



# Managing Workplace Harmony as a Contributor to Institutional Functionality: A Case Study of the Sekhukhu in Limpopo Province, South Africa

Ngwako Solomon Modiba <sup>1</sup> 

<sup>1</sup> Department of Education Studies, School of Education, Faculty of Humanities, University of Limpopo, South Africa.

## ABSTRACT

This paper examined the contribution of workplace or schooling harmony to the functionality and high performance of secondary schools in the form of learners consistently producing brilliant results. The paper was motivated by diverse discourses about how the presence of a cordial and cooperative mood among schoolmates generates the spirit of collegiality and collectivism within secondary school learners. The paper is conceptual and empirical in nature within the qualitative research paradigm. The question guiding this paper is: *why are myriad secondary schools not utilising schooling harmony to promote institutional functionality which leads to good learner performance?* An interviewing technique and narrative enquiry were utilised to generate data. Out of the population of 16 public secondary schools in one of the circuits in Sekhukhune district in Limpopo Province, South Africa, six were conveniently sampled. In each of the schools, only representatives of the teacher components in the School Governing Body and Chairpersons of the Representative Council of Learners were selected as research participants. Altogether there were 12 research participants. Findings revealed that considering the dynamic nature of educational institutions workplace or schooling harmony could be a product of multi-faceted occurrences in an institution. Issues such as a sense of insecurity, a product of an identity crisis, the harrowing pain of growing up without a father, the impact of denial by a blood father, the absence of enlightened school leadership, mocking by fellow learners and becoming a victim of grade repetition were found to cause learner anger outbursts which negatively impacted institutional harmony. Based on the findings, the researcher recommended that public educational institutions prioritise the provision of counselling and psycho-social support to victims of workplace or schooling disharmony to restore their emotional and mental stability. Such stability could enable those learners to cope with their schooling duties just like the rest of others. The contribution of this paper to scholarship is in terms of unveiling how effectively managed schooling or workplace harmony could contribute to institutional functionality and high performance of secondary schools.

## Correspondence

Ngwako Solomon Modiba  
Email: [solomon.modiba@ul.ac.za](mailto:solomon.modiba@ul.ac.za)

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## INTRODUCTION

The objective of this paper is to examine the contribution of workplace or schooling harmony to the functionality and high performance of secondary schools in the form of learners consistently producing brilliant results in Sekhukhune district in Limpopo Province, South Africa. The statement of the problem in this paper is anchored on the perpetual underperformance of myriad secondary schools in the Sekhukhune district of Limpopo Province. With this paper, the researcher examines whether effective management of schooling harmony where

these pupils learn cannot contribute to the improvement of their academic outcomes.<sup>1</sup> The researcher acknowledges that there are various factors behind the underperformance of secondary school learners. For instance, the absence of a workplace or schooling harmony could be one of the factors. This could be created by learners themselves coming from a hostile family background where a father figure is missing.<sup>2</sup> On that basis, there is a need for workplace or schooling harmony to be created and managed because it induces high performance by learners. What makes schooling harmony a centrepiece for the high performance and functionality of educational institutions is its ability to mitigate and neutralise persistent bickering common with today's institutional members inclusive of learners.<sup>3</sup>

It is no exaggeration to assert that where disharmony within learners is at its peak, sustainable brilliant learner outcomes could be greatly compromised. There is evidence to confirm that where institutional members experience a sense of security at work, then they are likely to contribute to the survival of the created institutional workplace harmony. One of the features of learners at a schooling place never working at cross-purposes is the absence of an identity crisis within them. Identity crisis by learners aggravates the spirit of disharmony within them. That spirit of rivalry is known to be the antithesis of the aspired schooling harmony. These days, the high performance and functionality of a secondary school are determined in terms of impressive learner attainment. Mangena reasons that practical experience consistently reveals that schooling harmony contributes to the production of brilliant learner performance which serves as one of the features of a functional and high-performing educational institution.<sup>4</sup> In a province such as Limpopo whose matric results are ever disappointing to place the province at position nine in comparison to all other provinces of South Africa, it could strongly be argued that the schooling harmony is missing in most of the secondary schools.<sup>5</sup> Dooms demonstrates that a competition that is not healthy among learners could attract schooling disharmony instead of repelling it and replacing it with harmony.<sup>6</sup> Evidently, disharmony at school could result from learners not coping with competition within themselves. This could spark a strife that degenerates into a schooling disharmony that inhibits harmony which is necessary for the smooth progression of an enterprise of teaching and learning. Aggrieved learners who are not coping with competition could become destructive and destroy the created spirit of schooling harmony. This is aggravated by the reality that angry learners in a classroom or school are likely to display irrational behaviour. It is precisely that unbecoming behaviour which ends up being a hurdle towards progressive schooling. That kind of unacceptable behaviour does trigger illogical reasoning by those learners.<sup>7</sup> Irrational behaviour and illogical reasoning at school are an obstacle to an orderly and disciplined schooling atmosphere. Worse, a secondary school learner characterised by anger has the potential of emotional outbursts even inside a classroom. This sums up the point that anger management is a pre-requisite in secondary schools when dealing with pupils in the adolescence stage. Failure by pupils to control, their emotions particularly when at school, could contaminate the existing learning milieu. In an improper learning milieu, the production of exquisite learner results could remain a far-fetched ideal. In addition, learners who display anger when at school are likely to create strained learner-teacher relations. An appropriate relations between teachers and learners could facilitate learning and the achievement of impressive academic outcomes. As such, under no circumstances should learner anger be allowed to prevail in school due to it having the potential to serve as an obstacle to the production of excellent scholastic learner results.<sup>8</sup> Angry learners at school make it difficult to promote the concept of cooperative learning. This is where learners collaboratively and collectively engage the learning content with the purpose of assisting one another to assimilate and master that learning content in a better way. Cooperative learning is possible where secondary school pupils are free from any form of anger. That kind of learning is possible in a child-friendly schooling milieu where every pupil enjoys being at school with fellow learners without harbouring any grudge against anyone. Indications are that anger which some public secondary school learners are displaying at schools does not start there. Such learners come to school with such anger. This is a natural anger caused by among others, and fatherlessness from some learners' homes.<sup>9</sup>

The thesis of this paper is that there is a need for public secondary schools to be aware that teaching angry learners could be counter-productive unless the rationale behind being angry is identified and victims of anger are assisted to cope with scholastic activities. Failing to do that educational institutions could see them

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<sup>1</sup> T. D. Jakes, *Disruptive Thinking: A Daring Strategy to Change How We Love, Lead and Live* (New York: Hachette Book Group, 2023).

<sup>2</sup> Jakes, *Disruptive Thinking: A Daring Strategy to Change How We Love, Lead and Live*.

<sup>3</sup> A. Maliba, "Fatherlessness Unravels Harrowing Pain of Growing up with Absent Dad.," *Sowetan*, April 26, 2022.

<sup>4</sup> M. Mangena, "Rallying to Defend Democracy," *Sunday World*, April 18, 2021.

<sup>5</sup> Y. Sobuwa, "Teacher Handbook Calls for Change InClasses.," *Sowetan*, April 19, 2021.

<sup>6</sup> T. Dooms, "South Africans Feel Unsafe on the Streets and in Their Homes," *Sowetan*, May 10, 2022.

<sup>7</sup> P Bambalele, "Rapetsoa Acts on Violence as He Reworks Our Cry"," *Sowetan*, 2019.

<sup>8</sup> K.G. Holten, "Youth Need Role Models to Positively Transform SA.," *Sowetan*, May 11, 2022.

<sup>9</sup> J. Allen, *As A Man Thinketh*. (New York: Dover Publications, 2014).

continuing to fail to contribute positively and massively to the reduction and eradication of annual underperformance of the province's education department. Schools in Limpopo province could curtail the poor educational outcomes produced by the education department by counselling and supporting learners with anger issues to control their episodes for the sake of quality instruction to take place.<sup>10</sup> Research points out that angry learners could jeopardise peer learning. During the Covid-19 pandemic, peer learning was useful for learners particularly when a teacher was unreachable. With peer learning, learners themselves are able to share their comprehension of the learning content and in that fashion experience mutual benefit. There is a theory and argument to the effect that that which a learner has learnt from a teacher, she could forget it but that which has been learnt from fellow learners stays long in the memory.<sup>11</sup> This accentuates the centrality of having learners who are not angry for fear of blocking the occurrence of successful peer learning. Briefly, learner anger is an enemy of peer learning.<sup>12</sup> The other predicament associated with anger by learners is that it prevents the efforts of making schooling fashionable for every learner. Fatherlessness from home spills over to schools in the form of parading learners who are different from others.

On the basis of coming from a fatherless home, some secondary school learners become withdrawn when at school. Such learners are not likely to embrace team learning which is closely associated with peer learning and cooperative learning.<sup>13</sup> Mangena reasons that the distinction between public secondary schools with multitudes of angry learners and those with a handful of them is that the former is unlikely to sustain the production of excellent learner results with the latter having the capacity of ever yielding good academic outcomes.<sup>14</sup> Evidently, this is the time for secondary schools to stop ignoring teaching learners who are angry due to missing the father figure in their homes. Such pupils could prevent a school from contributing to the reduction and elimination of the province's perpetual poor educational outcomes. Developing coping mechanisms for angry learners in secondary schools could be one of the surest ways of freeing those angry learners from contributing to the drop in the performance of their secondary schools.<sup>15</sup>

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Maliba advises that there is a need to acknowledge the prevalence of angry learners in secondary schools whose anger is traceable to the absence of fathers in homes.<sup>16</sup> This somewhat impacts their scholastic performance especially where their schooling environment lacks harmony. The display of anger in secondary schools is a longstanding problem and a searing issue worth addressing. Jakes approaches anger as a condition in a learner's mind that meddles with a pupil's emotional stability, which disables a learner from being educationally ready to assimilate the learning content.<sup>17</sup> The anger under discussion in this paper relates to the condition of fatherlessness in the home of a learner which makes a pupil feel out of place when at school in the midst of fellow learners with fathers at home.

Fatherless learners are likely to have a sense of insecurity at school. The implication is that the absence of a father at home inhibits a sense of safety and security when at school. Furthermore, the identity crisis which fatherless learners showcase at school interferes with the mastery of the learning content inside the classroom. Indications are that pupils who grow up without fathers, tend to harbour a harrowing pain about their state of affairs. Kumalo attests that all these factors interfere with the comprehension of schooling activities owing to the anger issues of learners.<sup>18</sup> It is unusual for an angry pupil in secondary school to display rational behaviour. This kind of irrational behaviour could be driven by the housed anger which is toxic to quality instructional practices. This signifies that where there is learner anger in secondary schooling, quality teaching and learning as well as the production of brilliant learner outcomes, could be greatly compromised. Masango posits that apart from irrational behaviour, angry learners in secondary schools are likely to show signs of illogical reasoning.<sup>19</sup> This is a kind of reasoning which displays disjuncture due to a person being involved in reasoning, operating with a mind polluted by anger. Hence, Olivier and Owen advise that secondary schools that perennially

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<sup>10</sup> I. Van Deventer and A.G. Kruger, *An Educator's Guide to School Management Skills*. (Pretoria : Van Schaik, 2010).

<sup>11</sup> N. Masango, "Some Mental Health Disorders Misunderstood," *Sowetan*, May 9, 2022.

<sup>12</sup> W.J. Levin, "Why Our Education System Is Failing.," *The Star*, October 5, 2011; C. Southey, "Teaching Ruin and Warring Wallahs," *Mail and Guardian*, April 12, 2012; Mangena, "Rallying to Defend Democracy."

<sup>13</sup> Tobie Van Dyk et al., "Ondersoek Na Die Impak van'n Akademiese Geletterheidsintervensie Op Eerstejaarstudente Se Akademiese Taalvermoë," *Linet Akademies* 8, no. 3 (2011): 487–506; K Bodibe, "Change Is Inevitable," *Daily Sun* 5 (2012); S. Memela, "Prophetic Intellectual Leaders," *Sowetan*, June 20, 2012.

<sup>14</sup> Mangena, "Rallying to Defend Democracy."

<sup>15</sup> N. Kumalo, "Autumn: A Time to Harvest Spiritual Growth," *Sowetan*, April 19, 2021.

<sup>16</sup> Maliba, "Fatherlessness Unravels Harrowing Pain of Growing up with Absent Dad. ."

<sup>17</sup> Jakes, *Disruptive Thinking: A Daring Strategy to Change How We Love, Lead and Live*.

<sup>18</sup> Kumalo, "Autumn: A Time to Harvest Spiritual Growth."

<sup>19</sup> Masango, "Some Mental Health Disorders Misunderstood. ."

underperform, need to establish how much is learner anger contributes to those schools' unpalatable academic outcomes.<sup>20</sup>

Holten asserts that anger could be contagious.<sup>21</sup> The implication is that angry learners pollute the schooling atmosphere to the level where in cases where such anger episodes are not assuaged, it could spill over to the entire schooling environment to the peril of the educational institution. Dooms states that angry learners in secondary schools could display emotional outbursts at any time.<sup>22</sup> Such an outburst is often triggered by the harboured anger of fatherlessness which a pupil comes to school with. The reality is that as long as there is learner anger in secondary schools, there is likely to be a contamination of the teaching and learning milieu. The milieu where instructional practices are occurring, deserve to be free from any form of toxic influence like learner anger. Mangena mentions that it is not unusual for angry pupils to be victims of grade repetition.<sup>23</sup> By virtue of being involved in schooling activities with dubious mental emotions of anger, makes it easy for angry pupils to end up repeating a grade before progressing to the next grade.<sup>24</sup> Hence Sobuwa advises that angry learners in secondary schools require an enlightened school leadership that is likely to be ready to confront the problem of learner anger head-on and resolve it.<sup>25</sup> Enlightened school leadership is likely to organise counselling and other vital psycho-social support services necessary to mitigate the severity of learner anger to rehabilitate learners to be able to assimilate the school content.

What normally aggravates learner anger in secondary schools is the problem of pupils with fathers at home mocking those without fathers when at school. This puts an unbearable burden on fatherless learners to the level of even creating imaginary fathers or lying about having fathers for the sake of gaining acceptability to those with fathers. This is an unfortunate circumstance which secondary school learners need not find themselves under. Bambalele points out that owing to learner anger, there could be strained learner-teacher relations at secondary schools.<sup>26</sup> That is why Equal Education and Meador are emphatic that where no cordial relations exist between learners and teachers, then the spirit of child-friendly schooling could be disturbed.<sup>27</sup> When that happens, the whole cooperative learning concept and the peer learning will be difficult to introduce, maintain and manage. That will have an impact on the successful rollout of the team-learning concept among learners.

Gqirana and Juan and Visser argue that great schools do not place the self-preservation interests of an individual member ahead of those of a school.<sup>28</sup> Doing so could be tantamount to holding schools and the country hostage. Ramrathan reveals that angry pupils particularly in secondary schools are simply incapable of making schooling fashionable for themselves and others.<sup>29</sup> This is not complex to explain based on the actuality that a learner who is not emotionally stable enough to succeed in imbibing the taught learning content, may not be in a better position to be of help to fellow learners regarding assisting them with scholarly work.

Zhu, Devos, & Li maintain that the peculiar nature is that angry learners could continue to decline in performance in secondary schools, something which could be happening intentionally or inadvertently.<sup>30</sup> On the said matter Mangena indicates that abiding by policies some of which are targeting learner anger and its impact could be very minimal.<sup>31</sup> Furthermore, schools free from learner anger are frequently never bereft of any ethics, solidarity and empathy, which are collectively applied to blunt learner anger from being dominant in schooling situations. As a result of the existence and the prevalence of learner anger in schooling, it is rare to have a learner who loves to style herself as a super or prime learner. This is due to the eroded and unstable learner-teacher relations. Pupils accept themselves as learners who have to involve themselves in cooperative or peer learning,

<sup>20</sup> C Olivier, "The DNA of Great Teachers," *South Africa: Learning Designs*, 2012; J.O. Owen, *How to Lead: The Definitive Guide to Effective Leadership*, 4th ed. (London: Pearson, 2015).

<sup>21</sup> Holten, "Youth Need Role Models to Positively Transform SA. ."

<sup>22</sup> Dooms, "South Africans Feel Unsafe on the Streets and in Their Homes."

<sup>23</sup> Mangena, "Rallying to Defend Democracy."

<sup>24</sup> Olivier, "The DNA of Great Teachers."

<sup>25</sup> Sobuwa, "Teacher Handbook Calls for Change InClasses. ."

<sup>26</sup> Bambalele, "Rapetsoa Acts on Violence as He Reworks Our Cry'."

<sup>27</sup> Equal Education, "School Infrastructure," [www.equaleducation.org.za](http://www.equaleducation.org.za), 2018; D. Meador, "The Role of the Principal in School.," [www.thoughtco.com](http://www.thoughtco.com), February 25, 2019.

<sup>28</sup> T. Gqirana, "Without Resources Rural Schools Will Continue to Underperform," *Journal of Technology Education* 9, no. 10 (2016): 1–16, <https://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/News/without-resources-rural-schools-will-continue-to-underperform>.; Andrea Juan and Mariette Visser, "Home and School Environmental Determinants of Science Achievement of South African Students," *South African Journal of Education* 37, no. 1 (2017): 1–10.

<sup>29</sup> Labby Ramrathan, "Learner Poor Performance: Provoking Bourdieu's Key Concepts in Analysing School Education in South Africa," *Southern African Review of Education with Education with Production* 23, no. 1 (2017): 23–36.

<sup>30</sup> Chang Zhu, Geert Devos, and Yifei Li, "Teacher Perceptions of School Culture and Their Organizational Commitment and Well-Being in a Chinese School," *Asia Pacific Education Review* 12 (2011): 319–28.

<sup>31</sup> Mangena, "Rallying to Defend Democracy."

displaying mutual empathy to keep the greatness of their educational institution intact when freed from the pandemic of anger. The implication of the expressed point is that much as impressive scholastic pupil performance is anticipated in every secondary school, the key personnel awaited to produce the mouth-watering learner results, namely, learners themselves, need to be taken good care of in the form of exposing them to counselling and other psycho-social services upon detecting an amount of destructive anger in them.<sup>32</sup>

To achieve peer or collaborative learning, a spirit of learner-solidarity and empathy created within the anger-free minds of pupils, is very necessary. Sobuwa reasons that any form of ignorance or discrimination of pupils on the basis of demonstrating anger has to be rescinded.<sup>33</sup> Confronting learner anger at school has to bring an educational institution closer to servicing its clientele to the highest required standards of an educational institution. Where pupils inside a classroom are fortunate to mingle and interact with great teachers who are ever alert to averting any emerging learner anger, that partnership could speedily contain perennial learner-underachievement and replace it with impressive pupil achievement.<sup>34</sup> Dooms unveils that it takes a great teacher to convert an angry pupil in an ordinary secondary school into a hero-learner whose scholastic achievement is ever-brilliant and continues to brand a learner's school as a great learning institution.<sup>35</sup> Masondo & Kumalo stress that the complexity of schooling leads to a situation whereby some educational institutions keep on surviving the stigma of housing more angry learners by virtue of having crafted a kind of identity that always associates a school with zero tolerance to disturbing learner anger.<sup>36</sup> This implies that the kind of brand or identity which a secondary school is known for, could always under normal circumstances work for a school.

Jakes attests that apart from the nature of a brand a school is famous for, even the kind of enabling harmony at the school could contribute to the eradication of learner anger at a school.<sup>37</sup> Holten stresses that the multiplicity of factors obtained in a school are the drivers and the determinants of the successful elimination of the experienced learner anger.<sup>38</sup> One distinguishable feature of secondary schools free from anger is their perpetual strive for the excellent scholastic achievement of their pupils and the institution.<sup>39</sup> Teaching and learning in anger-free secondary schools could remain unique and efficacious for the sake of ushering in the scholastic achievement of pupils. Such is the hallmark of a secondary school with zero tolerance for learner anger.<sup>40</sup>

When pulling hard, in terms of producing brilliant learner results, secondary schools with angry pupils in their midst could draw back and reconnect with themselves. This happens as magnificent learner results appear to be evading angry schools due to the absence of schooling harmony among others.<sup>41</sup> Anger-free schools are known to be capable of creating time to reflect on the strides they have made in their past educational journey, to learn from them and to be inspired to toil for excellent learner performance. Lee and Masango depict anger-free secondary schools to be possessing restorative power.<sup>42</sup> This is the kind of strength that enables such schools to immediately bounce back after they have had a mishap with their institutional results. Anger-free schools do learn to achieve harmony within themselves by treasuring goodness and braving the difficulties they face. Such schools are capable of embracing the present and everything it offers rather than always being reactive to difficulties, some of which could descend a secondary school into an underachievement mode. Dooms is emphatic that anger-free schools are courageous to set themselves free from things that can rob them of their exquisite performance, their functionality and their harmony, which are constituent elements of anger-free schools for myriad educational organisations.<sup>43</sup> As Jakes advises teaching angry learners in this paper, was largely conducted from the point of view of the Representative Council of Learners (RCL) and representatives of the Teacher Components serving in a School Governing body.<sup>44</sup> This was done under the conviction that the contribution of workplace or schooling harmony to the performance of secondary school learners could better

<sup>32</sup> Kumalo, "Autumn: A Time to Harvest Spiritual Growth"; Masango, "Some Mental Health Disorders Misunderstood."

<sup>33</sup> Sobuwa, "Teacher Handbook Calls for Change InClasses."

<sup>34</sup> N. Lee, "Schools Must Educate Children on the Dangers of Drug Abuse," *Sowetan*, May 11, 2022.

<sup>35</sup> Dooms, "South Africans Feel Unsafe on the Streets and in Their Homes."

<sup>36</sup> S. Masondo, "How Super-Principals and Teachers Help Matrix Soar.," *City Press*, January 11, 2015; Kumalo, "Autumn: A Time to Harvest Spiritual Growth."

<sup>37</sup> Jakes, *Disruptive Thinking: A Daring Strategy to Change How We Love, Lead and Live*.

<sup>38</sup> Holten, "Youth Need Role Models to Positively Transform SA."

<sup>39</sup> Sobuwa, "Teacher Handbook Calls for Change InClasses."

<sup>40</sup> E.V. Lara, "School Identity in the Modern World.," [www.tieonline.com](http://www.tieonline.com), 2018.

<sup>41</sup> Bambalele, "Rapetsoa Acts on Violence as He Reworks Our Cry."

<sup>42</sup> Lee, "Schools Must Educate Children on the Dangers of Drug Abuse"; Masango, "Some Mental Health Disorders Misunderstood."

<sup>43</sup> Dooms, "South Africans Feel Unsafe on the Streets and in Their Homes"; Olivier, "The DNA of Great Teachers"; Sobuwa, "Teacher Handbook Calls for Change InClasses."

<sup>44</sup> Jakes, *Disruptive Thinking: A Daring Strategy to Change How We Love, Lead and Live*.

be explained first by learners themselves and secondly by teachers who do the real teaching inside the classrooms which is where brilliant learner results emanate.<sup>45</sup>

## METHODOLOGY

This paper is a qualitative case study. The choice of the qualitative methodology was triggered by the reality that the paper is being underscored by Interpretivism and the Learning Organisation Philosophy.<sup>46</sup> The researcher saw a need to create a synergy between the two mentioned theoretical perspectives undergirding the paper and the qualitative approach as the overriding research methodology. The combination of the three, assisted immensely in terms of illuminating issues of fatherlessness, anger and trauma to the scholastic performance of pupils in secondary schools, from the perspective of teachers serving in the School Governing Body and the Representative Council of Learners.<sup>47</sup> The researcher utilised the mentioned theoretical perspectives to explore ways and means of ascertaining that the impact of fatherlessness, anger and trauma on some secondary school learners, is better understood in context and adequately contained. Persistent teaching of traumatised pupils which could lead to the yielding of dissatisfactory scholastic learner performance, is a worrisome issue warranting attention precisely because it could rob a school of an opportunity of being an educational institution of choice. With Interpretivism and the Learning Organisation Philosophy underscoring this paper, the researcher sought to decode what constitutes disharmony, trauma and fatherlessness in the context of dissatisfactory scholastic learner performance by some secondary school pupils. Amalgamating the qualitative research paradigm, Interpretivism and the Learning Organisation Philosophy aimed at maximising the strength of the three perspectives to understand in its entirety the raging discourses about how the presence of a father figure at home has a share on the good performance of learners at school.<sup>48</sup> Combining the three, enabled the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding of how despite many years of self-rule in South Africa, precisely 29 years, there are still a myriad of secondary schools that persistently churn out dissatisfactory scholastic learner performance. Such an in-depth insight was more than necessary in order to operate from an informed position with regard to the impact of schooling disharmony, trauma and fatherlessness on the good performance of some secondary school learners. Out of the population of 16 secondary schools, in one of the circuits in Sekhukhune districts, 6 were conveniently sampled and in each school, a teacher representative in the School Governing Body and a Chairperson of the Representative Council of Learners became research participants.

A narrative enquiry and interviewing techniques were applied to generate data for this paper. To be precise, secondary school teacher representatives serving in the School Governing Body and Representative Council of Learners were allowed to narrate from their own angles the contribution of schooling disharmony, trauma and fatherlessness of some secondary school learners to the production of excellent learner results. In addition, teacher and learner representatives were allowed to share that which they regarded to be the solution to the perennial discourse of how the absence of a father figure at home impacts negatively on the scholastic performance of some secondary school learners. To corroborate and triangulate the gleaned data, interviewing was conducted with those research participants which provided narrative enquiry. Altogether, a total of 12 research participants were interviewed regarding teaching angry, traumatised and fatherless learners in a secondary school context. Interviewing responses were audiotaped for transcription purposes later on. Both the narrative enquiry and the interviewing technique emerged very useful in terms of accessing information germane to the lack of a father figure at home and its impact on the scholastic learner performance of some secondary schools.<sup>49</sup>

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings arrived at in this paper are in relation to the research topic which focused on exploring how fatherlessness contributes to pulling hard with their studies by some public secondary school learners from the perspective of teachers serving in the School Governing Body and the Representative Council of Learners. The basis of the findings is the analysed data which were generated through the narrative inquiry and the interviewing technique. Responses of the 12 research participants were explored as regards the scholastic achievement of pupils in public secondary schools in relation to the experienced condition of fatherlessness, anger and trauma by some learners from the viewpoint of the representative of teachers and learners. As part of sharing and discussing the findings in a clear and free-from-ambiguity fashion, the 12 research participants

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<sup>45</sup> Mangena, "Rallying to Defend Democracy."

<sup>46</sup> K.C. Moloi, *The School as a Learning Organisation*. (Pretoria: Van Schaik, 2005).

<sup>47</sup> Equal Education, "School Infrastructure."

<sup>48</sup> Ramrathan, "Learner Poor Performance: Provoking Bourdieu's Key Concepts in Analysing School Education in South Africa."

<sup>49</sup> Meador, "The Role of the Principal in School."

interviewed in this paper are being referred to as Respondents A up to F referring to representatives of teachers serving in the School Governing Body and Respondents G up to L referring to representatives of learners. That was done to protect the actual identities of those research participants. Paying attention only to teachers serving in the School Governing Body and the Representative Council of learners ought not to create an impression that every time there is dissatisfactory scholastic learner performance in secondary schooling, it could be teachers and learners alone who are the instigators. A host of factors and variables are likely to be behind the performance or underperformance of learners. However, the context of this paper necessitated that the focus be placed on the perspective of teachers and learners in relation to anger, trauma and fatherlessness by some secondary school learners.<sup>50</sup>

In view of dissatisfactory scholastic learner performance in secondary schools having been debated from angles such as the principal's leadership role, teacher leadership and others, the researcher felt a need to debate it this time from the unique angle of the emotional stability of students. Interpretivism and the Learning Organisation Philosophy in partnership with the qualitative research paradigm, were adequately instrumental in helping in the analysis of data to ultimately emerge with these findings. The various themes that underscored the interviews were: a sense of insecurity, a product of an identity crisis, the harrowing pain of growing up without a father, the impact of denial by a blood father, the absence of enlightened school leadership, mocking by fellow learners and becoming a victim of grade repetition.

#### **a. A Sense of Insecurity**

Statistics reveal that 70% of learners in secondary schools are fatherless.<sup>51</sup> This is indeed a big problem experienced by schools whose origin is in a society. Such a problem requires a resolution in view of its impact on the produced schooling results. One of the findings in this paper is about a sense of insecurity which some public secondary school learners showcase when at school. A school is a place of learning. Pupils at school are likely to learn and progress or achieve when experiencing a sense of safety and security. Where learners experience insecurity when at school due to coming from families without father figures, learning could be impacted negatively.<sup>52</sup> The reality is that fatherlessness which conjures up a feeling of anger and trauma to the adolescents, the majority of whom are populating secondary schools, makes it difficult for pupils to cope with their studies having grown up in a space with no father figure. This affects their assimilation of the delivered learning content at school.

On this matter, Teacher A of School E reasons,

*"I confirm that secondary school pupils from homes with father figures outperform those from houses without fathers and this is based on the latter having a missing element in their life which intimidates and haunts them to see a school as a scary and insecure place for them to learn and build a nice future."*

RCL Chairperson C of School A stated,

*"As long as a school is an extension of a home or a society, every good thing occurring at home is likely to continue at school and every negative thing witnessed at home can proceed at school such as being taught by male teachers which learners are not used to because of growing up in home spaces without father figures, something which makes schooling an insecure learning environment which will be difficult to yield positive learner results."*

The implication is that secondary schools need to recognise and acknowledge that learners under their tutelage originate from diverse family settings that determine the success of classroom lessons and not base everything on the presence or the absence of the father figure from those homes. Summing up what has been articulated by the research participants, it is clear that 21<sup>st</sup>-century pupils are different from their predecessors for the sake of excellent scholastic learner results. Clarke and Equal Education align themselves with the above view when advising that failing to create a safe and secure teaching and learning atmosphere for all categories of pupils could prevent a school from having all pupils learn and achieve higher laurels.<sup>53</sup> Upon altering and

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<sup>50</sup> R.J. Botha, "The Role of the School Principal in the Case Study of Various Member's Perceptions.," *Journal of Social Science*, 30, no. 3 (2017): 263-271.; Juan and Visser, "Home and School Environmental Determinants of Science Achievement of South African Students."

<sup>51</sup> Maliba, "Fatherlessness Unravels Harrowing Pain of Growing up with Absent Dad. ."

<sup>52</sup> A Bernstein and J McCarthy, "Teachers' Poor Value for Money: Incentives for Good Educators Need to Be Introduced but the Challenge Is Deeper than Training and Skills Only," *The Star* 5 (2011); N.S. Modiba, "Every Educational Journey Has a Destiny" (Capricorn District, Limpopo Province., August 1, 2011); S. Mgxashe, "Time for This Carelessness with Our Lives to Be Stopped, Mr President," *Sowetan*, , December 7, 2011; H. Mueller, "Advocate's Scandal Just a Tip of the Iceberg.," *The Star*, October 5, 2011.

<sup>53</sup> A. Clarke, *The Handbook of School Governors* (Cape Town: Kate McCallum, 2009); Equal Education, "School Infrastructure."

evolving the teaching and learning space exudes safety and security for every pupil. Thus dissatisfactory scholastic learner performance by some secondary school pupils could be reversed.<sup>54</sup>

### **b. A product of identity crisis**

The need for every person young or old to have an intact identity cannot be stressed more in the current modern-day lifestyle. This has been necessitated by the reality that without a firm identity one could develop an anxiety disorder.<sup>55</sup> In the context of schooling, anger and trauma triggered by the absence of a father figure at home could escalate into an identity crisis. This is one of the conditions that serves as a barrier to successful assimilation of the learning content at school. Furthermore, that is why one of the findings in this paper centres around highlighting how learner anger at schools could be the product of an identity crisis which spills over from home to school. Dooms unveils that for a pupil experiencing an identity crisis orchestrated by the anger of not knowing one's father, finding that father could be synonymous with finding the lost identity.<sup>56</sup> Loss of identity by a learner for whatever reason could serve as a serious setback during the schooling moment of a learner.

On the above matter, a Teacher Representative D of School E submitted that

*"I continue to harbour a shocking experience of how I had to be a class teacher and a subject teacher to pupils in identity crisis who were not coping with their studies until they saw a way out as dropping out from schooling to the disappointment of all teachers who have known them for long and who remained sympathetic to those pupils and their wrong and unsustainable decision which was evitable."*

RCL Chairperson G of School C retorted

*"Fatherlessness is a pain to a learner that never heals as it keeps on re-emerging and reappearing and thus nourishes the condition of identity crisis which normally secondary school pupils who are at the adolescence stage, struggle to completely overcome to lead a stable life lived by children with father figures in their home spaces."*

On the basis of the utterances of the research respondents, it is likely to take long before the longstanding problem of anger and trauma as instigated by the condition of fatherlessness to secondary school learners, is completely circumvented from persisting to disturb fruitful instructional practices in secondary schools. Where learners have overcome identity crises, they could be teachable and when assessed, they are likely to consistently perform and thus contribute to the increase of the number of well-performing secondary schools. In an educational institution, the challenge of an identity crisis has to be identified and processes put in place to formulate solutions based on the cause of that problem.<sup>57</sup> In this context, the problem is fatherlessness which creates an identity crisis for a learner. That psychological condition of identity crisis could prevent a learner from excelling in his/her schoolwork until the hurdle of fatherlessness is resolved.<sup>58</sup>

### **c A harrowing pain of growing up without a father**

Children are born in this world by a male and a female and any child who has to grow up in the absence of any of the parents, particularly a father, is affected negatively.<sup>59</sup> The presence of a father figure in a household contributes to the shaping of certain behavioural patterns in children. That is why children who grow up missing one of their parents are generally bitter and angry. That bitterness and anger is a confirmation of a pain of longing for the other parent who is nowhere to be found. The unfortunate part of the mentioned pain is that it interferes with the imbibing of the educational content at school. In addition, the pain emerges as a serious obstacle as regards strange behaviour which pupils who are missing their fathers normally display when at school. Demonstration of alien behaviour by a pupil who is missing her father when at school suggests that such a child is not likely to cope with her studies due to the pain factor.<sup>60</sup> Fatherless children are more likely to display anger and aggression toward life and everything around them. This serves as another dimension from which the debated underperformance of secondary schools could be looked at. To be explicit, some secondary schools could experience perpetual underachievement of their pupils just because the bulk of those learners are missing

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<sup>54</sup> Kumalo, "Autumn: A Time to Harvest Spiritual Growth."

<sup>55</sup> Masango, "Some Mental Health Disorders Misunderstood."

<sup>56</sup> Dooms, "South Africans Feel Unsafe on the Streets and in Their Homes."

<sup>57</sup> Clarke, *The Handbook of School Governors*; Kehdinga George Fomunyam, "The Ideological Ware as Key to Improving Learner Performance," *Journal of Educational Studies* 16, no. 1 (2017): 108–25; Meador, "The Role of the Principal in School."

<sup>58</sup> Maliba, "Fatherlessness Unravels Harrowing Pain of Growing up with Absent Dad."; Masango, "Some Mental Health Disorders Misunderstood."

<sup>59</sup> Holten, "Youth Need Role Models to Positively Transform SA."

<sup>60</sup> Maliba, "Fatherlessness Unravels Harrowing Pain of Growing up with Absent Dad."



their fathers and thus could be receiving the delivery of school lessons under a very hostile and disturbed learning condition and mood of anger. No secondary school clear with its mandate has to celebrate any form of learner underachievement. Any underperformance irrespective of its severity has to be resolved. Doing so would be confirming that the delivery of an educational service has to promote and facilitate learner and institutional performance. Those who lord over schools and those ruled need to ascertain the alignment of valuing the achievement of learners at all times. This shall start with paying attention to the anger harboured by some learners through creating an inducing schooling harmony.

On this matter, Teacher Representative C of School F stressed that

*“getting secondary schools to perform to the highest level begins with a school identifying all emotionally troubled learners, doing something about their moods and condition with the aim of putting them in the right frame of mind to learn and succeed like fellow pupils who could be termed to be free from disturbing anger.”*

RCL Chairperson D of School B contended that

*“the serious mistake which nearly all black secondary schools commit is failure to ascertain that all frustrations, embarrassments and fits of anger which learners come to school with are first assuaged prior to the delivery of successful classroom lessons”*

The expressed views by the respondents, emphasise the need for secondary schools in the 21<sup>st</sup> century to be able to intervene as part of resolving destructive fits of anger which pupils normally come to school with. Failure to resolve these anger issues means impressive learner performance will be impossible to produce. All efforts have to be made to create and maintain a culture of learner and institutional performance at all times. Ramphela asserts that in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, institutions need to go the extra mile to cajole learners to open up about their anger and to receive appropriate interventions to enable those pupils to cope with academic schooling activities.<sup>61</sup> Modiba and Juan and Visser articulate that current educational institutions deserve and qualify for the deployment of seasoned institutional incumbents who are capable of de-routinizing secondary schools to service the crop of learners there to keep and maintain the efficacy of secondary schools.<sup>62</sup> Evidently, the pain of growing up without a father could serve as a hurdle to successful learning at school especially where the inspiring schooling harmony is missing.

#### **d. The impact of denial by blood father**

There is an adequate shame of growing up without a father. The shame aggravates when one grows up knowing his father who flatly denies being the blood father. This creates an identity crisis for a child and could impact negatively on the scholastic performance of a child. To substitute the disowning father, children normally resort to the creation of imaginary fathers at school as a strategy and ploy to avert being made fun of by other children with fathers.<sup>63</sup> The behaviour of fatherless children at school underscores the pressure of being a learner in the midst of fellow pupils with fathers when one's father disowns him/her.<sup>64</sup> There is normally a question of whether the pain of being fatherless ever heals. The response to such a question is that even if such pain ever heals, however, in an event where one is flatly rejected and disowned by a blood father, that kind of pain of anger may live with one to the grave. This is to imply that the pain of a child being rejected by a blood father rarely heals. The unfortunate outcome as regards this kind of pain of anger is that it interferes with the assimilation of the learning content inside a classroom by a victim, namely, a learner.

On this issue of being denied by a blood father, Teacher C of School E narrated

*“Although in the main in life, women are regarded to be evil, when coming to the rejection of own children by blood fathers, for the first time men emerge being more evil than women, a societal problem worth confronting and addressing to reduce the number of children in schools who grow up without fathers when their blood fathers are still alive and kicking.”*

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<sup>61</sup> M. Ramphela, “The Culture of Impunity,” *City Press*, August 14, 2011.

<sup>62</sup> N.S. Modiba, “Every Learner Schools for Himself or Herself Not for the Parents” (Capricorn District, Limpopo Province., May 9, 2012); Juan and Visser, “Home and School Environmental Determinants of Science Achievement of South African Students.”

<sup>63</sup> Dooms, “South Africans Feel Unsafe on the Streets and in Their Homes.”

<sup>64</sup> P. Arden, *It's Not How Good You Are, It's How Good You Want to Be* (New York : Phaidon, 2013); Botha, “The Role of the School Principal in the Case Study of Various Member's Perceptions.”; Maliba, “Fatherlessness Unravels Harrowing Pain of Growing up with Absent Dad. ”

RCL Chairperson D of the same school reiterated

*“The problem of fatherless children in schools could be avoided if the social mores of a society could be abided by adults in the form of making it mandatory for all men to shoulder responsibility for the fathering of their own children as a way of supporting those children to take schooling seriously and use it to prepare for their brightest future in a schooling environment where such children are free from any pain of anger induced by the rejection of a blood father.”*

The responses of the research participants paint a bleak picture of how much a society suffers in its attempt to bring up children who are free from the pains of anger inflicted on them by irresponsible fathers, who deny their fatherhood in broad daylight. Mabote and Ramrathan posit that every school prescribes for either its greatness or otherwise through the manner of consistently assuaging pains which children come to school with such as that of anger of being denied by blood fathers.<sup>65</sup> This is a pain with the potential of wreaking havoc on the kind of future which an angry learner at school attempts to prepare. A carefully managed schooling harmony could enable a troubled pupil to learn and progress like the rest.

#### **e. Absence of enlightened school leadership**

Although the rise and fall of a secondary school is ascribed to diverse factors, without doubt, enlightened school leadership contributes in no small amount to the reputation of an educational institution. The pain or anger generated by fatherlessness on the side of some public secondary school learners could be lessened by the existence of an enlightened school leadership.<sup>66</sup> It is such a leadership which could initiate a programme of identifying all children without fathers and how much are they coping with their scholastic activities. The purpose of such an initiative will be to determine how much the anger factor plays a role in the disturbance of such learners from excelling with their schoolwork. Learners who are angry as a result of harbouring the pain of being fatherless could easily be a child at risk with regard to scholastic performance. Where such children are being ignored due to the absence of enlightened school leadership, they could easily repeat grades before they finally drop out of school. Enlightened school leadership could become handy in salvaging the future of such children by means of availing any kind of support and counselling which could make a positive difference and impact in their lives. That is why Turner and Bambalele stress that tried and tested managers and leaders have to be deployed to public secondary schools, particularly where angry learners are in the majority, to address the severity of anger and to pick up the level of educational delivery there to resemble that of great schools where no single pupil learns being in an angry mood.<sup>67</sup> Holten points out that enlightened school leadership possesses the capacity to rehabilitate angry and distressed learners into functional and high-performing pupils.<sup>68</sup>

About this issue a Teacher Representative E of School B remarked

*“The continuous challenge of secondary schools persisting to treat pupils in an identical fashion wherein learners with anger are being ignored on the basis that they may not be in majority in a school leads to many schools not being able to register the earmarked 100% pass performance due to placing little attention to another section of the learner population, namely, the angry learners.”*

RCL Chairperson E of School B emphasized

*“it is not impossible to get rid of all the angry pupils in secondary schools, more so, that they may not constitute the largest percentage of the learner population, through stressing the application of visionary and ethical school leadership that service every pupil individually and collectively for the benefit and development of a society at large.”*

The expressed views explicitly suggest that since it is pupils who create a great reputation for their schools, then in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, such learners have to be treated differently and heterogeneously compared to their predecessors as far as partaking in their own lessons goes. This stands to enable them to enliven the schooling set-ups, where the bulk of teachers populating those schools normally lament the disinterest of pupils in their own schoolwork. This matter could also be construed to mean that in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, every learner in

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<sup>65</sup> M.D. Mabote, “Why Schools Underperform: Some General Causative Factors. ” (Capricorn District. Limpopo Province, February 16, 2008); Ramrathan, “Learner Poor Performance: Provoking Bourdieu’s Key Concepts in Analysing School Education in South Africa.”

<sup>66</sup> M. Koka and P. Dlamini, “ Alcohol Abuse and Financial Dependency Fuel GBV in SA: Experts,” *Sowetan*, May 23, 2022.

<sup>67</sup> A. Turner, *Born to Succeed*. (London: The Falmer Press, 2000); Bambalele, “Rapetsoa Acts on Violence as He Reworks Our Cry”.

<sup>68</sup> Holten, “Youth Need Role Models to Positively Transform SA. .”

secondary school be angry or happy, has to matter in the interest of producing for a society learners who are free from any form of anger and pain that are known to disturb and interfere with the quality of teaching and learning. Modiba, Gae, Gqirana and Lara sum this up remarkably when observing that nowadays, the nature of interactions between learners and teachers have to be different to enable pupils to make their secondary schools institutions of choice.<sup>69</sup> This happens when every secondary school services both angry and happy learners with quality instructional lessons.

#### **f. Mocking by fellow learners**

Botha and Lee reason that secondary schools are largely populated with adolescents who still enjoy mocking one another.<sup>70</sup> This is understandable given that those pupils are at a particular stage of growth or development. The habit of mocking could become unbearable to a fatherless child. This is evident by the manner in which some of the secondary school learners attempt to deal with the burden of being mocked at school due to being fatherless. Owing to the shame of being without a father, some secondary school pupils resort to driving away the shame by creating imaginary fathers to avoid being made fun of by their fellow pupils.<sup>71</sup>

On this aspect, a Teacher Representative A of School B stressed:

*“In my many experiences as a teacher in a public secondary school, I have come to conclude that fatherlessness to a secondary school adolescent and the pain and anger it creates, is a terrible pandemic deserving to be corrected due to meddling with teaching and learning in the sense of it making it difficult to offer quality instructions, especially to pupils who are victims of pain and anger as generated by the fatherlessness condition.”*

RCL Chairperson F of School E confirmed:

*“Secondary schools that are proactive in thought and practice are likely to be agile in developing mocking policies as a way of ascertaining that no single pupil feels out of place when at school as a result of being mocked about this or that especially on the problem of lack of a father at home which could drive some learners to protect themselves against mocking by creating imaginary fathers with a purpose of hiding their fatherlessness status and gaining approval and acceptability by their peers.”*

One key lesson drawn from how proactive schools think and act is that, they attempt to prepare almost everything with astuteness and attention to detail. Their proactive proclivity enables such secondary schools to do something whenever faced with learners who are experiencing pain and anger at being fatherless which normally interferes with excellent performance in schooling activities by the affected pupils. Ramphela displays her invaluable experience in schooling when accentuating the need to completely overhaul the South African education system to make it functional and to contribute to the transformation of myriad learners with diverse learning obstacles such as pain and anger induced by the condition of fatherlessness from home.<sup>72</sup> This is supported by Kuseka and Bush et al, who emphasised that secondary schools, need to learn to resort to their own witticism to wrench themselves out of the welter of myriad difficulties of this century, some of which include the witnessed perpetual learner underachievement which is traceable to the fatherlessness pain and anger which pupils are harbouring.<sup>73</sup> A carefully managed schooling harmony helps to mitigate the anger and pain of fatherlessness.

#### **g. Becoming a Victim of Grade Repetition**

According to Holten, pained and angry learners could easily become victims of grade repetition and thus compromise institutional functionality.<sup>74</sup> Not many non-educational practitioners are aware of the dangers and impact of grade repetition on the society and economy. In the first place, this is a waste of resources in the sense that the very same chair which a grade repeater sits on twice could have better been occupied by the other education customer. From an economic point of view, it is an abuse of economic resources that a learner has to do a grade more than once before qualifying to go to the next grade. All such could be averted if the effects of

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<sup>69</sup> Modiba, “ Every Learner Schools for Himself or Herself Not for the Parents”; W. Gae, “Primary School Learners’ Perspectives on Factors That Impact Their Learning and Wellbeing at School ” (Stellenbosch University, 2016); Gqirana, “Without Resources Rural Schools Will Continue to Underperform ”; Lara, “School Identity in the Modern World.”

<sup>70</sup> M Botha, “Let’s Be Proactive and Not Vindictive When Dealing with Bullying Children,” *Sowetan*, 2021; Lee, “Schools Must Educate Children on the Dangers of Drug Abuse.”

<sup>71</sup> Maliba, “ Fatherlessness Unravels Harrowing Pain of Growing up with Absent Dad. .”

<sup>72</sup> Ramphela, “The Culture of Impunity.”

<sup>73</sup> P. Kuseka, “The Power Within ,” *Sunday Sun*, July 15, 2008; T. Bush et al., *External Evaluation Research Report of the Advanced Certificate in Education: 30-School Leadership and Management* (Pretoria : Zenex Foundation., 2019).

<sup>74</sup> Holten, “Youth Need Role Models to Positively Transform SA. .”

fatherlessness on schooling could be better managed timeously. The pain and anger which fatherless children bring to schools require attention before they disturb and interfere with learning. An appropriate schooling harmony could be a remedy. Omar posits that by virtue of experiencing emotional and spiritual torture in the form of growing up without fathers, such learners deserve sufficient counselling and the provision of adequate psycho-social support to facilitate their adaptation to schooling work just like pupils with fathers from homes.<sup>75</sup> Where secondary schools treat learners as if they are all free from the pain and anger of fatherlessness, scholastic learner results could lead to a rude shock in terms of being below par and preparing secondary pupils for a despicable grade repetition.

On the mentioned issue, Teacher Representative A of School F stated:

*“There are countries in Africa where the repetition of a grade by particularly secondary school learners is an alien phenomenon, precisely because the kind of education systems provided in those countries do cater for all categories of pupils with the sole purpose that when a year ends none of a pupil finds herself having to repeat a grade like it is a common practice in countries like South Africa, where factors that create grade repetition such as learner pain and anger derived from fatherlessness are taken for granted until they wreak a havoc to the yielding of impressive learner results.”*

RCL Chairperson E of School D also stated:

*“it is a point beyond dispute that massive learner repetition which is associated more with coming to school harbouring pain and anger of growing up in a fatherless home environment due to various reasons such as being denied and dumped by a blood father at times owing to a child herself lacking adequate order and discipline prescribed by the family, could be something which consumes much of the teaching and the learning time to the level of ushering in unpleasant learner grade repetition.”*

The articulated frustrations by research respondents, who are teacher representatives serving in the School Governing Body and the Representative Council of Learners over secondary schools churning out grade repeaters, is indeed, a concern worth overcoming by rolling back any form of grade repetition in public secondary schools. Bernstein and McCarthy, Fomunyam, Equal Education and Sobuwa contend that the difficulties associated with grade repetition in public secondary schools transcend the daily challenges faced by myriad educational institutions and require complex, comprehensive and dynamic approaches, inclusive of the concerted multi-disciplinary and multi-stakeholder interventions.<sup>76</sup>

## SUMMARY

The narrative enquiry and the interviewing techniques together with the two selected theoretical perspectives, have provided a better context within which the entire paper had to be located and comprehended. Small wonder that the findings revealed that learner anger and educational achievement or the production of exquisite scholastic learner results are incompatible. Finally, learner anger as a product of fatherlessness from home, is a societal problem that requires a multi-sectoral intervention strategy to blunt its sharpness against disturbing the production of impressive learner results. Angry learners could be on the verge of producing mouth-watering learner results upon being counselled and being given the requisite psycho-social support against the pain and anger of growing up in a fatherless set-up and operating in an inducing schooling system.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- There is a need for public secondary schools to prioritise the provision of counselling and psycho-social support to learners from fatherless homes to contribute to their emotional and mental stability.
- In addition, public secondary schools need to regard and approach learner anger as a longstanding societal problem that requires a multi-sectoral intervention strategy to mitigate its severity in a schooling context.
- Furthermore, there is a need for secondary schools to eradicate the sense of insecurity experienced by some learners due to coming from homes without fathers, which aggravates those learners' identity crisis to the peril of disturbing the production of mouth-watering learner results.
- Moreover, there is a need for public secondary schools to put learner anger and trauma under check in the form of ascertaining that no mocking by fellow learners occurs.

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<sup>75</sup> Y. .A. Omar, “Wanted Political Entrepreneurs to Forge a Common Nationhood in SA,” *Sowetan*, October 4, 2019.

<sup>76</sup> Bernstein and McCarthy, “Teachers’ Poor Value for Money: Incentives for Good Educators Need to Be Introduced but the Challenge Is Deeper than Training and Skills Only”; Fomunyam, “The Ideological Ware as Key to Improving Learner Performance”; Equal Education, “School Infrastructure”; Sobuwa, “Teacher Handbook Calls for Change InClasses. .”

- There is also a need by public secondary schools to apply enlightened school leadership that will encourage no concealment of the harrowing pain of growing up without a father by learners with the purpose of supporting those pupils to overcome that painful condition before it derails and disturbs their schooling focus. An enlightened school leadership has the potential of judiciously identifying angry learners in a school whose anger is based on being denied by their blood fathers, something which when poorly managed could trigger learner grade repetition. The above efforts are necessary in view of the perennial underachievement of some public secondary schools, especially in Limpopo Province, South Africa. To sum up, the researcher recommends an emergency response plan by public secondary schools in order to confront and contain the rising problem of learner anger in schools.

## CONCLUSION

As part of winding up this paper, the researcher declares that indeed workplace or schooling harmony has a share or a contribution to the institutional functionality of secondary schools. Evidently, secondary schools that make efforts to expose their learners to a schooling milieu characterised by harmony are in a better position to maintain functional and high-performing educational institutions. This results from the fact that secondary school learners from hostile family backgrounds like where there is an absence of a father figure, learners are likely to harbour uncontrollable anger that could meddle with their studies. Such learners could prevent an educational institution from becoming a functional and high-performing one by virtue of those learners persistently underperforming with their school results. On that basis, workplace or schooling harmony deserves to be carefully managed in view of its capability to trigger functional and high-performing secondary schools basing everything on the nature and quality of learner results produced by secondary schools.

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## ABOUT AUTHOR

Prof. Ngwako Solomon Modiba has been in the employ of the University of Limpopo, South Africa for more than a decade, in the Department of Education Studies, School of Education, Faculty of Humanities. His position is that of a Research Professor in the mentioned department. Although his field of speciality is Educational Management, he is inter-disciplinary in his scholarship. This is being confirmed by myriad papers authored that are inter-disciplinary in content and nature. He prides himself in remaining inter-disciplinary other than solely focusing his Journal articles on his research niche areas such as decolonisation of schools, transformation, functionality, performance, leadership and management of educational institutions.