

**An Explanatory Model of School Dysfunctions
from the perspectives of principals,
teachers and learners**

by

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Abstract

This thesis is based on research aimed to develop and test a systematic framework to describe and analyse dysfunctions in underperforming schools in South Africa, the Explanatory Model of School Dysfunctions. The theoretical foundation of the model was created by synthesising the literature from various disciplines and conceptualising dysfunctions in relation to their antecedents, motivations, and consequences. The model was then applied and refined on three different data sets. The three data sets included data from principals, teachers, and learners. The principal data consisted of 80 essays written by principals or their representatives, the teacher data of 40 essays from teachers in the Gauteng area, and the learner data of 1,500 open-ended responses from recent high school graduates in South Africa. Content Configuration Analysis explored how school dysfunctions varied in degree, kind, and interconnectedness. Four groups of dysfunctions were identified: dysfunctions relating to rules and rule breaking, issues of competence, resources, and issues extrinsic to the school context. After application and refinement, the Explanatory Model of School Dysfunctions was found to be a suitable model to account for the problem sets experienced by these three actor groups. The goal of this model is to provide a theory-based approach to analyse dysfunctions within schools and to invite researchers to explore these and other problems within this framework.

Keywords: Dysfunctions, organisational psychology, South African schools, principals, teachers, learners.

Declaration

I declare that this thesis has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination at any other university. **An Explanatory Model of School Dysfunctions from the perspectives of principals, teachers and learners** is my own work and all secondary sources have been appropriately acknowledged within the main text as well as in the reference section.

Zinette W. Bergman

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Chapter 1

Statement of the problem

1.1 Introduction and justification

The South African schooling system is faced with tremendous problems and is plagued with dysfunctions at almost every level (see for example the excellent analyses by Bloch, 2009, Fleisch, 2008, Taylor, 2006, Van der Berg, 2008). It becomes apparent from reviewing the literature that research on problems in schools not only covers a wide range of topics, but often identifies what seems to be contradictory problems and causes. There exists, for example, considerable discrepancy on what the problems are and how they are being caused. The fact that the causes of problems often tend to be problems in themselves, such as when a frequently absent teacher causes learners to fall behind in their work, adds yet another layer of complexity to an already convoluted situation.

Due to the sheer size of outputs on this topic and the conceptual differences between them, forming a coherent picture of the nature or kinds of problems in South African schools is not an easy task. In the absence of a unifying model, a 'headcount' of problems and their causes easily turns into what seems like a never-ending list of factors. It is therefore not surprising that Taylor (2006) found 80% of South African schools to be dysfunctional. The present research aims to develop such a unifying model and to test it on the perspectives of actors who seem to be closest to where many of these dysfunctions occur - principals, teachers, and learners.

This will be accomplished by, first, developing an analytical model, which systematically maps problem sets in relation to their antecedents, motivations, and consequences, and second, refining this analytic model by applying it on the perspectives of these three actor groups. Developing an analytic model that is congruent with the problem sets encountered by these actors will not only contribute to our understanding of the nature and degree of the problems in South Africa's

underperforming schools, but also provide a framework for context and culture-sensitive interventions and research.

1.2 Research questions and aims of the research

The aim of this research is to systematically analyse the nature and degree of problem sets found in South African schools as experienced by three different actor groups – principals, teachers, and learners. The research questions are as follows:

1. Which analytic model can best describe problems in schools?
2. How do the problems, antecedents, and consequences differ according to the views of principals, teachers, and learners?

1.3 Methodology

1.3.1 Research design

Presenting the contextually-bound subjective experiences of participants is central to the study. Therefore, a multiple case study approach was chosen. This qualitative research design is particularly suited to research problems investigating phenomena in the contexts that they occur, while examining the meaning that participants assign to these contexts (de Vaus, 2001). Multiple case studies also allow us to observe how participants experience similar situations differently, as well as to compare and contrast these different experiences in detail. This approach therefore gives us the opportunity to develop, test, and refine an analytic model aimed to analyse problems in schools from a variety of perspectives.

1.3.2 Participants

This study consisted of three different actor groups – principals, teachers, and learners. The principals consisted of 80 primary and secondary school principals or their representatives from various urban and rural primary and secondary schools in the greater Gauteng area. The second participant group consisted of 40 teachers. These teachers came from the surrounding Johannesburg area. The final group of

participants consisted of 1,500 first year learners who were enrolled in their first year of teacher training.

1.3.3 Data collection

The study made use of three different data sets, one from each of the different actor groups. Principals were asked to reflect on and write an essay about a school-related problem that they have experienced in their career. Eighty essays were collected from the principals. Similarly, teachers were asked to reflect on a problem that they have encountered at school and to write an essay about this particular event. Forty teacher essays were used during the analysis. The final data set consisted of 1,500 survey responses collected from first year teacher training learners. These responses were collected in two sweeps; one in 2010 and another in 2011.

1.3.4 Data analysis

Content Configuration Analysis (CCA) was used to analyse the data. CCA is a systematic method of analysis for non-numerical data (Bergman, 2011). The strength of this method lies in that it is context and content-specific, designed for practical application within empirical research, and easily combined with a strong theoretical base. During this study, CCA was used for multiple levels of analysis. The method, as well as the analyses, is discussed in detail in later chapters.

1.3.5 Ethical considerations

This study conforms to the codes of professional conduct set out by The American Psychological Association's *Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct* (2010). In addition to this, this study was granted ethical clearance by the UNISA ethical board.

1.3.6 Measures of trustworthiness

Several strategies were adopted throughout the research process to ensure the trustworthiness of the research. These strategies related mostly to issues of credibility and accuracy. Some of these strategies included: verifying coding practices among the different team members, triangulation of findings, using rich, thick descriptions, incorporating negative cases, as well as making use of external auditors.

1.4 Clarification of concepts

Clearly defining key terms is an important conceptual part of any research project. Operational definitions of constructs connect the theoretical underpinnings of the study with the empirical aims of the research (Bergman, *submitted*). Given the strong theoretical focus of this study in conjunction with the complexity of the topic, clarification of some of the terms is needed. The following discussion presents the operational definitions for a dysfunction, a dysfunctional school, and the Explanatory Model of School Dysfunctions:

A dysfunction is defined as “an intentional or unintentional action or position by an individual, group, or institution that impedes either partially or wholly the functioning of an organization or some of its parts by violating organizational goals, norms, or societal standards within a context relevant to the organization” (Bergman, Bergman, & Gravett, 2011:465).

A dysfunctional school is defined as “a school, in which teaching, learning, or management are significantly impeded by intentional and unintentional actions from, or positions of, one or more individuals, groups, or institutions by infringing on the school’s educational goals, norms, regulations, or societal standards relevant to the school” (Bergman, *submitted:7*).

It is important to make a further distinction with regards to dysfunctions. Although this research investigates problems in schools, it does not imply, in any way, that schools, or any other system or organisation connected to schools are dysfunctional. Even though many problems occur in these settings it is the role different actors and

situations play within the school or organisation that is emphasised and not because these systems or schools are inherently dysfunctional.

The Explanatory Model of School Dysfunctions or EMSD is defined as an analytic framework used to analyse dysfunctions in schools according to antecedents, motivations, dysfunctions, and consequences.

1.5 Research collaboration

This thesis is the result of my collaboration within a research team. The research team consisted of Prof. Max Bergman, Chair of Social Research and Research Methodology at the University of Basel, Switzerland, Prof. Sarah Gravett, Dean of the Faculty of Education at the University of Johannesburg, Divine Fuh, Crispin Girinshuti, Lena Berger, and Hugo Hanbury research associates at the University of Basel, Switzerland, and myself, Zinette Bergman, research associate at the Faculty of Education, University of Johannesburg. During these collaborations Max Bergman, Sarah Gravett, and I analysed three different data sets and published two peer-reviewed journal articles.

This is a cumulative thesis based on these publications. It consists of a framework document outlining the work and purpose of these articles. As a member of the research team and co-author of the articles my duties and responsibilities included: conducting literature reviews, analysing all three data sets in close collaboration with the other authors, making substantive contributions to the interpretation of the data sets, and co-writing and co-editing both papers. Part of our work agreement was that I would produce a Masters of Arts thesis as an extension of our collaboration. Letters of their support are provided in Appendix 11.1 and 11.2.

1.6 Division of chapters

The thesis is divided into the following nine chapters to describe in detail the different parts of the research process:

Chapter two provides the context and background of the study by reviewing the relevant literature. Literature is sorted according to the different actors under investigation and the different causal chains used to explain the problems in schools. This review illustrates how varied the literature is in relation to how problems in schools are conceptualised, analysed, and described. It is argued that in the absence of a unifying model, it is difficult to determine a coherent picture of what the problems in schools are.

Chapter three consists of a detailed discussion on all of the methodological issues relating to the research. The multiple case study design is introduced and the method of analysis, Content Configuration Analysis (CCA), is discussed. This chapter also includes a section on ethical considerations such as issues relating to credibility and accuracy.

Chapter four details the initial development phase of the Explanatory Model of School Dysfunctions (EMSD). Literature on dysfunctional organisation behaviour was reviewed to provide a theoretical background for the model. Recasting schools as organisations allowed for the operationalisation of this theoretical perspective in schools. This process identified the main components for the analysis of problems in schools, which included antecedents, motivations, dysfunctions, and consequences. The next step consisted of testing and refining the model on the perspectives of principals.

Chapter five applies the EMSD on the perspectives of the principals. This analysis refines the EMSD antecedent, motivation, dysfunctions, and consequence components by developing the subcomponents within each of these. The dysfunction component, for example, is expanded to include four different types of dysfunctions: dysfunctions relating to rule bending or rule breaking, dysfunctions relating to issues of competence, dysfunctions relating to resources, and dysfunctions relating to external factors. The principals' narratives are also analysed to map the development of dysfunctional episodes. This is done by examining how the different EMSD components are connected and illustrates how interrelated narratives are, often connecting multiple actors, situations, and structures within a single narrative.

Chapter six applies the EMSD on the 40 essays written by primary and secondary teachers from Gauteng to assess whether this model could account for the problems experienced by them. The analysis furthermore mapped the structures of dysfunctional episodes by identifying how the different components connected to each other. These findings were applied on the previously developed EMSD and it was refined and adapted to create a new model based on the perspectives of teachers.

Chapter seven applies the EMSD to the 1,500 survey responses from the learners. The aim was to test the suitability of this model to describe and analyse the problems reported by the learners. The survey responses contained mostly short answers and therefore limited the analysis mapping the internal structures of the dysfunctional episodes. However, examining how learners connected antecedents, motivations, and consequences to different dysfunctions was still revealing in itself. The EMSD was found to be a suitable framework for the analysis of the perspectives of these learners.

Chapter eight compares and contrasts the EMSDs developed from each groups' perspective. This analysis illustrates how similar these EMSDs are in kind but how they differ in relation to the degree and interconnectedness of the dysfunctions they experience. These differences are explained using the concept of the proximal contact zone, which argues that as contact with actors increase so does the exposure to dysfunctions. The chapter concludes with a detailed analysis of the different proximal contact zones of learners, teachers, and principals.

The final chapter discusses the main findings from the above result chapters. The development, refinement, and application of the EMSD are summarised and the application of this model on the perspectives of principals, teachers, and learners are described. The main findings from these analyses are presented, followed by a section on recommendations for future research, and concluding with the limitations of the study.

1.7 Summary

The aim of this research is to systematically analyse and describe the problems in South Africa's underperforming schools from the perspectives of learners, teachers, and principals. This will be done by developing and testing an analytic framework to account for these problem sets. In order to begin the process of developing such a model, a review of the relevant literature is necessary to describe the current knowledge and research available on the problems in South African schools. This review is presented in the following chapter.

Chapter 2

South African schools

2.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to provide a contextual background by highlighting the many problems research investigates in South African schools. More specifically, this review examines the various ways literature conceptualises the nature and causes of the problems in South Africa's underperforming schools. This is done by classifying the literature in two ways. In the first instance literature is sorted according to the three different actors central to this study to show the breadth of the problems associated with them. Second, literature is classified according to the different causal chains used to explain the problems in schools. This comparison illustrates how similar studies often have different outcomes, adding yet another layer of complexity to an already intricate topic. It is suggested that in the absence of a unifying model it is difficult to establish a coherent picture of the nature or degree of problems in schools.

2.2 South African literature on problems and causes in schools

The problems in South African schools are widely acknowledged (Bloch, 2009, Taylor, 2006, Fleisch, 2008, Van der Berg, 2008). We know that on any given school day, there exists a variety of problems caused by a number of actors and situations. Over the years, South African research has amassed an impressive knowledgebase on the problems in schools covering a range of topics from a variety of perspectives. The following are examples of problems associated with learners, teachers, and principals.

Research focusing on learners most frequently investigate learners' poor academic performance (Christie, 2008, Letsatsi, Williams, & Deacon, 2011, Maree, Aldous, Hattingh, Swanepoel, & van der Linde, 2006, Pretorius, 2000, Reddy, 2006, van der Berg, 2008, van der Berg & Louw, 2006). Maree and Molepo (2005), for example, investigated the effects of a maths intervention in the Limpopo province. In their

study, teachers received training in problem-based tuition strategies and then applied these in their Grade 9 and 11 classrooms. The intervention yielded moderate results and the authors found that “the trained group may have benefited somewhat from the intervention. Although their marks in mathematics did not improve after the intervention, their marks dropped statistically significantly less than the marks of the control group” (Maree & Molepo, 2005:734–735). These findings point to a complex school environment with many different problems, which are not adequately addressed by a teaching-strategy-based intervention. While explaining the relatively low impact of the intervention, the authors highlighted the contributory factors such as disadvantaged learning environments resulting from curriculum change, lack of teacher training and expertise, and learners lacking formal and informal mathematical knowledge and skills (Maree & Molepo, 2005). This study reflects many of the complex issues other studies also connect to learners’ poor academic performance such as the impact of learner drop out, poverty, and exclusion (Dieltiens & Meny-Gibert, 2008, Kamper, 2008), overage learners, and grade repetition (Motala, Dieltiens, Carrim, Kgobe, Moyo, & Rembe, 2007, Social Surveys, 2009).

Another strand of the literature portrays learners as either perpetrators or victims of a range of problems. Examples of studies where learners are the perpetrators include learners’ experiences of aggression (Botha, 2008, Breet, Myburgh, & Poggenpoel, 2010) and learners’ disruptive behaviour (Marais & Meier, 2010). On the other hand, studies emphasising how learners are victims include examples of sexual violence (Petersen, Bhana, & McKay, 2005, Prinsloo, 2005, Seedat, van Niekerk, Jewkes, Suffla, & Ratele, 2009), instances of school violence (Burton, 2008a, Burton, 2008b, Leoschut, 2008, Liang, Flisher, & Lombard, 2007, Prinsloo, 2005, Swart & Bredekamp, 2009), and the impact of HIV/AIDS and trauma (Coombe, 2001, Statistics South Africa, 2010). An interesting study done by Myburgh and Poggenpoel (2009) combines the perpetrator and victim perspectives. They investigated how learners, in this case boys, are victimised by aggression in schools on the one hand, and behave aggressively at school on the other. In their study they found, for example, that “learners’ experiences of aggression include learner to learner aggression; learner to educator aggression; and educator to learner

aggression” (451). Studies such as this one begin to explore the complex nature of problems in schools.

Problems relating to teachers can be sorted in a similar way as literature frequently portrays teachers as either victims or perpetrators of a variety of problems in schools. Examples of studies investigating the negative impact of problems on teachers include research on teachers’ experiences of school violence (Bester & du Plessis, 2010), and aggression (Botha, 2004), teachers as victims of educator-targeted bullying (de Wet, 2010), and the impact of HIV/AIDS (Louw, Shisana, Peltzer, & Zungu, 2009). Schulze and Steyn (2007), for example, used a questionnaire to identify the types of stress that 987 teachers in South Africa are exposed to. Teachers reported factors such as “uninvolved parents, poor learner discipline, lack of learner motivation, learners’ negative attitudes towards themselves, numerous changes inside and outside the school, and lack of self-esteem,” (Schulze & Steyn, 2007:691) as some of the main stressors in their professional lives. These findings begin to illustrate some of the multi-dimensional problems teachers deal with on a daily basis. Another stressor relates to the negative perception of the teaching profession and here research often shows teachers perpetrating crimes.

Examples of these kinds of studies include instances such as teachers’ involvement in gender-based violence (Dunne, Humphreys, & Leach, 2006), teachers perpetrating sexual abuse (Seedat, van Niekerk, Jewkes, Suffla, & Ratele, 2009), the use of corporal punishment (Dawes, De Sas Kropiwnicki, Kafaar, & Richter, 2005, Morrel, 2001), a lack of good teachers (McCarthy & Bernstein, 2011), the lack of leadership (Grant, 2009), and under-qualified teachers (Breier, 2008). A 2011 report compiled by the Centre for Development and Enterprise investigated the quantity and quality of South Africa’s teachers and synthesised the problems associated with teachers and the teaching profession. Some of these problems include that teachers do not teach well, that they do not teach enough, and that they are poorly managed: they come late, leave early, and do not teach on Fridays. Due to these and other reasons the study concludes that “[t]he shortage of good teachers is a key reason why the education system is underperforming” (McCarthy & Bernstein, 2011:4). Extensive as the problems are, this example also illustrates another element found in

the literature, which connects to how poorly teachers are managed. For this, and many other reasons, principals are also often blamed for the problems in schools.

In relation to principals, most research tends to focus on issues relating to leadership and cooperation (for example Bush, 2007, Botha, 2010, Mpungose, 2010, Mestry & Singh, 2007, Niemann & Kotzé, 2006, Singh, Manser, & Mestry, 2007). However, examples of other problems include ineffective management (Bush, Kiggundu, & Moorosi, 2011), the roles and skills of principals (Prew, 2007), and the stress and stereotypes associated with female principals (Moorosi, 2007). Principals often get a lot of the blame and they are often portrayed as the most important ingredient in the success of a school. A study done by Ngidi and Qwabe (2006), for example, investigated the levels of partnership between parents, teachers, and principals and attempted to establish which of these partnerships are responsible for fostering a culture of learning and teaching in schools. They found that “the factors concerning principals' poor management of schools were the most factors perceived to be contributing to the decline of a culture of teaching and learning in schools” (Ngidi & Qwabe, 2006:537). This quote illustrates that as managers of a school, principals often find themselves at the helm of the problems in schools.

Examining the kinds of problems that are associated with principals, teachers, and learners begins to illustrate the breadth of the literature available on problems in schools. Research covers a wide range of topics from academic performance to criminal behaviour to issues of leadership and management. Within these topics principals, teachers, and learners can be seen as both victims and perpetrators of a range of behaviours. There is another strand of literature which falls outside of the three groups discussed thus far. These research outputs focus on problems in schools, but do not explicitly connect these to learners, teachers, or principals. These include examples of studies on inequalities in schools (Lemon, 2004), multi-grade classes and excessive class size (Department of Basic Education, 2010, 2011), lack of administrative capabilities and resources (Crouch & Mabogoane, 2001, Fiske & Ladd, 2005), fragmented professional development programmes (Mathibe, 2007, Mestry & Singh, 2007, van der Westhuizen & van Vuuren, 2007), the mismanagement of funds by different parties (Mestry, 2006), difficult educational contexts (Moloi, 2007), and the low functioning of schools (Gallie, 2007).

The most striking feature about the studies discussed so far is that they do not present an exhaustive list of the topics available on problems in schools. Yet, this partial representation already illustrates the heterogeneity of the literature. Even when the literature is classified to connect problems in schools to the main actors who are involved it is still difficult to determine the nature or even the range of the problems that affect these groups. What is evident, however, is that the problems in schools are very complex and multi-faceted and that research makes use of a variety of approaches to describe and analyse them. Because of this the heterogeneity discussed so far is not only limited to the topics of research but also includes a wide range of theoretical approaches and formulation of explanations. This means that a topic can be connected to a variety of theories, or be explained in many different ways and it is therefore possible for the same problem set to be attributed to radically different causes or actors.

The South African National Youth Risk Behaviour Survey conducted by Reddy, Panday, Swart, Jinabhai, Amosun, James, Monyeki, Stevens, Morejele, Kambaran, Omaidien, and Van den Borne (2003) and the National Youth Victimization Survey conducted by Leoschut and Burton (2006) illustrates this point well as both studies share many common characteristics. For example, both examined the same subpopulation and are nationally representative. Reddy, et al. (2003) sampled grade 8 through 11 learners from 23 schools per province, while 75.5 % of the sample from the National Youth Victimization Survey (Leoschut & Burton, 2006) were still attending school. Both studies investigated the same problem set - violence in schools. Reddy, et al. (2003) looked at problem sets relating to violence, which included assault, bullying, gang membership, sexual assault, and the use of alcohol, drugs, and weapons. Leoschut and Burton (2006:68) investigated violence and victimisation at school such as “robberies, assaults and sexual assaults, [...] verbal threats, physical assaults and theft of personal property”.

The difference between these studies lies in how they explain the occurrence of violence in schools. Reddy, et al. (2003:11) concluded that violent behaviours “contribute to morbidity, mortality and the social problems among youth and adults,” and that the behaviour of learners “result in many of the social and educational problems that confront the nation,” (ibid:7) and “account for a large proportion of the

burden of disease and injury and social problems experienced among youth” (ibid:72). In this proposed causal chain, youths committing acts of violence are presented as the cause of the problems found within society as a whole. In contrast to this explanation, Leoschut and Burton (2006) found that many of the problems in schools were caused by a violent society and that young people were frequently exposed to violence and personally victimised. According to them:

[w]hat becomes apparent from this data is that young people are at constant threat of danger at school even from teachers and principals. [...] It therefore becomes evident that violence not only threatens the physical and emotional well-being of children but also compromises the learning process of many South African children and youth (ibid:73)

Even though both studies investigate a similar topic and share many common characteristics, they differ in the causal attributions used to explain violence in schools. Despite the commonalities between studies, these different explanations lead to very different outcomes. For Leoschut and Burton (2006), a violent and corrupt society threatens and victimises school-going youth, while Reddy, et al. (2003) find that it is the violent behaviour of youths which cause the social ills in society.

This comparison is not intended to criticise the quality of these research outputs, rather to illustrate how different seemingly similar studies can be. These studies were done at a similar time, on a similar population, covering a similar topic, yet they reach remarkably different conclusions. These studies are also not unique in this regard, but actually serve as exemplars of the heterogeneity found in the literature as a whole. Not only are the amount of research topics examining problems in schools overwhelming, but so too are the many ways these problems are conceptualised and explained. This makes the comparison of studies, by connecting problems and causes in a meaningful way, a challenging task. Even when comparing research on the same topic it is not easy to establish the exact nature of what the problems are and who or what is causing them. Instead of providing a clearer picture on the nature and degree of problems in schools, these multiple perspectives add yet another layer of complexity to this ‘toxic mix’ of problems in schools. In the absence of a unifying

model it is difficult to account for the scope of problems and causes without providing what seem to be never ending lists of problems and causes.

The purpose of this background chapter is to begin the process of systematising this diverse body of knowledge and to provide an overview of the different strands found in the literature. Since the heterogeneity seems to be related mostly to what the problems are and the different ways in which these are being explained, it was decided to sort the literature according to these two elements.

In the following overview, research was sorted, first, in relation to what studies defined as a problem or problem set and second, to the range of causes attributed to these problems. To ensure that the reviewed research was as relevant and current as possible, only the past decade of research (2002-2012) was reviewed. A total of 20 texts were included and were selected based on their research focus: all texts investigated problems in South African schools and attempted to identify and map problems and their causes. The selection of these texts was not intended to be exhaustive but rather illustrative of the many and somewhat complex ways research uses to explain the different problems in schools. While sorting literature according to the above mentioned categories, it became evident that studies often used different causal explanations to describe problems in schools and that these explanations tended to vary in complexity. A study could, for example, investigate only one problem, or it could examine a whole range of problems simultaneously. Furthermore, when describing how these problems come about, a study could investigate one cause or include multiple causes.

Table 2.1 presents these 20 studies investigating problems in schools. These studies have been sorted, not only in relation to the problems and causes they investigate, but also in relation to the amount of problems or causes they investigate. As such, the first row contains studies which investigate one problem connected to a single cause. This category was labelled 'simple causal chains'. The second row contains slightly more complex chains. The studies included here investigated multiple problems or problem sets, while attributing these problems to a single cause. The label given to this causal chain is 'problems explained simply'. The third set of studies reverses this causal chain by attributing many causes to a single problem.

This type of causal chain was termed 'complex causes to a problem'. The next row contains studies which investigate multiple problems but make only vague references to causes. Since these studies do not make use of an explicit causal chain, they were simply labelled 'complex problems'. The final category consists of studies engaging with problems and causes at the most complex level by looking at multiple problems and multiple causes simultaneously. These were termed 'complex causal chains'. Table 2.1 shows how studies have been allocated. This is followed by a detailed discussion on the causal chains used for each of the categories.

Table 2.1: Problems in schools and different patterns of causal attribution

<p>Simple Causal Chain: 1 Problem - 1 Cause</p>	<p>Jewkes, et al. (2002), Pereznieto, et al. (2010), Maphosa & Shumba (2010), Selvaratnam (2011)</p>
<p>Problems Explained Simply: 1 Cause - Many Problems</p>	<p>Leoschut & Burton (2006), Reddy, et al. (2003), Pelser (2008), Moloi (2007)</p>
<p>Complex Causes to a Problem: 1 Problem - Many Causes</p>	<p>Bennell (2005), Maphosa & Mammen (2011), Van der Berg, et al. (2011), Chisholm (2004), Taylor (2006), Phurutse (2005), Bhorat & Oostehuizen (2006), Zulu, et al. (2004)</p>
<p>Complex Problems: Many Problems - Vague Causes</p>	<p>du Plessis (2009), Maree (2010), Department of Basic Education, NEIMS (2009)</p>
<p>Complex Causal Chains: Many Problems - Many Causes</p>	<p>Bloch (2009)</p>

2.2.1 Simple causal chains

There is nothing simplistic about the problems or the causes discussed in these studies. The term 'simple' does not refer to the content of these studies but rather to the simple causal chains implied in them. As the examples below illustrate, these studies frequently use an x-causes-y approach and thus employ a simple causal chain to explain the problem they investigate. This is the least complex problem-cause combination and normally investigates a single problem connected to a single solution. Examples of these kinds of studies cover a wide range of topics such as learner indiscipline, gender-based violence, corporal punishment, and incompetent teachers.

The study done by Jewkes, Levin, Mbananga, and Bradshaw (2002) is the first example of a simple causal chain used to explain a particular problem in schools. Their research was based on the 1998 South Africa Demographic and Health Survey and the project was a nationally representative study of all women in South Africa aimed to establish the frequency of rape. Although this study included the entire female population, their results concerning school girls showed that young girls had a significantly higher chance of being raped than adult women. From the interviews that they conducted they concluded that: "85% of the rapes took place in children aged 10–14 years, and 15% between 5 and 9 years. School teachers were the most common child rapists" (Jewkes, et al., 2002:319). Not only were teachers found to be the perpetrators but they were also found to be the cause of "many girls [being] forced to leave school because of pregnancies fathered by teachers" (Jewkes, et al., 2002:320). The simple casual chain implied in this study therefore states that teachers are the cause of rape, which results in teenage pregnancies.

While Jewkes, et al. (2002) formulated rape as the problem, Perezniето, Harper, Clench, and Coarasa (2010) use gender-based violence as the cause. A 2001 Human Rights Watch study investigating why girls discontinue their educational pathways concluded that it was most frequently due to gender-based violence. The study found that gender-based violence frequently led to girls being absent from school or even dropping out because "in many cases the perpetrators of sexual violence (both students and teachers) remained at school" (Perezniето, et al.,

2010:12). This simple causal chain implies that the absenteeism and drop-out rates amongst girls are caused by sexual violence.

In 2010 Maphosa and Shumba conducted a study to investigate what teachers' disciplinary capabilities are after the banning of corporal punishment in South African schools. Their main findings were that the banning of corporal punishment removed teachers' abilities to enforce or maintain discipline in schools and that this has contributed to a general sense of disempowerment. Furthermore, they found that "[t]he disempowering of educators has also led to feelings of abdication of the critical role of disciplining learners" (Maphosa & Shumba, 2010:395). In this causal chain teachers felt disempowered and disengaged and "'learners had neither fear nor respect for teachers and behaved as they pleased' signal[ing] a recipe for chaos in our schools" (Maphosa & Shumba, 2010:395).

In the final study cited as using a simple causal chain, Selvaratnam (2011) investigated matric science teachers' competencies in basic problem-solving strategies. In total, the study tested 73 teachers from two different provinces in South Africa on five different intellectual strategies needed to teach physical science. Some of these strategies included the representation of problems, identifying and applying relevant principles and equations, calculating solutions, and so on. The study found that although the test questions in themselves were not difficult, teachers performed poorly in all test areas. This led the author to conclude that "[t]he teachers' lack of competence in intellectual strategies and skills would seriously handicap the successful implementation of the matric physical science curriculum because this curriculum places strong emphasis on the training of pupils in various types of intellectual abilities" (Selvaratnam, 2011:7).

The above studies illustrate how research sometimes employs simple causal chains to explain the problems they investigate. The advantage of this approach is that it focuses on a particular problem while directly connecting it to a specific cause. This helps us to understand how particular problems and causes are related and assists with defining specific intervention strategies. The disadvantage of using simple causal chains lies in that it fails to consider other causes, which could be of equal

importance. The next category uses a slightly more complex causal chain by investigating several problems and connecting these to a single cause.

2.2.2 Problems explained simply

The first two studies in this problem-cause combination, Leoschut and Burton (2006) and Reddy, et al. (2003) were discussed in detail in the beginning of this chapter. It was shown how both studies investigated the same problem sets but explained these using different causal attributions. Both Leoschut and Burton (2006) and Reddy, et al. (2003) looked at a variety of problems such as physical and verbal assault, theft, bullying, sexual assault, alcohol and drug abuse, and so on; and then used a single, simplified cause to explain it, placing responsibility on either society or learners. The following provides more examples of studies investigating multiple problems or problem sets, while attributing these to a single cause.

Similar to the examples discussed so far, Pelsler (2008) investigated how youths are affected by crime and violence. Synthesising findings from the National Victims of Crime (2003) and the National Youth Victimization Survey (2005), the author concludes “that South Africa’s youth, that is, young people aged 12-22, are generally victimised at twice the adult rate, and at rates even higher for violent crimes” (2). When these studies were compared, Pelsler (2008) found that assault occurred approximately eight times more frequently with younger people in comparison to adults, while theft was five times more likely to occur and robbery four times more common. Furthermore, of the 4,409 respondents aged 12-22 whom participated in the National Youth Victimization Survey (2005), 52.4% reported cases of theft at school, 26% reported assault occurring on school premises (Pelsler, 2008). While 50.2% of the respondents admitted that they have personally committed a criminal offence. The study furthermore states that “youth crime, indeed, crime in South Africa, is a function of the development and replication, over the past 30 years of a “culture of violence”, a “normalisation of crime and violence” amongst an “underclass” of negatively socialised and socially excluded youth who constitute a significant proportion of South Africa’s population” (Pelsler, 2008:1). The causal chain used in this study implies that a culture of crime and violence cause youths to perpetrate crimes such as assault, robbery, and theft.

Molio (2007) synthesises numerous research outputs to investigate a range of problems found in South African schools. Problems range from external factors such as high unemployment, poverty, single-parent families, and high levels of HIV/AIDS among learners, to resource-related problems such as insufficient time for studying, teaching-related problems such as shortcomings of teacher training and incompetence, as well as crime-related problems such as learner indiscipline. These problems are explored through a historical lens and the author concludes that problems in schools such as the “issue of learner discipline is widely regarded as having its roots in the years of protest against the *apartheid* government” (Molio, 2007:472) and “help to demonstrate the complexity of addressing the educational legacy of the past, including ineffective education systems” (Molio, 2007:465). Here, the causal chain links many problems in schools to the historical consequences of apartheid.

The examples cited in the ‘problems explained simply’ category cover a range of problems in schools such as assault, theft, bullying, alcohol and drug abuse, poverty, unemployment, HIV/AIDS, incompetence, and so forth. The advantage of this approach is that a study can simultaneously investigate multiple problems or problem sets while tracking the effects a particular cause has on these problems. The disadvantage of this approach is that there could be many causes to these problems and emphasising one cause over another can have serious implications. In the first three examples cited in this category, for instance, youth violence and victimisation is explained as being caused by learners (Reddy, et al., 2003), by society (Leoschut & Burton, 2006), or by the replication of a history and culture of violence (Pelser, 2008). Due to these contradictions, determining the cause of youth violence becomes an increasingly difficult task.

2.2.3 Complex causes to a problem

In this category the previous casual chain is reversed by connecting a range of causes to a single problem. A study done by Bennell (2005) is an interesting example, since the study started with the assumption that there is a simple x-causes-y causal chain between health and teaching capability. Initially the study set out to establish the impact of the HIV/AIDS epidemic on teachers and their ability to deliver

education. This was one of the first studies to give a detailed description of the impact of HIV/AIDS on teachers by using a relatively large sample of teachers who were tested for HIV/AIDS and by triangulating this information with personal and public records such as sick-leave, mortality, and attrition rates. The tests revealed a HIV prevalence rate of 12.7% amongst teachers in 2004. The study found that this rate was not only considerably lower than the national population rate but nearly half of the 2003 UNAIDS estimate for South African adults at 21.5%. These findings illustrated the need for a more comprehensive account of the causes of underperformance in the teaching profession, which moves beyond the impact of HIV/AIDS. Bennell (2005) therefore concluded that:

Without doubt, the epidemic poses a serious threat to the teaching profession. However, 55 percent of all teachers in South Africa say that they intend to leave the profession because of low morale and job satisfaction, which is mainly due to issues of pay, student behaviour, and work loads rather than HIV/AIDS per se (3).

Bennell (2005), wanted to show the simple causal chain of the impact of HIV/AIDS on low quality teaching, but instead found many other factors causing the underperformance of teachers such as low morale, low job satisfaction, salaries, learner behaviour, workload, as well as HIV/AIDS.

A study done by Maphosa and Mammen (2011) makes use of two different causal chains to attribute sets of causes to a particular problem. In the first instance they find that minor forms of learners' indiscipline make classes unmanageable. Here, minor forms of indiscipline include instances of "non- completion of given assignments, non- submission of work for marking, swearing at other learners, back chatting teachers and unsanctioned movements in and out of the classroom" (Maphosa & Mammen, 2011:192). In the second causal chain they conclude that major forms of indiscipline cause schools to be unsafe and here they include instances such as "use of drugs, possession and use of dangerous weapons within school premises" (Maphosa & Mammen, 2011:192). These casual chains therefore utilise different sets of learner indiscipline to explain how classes have become unmanageable on the one hand and how schools have become unsafe on the other.

Van der Berg, Burger, Burger, de Vos, du Rand, Gustafsson, Moses, Shepherd, Spaul, Taylor, van Broekhuizen, and von Fintel (2011) synthesised a range of research findings to explore the effects of low quality schooling on learners. The aim of this study was to systematically explain the different causes leading to low quality schooling. They show, for example, the effects of teachers' lack of subject knowledge, or how the lack of resources at home causes "children [to] enter school with a cognitive disadvantage" (Van Der Berg, et al., 2011:7). They also illustrate how low quality schooling is caused by the "double burden of historical disadvantage and current poverty" (Van Der Berg, et al., 2011:5), as well as how the departments' poverty alleviation programmes seem to be ineffective in overcoming poverty. Other causes include how the lack of resources cause low quality schooling through limited access to textbooks or, when access to these resources are provided "[t]he impact of resources on student achievement is crucially mediated by how well they are managed" (Van Der Berg, et al., 2011:12). The study concludes that although education is the only viable route of social mobility out of poverty "the low quality of tuition offered in schools in poor communities can entrench exclusion and marginalization" (Van Der Berg, et al., 2011:3).

In a paper for the UNESCO Education for All Global Monitoring Report, Chisholm (2004) also looked at the different factors causing low quality schooling in primary education in South Africa. The author highlights a long list of causes, for example, "[t]he quality of education is linked to teachers, texts and the values promoted in schools through the official and hidden curriculum. Violence in schools remains a major issue, as does racism and sexism. Rape of schoolgirls, sexual violence and abuse, often by teachers, has been a marked feature of the schooling experience of many girls as well as boys" (Chisholm, 2004:14). Other causes include overcrowding and high pupil-teacher ratios, un- or under-qualified teachers, a lack of resources and infrastructure, the mismanagement of resources, HIV/AIDS, lack of mother-tongue education and teachers language skills, also the lack of provincial and district support from the department of education, and the effects of poverty on the quality of learner performance.

Similar to Reddy, et al. (2003) and Leoschut and Burton (2006) cited earlier, Chisholm (2004) and van der Berg, et al. (2011) examine the same problem, in this case low quality schooling, while using different sets of causes and explanations to account for this. Another example, discussed below, shows one more variation to the 'low-quality-schooling' causal chain.

A study done by Taylor (2006) found that "80 per cent of South Africa's schools are essentially dysfunctional" (65) and he gives a detailed description of the causes of low quality schooling in these schools. He highlights the frequent restructuring of personnel by provincial and district departments and how this often leaves schools unsupported and unmonitored, the lack of school management and effective classroom teaching, language policies, which often lead to poor children being taught in an unfamiliar language, low levels of contact time, as well as widespread absenteeism by teachers, learners, and principals, lack of curriculum content-knowledge and application by teachers, lack of teaching and practicing reading, incompetence and lack of teaching skills, poor quality of teacher training, as well as the lack and misuse of textbooks. Given these complex and extensive problems causing low quality schooling, it is unsurprising that Taylor (2006) concluded that these problems seem 'insurmountable'.

The studies done by Van der Berg, et al. (2011), Taylor (2006), and Chisholm (2004) are exemplary of how complex causal chains can become. Although all three studies investigated the same problem - low quality schooling in South Africa - and there is some overlap between the causes there are also remarkable differences. Van der Berg, et al. (2011) explains how low quality schooling is caused by, for example, lack of subject knowledge and teaching skills, lack of resources at school and at home, as well as the general debilitating effects of poverty. Chisholm (2004) includes some of these but casts her net wider to also include violence, rape, abuse, racism, sexism, and more, while Taylor (2006) adds absenteeism, lack of reading practice, the misuse of textbooks, incompetence, restructuring staff, and the lack of support and monitoring from provincial and district departments to the list. These studies highlight important aspects of what the causes of low quality schooling are, however, these divergent views make a review on this topic exceedingly difficult. When the findings from these three studies are combined more than 40 different causes are

connected to low quality schooling in South Africa. Although this is an overwhelming number of causes, it is not problematic per se, as these studies overlap to some degree and otherwise complement each other. As the examples below will illustrate, however, it is also possible for research on the same topic to attribute contradictory causes to the same problem.

The main aim of the study conducted by Phurutse (2005) was to investigate the factors affecting teaching and learning in South African schools and to use these to explain the low matriculation pass rate. The study sampled 20,488 teachers while examining factors such as class size, low school fees, contact time, and prevalence rates among teachers and how these related to low matriculation rates. In describing how the low matriculation rate is caused, the study found that the “general pattern suggests a sort of structural determinism, where those in poor schools (and communities) tend to perform poorly because of debilitating conditions and factors” (Phurutse, 2005:16). Some of these debilitating conditions include poverty, poor infrastructure at schools, lack of resources, large classes, increased contact time and overworked teachers, and HIV/AIDS. Due to the complexity of these causes the author cautions against intervention efforts aimed to improve only one of these factors, stating that these would be insufficient to improve education in general and that interventions should be broadly conceived to account for the wide range of contributory causes (Phurutse, 2005).

Similarly to Phurutse (2005), Bhorat and Oosthuizen (2006) used data from 5,612 schools to examine the determinants of matric pass rates in South Africa. More specifically, they investigated the roles teachers, learners, parents, and school characteristics such as infrastructure and pupil-teacher ratios play in determining school achievement. This study found that the pupil-teacher ratio was an insignificant indicator and did not affect matric pass rates. Furthermore, “most physical resources with the exception of the presence of classrooms made of bricks and mortar, are irrelevant in explaining matric performance” (31). Rather, the study revealed the importance of teacher characteristics and knowledge infrastructure. The authors found that “[t]he combination of a very strong result for the above quality of teacher proxy variable and insignificant learning infrastructure variables, suggests that one of the key factors [...] was the quality of teachers rather than the provision of physical

resources in classrooms (Bhorat & Oosthuizen, 2006:20). With knowledge infrastructure the authors specifically referred to school libraries and access to computers for both teaching and administration and this study provided empirical support that “many low performing schools are very poorly and inefficiently managed through the lack of administrative (rather than learning) physical and human resources” (Bhorat & Oosthuizen, 2006:21).

A comparison between these studies reveals somewhat divergent causes of low matric pass rates. Phurutse (2005) finds that poverty, poor infrastructure, lack of resources, large classes, low school fees, the prevalence of HIV/AIDS, and an increase in contact time between the teachers and learners are causing low matric pass rates. Bhorat and Oosthuizen (2006), however, contradict aspects of this by concluding that large class size and lack of infrastructure are insignificant and do not affect matriculation pass rates. They instead emphasise the effects of insufficiently managed administrative, physical, and human resources and the impact these have on pass rates. These contradictory causes make it difficult to determine what the factors causing the low matric rate are.

The final study in this category is based on school violence and was conducted by Zulu, Urbani, van der Merwe, and van der Walt (2004). In this study a questionnaire was administered to 16 randomly sampled high schools in Kwa-Zulu-Natal. The questionnaire aimed to establish some of the causes of violence in schools. The authors found that any combination of the following causes can lead to incidents of violence in schools: “over-crowding, over-age learners, broken homes and families, lack of home and parental support, poverty and the competition for limited resources, influence of violence in films, distrust of peers, suspicion of theft, lack of respect for differences and values, lack of the necessary support structures, perceptions about unsafe homes and schools, verbal conflicts, racism, unfair treatment, physical attacks and abuse (corporal punishment), drugs, weapons, alcohol, vandalism, ill-discipline, a lack of commitment to the task of the school and a lack of resources” (Zulu, et al., 2004:173). This final example shows the most complex system of causes attributed in a single study, finding 27 different causes leading to violence in schools.

This category explored the casual chains examining sets of complex causes to a particular problem in South African schools. The advantage to this approach is that, unlike a simple causal chain, it is able to consider a wide range of factors impacting on a single problem. As the above-mentioned studies illustrated, this can become problematic when too many causes are attributed to a single problem. This was the case when combining the findings from Van der Berg, et al. (2011), Taylor (2006), and Chisholm (2004) resulting in a list of 41 different factors causing low quality schooling, while Zulu, et al. (2004) found 27 different causes in a single study. It was also shown how studies can find contradictory causes to the same problem. For the purpose of a review, the question then becomes how to evaluate these contradictions to form a coherent understanding of what the problems are and how they are being caused. Even though complex causal chains are able to consider how causes and problems relate in more complex ways it becomes increasingly difficult to connect these to a more general understanding of what the problems in schools are or how they are being caused.

2.2.4 Complex problems

The following category contains examples of studies examining a range of problems in schools that are unconnected to causes or that are vaguely or indirectly connected to causes. Most of these studies are descriptive.

In his paper, du Plessis (2009) discusses the problems in schools along eight different dimensions: the first dimension relates to poor or unsatisfactory results and includes students not reading, writing, or spelling properly, or loss of teaching time through learner and teacher absenteeism, the second dimension relates to limited resources, especially in poor schools, the third involves crime-related issues such as gangs, robbery, rape, drug use, and so forth, the fourth dimension consists of lack of discipline and how teachers are exposed to “disobedience, mockery, cursing/swearing, and even physical and psychological violence” (du Plessis, 2009:4), the fifth dimension of problems accounts for the shortage of suitable teachers especially in maths and science, dimension six is an inability of schools to provide for the economic needs of industry and commerce, the seventh dimension relates to

incompetent management, and the final dimension includes problems such as the HIV/Aids epidemic and general health conditions of teachers and learners. These problem sets are vaguely attributed to being “caused by circumstances beyond the realm of education. Some negative social and economic factors have caused serious disruptive effects on education” (du Plessis, 2009:1). This, however, is the main reference the author makes to any causes.

Maree (2010) highlights the following problems in the South African schooling system: poor performance of Grade 12 learners, low level of subject knowledge of both teachers and learners, lack of new teachers, low image and status of the teaching profession in general, challenging teaching environments, high levels of learners dropping out, inequality, unemployment, poverty, prevalence of HIV/AIDS, lack of nutrition, illiterate parents, low morale of teaching staff at teacher training institutions, lack of infrastructure and physical resources such as libraries, electricity, laboratories, and computers, the negative impact of political decisions, apartheid, the shortages of teachers, OBE, unions, poorly trained teachers, the mismanagement of schools, lack of learner guidance, lack of time spent at school, lack of support from the Department of Education (DoE), and a lack of communication between schools and their communities.

Finally, in relation to under-resourced schools, the National Education Infrastructure Management System (NEIMS; Department of Basic Education, 2009) reported that 3,603 schools had no electricity and a further 800 had an unreliable electricity supply, 2,444 schools had no water, 2,563 had unreliable water sources, 970 schools did not have toilets while 11,231 still made use of pit-latrines, 79% of all schools in South Africa did not have a library, 18,746 schools or 77% did not have any computers, and 85% of all schools did not have science laboratories. Problems such as these make effective schooling a challenging task for many South African schools.

These studies illustrate that problem sets under investigation need not be explicitly connected with a host of causes to be complex in themselves. In order to comprehensively discuss the problems in schools, du Plessis (2009) divides them into eight different dimensions. Maree (2010) highlights more than 30 problems

affecting teaching and learning in schools, while the NEIMS report (2009) details the extent of the lack of resources and infrastructure in many South African schools. The final part of the discussion, combines the strategies looked at thus far. Here, causal chains investigate multiple problems connected to multiple sets of causes.

2.2.5 Complex causal chains

A good example of a text attempting to systematise a range of complex and multi-faceted problem sets in schools is *The Toxic Mix: What's Wrong with South Africa's Schools and How to Fix it* (Bloch, 2009). In this book, Bloch covers most problems evident in the literature. More specifically, the problem sets include: criminal behaviour, such as theft, corruption, bullying, and violence, teaching-related problems such as underperforming schools, teachers' lack of teaching skills and mismanagement by teachers and principals on various levels, a range of external problems such as poverty, gangs, drugs, and HIV/AIDS, and resource-related problems such as the lack of textbooks, teacher brain drain, and poor maintenance of schools. These problems are connected to a wide range of causes such as: learners suffering from malnutrition, learning difficulties and disabilities, and teachers' lack of knowledge, skills, and focus, gangs, violence, and abuse in society as a whole, and that "at least 25% of children sometimes or always go hungry, with this figure close to 40% in the Eastern Cape. Parents can barely buy food, let alone books or light" (ibid:75). Further causes Bloch highlights include: lack of support and the many breakdowns, inefficiencies, and inability to assert effective control by the Department of Education, as well as the government, the unions, and even the constitution. Finally, he also highlights historical causes with "[t]he strands laid by Bantu Education – of bad mass schooling, poor teaching and conflicted classrooms – have pervaded much of the present terrain. Apartheid left a legacy of backlogs, structural poverty and inequalities" (Bloch, 2009:89). These problems are further exacerbated by present-day conditions wherein "children often face a lack of learning support at home, sexual violence and inappropriate sexual relations, in the classroom, added responsibilities when parents die of AIDS, and peer pressure to take drugs or to drink. Crime and gang-related violence in the community also affects learners in a host of negative ways" (ibid:124).

This is one example of an author attempting to synthesise the problems in South African schools to develop a more general understanding. Examples of studies attempting to look at these problems in their entirety, instead of focusing on one or two problem strands are rare and when they exist they tend to be meta-syntheses, collating multiple studies to form an aggregated picture of the schooling environment.

2.3 Conclusion

The literature reveals how vast and complex the problems in South African schools are. Even when the literature is sorted in a meaningful way, by looking for examples of what the problems are and how they are explained or by connecting different problems to specific actor groups, it is still challenging to formulate a coherent picture of the nature of problems in schools. The literature on the problems in South African schools points to many things and in many directions. Research investigates a wide range of problems while connecting these to an even wider set of causes. This complicates the task of determining the nature or degree of the problems in schools. In the absence of a unifying model it is difficult to systematically describe the dysfunctions evident in schools today.

Although the preceding discussion is only a partial representation of the literature covering problems in schools it reflects the main characteristics of the literature as a whole. One of the features of this knowledgebase is the vast amount of problems being researched and, in conjunction with this, the many diverse ways these problems are being conceptualised, analysed, described, and explained. Due to this heterogeneity it is challenging to form a more coherent impression of the problems in schools. These diverse and somewhat contradictory outputs make it difficult to establish what the problems are as well as the degree to which these problems affect learners, teachers, and principals. The purpose of this thesis is to systematise these problems by developing and testing an analytic framework, which can describe and analyse these problem sets. The aim of such a model is to examine the complex nature of these dysfunctions in relation to their causes, in the context in which they occur, from the perspectives of the people who experience them – principals, teachers, and learners.

The following chapter covers the methodological issues underpinning the designing and testing of this model from the perspectives of these three actor groups.

Chapter 3

Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the methodological aspects of the study. First, the multiple case study research design is introduced. The approach is defined and a brief contextual background is given. Furthermore, the appropriateness of this design is justified in relation to the research focus and the advantages are also discussed. Next, the different research participants and the data collection for each of these different participant groups are presented, these include narrative essays from the principals, narrative essays from the teachers, and open-ended survey responses from the learners. The section on data analysis contains the method of analysis: Content Configuration Analysis. The different levels of analyses are also briefly discussed. The section on ethical considerations is divided into three parts: data collection, data analysis and interpretation, and the writing and dissemination process. Finally, the chapter concludes with issues of trustworthiness. This part of the chapter focuses on the strategies used to develop and maintain credibility and accuracy in the study.

3.2 Research Design

This qualitative study employs a multiple case study design. Case study research is a well-known field in the Social Sciences and it has enjoyed great popularity among researchers over the past few decades. Platt (1992) traces the emergence and contribution of qualitative case study research from the work of the Chicago school sociologists and the use of case studies in social work. Due to these and other disciplines this method has become a well-established research methodology. "As a research method, the case study is used in many situations, to contribute to our knowledge of individual, group, organisational, social, political, and related phenomena. Unsurprisingly, the case study has been a common research method in psychology, sociology, political science, anthropology, social work, business,

education, nursing and community planning.” (Yin, 2009:4). In this framework, Yin (2009) defines the case study approach as:

“An empirical inquiry that

- investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when
 - the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident”
- (18).

In order to successfully make such an empirical inquiry, Yin (2009) identifies three core decisions, which form the foundation of any case study approach and that need to be clarified prior to commencing research. These three factors require the researcher to make decisions about:

1. How to define the ‘cases’ to be studied.
2. How to determine the relevant data to be collected.
3. What to do with the data once it has been collected.

3.2.1 Defining the cases

Yin (2009) states that for cases to be exemplary, they should be significant and relevant to the research focus, as well as reflecting a real life context. Furthermore, cases should provide a complete representation of the context, and consider different perspectives. As Chapter two illustrated, there exists a large body of often contradictory views on the nature and kind of problems in South African schools. The purpose of this study is, therefore, to determine the nature and degree of problem sets found in South African schools as experienced by three different actor groups – principals, teachers, and learners. This multiple case study approach is not only significant and relevant to the research aims of this study, but also provides the opportunity to explore problem sets in the real-life context of the experiences of these three actor groups. Although a complete representation of any context is never entirely possible, this multiple case study approach offers the opportunity to systematically analyse a large part of the school context, while also enabling the comparison of different perspectives as represented by the different actor groups.

3.2.2 Data to be collected

Given that the research topic deals with problems in schools, it was important to collect data without making participants feel that they were being scrutinised or judged while describing their own experiences. By collecting data through essay-type responses, in the cases of the principals and teachers, and open-ended survey questions for the learners, participants were given the opportunity to respond to the questions in private and without time constraints. The longer narrative style of the essay responses also allowed us to explore how problems begin and end from the viewpoints of the actors.

3.2.3 How to analyse the data

Finally, data analysis was guided by the two different factors. One of the main aims of the study was to identify which analytic model could best describe the problems as reported by these different actor groups and therefore the analysis focused on developing and testing this model. The second goal of the data analysis was to compare and contrast the content of the data sets to determine how the experienced problems, antecedents, and consequences differ according to the views of principals, teachers, and learners.

3.2.4 Context and subjectivity: justifying a multiple case study design

As the literature in chapter two indicated, the problems in South African schools are complex and deeply entrenched in the school environment. Therefore, this study aims to present the subjective experiences of these different actors – principals, teachers, and learners - in the context in which they occur and from the subjective perspectives of the narrators. This also forms one of the core assumptions which underlines the case study approach and therefore makes this the most appropriate research strategy for the current project. As de Vaus (2001) points out:

“case studies are particularly suited to research problems when the phenomena in which we are interested either cannot be distinguished from its context or must be seen within its context. Many social scientists believe that

adequate causal explanations need to take account of the meaning that participants in a social situation attribute to their behaviour. They argue that the meaning of behaviour helps us 'make sense' of why one event produces particular outcomes. Therefore when conducting case studies it is very useful to collect information about the subjective meaning of behaviour for participants and build this subjective data into our analysis of the case" (250).

3.2.5 Advantages of multiple case studies

The multiple case study approach has many advantages. The design can, for example, account for complex problem sets from varied perspectives in a systematic way. First, case studies from each actor group provide in-depth and detailed accounts of the experiences describing the nature, kind, and degree of problems. Second, in-depth cases can be compared with each other to determine how problem sets are similar or different across different actor groups.

Multiple case studies also have many analytical advantages. Multiple cases can, for example, verify independent analytic conclusions. Conclusions made in each of the cases can be compared, verified, and refined across other cases (Yin, 2009). This helps to overcome the main criticism aimed at single case study approaches, whereby cases are often seen as reflecting the unique or artifactual conditions or contexts of a single case (Yin, 2009). Patterns and themes can be verified and refined across different cases, strengthening the interpretation and overcoming the criticism of findings being idiosyncratic or stemming from isolated instances. Although these analytic advantages increase the scope of comparison during analysis, this qualitative study is not, and does not intend to be, representative of the context as a whole.

3.3. Participants

This study consisted of three different participant groups – principals, teachers, and learners. The 80 primary and secondary school principals or their representatives came from urban and rural primary and secondary schools in the greater Gauteng area and were selected based on their enrolment in an Advanced Certificate in

Education (ACE) programme at an University located in the greater Johannesburg area in 2010¹. Although the principals are currently located in the greater Gauteng area, they originally came from all over South Africa. This also means that they came from a large variety of different schools. At the time of data collection, however, principals from low performing schools were the mode. These principals brought with them a range of experiences from being highly experienced to inexperienced in their role as principal. Given their enrolment in an ACE programme none of these principals have received significant formal training in principalship. An analysis of social group membership across the 80 principals or their representatives would be unsuitable because, first, these 80 individuals can never be representative of a larger population, and second, the data serves to explore the dimensionalities of problems, antecedents, and consequences and not to attribute these to any characteristics associated with the individuals. This would be the subject of a different study.

The 40 teachers from the surrounding Johannesburg area were part of a skill advancement workshop offered by the University during 2011. Similarly to the principals, these teachers were located in the Johannesburg area at the time of data collection but originate from various cities and school types across South Africa. The final group of participants consisted of approximately 1,500 first year learners who were in their first few weeks of teacher training at the University's Faculty of Education in 2010 and 2011. This participant group had a typical age range of approximately 17 – 22 years old and originated from various parts of South Africa. Each of these three participant groups represent a good cross-section of members from the three actor groups without being able to or aiming for representivity.

3.4. Data Collection

Data were collected from each of the above-mentioned participant groups, and the project made use of three different data sets: narrative essays from principals or their representatives, narrative essays from teachers, and open-ended questionnaires from first-year learners.

¹ For the remainder of this thesis the partner university which provided the data will be referred to as the University.

The data collected from the principals consisted of 80 essays written by school principals or their representatives as part of their evaluation in an ACE leadership programme in Johannesburg during 2010. Participants were asked to reflect on a particular problem they have dealt with in their management position as principal or representative and to write an essay about this experience exploring its context, background, and resolution. These multiple case studies provided narrative accounts of the problems experienced by principals or their representatives 'on the job.' These essays vary from one to three pages and range from basic accounts (covering one main problem) to complex and extended situations or conflicts. All of the accounts, however, present the subjective experiences of these principals or their representatives.

The data collected from the teachers consisted of 40 narrative essays written by teachers during a one day workshop hosted by the University's Faculty of Education. The aim of this workshop was to allow teachers to reflect on some of the problems they have experienced in their profession, to teach them how to write about these in a narrative account, and then to utilise these as possible teaching aids. These essays were based on concrete teaching problems, and they were to be utilised in a teaching textbook. Colleagues at the University made the 40 essays available for analysis to the current project. These essays vary in length and are between two and five pages long. The problems range from basic accounts to more complex problems. All of the essays, however, present the teachers' subjective experiences of the problems they encounter.

The final data set, 1,500 learner responses, were collected through open-ended surveys. As part of orienting new learners enrolled in the teacher training track at the University, first year learners at the Faculty of Education were asked to complete a questionnaire with open-ended questions. Examples of the questions included: Who was your favourite teacher and why? Who was your least favourite teacher and why? In your opinion, what characteristics make a good teacher? In your opinion, what characteristics make a bad teacher? Why do you want to become a teacher? What kind of a teacher would you like to be? Approximately 1,500 responses were collected in two sweeps, one at the beginning of 2010 and one at the beginning of 2011. Due to the purpose of this study, questionnaires were only partially analysed

and only the questions directly relevant to the research focus were included for analysis. These were, “Who was your favourite teacher and why?” and “Who was your least favourite teacher and why?”.

3.5 Data Analysis

The Analyses were based on Content Configuration Analysis (CCA), which is a systematic qualitative analysis method for non-numerical data (Bergman, 2011). CCA is related to thematic and content analyses. Its core characteristics can be summarised as follows:

(1) CCA has a strong internal research logic by explicitly and continuously relating analysis back to context. Among other things, context refers to the historical, political, social, and cultural conditions of the data or the research context, the data sets as a whole, or the individual cases (such as the essays). For example, during the process of analyses, problem sets were interpreted in relation to the socio-political context of education in contemporary South Africa, as well as with other problem sets reported in the same data set, and across the different data sets.

(2) While CCA is embedded in modern ontological and epistemological considerations, this technique is primarily focused on practical applications in empirical research. This study primarily employed a constructivist perspective by investigating the different perspectives of actors and the subjective meanings they construct in relation to the problems they encounter in schools. It is not possible to assess the degree to which these narratives reflect reality; they do however provide important insight into how participants experience these encounters.

(3) If qualitative analysis is considered along a continuum, where actual content of text occupies one half, and constructing meaning based on subjective interpretation the other, CCA occupies the space where these two positions meet. The EMSD, for example, is based on reported problem sets while the categories used to describe them were constructed through a process of interpretation.

(4) CCA can be applied to all non-numeric data. During this study, it was used on essays and open-ended survey questions, but it may also be used to analyse other textual, audio, and visual data.

(5) CCA emphasises the researchers' control over research design and the application of this technique. This means that CCA can have several different starting points depending on the researchers' interest, focus, or preference. For example, during this study, data analysis was not the first stage. Rather, the first stage consisted of analysing a large body of theoretical literature to define and develop the analytical model of the EMSD (Bergman, et al., 2011), which was then applied to data provided by principals, teachers, and learners. This step refined and focused the scope of the EMSD.

(6) CCA has a strong theoretical base, whether inductively or deductively utilised. Theory can guide the analytic process from the beginning, be integrated during the process of analysis, or be developed through a process of theory building. From the beginning, this study used a constructivist approach and theories relating to problem sets in school were integrated during the steps of analysis.

(7) CCA may be applied as a distinct and stand-alone method, and the data were not subjected to any other form of qualitative or quantitative analysis.

(8) Analytical procedures are explicitly described.

(9) The level of engagement and complexity of analysis is defined by the researcher. CCA can be conducted in a fairly simple manner and on a small and manageable data set, or it can be employed on more complex and multi-media data sets. In this study, for example, multiple data sets were collected from various participants.

(10) It is possible to use the results obtained through CCA for additional research, for example as part of a mixed methods approach, as well as other qualitative or quantitative approaches.

This study employed multiple levels of analyses. During the first level of analysis, the organisational literature on dysfunctions in organisations were analysed and potential components for the EMSD were identified. Second, problem sets, their antecedents, and their consequences, as reported by principals, were analysed to assess the adequacy of the emergent EMSD for the data. Third, subcomponents of the EMSD were identified from the principal narratives in order to understand the nature and structure of the problem sets. Fourth, problem sets, their antecedents, and their consequences, as recounted by learners and teachers, were analysed in the EMSD. Fifth, subcomponents of the EMSD were identified from the narratives in order to understand the nature and structure of these problem sets. Finally, components and subcomponents were compared between the principals', teachers', and learners' data in order to identify the similarities and differences in degree and kind of the problem sets from the actor groups.

3.6 Ethical considerations

This study conforms to the codes of professional conduct for researchers set out by The American Psychological Association's (APA) *Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct* (2010). This includes the five general principles of beneficence and non-maleficence, fidelity and responsibility, integrity, justice, and respect for people's rights and dignity, as well as the specific ethical standards. To ensure that these standards were met, the proposal for research was evaluated by an independent board through an official application for ethical clearance. The board's evaluation confirmed that all ethical standards would be met and the current study was granted ethical clearance. The following discussion will focus on ethical issues relating to data collection, data analysis and interpretation, and the writing and dissemination of the research (Creswell, 2003, Creswell & Miller, 2000).

3.6.1 Ethical issues in data collection

Conventionally, this discussion would include areas such as obtaining informed consent, discussing the research and research procedures with participants, informing them of their ability to withdraw at any moment, and so forth. This study, however, is a secondary analysis (Bergman & Coxon, 2005, Bergman & Eberle,

2005). This means that none of the three data sets were collected for this project, or by the researcher conducting this research. Nonetheless, there are two ethical issues relating to data collection, which are of importance here.

The first ethical issue pertains to how the topic of research relates to participants and the second to the permission that was given to use the data sets for secondary analysis. In the first instance it is important to note that the research topic is not one that is deemed 'sensitive' by nature. The data collected did not place the participants at risk, and none of the participant groups consisted of 'vulnerable' populations (Creswell, 2003). Given the non-evasive nature of the topic and that all participants were consenting adults, no special data collection precautions or preparations were needed.

Second, permission to use these data sets was granted by the Faculty of Education of the University. The data were collected in relation to intervention projects associated with an educational leadership intervention programme of the University in collaboration with the University of Harvard, and the Gauteng Department of Education. Colleagues at the Faculty of Education made the different data sets available for analysis to the current project.

3.6.2 Ethical issues relating to data analysis and interpretation

The most important ethical issues relating to data analysis and interpretation include: maintaining participant anonymity, the safe keeping of data, and providing an accurate account of data analysis techniques (Creswell, 2003).

Creating and maintaining participant anonymity was central to all levels of the analysis, writing-up, and dissemination of the research. During the first level of analysis, each survey and essay was uniquely labelled so as to identify the original source and from then on, these short-hand codes were used making participants unidentifiable. The citations from the data were cross-referenced with the original sources to check for accuracy, and citations were assigned a code, which is meaningful to the researchers but render the participants otherwise unidentifiable.

Steps were taken to ensure that all data sets are stored safely. The electronic and hard copies of the data are kept on university premises and only the research team has access to them.

Finally, an accurate account of the data analysis technique, Content Configuration Analysis (CCA; Bergman, 2011) is discussed in the methods section. Furthermore, the analyses are explicitly described in each of the results chapters and exemplars of the coding procedures have been attached (refer to appendix 12).

3.6.3 Ethics relating to writing and disseminating research

Standard ethical practices during this phase included using APA (2010) standards of language, preventing the falsification of findings, and ensuring the release of research details (Creswell, 2003).

APA standards of language (2010) require that all written material such as articles, papers, and dissertations be censored for language, which may be perceived as biased, sexist, or racist. Furthermore, APA (2010) emphasises a humanistic approach, whereby, for example, research participants are not referred to as 'subjects', but as 'participants'.

The falsification of data and findings is a serious offence. This study was conducted with a strong adherence to the principle of honesty. This means that all phases of the research were characterised by integrity and the researchers' commitment to not "steal, cheat or engage in fraud, subterfuge or intentional misrepresentation of fact" (APA, 2010).

Finally, many details pertaining to the research design, data collection, analysis, and presentation are discussed at length. Releasing the details relating to the study allows readers to follow the chain of evidence and to evaluate the credibility of the study for themselves (Neuman, 2000).

3.7 Measures to ensure trustworthiness: credibility and accuracy

This study employed different strategies to ensure trustworthiness in the research process. These methods aimed to develop and maintain credibility and accuracy throughout the different research phases and are presented in the following sections.

3.7.1 Issues of credibility

Two strategies were employed to ensure a high level of credibility in the current project. First, themes and patterns were checked for consistency by various team members. They analysed parts of the data individually and then compared and contrasted their results, discussing how and why interpretations converged or diverged. Furthermore, coding was verified by multiple team members throughout the various analyses and always in relation to the data itself. These combined strategies increased the credibility of the themes and patterns found in the data.

The second strategy used to increase the credibility of the analyses in this project pertains to generalising some facets across different cases during analysis to verify findings across different contexts (Yin, 2009). Patterns and themes were compared and clarified across the different cases to increase the credibility of the findings.

3.7.2 Issues relating to accuracy

There are many strategies which can increase the accuracy of a study. This particular study employed the following: triangulation, rich, thick descriptions, negative-case studies, and external auditors (Creswell, 2003).

Triangulation refers to using multiple data sources to verify research findings, patterns, and themes. This particular study triangulated three different sources of data, from three different participant groups, as well as using a theoretical framework as the basis of inquiry.

Rich, thick descriptions relate to how findings are represented and conveyed. It requires an approach, which discusses findings, themes, and patterns in detail, while supporting all claims with excerpts from the data. This approach creates a strong link

between data and interpretation. All claims and findings made in this project are supported with evidence from the data.

The negative-case strategy is an approach whereby instances contrary to the main themes or patterns, or which represent unique experiences, are carefully scrutinised and incorporated into the analysis. This can be done by adjusting the main themes to include these instances or by discussing negative cases explicitly in the results chapters. The results chapters in this study, for example, frequently discuss the least prevalent occurring components as well as subcomponents, which were present in some of the cases but not in others.

The final strategy used to increase the accuracy relates to using external auditors to review the research. The analyses were presented at a workshop in Basel, and based on the research, two articles were written and submitted to the peer-review process prior to publication. This peer-review process gives independent editors and review boards the opportunity to scrutinise all aspects of the research process and evaluate it for credibility and accuracy.

3.8 Conclusion

This is a qualitative study using a multiple case study design. This design is appropriate to the research focus of investigating problems in schools from the perspectives of multiple actor groups in the context that they occur. Data consisted of narrative essays from principals, narrative essays from teachers, and open-ended survey responses from learners. Data were analysed using Content Configuration Analysis. Ethical clearance to conduct the research was granted by the University of South Africa, and the study conforms to the ethical codes of conduct set out by the APA (2010). Finally, various strategies to increase the credibility and accuracy of the study were used to ensure the trustworthiness of the research throughout the different phases. Research was conducted based on the design discussed in this chapter and the main findings are presented in the chapters that follow.

Chapter 4

Conceptualising the Explanatory Model of School Dysfunctions

4.1 Introduction

Chapter two illustrated the heterogeneity of the literature on problems in South African schools. This heterogeneity makes the literature seem unsystematic in describing the nature and degree of problems in schools. The first empirical step in this study was to propose a heuristic model to account for these problems in a systematic way. This model was then applied to explore the structures and types of problems found in underperforming schools in Gauteng. The initial phase consisted of systematically reviewing literature on dysfunctional organisational behaviour (DOB). This review included multiple sets of literature from a range of disciplines such as industrial and organisational psychology, the management and organisational sciences, and the sociology of work and organisations. The second step involved identifying the main concepts in the DOB literature, which would aid the systematic explanation of problems found in primary and secondary schools. Once these components were identified, the third step consisted of applying and refining this model on the perspectives of different actor groups – principals, teachers, and learners. The first data set consisted of the principal essays and will be examined in Chapter 5, the second data set, the teacher essays, will be presented in Chapter 6, the third data set, the open-ended questionnaire responses from the learners, will be described in Chapter 7. Chapter 8 will compare and contrast these different perspectives and the final chapter will present the main findings. The following discussion tracks the conceptual development of the Explanatory Model of School Dysfunctions (EMSD).

4.2 Creating the EMSD framework

Creating the EMSD framework consisted of three conceptual steps: first, defining schools as organisations, second, presenting the scope of research on dysfunctions

in organisations, and third, identifying the main concepts from the reviewed literature to be used in the model on school dysfunctions.

4.2.1 Schools as organisations

Schools have often been defined in organisational terms (see for e.g. Bidwell, 2001, Herriott & Firestone, 1984, Nakamata, 2011, O’Sullivan, 2005, Van der Westhuizen, Mosoge, Swanepoel, & Coetsee, 2005). When simply defined, an organisation is a “consciously coordinated social unit composed of two or more people that functions on a relatively continuous basis to achieve a common goal or set of goals” (Robbins & Judge, 2009:6). Recasting schools in this way gives access to a wide range of theoretical concepts from the organisational sciences which are otherwise missing from the educational literature. Viewing schools as organisations not only allows us access to a range of theoretical concepts, multiple explanatory theories, and different empirical research approaches, but also to the range of literature based on dysfunctions in organisations. Conceiving of organisational dysfunctions as school dysfunctions gives access to a useful range of concepts, approaches, and interpretations.

4.2.2 Dysfunctions in organisations

Organisational dysfunctions are well-developed topics in fields such as industrial and organisational psychology, the management and organisational sciences, and the sociology of work and organisation. One of the few critiques levelled at this large body of knowledge is the little amount of cross-fertilisation which has taken place (Robinson, 2008). Research streams are generally reluctant to incorporate developments from other disciplines, and they tend to limit their empirical studies and theory building to their own fields. As one moves from one set of literature to another, a single concept or idea often has many guises. For example, dysfunctions in organisations may be understood as organisational misbehaviour, workplace deviance, aggression and violence at the workplace, counter productivity, incivility, and more. Given how the development of terms has become limited to particular disciplines, it is not uncommon to find that the same phenomena has multiple labels or that different phenomena share the same label across different sets of literature.

This division exists not only between disciplines but also within fields. One of the most challenging tasks authors face is trying to categorise this large body of overlapping concepts and theories into meaningful clusters.

One way of categorising the literature is by classifying the research foci according to their antecedents, indicators, and consequences of dysfunctions. While classifying the literature according to these three domains, a fourth, motivations for dysfunctional behaviour, was also added. This is due to the fact that many authors highlight the important role it plays in creating dysfunctional behaviour even though research has tended to neglect its influence (e.g. Robinson, 2008, Vardi & Wiener, 1996). Relevant literature was reviewed and systematised in relation to the most commonly cited dysfunctions, their antecedents, and their consequences. This analysis was based on overview and review chapters by the following authors: Greenberg (2009, 2010), Griffin, O'Leary-Kelly, and Collins (1998), Handel (2003), Pritchard, Griffin, and O'Leary-Kelly (2004), Robinson (2008), Robinson and Bennett (1995), Robinson and Greenberg (1999), O'Leary-Kelly, Griffin, and Glew (1996), and, Vardi and Wiener (1996). According to these authors, organisational dysfunctions include a wide range of behaviours such as absenteeism, abusive supervision, aggression, assault, back-stabbing, bullying, covert and overt conflict, fraud, intimidation, mobbing, retaliation behaviour, ridicule, sabotage, sexual and other types of harassment, social loafing, unconstructive criticism, verbal threats, verbal, emotional, and physical abuse, withdrawal, and withholding information and other forms of obstructionism.

The literature furthermore highlights the following antecedents: anger, company contempt, competitive environments, exposure to aggressive cultures, feeling victimized or mistreated, hostility, intent to quit, idealism, job dissatisfaction, job stressors, low sense of control or self-control, low self-esteem, low workplace surveillance, large or overly bureaucratic organisations, negative affectivity, overt or covert conflicts, perceived or real experiences of sexism, racism, classism, ageism, and other conflicts, personal dissatisfaction, perceived injustice, personality types or traits, pre-existing and especially prolonged conflicts and hostility in the organisation, perception of unfair, arbitrary, or self-serving behaviour of others, revenge attitudes, sense of powerlessness, substance abuse, vicarious exposure to conflict or

aggression, weak, ineffective, or frequently changing leadership, and workplace injustice.

The consequences of dysfunctional behaviours include absenteeism, anger, anxiety, depression, dissatisfaction, employee turnover, incivility, injury, insomnia and chronic fatigue, lack of control, low productivity and commitment to the organisation, lawsuits, reduced productivity, role conflict, sense of helplessness, stomach and back problems, stress, sabotage, and tarnished reputations.

Although the literature on DOB is extensive, Robinson (2008) identified numerous shortcomings within the field. Six of these shortcomings are explicitly dealt with in this study. These include that, generally, research fails to account for the complexity and dimensionality of dysfunctions, studies are too specific, focusing on one or two dysfunctions, rather than accounting for dysfunctions in general, due to a lack of cross-fertilisation, research tends to not incorporate advances across disciplines, research tends to focus on dysfunctions and neglect to connect these to the motivations and consequences associated with these acts, DOB research is methodologically limited to mostly quantitative studies, and research is generally limited to, and should extend beyond, self-reports from workers to also include their peers and supervisors.

4.3 Components of the Explanatory Model of School Dysfunctions

The systematic review of the DOB literature identified four main interrelated components from the literature: antecedents, motivations, types of dysfunctions, and consequences to dysfunctions. These were used as the main categories to identify and analyse problems in schools.

Antecedents refer to any idea, concept, or occurrence used in the DOB literature to connect or explain the causes of dysfunctions in schools. This could include personality types, negative communication and so on (e.g. Robinson, 2008, Vardi & Wiener, 1996). The term antecedent was chosen instead of the term cause because the direct causal pathway between, for example, unconstructive criticism, or large, anonymous bureaucracies, and the dysfunctions they create are hard to identify. Dysfunctions are often caused by other dysfunctions, or phenomena can be

connected but not clearly defined as a cause. It is therefore simpler, and conceptually safer, to refer to antecedents. Antecedents to dysfunctions can include a wide range of explanatory premises including: personality and behavioural characteristics, unique organisational and bureaucratic characteristics, and so on.

Motivations refer to reasons, actions, desires, urges, impulses, and intentions towards achieving a particular goal. They can be either intrinsic, i.e. the goal and the activity are inseparable, or extrinsic, i.e. the goal is the outcome of a particular activity (Ryan & Deci, 2000). For this study, motivations were divided into intended or unintended benefits, or intended and unintended harm.

Dysfunctions have enjoyed much attention in the medical and social sciences. Although the term has been used in many disciplines, it has predominantly been utilised in psychology to describe problems associated with mental and social dimensions, and in the medical sciences to describe physiological deficiencies. For the development of the EMSD, a dysfunction is defined as “an intentional or unintentional action or position by an individual, group, or institution that impedes either partially or wholly the functioning of an organization or some of its parts by violating organizational goals, norms, or societal standards in a context relevant to the organization” (Bergman, et al., 2011). This definition incorporates four distinct considerations: a dysfunction is normative, it is relativistic, i.e. connected to the perception and views of different actors, it is dichotomous, implying either a functional or a dysfunctional state, although, it is often more useful to consider dysfunctionality along a continuum and varying in degrees.

Consequences associated with dysfunctions can have direct or indirect effects on the organisation as a whole, some of its parts, some of its members, or individuals associated, either directly or indirectly, with the organisation. Furthermore, consequences can be divided into primary and secondary consequences. Primary consequences are explicitly linked to the dysfunctions and are caused as a direct result of the dysfunction. For example, a sexual relationship pursued at the workplace may result in an unwanted pregnancy. Secondary consequences are related to primary consequences in that they are seen as the extended knock-on effects. The secondary consequences of an unwanted pregnancy may include

mental and physical distress, absenteeism, or diminished working capacity due to these conditions. As this example illustrates, it is also possible for dysfunctions to lead to further dysfunctions.

In conclusion, a systematic review of the literature on DOB and related disciplines identified four main components which can be used as an analytic framework for the Explanatory Model of School Dysfunctions. These four components include: the antecedents of dysfunctions, motivations, dysfunctions themselves, and the consequences of dysfunctions. These four components are presented in Figure 4.1.

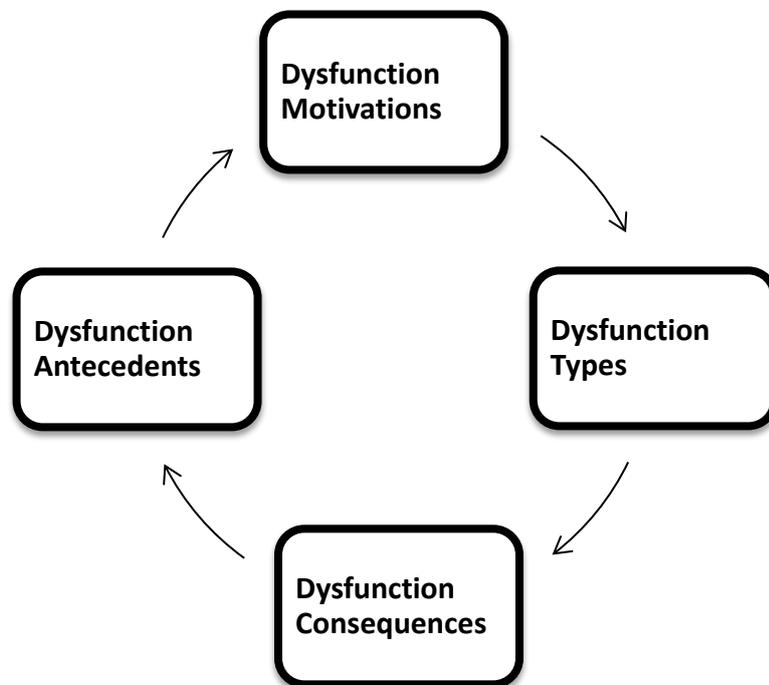


Figure 4.1: The conceptual components of the Explanatory Model of School Dysfunctions

The next step involved assessing the suitability of this model in explaining the range, scope, and interrelatedness of dysfunctions found in schools. This was accomplished by applying the above analytic framework to the 80 essays written by principals or their representatives from underperforming schools in Gauteng.

4.4 Conclusion

Three conceptual steps were followed to create the initial framework for the EMSD. In the first instance, schools were defined as organisations, which connected them with a wide range of well-developed and useful concepts from DOB literature. Second, the extensive research on DOB allowed for an in-depth analysis of the dimension of dysfunctions occurring in organisations. Finally, these insights were used in the model on school dysfunctions – the EMSD. The EMSD consists of four components and include: the antecedents of dysfunctions, motivations, dysfunctions themselves, and the consequences of dysfunctions. The next step involves testing and refining this model on the perspectives of principals. This is presented in Chapter 5.

Chapter 5

Dysfunctions from the principals' perspective

5.1 Introduction

A review of DOB literature identified the main components used in the EMSD: antecedents, motivations, dysfunctions, and consequences. These components were then used to analyse the 80 essays written by principals or their representatives from underperforming schools in Gauteng. The analysis was used to test these components and further refine the EMSD. After the analysis was complete, the EMSD was expanded to include four subcomponents in each of the main components: antecedents, motivations, dysfunctions, and consequences. Furthermore, the EMSD was able to account for the ways different components are connected to each other.

5.2 The Explanatory Model of School Dysfunctions and principals' perspectives

Eighty essays written by principals or their representatives were analysed in relation to the four components identified in the previous chapter: antecedents, motivations, dysfunctions, and consequences. These vignettes, which represent the problems experienced by these actors, were used to test the suitability of the EMSD and to refine and further develop the four components. In order to simplify the ambiguity and complexity of the narratives, data were sorted and classified to identify ideal types found across the cases. For Max Weber (1903-1917/1949:90),

[a]n ideal type is formed by the one-sided accentuation of one or more points of view and by the synthesis of a great many diffuse, discrete, more or less present and occasionally absent concrete individual phenomena, which are arranged according to those one-sidedly emphasized viewpoints into a unified analytical construct.

An analysis was conducted to identify the ideal types across the whole data set and these were then used to develop different subcomponents in each of the main components. The subcomponents were created to account for the range of phenomena identified as antecedents, motivations, dysfunctions, or consequences. Therefore, each narrative may not contain all of the components or subcomponents, but contributed to the process of identifying the structural commonalities contained within the entire data set.

5.3 The four components for an analytic framework for school dysfunctions

The principal essays were sorted and classified into the four EMSD components (see Figure 4.1:49) and a Content Configuration Analysis was conducted to further classify and refine these components. The following section explores the internal structures of each of these four components: dysfunctions, antecedents, motivations, and consequences.

5.3.1 Dysfunctions

A total of 760 dysfunctions were identified in the essays. Principals reported a wide range of problems varying significantly in degree, kind, complexity, and interrelatedness. Narratives ranged from basic accounts, containing only one problem, to complex narratives containing networks of problems. Difficulties in hiring new teachers or cases of theft are examples of basic, one problem accounts, while a teacher shot dead in front of learners due to a dispute between staff members is an example of a more complex network of problems. The Content Configuration Analysis identified four subcomponents to account for the range of these dysfunctions: rules, competence, resources, and extrinsics.

Rules, is the most frequently occurring subcomponent and contains all rule-related dysfunctions such as rule bending or rule breaking, rules causing dysfunctions, as well as the abuse of power. Rule bending and rule breaking can be divided into three dysfunctional areas: school norms, etiquette and cultural norms, and laws. School norms include dysfunctions such as absenteeism and unpunctuality by both teachers and learners, unethical practices such as favouritism or nepotism in hiring or

promoting staff, or the falsification of test scores. Examples of dysfunctions relating to etiquette and cultural norms are lack of respect or verbal abuse by learners, parents, or student governing body (SGB) members. Laws include illegal behaviour such as sexual misconduct, drug and alcohol abuse, gambling, prostitution, fraud, and corruption.

Although rules are intended to regulate and aid the daily management of schools it is also possible for these rules to disrupt teaching and learning. Government policy requiring that teaching posts be filled by newly-qualified bursary holders when no such teachers are available is an example of such a rule. This results not only in creating problematic employment practices, but also in schools remaining without teachers for extended periods of time. The final aspect of rule breaking relates to the abuse of power, which was evident on nearly all levels of management including district officials, principals, teachers, and SGB members. Examples of this include SGB members disrupting classes because of personal feuds or district members preventing a school from taking legal action by protecting parents and learners.

Competence, or problems associated with competence, was identified as the second most prevalent subcomponent. Instances of incompetence relating to principals included the mismanagement of staff, finances, or administration, an inability to cope with stress, duties and responsibilities, and an inability to manage or communicate effectively with staff, the district, unions, parents, or the greater community. Incompetence associated with teachers often included instances of an inability to cope with administration, curriculum, and workload, and lacking subject knowledge, or classroom management skills.

Resources form the third subcomponent of dysfunctions and relate to the lack of skills, infrastructure, or social welfare. Schools often lack qualified teachers, administrative staff, and cleaning and maintenance staff, while school infrastructure tends to be rundown or non-existent. Lack of infrastructure also includes lack of access to water and electricity, books, tables, chairs, offices, security fencing, and sporting facilities. Resources also relate to a range of welfare structures which are either insufficient or absent. Examples of these include the lack of feeding schemes, transportation, and access to emergency services, primary health care, and so forth.

The final subcomponent relate to *extrinsic* dysfunctions. Dysfunctions in this subcomponent include all external problems which enter, directly or indirectly, into the school setting and disrupt the day-to-day teaching, learning, and administration of a school. Parents seeking assistance with their personal problems at school, or teachers and parents engaging in sexual relations are examples of extrinsic factors impacting directly on the school environment. Examples of indirect extrinsic dysfunctions include the effects of abject poverty, learners who are hungry or ill, unstable or abusive home environments, child-headed households, HIV/AIDS, death of caregivers or of learners themselves, neglect or prolonged exposure to violence, trauma, and so on. Interestingly, learners are also often the gateway through which extrinsic dysfunctions enter the school setting through instances of robbery, theft, drug dealing, and prostitution. One of the narratives recounts, for example, how a Grade 7 pupil was notorious for barricading classrooms and turning them into gambling facilities, being a proficient moneylender to learners and teachers alike, and dealing drugs on school premises.

The preceding analysis refined and expanded the dysfunction component of the Explanatory Model of School Dysfunctions and it is presented Figure 5.1.

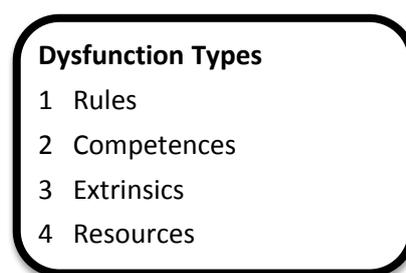


Figure 5.1: The EMSD – Dysfunctions refined and expanded

5.3.2 Antecedents

Antecedents to dysfunctions: A CCA identifying all antecedents yielded four subcomponents which include individual, situational, organisational, and structural antecedents.

Individual antecedents include all characteristics which can be attributed to individual actors. Specific instances include aggressive or violent personalities, alcoholism, greed, incompetence, laziness, or indifference. A teacher with a violent or aggressive personality who easily resorts to violence or an alcoholic teacher who is chronically absent or too inebriated to teach are examples of how individual antecedents cause dysfunctions.

Situational antecedents refer to any single event which causes a dysfunction and includes instances of violence, abuse, loss of control due to stress, absenteeism, and so on. For example, a teacher may stay at home to care for a sick child and consequently, learners are left unattended during class time.

Organisational antecedents relate to issues of competence, infrastructure, and organisational processes of a school such as the School Management Team (SMT) and the SGB. Problems can occur on various levels and between various organisational groups, for example, between the SMT and the SGB, the SGB and the principal, the principal and the district, and so on. Due to favouritism and factions these organisational structures often create rivalries and irregular management practices. These antecedents are often similar to situational antecedents, although they tend to be more systemic and often more prolonged. A suspended teacher may, for example, use their contacts in the SGB to cause unnecessary delays in filling the vacant position or SMT members may disrupt classes when their allies are not promoted.

Structural antecedents include dysfunctional social structures. Broadly speaking it includes dysfunctions such as racism, sexism, poverty, or chronic exposure to violence. It also includes specific structural limitations imposed by district or provincial policy, causing dysfunctions related to unions and district officials.

The above examples illustrate that the distinction between antecedents and dysfunctions is at times unclear and the most common antecedents to dysfunctions are often other dysfunctions. The interrelatedness of these dysfunctions as well as how frequently dysfunctions result in more dysfunctional 'knock-on effects' will be discussed in detail in sections 5.2.4 and 5.3.

After this analysis the antecedent component of the Explanatory Model of School Dysfunctions was refined and is presented in Figure 5.2.

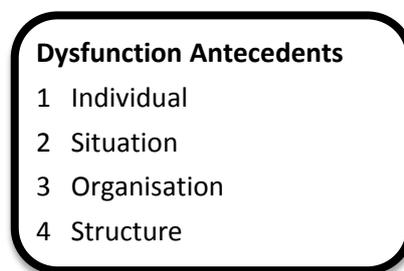


Figure 5.2: The EMSD – Antecedents refined and expanded

5.3.3 Motivations

Motivations of dysfunctions: Motivations can be seen as a subgroup of antecedents, as actors may have specific motivations to commit dysfunctional behaviour. However, the DOB literature highlighted the important role motivations play in causing dysfunctions and it was therefore decided to isolate this component from other antecedents. This was done not only to emphasise its importance in relation to dysfunctions, but also to allow the measurement of its effects more explicitly. Motivations were differentiated on four levels including: intended benefit, intended harm, unintended benefit, and unintended harm. A teacher lying about her child being ill is an example of intended benefit, as the teacher is able to absent herself from school. The unintended harm resulting from this absenteeism could, for example, be learners being left unattended or learners falling behind in their school work. A disgruntled teacher spreading rumours to damage the reputation of a colleague is an example of intended harm and a teacher receiving their full salary

while the department takes months to resolve a suspension is an example of unintended benefit.

The preceding analysis refined the motivation component. Figure 5.3 presents the expanded component.

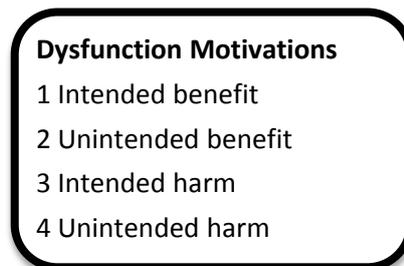


Figure 5.3: The EMSD – Motivations refined and expanded

5.3.4 Consequences

Consequences of dysfunctions: The CCA identifying the consequences of dysfunctions highlighted two different types of consequences, consequences relating to antecedents and consequences relating to dysfunctions. In the first instance, consequences of dysfunctions are often the antecedents to other dysfunctions. As mentioned earlier, consequences can be individual when, for example, depression causes absenteeism, it can be situational, when SGB's disrupt classes and learners miss important assessments, or structural whereby the collapse of a feeding scheme leaves learners undernourished, or it can be organisational when a district investigation leads to long-term vacancies of vital teaching posts in maths and science. The second type of consequence is identical to the subcomponents identified as dysfunctions themselves. In other words, when consequences were sorted and categorised, it yielded the same four subcomponents identified as dysfunctions: rules, competence, resources, and extrinsics. This is unsurprising given how interrelated and complex many of these narratives are. Dysfunctions are often not a single occurring event but form part of a bigger network or problem set which includes multiple actors, multiple situations or processes, and multiple

dysfunctions. To illustrate this complexity, the following excerpt shows how absenteeism is first portrayed as an antecedent and then as a dysfunction:

[S]he will report almost every week that she can't find her keys for the car thus she will be late ... if not she will phone and say that her car has a flat or cannot start....When she reports to be ill every week and the HOD, educators and the deputy complain about it [the principal] says that there is nothing he can do because she brings a sick note. This has now created a situation where those educators who had never stayed at home because they had a touch of cold, had now lately, publicly said to other colleagues that if she can stay sick every week, they will also stay at home. (Essay 7643:1)²

In this excerpt, absenteeism is the consequence of a set of dysfunctions:

Miss P was busy changing when she happened to turn around when she saw a figure climbing over the stall. Miss P got a fright and cried out. Miss P hastily got dressed and rushed out of the stall. A male staff member had caught the culprit and to Miss P' horror, the person who had been caught was [a learner in her class].... [In a meeting] the father stated that the principal and his staff had bullied [the learner] into admitting his offence and that he the father would be contacting his 'friends' at the department to ensure that the school did not get away with the persecution of an 'innocent child'... In the meeting the principal was accused by the director of being a racist, only believing the teacher and making a huge fuss over something that could easily be sorted out. The parents were then assured that the child did not have severe sanctions and after a hug for the parents, the district official left. Miss P missed the last few weeks of term and went home to her parents. It is uncertain if she will return. (Essay 0894:2-3)

The replication of the subcomponents for dysfunctions and consequences illustrates the connection between dysfunctions and their consequences, as well as the extent

² In all excerpts presented in this thesis, spelling mistakes were corrected to improve readability. All other idiosyncratic style elements, especially relating to grammar and punctuation, were reproduced verbatim.

to which these components overlap and interrelate to form complex webs of dysfunctions and dysfunctional situations. What is also apparent is that these narratives do not indicate the distinctive 'beginning' or 'end' of a problem and are often pieces of a much bigger and longer story or context of problems in which principals find themselves.

The final part of this analysis refined and expanded the component of consequences of the Explanatory Model of School Dysfunctions and is presented in Figure 5.4.

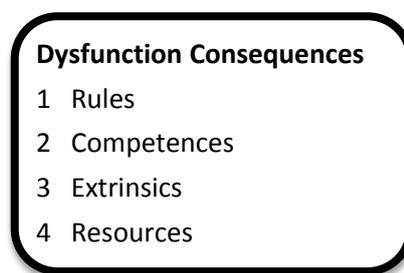


Figure 5.4: The EMSD – Consequences refined and expanded

5.4 The Explanatory Model of School Dysfunctions (EMSD)

The initial analysis of the DOB literature identified four main components, which were then applied on the principal data set. A CCA was conducted to explore the subcomponents in each of these four main components and the EMSD was adjusted and expanded. Figure 5.5 presents the main findings:

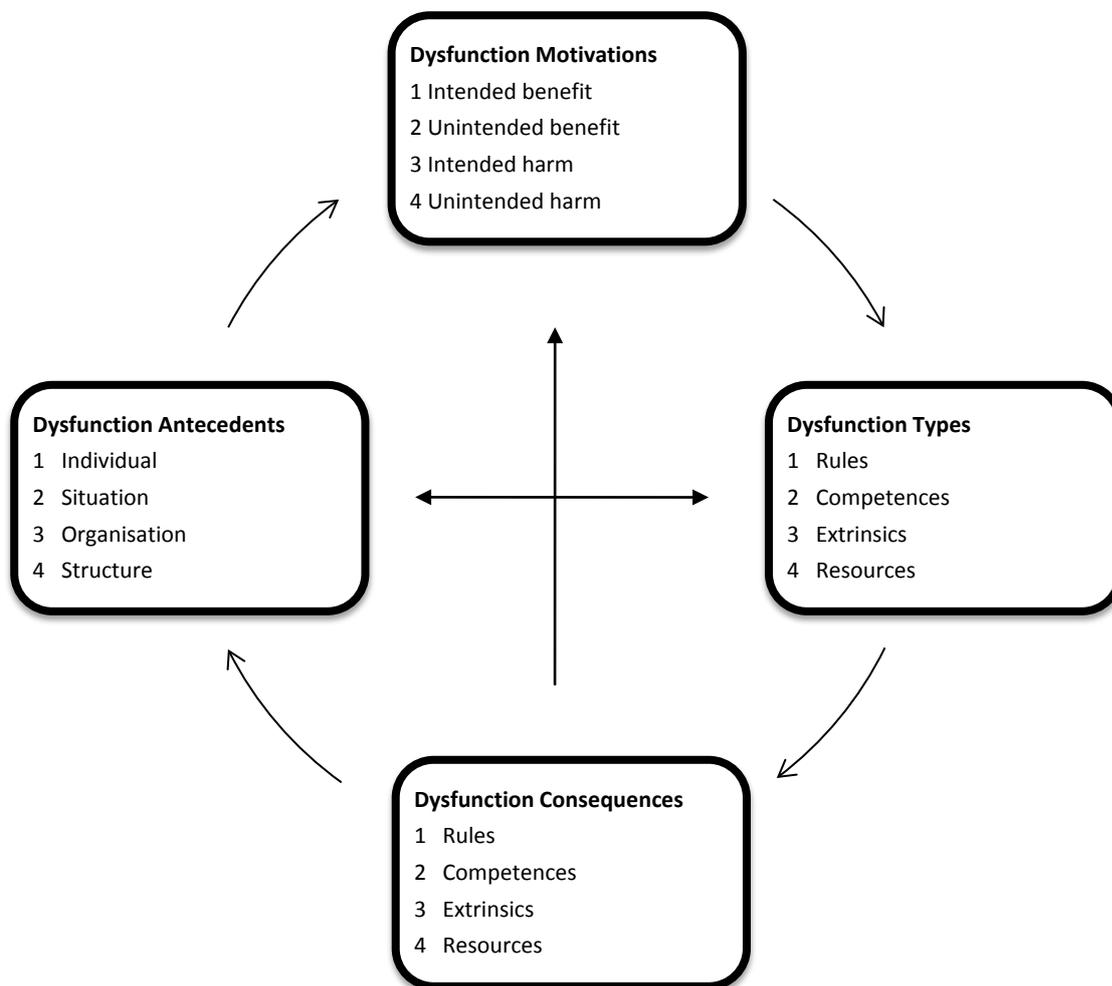


Figure 5.5: The Explanatory Model of School Dysfunction

The arrows in Figure 5.5 indicate the relations between the different components. Particularly noteworthy are the connections between consequences and antecedents, and consequences and motivations. These types of relations are common occurrences in the narratives and usually indicate the beginning of another dysfunctional episode. As such, dysfunctions often have a long and complex developmental history, which consists of multiple dysfunctional episodes. Each new cycle of dysfunctions lead to a different set of consequences, which create new or different antecedents or motivations. This in turn begins a new and often more

complex dysfunctional episode. As the previously cited excerpts 7643 and 0894 illustrated, dysfunctions are rarely resolved but rather lead to a variety of knock-on effects, which at each turn contributes new sets of complexities, interdependencies, and conditionalities.

5.5 Interdependencies and conditionalities within the EMSD

As with most other qualitative methods, conducting a CCA requires that the data be systematically sorted and classified. In this study, the EMSD was used as an analytic model which guided the classification process. However, this process decontextualises relevant phenomena from the rest of the data set according to specified ideal types. This study, for example, attempted to make sense of the process of dysfunctions in schools in relation to their antecedents and consequences. Narratives were teased out and sorted according to these elements. Although the arrows in the model begin to indicate some of the complexity in the narratives, the process of extracting, sorting, and classifying tends to obscure the true nature of the complexity, interdependence, and conditionality found in the narratives. To illustrate this, the final step in the analysis consisted of re-contextualising the phenomena back into the narratives and to illustrate the interconnectedness of these elements. The following example illustrates this point:

There were different posts advertised at my school. The SGB together with the entire management and staff agreed about certain criteria, requirements and needs of these posts, all procedures were followed, but the outcome of the process was the opposite. People who were appointed to the posts were people who were not earmarked, who had no prior experience and some did not meet the requirements and the needs of the school. People started to talk about the "Hit List". This resulted in one of the SGB members being shot dead and the situation escalating out of control. The SGB member who was a teacher was shot in class in full view of the learners. Everybody was in extreme shock. The school was never the same again. (Essay 3691:1)

This excerpt shows how narratives often have interrelated beginnings which lead to complex dysfunctions. At different stages consequences feed the cycle of

dysfunction in different ways. Although the EMSD, as an analytic model, helps to identify the different elements which are involved, it is difficult to quantify the individual effect these actors, their motivations, or situations have on these dysfunctions. What is clear, however, is how all of these are functionally connected to the dysfunctions. This makes assigning responsibility or playing the blame-game, by saying for example that it is the principal who is at fault, exceedingly difficult. The EMSD provides an analytic tool to systematise and analyse school dysfunctions and shows the complex interdependencies which exist between these dysfunctions, their antecedents, and their consequences. The EMSD was found to be an effective analytic tool to analyse and account for the problems experienced by school principals or their representatives, as well as to represent how these dysfunctions are connected to various actors, situations and motivations.

5.6 The EMSD from the principals' perspective

The 80 principal essays were sorted and classified according to the four EMSD components: antecedents, motivations, dysfunctions, and consequences. These components were then further classified to identify their internal structures and the subcomponents, which effectively describe the range of instances found in each of them. Finally, the position of these components were analysed in the narratives to identify how and in which ways they are structurally connected. After these analyses were completed, the EMSD was adjusted to reflect the main findings from the principal data. The following figure presents these findings, the EMSD from the principals' perspective:

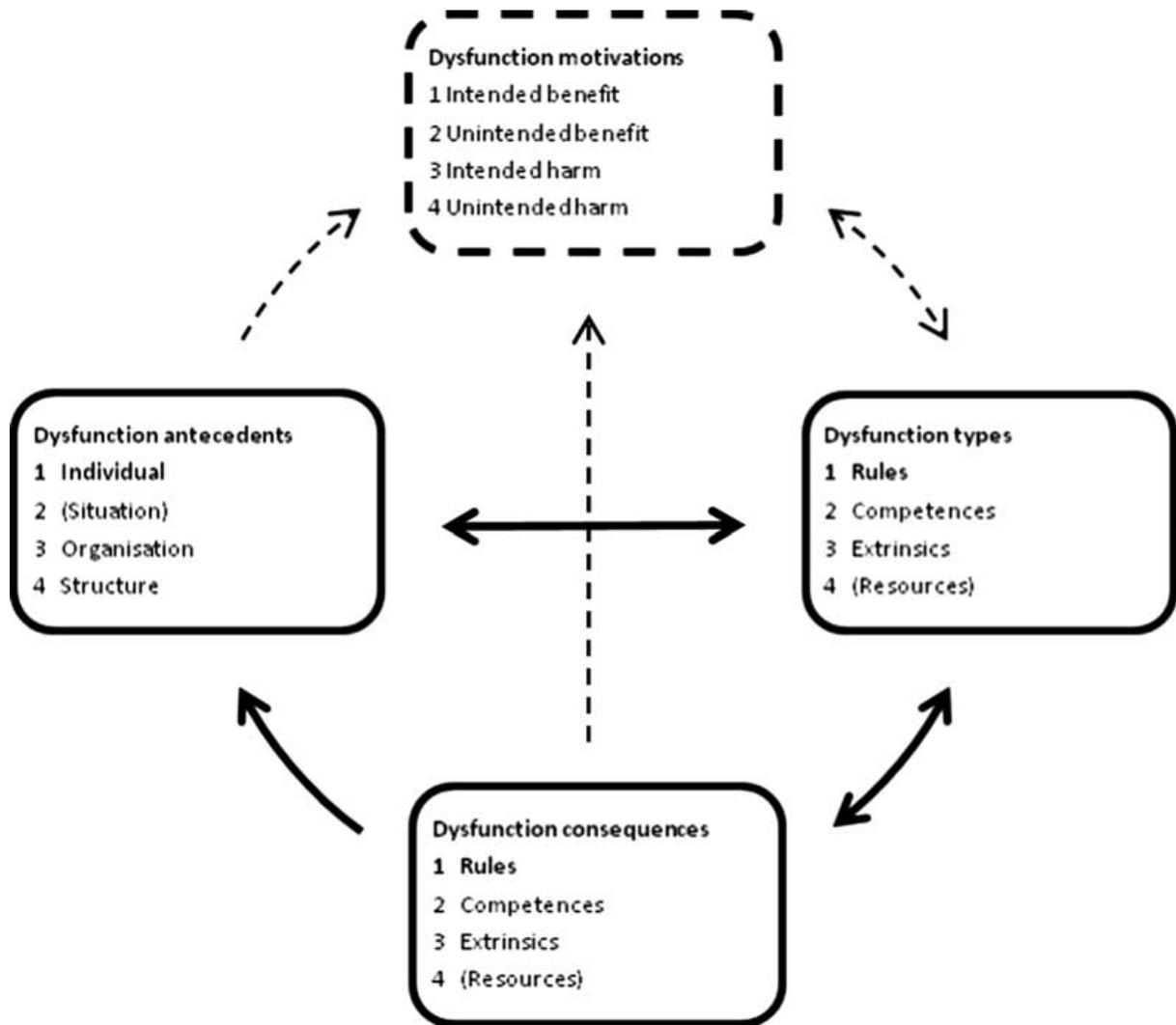


Figure 5.6: The EMSD from the principals' perspective

The first component, antecedents, has four different subcomponents. The most prevalent subcomponent has been highlighted in bold. Therefore, the most commonly cited antecedent relates to individual antecedents and includes, for example, aggressive or violent personalities, alcoholism, or incompetence. The least mentioned antecedent is situation and this is indicated by placing it in brackets. The second and third most commonly reported antecedents include organisation such as infrastructure, and organisational processes of a school, and structure such as social structures including sexism or racism, or structural limitations from the district or the provincial department of education.

The second component, motivations, has a dashed frame around it. This implies that motivations are rare or mostly implied in the principals' narratives. The dashed arrows between motivations and antecedents, motivations and dysfunctions, and motivations and consequences indicate a weak relation between these components. These weak relations are due, in part, to motivations rarely being explicitly mentioned in the narratives, making it difficult to determine the influence or effect motivations have on the other components. This does not, however, mean that motivations do not play an important part in the development of these dysfunctional episodes. Rather, this particular data set does not lend itself to an explicit analysis of this dimension.

The next component, dysfunctions, also contains all four of the subcomponents. Here, rules are the most cited subcomponent as is indicated by it being highlighted in bold. This is followed by the second most prevalent subcomponent, competences, and the third, extrinsics. The brackets enclosing resources indicates that this is the most infrequent dysfunction mentioned in the principal data. The arrows leading from this component are all double arrows. These double arrows indicate a reciprocal relationship between the components they connect. In other words, a dysfunction, for example, creates changes in the antecedents to subsequent dysfunctions, and so on.

The final component, consequences, mirrors the previously discussed component of dysfunctions. Rules are the most cited subcomponent and is indicated in bold. The second most prevalent subcomponent is competences and the third is extrinsics. The final and least mentioned subcomponent, resources, is enclosed in brackets. Of interest here, is how the internal structure of consequences mimics the internal structure of dysfunctions. This is due, in part, to the fact that dysfunctions tend to reproduce themselves or produce similar consequences and as such, these two components tend to mirror one another. The previously cited excerpt, Essay 3691:1, is a good example of one of these instances. The rule breaking dysfunction of corrupt hiring practices lead to the rule breaking consequence of a teacher being shot in front of learners.

The bold arrows between consequences and antecedents, consequences and dysfunctions, and dysfunctions and antecedents indicate the strength of relation between these components and the frequency with which these types of structures occur. These bold and sometimes reciprocal arrows go some way in illustrating the interconnectedness and conditionalities of these narratives as discussed in section 5.5.

After adapting the EMSD to fit the main findings of the principal data, it illustrates the suitability of the EMSD on the principals' narratives as it is able to account for the range of problems and dysfunctions reported by these principals or their representatives.

5.7 Conclusion

The main components of the EMSD identified in the DOB literature were used to analyse the 80 essays written by the principals or their representatives. This analysis further explored the different subcomponents evident in the antecedents, motivations, dysfunctions, and consequences identified in the principal data set. These were then used to refine the EMSD as presented in figure 5.6. Furthermore, analysis examined how these different components are connected with each other and how dysfunctional episodes begin and develop. The EMSD was found to be an adequate model to account for the experiences of these principals as presented in their narrative accounts. In the next chapter, the suitability of the EMSD is examined in relation to the perspectives of teachers.

Chapter 6

Dysfunctions from the teachers' perspective

6.1 Introduction

This chapter applies the Explanatory Model of School Dysfunctions (EMSD) on the 40 essays written by primary and secondary school teachers from Gauteng to identify the problems they experience at school. The first goal is to assess the degree of fit of the EMSD on these problem sets by exploring the dimensions of the dysfunctions in the teacher data set and, second, to analyse the structure of the dysfunctions by identifying how the different components connect to each other. Finally, the new findings are applied on the EMSD. It is refined and adapted to create a new model based on the perspectives of teachers.

6.2 The Explanatory Model of School Dysfunctions and teachers' perspectives

The 40 essays written by teachers were analysed using the four components of the EMSD: antecedents, motivations, dysfunctions, and consequences. This analysis was conducted to test the suitability of the EMSD. The EMSD was deemed suitable because it could accommodate the range of problems experienced by the teachers. The first step consisted of sorting and classifying the data into the four main components. Then the internal structures of these four components were systematically explored to identify the different subcomponents. Exploring the internal structure of each component consisted of three different steps. First, each component was thematically analysed using a bottom-up approach. This means that the themes were developed in situ as the components were sorted and classified. During this part of the analysis it was discovered that the identified subcomponents mimicked the previously defined subcomponents, which emerged during the analysis of the principal data. It was therefore decided to try to use these subcomponents during this analysis. The second part of the analysis consisted of applying the predefined subcomponents on the teacher data set to determine whether these subcomponents reliably described the range of dysfunctions, antecedents,

motivations, and consequences reported by the teachers. The third step involved using different classification systems and analytic techniques to determine whether different approaches would be more suitable for the data set. This step verified whether the EMSD subcomponents accounted for all of the instances found in the data. Accordingly, this was an iterative analysis, employing both bottom-up and top-down approaches, as well as using multiple strategies to ensure that the best descriptive approaches were utilised.

After completing the analysis to explore the subcomponents in each of the antecedent, motivation, dysfunction, and consequence components, a second analysis was conducted to identify the relations between these components. The structures of dysfunctional episodes were analysed by examining how the different components connected to each other. This analysis showed that dysfunctional episodes varied considerably in degree, kind, and interrelatedness. Furthermore, the narrative flow of each dysfunctional episode was analysed by identifying the directionalities and interdependencies of the different components in the narratives.

The final level of analysis applied the findings from the above analyses onto the EMSD, adapting it to reflect the perspectives of the teachers. This included an antecedent component containing three antecedents, individual, situation, and organisational, a motivational component similar to the principals' EMSD with intended and unintended benefit, and intended and unintended harm, four dysfunctional components including rules, competence, extrinsics, and resources, and finally, a consequence component, which mirrors the dysfunction component. The frequency and directionality of these narrative accounts, explored in detail in the second analysis is also illustrated with arrows and dashed frames in the teachers' EMSD diagram.

The following sections describe the main findings from the above analyses. Section 6.3 provides a detailed discussion of the different components and subcomponents as they relate to the teachers data, while section 6.4 describes the structures and flow of these narratives. Finally, section 6.5 presents the EMSD from the perspectives of the teachers.

6.3.1 Dysfunctions relating to rules and rule breaking

Similar to the findings from the principal essays, the most common type of dysfunction teachers report relates to rules. This type includes instances of rule breaking, rule bending, and dysfunctional rules. Although the narratives contain examples of rule breaking related to various actors, such as principals, parents, or other teachers, the most common instances relate to learners. Learners' rule breaking behaviour includes lack of discipline, destructive or disruptive behaviour, and misconduct. The following examples illustrate some of these dysfunctions:

The kids are rude and unmannerly, they do not want to work, they disrupt my classes and they do not respect me. They act as though they are doing me a favour to attend my class . . . It seems it is the kids most in need of education are the ones least likely to excel. This is not what I signed up for . . . this is not what I thought teaching was all about. (LMNJAV)

He first met his principal when he went to grade 2 and spent many hours in her office because of misconduct at school. By the time he reached grade 4 he was renowned for stealing, swearing and bad-mouthing his teachers. In grade 5, he was caught after stealing stationary from a teacher. (Anonymous)

Whilst I was teaching, a group of grade 12 boys burst into my class, wearing masks, and captured me. They dragged me out of the classroom and tied my hands and legs and even covered my face with a jacket. They proceeded to carry me into the boys' toilets, where they made sure my hands and feet were properly tied. I could not believe what was happening to me.... They then place me on the back of a bakkie and sped over the sports field towards the rugby post. I found myself fearing for my life. With my eyes blindfolded, I couldn't judge at what speed we were traveling. I could feel my body lift from the back of the vehicle as it sped around the corner. Finally they stopped. They picked me up and carried me towards a rugby post. Here they tied me to the post and left me there. (Anonymous)

Teachers also reported conflict with principals, mentors, and other teachers. Some of the narratives included instances of colleagues' use of corporal punishment, the mismanagement of staff, corruption, and unprofessional behaviour. The following illustrates some of these teacher-related dysfunctions:

He swore at the class, shouting repeatedly 'you f . . . girls', banged on the desks, almost tossing one across the room, and stamped his feet as he strode stormily up and down the aisles, unable to regain control of himself. The girls of 11x, fearing what might come next, sat motionless. (OCAA)

[The teacher and his student] decided to write an anonymous letter to both the principal and the Department of Education, so that they could deal with T. [another teacher] once and for all [by falsely accusing him of having sexual relations with a student]. He was a common enemy. They knew that most likely the principal would not buy the story, or even if he would buy, T. could possibly escape with just a light warning. The anonymous letters would be dispatched the next day. They also planned to incite the other learners to stage a demonstration, demanding the removal of T. from the school, if no immediate action was taken. This would be the last nail in the case. (Anonymous)

In these excerpts various actors are involved in rule breaking dysfunctions. Although learners are most frequently mentioned, other actors include other teachers and, as the final excerpt shows, even teachers and learners working together. These actors are involved in a range of rule breaking behaviours. Lesser problems include instances of students lacking manners or respect, while more serious dysfunctions include swearing, stealing, kidnapping, corruption, and falsifying allegations.

The lifespan of dysfunctions or actors' involvement can also be indicative of the degree of the dysfunctions. The second excerpt shows, for example, how a learner's misconduct extends over several years, seemingly without consequence, while the teacher-learner team from the last excerpt shows, not only their willingness to falsely accuse a fellow teacher, but also the extent to which they are willing to spread these lies, mobilising all possible avenues available to them including the DoE, the

principal, and other learners. These extracts show how rule breaking dysfunctions vary not only in kind, but also in degree. Often dysfunctions extend over time or connect wider networks of contexts and actors, while creating more complex and interrelated systems of dysfunctions. Finally, these excerpts also illustrate how rule breaking dysfunctions affect teachers in multiple ways, creating feelings of despair, as seen in the first extract, and teachers fearing for their personal safety.

6.3.2 Dysfunctions relating to extrinsic factors

The second most prevalent type of dysfunctions reported by teachers relate to extrinsic factors and dysfunctions relating to competence. Extrinsic factors include all dysfunctions taking place outside of the school environment which impact on the day-to-day running of the school in some way. Examples of extrinsic factors include: death in the family, gang activity, general neglect by caregivers, physical and sexual abuse, neglect at home, substance abuse, and unemployment. The following excerpts illustrate some of these:

Things have also become difficult at home because my husband sometimes accuses me of neglecting him, and he complains that the school and students demand all of my time and energy leaving little for him and our relationship.
(LMNJAV)

V. [a male learner] told the psychologist of a number of incidences which where he experienced physical and emotional mistreatment as well as neglectful, harsh, critical and threatening parenting at the hands of his mother. V. accounted how his mother would fly into fits of rage for no reason and beat him with whatever she could lay her hands on – belts, wire coat hangers, spades and telephone books. He said that his mother would often threaten to kill him. She would constantly call him a stupid and useless boy and say that he didn't have the right to live and she wished he were dead. She would also make him go to bed without food. (TTAN)

Extrinsic factors affect teachers in many ways. The latter excerpt shows how learners are often undernourished, neglected, abused, and so on. During such times learners come to school in no position to learn and they often need a lot more from their teachers than just being taught. The social responsibility of being a teacher, a mother/father, a psychologist, a caregiver, and more, often requires teachers to go beyond the call of duty. This added pressure can create stress in their personal lives, resulting in new sets of problems. This can be seen in the first excerpt. Given that all of these dysfunctions fall outside of the school setting, it is easy to underestimate the effects these dysfunctions have in disrupting the flow of teaching and learning at school. However, these excerpts begin to illustrate the impact they have on teachers and learners alike.

6.3.3 Dysfunctions relating to competence

Mentioned as frequently and sharing second place with extrinsic factors is the subcomponent relating to competence. Two types of competence issues were identified from the data. The first relates to learners lacking academic competence, while the second deals with the incompetence of teachers or teaching. In this second category, narratives often focus on the power struggles, management difficulties, and competence issues between novice and established senior teachers. The following excerpts illustrate some of the issues evident in the essays:

The principal Mrs D. is quite traditional and does not “buy into” the ideas of the newer staff and still believes that the best way to teach is in a disciplined structured classroom where the teacher rules with an iron fist. She is also wary of the new teachers who come into her school with newfangled ideas about teaching and learning, but who struggle to control their classes.... Mrs D. says: “I know you come out of university and they have taught you some new and interesting theories about learning and students and teaching. But that does not work in the real world. I have been teaching for 35 years already and I know these children. In my school, discipline is everything and here we do things my way. You teach, the children learn, and the classroom must be quiet and orderly if you want to kids to respect you.” (LMNJAV)

After a month of teaching she was very despondent; she felt that her university training had not prepared her adequately for teaching second language learners, and her senior mentor teacher was not of much help. Although she tried to use the ideas she had learned at university such as group work and collaborative learning and employing alternate resources for teaching, her mentor teacher, Mrs. S. did not approve. Mrs. S. had more than 20 years of experience and she advocated her own tried-and-tested methods such as placing learners in rows, with the teacher reading aloud to class and providing notes on the chalkboard. She argued that this way it was easier to keep order in the classroom. (NASCPEN)

The final competence subcategory deals with teachers' experiences of distress or feeling overwhelmed by the demands and complexity of their jobs. Teachers often feel overburdened as they attempt to deal with the competing and sometimes incompatible demands made on them by the principal, the curriculum, the school policy, other teachers, parents, and learners. This is especially common for novice teachers, who feel underprepared by their pre-teaching training. The following excerpt is an example of one of these instances:

I did not sign up for this. I just want to teach. I am not here to be a parent, social worker, psychiatrist and psychologist to these kids. I love my subject, I love to teach and I was very excited to become part of the school that I attended as a boy, but really! I am at my wits' end. (VJM)

6.3.4 Dysfunctions relating to resources

The final and least prevalent subcomponent teachers report relates to resources or the lack of infrastructure. These dysfunctions can be divided into three main groups: under-resourced or poorly maintained schools, an increase in student numbers and perceived decrease in teachers, and a lack of qualified teachers. The following excerpts illustrate some of these dysfunctions:

The school was in a general state of disrepair. The bathrooms were dirty, there were virtually no audio-visual aids in any of the classrooms and in some

parts the surrounding fence had fallen apart. The school however had a well-stocked library but it was usually locked Mrs. J. [the librarian] said: 'It's a waste of time taking these children to the library. They are not interested in reading They anyway just leave a mess that I have to clean.' (NASCPEN)

The school had gone for two terms without a science teacher This problem was not pertinent to them. Every time they went to the Department of Education, they were shown a long list of schools waiting for the same delivery, the science teacher. (Anonymous)

There is also some resentment amongst staff about the lack of resources afforded their school as some teachers in better resourced schools have many more support structures however in the schools most in need of these services, such as Progress Secondary Schools (PSS), teachers are generally on their own. (LMNJAV)

Here, dysfunctions relating to resources include more than the lack of resources. The lack of qualified teaching staff can disrupt or suspend learning at schools for months or years while teachers report schooling environments, which are unkempt and unsafe, as well as lacking in teaching equipment. Even when resources are available gatekeepers limit the access learners and teachers have to them such as when learners are prevented from using a well-stocked library.

6.4 The structures of dysfunctions

Narratives are rarely simplified accounts of dysfunctions and as the above excerpts illustrated, they often consist of complex, multi-levelled, and interrelated components. Dysfunctions are frequently part of bigger networks of problem sets and seldom occur in isolation or within a simple cause-and-effect pattern. When a dysfunction occurs within a simple cause-and-effect pattern, it is easy to identify the beginning, or antecedent, the dysfunction itself, and the resulting consequence. A learner with an aggressive personality could, for example, become disruptive during class and, as a consequence, be sent to detention. This is an example of a simple

cause-and-effect pattern with a clear beginning and a definitive end. As the excerpts from the teachers' narratives have illustrated thus far, however, this is hardly the case.

The section on rule breaking dysfunctions showed how patterns of rule breaking behaviour can remain intact over long periods of time while the severity of dysfunctions slowly increases during this period. Different factors, such as multiple dysfunctions, an extended time span, or an increase in the degree of dysfunctions, contribute new compound effects to dysfunctional cycles making them more complex and interrelated. Extended learner misconduct may, for example, lead to increased teacher stress, a decrease in student productivity, and a continuous disruption of teaching and learning. As the disruption continues and learners fall more and more behind schedule, the teacher's frustration increases culminating in the example of OCAA, cited in Section 6.3.1, where the teacher loses control, becoming verbally and physically abusive before walking out of the class. Although this is an extreme case, the stress teachers experience from having to deal with multiple levels of dysfunctions simultaneously, is not.

The section on extrinsic dysfunctions illustrated how learners' personal problems enter the school environment creating networks of dysfunctional knock-on effects and affecting teachers in various ways. Dysfunctions relating to resources also showed how these factors disrupt the process of teaching and learning in schools. The complex nature of these narratives makes it difficult to identify the moments which signal the beginning or the end of a dysfunctional cycle. Narratives do not begin at the beginning of a dysfunction and they do not end when this dysfunction is resolved. Rather, narratives are arranged in a way that is meaningful to the teacher's story. More often than not, narratives begin at the tipping point of a dysfunctional episode. This was the case with the example of the teacher and the girls from 11x (OCAA). This narrative did not tell the story of the learners' long term misconduct, the emotional and psychological stress of the teacher, or any of the other factors which contributed to the teachers' outburst. Rather, the narrative begins near the end, when the multiple layers of dysfunction culminate into the breaking point and the teacher cracks under the pressure. This single dysfunctional instance in itself is

already complex and multi-layered, while the dysfunctions and antecedents preceding this moment remain implied.

Narratives rarely contain the entire dysfunctional story and many of the antecedents or consequences often lie beyond the scope of a single narrative. It is not always possible to identify the antecedents, motivations, or consequences, which are connected to these dysfunctions. What is discernible, however, is the frequency with which dysfunctions lead to other dysfunctions, creating more complex dysfunctional episodes. Within these narratives, dysfunctions are often the antecedents to, and consequences of other dysfunctions. The following excerpt is a good example. Here, the dysfunctional cycle, which preceded this incident, is only implied, but the consequences of it are very real, and instead of leading to a resolution, this encounter sparks off new networks of dysfunctions, involving even more actors:

One Friday afternoon, towards the end of the term, V. and K. are at each other's throats again, and T. had to ask them repeatedly to settle down so that they could write their cycle test. After some horrible racist slurs between the two students in T.'s class, a big fistfight ensues between V. and K. causing uproar in the class. This leads to K almost breaking V.'s arm, and in sheer exasperation with the situation, T. put them both out of the class, preventing them from writing an important cycle test.... Mrs D. was very angry with T. and says that his job is to teach and make sure that students pass, nothing more and nothing less. Both sets of parents are angry at the school and T. about having to come to school again and there is general unhappiness about the situation. The other teachers are saying that T. is making too much of this and that he should not get so involved with the kids as they can't be expected to solve all the social problems in the school. (LMNJAB)

6.5 The EMSD from the teachers' perspective

A systematic analysis was conducted on the 40 essays written by teachers using the four components of the EMSD: antecedents, motivations, dysfunctions, and consequences. The analysis explored the subcomponents of each of these four categories as well as the different ways components are structurally connected. After

the completion of this analysis, the EMSD previously refined on the principals' perspectives was adapted to reflect the main findings from the teachers' data. Figure 6.1 presents the EMSD from the teachers' perspective:

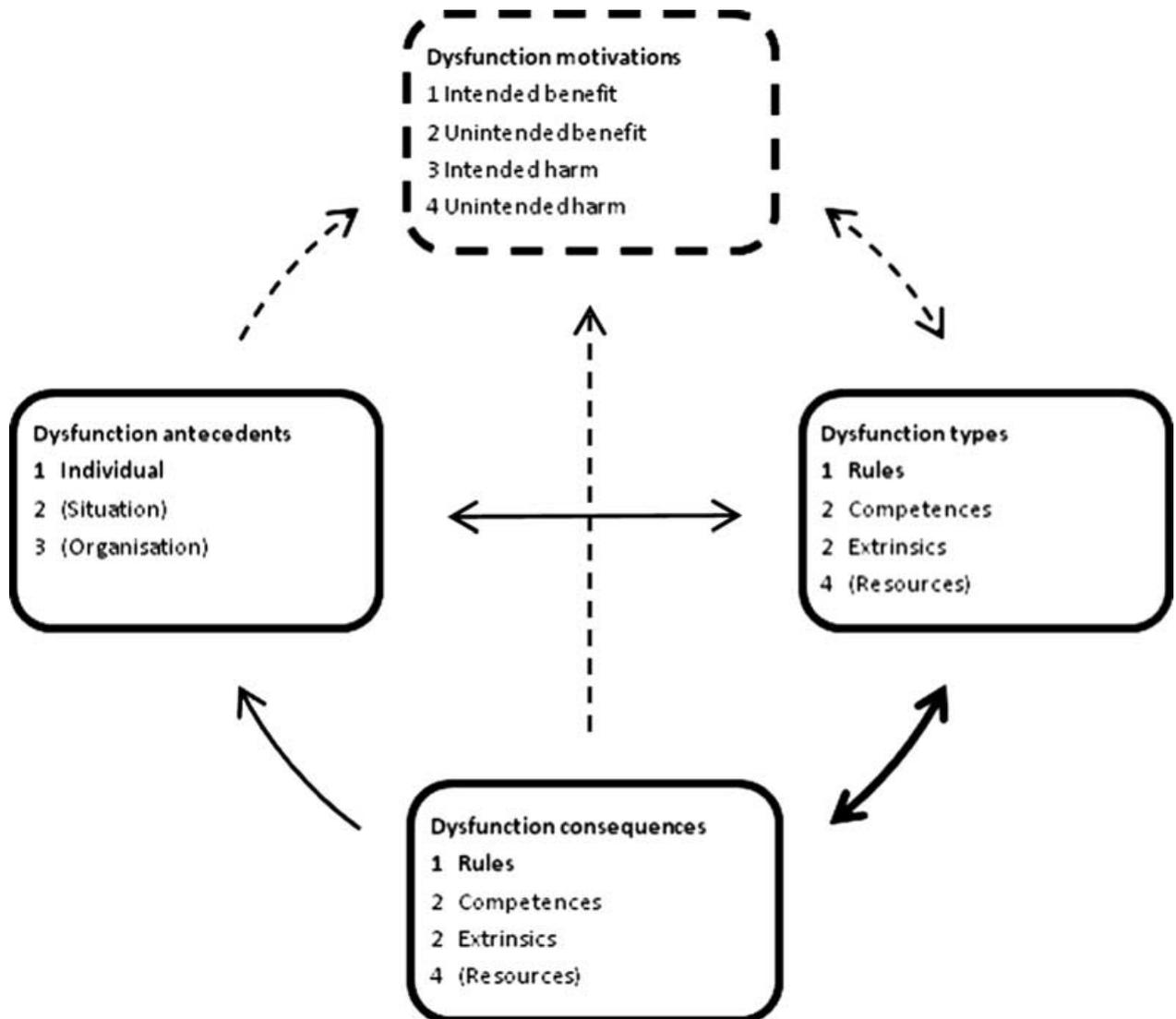


Figure 6.1: The EMSD from the teachers' perspective

The antecedent component of the teachers' EMSD contains only three of the four original subcomponents and two of these subcomponents are enclosed in brackets. The fourth subcomponent, defined in the principal data as structure, is missing. This is due to the fact that none of the teachers mentioned antecedents relating to social structures such as racism, classism, or structural limitations from the district or

provincial management. The subcomponents of situation and organisation have been placed in brackets. The brackets indicate that these subcomponents were rarely mentioned in the teachers' narratives. The final subcomponent in the antecedent category, individual, is highlighted in bold because it is the most commonly reported antecedent. As the previous analyses illustrated, this related most often to learners.

The second component, motivations, has a dashed frame. This implies that motivations are rare or mostly implied in the teachers' narratives. Furthermore, the dashed arrows leading to and from motivations indicate weak relations between this and other components. This, however, does not indicate that motivations do not play an important part in the development of dysfunctional episodes. Rather, motivations are rarely discussed in the teachers' essays and are therefore difficult to analyse explicitly.

The dysfunction component contains all four subcomponents and, as shown earlier, rules are the most commonly cited dysfunctions. Competence and extrinsic dysfunctions share second place, while resources are the least mentioned dysfunction subcomponent. The bold arrow connecting the dysfunctions and consequences components indicate that this was the strongest or most frequently occurring relation as the teachers' narratives tended to focus on dysfunctions and their consequences. The double arrows between dysfunctions and antecedents, dysfunctions and motivations, and dysfunctions and consequences indicate that these components form a reciprocal relationship. Each time these components connect with each other they create changes, which have subsequent effects on the other components. The concluding excerpt from the previous section illustrates this point. The excerpt begins with two learners fighting. Although the teacher intervenes, the verbal exchange escalates into a fist fight and, consequently, the learners are removed from the classroom. This however creates a new dysfunctional antecedent whereby the learners miss an important test. This new antecedent leads to several new dysfunctions including an angry principal accusing the teacher of incompetence and angry parents, resulting in general unhappiness. Many of the other excerpts cited previously also illustrated these knock-on effects and show how they create more complex and interrelated dysfunctional cycles.

The final component, consequences, is identical to the dysfunction component, something that was also found in the principal data. As in the dysfunction component, rules are the most common type of consequence. Competences and extrinsics are tied in second place and resources are the least frequently occurring consequences. An interesting observation here is the repetition of the dysfunctions-consequences sequence found in the principal data. Again, it seems that dysfunctions tend to reproduce themselves or at least produce similar consequences and just as in the principal data, the dysfunction and consequence components mirror each another.

The teachers' EMSD illustrates the suitability of the EMSD on the teachers' narratives as it is able to account for the range of problems and dysfunctions as reported by them. Furthermore, it is able to describe the dimensions of the problems experienced by the teachers accounting for these problems sets not just in degree and in kind, but also by illustrating the complex and interrelated nature of these narratives and dysfunctional cycles.

6.6 Discussion

The aim of these analyses was to apply the previously developed EMSD on the essays written by teachers to determine the degree of fit of the EMSD on the problem sets experienced by them. Multiple levels of analyses explored the different components and subcomponents of the EMSD and identified the relationships between these components. Interestingly, the problems teachers experience are mainly pedagogical and mostly connected to the behaviour or performance of learners. To a lesser degree, the data also included examples of dysfunctions relating to other teachers. Examples of such problems included conflict between novice and experienced teachers, as well as differences in discipline and teaching techniques. These dysfunctions introduced an interesting feature as they intersected both rule breaking dysfunctions and dysfunctions relating to competence. This is one of many instances illustrating the interrelatedness of dysfunctions.

Dysfunctions relating to extrinsic factors tied with competence dysfunctions in prevalence, while resource-related dysfunctions such as physical infrastructure and teaching aids were rarely mentioned. The resources which were most often associated with dysfunctions related to the lack of qualified staff. Examples of this included lack of teachers or teaching skills, lack of support, or problems with principals or parents.

The antecedents and consequences of dysfunctions were rarely stated explicitly, or fell beyond the boundaries of the narratives. Therefore narratives often presented a particular part of a much larger and complex system or networks of dysfunctions. The most frequently linked components were dysfunctions leading to dysfunctions. It was not uncommon for dysfunctions to also play the role of antecedent and consequence, sometimes even multiple times in a single narrative.

After the analyses were completed, the new findings were applied and the EMSD from the teachers' perspectives was created. This model showed that the EMSD was an effective model as it was able to account for the full range of the problem sets reported by the teachers. The subcomponents identified in the dysfunction, antecedent, motivation, and consequence components mirrored those developed in the principal analysis and no new components or subcomponents needed to be added to the previously developed model. As such, the EMSD was found to be a suitable analytic framework for the dysfunctions experienced by the teachers.

6.7 Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to apply the EMSD on the 40 essays written by the teachers and to assess if this model could adequately account for the problems in schools as described by the teachers. Analysis furthermore explored the structures of dysfunctional episodes to examine the interrelatedness of dysfunctions. As in the principal data, rule breaking behaviour was the most commonly reported dysfunction, while dysfunctions most frequently led to other dysfunctions. This often created larger networks of dysfunctional episodes. After the analyses were complete, the EMSD was found to be an adequate model to describe the problems as reported by

the teachers. In the next chapter, the suitability of the EMSD is tested on the perspectives of learners.

Chapter 7

Dysfunctions from the learners' perspective

7.1 Introduction

The main goal of this chapter is to identify the problem sets encountered by learners and to assess whether the problems can be adequately described using the EMSD. To assess the suitability of this model, the learner data were initially sorted according to the four main components of the EMSD: antecedents, dysfunctions, motivations, and consequences, to explore whether these effectively accounted for the problems reported in the data set. Then, the components were individually analysed to determine the subcomponents in each of these. Further analyses explored how the components were connected to each other. Finally, a new EMSD was created to reflect the perspectives of the learners.

7.2 The Explanatory Model of School Dysfunctions and the learners' perspectives

The four main components of the EMSD were used to systematically analyse the 1,500 survey responses collected from the learners. The surveys were only partially analysed because the analysis focused primarily on the survey questions, which were most relevant to the research focus. These responses were answers to the following two questions: "Who was your favourite teacher and why?" and "Who was your least favourite teacher and why?" Although the first question does not seem to be related to the research focus based on problems in schools, the answers to this question often elicited negative responses from learners. Participants often reported that they did not, in fact, have a favourite teacher or that all of their teachers were bad and then explained their reason for such a response. These responses were therefore relevant to the research focus and the decision was made to include these during analysis.

The main aim of this analysis was to determine if the EMSD was a suitable analytic model for the learner data. If the EMSD could account for the range of problems and dysfunctions reported by the learners it was deemed suitable. Given the specific nature of the survey questions and the limited space provided for the learners' responses, the learner data differed markedly from the narrative accounts obtained from the principals and teachers. Narrative-style accounts were rare and learners mostly gave short responses. These short responses were analysed to identify the dysfunctions, antecedents, motivations, and consequences in the narratives and to explore different subcomponents.

Three levels of analysis were conducted on the data set. During the first, the learners' responses were analysed to identify dysfunctions, antecedents, motivations, and consequences and to see whether these four components were present in the learners' open-ended survey responses. The next level of analysis aimed to explore the internal structures of each of these components. Here, the same analytic process was applied as during the analysis of the teacher data: a three step-analysis.

First, each component was thematically analysed using a bottom-up approach. This means that the survey responses were coded by defining the themes in situ as the components were sorted and classified. During this analysis, the themes again mimicked the previously defined subcomponents developed during the analyses of the principal and teacher data. It was therefore decided to use the same subcomponents.

The second part of the analysis consisted of applying the predefined subcomponents to the learner data set to determine whether these subcomponents adequately described the range of dysfunctions, antecedents, motivations, and consequences reported by the learners.

The final step consisted of using multiple classification systems and analytic techniques to determine whether different approaches would be more appropriate. This step established if the EMSD subcomponents accounted for all of the instances found in the data. This iterative analysis employed both bottom-up and top-down

approaches, making use of multiple strategies to ensure that the best descriptive approach was utilised.

During the analyses the subcomponents of the EMSD accounted for the range of dysfunctions, antecedents, motivations, and consequences. No new components needed to be added and no existing components needed to be refined. Thus, the EMSD was found to be a suitable model to account for the dysfunctions experienced by learners. The final level of analysis tried to identify the different ways components were linked to each other. This part of the analysis was, however, limited due to the brevity of the survey responses. The following sections present the different components of the learners' EMSD.

7.3.1 Dysfunctions relating to rules and rule breaking

The most prevalent form of dysfunction reported by learners is rule breaking or rule bending. It included instances of teachers being chronically absent, inebriated at school, practicing favouritism, making sexual advances or being sexually improper, as well as administering corporal punishment. Dysfunctions relating to rules were by far the most common and outnumbered all other dysfunctions by a ratio of 8:1.

The following excerpts illustrate some of the rule breaking associated with improper relations with learners:

He always comes to school drunk, smoking, and insult learners and having affairs with them. (NONA)

He was not a good role model because he was in love with young school children. He also slept with them and two of them fell pregnant. (EQESAA)

He was in love with corporal punishment and he did not focus on teaching. He also dated one of the girls in my class. (EV)

Another form of rule breaking frequently reported by learners related to teachers not teaching at all and the effects this had on the learners. The following are examples of this form of rule breaking.

Mrs S., my CAT teacher, she was always absent, she was always on Facebook, she did not teach us anything, hence we all failed and she ran away with our portfolios before our prelims. (ANAP)

It was my grade 9 EMS teacher. She always came to class and talked for a few minutes, then give us work, then she eats or sleeps in class always. (OKEBAP)

Mrs T. hated teaching us. We felt the same because the lessons were always the same. Read from page 1 to 80 and give me a essay on it tomorrow. Nothing ever changed. (TVCMYW)

My accounting teacher was always absent on Mondays and never came to class in time, and he couldn't explain the class activities and we had to form study groups so that we can help one another to understand. Most students failed the class. (ESUX)

The frequency with which learners report rule breaking behaviour is not the only striking feature of this EMSD component. The range of rule breaking is revealing in itself and the most common rule breaking dysfunction reported by learners relates to teachers' abuse of power and responsibility. This includes a wide range of dysfunctions from having relationships with learners, consuming alcohol at school, using corporal punishment, and practicing favouritism.

Furthermore, due to the brevity of the responses the larger dysfunctional narrative is often missing, making it difficult to determine the extent of dysfunctional cycles. As such, the frequency with which learners report teachers as being involved in multiple rule breaking dysfunctions, becomes a better indication. The same teacher was, for example, reported as being chronically absent, incompetent, and not teaching when at school, and smoking and drinking at school, and having sexual relations with learners. Although learners' responses are short, they still provide a good indication of the degree of rule breaking dysfunctions, the extent of these dysfunctional episodes, and how frequently this type of behaviour was encountered by learners.

7.3.2 Dysfunctions relating to competence

The second most prevalent subcomponent relates to competences. Here, learners mostly reported instances of teacher incompetence in relation to either subject or teaching knowledge. There was also some overlap with teachers not teaching. Although not teaching forms part of rule breaking dysfunctions, it can also be due in part to a lack of knowledge or skills and therefore becomes part of competence-related dysfunctions. The following excerpts illustrate instances of teacher incompetence in relation to teaching techniques, subject knowledge, or both:

She read from the text book. I doubt she understood what she taught us. We were not equipped for higher grades after leaving her class. (YHEL)

He didn't understand the subject he was teaching. He always supplied wrong answers to the task. If he didn't like a chapter, he would not do it. (IMRT)

She wasn't clear. She couldn't explain. She didn't have answers to our questions. She was unprepared all the time. (YMLK)

My geography teacher was horrible. He was lazy, always drinking tea and hotcakes and did not do his job properly . . . and never, even for once, taught us anything to do with geography. (EHESAE)

This component often illustrated the interrelatedness of dysfunctions in the EMSD by describing the knock-on effects caused by the incompetence of teachers. Not only did learners often report the frustration associated with a teachers lack of knowledge and their own lack of learning, but also how unprepared they were in their subsequent grades.

7.3.2 Dysfunctions relating to extrinsic factors

The final dysfunction subcomponent relates to extrinsic factors. Extrinsic factors include all problems or dysfunctions, which happen outside of the school setting but

which effect the teaching and learning environment of a school. Examples of this subcomponent include teachers' psychological problems and the stress and frustration caused by problems at home, which teachers often bring with them into the classroom. The most common extrinsic factor, however, deals with teachers' consumption of alcohol. The following excerpts illustrate some of these extrinsic factors and the impact they have on day-to-day schooling:

My physics teacher, he used to drink, come to class drunk, never marked our class tests, he will give us notes and never explain about them and he used to beat us. (NONA)

The bad teacher I had was my geography teacher. He always beat us up, took his stress out on us, and if he doesn't like you, he will make sure that you fail his subject. He had relationships with school girls. (ATERECEN)

My business studies teacher was the leader of a trade union and left school any time of the day. Whether we get him or not. (AFEC)

Finally, it should be noted that the survey questions explored learners' experiences with their teachers and therefore learners' responses are limited to discussing dysfunctions directly related to them. As such, the data over-represents the dysfunctional role teachers play and care should be taken not to over-interpret these findings or assume that teachers are the only antagonists.

7.4 Antecedents relating to dysfunctions

Antecedents are rarely mentioned. However, in the instances where antecedents are noted, they mostly related to teachers' aggression, excessive alcohol consumption, boredom, and frustration. The following are examples of how antecedents relate to dysfunctions in the learner data:

He was a lazy person. Whenever he did not know a solution to the problem we had in class, he would walk out and come back tomorrow. He was not a

good role model because most of the learners were failing his subject and he did not care. (AMYSAPOK)

Mr S. was a drunkard. He did not teach, he was always reading newspapers. (ESOS)

The survey questions elicited short responses from learners and antecedents are not only rare but also tend to be focused on individual antecedents. These antecedents often show dysfunctional personalities or individuals with no regard for the teaching profession, their subject, or the learners.

7.5 Motivations relating to dysfunctions

Motivations are rarely mentioned in the learner data. However, the following excerpt is an example of how the rewards of financial gain serve as a motivation to teach:

He didn't like working with children. He even said that he doesn't like students. He is just doing it for the money. He didn't teach us and always used corporal punishment. (NONA)

Motivations are rare partly because of the limitations of the survey data, but also due to the limited conceptual scope of the learners: limited in the sense that learners are too far removed from teachers' private lives to have access to what motivates them. This component, however, still forms an important part of the EMSD and contributes significantly to understanding the structures and functions of dysfunctions.

7.6 Consequences relating to dysfunctions

Similar to the principal and teacher data, consequences of dysfunctions were most often other dysfunctions and frequently created larger networks of knock-on effects. The line of demarcation between dysfunctions and consequences and new antecedents or dysfunctions is often hard to determine. Similarly, to identify the beginning or the end of a dysfunctional episode as the following excerpt illustrates:

My physical science teacher lessons were never organised, he had wrong calculations most of the time. He was never certain about what he taught. Most students failed his subject because they never understood anything during his lessons. (SP)

This excerpt illustrates how the lack of organisation, the teacher's insecurity, the lack of learners' understanding of the lesson, and their failing of the subject are all linked in an extended dysfunctional episode, which does not have a clear beginning or end. Due to this it is often difficult to differentiate between dysfunctions and consequences as consequences are mostly also dysfunctional in themselves.

7.7 The EMSD from the learners' perspective

The 1,500 student responses were systematically analysed using the four components of the EMSD: antecedents, motivations, dysfunctions, and consequences. Further analyses explored the subcomponents of each of these four categories as well as the different ways these components were connected. After the completion of these analyses, the previously developed model was adapted to reflect the main findings from the learner data. Figure 7.1 presents the EMSD from the learners' perspective:

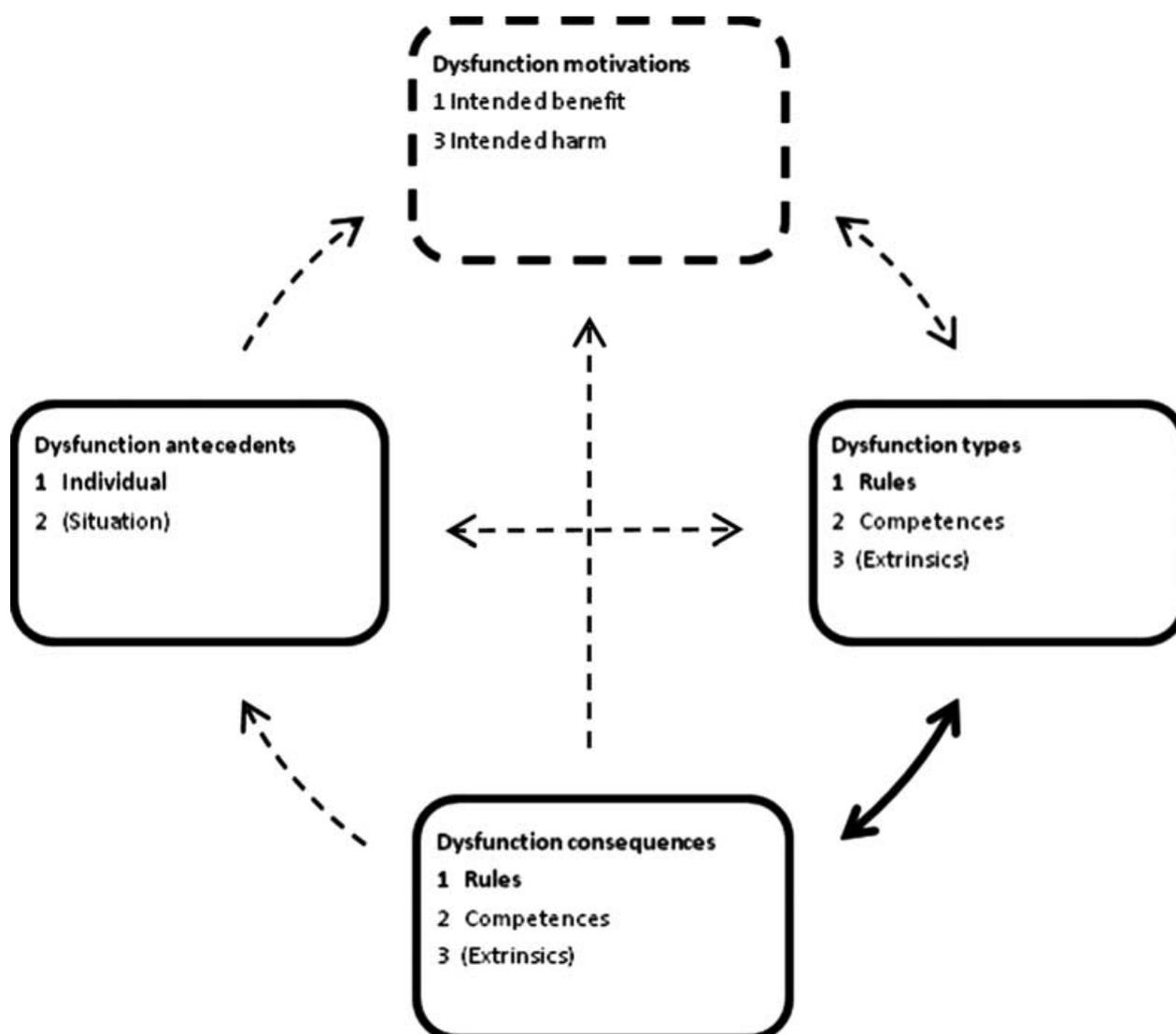


Figure 7.1: The EMSD from the learners' perspective

The first component, antecedents, contains only two of the four predefined subcomponents and the subcomponent situation has been placed in brackets. The subcomponents of organisation and structure are missing from this EMSD because the learner data did not mention any of these antecedents. Situation as a subcomponent is infrequently mentioned, as indicated by the brackets, while individual antecedents, highlighted in bold, is the most frequently occurring antecedent. As mentioned before, this is partly due to the way the survey questions were constructed.

The motivation component is rarely evident in the data, which is indicated by the dashed frame. The data furthermore contains no instances of unintended benefit or

unintended harm. The few motivations identified in the data tended to be connected with intended benefit and some with intended harm, when for example, teachers used corporal punishment because they dislike learners and intend to cause them physical harm or, as the excerpt shown in section 7.5 illustrated, when teachers show up for class without teaching just to get paid.

The dysfunction component contains three of the original four subcomponents. During analysis, no instance of resources-related dysfunctions was found and this subcomponent was therefore excluded from the model. The subcomponent of extrinsics has been placed in brackets since it occurs infrequently in the data. Competence, or dysfunctions related to issues of competence was the second most prevalent dysfunction, and rules, or rule breaking, were the most commonly cited form of dysfunction. To show the prevalence of this subcomponent in the diagram the subcomponent has been highlighted in bold.

The final component, consequences, mimics the same pattern found in the principal and teacher data sets. Once again, the consequences of dysfunctions mirror that of dysfunctions themselves in kind and in prevalence. As such, the resources subcomponent was excluded from this model, and extrinsics was placed in brackets given its rare occurrence. The most prevalent consequence of dysfunctions, rules or rule breaking, has been highlighted in bold and the second most prevalent consequence, competence, is found in second place.

Another interesting feature of this EMSD relates to the arrows connecting the different components. The bold, double arrow between dysfunctions and consequences indicates the strength of this relation as well as the reciprocal nature of these components. The dashed arrows connecting the rest of the EMSD illustrate that the rest of the components are all weakly related to each other. This is due to the fact that learners' responses were rarely connected to long narratives or dysfunctional episodes. They most frequently reported major dysfunctions connected to some consequences, hence the bold reciprocal arrows, and seldom connected these accounts to larger networks of actors, motivations, or antecedents.

This adaptation to the learners' EMSD illustrates the suitability of the EMSD on the learners' narratives. It is able to account for the range of problems and dysfunctions reported by these learners as well as to illustrate the interrelatedness of these components.

7.8 Discussion

The main aim of the analyses was to apply the previously developed model of the EMSD on the experiences of learners to explore the problem sets they describe. The EMSD components were used to sort and classify the learners' responses and the subcomponents were iteratively explored. After the analyses were completed, the components and subcomponents were carefully compared with the entire data set to ensure that these EMSD components effectively accounted for all the dysfunctions reported by the learners as well as to explore the different ways these components were related to each other.

Dysfunctions relating to rules or rule breaking were by far the most common reported dysfunctions with a ratio of approximately 8:1, the perpetrators mostly being teachers. What was surprising was how few learners reported not having experienced a problem teacher. Even positively framed questions such as "Who was your favourite teacher and why?" sometimes elicited negative responses. Only about one out of every fifty responses was not directly related to problem teachers and focused instead on more trivial instances such as a boring subject, teachers lacking a sense of humour, or dressing unfashionably.

The least prevalent subcomponent of dysfunctions is that of extrinsics, and learners rarely reported dysfunctions relating to general education such as curriculum issues, the management of schools, and school or educational policy. Learners did not report any dysfunctions relating to resources or infrastructure. The under-reporting of these dimensions can, in part, be due to the specificity of the survey questions. The survey questions elicited responses directly related to learners' experiences with their teachers and this could also explain the under-reporting of issues such as

resource and infrastructure and care should be taken not to over-interpret these findings.

The main findings were adapted and a new EMSD was created to reflect the learners' perspectives. The components and subcomponents from the previously developed EMSD adequately represented the dysfunctions reported by learners. During the analyses no new components had to be added. After applying these findings and creating the learners' EMSD the model was able to account for the entire range of dysfunctions as well as to illustrate how these dysfunctions are related to the other EMSD components and how they differ in degree and kind. Accordingly, the EMSD was found to be a suitable analytic framework for the problem sets encountered by learners.

7.9 Conclusion

These analyses applied the EMSD on the perspectives of the learners. The goal was to determine the degree of fit of this model. The EMSD was found to be a suitable model to describe the problems as reported by the learners as it was able to account for all of the dysfunctions, antecedents, motivations, and consequences reported by the learners. In the following chapter, the three EMSD's are compared and contrasted with each other.

Chapter 8

The Proximal Contact Zone

8.1 Introduction

The final analysis compared the EMSDs developed from the principal, teacher, and learner data to identify the similarities and differences between them. This was done by comparing the components and the subcomponents of these EMSDs to identify how they differ in degree and kind. Following this analysis, this chapter presents the substantive and structural differences between these groups in relation to their proximal contact zone. The proximal contact zone theorises that the exposure to dysfunctions is limited to the degree of contact actors have with other actor groups in the educational setting. This chapter concludes by relating the proximal contact zone to the experiences of principals, teachers, and learners.

8.2 EMSDs from the perspectives of learners, teachers, and principals

The main components of the EMSD were developed from the DOB literature and then refined on the principal data. This model was subsequently applied to the teacher and the learner data to explore the problem sets described by these different actor groups. After each set of analyses was completed, the EMSD was applied to reflect the findings from each of these groups. Essentially all three of these EMSDs are the same, containing the four main components of antecedents, motivations, dysfunctions, and consequences. These diagrams differ however, in the presentation of the subcomponents as well as the interrelatedness and reciprocity between the different components to reflect the differences contained in each of the data sets since the problems these actors encounter vary in degree. The following analysis compares these three diagrams, presented in Figures 8.1, 8.2, and 8.3, to identify the similarities and differences between them and to see if such a comparison can make a meaningful contribution to our understanding of problems in underperforming schools in South Africa.

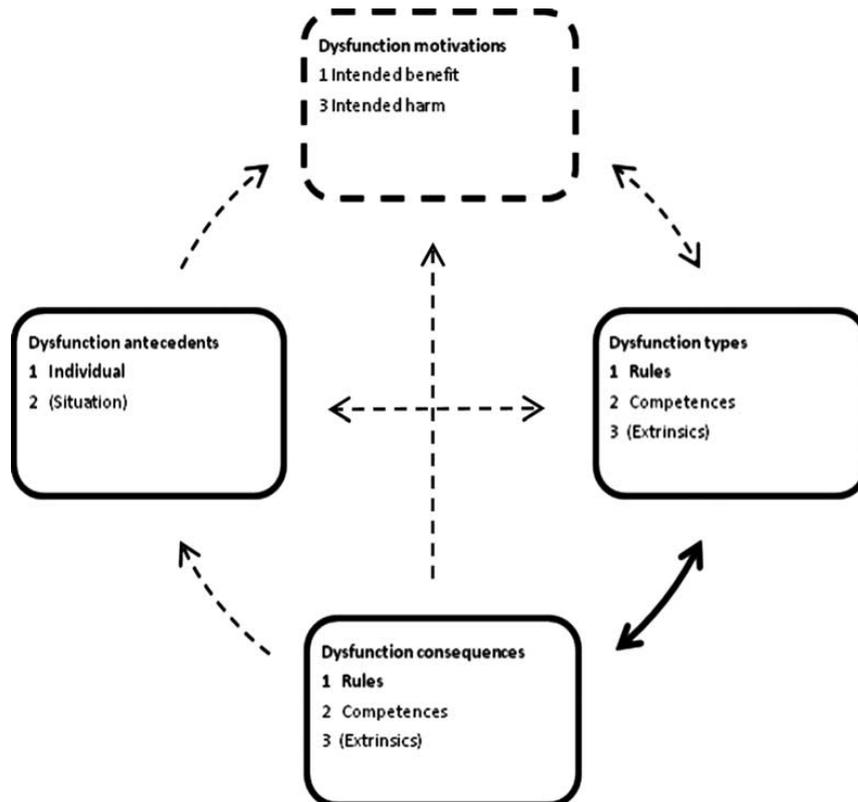


Figure 8.1: The EMSD from the learners' perspective

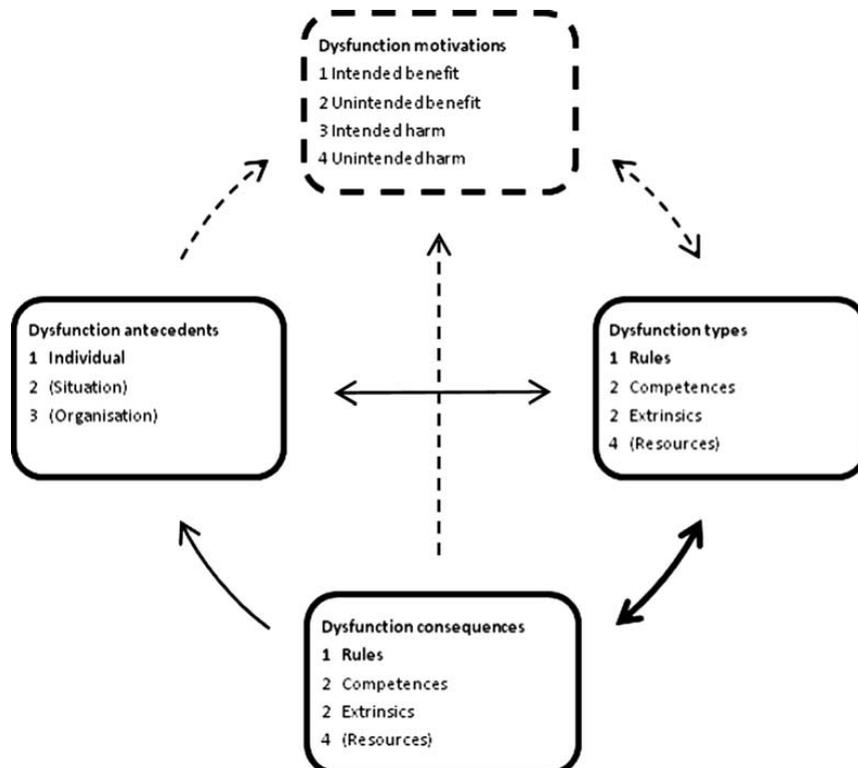


Figure 8.2: The EMSD from the teachers' perspective

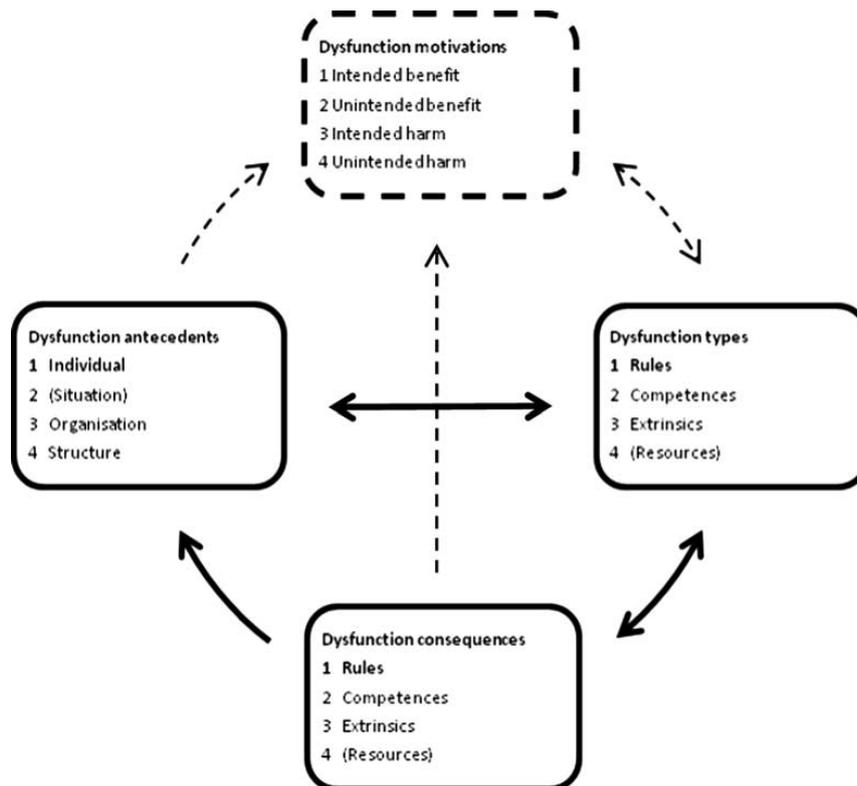


Figure 8.3: The EMSD from the principals' perspective

A comparison of these diagrams begins to illustrate how similar the experiences of principals, teachers, and learners are. There is a remarkable overlap between the components and the types of problems these different actors report. Everyone seems to be affected by similar dysfunctions, albeit in varying degrees. These variations indicate important differences between these three EMSDs, which contribute substantially to our understanding of the experiences of principals, teachers, and learners.

A systematic comparison between the antecedent components from the learners, teachers, and principals illustrates, for example, that this component steadily increases in scope as one moves from the learners', to the teachers', and then the principals' EMSD. The learners' component is the smallest and contains only two antecedents: individual and situation, the latter of which is rarely mentioned. The teachers' component contains three of the four subcomponents: individual, situation, and organisation, although situation and organisation are rarely mentioned. The final antecedent component, containing the experiences of the principals, is the most

complete. Here, the antecedent component contains all four types: individual, situation, organisation, and structure and all four are frequently found in the data.

A comparison of the motivation components between the three EMSDs shows a similar pattern. The learners' component is the most limited in scope and contains only two of the four types of motivations, intended benefit and intended harm. This is because the learners did not mention any motivations leading to unintended benefit or unintended harm. The teachers' and the principals' components are the same. Both contain all four of the motivational types, which include intended benefit, intended harm, unintended benefit, and unintended harm. The motivations component is presented in a dashed frame in all three diagrams, indicating that examples of this component were rarely found. As mentioned before, this is partly due to the kind of data that was collected. Motivations were not directly assessed in the essays and surveys, which focused instead on problems in schools. Given that motivations are internal psychological functions they would need to be assessed in more detail to be properly represented in the three data sets. In order to more directly assess this EMSD component, different data sets focusing specifically on identifying the motivations, which underlie such behaviour, should be collected.

Comparing the dysfunction components again shows striking similarities and differences. The learners' dysfunctions seem to be the most limited, containing only rules, competence, and extrinsic dysfunctions. Rule dysfunctions are the most common and dysfunctions relating to resources are completely absent from this data set. Extrinsic dysfunctions are rarely mentioned. The teacher and principal dysfunctions are not only more developed, but they are also identical to each other. Rule breaking dysfunctions are the most frequently reported problems in both data sets. The second most prevalent type of dysfunction relates to competence and the third most prevalent relates to extrinsic factors. The least mentioned dysfunction for both principals and teachers relates to resources. The most interesting feature here is the overwhelming occurrence of rule breaking dysfunctions in all three data sets. In the learners' responses it outnumbered all other dysfunctions with a ratio of 8:1 and, although to a lesser degree in the other two data sets, it still accounted for a large proportion of the dysfunctions.

The final component: consequences, has the interesting feature of repeating the dysfunction components of each EMSD. As discussed earlier, this is often due to a reproduction of dysfunctions or situations where dysfunctions cause similar dysfunctions as consequences. Examples include situations where rule breaking behaviour leads to further rule breaking behaviour, or when incompetence in a teacher leads to further incompetence such as when learners are poorly prepared for their examinations. These dysfunctional patterns were evident in all three of the data sets. Often, these knock-on effects created more interdependent and complex dysfunctional episodes, which were maintained over long periods of time.

The arrows connecting the components illustrate how these complex and interdependent dysfunctional episodes tend to develop. These arrows indicate the structure, or flow, of the dysfunctional episodes as reported by the different actor groups. At first glance, the dysfunction and consequence components of the learners, teachers, and principals seem to be similar. However, when considering the arrows of each of these EMSDs, the differences between these data sets become more evident. Once again, the learners' responses seem to have the smallest scope as their responses are mostly limited to accounts which move between the dysfunction and consequence components. This is indicated by the bold double arrow connecting the components. All other arrows are dashed, indicating weak or infrequent relations.

The arrows from the teachers' EMSD illustrate that their narratives are more developed and interlinked, occurring more frequently, and with more reciprocity. As with the learners' EMSD, the teachers' EMSD contains a bold double arrow between dysfunctions and consequences, illustrating the strength and frequency of this relationship. However, the narratives are further linked with double arrows between dysfunctions and antecedents, and consequences and antecedents. This illustrates that a narrative can shift between these components multiple times and in various directions, creating longer and more complex dysfunctional episodes.

Finally, the principals' EMSD is the most developed and complex dysfunctional narratives. As Figure 8.3 illustrates, there are strong relationships between dysfunctions and consequences, dysfunctions and antecedents, and consequences

and antecedents. Furthermore, the double arrows indicate that the dysfunctions to antecedents and dysfunctions to consequences relationships are reciprocal. This shows how the knock-on effects change and add to dysfunctional episodes, making these narratives more complex and interrelated with each exchange. The following excerpt, first used in Chapter 5, illustrates clearly how dysfunctions evolve, creating new antecedents, and more complex dysfunctions:

There were different posts advertised at my school. The SGB together with the entire management and staff agreed about certain criteria, requirements and needs of these posts, all procedures were followed, but the outcome of the process was the opposite. People who were appointed to the posts were people who were not earmarked, who had no prior experience and some did not meet the requirements and the needs of the school. People started to talk about the "Hit List". This resulted in one of the SGB members being shot dead and the situation escalating out of control. The SGB member who was a teacher was shot in class in full view of the learners. Everybody was in extreme shock. The school was never the same again. (Essay 3691:1)

8.3 The Proximal Contact Zone of learners, teachers, and principals

A systematic analysis between these models goes some way in explaining the day-to-day dysfunctions experienced by learners, teachers, and principals. Given that all three actor groups highlight the prevalence of rule breaking dysfunctions, the impact of this dysfunction on the day-to-day functioning of a school should not be underestimated. It is not only the similarities which provide significant insights into the dysfunctions taking place in schools - the differences between these actor groups also provide important insights. The most apparent difference between these EMSDs relates to how the models differ in scope.

Moving from the experiences of the learners, to that of the teachers, and then to the principals, the EMSDs start small in scope and then become more developed. Put differently, these EMSDs show a Russian-doll-like pattern, each EMSD fitting into the other. In this way, each EMSD seems to be a substructure of the next one. Looking at all four of the learner components, it is evident that the way learners make sense

of dysfunctions in relation to antecedents, motivations, and consequences is much less developed than that of the teachers. Although the teachers' EMSD is more developed than that of the learners, it is still less developed than that of the principals and therefore fits neatly into the principals' EMSD. Principals experience the largest scope of problems and they are linked to the widest range of antecedents, motivations, and consequences when compared to teachers and learners. Teachers find themselves somewhere in the middle. They experience more problems than learners do, but less than the principals.

Furthermore, when considering the ways in which the narratives are connected, as indicated by the arrows in the models, it becomes evident that principals experience the most developed networks of problems. Principals have contact with the most people, networks, and contexts. Out of the three actor groups they also give the most comprehensive descriptions of dysfunctional episodes and frequently link dysfunctions to various antecedents and consequences. Of the learners, teachers, and principals, the principals seem to be the most capable of connecting different antecedents, motivations, dysfunctions, and consequences while understanding these different structures as part of feedback loops or dysfunctional episodes. They are also able to link these dysfunctions into complex networks of people, situations, and organisational structures.

In contrast to this, learners rarely connect their dysfunctions to a wider context such as antecedents, or motivations. Most of what they report relates directly to teachers, and dysfunctions are rarely seen outside of the teacher-as-perpetrator framework. The experiences of teachers are situated between these two models. Although, teachers' experiences are mostly focused on dysfunctions related to learners, they also contain some insight into dysfunctions related to other teachers, parents, and management. Teachers' experiences of dysfunctions are therefore more complex than that of the learners, but less developed than that of the principals.

From this analysis, it is possible to conclude that the difference in exposure to dysfunctions between learners, teachers, and principals is due to their proximal contact zone (PCZ; Bergman & Bergman, 2011). Given the different levels these actor groups occupy in the school setting and the differences in roles and

responsibilities accorded to them, they have contact with a different range of actors on a given school day. More importantly, however, the main sources of dysfunctions these actors experience derive from the main sources of contact they have. Learners tend to have the most contact with teachers and therefore their proximal contact zone is limited to teachers. As such, teachers also tend to become the main source of dysfunctions learners identify. Teachers on the other hand, have contact with more actors - they have bigger networks and more responsibility. Their proximal contact zone includes not only learners, but also parents, other teachers, and principals. Due to this, they have a more developed experiential range, increasing their contact with dysfunctions in degree and kind. The most developed PCZ, however, belongs to the principal. Within any given school day, a principal occupies the most roles and has the widest scope of contact. A principals' PCZ includes contact with administrators, teachers, learners, parents, school committees, local communities, education policy, maintenance staff and infrastructure, district officials, and so forth. Given the scope of their contact as well as their roles as managers and leaders it is unsurprising that they have the ability to comprehend dysfunctions in a much larger and complex network, containing multiple agents, limitations, domains, and power structures.

Although teachers and learners are limited by their PCZs, their mere presence in the school setting means that they are still affected, at least indirectly, by the same kind, degree, or interconnectedness of the dysfunctions experienced by principals. The wide scope of the principals' PCZ allows them to have the most developed understanding of the extent of dysfunctional episodes. In reality, however, all three actor groups are active agents in these complex networks and are directly or indirectly affected by all of these dysfunctions. Teachers and learners are limited by their skewed PCZ and are not always able to identify hidden or indirect causes of secondary dysfunctions. This limited or skewed PCZ can also result in different actor groups having divergent perspectives. When acted upon, these divergent perspectives can create new sets of knock-on effects contributing to more complex and multi-layered dysfunctional situations.

8.4 Conclusion

Comparing the EMSDs from the learners, teachers, and principals goes some way in explaining the differences and similarities between these actors' daily experiences. Although their experiences of dysfunctions differ remarkably in degree, kind, and interconnectedness, all three groups report dysfunctions relating to rule breaking behaviour as the most prevalent form of dysfunction in schools. The differences in degree, kind, and interconnectedness between these groups can be explained using the concept of the proximal contact zone.

This means that the less contact an actor has with other agents the less exposed they are to different, or wider ranging dysfunctions and, more importantly, the more likely they are to blame immediate agents. This was seen, for example, in the learners' responses. They were the most limited in range and frequently blamed teachers for problems that may have originated elsewhere. As an actors' roles and responsibilities increase in a school, so too does their exposure to dysfunctions. This culminates in the role of the principal, who by the nature of their position find themselves intersecting teachers, learners, parents, SGB's, SMT's, the community, district and provincial government, the department of education, and so on. These are the actors who experience the widest range of dysfunctions, connected to the most antecedents, motivations, and consequences. Interestingly then, the learners' EMSD forms a substructure of the teachers' EMSD, and the teachers' EMSD fits into the more developed EMSD of the principals. This Russian-doll-pattern describes the limits of each of these actor groups' perceptions, or PCZ, although they are all present in the same contexts and dysfunctional networks. By understanding the scope of the dysfunctions experienced by principals, researchers can begin to understand the indirect, obscured secondary dysfunctions, which also effect teachers and learners, but which are not necessarily directly observed by their skewed PCZs.

Understanding the scope and limits of actors PCZs contributes significantly to our knowledge of how dysfunctions are experienced and acted upon by them within the wider scope of a schools dysfunctional setting. As an analytic model, the EMSD is

able to not only describe the problems as experienced by principals, teachers, and learners in relation to their antecedents, motivations, and consequences, but also describe the differences between these actor groups in a meaningful way by mapping dysfunctional episodes according to their PCZs.

Chapter 9

Summary and conclusion

9.1 Introduction

The analyses presented in this thesis explored the problems in underperforming schools in South African in relation to their antecedents, motivations, and consequences. Although there are differences between the perspectives of the principals, teachers, and learners in this study, there are also remarkable similarities. Both these differences and similarities contribute to our understanding of the many dysfunctions in the schooling system as well as to the challenges these actors face on a day-to-day basis as they are confronted with these problem sets. This chapter concludes the study by presenting the main findings. The development of the EMSD and the process of testing and refining it on the perspectives of the actor groups are summarised. Then, recommendations for further research and the limitations of the study are discussed. Finally, some concluding remarks are made.

9.2 Main findings

The EMSD's main components were developed by systematically reviewing the literature on dysfunctional organizational behaviour (DOB). This review considered a number of theories and concepts from various disciplines such as industrial and organisational psychology, the management and organisational sciences, and the sociology of work and organisations. During this review, useful concepts were identified and used as the basic outline for the model. The next step involved redefining schools as organisations. Reconceptualising schools as organisations allowed for the application of the concepts from the DOB literature in the systematic explanation of problems found in primary and secondary schools.

Before continuing the discussion on the development and refinement of the EMSD on the principal data, the theoretical contribution this study makes to the field of education and DOB research needs to be considered. Robinson (2008) highlighted several shortcomings in the DOB literature. This study explicitly addresses six of

those shortcomings. In the first, Robinson (2008) points out that studies investigating dysfunctions in DOB research are generally limited to quantitative studies and lacking in qualitative research outputs. The qualitative multiple case study design of this research therefore makes a substantial contribution to advancing this kind of research. Robinson (2008) also highlights that important advances in one discipline are not incorporated into other fields due to a lack of cooperation and cross-fertilisation. As pointed out previously, this study made an explicit attempt to review, integrate, and apply concepts and theories from a variety of disciplines. The third shortcoming relates to research focusing on workers' self-reports and Robinson (2008) states that other forms of data collection including perspectives from peers and supervisors are also needed. This study collected data from various levels within the school setting. Therefore, data often reflected participants' views on their peers, their supervisors, as well as the members they manage themselves, providing an additional perspective to the different levels of participation in schools.

The fourth shortcoming relates to research focusing primarily on dysfunctions and failing to account for the motivations and consequences associated with these acts. In this instance, the EMSD specifically analysed dysfunctions in relation to antecedents, motivations, and consequences. The fifth shortcoming Robinson (2008) defines is that studies are too topic-specific, focusing on one or two dysfunctions and failing to account for dysfunctions as a whole. The aim of the EMSD was to account for dysfunctions in a greater sense by capturing the whole range as reported by the different actor groups. The final shortcoming Robinson (2008) mentions is that research generally fails to account for the complexity and dimensionality of dysfunctions. For each of the data sets, a detailed analysis was conducted to map the dimensionality and interrelatedness of the dysfunctional episodes reported by the participants. These analyses were then used to describe the complexity of these accounts through the PCZs. Finally, this study made a novel contribution to the field of education research by providing an analytic framework to systematically describe and analyse the problems in schools. The EMSD, therefore, made use of a strong theoretical base aimed to advance the fields of education and DOB research in several ways. The aim of developing this model, however, was empirical application and the model was next applied on the perspectives of the principals, teachers, and learners.

During the first analysis, the 80 essays written by the principals or their representatives were sorted and classified into the four main components identified in the DOB literature: antecedents, motivations, dysfunctions, and consequences. Then, each of these components was analysed in detail. During this part of the analysis each component was sorted into smaller thematic categories and these were used to identify the subcomponents in each main component. This process led to the refinement and adaptation of the Explanatory Model of School Dysfunction as presented in Figure 9.1.

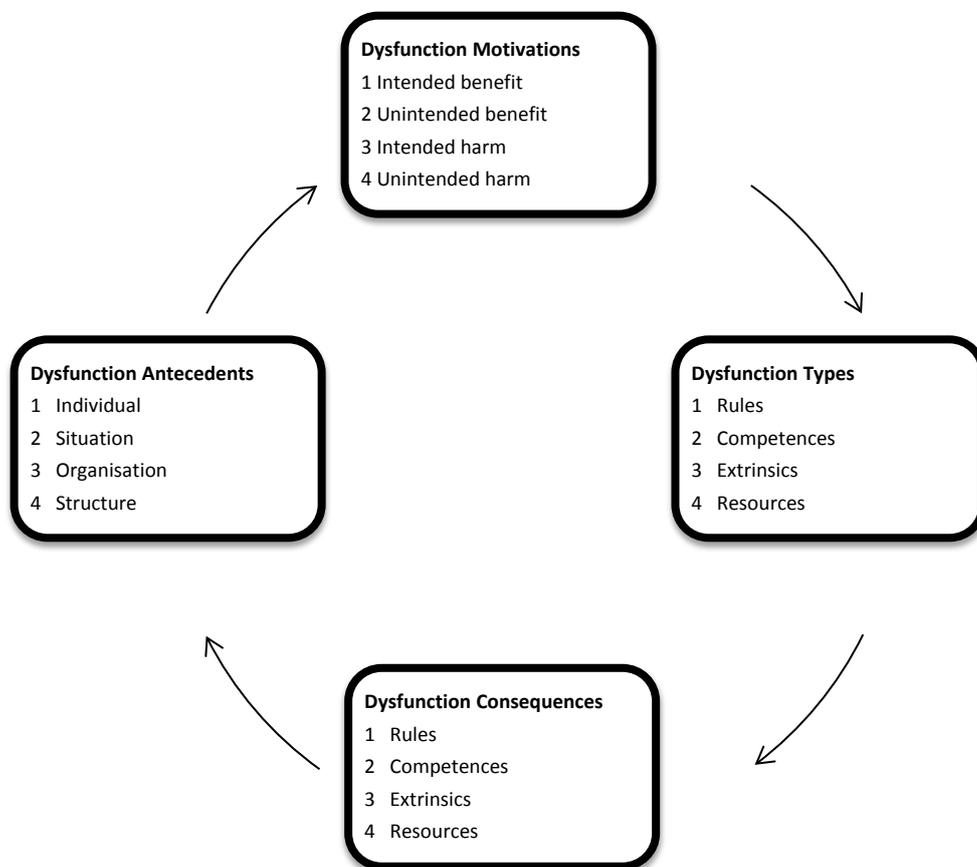


Figure 9.1: The Explanatory Model of School Dysfunction

An analysis examining the narrative construction of the principals’ essays also revealed how dysfunctions vary in degree and kind. Dysfunctional episodes were rarely reported in singular events and were often portrayed in interrelated and complex networks of problems. These dysfunctional networks usually involved

multiple actors, power structures, and domains. Moreover, principals were not always directly related to these networks of dysfunctions. Even indirect dysfunctions, such as problems between teachers or learners, were shown to affect principals or their representatives. This analysis located principals inside these multi-dimensional networks of problems and started the process of mapping dysfunctions from their perspectives.

The analysis not only revealed the complex and interrelated networks of dysfunctions. Five other factors connected to the frequency and severity of the dysfunctions principals experience featured prominently. The first relates to how common rule bending and rule breaking occurs, the second to how often principals reported incompetence in relation to other actors, the third relates to the frequent confusion of roles, the fourth is the abuse of power, and the final relates to the lack of conflict resolution skills. As mentioned earlier, these dysfunctions are often located within larger networks, involving multiple actors, structures, and domains. Given the extent of many of the dysfunctions described by them, it becomes evident that interventions based solely on developing principals' professional skills will be insufficient to deal with the complexity of the daily challenges they face. As the analysis of the data showed, dysfunctions are embedded in different situational and cultural contexts, connecting many actors and domains in complex ways. These intricate networks of problems need extensive systematic interventions over-and-above strategies aimed to improve principals' leadership capacities.

The second analysis tested the suitability of the EMSD on the perspectives of teachers. The 40 essays written by teachers were analysed according to the EMSD components, while further analyses explored the structures and connections between them. Interestingly, the problems experienced by teachers were often pedagogical and connected to learners. To a lesser degree, data also included examples of problems between novice and experienced teachers, and differences in discipline and teaching techniques. Dysfunctions often contained elements of both rule breaking and dysfunctions relating to competence, illustrating the complex and ambiguous nature of these problems.

A common feature related to how rarely antecedents and consequences were mentioned. These components frequently occurred before or after the beginning or end of a participant's narrative. Therefore narratives were often a small proportion of a much larger and complex system or network of dysfunctions. The most frequently linked components were dysfunctions leading to dysfunctions so that dysfunctions were frequently also the antecedents to, and the consequences of, other dysfunctions.

The way teachers used the resource subcomponent in the EMSD presented an interesting dimension to the data. This is because teachers often used resource-related dysfunctions as contextual descriptors for a dysfunctional setting rather than describing these as dysfunctions themselves. In other words, teachers often used conditions such as the lack of infrastructure to describe the educational setting in which their dysfunctional narratives occur. They rarely mentioned these conditions as dysfunctions. The first excerpt from the resource-related discussion in Chapter 6, for example, described the lack of resources at the school not as a dysfunction, but as a descriptor for the dysfunctionality of students being prevented from using a well-stocked library. The second excerpt from the same section used the long-term absence of a science teacher at their school to illustrate the lack of support and prioritisation of the DoE.

Although teachers occasionally mention resource-related dysfunctions, it seems that these problems are secondary in their experiences when they are reporting what they believe to be the dysfunctions disrupting teaching and learning in their schools. This could be due in part to teachers' limited PCZ. The consequences to resource-related dysfunctions such as students' lack of access to books, students not being taught, or the stress placed on teachers due to a lack of resources are seen as more important than the lack of resources in themselves.

Finally, it was concluded that the EMSD was an adequate model to describe the problems teachers experience and it was able to account for the entire problem sets evident in the teachers' narratives. The EMSD did not need to be refined in any way and no new components or subcomponents were added to the framework.

The third analysis applied the EMSD on the 1,500 survey responses collected from the learners. Similarly to the previously conducted analyses, the learners' responses were sorted according to the four main EMSD components and then the internal structures of each were explored to determine the suitability of the model. The most interesting feature of this data set relates to the frequency with which learners reported rule breaking behaviour, with a ratio of 8:1 to all other dysfunctions. Learners were also most likely to connect these dysfunctional behaviours, such as absenteeism, alcoholism, incompetence, corporal punishment, and so forth, directly to teachers. When the main findings from the learners' responses were incorporated into the EMSD, the model adequately represented the dysfunctions reported by them. No new components had to be added and the EMSD did not need to be refined in any way and the EMSD was able to account for the entire range of problems reported by the learners.

The final analysis compared the three EMSDs developed from the principal, teacher, and learner data sets to identify the similarities and differences between them. During this comparison it became evident that the EMSDs differed in degree and interrelatedness relative to the group that was being investigated. The learners' EMSD was the most limited and the principals' EMSD the most developed, containing the biggest range of dysfunctions, antecedents, motivations, and consequences while the teachers' EMSD fitted somewhere in-between. Put differently, the learners' EMSD was a substructure of the teachers' EMSD, while the teachers' EMSD was a substructure of the principals'.

Rule bending or rule breaking, the abuse of power, competence issues, and dysfunctions extrinsic to the school setting were frequently reported by all three actor groups and form the bulk of the dysfunctions encountered by them. Although resources were the least mentioned dysfunction in the principal data set, it was reported even less frequently by teachers and not at all by learners, and it seems, at least for these actor groups, that the lack of educational resources is not a significant problem. It seems that within the lived experiences of principals, teachers, and learners there are more pressing issues disrupting teaching and learning. Before learners are in a position to make use of textbooks and well-equipped classrooms, a

whole range of other systemic problems, of which rule breaking dysfunctions are the most endemic, first need to be resolved.

Furthermore, it is also worth observing that the inadequacies of the curriculum or issues relating to school or educational policy seem to be non-problems for all three of these actors groups. Although these factors most certainly have indirect effects on teachers and learners, they were not reported as problems by these actors. Principals occasionally reported policy-related issues although these tended to relate to management problems or disputes and conflicts between different governing bodies such as principals and the SGB's or SMT's.

Participants PCZs explains the differences between the EMSDs as well as how the interrelatedness and degree of complexity of these problem sets change. As the contact with other actors increases so does the exposure to school-related dysfunctions. This affects the kinds, degree, and interrelatedness of dysfunctions they are exposed to. The smallest amount of school-related exposure, and therefore the most limited PCZ, belongs to the learners as they normally only have contact with their teachers and peers. This exposure increases for teachers as their contact zone widens to incorporate more actors and contexts such as parents, principals, management teams, and so on. Finally, principals have the most developed PCZ and are exposed to the most school-related dysfunctions as they have the greatest amount of exposure to actors, contexts, domains, and dysfunctions.

The way actors assign blame is also reflective of their PCZs. Learners, for example, rarely assign blame to actors other than teachers. Given the relative restrictedness of their PCZ, learners do not consider the problems they or their teachers experience within a wider social, political, or economic context. Teachers are almost always perceived as the perpetrators or the main source of dysfunctions. Teachers on the other hand have a broader perspective and they are able to connect the dysfunctions they experience to a wider network. However, they are also limited by their PCZ and do not always recognise their problems as being part of a bigger dysfunctional episode. Introducing novice teachers to the idea of this perspectivism by making them aware of how they could be perceived by learners and principals and how this

may contribute to further dysfunctions may help them to adapt to the complex demands of being a teacher in South African schools.

The complexity of the problem sets and the many intricately developed networks of dysfunctions which exist in the school setting make interventions at the level of school management, teacher training courses, or educational policy difficult to formulate or implement. However, the following discussion presents some recommendations for possible research and intervention strategies in underperforming schools and the general educational setting in South Africa.

9.3 Recommendations

9.3.1 Recommendations for principal support and intervention strategies

One of the major challenges principals face relates to the many roles their school and their community demand of them as well as the many responsibilities they have. It is therefore recommended that principals receive help in the clarification of their role as principal. This should include defining what their roles and responsibilities are as principals. When the roles and responsibilities of principals are defined, they will be able to resolve issues, assign duties, and enlist help more effectively. In addition to understanding which roles and responsibilities can be assigned to other actors, it is also important that principals are able to rely on these structures for support. Principals, administrators, and teachers should work together in developing, clarifying, and enforcing systems of support and control, which regulate and maintain the various levels of the schooling system. Ideally, these support systems should be systematic, long-term structures. The demands placed on principals cannot be underestimated; neither can the networks of support they need to create a stable, functioning, and productive school. As stated elsewhere (2011:472):

A principal is not unlike a captain of a ship, and a principal at an underperforming school in South Africa is in great need of a sound ship, a competent and cooperative crew, training and experience, and a plan of action that is adapted and adaptable to a particular situation.

9.3.2 Recommendations for teacher support and intervention strategies

A recommendation for a short-term intervention strategy would be to incorporate teaching cases discussing some of the problems reported by teachers into the pre-service curriculum at teacher training institutions. Teaching cases establish a framework for discussion and debate and this could go some way in preparing novice teachers for the kinds of problems they could possibly encounter as well as exploring different coping and resolution strategies.

A more long-term recommendation would include a monitoring system to punish perpetrators at all levels of the school environment. As with support systems, it is important that such a monitoring system be a systematic, predictable, and stable long term structure.

An ambitious recommendation to help individual teachers cope with the problems they experience would be to provide a support system where they could obtain independent and reliable advice and counsel. Such a support system could also extend to include an independent ombudsman to mediate between different actors, while clarifying roles and resolving conflicts. A less ambitious but equally relevant approach could be a web-based forum where teachers could access information and advice or discuss their problems.

9.3.3 Recommendations for future research

The main recommendation for future research would be to invite researchers to use the EMSD for detailed studies on the main types of dysfunctions identified thus far. This could, for example, include theory-based analyses of different components such as rule breaking behaviours or exploration of the structural typologies of dysfunctional episodes. A detailed study on how different episodes are connected in relation to dysfunctions, their antecedents, and consequences could explore the dyads, chains, cycles, networks, and spirals of dysfunctions contained within. More specific studies could also investigate the different situational and structural antecedents, which contribute to rule breaking dysfunctions.

Research could apply the EMSD in areas of intervention, policy, and reform. Actor-orientated research (action research) could, for example, investigate the roles and responsibilities of principals, teachers, or administrators and identify the extent role confusion or role conflict contributes to dysfunctional settings. Having accounted for the perspectives of the major stakeholders in the school setting - principals, teachers, and learners - the EMSD could also be extended to include analyses of the problems in schools as presented by the media, educational policy, and research. These analyses could be used to compare these actor groups to identify the convergences and divergences in the representations of problems in schools in South Africa.

Finally, future research could also adopt a functionalist approach to investigate the extent to which dysfunctions in schools are functional in maintaining certain systems, such as, for example, neopatrimonialistic systems and so on.

It needs to be emphasised that the EMSD is not a theory but an analytic framework. This framework can accommodate a variety of approaches and it is recommended that researchers embed theories or interventions into this model to guide research on dysfunctions in schools in a way that is context and culture-sensitive.

9.4 Limitations

Although this study was able to capture something of the complex, multi-dimensional nature of the problems experienced by principals, teachers, and learners, there are some limitations to the study. None of the data sets, for example, explicitly assessed motivations associated with dysfunctions. Another limitation relates to the brevity of the learners' survey responses. The principal and teacher narratives provided the opportunity to map the development of these dysfunctional episodes in detail and clearly showed how dysfunctions, antecedents, motivations, and consequences were structurally connected. The learner survey responses were somewhat limited.

Although the current research presents the perspectives of three actor groups, it is nonetheless still a limited representation of the problems in schools. Future research

should aim to include the perspectives of other actor groups such as administrators, both within and beyond the school setting, or other key players, which have an impact on the day-to-day management of a school. These actors include various levels of the department of education as well as the South African media.

The final limitations relates to generalisability. Given the large data sets, it is tempting to draw general conclusions. This, however, was a qualitative study and the aim was not to make inferences about the larger population. Regardless of the size of the data sets used, the aim here was to explore the subjective experiences of the participants, while being cognisant that these experiences are always individual and context-bound. Furthermore it is not possible to determine the boundaries between subjective interpretation and real-life events. Exploring the subjective experiences of these actor groups was central to the research aims and care should be taken not to over-interpret the findings in a more general sense.

9.5 Conclusion

The main goal of this research was to systematically analyse the nature and degree of problem sets found in South African schools as experienced by three different actor groups – principals, teachers, and learners. An analytic framework was needed to systematically analyse these problem sets and thus the first task was to develop an Explanatory Model of School Dysfunctions. After identifying relevant concepts from the DOB literature, the model was tested and refined on essays written by principals or their representatives from underperforming schools. After the first stage of refinement was completed, the EMSD was able to account for, and describe, problem sets in relation to dysfunctions, antecedents, motivations, and consequences. The model was then applied to the perspectives of teachers and learners and the EMSD was found to be a suitable model to describe the problems in schools as it was able to account for the range of dysfunctions as reported by all three actor groups.

These accounts show that rule breaking, incompetence, abuse of power, and dysfunctions extrinsic to the school environment are regularly experienced by all three actor groups. These dysfunctions also have a disruptive effect on the teaching

and learning environments of schools. There were, however, some differences between these actor groups. Teachers and learners tended to under-report the lack of educational resources, while this dysfunction seemed to be encountered more often by principals. Other differences relate most significantly to these actors' different PCZs, which influence the degree and kind of dysfunctions they are exposed to. As the PCZ increases from the learners' perspectives to the teachers', and then to the principals', so too does the interconnectedness, complexity, and interdependentness of dysfunctions. These dysfunctional networks also begin to incorporate more actors, situations, power structures, and domains. These dysfunctions, especially when they are connected to constellations of problem sets, actors, situations, and power structures, become increasingly difficult to address, through intervention, policy, management, or teacher training courses. The EMSD makes a contribution to the understanding of problems in schools and how different actors, in this case principals, teachers, and learners make sense of these problems in relation to antecedents, motivations, and consequences, and it will serve the author to continue exploring other perspectives on problems in schools such as the perspectives of the media and educational policy in South Africa.

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Appendix 11

Letters of support

11.1 Letter of support: Prof. Bergman

UNIVERSITÄT BASEL
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DEPARTEMENT GESELLSCHAFTSWISSENSCHAFTEN

Zinette Bergman
Baiergasse 38
4126 Bettingen
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1 October 2012

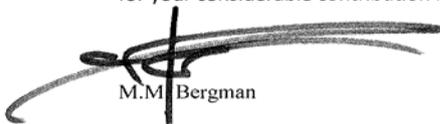
RE: Thesis Support Zinette Bergman

Dear Zinette

I am pleased to write this letter in support for your thesis, "AN EXPLANATORY MODEL OF SCHOOL DYSFUNCTIONS: FROM THE PERSPECTIVES OF PRINCIPALS, TEACHERS, AND LEARNERS".

Your thesis in part synthesizes the findings from our peer-reviewed articles, representing our research within a coherent narrative, which explores school-related dysfunctions as experienced by three actor groups, principals, teachers, and learners. In part, it goes beyond the limits of our work in that I can see interesting syntheses that have not yet found their way into published forms. From the beginning of our collaboration in 2010, we agreed that you use the research output generated by our collaboration towards completing your MA degree. You therefore not only contributed considerably to the initial peer-reviewed journal articles but, in this MA thesis, went beyond their limits to add qualities that clearly make this an important contribution to our work.

You have made substantive contributions to the analyses and interpretation of the data, as well as the co-writing and co-editing of both peer-reviewed articles. I am pleased to support you in extending our work for your MA thesis. Thank you for your considerable contribution in this ongoing project.



M.M. Bergman

Prof. M.M. Bergman

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11.2 Letter of support: Prof. Gravett

FACULTY OF EDUCATION OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DEAN

TEL: +27 11 559 5233

12th October 2012

Ms Z Bergman

Dear Ms Bergman

This letter serves to confirm your significant involvement in the article of which you were co-author:

Bergman, MM; Bergman Z & Gravett S 2011: The development of an Explanatory Model of School Dysfunction. SA Journal of Education, 31, pp. 461-474.
<http://www.sajournalofeducation.co.za/index.php/saje/article/view/476>

You were involved in the review of the literature, the analyses and interpretation of data, as well as the writing of the article. Consequently, I hereby give permission that you can use this article as part of your dissertation.

Yours sincerely



Prof Sarah Gravett

Executive Dean

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Doornfontein Campus | Soweto Campus



Appendix 12

Examples of Coding and Analysis

12.1 An example of bottom-up coding

The first example illustrates three different phases of data coding and analysis. It begins with an example of a coded data excerpt (12.1.1), which is followed by a code list developed from this data excerpt (12.1.2), and finally some analytic maps attempting to connect the different antecedents, motivations, dysfunctions, and consequences within the logic of the narrative (12.1.3).

12.1.1 Initial coding of essay

The learners were not attended for a period of two weeks, while the school was looking for a qualified educator. The school managed to secure the services of the educator who occupied the post temporary in the year 2009. The school submitted all required documents to district, while the process of appointing the educator was on, the district informed that the educator from Funda Lushaka can be appointed because she will supplement and she did not fail the major subject.

With frustration the school complied to the district and the educator was appointed with conditions. The educator recruited became frustrated and disappointed. Her contract was not processed and the educator for Funda Lushaka was temporarily appointed. She supplemented in February at JU but failed again the same subject. She was not given a chance to supplement but to register the subject in the second semester of 2010. the district renewed her contract until 31/12/2010 from 01/04/2010.

Mid-April the appointed educator informed the principal by and sms that she is not feeling well and went back home in Tembisa. The principal was in the impression that the educator is not really feeling well, only to discover that she told other educators that she is leaving the school. She informed other educators that she accepted an offer in Tembisa walking distance from home.

The principal is also from Tembisa. He required about the where about of the educator . He was informed by the principal of the school in Tembisa that the teacher started working at her school the previous Monday. The principal was shocked and disappointed. The district was informed. The district informed the school that the is no binding contract between the school and the educator. The school was mandated to look for another educator of occupy the post temporarily. Learners have been taught since mid-April.

The school is frustrated because subjects taught by educators is one of the scarce subject in the district and area. The district is not assisting the school to secure services of the educators. Learners have written term two activities but no one can mark them since the HOD is overloaded with work. The school has only one educator and HOD who specialized in the subject, and both of them they are overloaded with work.

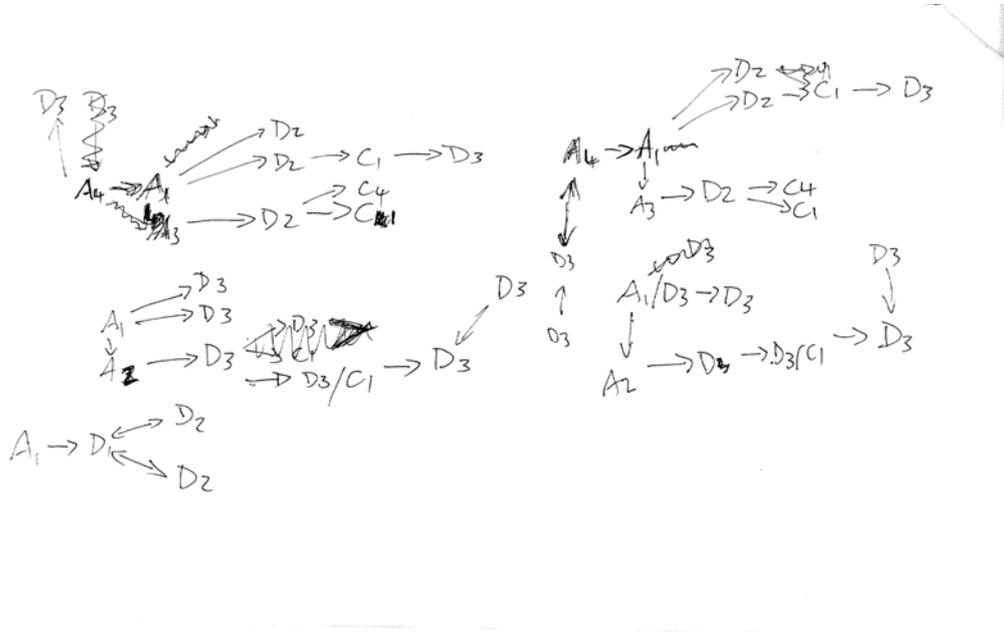
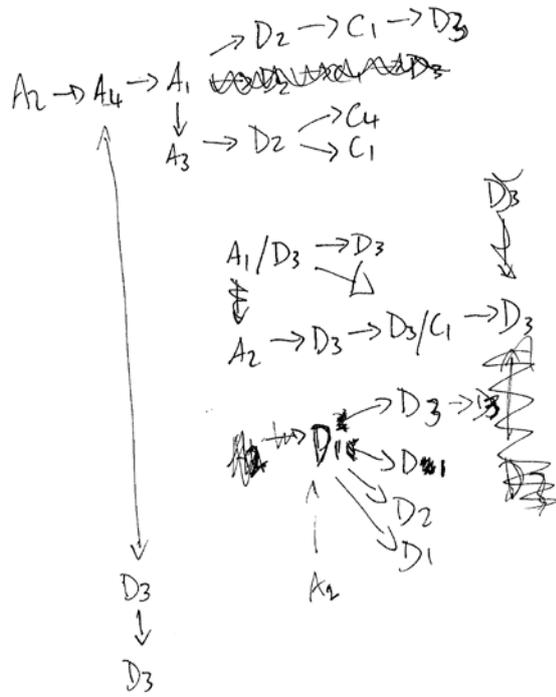
The principal and SMT are working day and night to secure services of and educator. Most educators that can fill the post are permanent in post for temporary post. Most educators that can fill the post, they have primary qualifications and district cannot appoint them in Secondary school. The district informed the school that any educator who resigns permanent post for a temporary post is doing that at his/her own risk. The district will not be accountable and responsible in case the educator is not permanently appointed because educators holding Funda Lushaka will be given first preference.

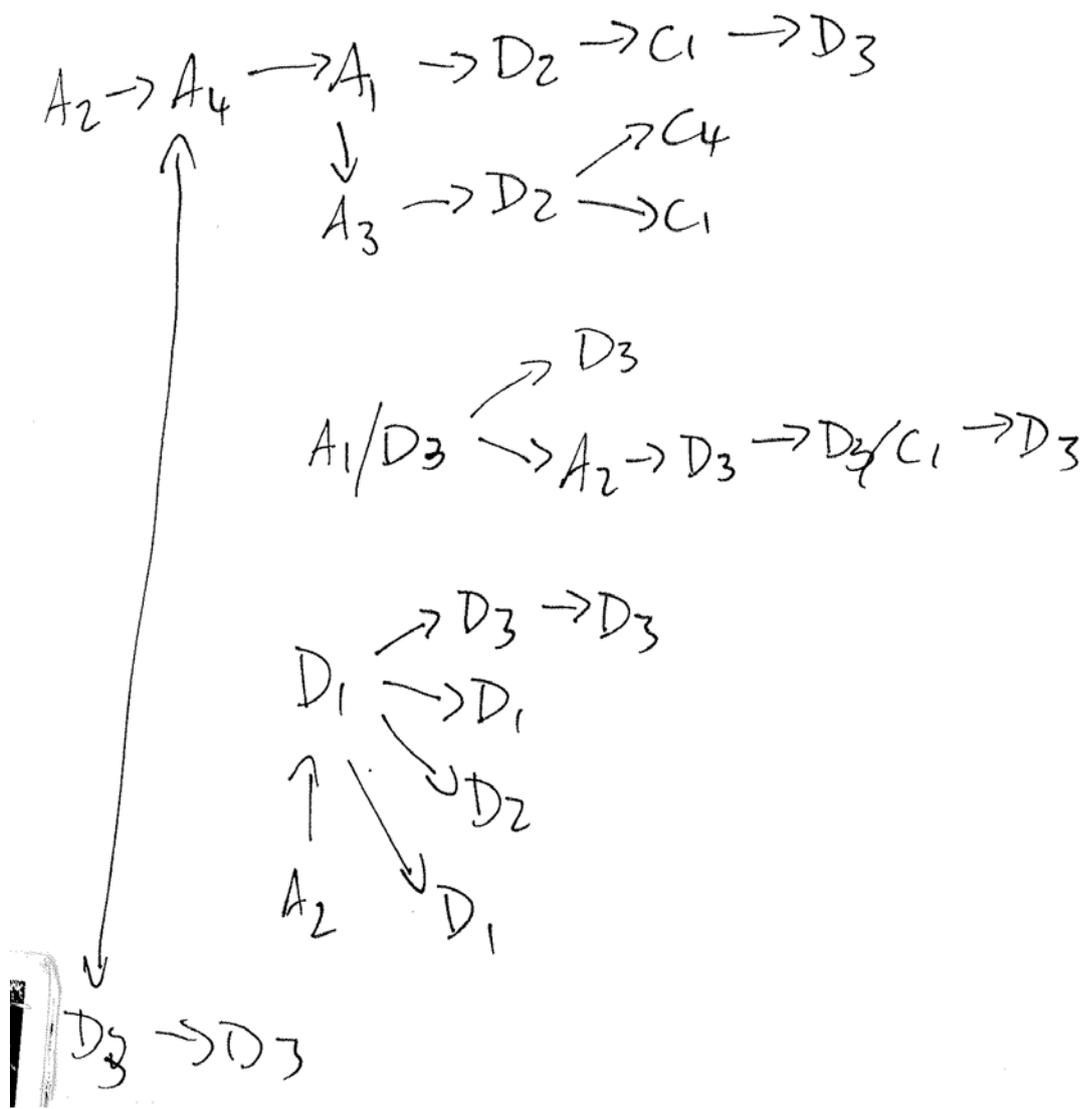
Learners right still not have an educator when the schools re-opens on the 13/7/2010

12.1.2 Developing a code list

A ₁	A ₁	: District will not renew contract (of temp.) teacher (but) send new teacher who is a Fund Lishak bursary holder.
D ₂	D ₁	: New teacher failed one subject
D ₂	D ₂	: New teacher failed supplementary exam.
C ₁	C ₁	: Educator cannot be appointed since she didn't complete her qualifications.
D ₃	D ₃	: learners are not attended while looking for a substitute educator (2 weeks)
A ₂	A ₂	: District insists on Fund Lushaka being appointed.
A ₃	A ₃	: With frustration the school complies + educator was appointed with conditions.
D ₂	D ₄	: She supplements + fails her exams again. (Feb)
C ₄	C ₂	: She was not given a chance to supplement but to register the subject in the second semester.
C ₁	C ₃	: (District does not extend contract beyond April)
A ₁ /D ₃	A ₄ /D ₅	: Mid April appointed educator informed principal by SMS that she is not feeling well + went home.
D ₃	D ₆	: (later the principal discovers) she told other educators that she is leaving the school.
A ₂	A ₅	: She accepted an offer in Tembisa walking distance from home.
D ₃	D ₇	: (The principal investigates and is) informed by the principal of the school in Tembisa that the teacher started working at her school the previous Monday.
D ₃ /C ₁	C ₁ /D ₈	: District informed the school that there is no binding contract between the school + the educator.
D ₃	D ₉	: Learners have not been taught since Mid-April.
D ₁	D ₁₀	: Subjects taught by educators is one of the scarce subject in the district & area.
D ₃	D ₁₁	: The district is not assisting the school to secure services of the educators

12.1.3 Drawing structural maps of narrative flow





12.2 Coding with index cards

The most common type of coding was done by using index cards. After the initial reading and identifying of codes in the essays, coded segments were written on index cards with ids linking them back to the original source. The benefit of this method allowed for examining multiple and diverse categories by sorting and resorting index cards according to different criteria. The following are examples of index cards used to categorise and sort data into antecedents, motivations, dysfunctions, and consequences:

90d42a174p.2

This puzzled other educators who immediately embarked on a sit in, demanding the return of Mosca.

670680292086 p.1

It is a quietness that characterized his classroom. This quietness stems from fear of being beaten with a stick.

200941963

"In February 2009 "Zozo" started with the stones, she came to work as normal and just after assembly she told the principal that one of her neighbours called and said they see water flowing under the, she was released and zozo stayed away from school for the whole week."

200941963 p 2

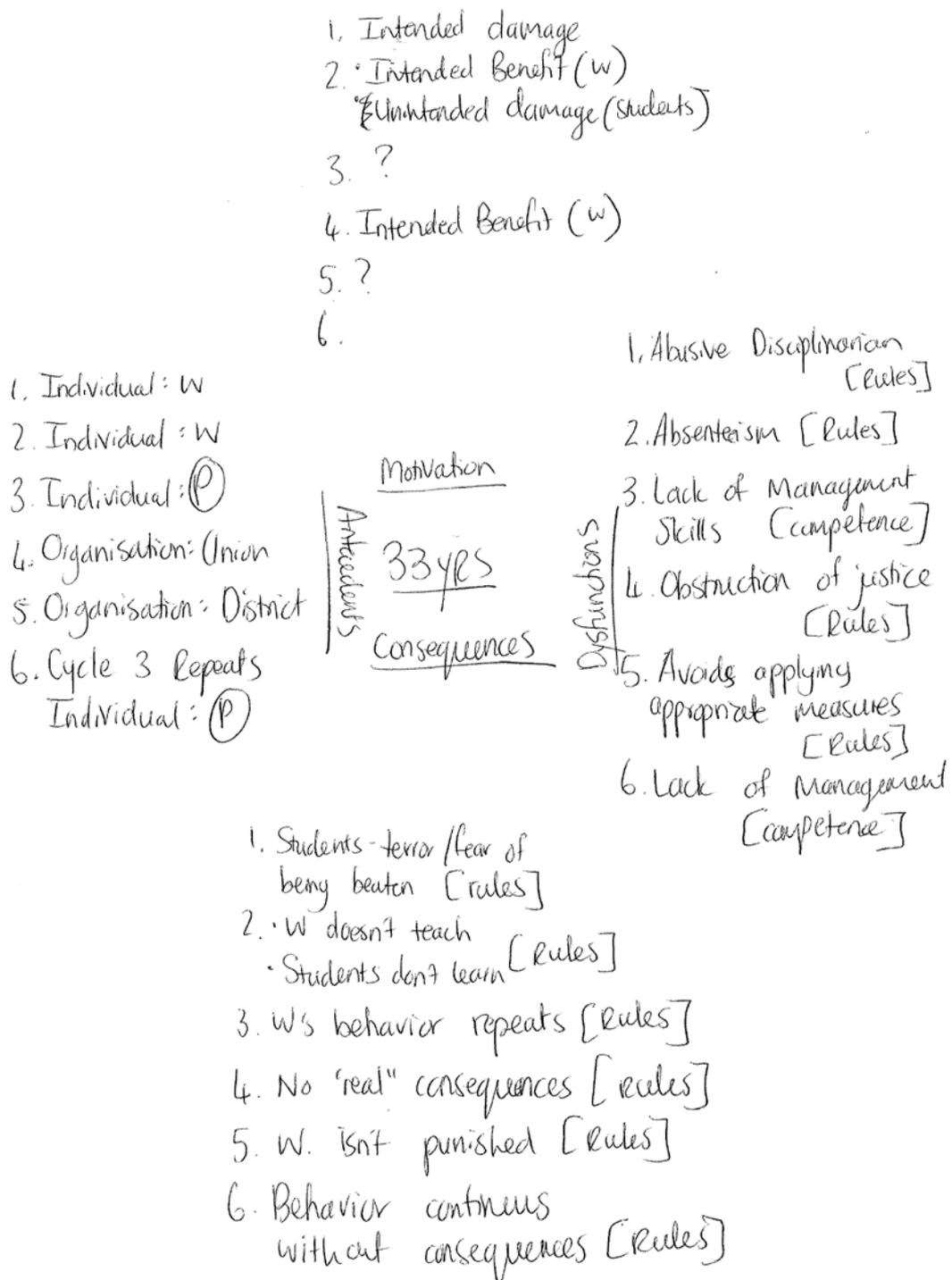
She [the teacher] tells learners not to give their books to the HOD, they must tell the HOD that their books are with her.

200941963

Zozo sent a SMS to the principal telling him that her son was hit by a car ... unfortunately for her, she met the Admin Assistant of our school at the shopping Mall and Zozo was accompanied by her two sons.

12.3 Conceptual mapping of EMSD subcomponents

Structural maps were also drawn to identify the occurrences of the different EMSD subcomponents as illustrated in the two examples below:



1. Unintended Damage.
2. Intended Benefit
3. Unintended Damage.
4. Unintended Damage
5. Unintended Damage.
6. ?
7. Intended Damage.
8. Intended Damage.
9. Unintended Damage.
10. Intended Damage

1. ~~Organisation~~ Situation: Overpopulation
2. Organisation: Infra-structure
3. Organisation: District
4. Situation: 1 Building, 2 schools
5. Organisation:
6. Individual

11. Intended Benefit
Unintended Damage
Motivation

15 yrs
Antecedent | Consequences
| Disruption

1. No School Buildings [Resources]
2. Lack of facilities [Resources]
3. Cannot build new school [Resources]
6. Lack of Discipline: noise/late coming [Rule]
5. Host schools pays for shared resources [Resources]
6. Principals refuse to communicate [Competence]

7. Organisation.
8. Situation: Students Riot
9. Organisation: District
10. Cycle 7 repeats Organisation
11. Situation: Feeding Scheme.

1. 2 Schools, 1 Building [Resources]
2. ~~3 Schools, 1 Building~~ [Resources] + staff work in storerooms
3. No resolution [Resources]
- 4.
5. Animosity between (P's) [Competence]
6. Issues of vandalism remain unresolved [Rules]
7. Fighting between management [Rules]
8. Polia intervenes [Rules]
- 9.
10. Conflict continues [Rules/competence]
11. Conflict continues [Rules/competence]
7. Excluding Principal + SGB from meetings [Rules]
8. Student's riot/disrupt exams/ start fire [Rules]
9. District fails to provide school with support during riot [Rules]
10. Lack of communication/Exclusion of Principal + SGB [Rules]
11. Students are excluded from feeding scheme [Rules/Competence] * quote.