

## When Expiry Date for Educational Mediocrity Dawns: A Case of Three Selected Secondary Schools

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**ABSTRACT** The paper examines educational scars endured by underperforming schools after resilience from underachievement to high performance. This is a case study of three secondary schools, premised on a qualitative research and underscored by the Phenomenological Approach and the Learning Organisation Philosophy. The research question guiding the paper is: what enables the vestiges of underperformance to persist to linger in the minds of institutional incumbents, long after a school's resilience? Data were collected with literature study and interviewing technique. Three secondary schools were conveniently sampled out of thirteen from Kgakotlou Circuit in Capricorn District of Limpopo Province. Principal findings reveal that underachievement sticks in the minds of institutional incumbents. Furthermore, an institution that once underperformed, has a great likelihood of experiencing its recurrence in no time. Finally, educational mediocrity can never replace excellence for ever. The researcher recommends that further studies on educational scars left behind by institutional underperformance be undertaken.

### INTRODUCTION

One educational institution underperforming is one too many. Every learning institution has to avert underperformance. This is in view of it resulting in learning gaps that negatively impacts on learner attainment and also having a potential of leading to learning difficulties in later years (Govender 2016: 9). The active involvement of all the institutional incumbents to ward off organisational underperformance is necessary. That aims at keeping schools to be high performing institutions. When a school performs or underachieves, people therein, are likely to have a share to that state of affairs. That in itself underscores the central role played by people to the success or downfall of an institution (Motsepe 2015:18). There is a need for organisational heads never to make management and leadership of schools a one man show. Keeping that as a joint venture allows the meaningful and fruitful participation of every institutional member (Chikoko 2007: 28; Crow 2007: 69). Since maverick scholastic learner achievement in every school resides in that school's classrooms, there is adequate sense in keeping on reminding every educator that he is a manager and leader in his own right despite the position he occupies. This connects well with the focus of the paper which is examining the educational scars which underperforming learning institutions endure

after resilience from underachievement to high performance (Ntadane 2015: 7). This therefore, calls for the exquisite execution of the management functions such as planning, organising, leading and controlling by all institutional members at all times. When that happens, then a school stands to operate to the living dictum of the five p's which are that proper planning prevents poor performance. This signifies that every school holds a key to its own greatness. This further, confirms that it is actually not the great school that makes great learners, but great learners that make great schools (Watson 2015). In a school context, learners are likely to be great by virtue of being exposed to great teaching (Olivier 2012). That is why the phrase "great teaching great learning". As part of keeping schools functional and high performing institutions, a question to pose is: what is it that great teaching which leads to great learning entails? The answer is that this is a kind and type of teaching which allows a teacher to teach not according to his own preferential teaching style but according to a learner's preferential learning style. This implies that it is the kind of teaching which is accompanied by learning which qualifies to be categorised great or superior in terms of its efficacy (Duke et al. 2007:15; Porter 2016: 23).

Great learning by pupils is produced when learners partake in their own studies. This hap-

pens when teaching is not made a one man show wherein it is only the educator in the classroom who talks with pupils being learning passengers. Learners in a classroom have to be made to vacate their learning passenger seats to occupy the learning driver seats to drive their own learning. Learner's right frame of mind matters to enable them to be receptive and participate meaningfully and fruitfully in the lesson. An educator is awaited to create enabling classroom conditions that facilitate such a right frame of mind. Educators who are tall in educational patience, educational passion and educational compassion for all their learners, do succeed in that regard. Fleisch et al. (2016: 9) emphasise that better instructional practices in the classroom can make a difference, besides any resource constraints. Research evidence confirms that where an educator demonstrates unequalled patience, love and empathy for the success of all learners under his tutelage, learners end up reciprocating and brilliant learner results become the confirmation (Machpheroon et al. 2007: 66; Day 2007: 41).

Remembering the heterogeneity of learners in the classroom helps. This assists in the sense that with every lesson delivered to learners, an educator diversifies it to accommodate all learners. Coupled with this, an educator presents the lesson cooperatively as a way of enabling learners to learn from each other. Research evidence attests that where an educator is a classroom giant, he is likely to produce pupils who mirror him. An educator who perennially intends contributing massively to keeping his school functional and ever high performing, has to be a revolutionary par excellence in the classroom (Zwane 2015: 16). That is likely to spill over to the kind of learners produced in that classroom and school. This signifies that educators have to keep on revolutionising their classrooms with the intent of making learning a fun and a pleasure other than a burden to be avoided at all costs. The implication of that is to avert a culture of mediocre through underachievement from developing and entrenching itself in a school to the disadvantage of learners. In a revolutionised classroom, learners stand to be very prolific with their studies. When that happens, a room for a school to underperform and have the institution suffering the vestiges of underachievement in future, would not be there. Having said that every educator is a manager and leader in

his own right inside and outside the classroom, it therefore, makes sense to expect every educator to possess a managerial acumen for the management of his classroom as well as instructional proficiency to be able to teach successfully. This could be summarised to mean having every educator being an astute of the teaching-learning process. However, (Govender 2016: 9) cautions that there are schools in which disciplinary issues make each teaching day a nightmare for the teacher. Such could disable an educator from keeping his classroom being characterised by irrepressible sense of cheer which assists in promoting learner involvement in their own studies. Schools that incessantly perform, are characterised by classroom interactions that are ever memorable and theatrical to both learners and teachers. Such learners are likely to be great pupils because of finding themselves in the midst of great teachers who make learning fascinating, absorbing and appealing to them (Oplatka 2007:98). As such, educational mediocrity expires or disappears in schools, where efforts are being made to keep a school as a high performing institution, other than talking without walking our talk (Mangena 2016: 15). This saves and relieves schools of having to endure hang-overs or vestiges of institutional underachievement. To sum up, the rationale for this paper is to examine how schools that once underperformed, persist to endure the vestiges of underachievement long after resilience.

### Objectives

This paper sets out to examine the educational scars which underperforming learning institutions endure after bouncing back from underachievement to high performance. The second objective relates to gleaning insight as regards how educational institutions in the main, manage the vestiges of underperformance to steer an institution in a new direction free from underachievement.

### METHODOLOGY

The Phenomenological approach and the Learning Organisation Philosophy underscore this paper. These perspectives enabled the researcher to frame the paper and to glean insight on the journey by educational institutions on the replacement of mediocrity with excellence.

In addition, the perspectives shed light on the management of vestiges of underperformance after institutions have bounced back and become high performing organisations. A research question such as: to what degree does the vestiges of underperformance persist to linger around in the minds of institutional incumbents long after a school has become functional?, could at best be investigated through the guidance of the mentioned theoretical frameworks than through other research perspectives like Functionalism and Marxist theories (Moloi 2005: 56; Higgs and Smith 2010: 57). Mueller (2011: 8) advises that the Learning Organisation Philosophy is essential in terms of providing a new notion of schools being evolutionary for the purpose of keeping on improving the offered quality of teaching and learning there. This is fascinating considering that learners have to be treated to superior teaching for them to engender superior learner results. Partnering the Phenomenological approach with the Learning Organisational Philosophy emerged helpful in tracing the genesis of underperformance of schools in Capricorn District prior to schools making a transition to high performing institutions. The reality is that underachievement of secondary schools throughout the Limpopo Province and beyond cannot always be ascribed to similar circumstances (Bulbulia 2014: 5; Day 2007: 41; Hean et al. 2008: 75; Mashele 2014: 11; Modiba 2014: 2; Phendla 2008: 30). There is a need to comprehend contributing conditions and circumstances behind institutional underperformance as experienced in Capricorn District. These two frameworks remind of the value of understanding and validating interpretations in their own contextual terms instead of emphasising the need to verify interpretations against an “objective” world. The frameworks acknowledge the complexity of educational mediocrity especially as regards what triggers and orchestrates it in the case of secondary schools. For instance, the nature of the community within which a school operates could have a huge impact on the functionality or otherwise of that school. So, comprehending the source and genesis of educational mediocrity in the light of how its vestiges persist to linger around in the minds of institutional incumbents, could be a tall order to be studied with a single theoretical framework. This vividly explains why in this paper joint theoretical perspectives, namely, Phenomenology and the

Learning Organisation Philosophy, were applied simultaneously. The elected theoretical frameworks allowed the phenomenon under study to open up undisturbed. In this context, such a phenomenon was the expiry date of the educational mediocrity which was signalling the dawn of educational excellence (Bottery 2011:9; Thody 2011: 24). A transition from educational mediocrity to educational excellence leaves behind vestiges which have to be understood in the context and environment of their occurrence. Those vestiges remain lingering around in the minds of the institutional members who experienced firsthand what it is to operate and serve in the underachieving educational organisation and what it means to make a transition to a functional and high performing educational institution. To successfully, capture those vital experiences from their original and uncontaminated source, requires that the researcher preserves and conserves the territory of their occurrence (Sebola and Tonga 2009: 42; Mncube and Harber 2009: 37). That territory happens to be the Capricorn District secondary schools which is where educational mediocrity is a reality and no fiction. Phenomenology and the Learning Organisation Philosophy enabled the researcher to reach the heart and soul of the occurrence of educational mediocrity (Hord and Sommers 2008: 24; Khanare 2008: 37; Ngidi 2009:23; Khumalo 2011: 8).

Out of the population of 13 secondary schools of Kgakotlou Circuit in Capricorn District of Limpopo Province, three were conveniently sampled. Lehlaha (2011: 31) maintains that a relatively small number of participants selected, can provide the researcher with an adequate high degree of probability and true reflection of the sampling population. This is and has been the conviction of the researcher when resorting to this kind of manageable sampling (Babbie 1992: 220). The problem under study, namely, of how schools endure the educational scars they go through after bouncing back from underperformance to high performance, necessitated a convenient purposeful sampling. The sampling type is in line with the research paradigms and data construction techniques for the paper. The researcher had an interview schedule containing questions for each category of respondents (Mouton 1996: 19; Creswell 2010: 143). A developed interview schedule was piloted with similar respondents, such as teachers, learners and parents who were but not from the sampled

schools. The aim of piloting was to identify weaknesses and remedy them timeously. Literature study as partnered with in-depth interviews, helped immensely to corroborate and triangulate the secured responses from respondents (Higgs and Smith 2010: 73). Given the nature of the research problem for this paper, and the kind of data the researcher emerged with, content analysis was selected to analyse the raw constructed data. Nieuwenhuis (2007: 101) as quoted in Lehlaha (2011: 31) contends that content analysis is a systematic approach to qualitative data that analyses, identifies and summarises the message content. Using content analysis as part of Phenomenology and the Learning organisation Philosophy, focused more on examining the educational scars which underperforming learning institutions endure after resilience from underachievement to high performance. The analysis of data was never handled as a separate stage, from all other research steps. In the process of data construction, data analysis was performed and entailed sorting and constructing information into categories, formatting the information into a story, creating themes out of the data, and actually writing the text. Data analysed was generated for a specific purpose, derived from particular methodologies, looked at from a particular perspective and discussed from a particular point of view (Maykut and Morehouse 1992: 127). Data analysed for this paper, was the one constructed being about endurance of educational scars by educational institutions after resilience from underachievement to high performance. This relates to the manner in which schools managed vestiges of underperformance they went through, as a way of coping and ascertaining that they do not find themselves in similar state of affairs. Data analysed included capturing, coding and analysis into themes. An inductive approach to analysing the responses from the research participants was undertaken to allow patterns, themes, and categories to emerge rather than being imposed prior to data collection and analysis. Similar responses were grouped together into categories which were subsequently utilised for the discussion of the paper's results. This identification of themes, provided depth to the insight about individual views of educators, learners and parents pertaining to the likelihood of an educational institution reverting to underperformance because of inability to make a sustainable transition from

underperformance to performance. This relates to a learning institution being haunted by the previously experienced underperformance to the level of re-embracing that passed stage and begin to underachieve (Gurr et al. 2007: 26; Johnson 2007: 52; Ylimaki 2007: 13). The researcher analysed data pertinent to the paper, utilising the constant comparative method. This is an approach which complements content analysis in the sense of first requiring that as the first step, all the tape recorded data be transcribed and typed verbatim. Copies of transcripts were made, to be used in data analysis. Data pages were coded to their sources, that is, either from educators, from learners and from parents. Ultimately, the researcher emerged with themes and categories and applied them to discuss results of the paper (LeCompte and Preissle 1993: 163). Data analysis entailed dissecting, pulling into pieces and tearing apart the constructed data (Leedy 1993: 87; Giles 2007: 32; Brooking 2008: 47). Data analysed in this paper were generated from interviewing and from the study of literature as the identified data collection tools for the paper.

## RESULTS

### Underachievement Sticks

There is a result to the effect that underachievement persists to linger on in the minds of institutional incumbents. This signifies that once a learning institution experiences underperformance, that condition is likely to take a while before completely expunging the affected minds. This is despite the school having bounced back to high performance. Registering excellent scholastic learner performance, is part of institutional re-imaging, re-branding and re-dignifying and are no once-off events. Words of Teacher 1 of school A sums up this finding accurately when articulating that "myriad of us teachers appeared to have been in a trance in a new operational condition of high performance by our school, because of the legacy of having been in an underachieving institution for long. Our way of doing things still mirrors when we were an underperforming school". Parent 1 of school A concurs when contending that the line of distinction between a high performing school and the underachieving one is thin. Despite finding ourselves in a mode of a high performing

environment, sadly, the entire institution still thinks and acts as if we are still an underperforming school". Learner 1 of school C states that "it appears like a fallacy to contend that our school is still highly steeped in underachievement mode, judging by our way of operation, thinking, relations and interrelations as if we are still a bunch of underperformers, when in fact we are in the category of performers". All these confirm that once a school underperforms even if it later outgrows that, it will persist to show semblances and manifestations of underachievement (Hean et al. 2008: 75; Samier 2008: 7; Sowelan 2016: 12).

### **Mediocrity and Excellence as Antithesis**

There is a result to the effect that an educational institution cannot register educational excellence and mediocre at the same time. The latter is the inverse of the former. What is possible though with learning institutions is to alternate and interchange the registering of educational excellence and mediocre. This happens when in some years a school performs and in others underachieves. In an educational institution, one learner underachieving is one learner too many. This is the case because underachievement of learners borders on institutional underperformance. Schools have to be helped to desist from underachieving since this is a delay to learner advancement through schooling. Teacher 2 of school B articulates that "all schools have a potential of superseding mediocrity with excellence upon diagnosing and dealing head-on with the genesis of educational mediocrity to enable excellence to reign supreme". Learner 2 of school B asserts that "mediocrity in the form of scholastic underachievement could be curbed and combated if all learners could be exposed to great teaching which is known to be engendering great learning". Parent 2 of school B reminds that "some educational mediocrities are institutionally engendered given how less serious institutions of learning ill-prepare themselves for brilliant scholastic learner excellence year-in year-out". The shared views of research respondents confirm one indisputable point of schools either choosing to record educational mediocrity or excellence. Schools make such a choice by the manner in which they approach and execute an enterprise

of teaching and learning (Ylimaki 2007: 12; Gaziel 2008: 29; Fleish et al. 2016: 23).

### **Persistent Institutional Performance as Subverting Mediocrity**

One of the results is that an institution that incessantly produces superb scholastic learner results, ends up submerging and subverting mediocrity despite its intensity and severity. The lesson learnt is that no school has to allow underachievement to be legendary for it is pernicious and precarious in the sense that it could condition an institution to underachievement other than to high performance institution. Where educators teach learners who are in the right frame of mind, learner performance is likely to soar and enhance. Furthermore, where the manner of teaching reflects that lessons are delivered according to learners' learning styles instead of according to teachers' preferred teaching style, maverick scholastic learner performance could be guaranteed. Similar sentiments are expressed by Teacher 3 of school C when retorting that "every teacher holds a key to the success or failure of her lesson and thus to institutional performance or institutional dysfunctionality". Learner 3 of school C cautions that "the sooner all current teachers exhibit unequalled devotion to their teaching responsibility, the better it would be for all learners to learn and succeed". Parent 3 of school C remarks that "re-culturing an underperforming school with a high performance tradition and culture could be a long-term remedy to overturning institutional mediocrity" (Ismael et al. 2008:89; Ratshitanga et al. 2015: 15).

### **The Dynamics of Organisational Resilience**

One of the results emphasises that an educational institution worth its salt has to possess the resilience ability. This is mostly relevant when a school has been experiencing a slump in terms of performance especially for a couple of years. Since schools as organisations are surprising, complex and ambiguous, the significance of the resilience capability can never be stressed more. Teacher 2 of school C emphasises that "by virtue of teaching and learning being people-intensive, each institutional participant has to be able to regenerate after a slump for its own benefit and that of the organisation

served". Hence Teacher 3 of school A avers that "the vitality of current learners being in a position of standing up and dust themselves off after educational falling down is worth encouraging. This is a hallmark of a desire for forward movement with schooling." Parent 3 of school B alerts that "enabling schooling conditions and circumstances are indispensable to our current schooling to encourage the resilience mentality within all the institutional incumbents" (Menon et al. 2008: 80; Govender 2016 :9).

### **Quality Learners as Makers of Quality Schools**

One of the results emphasises that talismanic scholastic learner performance in every school, resides inside the classroom. Such exquisite learner achievement is produced by learners under the guidance and support of their teachers. This signifies that every-time when there is a brilliant institutional performance because of learners having distinguished themselves with their studies, both the school and its learners have to be heaped with praises (Brooking 2008: 49; Gaziel 2008: 24; Mangena 2016: 9). Teacher 2 of school C sums up the expressed point so poignant and vividly when reminding that "the quality in learners influences the quality of a school as an organisation." Learner 3 of school A accentuates that "since it is learners who sit for the examination and earn honours and credibility for themselves and their school on the basis of their performance, it is clear that quality learners would create a quality school." Parent 1 of school 2 agrees in emphasising that "learners have to be conditioned and trained to be industrious with their studies with the knowledge that they will earn admiration and educational popularity for their schools by their sterling learner results."

### **Quality Teacher-Learner Relations as Source of Institutional Performance**

One of the results rests on the fact that a healthy teacher-learner relations brings about institutional performance. The significance of humane relations between the teacher and learners becomes relevant, considering the truism that the teaching-learning encounter is by its very nature, a people-intensive exercise. In a classroom environment characterised by harmonious relations between classroom practitioners, learn-

er results are likely to soar and enhance. In the total scheme of things, this is possible because as long as learners are always inspired to take their studies seriously within a quality teacher-learner relations, they are likely never to disappoint in terms of engendering scintillating and superior results. As long as learner performance is exceptionally well, the educational institution would continue to be viewed to be within the category of educational excellence as against educational mediocrity (Samier 2008:10). Teacher 1 of school C captures the validity and relevance of the above argument finely when disclosing that "only teachers who are averse to institutional mediocrity are likely to always toil for institutional performance through excellent scholastic learner results". Learner 3 of school B expresses that "as long as teachers never de-humanise learners in the classroom, through the daily interrelations and interactions, learners are likely to always be spurred on to perform to the highest level and thus keep the educational institution ever functional". Parent 3 of school C notes that "the ability to clique between teachers and learners is the starting point for the production of praise-worthy learner results" (Khoza 2015: 16; Khumalo 2016: 25).

### **Institutions Refusing to Settle For Less than the Best**

One of the results relates to the point that dedicated schools go for quality institutional performance and nothing less. This is done through ascertaining that with every lesson delivered inside the classroom, the psychological and developmental readiness of all learners receive adequate attention. In addition, no classroom ever experiences lethargic teaching by learners since this has a potential of spilling over to lethargic learning by learners. Instead, in every classroom, learner heterogeneity is afforded a deserved attention. That learner diversity is coupled with cooperative learning. Finally, learner involvement in the lessons delivered is greatly encouraged as part of confirming the observation that mastering the learning content and teaching techniques by the teacher, without involving learners in classroom activities, is insufficient. Teacher 2 of school B "states that only educational institution that dedicate little time to how they roll out teaching and learning are likely to yield mediocre learner results".

Learner 2 of school C remarks that “where learners are accustomed to experiencing failure, instead of learning success, then the educational institution could be proving to be settling for less than the best as far as superb and superior institutional achievement is concerned”. Parent 3 of school C “indicates that as long as an educational organisation treats learners as if they are homogeneous inside the classroom, and proceeds to ignore learners who are at risk, by starving them of remedial classes, then the school could be heading for disaster in terms of excellent scholastic learner results”. Once again, that would be part and parcel of settling for less than the best as regards impressive and high institutional performance (Stelmach 2008:62; Mashele 2016:13).

### DISCUSSION

The aim of this paper is to examine educational scars which underperforming learning institutions endure after bouncing back from underachievement to high performance. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, there is a need for educational institutions to re-image, re-brand and re-dignify themselves to ever produce magnificent learner results (Fleisch et al. 2016: 23). Such a process enables institutions to enjoy the confidence and trust of the communities they are serving and servicing (Samier 2008: 11; Modiba 2011: 3). That also aids in ascertaining that the once experienced underperformance does not recur. Bearing educational scars by an institution of learning is a challenge enough deserving and warranting to be opposed and defeated. Succeeding in doing that, assists in divesting a school of the vestiges of underperformance that normally persist to linger on in the minds of institutional incumbents. Institutions that underperform, have to deal with the aftermath of underachievement to quickly adapt to a new condition of high performance that leads to exquisite learner results. Clearly, underperformance by a school implies a delay in terms of yielding good learner performance. Lethargic teaching and learning classroom environment, learners who do not value schooling, learners who are conditioned to failure than to success, teachers who are not averse to institutional mediocrity, learners who are averse to being teachable, learners at risk who receive no remedial teaching and ignorance of learner heterogeneity inside the

classroom, are some of the causes of institutional underachievement (Coetzee et al. 2008:25; Naidu et al. 2012: 74; Mangena 2016: 9). Tshingilane (2015: 5) advises that much as mediocrity is an inverse of excellence, there is a need for educational institutions to pursue excellence at all times for the benefit of learners entrusted to them. Doing that by schools, would be a confirmation that one learner underperforming is one too many. This is the case because the source of institutional underperformance is the underachievement of its own learners. This signifies that overcoming institutional underperformance has to begin with getting rid of it from the classroom level through having every learner performing. Ratshitanga et al. (2015: 17) reminds that the functionality of the public schooling system remains at best a work in progress. This implies that schooling in South Africa fluctuates between underperformance and performance which is where the issue of the vestiges of underachievement comes into the picture. Mashele (2016: 13) asserts that to fast-track the demise of underperformance, inside the classrooms, learners need to be encouraged to aspire to reach the highest level of knowledge heights. Apart from being a waste of resources, underperformance is undesirable in the sense that it delays the scholastic advancement of learners (Nair 2015: 5; Zwane 2015: 16). Notwithstanding its intensity and severity, educational underperformance ought not to be tolerated because it could establish itself as a new culture in an institution which may require intensive efforts for its total eradication. Conditions and circumstances that create either an achieving or an underperforming school are ever diverse. This is a point of caution for schools to remain original as regards attempts to become high performing institutions where underachievement has to be a taboo and an anathema (Macupe 2015: 7). This advises that no educational institution has to copy techniques and tactics of a neighbouring institutions exactly how they are, with the hope of using them to eradicate their underachievement which are likely to be anchored in certain environmental conditions there. The era of regarding schools to be capable of producing great learners is not now. Currently, it is a learner that makes a great school not a great school making a great learner (Govender 2016: 9). This is a shift from how schooling has been understood in the past. The shift affects how schools have to be

approached and managed in the 21st century so that they are successfully able to deal with the experienced vestiges and hang-overs of underperformance (Motsepe 2015: 18). The day every school attempts to ascertain that every lesson delivered to learners inside the classroom is in line with every learner's psychological and developmental readiness, then will it be possible for schools to outgrow the challenge of learner underachievement. This is the case because in most instances, learners do underperform because of being taught when their frame of minds were not first prepared to absorb and assimilate lessons delivered to them. Khumalo (2016:25) reminds that where educators lack the pedagogical foundation which should enable them to absorb new training interventions, they could struggle to produce quality learners who are the makers of quality or great schools. The air and spirit prevalent inside the classroom, do contribute to having learners being in the classroom environment both bodily and mentally to hear and understand every aspect of the lesson delivered to them. Lastly, desisting from treating learners as if they are homogeneous when in reality they are heterogeneous, contributes to replacing institutional underachievement with organisational performance (Khoza 2015: 16). As long as there is a synergy in the manner of teaching and learning, educational mediocrity is likely to be kept at bay. Sowetan (2016: 12) cautions that due to underperformance by some secondary schools, some learners leave homes being decent to schools and come back to the community or society as monsters. This suggests that underachievement of secondary schools has to be countered at all costs because of having unpleasant consequences for schools and their learners. The theoretical frameworks underpinning this paper, namely the Phenomenological Approach and the Learning Organisation Philosophy, have been more than helpful in this paper. For instance, given the fluidity and the unpredictability of the production of learner results by schools, by virtue of emphasising the evolutionary nature of schools, these frameworks enabled the interpretation of the findings to be placed in context. The theoretical frameworks contributed to the clear and understandable interpretation of research results for this paper.

### CONCLUSION

As it has been displayed in the discussion of the research results of this paper, both the

review of literature as well as the theoretical frameworks undergirding the paper, played a critical role in talking to the results of the paper. In addition, in this paper, literature study and the two selected theoretical perspectives, provided the better context within which the entire paper had to be located and understood. Small wonders that mediocrity and excellence in educational institutions, were exposed to be antithesis and that persistent institutional performance ultimately subverts institutional mediocrity. Lastly, research results divulged that contrary to a popular notion that it is a quality school that precedes quality learners, the opposite was found to be the case. The implication of findings of this paper for schools is that they have to keep underperformance at bay because it disturbs and destroys an opportunity for the production of excellent scholastic learner results.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Capricorn District in Limpopo Province has schools which bore the educational scars of underperformance. Research evidence ascribes this to the period of underachievement which those schools went through prior to making a transition from perennial underperformance to high performance. Bearing educational scars by an institution of learning is a challenge enough deserving and warranting to be opposed and defeated. Succeeding in doing that assists in divesting an educational organisation of the vestiges of underperformance that normally persist to linger on in the minds of institutional incumbents. On the basis of that, the researcher recommends that institutions that once underperformed have to be identified and supported more to enable them to quickly turn a new leaf from underperformance to performance. Regarding underperformance sticking, the researcher recommends counselling for institutional incumbents who at one stage experienced underachievement. On persistent institutional performance as subverting mediocrity, the researcher recommends that educational managers and leaders need to be mindful that it is not a school and its practitioners that fail when an institution underachieves, but the manner of rolling out an enterprise of teaching and learning. Pertaining to the dynamics of organisational resilience, the investigator recommends for educational institutions which perennially underperform to con-

sider very seriously the idea of adopting and building the resilience mentality in their institutions in order to persist to have a hope that one day they would turn a tide as regards underperformance. On the quality learners as makers of quality schools, the researcher recommends that learners in schools be spurred on to look at themselves anew in terms of possessing a potential individually and collective to produce world-class performance for themselves and their school. To the point of the quality teacher-learner relations as a source of institutional performance, the researcher suggests that every educational institution whether performing or underperforming goes through the educational pain of creating a harmonious teaching-learning environment which is ever inspiring and stimulating for the production of spirited, memorable and theatrical learner- results. Finally, the researcher recommends that further studies be undertaken on the vestiges of underperformance that linger around the minds of institutional members long after their institutions have shed off underachievement for achievement.

### LIMITATIONS

The limitation of this paper is that it mainly concentrates on examining the educational scars which underperforming learning institutions endure after resilience from underachievement to high performance. There is a need that the paper proceeds to place adequate attention to what the genesis or the cause of those educational scars is. Even if the paper attempts to find out how educational institutions manage the vestiges of underperformance, lack of clarity on the causes of those vestiges remains a visible missing point. The other limitation is the failure by the paper to divulge roughly how long it could take an educational institution to replace mediocre results with excellent scholastic learner performance.

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