

The Impact of Socio-economic Factors on the Performance of Selected High School Learners in the Western Cape Province, South Africa

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ABSTRACT The quality education has been considered as a cornerstone of economic development and social transformation. It is therefore, educational quality and its development have been regarded as indispensable for the teaching and learning process. The World Economic Forum in April 2013 ranked South Africa as second from last in the world for math and science education, just ahead of Yemen. South Africa's schools fare poorly in international comparison, even among African countries. This research paper addresses some of the Socio-economic factors that contribute for the underperformance of learners in secondary schools in the Western Cape province of South Africa. By definition, schools are categorised as underperforming if they do not obtain a pass rate of at least 60% in the National Senior Certificate Examinations. The underperforming schools are mainly located in the townships schools and schools in informal settlements with peculiar contexts. An attempt is made in this paper to delve the socioeconomic circumstances of learners' attending underperforming schools in the Western Cape Province and show that learners at these schools face a number of socioeconomic challenges which limits their ability to achieve.