at risk" of dropping out, research the causes of school dropout and eventually design programmes that could prevent this from occurring. Factors that will be included in the profile of dropout pupils are : family relations, self concept, school climate and locus of control. In this study locus of control and its relationship to school dropout will generally be examined, with specific emphasis on the economically and culturally disadvantaged communities.

There is a universal concern about the high dropout rate in many schools. Every country needs its youth to be creative, motivated, productive and self-supportive. This seems to be especially true in South Africa, with its so-called "lost generation." Adequately qualified and capable workers are required to improve the existing quality of life. It is therefore important for the youth to stay in school so that they will be able to develop their potential to the optimum.

### 1.2 THE DROPOUT PHENOMENON

#### 1.2.1 Definitions and portrait of a dropout

Garbers ( In Crawage, 1992 : 8) defines dropout as the

phenomenon when pupils terminate their school career before they have reached matric (sometimes standard eight) in any type of teaching or education. Trueba et al . (1989 : 20) and Elliott and Voss (1974 : 40) see a dropout as a pupil who leaves school, for any reason except death, before the completion of a set programme of studies, without transferring to another school.

Ballantine (1989 : 189) gives the following profile of dropouts. They are disproportionately male, older than average (two or more years behind standard level), have low grades and display behavioural problems, they are essentially from minority and low income families with low educational attainment and little educational encouragement. Weis et al . (1989 : 3) reiterates that a dropout is an aberrant individual who is deviant, disfunctional or deficient because of personal, family or community characteristics.

Parelius and Parelius (1978 : 165) say that dropouts tend to have severe reading problems and find school unpleasant and discouraging.

Taking this description of a dropout into consideration, it almost seems as if a dropout is an outcast in society, a person to be blamed for his lack of progress. In actual fact, it is a tragedy that so many pupils do not complete their primary and/or secondary education as a result of factors that are beyond their control. For the purpose of this study, dropouts

are seen as those individuals who have the mental ability to complete their schooling, but end their full time school attendance while still eligible for compulsory education.

### 1.2.2 The dropout problem : a universal problem

Internationally, the dropout problem has been researched by, amongst others, Gibson and Ogbu (1991), Slavin (1991) White (1990), Lakebrink (1989), Musgrave (1979) and Höhn (1967). These researchers state that dropouts are a "variant breed of teenagers" who are a social problem because they are "clumsily dysfunctional in the computer-precise, machine-orientated, communication-saturated society." These authors support the notion - held by many others - that dropouts would become an "outlaw pack" who could not be absorbed into society. South African researchers, but to mention a few, who researched dropout with regard to various factors are: Van Rooyen (1990), Verwoerd (1985), De Beer (1976), Nel (1976), Botha (1973) and Engelbrecht (1972).

According to the above mentioned researchers, the factors most strongly associated with dropping out are, inter alia: low academic achievement (and school related factors such as truancy), race/ethnicity prejudice and discrimination, socioeconomic status and an individual's perception of control over his environment (locus of control).

### 1.2.3 Consequences of Dropout

According to Ballantine (1989 : 191) and Weis et al . (1989 :

32) a disproportionate number of dropouts end up in the nation's jails and prisons. They are four times as likely to engage in unlawful behaviour and have difficulty competing in the labour market. Their lack of knowledge and skill results in them having less tools to survive on a daily basis.

Weis et al . (1989 : 33) states that the low self-esteem of these individuals who cannot compete in the world, seems to be the most disturbing factor as it would most likely lead to antisocial behaviour such as delinquency, truancy and drug abuse.

Taking these negative consequences for both the dropout and society into consideration, it becomes clear that every effort must be made to understand the causes of dropout in order to develop programmes to counteract this phenomenon.

### 1.3 LOCUS OF CONTROL AS A CONTRIBUTING FACTOR TOWARD DROPOUT AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

Locus of control is the main focus of this study. It would thus be defined and then briefly be elaborated on.

#### 1.3.1 Definition of locus of control

Maddi (1989 : 488) defines locus of control as the seat of control where peoples lives are controlled. He states that people who believe that their lives are controlled by

themselves have an internal locus of control and people who believe that society or others control them have an external locus of control.

### 1.3.2 Locus of control

Maqsud (1983 : 216) states that there are significant positive relationships between locus of control and academic achievement, that in turn influence the learner's ability to handle given tasks which basically influence his approach and understanding. Johnson (1978 : 316) found that students high in internal locus of control - pupils who perceive events contingent to their own behaviour, the so-called internals - have better grades and test scores than students who are high in external locus of control - pupils who attribute success or failure to luck, chance or fate, the so-called externals.

Bernstein et al . (1988 : 470) state that pupils with an internal locus of control, that is, who think of themselves as generally capable of controlling their school successes or failures, have a greater sense of personal control over stressors like exam/test stress, family pressure and peer pressure. They make stressors appear less threatening. This explains why "internals" often appear to be better than "externals" at managing everyday stressors and thus coping better with their school work.

Dropouts are more likely to have an external locus of control

because they usually attribute academic performance to factors outside their control. Externals would therefore not strive to achieve academically because they do not believe in their own abilities, even if they are capable of succeeding. Poor academic achievement may contribute to early school leaving (Clifford, 1981 : 379).

#### 1.4 DEFINITIONS, CONCEPTS AND TERMINOLOGY

Terminology and concepts such as "disadvantaged", "at risk pupils" and "non at risk pupils" that has not been defined yet, but which will be used in the context of this specific study, will briefly be expounded on.

##### 1.4.1 Disadvantaged pupils

According to Khatena (1982 : 238) the word "disadvantaged" suggests lack, indicating deficit conditions that depict an individual's social status when compared to the rest of the population.

Bates et al . (1993 : 2) say that disadvantaged children display deficits in language development of varying types and seriousness, are often homeless and undernourished and their families move regularly from place to place. These factors contribute to the breaking down or disturbance of their school progress. Disadvantaged children may have the mental ability to succeed, but are denied the opportunity to prove themselves

because of external factors that are beyond their control.

The disadvantaged child is less able to make use of conventional verbal symbols in representing and interpreting feelings, experiences and objects in the environment. Conceptualisation is content centered rather than form centered which implies that reasoning is inductive rather than deductive (Hellmuth, 1970 : 252).

Children in a migratory worker's family, where the child has to move with his family from one city to another, or a child who had several foster parents in a single year, are especially disadvantaged where their school careers are concerned. They do not identify with any vision of personal success. These children bear the marks of poverty and fear, and are frequently barricaded behind a wall of silence because of a basic inability to generally relate to their environment (Gage et al ., 1984 : 379).

#### 1.4.2 At risk pupils

The term "at risk" is used to describe a group of pupils who are substantially at a higher risk than others of becoming potential educational dropouts (Wedell, 1976 : 30).

The pupils at risk are not only those pupils who come from poor families and minority social groups, but also other pupils who come from what Weis et al .(1989 : 5) define as "families with



deficiencies." Included here are also those students who have had academic and disciplinary problems.

Coleman et al .(1987 : 129) uses four categories to elaborate the concept of the at risk student : minority, poor, deficient families and school problems. They claim that the following family factors are some of the indicators of the at risk pupil:

- single-parent households
- mothers who work outside the home
- low involvement of parents with the children
- lack of shared activities between parents and children
- absence of verbal communication between parents and children

#### 1.4.3 Not at risk pupils

The "not at risk pupils" are those pupils who are conceivably not at risk of becoming dropouts. These pupils usually attend classes regularly, have good scholastic progress, and have a higher motivation and self-concept level. Their parents normally take an interest in them with shared activity and high verbal interaction (Elkind et al ., 1978 : 661).

#### 1.5 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Ballantine (1989 : 191) and Weis et al . (1989 : 32) state that there are really no specific causes and consequences of school dropout because problems are so diverse. They do state, however, that dropouts will most likely face a grim future and

will most probably be on welfare because they usually fail to find proper employment.

As has been indicated, locus of control can be identified as a possible cause of school dropout because a pupil with an external locus of control usually perceive himself as having little or no control over his environment. The problem to be researched can thus be stated as follows: How do "at risk" and "not at risk" pupils differ with regard to their perception of control over their environment?

#### 1.6 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The main purpose of the study is to determine whether "at risk" and "not at risk" standard seven pupils display differences in their locus of control orientation. In the literature study locus of control will also be researched as a contributing factor to school dropout.

#### 1.7 METHOD OF THE STUDY

The method used in this study is two-fold: it firstly contains a literature study in which locus of control as a cause of school dropout is investigated with emphasis on the external and internal locus of control. A questionnaire pertaining to locus of control will secondly be implemented. The target group is standard seven pupils of selected secondary schools in the Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vereeniging area.

The following factors are covered by the questionnaire used in the project: self concept, family relations, school climate and locus of control. This study, however, only deals with the locus of control items, in accordance with the aim of the study.

## 1.8 PLAN OF THE STUDY

A short overview of each chapter and its contents is provided in an attempt to give an all inclusive plan of the study.

### Chapter 2

In this chapter the aspects of locus of control are investigated. The following factors are examined: internal locus of control, external locus of control, expectancy, responsibility and attribution.

### Chapter 3

This chapter investigates how locus of control influences the causes of school dropout. This is categorised into social factors, family factors and school factors.

### Chapter 4

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

dealt with in this chapter.

## Chapter 5

Statistical analyses are tabulated and discussed.

## Chapter 6

This chapter concludes the study with a summary of findings, discussion of limitations as well as recommendations for further research.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **ASPECTS OF LOCUS OF CONTROL**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

In the first chapter, a broad outline was given of some causes of school dropout. In this chapter an effort will be made to focus on the theoretical background of the locus of control construct.

#### **2.2 Theoretical basis of locus of control**

Slavin (1991 : 326) divides locus of control into two categories, namely: internal locus of control and external locus of control. He defines individuals with an internal locus of control (internals) as those who attribute their success or failure to personal effort or ability and external locus of control (externals) as referring to individuals who attribute success or failure to external factors such as luck, fate or being under the control of powerful others.

Rotter (1966 : 1) says that when an event is interpreted as the result of luck, chance or as unpredictable because of the great complexity of forces surrounding him, then the individual perceives his locus of control as external. If a person perceives that an event is contingent upon his behaviour or determined by his own relatively permanent characteristics,

then the individual is termed as having an internal locus of control .

The foregoing definition is possibly the most widely quoted in literature and is used by, but to mention a few, Gray et al . (1977), Johnson (1978), Brophy et al . (1980), Clifford (1981), Maehr et al .(1984), Shaffer (1989) and Slavin (1981).

In order to get a global picture of the locus of control construct, the social learning theory, as background information, will be briefly discussed because the locus of control concept is derived from the social learning theory .

### 2.3 SOCIAL LEARNING THEORY

Hall et al . (1985 : 536) state that the social learning theory holds that human behaviour is largely acquired and that learning principles are sufficient to account for the development and maintenance of human behaviour.

Adler, Lewin, Thorndike and Skinner are some of the classical theorists whose works Rotter used in 1954 to develop his social learning theory. Rotter (1967) provides the general theoretical background for the conception of the nature and effects of reinforcement. Interaction between the individual and his environment is emphasised and more particularly, his need to attain positive reinforcements which promote behaviour based on past experiences.

Rotter (1967) acknowledges that the work by Thorndike and Skinner provided the impetus for the motivation aspect of social learning theory and also states that perhaps the most significant principle for the subsequent development of the construct locus of control has to do with the concept expectancy.

The concept expectancy was introduced by Rotter (1954 : 102) which he says is a function of experience, motivation and reinforcement. When an individual perceives a strong connection between his behaviour and the various outcomes flowing from that behaviour, then such an individual is said to have high expectancy of success.

Woolfolk (1990 : 306) aptly defines expectancies in terms of motivation that emphasises the individual's expectations for success or failure, which is combined with the value that the goal has for the individual.

Bandura ( In Woolfolk, 1990 : 306), in his social cognitive theory, reiterates that the concept "expectancy" is a derivative of the construct "locus of control". He sees expectancies as generalisable, which implies that expectancies developed in one situational context would mediate in other contexts. An expectancy can be seen as another source of motivation in the setting of goals. These goals that are set, become the standard for evaluating performances.

Woolfolk's given definition of the expectancy theory, which germinated from the social learning theory, should be borne in mind as attention is turned to a discussion of the construct locus of control in terms of its relationship to the expectancy theory.

#### 2.4 RELATIONSHIP OF "LOCUS OF CONTROL" TO EXPECTANCY THEORY

Many studies were conducted by Telford et al . (1973 : 500) on the motivational significance of an internal versus external locus of control and its relationship to expectancy. They state that the internal versus external locus of control describes the degree to which a person believes that he possesses or lacks the power to control the events or circumstances of his life. This refers specifically to the extent to which the individual expects success and failure in his life to occur as a result of his own actions, on the one hand, or the outcome of chance or luck on the other hand.

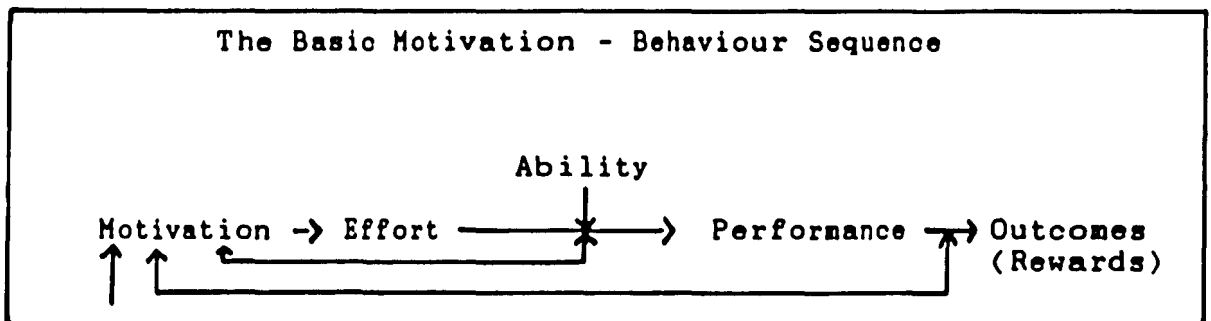
Broedling (1974b : 6) states that the expectancy theory has its earliest roots in the field of motivation. Rotter (1967), however, also used the concepts of "reinforcement" and "motivation" to develop the locus of control construct. It can thus be seen that the construct locus of control and expectancy models have a common background which provide the basis of a special relationship between them.

It is postulated by Vroom (1964) that individuals experience



two types of expectancies, namely, that effort will lead to performance and that good performance will lead to rewards. This was used as a springboard by Porter and Lawler (1968) to develop a more complex model consisting of Valency, Instrumentality and Expectancy (VIE) models. A general model is shown in table 2.1, where the basic Motivation-Behaviour sequence is illustrated.

Table 2.1: The Valency, Instrumentality, Expectancy (VIE) Model



(Steers and Porter ,1979 : 218)

Steers and Porter (1979 : 216 - 220) say the following about the Basic Motivation - Behaviour Sequence:

Working from left to right in the model, motivation is seen as the force which is used to expend effort. In order for an individual to perform, effort alone is not enough. The combination, however, of ability and effort produces performance. Effort thus combines with ability to produce a given level of performance. As a result of performance the individual attains certain outcomes or rewards. As this process of performance-reward occurs, the actual events serve to provide the information which influences the individual's perceptions (particularly expectancies) and influences

motivation in the future.

Perceptions of instrumentality and expectancy are influenced by the personality of the receiver. The locus of control construct is incorporated into the VIE model as a determinant of Performance-Outcome expectancies. Lawler (1971 : 484), however, warn that perceptions exert a greater influence than locus of control in the practical situation.

Slavin (1991 : 332) developed an expectancy-valence model as shown in table (2.2). He says that an individual's motivation to achieve depends on the product of the individual's estimation of his chances to succeed (perceived probability of success, or Ps) and the value he places on success (incentive value of success, or Is). He also adds an important aspect to the expectancy theory in pointing out that under certain circumstances, an overly high probability of success can be detrimental to motivation in that if success is not attained, then demotivation will occur.

Table 2.2 Expectancy - Valence Model

Motivation (M)	=	Perceived probability of success (Ps)	X	Incentive value of success (Is)
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(Slavin, 1991 :332)

Atkinson (1984) explains that there is a relationship between probability of success and incentive values of success, such

that success in an easy task is not as valued as success in a difficult one. He concludes that motivation should be at a maximum, at moderate levels of probability of success because if failure occurs, then the level of disappointment will not be so great, on account of the fact that failure at a moderately difficult task is not experienced as negatively as failure at an easy task.

Seifert (1983 : 118) states that there is considerable evidence that a person's achievement motivation is powerfully conditioned by the degree to which he believes that the rewards of learning occurs. Learning that takes place as the result of own actions and expectations can be said to occur on account of an internal locus of control.

An expectancy that certain consequences will follow one's actions is of great importance in the learning situation. Children with such expectancies are more likely to have an internal locus of control because they work more consistently to achieve goals than children who have a more external locus of control (Rogers, 1982 : 108).

The above research supports the notion that an individual's internal or external locus of control mediates his expectancy and motivation for success and failure.

Attention is now turned to a discussion of the construct locus of control in terms of its relationship to the attribution theory.

## 2.5 RELATIONSHIP OF LOCUS OF CONTROL TO ATTRIBUTION THEORY

One of the theories related to the locus of control concept is the Attribution theory which was originally developed to explain how events are interpreted and to what cause these events are attributed or credited to. This theory assumes that explanations are needed to clarify events. Causal explanations are formulated for happenings that transpire. Behaviour is also affected by the cause-and-effect relationship that exists (Clifford, 1981 : 375).

Weiner et al . (1979) state that most explanations for success or failure have three characteristics. The first is whether the cause is seen as internal (within the person) or external. The second is whether it is seen as stable or unstable. The third is whether it is perceived as controllable or not. Slavin (1981) states that people will be more likely to attribute good happenings to their own effort or ability, but when anything bad happens, they will believe that it is due to factors over which they had no control.

Attribution theory primarily deals with four explanations for success and failure in achievement situations: ability, effort, task difficulty and luck. Ability and effort attributions are internal to the individual, whereas task difficulty and luck attributions are external. Ability is taken to be a relatively stable, unalterable state. Effort, on the other hand, can be altered. In the same vein, task difficulty is essentially a

stable characteristic, while luck is unstable and unpredictable. Table 2.3 below summarises these four attributes and representative explanations for success and failure (Slavin, 1991 : 325).

Table 2.3 Attribution To Success And Failure

	Stability	
Locus of control	Stable	Unstable
Internal Success: Failure:	Ability "I'm smart" "I'm dumb"	Effort "I tried hard" "I didn't try hard"
External Success: Failure:	Task difficulty "It was easy" "It was too hard"	Luck "I lucked out" "I had bad luck"

(Slavin, 1991 : 325)

The above table shows how students might seek to explain success and failure differently. When students succeed they would like to believe that it was because they are smart (an internal, stable attribution), not because they were lucky or because the task was easy, or even because they tried hard (trying hard says little about their likelihood of success in the future). Contrastingly, students who fail would like to believe that they had bad luck (an external, unstable attribution), which allows for the possibility of succeeding next time. Students, however, who feel that they are dumb, will attribute failure to factors within themselves (an internal, unstable attribution), which does not allow for the ability of success the next time.

Studies were conducted by Forsyth (1986 : 325) where groups of people were given a task and then told that they either "failed" or "succeeded" (even though all in fact, were equally successful). Those who were told that they had failed, said that their failure was due to bad luck, while those who were told that they had "succeeded" attributed their success to skill and intelligence.

Clifford (1981 : 378) stresses that the manner in which a person behaves is determined by the views about the causal relationship between person and environment. Passing a test, for example, might depend on effort and ability, which are personal causal factors. It might depend on how difficult the test is and the grading policy of the examiner, which are environmental external factors. It might possibly depend on some combination of these personal and environmental factors. A person's behaviour when taking the test will depend mainly on his beliefs about the cause-and-effect relationship in this situation. If he believes that passing the test is caused primarily by his actions, he will behave quite differently than if he believes that passing the test depends on environmental factors. Kellas (1987 : 198) says that an individual is assumed to be a reasoning being who attribute events to various causes and are motivated to act in terms of these cause-and-effect relationships.

In keeping with the attribution theory, it can be seen that locus of control can be very important in explaining a

student's school performance. Various researchers have found that students high in internal locus of control have better grades and test scores than students of the same intelligence who are low in internal locus of control (Messer, 1972; Lefcourt, 1976; Nowicki et al .,1978 In Slavin, 1991 : 326). Brookover et al .(1979 : 273) found that locus of control was the most important prediction of a student's academic achievement after ability. They say that students who believe that success in school is due to luck, the teacher's whims or external factors are unlikely to work hard. On the contrary, students who believe that success and failure are primarily due to their own efforts can be expected to work hard.

In summary, it has come to light that the attribution theory seeks to understand explanations for success or failure. A central assumption is that people will attempt to maintain a positive self-image so that when good results occur, they tend to attribute them to their own abilities. Negative events, however, are attributed to factors beyond their control. Locus of control can help explain school performance in the sense that individuals with an internal orientation attribute success largely to personal effort.

Attention will now be turned to the development and characteristics of the original locus of control scale - the Rotter I-E scale. Various relationships of locus of control in specific situations will also be examined.

## 2.6 THE DEVELOPMENT AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ROTTER INTERNAL-EXTERNAL (I-E) LOCUS OF CONTROL SCALE

Phares (1976 : 648 - 662) first attempted to measure individual differences in locus of control. He used colour matching as an ambiguous task to develop an instrument consisting of 13 items of "external" attitudes and a similar number of "internal" attitudes on a Likert type scale. This scale was developed on the grounds of precedence where different groups of subjects were given conflicting information on the nature of the task with regard to skill/chance expectancies of the outcome. The groups were loosely named skill-bound and chance-bound. He predicted that subjects endorsing the internal, skill related items would exhibit expectancy changes which would be similar to those produced by skill instructions. The opposite behaviour was anticipated from subjects choosing external, or chance-related items. This data, however, did not support the prediction. There was a tendency in the subjects with external attitudes to show more unusual shifts in expectancy than those with internal attitudes.

James (1957 : 397 - 403) revised what is generally known as the James-Phares Scale. He predicted that externals would exhibit similar behaviour regardless of whether they were in a chance-bound or skill-bound group. He, however, found that subjects with a tendency for external items showed smaller increases and decreases in behaviour change when success and failure were expected. Externals also generalised less from



task to task than internals, whose performance corresponded to the skill instructions given. Internals would thus show greater increases and decreases in behaviour change when success and failure are expected.

The development of subscales for such need areas as achievement, affection and general social and political attitudes were initially broadened by Liverant, in association with Rotter and Seeman (Rotter, 1966 : 9).

A hypothesis stated that behaviour based on locus of control beliefs would be more relevant in certain need areas than in others. A hundred items were originally used to determine the relationship between achievement and social desirability. After many items were discarded on the basis of not having satisfactory internal-external consistency scales, a final total of twenty-nine items, including six filler items, were designed, as is currently used and named as the Rotter internal-external locus of control scales (Rotter, 1966 : 1 - 20).

The above discussion thus far has centred on the development and characteristics of the Rotter internal-external locus of control scales. Research, in the last one and a half decades, has focused attention on the development of specific locus of control scales, which will be the focus in the succeeding section.

## 2.7 THE DEVELOPMENT AND RESULTS OF MULTIDIMENSIONAL LOCUS OF CONTROL SCALES

### 2.7.1 General scales

Reid and Ware (1974 : 131 - 142) and Collins (1974 : 381 - 391) provided the initial thrust in multidimensional scale construction using modified and extended versions of the Rotter I-E scale.

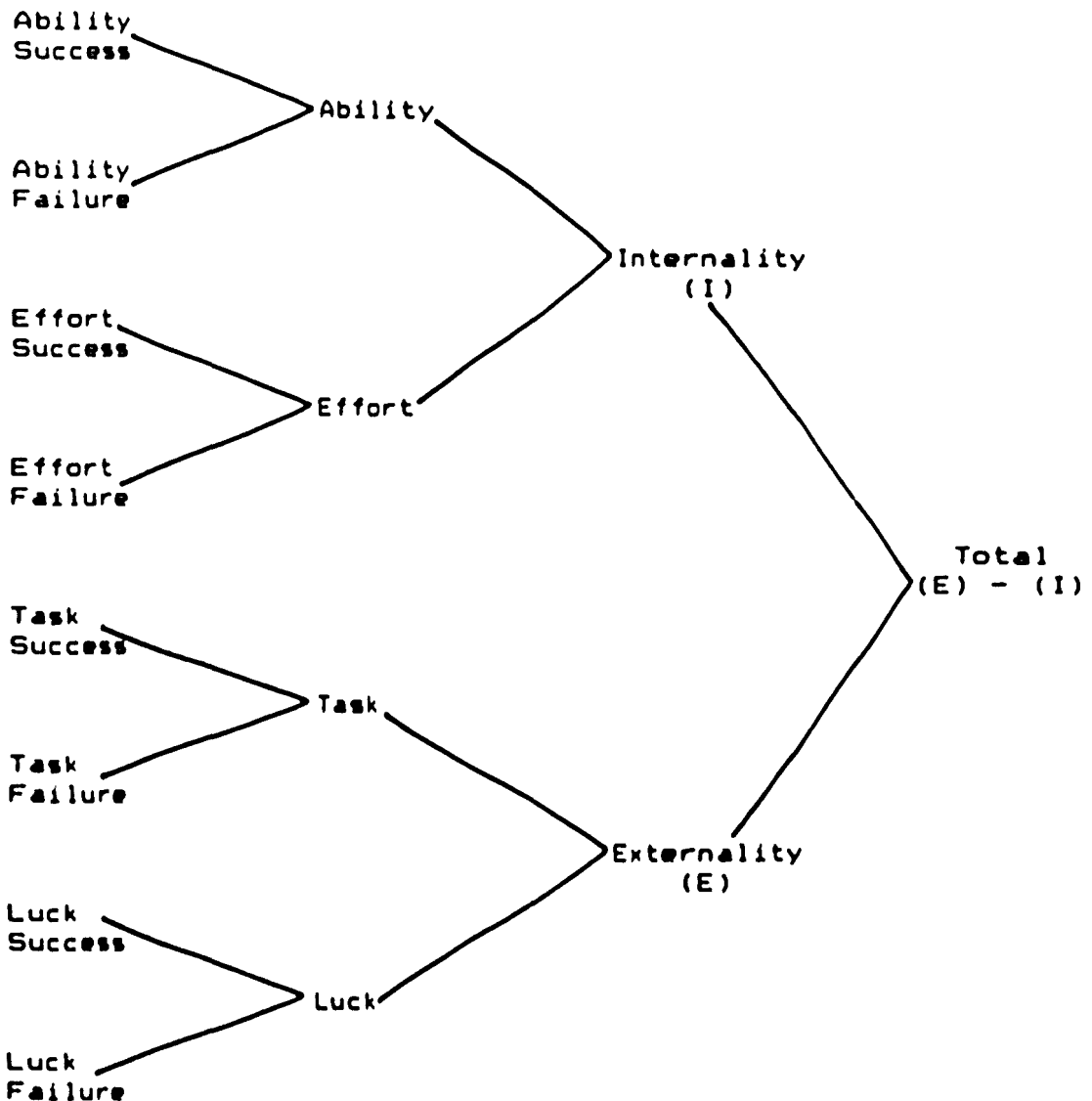
Using Canadian students, Reid and Ware found that with the Rotter I-E scale, the students did not distinguish between "self" and "others" as sources of control. It was only after the addition of a self control dimension to the Rotter I-E scale, that these students could differentiate between the personal systems transaction of the self and others.

Collins (1974) outlined four dimensions of control: The Difficult-Easy World, The Just-Unjust World, The Predictable - Unpredictable World and the Politically Responsive-Unresponsive World. Duffy, Shiflett and Downey (1972 : 214 - 219), using the Collins Scale, reported similar dimensions, with the addition of a further control dimension which they labelled the Friendly - Hostile World.

Levinson (1974 : 377 - 383) reports a fundamental departure from the conceptualisation of locus of control as seen in the multidimensional scale. He delineates three dimensions of control which are labelled Internality (I), Powerful Others (P) and Chance (C).

In a project to develop a multidimensional locus of control measure, Lefcourt (1981 : 250) constructed two twenty-four item scales relating to achievement and affiliation respectively, this he called the Multidimensional Multiattributinal Scale (MMCS). This scale examines successes and failures by presenting subjects with items relating to ability, effort, task context and luck. The representation of the MMCS scale is schematically set out in figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1 Schematic Representation Of The MMCS Scale



(Lefcourt, 1981 : 251)

The Lefcourt (1981) report findings support the theory of the continual development of goal-specific measures of locus of control and cautions that each goal area should be clearly delineated before a locus of control scale can be constructed.

This discussion has, thus far, concerned itself with scales developed for "general" life situations with various scales.

Attention is now turned to scales developed to tap specific life areas and situations.

### 2.7.2 Specific Locus Of Control Scales

Rotter (1975 : 59) says that if one's interest is in a limited area and particularly if one is seeking some practical application where every increment in prediction is important, then a very broad measure is necessarily limited to a lower level of prediction.

Lefcourt (1981) makes a similar observation and argues that the development of criterion-specific measures are more useful than repeated verification of multi-dimensionality with present-day locus of control scales. Performance and Motivation related locus of control scales have been developed by authors like Reigeluth (1983 : 140), who designed the Performance and Motivation Locus Of Control Scale (PHLC) and Perlmutter and Monty (1977) who designed the Multidimensional Confidence Locus Of Control Scale (MCLC).

The PCLC comprises 15 items in a Likert format and examines the relationship between performance and the cognitive characteristics of the student's ability. It was found by Reigeluth (1983) that performance in learner-controlled settings are influenced by the student's ability. Low-ability students achieve more objectives under conditions of external control, whereas high-ability students succeed most often during control over instruction under conditions of internal control. Perlmuter et al. (1977) report a positive relationship between student ability and performance, regardless of whether subjects were given control over instruction.

Keller et al. (1978 : 415 - 421) conducted studies to examine the relationship between locus of control and attitudes. These researchers found that locus of control was more highly correlated with the attitudes of the subjects toward their academic achievement, than with the study habits of subjects who were allowed to control instruction. Internals procrastinate less than externals when they can control instruction. Internals have expressed greater satisfaction with learner-controlled instruction, whereas externals reported greater satisfaction with instructional environments.

In an attempt to examine the relationship between socioeconomic background and academic achievement with locus of control Gilmer et al. (1978 : 565) developed a 24 item version of a revised socioeconomic background questionnaire (RSBQ). They

conducted studies on eighty Nigerian Secondary pupils, requiring them to give information on their parent's educational and occupational background. The results of these studies revealed that there is a significant association between socioeconomic status, school achievement and locus of control. Students from a higher socioeconomic strata tend to have a more favourable attitude toward school and teachers and possess an internal locus of control.

Cohen and Cohen (1974 : 848) adapted a scale of self-concept of ability (ASAA) to measure the relationship between self-esteem and locus of control. Each item of the scale, consisting of six multiple choice items, required subjects to compare themselves with others on the dimensions of academic ability. These researchers found that self-esteem correlated significantly with locus of control. This implies that internal locus of control (internality) is possibly associated with positive self esteem. These results support Roger's (1967) argument that the learner's self concept - the feeling of how well the learner can handle given tasks - basically influences the learner's approaches and understanding.

Connell (1980) developed a multidimensional scale that measures children's perceptions in relation to three sources of Control - Internality, Powerful Others and Unknown, across three competency domains - Cognitive (school related) activities, Social (peer related) activities and Physical (sports related) activities. Internals were found to have good social

interaction with positive physical and mental health as assessed by the scale and the educators involved. Externals, however, were found to have problems with interacting on a social basis and had negative cognitive and physical attitudes of scale development.

This section has shown that an individual's locus of control may be focussed on specific dimensions of control and that a need for the development of new scales are imperative.

Attention is now turned to a discussion of the construct locus of control in terms of its relationship to the attribution theory.

## 2.8 LOCUS OF CONTROL AS A MODERATOR OF ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOUR

Ritchie and Phares (1969 : 429 - 443) conclusively showed that individuals with an internal locus of control are resistant to attitude change and Cravens and Worchel (1983 : 150 - 168) showed that externals are more susceptible to manipulation and tend to conform to group pressure.

Conformity and attitude changes are types of behaviours. It can thus be said the locus of control is a moderator of behaviour (Schneider, 1972 : 226). O'Brien (1984) say that this moderating effect is shown with regard to activity preference and would mediate action-taking as a behavioural action.

The attitude-behaviour relationship has been given little attention because research has concentrated on the relationship between locus of control and behaviour. Rotter (1975) modified his 1962 hypothesis by adding a paradigm, namely, that of expectancy of outcome which explains the differences between action-taking behaviour and the individual's use of internal or external reinforcements.

Zuckerman and Gerbasi (1977b : 357) conducted studies to examine the relationship between attitude and behaviour. They found that internals, having developed an attitude toward an object or situation, perceive greater control and follow through with overt behaviour which is consistent with attitude.

Internal and external control orientation can precipitate behaviour under differing conditions. Externals tend to take action if their powerlessness becomes too intolerable. Their motivation would be the achievement of sufficient power to restore their equilibrium in this regard. This is termed as a "power-formation hypothesis". Internals would only take action if they believe that they can change or influence their circumstances. This is termed as the "efficacy hypothesis" (Klanderman, 1983 : 399 - 415).

Schwartz and Dovidio (1984 : 305 - 308) conducted a study which links attitude, behaviour and locus of control in support of Klanderman's work. These researchers suggest that externals are more likely than internals to express unconventional attitudes



and behaviours. Externals, without the fear of negative sanctions, expressed their attitudes in a purposeful way, whereas internals, were reticent to express their views. These behaviours show that there are linkages between attitude, behaviour and locus of control in that the outcome of both the internals and externals are related to their attitudes.

## 2.9 CONCLUSION

Before moving on to a discussion of how locus of control has a bearing on the dropout rate at school, it would be useful to summarise the research findings recorded in this chapter and their relevance to this study.

The construct locus of control has been shown to be a major personality variable which has survived severe research programmes for some two and a half decades. The Rotter I-E scale, has been found to be the most commonly used instrument to measure an individual's internal-external locus of control orientation.

The following multidimensional and specific locus of control scales, using the Rotter I-E scale as foundation, have been developed as instruments to measure an individual's internal-external locus of control orientation.

- Performance and Motivational locus of control scale (PMLC) which examines the relationship between performance and cognitive characteristics of the student's ability (Reigeluth, 1983).

- Multidimensional Confidence locus of control scale (MCLC) which monitors a student's confidence and the bearing it has on locus of control (Monty, 1977).
- Revised Socioeconomic background questionnaire (RSBQ) to examine the association between socioeconomic status and school achievement (Gilmour et al ., 1978).
- Scale of Self Concept of ability (ASAA) to measure the relationship between self esteem and locus of control (Cohen and Cohen, 1974).
- Multidimensional scale which measures children's perceptions in relation to three control sources, that is, Internality, Powerful others and Unknown (Connel, 1980).
- Multidimensional Multiattributitional scale (MMCS) which examines success and failure by presenting subjects with items relating to ability, effort, task content and luck (Lefcourt, 1981).

Locus of control has been shown to be significantly related to a number of variables, such as a student's school performance and components of the expectancy and attribution theory.

More recent work has pointed to the possibility that locus of control will moderate the attitude behaviour relationship. Silvestre (1983) and Wickman and Ball (1983) in particular conducted studies to provide insight into the formation/change of attitudes among internals and externals and indicate that internals exhibit behaviour consistent with their attitude.

The foregoing provide the theoretical foundation for this study. Locus of control will constantly be referred to when discussing how sociological factors influences a psychological construct. It is not feasible to isolate locus of control as a cause of school dropout, therefore, locus of control will be interwoven with aspects such as social factors, family factors and school factors. Locus of control is seen to be the most significant factor in this regard, hence it will be used as a springboard for examining causes of school dropout.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **SCHOOL DROPOUT: CAUSES AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO LOCUS OF CONTROL**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

Literature reveals that many studies have been conducted to determine the causes of school dropout. An attempt will be made in this chapter, using the attribution theory as discussed in chapter two as basis, to examine specifically how locus of control influences school dropout with particular reference to social factors, school factors and family factors.

#### **3.2 CAUSES OF DROPPING OUT**

Factors which contribute to early school leaving may be found in the personality of the child, in the school, the community and the home (Rip, 1971 : 1).

The above statement is supported by Zarb ( In Rice, 1992 : 498) who states that there is a constellation of causes for dropping out. The reasons dropouts mostly give for leaving school includes:

- \* Socioeconomic factors
- \* Racial/ethnic prejudice and discrimination
- \* family background
- \* parental influence and relationships

- \* home responsibilities
- \* personality problems
- \* social adjustments
- \* financial problems
- \* marriage
- \* intellectual difficulties or retardation
- \* reading disability
- \* school failure
- \* misconduct
- \* expulsion
- \* lack of interest in school

Social factors in its different facets will now be examined to establish how it is related to locus of control and how it affects the school dropout phenomenon.

### 3.2.1 SOCIAL FACTORS

According to Rotter (1967), the first principle of locus of control is the individual's interaction with the environment and his need to attain positive reinforcement. The individual who receives positive reinforcement, will possibly experience an internal locus of control; the individual who receives negative reinforcement will most likely experience an external locus of control because he feels that he does not have control over his environment.

Rice (1992 : 10) says that the child's interaction with the

environment has an important influence on his development, relationships, adjustments and problems. The expectations of society would mould his personality, influence his role and guide his future. The structure and functions created by society either help fulfill his needs or create new problems by stimulating further tension and frustration. It is important to understand this social order and some of the ways it influences a child because he is a social being who is part of a larger society, irrespective of his economic status.

Bearing Rice's view in mind, selected social factors will be focussed on to give an idea of how the environment influence school dropout and the role that locus of control plays.

### 3.2.1.1 Poverty

According to Weis et al .(1989 : 137) students who come from a "poor" environment - which is not conducive to the development of school-required skills - will most likely be the ones who will drop out of school because they fail the standard competency tests. Some of these students may have the mental ability to pass these competency tests, but fail as a result of their unsupporting environment.

Inadequate care of children and poverty often results in cramped and impoverished living conditions, overcrowding, low income, pressure on children to start earning, and feelings of insecurity. The following factors, which are very relevant to

low socioeconomic status homes, are considered as barriers to scholastic success:

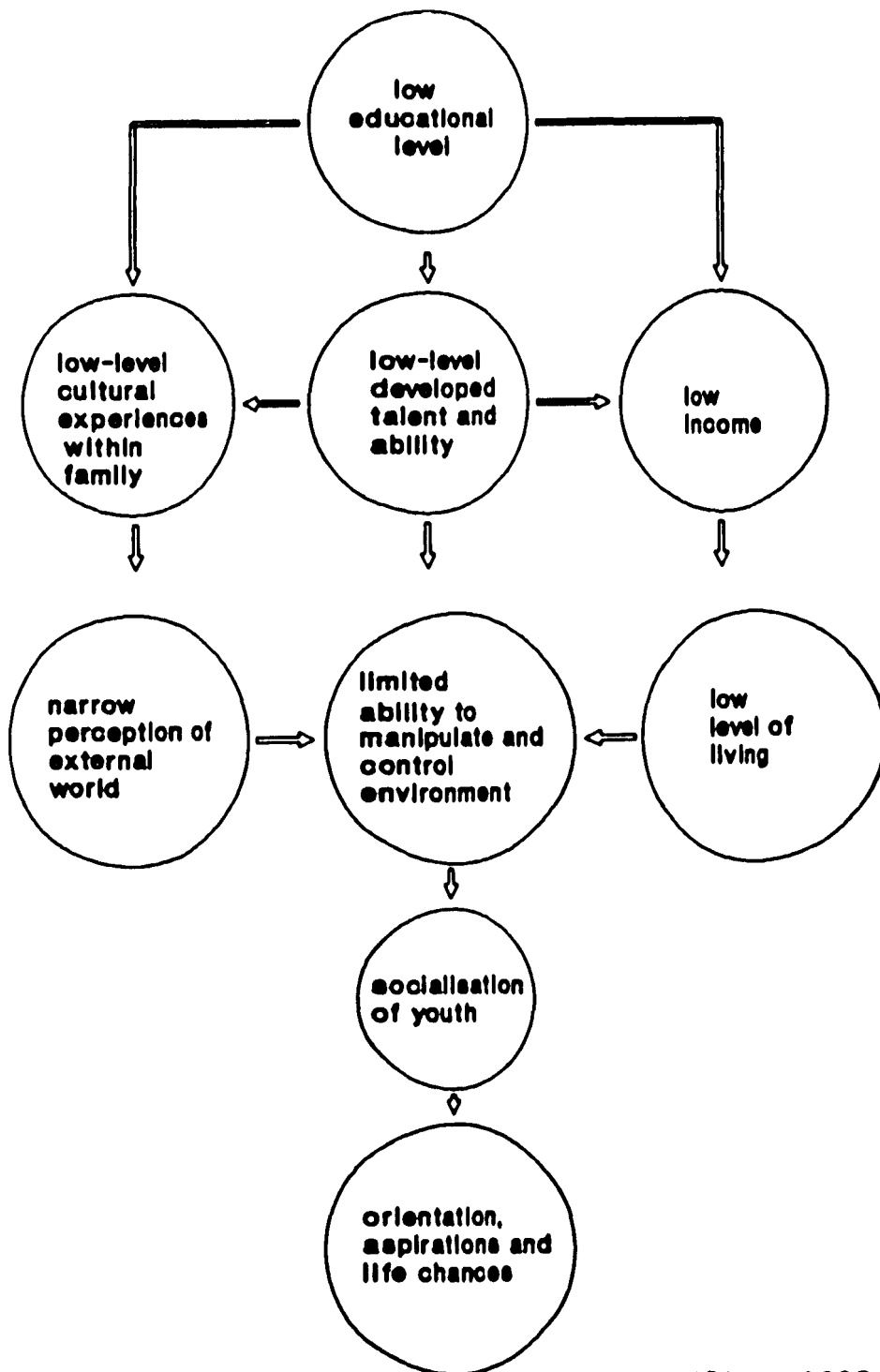
- A child from a working-class home often has restrictions in language experience which disables the child to form abstract concepts.
- There are few books around in the home.
- Conversation is neither informative nor extensive.
- There is often a shortage or absence of toys or surrounding objects offering some variety of stimulation which result in sensory deprivation.
- Children from socially deprived homes often tend to develop poor self-images.

The above factors imply that children from deprived homes are not likely to succeed academically and therefore are at a greater risk of becoming dropouts (Child, 1986 : 281 - 282).

Rice (1992 : 13) says that children from poor families often abstain from participating in school activities, are seldom elected to positions of prestige and often seek status through antisocial behaviour. The effect of these limitations that are imposed upon the lives of low socioeconomic status children influences them negatively and contribute to a poor self image. These children will most likely experience an external locus of control as a result of their inability to control these negative factors in their environment. Amongst these children it could be the norm to belong to a gangster group where the importance of progressing academically is not even considered. A better quality of life will thus not be attained. In this way

a cycle of poverty and cultural deprivation is perpetuated as illustrated in figure 3.1.

FIGURE 3.1 POVERTY AND CULTURAL DEPRIVATION CYCLE



(Rice, 1992 : 33)



Low levels of education result in low levels of developed talent and ability with low levels of cultural experiences in the family. This in turn results in a narrow perception of the external world, which, along with the low standard of living contributes to the limited ability to manage and control the environment so that the child attributes his circumstances to external factors beyond his control. As a result of the limitations imposed upon parents, they in turn, teach their children not to expect a very high standard of living or much education. Low socioeconomic status pupils therefore tend to perpetuate a cycle of school dropout because it seems to be the order of the day (Knapp and Shields, 1990 : 33 - 34). When they become parents, they transfer their negative perceptions of school to their children.

Henry (1988 : 144 - 145) claims that children who drop out of school, often blame their circumstances because they come from poor homes and are often victimised at school. These children seem to have an external locus of control because they tend to have negative reinforcements from society. These children lack adequate housing and good food, with obvious consequences for their health and ability to study. There is often no place to study so that it seems as if school work is neglected. Fitzgerald ( In Henry, 1988 : 145) report that the effect of poverty on education is academic failure and early school dropout. Irrespective of their academic ability or desire to learn, students from poor families have relatively little chance of securing success.

Henderson (1981 : 221) says that poverty denies self respect and the possibility for full participation in all aspects of society, which includes education.

The above research has shown that the child may attribute his dropping out of school to poverty. The child, on the other hand, does not necessarily have to drop out of school, but may become so frustrated that he starts becoming delinquent and start playing truant in order to get rid of his pentup emotions; this could possibly lead to an inability or unwillingness to adhere to social norms.

Attention will now be turned to truancy and the influence it has on the school dropout phenomenon.

### 3.2.1.2 Truancy

Truancy - chronic unexcused school attendance - has a very negative effect on pupil/teacher relationships and a child's academic achievement. This could directly contribute to dropout. As dropouts frequently try to avoid school, truancy will be discussed in this section.

Truancy comprises a whole class of actions or contexts of actions. These contexts involve the interactional relationships of the child, family and school concerning the issue of chronic unexcused school absense (Walsh et al ., 1988 : 147). These interactional relationships influence truant children in a

negative way, in that they have a marked disinterest in school with feelings of not belonging and consistently performing lower than their potential. On account of this they experience negative reinforcement, which could entrench an external locus of control, causing them to deny any responsibility for their deeds.

Truants, because of their infrequent attendance, are most unlikely to cause major disciplinary problems, but could be the target of bullying especially if they are school phobics (Tattum, 1982 : 15).

#### 3.2.1.2.1 Identification and characteristics of a truant child

Tyernan (1988 : 83) says that amongst the child's most obvious failure at school is also his negative relationship with other pupils and teachers. Along with his unhappiness at school, there is often unhappiness at home. Many are lonely and miserable. Tattum (1982 : 15) states that the truant child defies authorities, has a sullen attitude, shows low tolerance of frustration, reveals a tendency to react explosively to being frustrated and has frequent and extreme changes of mood.

Truants lack affection. They have more likely been charged with stealing and many had stolen, but have not been caught. They have most probably slept out and had run away from home. At school they tend to be working below their ability levels.

They choose subjects where the formal work seem to be too difficult for them (Walsh et al ., 1988 : 148).

Truants are on the school register, but are so alienated that they withdraw from the system and what it stands for as often as they can. Some are genuine school phobics with emotional problems. Others take a dislike to particular teachers or lessons and stay away on the day when they are timetabled. They do not really present the teacher with a disciplinary problem because their responses are so passive (Tattum, 1982 : 159).

Truancy can be linked to negative reinforcement which implies an external locus of control. In the following section, negative reinforcement factors that causes truancy and the effect of truancy on dropout, will be examined.

#### 3.2.1.2.2 Causes of truancy

According to Tyerman (1968 : 61) the following home factors are contributors to truancy: children are principally controlled by corporal punishment, their homes are unclean, adequate clothing is unavailable, there are more than three children in the family, the homes are overcrowded, the child lacks a strong emotional tie with a responsible adult of good standards, parents have little interest in the child's welfare and children are kept regularly from school or occasionally without just cause.

The disruption of the child's emotional state, having to move from a relatively informal and sheltered environment of the primary school to the more highly structured atmosphere of the high school, together with unfriendly and aggressive classmates and critical teachers contribute greatly to possible causes of truancy (Hersov, 1980 : 7 - 19).

### 3.2.1.2.3 The effect of truancy on dropout

Ekstrom et al .(1988 : 116) states that dropouts are more likely to have had behavioural problems while still at school. They have higher rates of absenteeism and tardiness than stayers. Dropouts also played truant more often than stayers, had disciplinary problems, had trouble with the police and have been suspended from school. There seems to be a strong negative influence from the environment which could possibly explain this deviant behaviour. Truant students will most likely experience an external locus of control because of negative influences from the environment.

Hersov (1980 : 71) states that there is a high correlation between high school truancy and dropout. He also says that the high school dropout rate is greatly influenced by the level of primary school truancy.

Social factors alone, cannot give an all embracing view of the child in relation to the dropout phenomenon, hence, the influence of family factors and school factors will be dealt

with in the following section.

### 3.2.2 FAMILY FACTORS

Feldhussen et al. ( In Tattum, 1982 :53) conducted studies that sought to link elements of the pupil's family background with locus of control and dropout tendencies. They found that children from well balanced families with good relationships have an internal locus of control and will most likely complete their schooling years. They also found the following psychological-sociological correlates of classroom misbehaviour and home circumstances which contribute to an external locus of control in children:

- the husband-wife relationship lacked closeness and equality of partnership.
- the discipline by the father was either lax, overly strict or erratic.
- the supervision by the mother was only fair or downright inadequate.
- the mothers were not happy with the community in which they lived.
- the family members were engaged in diverse activities and the family operated only somewhat as a unit or perhaps not at all.
- the parents were indifferent or even hostile towards the child.
- the parents found it difficult to talk things over regarding the child.

- the parents found many things to disapprove of in their child.
- the parents resorted to angry, physical punishment when the child misbehaved. Temper control was a difficult problem for the parents.
- the parents believed that they had little influence on the development of their child.
- the parents thought that other children exerted bad influences on their children.
- the parents' leisure time included few cultural or intellectual activities.
- the parents, particularly the father, reported no church membership. Even if members, church attendance by them tended to be sporadic.
- the parents had less education than the population average and, if unemployed, were in lower-level occupations.

It appears from the above mentioned factors that there are a wide variety of aspects of a child's home environment that can influence his perception of control over his environment. If he develops an external locus of control, he may encounter problems at school because lack of control over his academic environment may alienate him. This could directly contribute to dropout.

### **3.2.2.1 Family structure and its effect on school dropout**

Cohen et al . (1974 : 848) state that there are positive

correlations between locus of control and family structure and the influence that locus of control has on school achievement. A child with an internal locus of control who succeeds or fails at school will attribute his successes or failures to personal effort or ability, whereas a child with an external locus of control will attribute his successes or failures to luck, chance or fate. They suggest that the home and the school are two of the most important systems for the child. What occurs in the one system can substantially affect the other. Problem school behaviour usually has its roots within the home and helps to determine the nature of the family structure with its interlinking relationships.

In view of Cohen et al's statement, a few factors such as broken homes, family size, birth order and gender differences that affect school dropout will be discussed.

#### 3.2.2.1.1 Broken homes

Johnson ( In Rice, 1992 : 125) says that there is a correlation between father absence and delinquency. Adolescents from father-absent homes have a higher incidence of delinquency; this however, does not necessarily mean that father absence causes delinquency.

Children who are raised in single-parent homes have an increased risk for psychological damage and poor academic achievement. Compared to complete families, the intellectual



performance of children from single-parent families is lower on measures of school performance and on standardised tests of intelligence and achievement (Walsh et al .,1988 : 181).

Mothers who go through separation or divorce suffer a significant reduction or loss of income. Many live in poverty and are forced to raise their children in poor sections of town under adverse conditions. Problems then develop with the children because their mothers are less able to influence the children after the divorce; partly because she feels guilty + about the divorce or she has to work full time and is therefore not around to guide her children (Rice, 1992 : 126). Both mother and child seem to attribute their negative feelings and poor conditions to external factors beyond their control.

Shaffer (1989 : 134) agrees that divorce represent a drastic change in the family life. Life is stressful and unsettling for both the children and the parents. Children often become disobedient or otherwise difficult, while the custodian parent may suddenly become more punitive and controlling. The stress resulting from divorce and this new coercive lifestyle often affects the child's peer relations and schoolwork. These children would most probably experience an external locus of control because of the divorce that would have a negative influence on their lives.

#### **3.2.2.1.2 Family size**

According to Robins et al .(1987 : 118) a direct link between large families and dropout can be detected. The life style of

the family and school problems that occur are interrelated. This is seen as a possible prediction to school dropout. When the child ascribes his dropping out of school to his family, who is an external factor, he denies responsibility for dropping out of school.

Sarafino and Armstrong (1980 : 311) and Sprinthall et al . (1981 : 489) reiterate, that as the family size increases, parents tend to become more authoritarian and reliant on the help of older siblings. Children in large families often have fewer interactions with parents and this may be the reason why the intellectual competence of children tend to decrease as family size increases. This increases the possibility for these children to become dropouts.

In a study done by Henderson (1981 : 6) it is evident that family size is inversely related to intellectual performance. He found that there is a significant difference in family size when distinguished between the families of children who scored either low or high on both verbal and non-verbal IQ measures. This indicates that children from large families scored lower on a verbal and non-verbal IQ measure than children who come from smaller families.

McCall and Johnson (1972 : 36) admonishes that these results could be misleading, since lower socioeconomic status families tend to be larger than middle-class families. Rankin ( In Henderson, 1981 : 6 -7) says that one should be careful to

accept such a hypothesis because socioeconomic status has a positive and reliable relationship to IQ and academic achievement. Intelligence is not only a reflection of a verbal and a non-verbal measurement, but also reflects cultural expectations and values. These findings, however, indicate that the most intellectually competent children were those from smaller size families.

#### 3.2.2.1.3 Birth order and spacing

Sarafino and Armstrong (1980 : 312 - 313) state that the position of the child in the sibling row is a factor in school dropout. They found that first borns were generally more successful both in academic tasks and later in professional accomplishments. They also state that children, who according to rank order, were placed fourth or higher, had a higher percentage dropout rate.

Later born siblings, generally do academically less well than those born earlier. This could be as a result of the number of siblings that precede a child's entry into a family. The home environment is likely to be intellectually deprived by the time the later born siblings arrive because parents may not have all the energy and motivation they had as with their first borns. The closer the spacing, the less enriching the home environment is likely to be. When the spacing, on the other hand is large, then the environment might be more enriching for the young child because older, more cognitively advanced models are

available for teaching (Armstrong and Sarafino, 1980 : 312).

Henderson (1981 : 5) and Gray et al .(1977 : 139 - 141) agree that birth order influences the child's academic performance. They say that first borns tend to have higher I.Q. scores than children born later. This could be due to the fact that parents pay less attention to any one child when there are many and to later born children in general. The oldest child is likely to develop leadership qualities and will probably pursue his school career. Second borns and other ordinal position children showed more dependancy behaviour such as seeking help, approval and affection from adults. These forms of behaviour, which are external influences, will most likely lead to school dropout. This type of child would probably experience an external locus of control because they attribute their behaviour to negative reinforcements.

#### 3.2.2.1.4 Gender differences

Parents hold separate attitudes and expectations for their sons and daughters. Girls are expected to receive higher grades than boys because girls are supposed to stay at home and study. Boys enter school with a predisposition to academic underachievement, which gets more serious as they progress to higher standards (Weiner et al ., 1978 : 464 - 465). This implies that more boys than girls drop out of school because boys are forgiven more easily when they fool around.

Factors such as broken homes, family size, birth order and spacing and gender differences are in keeping with the works of Lied and Pritchard (1978), who state that locus of control correlates significantly with performance and expectancy. They suggest that a child from a poor family structure with an atmosphere that is negative and untherapeutic will be expected to perform poorly and eventually drop out of school. These factors all indicate that the individual attributes his circumstances to an external factor which probably predisposes the individual to an external locus of control. The predicted expectancy will be that the individual will possibly become a potential underachiever and eventually a school dropout.

### 3.2.2.2 Family background and its effect on dropout

Gilmor et al . (1978 : 585) state that there is a strong correlation between family background and locus of control and its relationship to school achievement. Children from favourable family backgrounds, where the mother stays at home and where money is no problem, would most likely have an internal locus of control with the propensity to complete their school education. These children would have parental supervision after school. In this way a structured life style in terms of homework and after school activities would be cultivated.

Many parents who are forced to work and who do not uphold strong moral principles, expect the school to make their

children conform to standards of behaviour that they themselves are unwilling or unable to impose or follow (Tattum, 1982 : 52). These double standards confuse children, making them liable to rebel against both the school and the parents. These children could, as a result, become potential dropouts.

In the following section, selected family background factors will be examined bearing Gilmore et al's (1978) statement in mind.

#### 3.2.2.2.1 Socioeconomic status (SES)

Socioeconomic status which is related to poverty (see pg. 37) is a social factor, but in the following section it will also be placed in the context of family situations.

Garbers (1980 :34) states that the economically deprived child is not prepared for school and is a high risk for school dropout because of the following factors:

- \* there is a lack of communication between parent and child.
- \* there is a shortage of reading material and the use of language is poor; for this reason language development is stifled.
- \* there is little stimulation for the child's sensory development because of the shortage of toys.
- \* the family lives from day to day; there is no future planning.
- \* poverty and negligence mean dissatisfactory life circumstances, cramped home conditions, feelings of

insecurity and pressure on the child to start earning money as soon as possible.

- \* economically deprived children mostly have a low self image.
- \* little interest and inconsistency from the parents causes maladjustment in the children.

Lack of money to pay for basic school supplies, inadequate clothing or the need to help out at home with the housework or care for the younger siblings may raise the absentee rates of many children or keep them out of school altogether (Boocock, 1980 : 40 -41).

A student's social-class origin profoundly affects his attitude and behaviour in school. Lower-class children receive an upbringing less consistent with what they will be expected to do in school than middle-class children do. Middle-class children, by the time they enter school, are likely to be masters at following directions, explaining and understanding reason, comprehending and using complex language whilst lower-class children will probably have less experience in all these areas (Slavin, 1991 : 449).

Rist ( In Slavin, 1991 : 452) says that low SES groups tend to lag in school achievement because of the inability of their families to provide the same stimulation and academic preparation that wealthier families can often provide, and the assignment of children from low SES homes to academically inferior, overcrowded schools. Home environment not only

affects a child's readiness for school but also his achievement throughout the school years.

Parents in high socioeconomic status families are more likely to get involved with their children's education. This creates a chance for the children to improve their academic performance (Henderson, 1981 : 10 - 11). Lower-class parents, on the other hand, tend to have minimal education, to regard school as an alien and hostile institution - probably on account of their own negative experiences at school - and view their children's attendance as little more than a legal requirement or perhaps a route toward getting a better paying job. These parents are less likely to discuss school activities with their children, to understand and help them with their studies or to praise their achievements in the classroom. As a consequence, children from lower-class families may have a less positive feeling toward school and be less influenced by it than middle - class or upper-class children (Weiner et al ., 1979 : 421) and (Rhine, 1981 : 51).

As a result of family background influences, the child who will eventually drop out of school will most likely be the ones who attribute their circumstances to factors beyond their control. It is clear that children from lower-class families are likely to experience an external locus of control because of the negative reinforcements from the environment.

#### 3.2.2.2.2 Working mothers

Willimson (1970 : 138) states that children of two-parent



families may experience some parallels to the child of the single-parent family if the child's mother works outside the home. Years ago it was relatively rare for the mother to be working, but modern perspectives on womanhood as well as changing financial realities have made the working mother a common phenomenon.

The children of working mothers are expected to display antisocial behaviours and psychopathologies as well as lower school performances. Gray et al . (1977 : 108) conducted studies to prove that this is no longer the case. They found no differences in I.Q. scores between students of working and non-working mothers. Stolz and Hoffman ( In Gray et al . , 1977 : 138) found that teachers rated children of working mothers as lower in intellectual achievement than children of non-working mothers. They also point out that the working mother might tend to overprotect the child out of a sense of guilt which could have an adverse effect on the child's performance at school.

Sarafino and Armstrong (1980 : 308 - 309) say that there may be problems encountered with the working mother. The mother may not be able to visit the school as much as necessary, especially where parental intervention can be helpful, if she is unable to leave the work situation. The mother's cooperation in helping the child with his or her homework may be stifled by work commitments. The child can as a result attribute his poor academic performance to his mothers 'disinterest' in his school work and deny any responsibility for his negative actions. This

can lead to his dropping out of school.

### 3.2.2.3 Family Relationships

In a study conducted by Connell (1980) it was found that locus of control correlated significantly with self-esteem as developed through family relationships. This implies that internal locus of control is positively associated with good family relationships because healthy interactions between the members of the family would occur. The children will feel loved, secure and will receive guidance and assistance when needed.

Factors influencing family relationships and its effect on dropout will consequently, in support of the above statement, be examined in the following section.

#### 3.2.2.3.1 Family relationships and its effect on dropout

The family is the principal medium through which the child, both consciously and unconsciously, learn attitudes, feelings, roles, controls and interrelationships (Walsh et al. , 1988 : 166).

#### 3.2.2.3.2 Developing a relationship

Mutual trust, feelings of security and unconditional acceptance are indispensable for a healthy relationship between parents

and children (Sonnekus, 1984 : 49). Congruency in a relationship is imperative because both the parents and the children should feel that whatever emotions are depicted are true. If for example, the parent tells their children that they love them, then their whole attitude and body language should agree, otherwise the child's confidence and self esteem will be broken down and in this way a relationship can be tainted. This can have a negative influence on the child's school performance which will eventually lead to school dropout.

#### 3.2.2.3.3 Relationship with mother

In a study conducted by McCombs and Forehand (1989 : 126) to determine the effect of low school achievement and adolescents of conflicting mothers, they found that adolescents with high grade point averages had mothers with low levels of depression and higher educational levels. There was less levels of conflict between the mothers and adolescents with high grade point averages than those adolescents in the low grade point average group.

Duck et al .(1981 : 146) found that children who are well cared for by their mothers do not normally seek comfort, help and protection from other children; but they do seek interaction with others. Strong emotions and strength of character are developed in this way so that these children are well adjusted at home, which in turn causes them to be well adjusted at

school. These children seem to experience an internal locus of control because of the positive reinforcement from the environment.

The mother of a highly achievement-motivated child, would have functioned as the primary teacher of that child and would have provided him with close guidance in academic programmes. If the relationship, on the other hand, between mother and child is dissatisfactory, then the attitude of the child toward school will also change (Travers, 1973 : 156). The child would most probably attribute this change to an external factor such as his negative relationship with his mother where he feels that his mother does not love him and is not interested in his school progress. The child would most likely have an external locus of control.

#### 3.2.2.3.4 Relationship with father

Adolescents who became delinquents were more likely to have had fathers who were cold, rejecting, punitive, neglectful and mistrusting (Rice, 1992 : 125).

Extensive research conducted by Biller ( In Weiner et al . 1979 : 264) on the role of the father indicates that there is a correlation between children who have a good relationship with a mature father and their possibility to achieve academically. Children with attentive fathers tend to have a more positive self-concept, feel better about being a boy or

girl, get along better with other children and adults, and function more effectively in achievement-related situations. It is the quality time the father spends with the child and his schoolwork that motivates the child to see the importance of his school work. These children would most likely have an internal locus of control which could be ascribed to the positive reinforcement they had from their fathers.

#### 3.2.2.3.5 Sibling relationships

Siblings can have a powerful influence on each other. They act as models, provide rewards, share intimate knowledge about family members and teach each other many important lessons (Sarafino and Armstong, 1980 : 314). As a result of this type of interaction that siblings have with each other, birth order, spacing and gender are important factors in sibling relationships and achievements. First-borns are often placed in charge of siblings and tend to be the leaders and teachers of younger brothers and sisters. They seem to have more self-confidence and self-esteem than other children in the household and consequently a better self-concept is developed. First borns would most likely have an internal locus of control because of this positive reinforcement.

Sibling rivalry is a normal occurrence and is a possible channel through which a child learns to know himself in terms of his abilities and shortcomings. Sibling rivalry seems greater when siblings are closely spaced, that is, one or two years apart

and of the same sex, because competition between them is probably keener. Children, on the other hand, who are spaced more than three years apart or are of the opposite sex have different interests and as a result sibling rivalry is normally lower (Pistorius, 1976 : 71) and (Sarafino and Armstrong, 1980 : 314).

It is most likely that children who are closely spaced will be under greater pressure to achieve academically than children who are spaced further apart. Closely spaced children are constantly compared to each other and have to compete to gain the favour of their parents. The possibility of dropout will thus be greater under closely spaced children.

#### 3.2.2.3.6 Relationship between members of the family

The quality of interaction among members of the child's family has a marked influence on school success (Rice, 1992 : 501). Studies of the family relationships of bright, high-achieving versus underachieving high school students show that the high achievers, more often than underachievers describe their parents as: typically sharing recreation and ideas, understanding, approving, trusting, affectionate, encouraging with respect to achievement without really pressurising to achieve and not overly restrictive or severe in discipline (Stunkard et al., in Rice, 1992 : 501). Youths who come from conflicting family environments are more likely to be underachievers and school dropouts than those who come from

cohesive and non-conflicting families.

Weiner et al . (1979 : 628) state that among both low and middle-income adolescents who drop out of school, there are often family quarrels and conflicts. Some young people leave home, with its constant bickering, and school, since it seems to be the only way to escape from an impossible situation. In these homes there is little real communication among family members and little real caring and sharing with one another. Marital problems are also more common among the parents of young people who drop out of school, than there are among the parents of those who complete school.

### 3.2.2.3 7 Family influences on the development of the self concept

According to Erikson (1971), the development of a self concept involves a search for a sense of identity. Society provides a time limit during which an adolescent can try on roles, beliefs and values. The family situation can influence a child's academic achievement in either a positive or negative manner. Either influences could put pressure on the child, where he is unable to meet the expectations and demands of the teacher (Sarafino and Arnstong, 1980 : 510 - 511).

Kapp (1989 : 165 - 166) says that the result could be constant failure and the development of a low self concept. He states that the following factors are to be considered when a self

concept is developed:

- \* Overprotection from parents obstructs the development of independence and thorough working attitudes.
- \* Inconsistency in the education procedure of the parents causes difficulty for the child to adjust to the fixed rules of the school.
- \* Some parents never set demands on their children and do not expect any effort from them, with the result that they cannot complete the tasks of the teacher.
- \* Problems, discord and difficult circumstances in the family cause children to be worried, with the result that they cannot give their full attention to their school work.
- \* Dropouts often show set patterns of behaviour which relate to family members. Some children often stay in school only a little longer than what their parents and older brothers and sisters did. Children's negative attitude toward school and school work is also transferred easily onto the younger children.

From the above information it can be deduced that children who do not have good family relationships, will most probably attribute their negative self concepts to external factors such as the parent's attitude and the negative feelings between siblings. These children will most likely have an external locus of control, with low self esteem because of the adverse reinforcements from the family and will become the dropouts.



### 3.2.3 SCHOOL FACTORS

De Vito (1982 : 63 - 69) states that children with an internal locus of control will have good social interaction with positive physical and mental health toward school.

There are factors, however, that have a negative influence on the healthy relationship between the individual and the school. Selected factors, as a result of negative reinforcements and thus implying an external locus of control, will be discussed in the following section.

#### 3.2.3.1 Dissatisfaction with school

According to Knoff (1983 : 550) there is amongst dropouts a general, vague category that might be labelled apathy, lack of motivation or a feeling that school is irrelevant. Some students would not necessarily be emotionally or socially maladjusted, but simply lack interest in school work, feel it is a waste of time and would rather get married or employed. Such youths may be capable of doing acceptable work, but have no interest in doing so. Such a student could possibly have been placed in the wrong type of programme.

Students, on the other hand, may be dissatisfied with school because of school related factors. Weiner et al . (1979 : 663) state that students need adequate educational background in order to be able to realise their academic potential in high

school and beyond. One of the most important sociocultural reasons for high school underachievement and dissatisfaction is the lack of good elementary school preparation. Students who attend under equipped and under staffed schools and who sit in crowded classrooms listening to bored or inept teachers may never acquire the basic academic skills and study habits that are necessary for handling high school work. These students would most probably attribute their dissatisfaction with school to negative influences and would likely experience an external locus of control.

#### 3.2.3.2 Failing and retaining students

According to Deci ( In Rice, 1992 : 502) students who had to repeat a grade will most likely miss their friends. They will feel that they are social misfits and may as a result, develop an intense dislike for school and loose all interest and desire to learn. Students who have a history of low marks and failure find school an unrewarding, painful experience and cannot wait to get out. These pupils will most likely not accept responsibility for their actions and ascribe their behaviour to external influences.

Pupils with a high rate of absenteeism will most likely perform poorly academically. Inadequate academic preparation and performances leads to failing courses and grades, both of which are strong predictors of dropping out (Bichler et al ., 1986 : 397 - 400).

### 3.2.3.3 Underachievement

Weiner et al .(1979 : 660) states that underachieving children tend to receive lower grades than achieving children right from the beginning of the first grade. The performance level of the underachievers deteriorates significantly as the grades increases. This causes embarrassment and discourages the children so that they will most likely drop out before the end of their schooling years. These children do not realise the long term benefits that education will provide, like an improved life style and quality of life. More often than not, they dislike school and do not see any relationship between what they learn and what they will be doing in the future.

Whitmore (1980 : 173) identifies the following as major causes of underachievement in high school students:

- \* Lack of effort to achieve.
- \* Lack of challenge in curriculum and instruction.
- \* New challenge in high school; difficult adjustment for students who never had to study to achieve in elementary school.
- \* Adolescent attitudes of rebellion against authority; fear of peer ridicule or alienation.
- \* Conflict of interests where the child pursues one area of the curriculum or hobbies at the expense of academic progress.

Whitmore (1980 : 174) states that the lack of motivation is one of the most significant factors influencing the underachiever.

#### 3.2.3.4 Family background influences and school attendance

In a study done by Kneller et al .( In Slavin, 1991 : 451) it was found that students from lower-class families are less willing to compete and more interested in cooperating with their peers than the middle-class students. Lower-class students have learned from an early age to rely on their friends and family, and have always also helped and been helped by others. This causes a mismatch between the ethos of the school in that children should do their own work, and the orientation of the pupil in terms of school rules. As a result the pupils are unhappy and tend to drop out of school or play truant. These children would most likely deny responsibility for their actions and blame society for their truant behaviour and for them dropping out of school.

Gray et al .(1977 : 145- 146) say that the orientation of the home and its interaction with the school should be seen as a total integrated environment. He states that dropout could be the result if there are discrepancies in the following factors:

- The school does not appear to be forceful in areas such as intellectual functioning.
- School and home experiences are not congruent so that the impact of the experiences are not reinforced.
- By virtue of the new context the school provides, it does not extend or modify the activities established by the family.

### 3.2.3.5 School climate

Tattum (1982 : 55) reports that the difficulties that pupils experience in the school may be related to the following school climate factors:

- \* The raising of the school leaving age, including the combined effects of this earlier maturation
- \* Unsettlement arising from the period of rapid educational change of recent years.
- \* Disenchantment of many pupils with the type of secondary education provided, for the non-academic groups in particular, resulting in a high degree of apathy.
- \* Teacher shortages and/or a high rate of staff turnover.

The developmental phase where the dropout rate becomes critical is in early adolescence. This is the time period when pupils experience many psychological and emotional changes, and conflict with teachers is not uncommon. These conflicts cause unpleasant and strained atmospheres in the classroom, which may contribute to the pupil's dropping out of school. With many educational changes occurring - for instance where pupils are allowed to have a say in their education, expressing their dissatisfaction with the quality of education they receive, and teachers that resign because of financial factors - it is not surprising that pupils get discouraged and drop out of school.

Rice (1992 : 506) states that one of the problems of modern high schools stems partly from the size of some of the schools.

Schools with large enrollments tend to become less personal, with less attention devoted to the needs of individual students. This could be a positive setting for truancy and dropout to occur. The best schools would ideally seek to combine academic excellence with personalised attention and service to achieve both intellectual rigour and intimacy.

According to Weiner et al . (1979 : 629) it is generally recognised that many aspects of the high school itself can lead adolescents to drop out. These include the heavy emphasis on academic subjects and college preparation as well as the lack of vocational courses. Many young people leave school simply because it does not meet any of their vocational and recreational needs. It seems as if these young people would not accept responsibility for their actions and would attribute their dropping out of school to factors beyond their control.

### 3.2.3.6 Peer association and social adjustment

Rice (1992 : 501) states that peer influences are often a major factor in influencing a particular student to stay in school or not. Most adolescents want to do what their friends are doing. A student may be persuaded to drop out of school if his friends are dropping out of school to get jobs earning "big money" or to get married. A student who adopts a lower-class pattern of life that rejects education or become acculturated into a delinquent group rebelling against the established system of education is strongly influenced by his or her peers to drop

out of school.

Many school dropouts report that they do not feel that they have ever been accepted by their peer group. The young people who feel alienated from their peers sometimes attribute it to money. They could not afford to date or dress in a way that would make them acceptable to their peers. Consequently they feel poorly treated and may drop out of school in order to escape from a painful situation (Elkind et al ., 1978 : 629).

In view of the above discussion it can be seen that children may attribute their negative attitudes toward school to external factors. These children will probably have an external locus of control because of the negative reinforcements from factors such as peer association, the attitudes of parents and the curriculum that does not cater for the abilities of the child, which will lead to school dropout.

### 3.3 CONCLUSION

It has become apparent from the above research that the dropout problem of the adolescent has its roots in social factors, family factors and school factors. The three factors are interlinked and cannot be divorced from each other.

The potential dropout is dependant on his parents and the school to try and curtail possible early school leaving . In this way the child will become productive in society and will

lead a qualitative life style.

Cognizance, however, should be taken of the fact that the research only reflects the basic problems which exists. Many dropouts resume their education at a later stage and some succeed in life without further schooling.

Children generally acquire their attitudes towards school from their families. It has been found that parents of underachievers place less emphasis on education than do parents of achieving children. These parents therefore, are not likely to encourage either intellectual interest or positive attitudes towards teachers and the school. These parents pay little attention to how their children are doing in school and do not do anything to encourage their children to do their homework or to receive better grades. As a consequence, their children are not likely to develop much motivation to achieve academically or to improve their underachievement (Elkind et al., 1978 : 661). Dropping out of school is inevitable and these children will most likely attribute their negative behaviour to external factors.



## **CHAPTER 4**

### **THE RESEARCH DESIGN OF THE EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

In order not to lose track of the aim and context of this study, it will briefly be referred to in this chapter. However, more emphasis will be placed on the method of investigation, the research group, the measuring instrument and the statistical techniques.

#### **4.2 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The purpose of this study is to determine whether "at risk" and "not at risk" standard seven pupils display differences in their locus of control orientation and whether locus of control can be regarded as a contributing factor in school dropout.

In response to this purpose, it is hypothesised that there are no significant differences between at risk and not at risk standard seven pupils with regard to their perception of locus of control.

The two groups will be compared with regard to the following variables:

- \* family size
- \* family situation

- \* home language
- \* school promotion
- \* gender
- \* age

#### 4.3 METHOD OF STUDY

##### 4.3.1 The Pilot Research

This research was conducted by the researcher and various field workers (teachers at the school). A sample of 30 standard seven pupils from a secondary school in a disadvantaged community in the Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vereeniging area was used. This particular research did not include respondents who were already part of the final sample, that is those pupils who participated in the pilot programme. These results will consequently not be incorporated in the final statistical analysis.

The purpose of this pilot programme was to evaluate the questionnaire which was developed in the course of the research, in order to refine it and to determine the duration for the completion of the questionnaire.

It became apparent from the pilot research that pupils experienced the following problems:

- Pupils found it difficult to understand the five point scale.

- Most pupils had poor language comprehension and a poor vocabulary.
- Some questions were found to be embarrassing and as a result were not answered.
- The questionnaire was completed in approximately thirty to sixty minutes.

Consequently, some of the questions were reformulated and the necessary alterations were made to make the instructions more explicit.

#### 4.3.2 Obtaining Of Data - Actual research

The researcher and the field workers involved (teachers at the school) were responsible for supervising the completion of the questionnaires at a particular school. The test procedure was fully explained to all teachers involved in the field work, in order to ensure a standard procedure for different classes. The teachers were briefed, with regard to factors like family size, gender, family relations and school promotion which could contribute to dropout. Three teachers had to identify and agree that a pupil has the ability to complete his school career, but because of contributing factors beyond his control, he is at risk of becoming a dropout and asked to place pupils into two categories namely, those "at risk" and "not at risk" of dropping out of school.

The following procedure was used to accumulate the data:

- \* instructions were read to the respondents ;
- \* the five point scale was explained;
- \* pupils were implored to answer each question diligently;
- \* respondents were encouraged to ask questions at any time;
- \* relaxed working atmosphere was created;
- \* the respondents were assured of the confidentiality of the information;
- \* a break was given after thirty minutes;
- \* class lists were given to the field workers prior to the actual testing to identify the at risk pupils;
- \* the pupils were asked to write their initials and date of birth at the back of the completed questionnaire.

#### 4.4 DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH GROUP

##### 4.4.1 Population

The population comprised of standard seven pupils affiliated to twenty high schools in the Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vereeniging area. This age group was specifically chosen because of their developmental stage. They are entering their adolescence where physical, biological and emotional changes are at work in the maturation process. They are faced with a number of choices like: subject choices and choices concerning their future, this in turn affects their attitude toward school.

##### 4.4.2 Sample

The sample initially comprised of 1000 standard seven pupils

from five dual medium high schools. The high schools were chosen as follows: out of the twenty schools eligible for selection, nine schools situated in subeconomic areas, as identified by the school clinic, were identified, of which four were chosen at random. The motivation for choosing schools in a disadvantaged area is the social, political and economical factors that might contribute to these pupils falling into a higher risk category for dropout than children from a more stable environment. The fifth school was situated in a higher socioeconomic area and was chosen at random from the remaining eleven schools.

The final composition of the sample group, according to gender, was as follows:

Sex	Total
Boys	274
Girls	460
Total	734

It was initially planned to use a sample of 1000 respondents, but eventually only 734 recipients completed the questionnaire. This could be ascribed to the large absenteeism rate of the pupils. Schools may have been disrupted as a result of stayaways and teachers not turning up for school due to the chalk down.

#### 4.5 THE MEASURING INSTRUMENT

A Locus of Control Questionnaire was developed by the research

group and staff members of the Educational Sciences Department. Aspects such as performance and motivation, performance and cognitive characteristics, locus of control and attitudes, and locus of control and self esteem from specific locus of control scales (see chapter 2), were incorporated into the Locus of Control Questionnaire. The questionnaire was presented to ten experts from the Statistical Consultation Services of the Rand Afrikaans University with regard to face validity and content validity.

The measuring instrument consists of two sections. The first section entails a set of questions which pertains to the following variables relating to dropout:

- \* Self concept
- \* Family relations
- \* School climate
- \* Locus of control - this is the component which is emphasised in this particular study (see appendix A, items 32 - 72).

The second section contains the biographical information, which was necessary for determining important independent variables such as gender, age, family relationships and school promotion.

The respondents had to circle the number which describes them the best on a five point scale, for instance:

70. *To get what I want, I have to please the people in charge*

Very true

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

Not true at all

Points were allocated according to the values of the questions, that is if a 5 was chosen, then five points were allocated and if a 1 was chosen, then one point was allocated. A high score will indicate an external locus of control and a low score will show an internal locus of control.

#### 4.8 STATISTICAL ANALYSIS AND TECHNIQUES

After completion, the questionnaires were numbered and checked for mistakes and omissions. Corrections were made, data obtained were computerised and assimilated at the Statistic Consultation Services of the Rand Afrikaans University.

The following techniques and analyses were used to interpret the accumulated data:

- \* Students t-test (SPSS)
- \* NP50 -Program - Item analysis program (Cronbach  $\alpha$ )
- \* BDH4M - Factor Analysis

The analyses of the data and results will be discussed in chapter 5.

## CHAPTER 5

### ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter will give an overview of the statistical techniques implemented, the tabulation, analysis and interpretation of the empirical findings against the background of the literature study.

#### 5.2 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

##### 5.2.1 VALIDITY

Validity refers to the extent to which an instrument measures what it is supposed to measure. After the items were formulated by the four researchers in this project, the Locus of Control Questionnaire was presented to ten experts from various departments at the Rand Afrikaans University to comment on face validity and content validity. Recommendations were made and the necessary changes were implemented in an effort to improve the validity of the instrument.

##### 5.2.2 RELIABILITY

Reliability refers to whether or not the measuring instrument produces consistent results every time it is used.

The information gathered from the 734 questionnaires were analysed to obtain factorial validity. The factor analysis programme used is the BMDP4M - Factor Analysis. The factor method used is PFA (Principal Factor Analysis). It was not



necessary to reflect any of the items in the factor analysis. A factor - "locus of control" - was identified. The 20 items which comprise this factor were analysed in order to determine reliability, using the NP50 programme. A Cronbach reliability coefficient of 0,768 was obtained in this study (Cronbach, 1951). This coefficient can be regarded as an indication of the reliability of the Locus of Control Questionnaire.

Table 5.1 gives a summary of the items which comprises the factor "locus of control" as well as the items retained after item analysis.

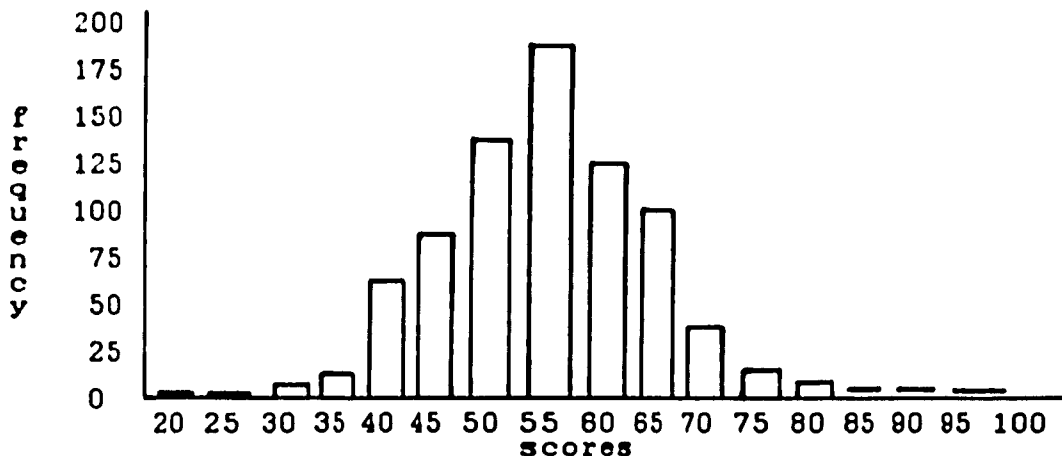
Table 5.1 Items comprising "Locus of control" and items retained after item analysis.

Locus of control	Items accepted in item analysis
32	-
34	34
35	35
37	-
38	38
43	43
44	44
46	46
47	47
49	49
50	50
53	53
56	56
58	58
59	59
62	62
64	64
65	65
67	67
69	69
70	70
71	71

Cronbach  $\alpha$  = 0,768

The locus of control scales comprise of 20 items which measures the respondents locus of control. The minimum score than can be attained is 20 and the maximum score that can be attained is 100. The midpoint of the scale is 60. A higher score indicates a more external locus of control and a lower score indicates a more internal locus of control. All the respondents in this study tend to measure in the direction of an internal locus of control. The distribution of the scores are set out in the scale in figure 5.1

Figure 5.1 Histogram of locus of control scales



### 5.3 HYPOTHESIS AND ANALYSIS

Hypotheses were formulated with regard to the following independent variables:

- \* Risk
- \* Family size
- \* Family situation
- \* Home language
- \* School promotion
- \* Sex
- \* Age

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

Students' t-test is used to compare the two groups with each other to determine whether there are statistical significant differences in the average test scores with regard to locus of control.

#### 5.3.1 Locus of control and at risk/not at risk pupils

##### 5.3.1.1 Hypotheses

Hot1 There are no statistically significant differences in the average test scores, as measured by the Locus of Control Questionnaire, of standard seven at risk and not at risk pupils, as identified by their teachers.

Hat1 There are statistically significant differences in the average test scores, as measured by the Locus of Control Questionnaire, of standard seven at risk and not at risk pupils, as identified by their teachers.

5.3.1.2 Significance of differences between at risk/not at risk pupils with regard to locus of control

The groups referred to in table 5.2 are:

- 1 - At risk pupils
- 2 - Not at risk pupils

Table 5.2 Differences between the at risk and not at risk pupils with regard to Locus of control

Variable	Grp	N	$\bar{X}$	S	t-value	Df	P
Locus of control	1	274	35,2591	9,1035	4,48	1,732	*** 0,0000
	2	480	32,3130	8,3247			

- \* significant at 5% level
- \*\* significant at 1% level
- \*\*\* significant at 0,1% level

5.3.1.3 Analysis

From table 5.2 it appears that there are statistically significant differences ( $p = 0,000$ ) at the 0,1% level between at risk and not at risk standard seven research groups with regard to locus of control. The Alternative Hypothesis Hat 1 is

supported and the Null Hypothesis  $H_0$  is rejected.

### 5.3.2 Family size and locus of control

#### 5.3.2.1 Hypotheses

$H_0$  There are no statistically significant differences in the average test scores, as measured by the Locus of Control Questionnaire, of standard seven pupils with regard to family size when considered in the following manner:

$H_{0a}$  At risk pupils from small families compared with at risk pupils from large families

$H_{0b}$  Not at risk pupils from small families compared with not at risk pupils from large families

$H_{0c}$  At risk pupils from small families compared with not at risk pupils from small families

$H_{0d}$  At risk pupils from large families compared with not at risk pupils from large families

$H_1$  There are statistically significant differences in the average test scores, as measured by the Locus of Control Questionnaire, of standard seven pupils with regard to family size when considered in the following manner:

$H_{1a}$  At risk pupils from small families compared with at risk pupils from large families

Hat 2b Not at risk pupils from small families compared  
with not at risk pupils from large families

Hat 2c At risk pupils from small families compared with  
not at risk pupils from small families

Hat 2d At risk pupils from large families compared with  
not at risk pupils from large families

5.3.2.2 Significance of differences between family size with  
regard to locus of control

The groups referred to in table 5.3 are:

- 1 - At risk pupils from small families
- 2 - Not at risk pupils from small families
- 3 - At risk pupils from large families
- 4 - Not at risk pupils from large families

Table 5.3 Differences between the at risk and not at risk  
pupils with regard to family size

Variable	Grp	N	$\bar{X}$	S	value	Df	P
Family Size	1	127	34,7638	10,1218	-1,10	1,258	0,2727
	3	133	36,0075	8,0477			
	2	256	31,7812	7,9266	-1,71	1,430	0,0885
	4	176	33,1591	8,8828			
	1	127	34,7638	10,1218	3,15	1,381	** 0,0017
	2	256	31,7812	7,9266			
	3	133	36,0075	8,0477	2,85	1,307	** 0,0035
	4	176	33,1591	8,8828			

\* significant at 5% level  
\*\* significant at 1% level  
\*\*\* significant at 0,1% level

### 5.3.2.3 Analysis

From table 5.3 it appears that there are statistically significant differences ( $p = 1,001$ ) at the 1% level between at risk and not at risk pupils from small families with regard to locus of control. There are also statistically significant differences ( $p = 0,003$ ) at the 1% level between at risk and not at risk pupils from large families with regard to their locus of control. The Hypotheses Hat 2c and Hat 2d are supported and the hypotheses Hot 2c and Hot 2d are rejected.

### 5.3.3 Family situation and locus of control

#### 5.3.3.1 Hypotheses

Hot 3 There are no statistically significant differences in the average test scores, as measured by the Locus of Control Questionnaire, of the standard seven pupils with regard to family situation when considered in the following manner:

Hot 3a At risk pupils living with two parents compared with at risk pupils living with one parent

Hot 3b Not at risk pupils living with two parents compared with not at risk pupils living with one parent

Hot 3c At risk pupils living with two parents compared

with not at risk pupils living with two parents

Hat 3d At risk pupils living with one parent compared with not at risk pupils living with one parent

Hat 3 There are statistically significant differences between the average test scores of the standard seven pupils with regard to family situation when considered in the following manner:

Hat 3a At risk pupils living with two parents compared with at risk pupils living with one parent

Hat 3b Not at risk pupils living with two parents compared with not at risk pupils living with one parent

Hat 3c At risk pupils living with two parents compared with not at risk pupils living with two parents

Hat 3d At risk pupils living with one parent compared with not at risk pupils living with one parent

### 5.3.3.2 Significance of differences between the family situation with regard to locus of control

The groups referred to in table 5.4 are:

- 1 - At risk pupils living with two parents
- 2 - Not at risk pupils living with two parents
- 3 - At risk pupils living with one parent
- 4 - Not at risk pupils living with one parent

Table 5.4 Differences between the at risk and not at risk pupils with regard to family situations

Variable	Grp	N	$\bar{X}$	S	t-value	Df	P
Family Situation	1	173	34,6011	8,8887	-1,79	1,269	0,0741
	3	98	36,6531	8,3303			
	2	302	31,9172	8,3058	-1,59	1,450	0,1115
	4	150	33,2467	8,4249			
	1	173	34,6011	8,8887	3,30	1,473	***
	2	302	31,9172	8,3058			0,0010
	3	98	36,6531	8,3303	2,98	1,248	**
	4	150	33,2467	8,4249			0,0031

\* significant at 5% level  
 \*\* significant at 1% level  
 \*\*\* significant at 0,1% level

### 5.3.3.3 Analysis

From table 5.4 the following conclusions can be made: there are statistically significant differences ( $p = 0,001$  at the 0.1% level between at risk and not at risk standard seven pupils living with two parents with regard to their locus of control. There are also statistical significant differences ( $p = 0,003$ ) at the 1% level between at risk and not at risk pupils living with one parent with regard to their locus of control. The hypotheses Hat 3c and Hat 3d are supported and the hypotheses Hot 3c and Hot 3d are rejected.



### 5.3.4 Home language and locus of control

#### 5.3.4.1 Hypotheses

**Hot 4** There are no statistically significant differences in the average test scores, as measured by the Locus of Control Questionnaire, of the standard seven pupils with regard to home language when considered in the following manner:

**Hot 4a** At risk Afrikaans speaking pupils compared with at risk English speaking pupils

**Hot 4b** Not at risk Afrikaans speaking pupils compared with not at risk English speaking pupils

**Hot 4c** At risk Afrikaans speaking pupils compared with not at risk Afrikaans speaking pupils

**Hot 4d** At risk English speaking pupils compared with not at risk English speaking pupils

**Hat 4** There are statistically significant differences in the in the average test scores, as measured by the Locus of Control Questionnaire, of the standard seven pupils with regard to home language when considered in the following manner:

**Hat 4a** At risk Afrikaans speaking pupils compared with at risk English speaking pupils

**Hat 4b** Not at risk Afrikaans speaking pupils compared with not at risk English speaking pupils

Hat 4c At risk Afrikaans speaking pupils compared with not at risk Afrikaans speaking pupils

Hat 4d At risk English speaking pupils compared with not at risk English speaking pupils

5.3.4.2 Significance of differences between language groups with regard to locus of control

The groups referred to in table 5.5 are:

- 1 - At risk Afrikaans speaking pupils
- 2 - Not at risk Afrikaans speaking pupils
- 3 - At risk English speaking pupils
- 4 - Not at risk English speaking pupils

Table 5.5 Differences between the at risk and not at risk pupils with regard to home language

Variable	Grp	N	$\bar{X}$	S	t-value	Df	P
Home Language	1	201	37,1691	8,5118	5,35	1,243	*** 0,0000
	3	44	29,5455	8,8330			
	2	358	33,5475	8,0608	4,68	1,416	*** 0,0000
	4	80	28,2833	8,3807			
	1	201	37,1691	8,5118	5,00	1,557	*** 0,0000
	2	358	33,5475	8,0608			
	3	44	29,5455	8,8330	0,74	1,102	0,4584
	4	80	28,2833	8,3807			

\* significant at 5% level  
 \*\* significant at 1% level  
 \*\*\* significant at 0,1% level

#### **5.3.4.3 Analysis**

From table 5.5 it appears that there are statistically significant differences ( $p = 0,00$ ) at the 0,1% level between at risk Afrikaans speaking pupils and at risk pupils from English speaking families with regard to their locus of control. On the 0,1% level there are statistically significant differences ( $p = 0,00$ ) between at risk and not at risk Afrikaans speaking pupils with regard to their locus of control. A statistical significant difference ( $p = 0,00$ ) on the 0,1% level between not at risk Afrikaans and English speaking pupils were also found with regard to their locus of control. The hypotheses Hat 4a, Hat 4b and Hat 4c are accepted and the hypotheses Hot 4a, Hot 4b and Hot 4c are rejected.

#### **5.3.5 School promotion and locus of control**

##### **5.3.5.1 Hypotheses**

**Hat 5** There are no statistically significant differences in the average test scores, as measured by the Locus of Control Questionnaire, of standard seven pupils with regard to school promotion when considered in the following manner:

**Hot 5a** At risk pupils who never failed in school compared with at risk pupils who failed in school

**Hot 5b** Not at risk pupils who never failed in school

compared with not at risk pupils who failed in school

H0t 5c At risk pupils who never failed in school compared with not at risk pupils who never failed in school

H0t 5d At risk pupils who failed in school compared with not at risk pupils who failed in school

Hat 5 There are statistically significant differences in the average test scores, as measured by the Locus of Control Questionnaire, of standard seven pupils with regard to school promotion when considered in the following manner:

Hat 5a At risk pupils who never failed in school compared with at risk pupils who failed in school

Hat 5b Not at risk pupils who never failed in school compared with not at risk pupils who failed in school

Hat 5c At risk pupils who never failed in school compared with not at risk pupils who never failed in school

Hat 5d At risk pupils who failed in school compared with not at risk pupils who failed in school

#### 5.3.5.2 Significance of differences between categories of school promotion with regard to locus of control

The groups referred to in table 5.6 are:

- 1 - At risk pupils who never failed in school
- 2 - Not at risk pupils who never failed in school
- 3 - At risk pupils who failed in school
- 4 - Not at risk pupils who failed in school

Table 5.6 Differences between the at risk and not at risk pupils with regard to school promotion

Variable	Grp	N	$\bar{X}$	S	t-value	Df	P
School Promotion	1	85	34,6235	8,8009	-0,79	1,262	0,4275
	3	179	35,5698	8,2408			
	2	285	31,4281	8,0814	-3,10	1,445	**
	4	162	33,9945	8,5584			0,0021
	1	85	34,6235	8,8009	3,15	1,368	**
	2	285	31,4281	8,0814			0,0018
	3	179	35,5698	8,2408	1,68	1,339	0,0939
	4	162	33,9945	8,5584			

\* significant at 5% level  
 \*\* significant at 1% level  
 \*\*\* significant at 0,1% level

#### 5.3.5.3 Analysis

The following conclusions can be made from table 5.6: There are statistically significant differences ( $p = 0,002$ ) at the 1% level between not at risk pupils who never failed and not at risk pupils who failed in school with regard to their locus of control. A statistically significant difference ( $p = 0,001$ ) on the 1% level between at risk pupils who never failed in school

and not at risk pupils who never failed in school with regard to their locus of control were found. The hypotheses Hat 5b and Hat 5c are supported and the hypotheses Hot 5b and Hot 5c are rejected.

### 5.3.6 Gender and locus of control

#### 5.3.6.1 Hypotheses

Hot 6 There are no statistically significant differences in the average test scores, as measured by the Locus of Control Questionnaire, of standard seven pupils with regard to gender when considered in the following manner:

Hot 6a At risk boys compared with at risk girls

Hot 6b Not at risk boys compared with not at risk girls

Hot 6c At risk boys compared with not at risk boys

Hot 6d At risk girls compared with not at risk girls

Hat 6 There are statistically significant differences in the average test scores, as measured by the Locus of Control Questionnaire, of standard seven pupils with regard to gender when considered in the following manner:

Hat 6a At risk boys compared with at risk girls

Hat 6b Not at risk boys compared with not at risk girls

Hat 6c At risk boys compared with not at risk boys

Hat 6d At risk girls compared with not at risk girls

5.3.5.4 Significance of differences between genders with regard to locus of control

The groups referred to in table 5.7 are:

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

Table 5.7 Differences between the at risk and not at risk pupils with regard to gender

Variable	Grp	N	$\bar{X}$	S	t-value	Df	P
Gender	1	124	33,9113	8,4478	-2,24	1,272	0,0256 *
	3	124	36,3733	8,4857			
	2	210	31,9143	8,2510	-0,94	1,458	0,3470
	4	250	32,648	8,3878			
	1	124	33,9113	8,4478	2,12	1,332	0,0349 *
	2	210	31,9143	8,2510			
	3	124	36,3733	8,4857	4,09	1,398	0,0001 ***
	4	250	32,648	8,3878			

\* significant at 5% level  
 \*\* significant at 1% level  
 \*\*\* significant at 0,1% level

### 5.3.6.3 Analysis

The conclusions made from table 5.7 are as follows: There are statistically significant differences ( $p = 0,025$ ) at the 5% level between at risk boys and at risk girls with regard to their locus of control. A statistically significant difference ( $p = 0,034$ ) were also found on the 5% level between at risk and not at risk boys with regard to their locus of control. There appears to be a statistically significant difference ( $p = 0,000$ ) at the 0,1% level between the at risk and not at risk girls with regard to their locus of control. The hypotheses Hat 6a, Hat 6c and Hat 6d are supported and the hypotheses Hot 6a, Hot 6c and Hot 6d are rejected.

### 5.3.7 Age and locus of control

#### 5.3.7.1 Hypotheses

Hot 7 There are no statistically significant differences in the average test scores, as measured by the Locus of Control Questionnaire, of standard seven pupils with regard to age when considered in the following manner:

Hot 7a At risk pupils 14/15 years old compared with at risk pupils 16/17 years old

Hot 7b Not at risk pupils 14/15 years old compared with not at risk pupils 16/17 years old



Hot 7c At risk pupils 14/15 years old compared with not at risk pupils 14/15 years old

Hot 7d At risk pupils 16/17 years old compared with not at risk pupils 16/17 years old

Hat 7 There are statistically significant differences in the average test scores, as measured by the Locus of Control Questionnaire, of standard seven pupils with regard to age when considered in the following manner:

Hat 7a At risk pupils 14/15 years old compared with at risk pupils 16/17 years old

Hat 7b Not at risk pupils 14/15 years old compared with not at risk pupils 16/17 years old

Hat 7c At risk pupils 14/15 years old compared with not at risk pupils 14/15 years old

Hat 7d At risk pupils 16/17 years old compared with not at risk pupils 16/17 years old

### 5.3.7.2 Significance of differences between age groups with regard to locus of control

The groups referred to in table 5.8 are:

- 1 - At risk pupils 14/15 years
- 2 - Not at risk pupils 14/15 years
- 3 - At risk pupils 16/17 years
- 4 - Not at risk pupils 16/17 years

Table 5.8 Differences between the at risk and not at risk pupils with regard to age groups

Variable	Grp	N	$\bar{X}$	S	t-value	Df	P
Age	1	91	33,2747	9,0824	-2,08	1,241	0,0406
	3	152	35,6579	8,5188			
	2	301	31,1096	7,9013	-3,78	1,435	0,0002
	4	136	34,2647	8,4864			
	1	91	33,2747	9,0824	2,21	1,390	0,0277
	2	301	31,1096	7,9013			
	3	152	35,6579	8,5188	1,39	1,268	0,1662
	4	136	34,2647	8,4864			

\* significant at 5% level  
 \*\* significant at 1% level  
 \*\*\* significant at 0,1% level

### 5.3.7.3 Analysis

The following conclusions are made from table 5.8: There are statistically significant differences ( $p = 0,040$ ) at the 5% level between at risk pupils 14/15 years and at risk pupils 16/17 years with regard to their locus of control. A statistically significant difference ( $p = 0,0002$ ) were found at the 0,1% level between not at risk 14/15 year old and 16/17 year old pupils with regard to their locus of control. It also appears that there are statistically significant differences ( $p = 0,027$ ) at the 5% level between at risk and not at risk 14/15 year olds with regard to their locus of control. The Hypotheses Hat 7a, Hat 7b and Hat 7c are supported and the hypotheses Hot 7a, Hot 7b and Hot 7c are rejected.

## 5.4 CONCLUSION

Table 5.9 gives a summary and overview of the mean scores of the

various variables that was investigated with regard to locus of control.

Table 5.9 An overview of locus of control mean scores and significant differences

Variable	Groups Compared	$\bar{X}$	Significance
Locus of Control	At risk	36,8534	*
	Not at risk	33,2467 ↓	
Family Size	At risk/small families	34,7638	**
	Not at risk small fan.	31,7812 ↓	
Family Size	At risk/large families	36,0075	**
	Not at risk/large fan.	33,1591	
Family Situation	At risk/two parents	34,6011	***
	Not at risk/two parents	31,9172 ↓	
Family Situation	At risk/one parent	36,6531	**
	Not at risk/one parent	33,2467	
Home Language	At risk Afr. speaking	37,1619	***
	Not at risk Afrikaans	33,5475	
	At risk Afr. speaking	37,1691	
Home Language	At risk Eng. speaking	29,5455	***
	Not at risk Afrikaans	33,5475	
Home Language	Not at risk English	28,2833 ↓	***
School Promotion	At risk /never failed	34,6235	**
	Not at risk /never failed	31,4281 ↓	
School Promotion	Not at risk/never failed	31,4281 ↓	**
	Not at risk pupils/failed	33,8445	
Gender	At risk boys	33,9113	*
	Not at risk boys	31,8143 ↓	
	At risk girls	36,3733	
Gender	Not at risk girls	32,8480	***
Gender	At risk boys	33,9113	*
	At risk girls	36,3733	
Age	At risk 14/15 years	33,2747	*
	Not at risk 14/15 years	31,1098 ↓	
	At risk 14/15 years	33,2747	
Age	At risk 16/17 years	35,8578	*
Age	Not at risk 14/15 years	31,1098	***
	Not at risk 16/17 years	34,2847	

\* significant at 5% level  
 \*\* significant at 1% level  
 \*\*\* significant at 0,1% level

↓ - lowest scores indicate a more internal locus of control

In chapter 6, findings of table 5.9 will be discussed in detail. Limitations in this study will also be discussed as well as recommendations for further studies.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **6.1 Introduction**

This study, which forms part of a group project, undertaken by the Rand Afrikaans University and the Ben Gurion University in Israel, focusses on causes of school dropout. It includes factors such as self concept, family relations, locus of control and school climate. The main aim of this study was to investigate whether locus of control can be regarded as a factor which contribute to school dropout.

#### **6.2 Focus of the study**

Chapter two concentrates on the aspects of locus of control. Locus of control is divided into two categories, namely internal locus of control, which refers to individuals who attribute their success or failure to personal effort or factors under their control. The second category is external locus of control, which refers to individuals who attribute their success or failure to factors such as luck, fate or chance. They do not perceive themselves as being in control of their environment.

#### **6.3 Causes of dropout and its relationship to locus of control**

The causes for school dropout and its relationship to locus of control, as stated in chapter three, are categorised as follows:

\* social factors

\* family factors

\* school factors

### 6.3.1 Social Factors

The environment influences an individual's development and his interaction with others; it has a definite effect on his personality because all individuals have a need - to a greater or lesser extent - to attain reinforcement from significant others (Rice, 1992 : 10). The individual who receives positive reinforcement from the environment, will most likely experience an internal locus of control because he feels that he has control over his environment. The individual who receives negative reinforcements from the environment, will probably experience an external locus of control because he feels that he has no control over his environment. Pupils who fall in the external locus of control category, usually are at a greater risk of becoming dropouts.

### 6.3.2 Family factors

Factors such as family structure, family background, family relationships, as well as parental involvement and attitudes influence the child's perception of control over his environment. If he develops an external locus of control, he may encounter problems at school, because lack of control over his academic environment may alienate him. Poor academic achievement could contribute to dropout because a sense of being a failure will demotivate a child with regard to the school.

### **6.3.3 School Factors**

The pupils who drop out of school will - as has been stated above - probably have an external locus of control because of the negative reinforcements from the environment. Factors that negatively influence the pupils to drop out of school are: peer association, dissatisfaction with school, failing and retaining students, underachievement, school climate, social adjustment and curricula that do not cater for the diverse needs and abilities of pupils. Many pupils may have the mental ability to complete their schooling but fail to do so because of environmental influences.

### **6.4 Summary of empirical conclusions**

The empirical investigation focused on whether "at risk" and "not at risk" standard seven pupils display differences in their locus of control orientation.

A sample consisting of 734 standard seven pupils from five schools in the Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vereeniging area completed a Locus of Control Questionnaire. The data obtained were computerised and analysed by means of the Student's t-test, the BMDP4M factor analysis, and item analysis by means of the NP50 programme.

#### **6.4.1 Analysis of the empirical findings**

The results of the statistical analyses are presented in chapter five, table 5.9. From these results the following conclusions are drawn.

### Locus of control

When the histogram on page 81 is studied it shows that the midpoint of the scale is 60. A higher score indicates a more external locus of control and a lower score indicates a more internal locus of control. All the subjects in this study tend toward a more internal locus of control. "Not at risk" pupils, however, tend to have a more internal locus of control than "at risk pupils".

### Family - size and situation

According to the theory (pg. 46 - 49) pupils from large families and single parent families seem to be at a greater risk of dropping out of school.

In this study significant differences with regard to locus of control was found between "at risk" pupils from small families and "not at risk" pupils from small families. "At risk" pupils from single parent and "not at risk" pupils from single parent families, "at risk" pupils from large families and "not at risk" pupils from large families, and "at risk" pupils from two parent families and "not at risk" pupils from two parent families.

In the context of this study this implies that "not at risk" pupils from large families and single parent families tend to be more internal with regard to their locus of control than "at risk" pupils from large families and single parent families. "Not at risk" pupils from single parent and two parent families tend to be more internal than "at risk" pupils from single parent and two parent families. This finding supports the



theory with regard to family size and family situation as a factor contributing to dropout.

#### **Home language**

It has not been discussed in the literature study that Afrikaans speaking pupils might be inclined to be less internal with regard to locus of control. In this study it was found that there is a tendency for "at risk" and "not at risk" English speaking pupils to have a more internal locus of control than "at risk" and "not at risk" Afrikaans speaking pupils. This can probably be ascribed to the authoritarian educational style typical of Afrikaans speaking families, which may lead to these pupils experiencing less control over their environment. This might be taken as an indication that "at risk" Afrikaans speaking pupils are more prone to becoming dropouts than "at risk" English speaking pupils. "Not at risk" English speaking pupils are more internal than "not at risk" Afrikaans speaking pupils. This also indicates that "not at risk" Afrikaans speaking pupils are also more prone to becoming dropouts, as it was argued that a more external locus of control - as displayed by these pupils - may contribute to dropout.

#### **School promotion**

In chapter 3 (pg. 85) it was pointed out that pupils who had failed are at a greater risk of dropping out. In this study the findings (table 5.9) show that there are significant differences between "not at risk" pupils who had never failed, and "not at risk" pupils who had failed. "Not at risk" pupils

who had never failed tend to have a more internal locus of control than "not at risk" pupils who had failed. This finding supports the expectation that failure leads to a more external locus of control. This implies that "not at risk" pupils who had failed are at a greater risk of becoming dropouts than "not at risk" pupils who had never failed. Furthermore, "not at risk" pupils who had never failed tend to have a more internal locus of control than "at risk" pupils who had never failed. This finding also supports the theory with regard to failure as a factor contributing to dropout (pg. 65).

#### Gender

According to the literature boys are more prone to dropping out than girls (pg. 51). From table 5.9 there is an indication that "at risk" boys and "at risk" girls differ significantly with regard to their internal locus of control. This finding is contrary to the theory because according to table 5.9 "at risk" boys are more internal than "at risk" girls. In this study this implies that girls are more prone to dropping out than boys, on account of a more external locus of control.

#### Age

In chapter 3 (pg. 60) it was discussed that older pupils tend to be less internal with regard to locus of control than younger pupils. This is supported in this study because table 5.9 shows that there are significant differences in the average scores of the 14/15 year old "at risk" and "not at risk" pupils, and the 16/17 year old "at risk" and "not at risk" pupils. "At risk" and "not at risk" 14/15 year old pupils are less internal with regard to locus of control than "at risk"

and "not at risk" 16/17 year old pupils. This more external locus of control of older pupils may lead to their dropping out of school more than younger pupils.

### 6.5 Limitations of the study

Factors which limited the study are:

\* The research group is not large enough because only five schools were used in the empirical investigation, on account of time and money considerations. Universally valid conclusions can therefore not be made.

The research was limited to pupils in the city only. Generalisations with regard to locus of control of pupils in the rural areas are thus not possible.

\* According to the theory, boys usually display a greater tendency to drop out of school. A larger proportion of boys would have been desirable. Unfortunately the sample did not allow for this.

### 6.6 Recommendations

The results of the empirical investigation show a statistically significant difference between at risk and not at risk pupils with regard to their locus of control. Furthermore, various studies have indicated that locus of control is a contributing factor to school dropout. This implies a need for educators to design prevention programmes aimed at reducing the amount of at risk pupils dropping out of school. Pupils should also be motivated - through invitational education - to accept responsibility for their actions and behaviour. In this way an internal locus of control could be cultivated.

It was found that at risk pupils usually display an external locus of control which predisposes them to become dropouts. In an effort to reduce the dropout rate, prevention programmes can be designed to help "at risk pupils" to complete their schooling. Guidelines for prevention programmes could include the following aspects:

- \* strategies for at risk pupils from small and large families to deal with their specific problems so that they can complete their schooling years.
- \* guidelines for parents to enable them to recognise detrimental factors as far as dropout is concerned.
- \* identifying at risk pupils at an early stage so that intervention steps could be taken.

#### 6.7 Conclusion

The dropout problem in South Africa will not be totally eliminated. A great deal of expertise in this field is thus needed to try and reduce the exorbitant dropout rate. It is not only imperative to educate teachers and leaders to identify problems, but also to instil in the pupils the importance and value of education. If an attempt is made to inculcate an internal locus of control, pupils will be equipped to deal with external factors. They will also learn to have control over environmental factors that influence dropout. In this way an education cycle, instead of a dropout cycle will be perpetuated. Parents, however, should not be left out because they also play a key role in curtailing the dropout problem. It is only through education that behaviour changes can and will occur.

**QUESTIONNAIRE**

The questions circled pertains to this study

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

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

		For office use only						
Case								
		(1 - 4)						
Card	1				(5)			
1.	To what extent do you feel that you are a person of worth, at least on an equal basis with others?							
	To a great extent	5	4	3	2	1	Not at all	(6)
2.	To what extent do you feel that you are a failure?							
	To a great extent	5	4	3	2	1	Not at all	(7)
3.	To what extent do you feel that you are able to do things as well as most other people?							
	To a great extent	5	4	3	2	1	Not at all	(8)
4.	To what extent do you feel that you have much to be proud of?							
	To a great extent	5	4	3	2	1	Not at all	(9)
5.	To what extent do you take a positive attitude towards yourself?							
	To a great extent	5	4	3	2	1	Not at all	(10)

6. To what extent are you satisfied with yourself?

To a great extent 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not at all

(11)

7. To what extent do you wish that you could have more respect for yourself?

To a great extent 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not at all

(12)

8. To what extent do you feel useless at times?

To a great extent 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not at all

(13)

9. To what extent do you think you are not good at all?

To a great extent 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not at all

(14)

10. To what extent do you believe that you are able to solve your own problems?

To a great extent 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not at all

(15)

11. To what extent do you sometimes wish you were somebody else?

To a great extent 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not at all

(16)

12. To what extent do you feel accepted by other people?

To a great extent 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not at all

(17)

13. To what extent do you postpone to tomorrow what has to be done today?

To a great extent 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not at all

(18)

14. To what extent do you feel that others enjoy your company?

To a great extent 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not at all

(19)

15. To what extent do you see yourself as greatly respected by others?
- To a great extent 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not at all (20)
16. To what extent do you know that you can usually solve your problems?
- To a great extent 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not at all (21)
17. To what extent can you persevere with a task?
- To a great extent 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not at all (22)
18. To what extent do you feel self-conscious in the company of others?
- To a great extent 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not at all (23)
19. To what extent do you desire characteristics of others?
- To a great extent 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not at all (24)
20. To what extent do you find it difficult to take decisions?
- To a great extent 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not at all (25)
21. To what extent do you see yourself as a successful student?
- To a great extent 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not at all (26)
22. To what extent do you experience the school in a positive way?
- To a great extent 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not at all (27)

23. To what extent do you feel you live up to the expectations of the school?
- To a great extent 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not at all (28)
24. To what extent do you feel that you are a failure at school?
- To a great extent 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not at all (29)
25. To what extent do you feel you can cope with your school-work?
- To a great extent 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not at all (30)
26. To what extent do you feel you achieve according to your ability?
- To a great extent 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not at all (31)
27. To what extent do you see examinations as a opportunity to reach your goals?
- To a great extent 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not at all (32)
28. To what extent do you find it important to achieve at school?
- To a great extent 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not at all (33)
29. To what extent do you show perseverance in completing your homework?
- To a great extent 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not at all (34)
30. To what extent do you postpone doing your homework?
- To a great extent 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not at all (35)



31. To what extent do you think your teachers see you as a capable student?

To a great extent 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not at all (36)

32. When I win at a sport, a lot of times I can't figure out why I won.

Very true 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not true at all (37)

33. When I am unsuccessful, it is usually my own fault.

Very true 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not true at all (38)

34. The best way for me to get good marks is to get the teacher to like me.

Very true 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not true at all (39)

35. If somebody doesn't like me, I usually can't figure out why.

Very true 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not true at all (40)

36. I can be good at any sport if I try hard enough.

Very true 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not true at all (41)

37. If an adult doesn't want me to do something I want to do, I probably won't be able to do it.

Very true 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not true at all (42)

38. When I do well in school, I usually can't figure out why.

Very true 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not true at all (43)

39. If somebody doesn't like me, it's usually because of something I did.

Very true 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not true at all (44)

40. When I win at a sport, it's usually because the person I played against played badly.

Very true 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not true at all (45)

41. When something goes wrong for me, I usually can figure out why it happened.

Very true 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not true at all (46)

42. If I want to do well in school, it's up to me to do it.

Very true 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not true at all (47)

43. If my teacher doesn't like me, I probably won't be very popular with my classmates.

Very true 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not true at all (48)

44. Many times I can't figure out why good things happen to me.

Very true 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not true at all (49)

45. If I don't do well in school, it's my own fault.

Very true 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not true at all (50)

46. If I want to be an important member of my class, I have to get the popular kids to like me.

Very true 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not true at all (51)

47. Most of the time when I lose a game in athletics, I can't figure out why I lost.
- Very true 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not true at all (52)
48. I can pretty much control what will happen in my life.
- Very true 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not true at all (53)
49. If I have a bad teacher, I won't do well in school.
- Very true 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not true at all (54)
50. A lot of times, I don't know why people like me.
- Very true 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not true at all (55)
51. If I try to catch a ball and I don't, it's usually because I didn't try hard enough.
- Very true 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not true at all (56)
52. When I lose at an outdoor game, it is usually because the kid I played against was much better at that game to begin with.
- Very true 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not true at all (57)
53. When I win at an outdoor game, a lot of times I don't know why I won.
- Very true 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not true at all (58)
54. When I don't do well at something, it is usually my own fault.
- Very true 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not true at all (59)

55. When I do well in school, it's because the teacher likes me.

Very true 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not true at all (60)

56. When another kid doesn't like me, I usually don't know why.

Very true 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not true at all (61)

57. I can be good at any sport if I work on it hard enough.

Very true 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not true at all (62)

58. I don't have much chance of doing what I want if adults don't want me to do it.

Very true 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not true at all (63)

59. When I get a good mark in school I usually don't know why I did so well.

Very true 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not true at all (64)

60. If someone is mean to me, it's usually because of something I did.

Very true 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not true at all (65)

61. When I win an outdoor game against another kid, it's probably because the other kid didn't play well.

Very true 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not true at all (66)

62. A lot of times I don't know why something goes wrong for me.

Very true 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not true at all (67)

63. If I want to get good marks in school, it's up to me to do it.

Very true

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

Not true at all

(68)

64. If the teacher doesn't like me, I probably won't have many friends in that class.

Very true

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

Not true at all

(69)

65. When good things happen to me, many times there doesn't seem to be any reason for it.

Very true

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

Not true at all

(70)

66. If I get bad marks, it's my own fault.

Very true

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

Not true at all

(71)

67. When I don't win at an outdoor game, most of the time I can't figure out why.

Very true

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

Not true at all

(72)

68. I can decide what will happen in my life.

Very true

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

Not true at all

(73)

69. A lot of times there doesn't seem to be any reason why somebody likes me.

Very true

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

Not true at all

(74)

70. To get what I want, I have to please the people in charge.

Very true

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

Not true at all

(75)

71. When I don't do well in school, I usually can't figure out why.

Very true 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not true at all (76)

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(1 - 4)			
2			
(5)			

72. If somebody is my friend, it is usually because of the way that I treat him/her.

Very true 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not true at all (6)

73. To what extent do you feel comfortable at school?

To a great extent 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not at all (7)

74. To what extent do you feel teachers care about you?

To a great extent 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not at all (8)

75. To what extent do you value your relationships with your teachers?

To a great extent 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not at all (9)

76. To what extent is it important for your to attend school?

To a great extent 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not at all (10)

77. To what extent can you talk to your teachers about personal problems you are facing?

To a great extent 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not at all (11)

78. To what extent can you talk to your teachers about academic problems you are facing?
- To a great extent 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not at all (12)
79. To what extent do you feel classes at school are boring?
- To a great extent 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not at all (13)
80. To what extent do you feel teachers do understand the needs of the pupils?
- To a great extent 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not at all (14)
81. To what extent do you feel teachers have a good attitude toward the students?
- To a great extent 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not at all (15)
82. To what extent do you feel teachers devote enough time to their students?
- To a great extent 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not at all (16)
83. To what extent do you feel school atmosphere is stressful?
- To a great extent 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not at all (17)
84. To what extent do you feel your friends in school care about you?
- To a great extent 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not at all (18)
85. To what extent can you communicate with your friends at school?
- To a great extent 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not at all (19)

86. To what extent do you value your relationships with your school friends?
- To a great extent 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not at all (20)
87. To what extent do you feel communicating with the principal is important?
- To a great extent 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not at all (21)
88. To what extent do you feel the principal cares about you?
- To a great extent 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not at all (22)
89. To what extent can you talk with the principal?
- To a great extent 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not at all (23)
90. To what extent can you talk to the school counsellor about your career?
- To a great extent 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not at all (24)
91. To what extent can you talk to the guidance teacher about your school work?
- To a great extent 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not at all (25)
92. To what extent can you talk to the guidance teacher about your personal problems?
- To a great extent 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not at all (26)
93. To what extent do you value your relationship with the guidance teacher?
- To a great extent 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not at all (27)



94. To what extent do you feel the guidance teacher care about you?
- To a great extent 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not at all (28)
95. To what extent can you talk to the guidance teacher about problems you are having?
- To a great extent 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not at all (29)
96. To what extent do you feel the guidance teacher helps you?
- To a great extent 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not at all (30)
97. To what extent are you allowed to chose where you sit in the classroom?
- To a great extent 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not at all (31)
98. To what extent do you feel free to express your ideas in school?
- To a great extent 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not at all (32)
99. To what extent do you feel repressed by the school regulations?
- To a great extent 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not at all (33)
100. To what extent do you feel the teachers give you the necessary information on the standard of your work?
- To a great extent 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not at all (34)
101. To what extent do you feel the teachers are fair?
- To a great extent 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not at all (35)

102. To what extent are your parents satisfied with the quality of your work?
- To a great extent 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not at all (36)
103. To what extent do your parents care about you?
- To a great extent 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not at all (37)
104. To what extent do your parents care about your feelings?
- To a great extent 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

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

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not at all (39)
106. To what extent can you talk to your parents about problems you are having?
- To a great extent 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not at all (40)
107. To what extent do your parents see to it that you attend school regularly?
- To a great extent 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not at all (41)
108. To what extent do you feel that your parents devote enough time to you?
- To a great extent 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not at all (42)
109. To what extent do you feel that if you keep out of your parent's way, they are satisfied to let you do whatever you want to do?
- To a great extent 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not at all (43)

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

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not at all (44)
111. To what extent do your parents control your behaviour?
- To a great extent 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not at all (45)
112. To what extent are your parents involved in helping you with your schoolwork?
- To a great extent 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not at all (46)
113. To what extent do you feel your parents expect too much of you?
- To a great extent 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not at all (47)
114. To what extent do your parents encourage you to do well in school?
- To a great extent 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not at all (48)
115. To what extent do you feel your parents are proud of you when you do well at school?
- To a great extent 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not at all (49)
116. To what extent do your parents see to it that you do your homework?
- To a great extent 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not at all (50)
117. To what extent do your parents care that you attend school regularly?
- To a great extent 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not at all (51)

118. How often do your parents attend school functions?  
 Always 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Never (52)
119. To what extent do the members of your family help each other?  
 To a great extent 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not at all (53)
120. To what extent are your family relationships close?  
 To a great extent 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not at all (54)
121. How often do your parents completely ignore you after you've done something wrong?  
 Always 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Never (55)
122. How often do your parents act as if they don't care about you any more?  
 Always 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Never (56)
123. How often do your parents disagree with each other when it comes to raising you?  
 Always 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Never (57)
124. How often do your parents take away your privileges (TV, movies, dates)?  
 Always 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Never (58)
125. How often do your parents blame you or criticize you when you don't deserve it?  
 Always 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Never (59)

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

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Never (60)
127. How often do your parents disagree about punishing you?
- Always 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Never (61)
128. How often do your parents nag at you?
- Always 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Never (62)
129. To what extent do you consider your parents' marriage a happy one?
- To a great extent 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not at all (63)
130. To what extent do the members of your family fight with each other?
- To a great extent 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not at all (64)
131. To what extent would you regard the members of your family as good friends?
- To a great extent 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not at all (65)
132. To what extent would your family members discuss personal problems with each other?
- To a great extent 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not at all (66)
133. How often does your family do things together?
- Always 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Never (67)

134. How often does your family enjoy meals together?
- Always 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Never (68)
135. How important, do you think, is it that your family celebrate occasions such as birthdays and anniversaries together?
- Very important 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not at all (69)
136. How often do your parents argue?
- Always 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Never (70)
137. To what extent do you enjoy it when your family does things together?
- To a great extent 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not at all (71)
138. To what extent would you regard your family home as the place where you feel emotionally safe?
- To a great extent 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not at all (72)
139. How often would your family spend an evening together just talking?
- Always 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Never (73)
140. To what extent are the members of your family comfortable and relaxed with one another?
- To a great extent 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not at all (74)
141. To what extent do your parents make your friends feel welcome when they visit you?
- To a great extent 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not at all (75)

142. How often does your family attend church/mosque together?

Always

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

Never

(76)

For office use only

Case

--	--	--	--

(1 - 4)

Card

3
---

(5)

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

To a great extent

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

Not at all

(6)

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

Always

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

Never

(7)

145. To what extent do you respect your parents?

To a great extent

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

Not at all

(8)

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

To a great extent

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

Not at all

(9)

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

To a great extent

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

Not at all

(10)

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

1. Gender: Male  1 (11)  
 Female  2
2. Age:   years (12-13)
3. Standard:  (14)
4. What is the highest academic qualification which your father/stepfather/guardian obtained at a school, college or university?
- |  |    |         |
|--|----|---------|
| No education at all                        | 01 |         |
| Std. 6 or lower                            | 02 |         |
| Std. 7 or 8                                | 03 |         |
| Std. 9 or 10                               | 04 |         |
| Diploma at a College of Education          | 05 |         |
| Diploma at a Technical College             | 06 |         |
| Diploma at another College                 | 07 |         |
| Diploma at a University                    | 08 |         |
| Bachelor's degree                          | 09 |         |
| Bachelor's degree and Diploma in Education | 10 |         |
| Honours degree                             | 11 |         |
| Master's degree                            | 12 |         |
| Doctor's degree                            | 13 |         |
| I do not know                              | 14 | (15-16) |
5. Home language: Afrikaans  1  
 English  2  
 Other  3 (17)



6. Religion? Moslem  1  
 Christian  2  
 Other  3 (18)

7. Do you live with your parents? Yes  1 No  2 (19)

8. What is the highest academical qualification which your mother/stepmother/guardian obtained at a school, college or university?

No education at all  01  
 Std. 6 or lower  02  
 Std. 7 or 8  03  
 Std. 9 or 10  04  
 Diploma at a College of Education  05  
 Diploma at a Technical College  06  
 Diploma at another College  07  
 Diploma at a University  08  
 Bachelor's degree  09  
 Bachelor's degree and Diploma in Education  10  
 Honours degree  11  
 Master's degree  12  
 Doctor's degree  13  
 I do not know  14 (20-21)

9. Numbers of brothers and sisters:  (22)

10. Describe your family situation:  
 Parents live together  1  
 Single-parent father  2  
 Single-parent mother  3  
 Other  4 (23)  
 Specify: \_\_\_\_\_

11. Is your father presently employed?  
Full time  1 Part time  2 No  3 (24)

12. Is your mother presently employed?  
Full time  1 Part time  2 No  3 (25)

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

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

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

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

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

Trained artisans. e.g. baker, driller,  
electrician, boiler-maker, bricklayer, welder,  
artist, butcher, carpenter, paint sprayer.  05

Qualified fieldworker. e.g. ambulance driver,  
customs officer, crane operator, conductor,  
pilot, shunter, traffic officer.  06

Farmers, gardeners, foresters, fisherman.  
e.g. farmer, manager of a farm, forester,  
gardener, stockinspector, fisherman.  07

Personalised and domesticated workers.  
e.g. undertaker, butler, tailor, chef, caterer.  08

Operators and semi-skilled workers.  
e.g. concrete worker, blockman, tree-sprayer,  
dambuilder, factory worker, watchmaker, mine-  
worker, shift foreman.  09

Unskilled workers. e.g. roadworker, farm  
labourer, railway worker, cleaner.  10 (26-27)

14. Most of my friends:  
 Attend the same school I do 

1
---

  
 Attend a different school 

2
---

  
 Do not attend school 

3
---

 (28)

15. To what extent do you like going to school?  
 To a great extent 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not at all (29)

16. How many times have you failed a standard at school? 

--

 (30)

17. How do you evaluate your school achievement?  
 Very good 

1
---

  
 Good 

2
---

  
 Average 

3
---

  
 Below average 

4
---

  
 Failing 

5
---

 (31)

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

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not at all (32)

19. Until what standard are you planning to stay at school?  
 Standard 7 

1
---

  
 Standard 8 

2
---

  
 Standard 9 

3
---

  
 Standard 10 

4
---

 (33)

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

To a great extent 

5	4	3	2	1
---	---	---	---	---

 Not at all

(34)

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

.....

(35)

(36)

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