

High Failure Rate in Mathematics Examinations in Rural Senior Secondary Schools in Mthatha District, Eastern Cape: Learners' Attributions

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ABSTRACT This study sought to investigate learners' attributions on high failure rate in Mathematics examinations in rural senior secondary schools in the Mthatha District of Education. A survey design which used both quantitative and qualitative aspects of research was used in the study. Questionnaires and interview schedules were used to collect data. Participants (N=150) were made up of 75 boys and 75 girls from senior 10 secondary schools. Descriptive statistics and content analysis were used to analyse quantitative and qualitative data respectively. A frequency table was used to present quantitative data while qualitative data were presented thematically. The study revealed that learners attributed their failure mainly to external factors such as lack of human and material resources, poor teachers, poor teaching methods and bad teacher behaviour. Some learners attributed their failure to internal factors like laziness, lack of interest and absenteeism. Recommendations to improve learners' performance in mathematics were made.