

# Perceptions of Learners in Rural Schools in Zimbabwe Regarding the Factors Influencing Their Academic Achievement

Christa Beyers<sup>1</sup>, Miriam Mugabe<sup>2</sup>

*<sup>1,2</sup>University of the Free State*

## Abstract

The growing performance gap between learners attending rural schools and those attending top tier schools in Zimbabwe remains a concern that needs to be addressed in order to assist all learners to develop holistically. This study aims to investigate what learners attending rural schools perceive as challenges which hinder their academic achievement. This qualitative study was executed by making use of interviews with eight (8) grade six learners. We furthermore interviewed one parent and one teacher to triangulate the data obtained. The findings suggest that there is a direct association between the investment by the school in the pupils' education and what the pupils produce. This is compounded by the environment which they live in - shortage of food, lack of models, lack of parental concern and guidance on school issues - which are all factors perceived as influencing their academic achievement. We end with suggestions for future research that might deepen our understanding of the important roles that both teachers and parents can play in meeting the needs that these learners have.

**Keywords:** Academic achievement, motivation, parents, socio-economic, teachers