

**THE ROLE OF SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAMS IN MANAGING FACTORS  
THAT INFLUENCE LEARNER ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN GRADE 12  
EXAMINATIONS IN KWAZULU-NATAL**

**by**

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## DECLARATION

Student number: 30654084

I, **Michael Togara Tigere** declare that:

**“The role of school management teams in managing factors that influence learner academic performance in grade 12 examinations in Kwazulu-Natal”** is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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SIGNATURE

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DATE

## **DEDICATION**

This study is dedicated to all those who sometimes stay up through the night in pursuit of knowledge and personal fulfilment. Keep going!

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I would like to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation to the following:

- Professor S.P. Mokoena, my supervisor, for his unfailing guidance, support, and motivation in my mission to complete the study;
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- Lastly, but not least, The Almighty, through whom all things are possible.

## ABSTRACT

The National Senior Certificate Grade 12 results in the Pinetown District between 2010 and 2015 revealed that a number of township and rural schools are struggling to obtain an overall 60% pass rate. But some schools in similar circumstances managed to achieve above this pass percentage. The study sought to enquire about the role of school management teams (SMTs) in managing factors that influenced learner academic performance in Grade 12 examinations

The study was conducted in three purposely selected public schools that each surpassed the 60 percent overall pass in the National Senior Certificate (NSC) examinations in the Pinetown District, KwaZulu-Natal. The study employed a qualitative approach and was located in the interpretive paradigm. Data was collected by means of semi-structured interviews and document analysis. The identities of all respondents were protected. Upon analysis of results, several measures the schools applied emerged. Topics for future research are also suggested.

**KEYWORDS:** learner performance, school management team, curriculum management, monitoring, continuing professional development, family income, classroom management

## **GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

NPC: National Planning Commission

NSC: National Senior Certificate

DBE: Department of Basic Education

NDP: National Development Plan

SMT: School Management Team

IQMS: Integrated Quality Management System

REQV: Relative Education Qualification Value

KZNDoE: KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education

CAPS: Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement

APR: Annual Performance Report

DoE: Department of Education

OECD: Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development

NNSSF: National Norms and Standards for School Funding

SASA: South African Schools Act No 84 of 1996

ICT: Information and Communication Technology

CPD: Continuing Professional Development

UNICEF: United Nations Children's Fund

HSRC: Human Rights Commission

HoD: Head of Department

SGB: School Governing Body

LSA: Learner Support Agent

NGO: Non-Governmental Organisation

PPN: Post Provisioning Norm

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# CHAPTER ONE

## OVERVIEW AND RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

Johnson (2009:461) notes that a large percentage of South African schools are failing as institutions of teaching and learning. Bloch (2009:17) concurs with this view when asserting that 60-80% of the country's schools can be called dysfunctional. In terms of the National Planning Commission's (2011:270) diagnosis, two factors are largely responsible for this failure. The overall cause is weak capacity throughout the civil service- teachers, principals and departmental officials- which leads to poor schooling outcomes. The other cause is nepotism and the appointment of unsuitable personnel which further weakens government capacity. This situation exists in spite of a huge increase in resources invested in the historically disadvantaged and majority part of the schooling system (Taylor, 2011). Taylor avers that investment in the schooling system has not produced commensurate improvement in education quality.

The above scenario becomes evident when one looks at the exit point after twelve years of basic education. In South Africa the performance of candidates in the National Senior Certificate (NSC) examination is one of the indicators of quality with regard to the performance of the schooling system as a whole (DBE, 2014:21). The NSC is the qualification that is offered to learners in the Further Education and Training (FET) band (i.e. Grades 10, 11 and 12). As a result, achievement of this qualification signifies the readiness of learners for higher education and the world of work (DBE, 2014). The number of learners that attain this qualification and the level of performance of learners in this qualification, especially the type of certificate achieved, is therefore a strong indicator of the performance of the education system (DBE, 2014).

While the overall NSC pass rate in 2014 was 75, 8% (DBE, 2015), a disturbing picture emerges when examining the quality of passes, and not the number of the passes, namely:

- The number of learners with bachelor passes which allow university entrance; and
- The number of learners who passed Mathematics and Physical Sciences.

Only 28% of matric candidates achieved a bachelor pass (DBE, 2015). Furthermore, there has been a steady decline in the number of full-time Grade 12 candidates who take Mathematics- down from 270 598 in 2010 to 231 180 in 2014. The Mathematics pass rate also declined from 59, 9% in 2013 to 53,1% in 2014. Moreover, only 35, 1% of learners scored over 40% in Mathematics (DBE, 2015).

The number of full-time candidates who took Physical Sciences also showed a decline from 210 168 in 2010 to 171 549 in 2014. The pass rate in Physical Sciences declined from 67, 4% in 2013 to 61, 5% in 2014. Only 36, 9% candidates scored over 40% (DBE 2015).

The above figures go against two of the stated objectives of the National Development Plan (NDP) -2030. These objectives are

- To increase the number of students eligible to study towards Mathematics and Science-based degrees to 450 000 by 2030 (NDP, 2011:59); and
- To increase enrolment at universities by at least 70%by 2030 so that enrolments increase to about 1, 62 million from 950 000 in 2010 (NDP, 2011:59).

While, as mentioned earlier, huge resources have been directed towards education, Van der Berg (2008:13) argues that school resources do not necessarily make a difference but that the ability of schools to convert resources into outcomes is the critical factor.

Despite the negative scenario painted above, the researcher made the observation that some schools were able to deliver commendable results in the Grade 12 National Senior Certificate

(NSC) examinations despite debilitating conditions. These schools are a proof that it is possible to attain good results by overcoming challenges that continue to hamper academic performance in the majority of secondary schools.

The interest of my study was to explore how the school management teams (SMT's) manage factors that influenced learner academic performance in the Grade 12 examinations at secondary schools. These are teaching-related, learner and learning-related and societal factors (Van der Westhuizen, Mosoge, Swanepoel & Coetsee, 2005).

It was envisaged that the findings of this study would shed light on what poorly performing schools needed to do in order to improve the performance of Grade 12 learners during the final examination.

## **1.2 RATIONALE OF THE STUDY**

Although the study was limited to exploring how SMT's manage factors that influence learner academic performance in Grade 12 examinations, it was hoped the results of the study might provide insight into how struggling schools could be assisted to improve their performance. The results of this study would also suggest possible solutions into how SMT's could overcome some of the challenges facing them.

The value and importance of the matriculation certificate is growing due to increasing competition for entry into post-matric fields of study and the world of work (Dhrurumraj, 2013). The study, therefore, further aims to suggest management steps school can adopt to improve their performance at Grade 12 examination thus enabling matriculants to access the mentioned opportunities.

Having worked in township and rural schools in the Pinetown District throughout my career, I had made a general observation that while on the one hand there were schools that consistently

obtained an above 60% overall pass rate, there were schools on the other hand which continuously achieved a below 60% pass rate in the Grade 12 final examination for a number of years.

This study needed to be conducted to shed light on what the better performing schools were doing to manage factors that influence learner performance in secondary schools in the Grade 12 NSC examinations.

### **1.3 PURPOSE AND CONTEXT OF THE STUDY**

The main purpose of this study was to uncover how SMT's managed factors that influence learner academic performance in the grade 12 NSC examinations.

The research area was limited to the KwaZulu-Natal Province and more specifically to three secondary schools in the Pinetown District. Most learners in KwaZulu-Natal are found in the Pinetown District. The district consisted of 358 084 learners in 2013 and is still regarded as one of the largest in KwaZulu-Natal. The district had the second highest number of learners (136 499) in 2013 in the secondary school band i.e. Grade 08-12 (Department of Education 2015). It was, therefore, assumed that these schools would provide information-rich data with some applicability to underperforming schools elsewhere in South Africa.

No claim was made, due to the limited scope of the study, that the results could be generalised to all secondary schools in South Africa.

### **1.4 RESEARCH QUESTION AND SUB-QUESTIONS**

The main research question guiding this study is as follows:

- How did School Management Teams (SMT's) manage factors that influence learner academic performance in Grade 12 National Senior Certificate examinations?

From this main research question, the following sub-questions were derived:

- How did the School Management Team (SMT) perceive its role in the management of the curriculum?
- How did the SMT perceive its role in the management learners and their learning?
- How did the SMT perceive its role in the management of external factors?
- What recommendations could be made based on the literature review and the findings of the empirical study to improve the management of factors influencing performance in Grade 12 examinations at secondary schools?

### **1.5 AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The aim of the study was to enquire how SMT's managed factors that influence learner academic performance in Grade 12 examinations and to provide recommendations based on the findings.

Furthermore, this would help SMT's, educators, parents and Grade 12 learners to optimally fulfil their roles.

The objectives of the study were as follows:

- Determine how the School Management Team (SMT) perceived its role in the management of the curriculum;
- Explore how the SMT perceived its role in the management of learners and their learning;
- Enquire how the SMT perceived its role in the management of external factors; and
- Make recommendations on what could be done to improve the management of factors influencing performance in Grade 12 examinations at secondary schools.

## **1.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The study was limited to three public secondary schools in the Pinetown District where learners come from almost the same socio-economic background and attend high schools with almost similar resources and infrastructure. Furthermore, it was limited to school management teams in the Pinetown District, KwaZulu-Natal.

## **1.7 RESEARCH APPROACH**

The study adopted the qualitative approach. According to Nieuwenhuis, (2007: 50), "Qualitative research attempts to collect rich descriptive data in respect of a particular phenomenon or context with the intention of developing an understanding of what is being observed or studied. It therefore focuses on how individuals and groups view and understand the world and construct meaning out of their experiences". Since the study intended to understand the role of SMT's in managing factors that influenced learner academic performance in Grade 12 examinations, the study was therefore located in the interpretive paradigm. Lincoln and Guba (1985) describe interpretive paradigm as a paradigm whereby the researcher does not aim to predict what people will do, but rather to describe how people make sense of their worlds, and how they make meaning of their particular actions.

## **1.8 DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS**

Two data collecting tools were used for this study, namely, the qualitative interview and document analysis. Kuada (2012) opines that the qualitative interview seeks to gain an insight into the lived experiences of the people one is interviewing. The second instrument that was used was document analysis. A school and SMT's minute books, class and the teacher attendance registers were requested. Minute books provided insight into what was discussed during meetings and sometimes shed light on what the school perceived as challenges confronting it. Class registers provided an indication of learner attendance. The teacher attendance register enabled the researcher to determine the extent of teacher presence and

absence.

For each participating school, separate recorded discs were used to capture the information. The purpose of recording was to facilitate easy retrieval of data for analysis. Thereafter, the researcher proceeded to read and listen closely to the recorded data which was subsequently interpreted. Each of the recorded interviews was transcribed and in some instances the participants' views were reported verbatim.

## **1.9 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The researcher identified classical management theories as ideal to serve as a lens for this study. Two of them are Administrative Management Theory and Bureaucratic Theory of Management.

Mahmood, Basharat and Bashir (2012) opine that classical management theories were developed to predict and control behaviour in organisations. As schools are organisations that deal with humans whose behaviour need to be predicted and controlled, this researcher believed that classical management theories rendered themselves relevant to the study.

In addition, another feature of classical management theories, which makes it applicable to schools and thus the study, is chain of command. In classical management theories, management is distributed in three levels:

- Top Level Management. Mahmood *et al.* (2012) assert that this level of management is usually called administration. It consists of directors and general managers in organisations. This level of management is responsible for the development of the long-term strategic plans to meet the objectives of the organisation;
- Middle level management. The SMT falls at this level. According to Mahmood *et al.* (2012), this level of management is responsible for the coordination of the activities of supervisors and the formulation of plans in line with the strategic plans of top level management; and

- First level management. This level consists of teachers whose paramount duties are to implement policies and plans drawn by middle management (Mahmood *et al.* 2012).

Other feature of classical management theories that have not been mentioned but are pertinent to the study are: division of labour, unidirectional downward influence, autocratic leadership style, and predicted behaviour.

When collected data is analysed, the researcher will establish the proximity or distance of the responses to classical management theories that have been selected. In other words, data will be analysed in context of these theories.

## **1.10 DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS**

In this study certain concepts are used that need to be defined to clarify their use in the study. The definitions of these terms are theoretical assumptions for the purpose of this study only and may not cover all possible definitions for the concepts.

**1.10.1 School management team:** Structure responsible for the day-to-day professional management of the school and for the implementation of its policies (Van Wyk & Marumoloa 2012).

**1.10.2 Academic performance:** Exhibition of knowledge attained or skills developed in a school subject (Commonwealth Association of Education, Administration and Management, 2013).

**1.10.3 Grade 12/Matriculation:** In this study these two terms are used interchangeably to refer to the final secondary school grade in South Africa, where after its completion, a learner can officially become a student at a tertiary institution.

**1.10.4 Underperformance:** In South Africa a secondary school is deemed to be underperforming if its percentage pass in the NSC examination falls below 60% (KZNDoE 2010).

## **1.11 OUTLINE OF THE STUDY**

### **Chapter One: Overview and rationale of the study**

This chapter provides the background information to the study. It introduces the study, describes formulation, and discusses aims, objectives, research methodology, limitations and an outline of the chapters.

### **Chapter Two: Review of literature**

This chapter provides the theoretical background to the study. The role of SMT's in the management of factors that influence learner performance in Grade 12 examinations is presented.

### **Chapter Three: Research Design and Methodology**

This chapter presents the data collection methods and procedures used in this study. The collection instruments used, population sampling techniques, location and demographics are described in detail. Also included are ethical considerations.

### **Chapter Four: Data Analysis, Presentation and Discussion**

Data analysis and interpretation with regard to the results obtained from the interviews and document review is presented and discussed. In this chapter, findings of the research are provided.

### **Chapter Five: Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations**

Findings are synthesised and the final conclusion of the study is provided. Based on the literature study and the findings, future recommendations are provided.

## **1.12 CONCLUSION**

In this chapter a background to the study was given. This was followed by the rationale to the study. The purpose and context of the study were followed by the main research question and sub-questions. The aim and objectives of the study were then detailed. These were followed by limitations of the study and the research approach. Data collection and analysis were briefly explained. The theoretical framework that underpinned the study was then briefly explained. Definition of key concepts was followed by an outline of the study.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

The focus of this chapter is to review literature on factors that influence learner performance in examinations at secondary schools. It begins with an explanation of the concept “performance” in the context of the study. This will be followed by an overview of Grade 12 learner performance in KwaZulu-Natal and in the Pinetown District between 2010 and 2015. The review continues with a brief historical perspective on South African education which provides a background to the present. Factors influencing learner performance such as location, school culture and funding will be discussed. This will be followed by learner-related factors. Here, learner discipline, learner motivation, parental involvement, and study skills will be examined.

Factors emanating from outside school will then follow. Here, economic and social factors such as family income and teenage pregnancy are discussed respectively. This will be followed by teacher factors that can affect learner performance. They include continuing professional development, academic qualifications, classroom management, teacher absenteeism, and teacher attrition.

The leadership role of SMT’s in managing learner performance including monitoring is then discussed. This will be followed by a discussion of the leadership styles of managers. These include autocratic, bureaucratic, charismatic, democratic participative, laissez faire, and transactional leadership styles. Organizational management approaches which include classical, human relations and, systems approaches are discussed. The chapter ends with a discussion on the theoretical framework underpinning the study.

## **2.2 DEFINITION OF PERFORMANCE IN RELATION TO THE STUDY**

The Cambridge International Dictionary of English (1995) defines the concept 'performance' of a person as how well he/she does a piece of work or activity. It is about getting results. Stuart-Kotze (2006) highlights the fact that, in order to determine whether one is performing (that is, there is a notable action or achievement and/or there are results) in one's work, one needs to know how to get results and be clear of what makes a difference and what does not. The author further states that what drives performance is behaviour or how one acts. Furthermore, the Cambridge International Dictionary of English (1995) defines behaviour as a way of acting or how one conducts oneself. This means that it is what you do that is important, not what you are or who you are. Behaviour entails the actions one takes and the decisions one makes. Actions and decisions can be controlled; one can decide what to do and when to do it. You can see these things and you can measure them. And because you can decide what to do in any situation, you can determine, control and most importantly, improve your performance. In Stuart-Kotze's (2006) view, performance is about doing the right thing at the right time.

In the South African education system, a secondary school is deemed to have performed well if its overall pass percentage in the NSC examination is above 60% (Kwazulu-Natal Department of Education, 2010). Looking at this yardstick, it does not focus on the quality of the school's results but looks at the ability of each school to meet the minimum pass requirements for 60% of the total number of learners registered for an examination sitting. Schools that obtained below 60% average pass percentage are considered to have underperformed.

## 2.3 OVERVIEW OF GRADE 12 LEARNER PERFORMANCES IN KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE (2010-2015)

Table 2.1 below presents KwaZulu-Natal provincial pass percentages from 2010 to 2015.

**Table 2.1: KwaZulu-Natal provincial pass percentages from 2010 to 2015**

Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Provincial Pass %	70.7	68.1	73.9	78.2	69.7	60.7
National Pass %	67.8	70.2	73.9	78.2	75.8	70.7

Source: (Department of Basic Education, 2015)

The six-year provincial results show that the province has been generally underachieving compared to the national average. The results show that only once over the past six examination sittings did the provincial average surpass the national one. It is clear that, apart from the 2013 high of 78,2%, the province's results have been in decline.

Commenting on the decline in the pass rate in 2011 compared to 2010, the then Provincial Head of Department, Dr Nkosinathi Sishi, cited the fall in the Mathematics pass rate as one of the reasons. He lamented the fact that it was now compulsory for all learners to do either Mathematics or Mathematical Literacy (News24, 2012). He also cited poverty as a determining factor in the decline in performance. In his view, the fact that nine of the poorest 20 districts in South Africa were in KwaZulu-Natal had to be considered when looking at the province's Grade 12 results.

There was also a drop in the 2014 pass rate compared to the 2013 high of 78.2%. In this case the provincial Department of Education attributed the drop to the new Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) on which learners were being examined for the first time,

pointing out that teachers and learners needed time to adjust to the new system (Subban, 2015).

It is noteworthy that KwaZulu-Natal recorded a 9% drop in matriculation passes, the highest compared to other provinces in 2015 (DBE, 2015). One of the key reasons for the drop, according to Department of Basic Education (DBE) Minister, Angie Motshekga, was the progression or condonation of learners who had repeated Grade 11 more than once and those who were over-age to Grade 12 (Child, 2016). However, Dean of Education at the University of Johannesburg Sarah Gravett, while conceding that socio-economic factors might have played a role in the drop in matric performance, blamed poor leadership in the management of education within the province (Child, 2016). She further noted that KwaZulu-Natal was one of the provinces implicated in the selling of posts by teacher unions and the incidences of group copying that were reported in 2014.

Another notable comment on the continued drop in the province's results was made by socio-economic researcher Nic Spaull who said: "The gap between the performance of affluent and poor children is and has always been one of the biggest in the world. We have arguably the most unequal education system on earth. It is an on-going tragedy that 20 years on from apartheid we can still see the impact of the former homelands and the huge privileges given to white South Africans for five decades" (Child, 2016:1).

Spaull's comment confirms the role hinted by Gravett of the impact of socio-economic factors on the performance of Grade 12 learners in the province. But in a study conducted in the Western Cape, South Africa, Bayat, Louw and Rena (2014) discovered that in schools where principals displayed leadership qualities learners responded with good results in spite of their poor socio-economic environment. These principals engaged the community and hooked it to their vision of the school. This suggests that further studies need to be conducted into the extent of the impact

of socio-economic factors into the continued downward spiral of academic performance of KwaZulu-Natal as a province in Grade 12 examinations.

### 2.3.1 Overview of Grade 12 learner performance in Pinetown District (2010-2015)

Table 2.2 below presents Pinetown District performance data between 2010 and 2015 (DBE, 2015). The number of bachelor and diploma passes has been provided.

**Table 2.2: Pinetown District performance data between 2010 and 2015**

YEAR	No Wrote	No Passed	Pass %	Bachelors Pass	Diploma Pass
2010	15874	11309	71.2	4412 (39%)	2166 (19%)
2011	14314	9807	68.5	3895 (40%)	2128 (22%)
2012	15556	12046	77.4	4683 (39%)	2186 (18%)
2013	19248	15694	81.5	5688 (36%)	2453 (16%)
2014	18592	14099	75.8	5737 (31%)	5859 (42%)
2015	20098	12993	64.6	5072 (39%)	5204 (40%)

Source: (DBE, 2015)

Table 2.2 indicates that there has been a 21% increase in the number of candidates sitting for the (NSC) examination between 2010 and 2015 in the Pinetown district. However, there has only been a 13% increase in the number of candidates obtaining passes. While the overall district pass percentage shows a district that has been performing well, the downward trajectory of the results from 2014 indicates that there are serious problems that need attention.

Another aspect that the table reveals concerns bachelor passes. In 2010 the number of bachelor passes constituted 28% of enrolled candidates whereas in 2015 they constituted 25%. What these statistics do not reveal though is the number of bachelor passes produced by township and rural schools in the district as compared to those attained by ex-Model C schools.

Table 2.3 below illustrates the number of schools that achieved 60% plus pass percentage and those that did not over the past three years and the percentages of schools that underperformed between 2013 and 2015.

**Table 2.3: Number of schools that achieved 60% and below between 2013 and 2015**

<b>YEAR</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>
No of schools that obtained 60% plus pass rate	141	126	102
No of schools that obtained below 60% pass rate	23	38	62
% of school that underperformed	14	34	38

Source: (DBE, 2015)

The Pinetown District has 164 secondary schools under its jurisdiction. About 34 of those schools are situated in urban areas while the rest are either township or rural based (DBE, 2015). When one views the statistics, it might be tempting to think that the province is doing well. The district has managed to achieve results above the provincial and national averages over the past six years.

Looking closely at the above table, there is a gradual decrease in the number of schools that are performing. The drop is noticeable in 2014 and 2015. The 38 schools that underperformed in 2014 represent 24% while the 62 schools in 2015 represent 38% of schools in the Pinetown District (DBE 2015). Further evidence from the 2015 Annual Performance Report (APR) released by the DBE indicates that the majority of the schools that underperformed are based in the township and rural areas of the district.

What the researcher could not determine is the extent to which the district was affected by the 2014 group copying debacle. This was due to intervention measures implemented by the DBE to prevent a repeat of the scandal. For the 2015 NSC examinations all centres were classified according to their risk profiles. Schools that were considered high-risk (to copy) had a full time departmental official administering their examinations (DBE, 2015b). Could the 9% drop in passes in the province and the district be partly attributed to group copying? This could not be ruled out considering that in some schools the pass percentage dropped by more than 40% (DBE, 2015a). A notable measure which the DBE had used to identify high risk schools was through curriculum implementation monitoring (DBE, 2015). It had emerged during the course of the investigation that one of the reasons for group copying was that the curriculum had not been adequately covered during the course of the academic year which resulted in learners unprepared to sit for the examinations (DBE, 2015).

While a considerable number of schools' results show a downward trend, there were some schools based in township and rural areas of the district that performed well above 60% (DBE, 2015a). This indicates that some schools have managed to remain functional in spite of adverse conditions they may be facing. It is these schools that are the subject of this study.

## **2.4 BRIEF HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE ON SOUTH AFRICAN EDUCATION**

Dhrurumraj (2013) asserts that the history of the South African education system shows inequalities that existed for many decades during various historical periods. The provision of education during the colonial and subsequent periods was characterised by segregation and unequal resource allocation. Four education departments were created to serve Africans, Whites, Coloureds and Indians.

Looking at any dimension of comparison, there were glaring inequalities between the four schooling systems in South Africa. This applied to teacher qualifications, teacher-learner ratios,

per capita funding, buildings, equipment, facilities, books, stationery, etc. Due to the funding models that were applied at the time, schools for white people were better off than those for Indians, Coloured, and Africans. Furthermore, schooling was compulsory for the other three population groups but not for Africans (newlearningonline.com).

But the advent of democracy in 1994 brought change. Van der Berg, Burger, Burger, de Vos, du Rand, Gustafsson, Moses, Shepherd, Spaul, Taylor, van Brockhuizen and von Finkel (2011:2) state that at the time of the transition to democracy, a South African education system was envisaged that would foster nation-building, promote democratic values and provide a pathway out of poverty for the poor. To this end the South African Schools Act, No 84 of 1996 was enacted as a legislative means of redressing past injustices in the education system and promoting the democratic transformation of society (Mafora, 2013:97).

The NSC is the exit point for school leavers (DoE, 2014). In the previous dispensation, Grade 12 was marked by the award of the Senior Certificate but this was replaced by the award of the NSC with the intention to address the shortcomings in the education system (Mouton, Louw & Strydom, 2012). In the past (before 2008 when the first Grade 12 NSC was written), Grade 12 learners could pass their subjects at three different levels, that is, higher, standard or lower grade (Mouton et al., 2012). The new curriculum offers 29 subjects at one level. Consequently, there is no distinction between subjects at the higher, standard or lower grade (Nel & Kistner, 2009). For university exemption, a candidate must obtain a rating of at least 4 (50-59%) in four subjects from the designated list of recognised subjects for admission to university (DoE, 2014).

## **2.5 FACTORS INFLUENCING LEARNER PERFORMANCE**

### **2.5.1 School-related factors**

A school does not operate in a vacuum. Several factors can determine if it fulfils its mandate successfully or otherwise. This section discusses some of the school-related factors that can influence learner performance, which include location of the school, school culture and funding.

#### **2.5.1.1 Location of the school**

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2003) defines school location as the community in which the school is located. This could be a village or rural area (fewer than 3 000 people), a small town (3 000 to about 15 000 people), a town (15 000 to 100 000 people), a city (100 000 to 1 000 000 people).

A brief review of literature on the effect of location on learner performance shows mixed researcher findings. A study conducted in Nigeria by Owoeye and Yara (2011) concluded that the geographical location of a school has influence on the academic performance of learners. Their study found that learners in urban areas had better academic achievement than those in rural areas. Factors that negatively affected the performance of rural-based learners were, among others, uneven distribution of resources, poor school mapping, facilities, the problem of qualified teachers refusing appointment or not willing to work in isolated villages, lack of good roads, poor communication, and an indifferent attitude of some communities to schooling.

In contrast, a study conducted by Bulala, Ramatlala and Nenty (2014) on the effect of location of schools in Botswana, showed no significant difference between learners' academic performance in rural, peri-urban and secondary schools in agriculture junior school certificate examinations. On the contrary, Mkpugbe (1998) conducted a study on whether location of a school influences

performance on mathematics tests. The results showed that learners from rural schools defied odds to outperform learners from urban schools.

The results in the studies above indicate that a school's location on its own does not determine the performance of its learners. This researcher's view is that it is the people inside the institution that make the difference.

### **2.5.1.2 School culture**

Kruger and Steinmann (2011) in van Deventer and Kruger (2011) define school culture as the historically transmitted pattern of meaning that includes the norms, values, beliefs, ceremonies, rituals, traditions and myths as these are understood, perhaps to varying degrees, by members of the school community.

Basson, Van der Westhuizen and Niemann (1991) posit that school culture influences educators' commitment to their teaching task in the isolation of the classroom. In addition, it is cohesive by nature and binds the staff and learners in a common fate and vision. This is particularly important for new staff members and learners. The researcher believes that "how things are generally done" in an organisation is what one picks up early and has a big role in how one adapts to the working or learning environment. Its "directiveness" plays an important role in decision making in the school. Schools need to take decisions that are in tandem with their cultures.

In Hallinger and Heck's (1998) opinion, the school principal embodies the culture of a school and it is through it that his/her leadership has impact on learning. MacNeal, Prater and Busch (2009) further opine that it is crucial for principals to focus on the development of a school's culture as it has an impact on teacher morale and learner achievement. To support MacNeal *et al.*'s (2009) view, culture is a pervasive phenomenon which can work for or against the school. For an example, when a culture of late coming has taken hold in a school, it can prove daunting

to eradicate. By the same token, a positive school culture sustains the schools' activities and continued success. The point is expanded by Basson *et al.* (1991) in asserting that healthy and sound school cultures correlate strongly with increased learner achievement, educator productivity and satisfaction, and educators' attitudes towards their work.

### **2.5.1.3 Funding**

Funding is the act of providing financial resources usually in the form of money, or other values such as effort or time, to finance a need or programme (Cambridge International Dictionary of English 1995). In the South African education context, the state is the primary source of funding for schools. Section 29 (1) (a) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996 states that it is the state's duty to build enough schools and provide enough teachers for everyone to be able to go to school and obtain proper education.

Research has indicated that there is a strong causal link between good learners' performance and a well-funded school (University of Witwatersrand, 2006). The DBE endorses this view by acknowledging that an improvement in resources is thought to improve output in education or the performance of learners (Government Gazette, 2011).

According to the South African Human Rights Commission (2001), the post-apartheid government inherited an education system that was saddled with inequalities. South Africa, in reality, still consists of separate education systems, the one consists of the previously whites only, former Model C schools, which are adequately resourced, and the township and rural schools which are entrenched in poverty. The legacy of apartheid education is manifested in a minimum level of resources, lack of qualified teachers, high teacher-learner ratios, lack of libraries and laboratories and a shortage of classrooms at the township and rural schools. On the other hand, most of the former Model C schools are equipped with modern computers, well-resourced libraries and laboratories and well-qualified teachers (Arendse, 2011).

Due to South Africa's historical discriminatory past, the state is obliged to fund public schools from public revenue to ensure redress of the inequalities in the education system. Arendse (2011) contends that one of the key features of apartheid education was the gross inequality in the funding of public schools. The financing of public education under the previous regime occurred primarily on the basis of race, with black learners receiving the least.

The National Norms and Standards for School Funding (NNSF) clarify procedures to ensure redress as stipulated by the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996. State funding is divided into three categories. Firstly, the bulk of the funding is spent on teachers' salaries, the exact amount of which is connected to the qualifications and experience of teachers (University of Witwatersrand, 2006). The second category of state funding is directed at the infrastructure of schools. Since most previously disadvantaged schools are in a less than ideal condition, government allocates money for infrastructure almost exclusively to poor schools (University of Witwatersrand, 2006). The third category is non-personnel, non-capital expenditure, commonly known as "school allocation" money (University of Witwatersrand, 2006). This expenditure is directed at the acquisition of capital equipment and consumables necessary for teaching and assessment in schools, including electricity, water, stationery, furniture, computers, photocopiers, teaching aids and so forth (University of Witwatersrand, 2006).

Furthermore, schools are divided into national quintiles ranging from the poorest school to the least poor school (South African Schools Act 84 of 1996). In 2015, schools in quintile one (the poorest schools) received an allocation of R1116 per learner and in quintile five (the least poor schools) an amount of R183 per learner (Mtshali, 2014). According to paragraph 101 of the NNSF, the provincial Departments of Education must assign to each school a poverty score that will enable them to sort schools from the poorest to least poor. The determination of this score is based on the relative poverty of the community around the school, which in turn depends on the individual or household advantage or disadvantage with regard to income,

wealth and/ or level of education. The poverty score should be based on data collected from the national census conducted by Statistics South Africa (Stats SA). Provincial departments are not allowed to rely on data supplied by the schools themselves (Arendse, 2011).

Another development to address past imbalances in school funding took place in 2006 when the South African Schools Act no 84 of 1996 amended the NNSSF policy for public ordinary and independent schools to include “fee exemptions” and “no-fee” schools (RSA, 2006). Oliphant (2008) defines a no-fee school as a school where parents pay no school fees, since government pays for every child who goes to that school.

## **2.5.2 Learner-related factors**

The South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 mandates learners in secondary schools to take part in decision making as stakeholders through democratically elected school governing bodies (SASA 1996). This places new responsibilities on learners to be hands-on in their education and not just be passive recipients of knowledge from teachers. Learners can now have input on aspects that affect their learning. Factors that are likely to have debilitating effects on teaching and learning which are discussed in the next section include learner discipline, motivation, parental involvement, and study skills.

### **2.5.2.1 Learner discipline**

Learner discipline and learner misconduct are universal problems (Wolhuter & Russo, 2013). In England and Wales, for example, government statistics published showed that the government school inspectors judged pupil behaviour in 18,4% of secondary schools as either satisfactory or inadequate. In 0, 1% of secondary schools, it was judged to be inadequate, the lowest descriptor used by the inspectorate. In China, according to one survey of 527 teachers from 27 elementary schools located in five provinces, about 45% of the teachers reported spending “too

much time” on students’ behavioural problems (Shen, Zhang, Zhang, Richardson & Shetzer, 2009).

An empirical study done by Wolhuter and Van Staden (2008) confirmed that South African educators face a variety of forms of learner misconduct. The majority of teachers face the following forms of misconduct daily: disruptive behaviour, obscene language, impertinence, untidy or incorrect attire, neglect of duty, the telling of lies and absence from school.

South Africa’s situation is compounded by historical realities. The democratisation of the schooling system in line with the new political dispensation which came into effect with freedom in 1994 brought with it emphasis on respect and preservation of children’s rights including the abolition of punitive measures such as corporal punishment (Maphosa & Shumba, 2010). The National Education Policy Act of 1996 stipulates that “no person shall administer corporal punishment or subject a student to psychological or physical abuse at any educational institution” (South Africa, 1996). In Chisholm’s view (2007), this encapsulates the dilemma schools face in trying to respect the law on children’s rights on the one hand and on the other, finding adequate measures to deal with learner indiscipline without tampering with the said rights.

In Zulu, Urbani, Van der Merwe and Van der Walt’s (2004) view, learner indiscipline has a negative impact on teaching and learning. Disruptions of teaching and learning inevitably impact on learner performance in examinations.

#### **2.5.2.2 Learner motivation**

It is not enough for a learner to just be in the class. A learner needs to have motivation to learn. Different authors define motivation differently. For example, Saeed and Zyngier (2012) describe learner motivation as the degree to which a learner puts effort and focuses on learning in order to achieve successful outcomes. This view agrees with Abba (2013) when quoting Hendrikz

(1986) who describes motivation as the process by which teachers make learners to settle down to the task and pay attention to it in such a way that they succeed in achieving the learning objective they have set. In addition, Oladele (2005) defines motivation as a process by which a learner's internal energies are directed towards various goal objects in his/her own environment. Kauchak and Eggen and (2007) describe motivation as a force that energises, sustains and directs behaviour towards a goal.

Based on the above definitions, motivation can be understood as an internal force, energy or drive, which can be aroused by internal or external stimuli (Abba, 2013). It is critical for school management teams and teachers to understand the concept of motivation and its role in enabling an effective teaching and learning process. Motivation consists of two types, that is, *intrinsic motivation* which is the desire to do or achieve something because one truly wants to and takes pleasure or sees value in doing so and *extrinsic motivation* which is the desire to do or achieve something not for enjoyment of the thing itself, but because doing so leads to a certain result (Pintrich, 2003). However, the choice of motivation, either internal or external depends on the learner's personality, age, the learning activity and the context. It is the responsibility of the teacher to ensure that the learners have deep interest in the learning activity.

Motivation affects every aspect of schooling (Usher, 2012). It can affect how learners approach school in general, how they relate to the teachers, how much time and effort they devote to their studies, how much support they seek when they are struggling, and how they perform in examinations (and therefore how the school performs). Therefore, a teacher can be a huge motivating factor in the performance of learners. Williams and Williams (2011) feel that the changing role of teachers, i.e. from being pre-programmed dispensers of knowledge to being managers of learning and the learning environment requires that teachers be empowered to exercise professional judgement in the classroom to attain clearly expressed goals. Teachers

should be provided with training to support them in this expanded role, including more time for peer interaction to share their views on what is effective.

Usher (2012) posits that school-based efforts to improve learner motivation can include targeted intervention programmes that identify learners who are at risk of dropping out or who show other indicators of lagging motivation such as poor attendance or failure to complete assignments.

However, there can be no doubt that motivation is a critical and essential element in the teaching and learning process. It is doubtful there can be any notable achievement without motivation. However, motivation is complex largely because each student's situation is unique and it is very difficult to analyse learners' motives for the things they do. But with much patience and practice, teachers can know the best principle to apply on each learner in every given teaching-learning situation. Most importantly, teachers must cautiously make learning interesting and provide a rationale for uninteresting tasks so as to get learners engaged in learning activities to move towards desired goals (Abba, 2013).

### **2.5.2.3 Parental involvement**

According to Watson, Sanders-Lawson and McNeal (2012), in the United States of America (USA), parental involvement was designed to create a partnership that allowed for greater collaboration between the home and school to improve learner outcomes. The intention was to increase the school's capacity to understand and appreciate values and cultures of families and to be more effective in meeting learner needs. Furthermore, parental involvement in education was seen as important because it added value to the educational development of learners of all ages.

In South Africa, parental involvement in schools is mandated by the South African Schools Act (SASA), Act 108 of 1996. Parents in public schools are expected to guide their schools and help their communities as they ensure that their schools have a symbiotic relationship with the

community. Parents serving in schools' governance do not only help to uphold the country's constitutional values and learners' right to education. They are also there to secure the future of their children and work with school management and teachers to steer the school to success (Msila, 2012).

The role of parents in the education of their children is not only confined to formal structures such as school governing bodies (SGB's). In studies conducted in other parts of the world, researchers have found that parental involvement correlates with positive attitudes towards education, school attendance, readiness in school, behavioural performance and better academic achievement (Kauchak & Eggen, 2011).

There is no doubt that schools need the proximity of parents to fulfil their mandate. The disappointing part is that many do not realise how seriously schools need them and end up staying away. Schools also need to make the parents feel welcome and not alienated.

#### **2.5.2.4 Study skills**

There is no doubt that the volume of knowledge that learners have to master requires possession of specialised learning skills. Psychologists have developed over the years a number of learning techniques which learners can use to enhance learning and performance (Dunlosky, Rawson, Marsh, Nathan & Willingham, 2013). One of these techniques is called elaborative interrogation. This technique focuses on enhancing memory through bringing out facts that are learned by encouraging learners to generate "Why" questions after reading the material. After the question has been generated, learners should try to derive possible answers that define the cause-effect relation between the subject and the predicate. In Dunlosky *et al.*'s (2013) view, this technique enhances learning by supporting the integration of new information with existing prior knowledge.

Another technique that learners can use is self-explanation. This is a domain general constructive activity that engages learners in active learning and ensures that learners attended to the material in a meaningful way while effectively monitoring their evolving understanding. Several key cognitive mechanisms are involved in the process including generating inferences to fill in missing information with prior knowledge, and monitoring and repairing faulty knowledge (Dunlosky *et al.*, 2013).

Summarisation is probably one of the most commonly known and used techniques. Learners often have to learn large amounts of information which requires them to identify what is important and how different ideas connect to one another. One popular technique for accomplishing these goals involves having learners write summaries of texts to be learned..

What is remarkable about the learning strategies is that they seek to get information into learners' minds. However, there is another learning strategy that works the opposite way. Retrieval practice seeks to get information out of students' minds. Agarwal, Roediger, McDaniel and McDermott (2013) assert that through retrieval, which is the art of calling information into mind, memory for that information is strengthened and forgetting is less likely to occur. The advantage of this strategy is that, instead of being used as an assessment tool, retrieval practice can be used as a learning tool to improve learners' understanding and retention of classroom material (Agarwal, *et al.*, 2013).

Having looked at the various learning strategies available, I am left wondering how many teachers actually take time to teach learners methods of retaining the material they teach. Many learners are usually at a loss when studying for examinations. The reality is that success in examinations is not based on the length of time one spends with books but on the quality of time spent using appropriate and effective learning strategies.

A view that emerges from the literature is that learning strategies can be modified to achieve a more specific objective. In a study conducted by Norviewu-Mortty (2012) in some Ghanaian high schools, a school principal played his instructional leadership role through salient teaching and learning enhancing strategies. These were strategies employed by the school in preparing all students to be confident in their final national examinations. These strategies included extra-tutorials, group studies, regular class tests, debates and quizzes, expert tutors and teachers, multiple practice examinations and teacher improvisation for text books, Science and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) equipment.

The multi-pronged approach to examination performance just displayed indicates how a well-planned and thought-out strategy can improve chances of improved learner performance in examinations. I feel that the overall poor performance in NSC examinations by many learners reflects the lack of focused planning and execution in the preparing learners. Therefore, teaching students good learning techniques would ensure that they know how to acquire knowledge, which would lead to improved learning outcomes (Paul, 2013). While Paul's view needs to be supported, the question is: Where does one get the time to teach these strategies? The curriculum today is so congested that there is hardly an inch to deviate from it. This often leaves teachers frustrated when learners cannot satisfactorily grasp what they are trying to teach.

## **2.6 FACTORS EMANATING FROM OUTSIDE THE SCHOOL**

### **2.6.1 Economic factors**

#### **2.6.1.1 Family income**

Household income is a measure of the combined incomes of all people sharing a particular household or place of residence. It includes every form of income, for example, salaries and wages, retirement income, near cash government transfers like food stamps, and investment

gains (Wikipedia.com). But family income can be affected by such factors as unemployment, and change of neighbourhood. In 2014 the unemployment rate in South Africa was officially at 25% (StatsSA, 2015). This means that one-in-four of economically active people were without a job.

The above information is crucial as some researchers have found that family income has an influence on learner achievement. A study conducted in Nigeria by Ushie, Emeka, Ononga and Owolabi (2012) concluded that parents who earned bigger salaries were able to take responsibility for their children's education compared to parents who earned smaller salaries. The former were able to give their children financial and moral support which influenced them psychologically, and this in turn was reflected in their performance at school.

## **2.6.2 Social factors**

### **2.6.2.1 Teenage pregnancy**

Literature indicates that teenage pregnancy is a worldwide phenomenon. Globally, 15 million women under the age of 20 give birth, which represents one-fifth of all births (Dev Raj, Rabi, Amudha, Van Teijlingen & Glyn, 2010). In South Africa, research conducted discovered that by the age of 18 years, more than 30% of girls had given birth at least once (Sibeko, 2012).

Research has led to the conclusion that teenage pregnancy does affect the educational success of most teenage girls in South Africa (Sibeko, 2012). Although a learner is allowed to return to school after the birth of her baby, she is faced with many challenges in trying to cope with the demands of motherhood and schooling at the same time. This is confirmed by Malahlela's (2012:53) study on the effect of teenage pregnancy on the behaviour of learners at secondary schools in the Mankweng, Limpopo Province. The study revealed that teenage pregnancy has a negative or detrimental effect on school attendance, academic performance, emotional behaviour and relationships between pregnant teenagers, their peers and educators.

Another study conducted by Malahlela and Chireshe (2013) confirmed the effects of learner pregnancy when probing the views of teachers who reported that the performance of some learners deteriorates after falling pregnant. The teachers noted that pregnant learners often performed lower than their peers. Reasons such as absenteeism due to pregnancy-related issues, the feeling of tiredness especially when the girl was about to give birth, non-participation in class, the girls generally becoming tired especially during the last trimester of their pregnancy and lack of attention to school work, and low cooperation between the pregnant learners and their teachers.

The effect of learner pregnancy on performance can further be witnessed in the Ilembe District, KwaZulu-Natal, where it was noted that the majority of secondary schools that obtained poor matric results in 2014 had a high pregnancy rate (Independent on Saturday 2015).

## **2.7 TEACHER FACTORS THAT CAN AFFECT PERFORMANCE**

DuFour and Eaker (1998) lament the fact that many schools operate as though their staff know everything they will ever need to know the day they enter the teaching profession. But they opine that a school that operates as a professional learning community recognises that its members must engage in on-going study and constant practice that characterise an organisation committed to continuous improvement. In the next section, continuing professional development (CPD) and teacher academic qualifications, which can be seen as skill enhancing, are discussed first. This leads to classroom management which is followed by teacher absenteeism and lastly, teacher attrition.

### **2.7.1 Continuing Professional Development (CPD)**

Efforts have been made in recent years to enable teachers to improve on their practice in the form of (CPD). The reason is that high quality teaching requires qualified, knowledgeable and skilful teachers throughout their career (Day & Sachs, 2004). The ever evolving world demands

that teachers keep up to the latest available thinking and knowledge or risk becoming irrelevant and their antique knowledge being redundant. This has become even more obvious in a developing country such as South Africa in its efforts to overturn the legacy of the previous apartheid dispensation.

For Day and Sachs (2004), Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is a concept used to describe all activities in which teachers partake during the course of their career whose purpose is meant to enhance their practice. According to the Training and Development Agency (2007), these activities may include professional development meetings, attending internal and external courses and conferences, coaching and mentoring, joining professional development networks, participating in reflective discussions and conducting action research and investigations. According to Guskey (2002), these activities are meant to change teachers' classroom practice and their attitude while enhancing learners learning outcomes. Mizell (2012) further highlights the importance of on-going teacher learning arguing that it models to learners that learning is important and useful. CPD creates a culture of learning throughout the school which enhances learner achievement.

I have in my experience been disappointed by the general apathy shown by teachers towards CPD. They would generally try to avoid workshops as they view them as a waste of time. Some of their reasons are based on the reality that once they get back to their schools the SMT's would simply ignore most of the input gained from attending the workshops.

The other point that highlights the importance of CPD relates to the use of technology in schools. Many schools have been supplied with computers and tablets, and in some, smart boards, by the DBE and private donors. However, much of that technology is not being used as teachers have not been given training in how to use and integrate it to their teaching. Moreover,

SMT's do not provide the space for the technology to be used, for example, by altering the school timetable and providing sitting space for maximum use.

### **2.7.2 Academic qualifications**

There are mixed findings about the effect of teacher academic qualifications on learner academic performance. In a study conducted by Owolobi and Adedayo (2012) in Nigerian secondary schools on the performance of students in Physics, results revealed that students taught by teachers with higher qualifications performed better than those taught by teachers with lower qualifications. The study also showed that students performed better in Physics when taught by professional teachers.

However, a study conducted in Kenya (Musau & Abere, 2015) on the impact of teacher qualifications on students' academic performance in Science, Mathematics and Technology subjects, the findings suggested that teacher qualification and experience does not significantly influence students' academic performance. Students' performance may be improved by other factors such as career growth of the teachers which may lead to teachers' satisfaction resulting in them being more committed to the teaching job.

### **2.7.3 Classroom management**

Falsario, Muyong and Nuevaespana (2014) assert that classroom climate refers to a group of variables working together to promote learning in a comfortable environment in a classroom. Every classroom is unique because there is a wide range of variables that have an impact on the climate in the classroom.

Learners spend a large amount of time sitting in a classroom (Hannah, 2013). The classroom is a place where they learn the various skills and acquire knowledge that is necessary and proper for them to succeed in examinations and in society. Creating a positive classroom environment

is, therefore, an important aspect of effective teaching (Hannah, 2013). The Employment of Educators Act 76 of 1998 stipulates that among the duties of a teacher is to establish a classroom environment which stimulates positive learning and actively engages learners in the learning process.

Mtsweni (2008) opines that management takes place at all levels at an institution like a school. Therefore, teachers are also managers as they have to manage learners and a classroom so that there can be discipline in the school. By creating positive classroom environments, teachers are provided the opportunity for better classroom discipline and management. This point was realised some years ago as I was going past several classrooms on my way to honour one of my daily teaching periods. My attention was drawn to this particular classroom by the noise and commotion emanating from it. I went inside with the intention of enquiring what was going on and to bring some semblance of order into it. I could not believe my eyes as I entered to discover that amidst all the noise and commotion, was a newly appointed teacher trying to conduct a lesson and he was clearly not succeeding!

Hannah (2013) posits that the way in which a teacher organises their class, or how they control it, will result in positive or negative consequences for their learners. If a teacher is unmotivated or negative in approach, there will be a direct impact on the learners within the classroom. By the same token, if the teacher is motivated and positive they will likely have a beneficial impact on their learners as well.

Fraser (2010) suggests a number of ways in which teachers can create positive classroom environments. These include starting the year with high expectations, encouraging learner involvement, making the classroom visually appealing, getting parents involved, and using effective praise and effective feedback.

Parents also have a role to play in the creation of a positive and productive classroom climate. Wilson-Flemming and Wilson-Younger (2012) state that allowing and encouraging parents to be involved within the classroom can help in creating a positive classroom climate. Parental involvement in the classroom and in their child's education are two factors that play an important role in having a successful school year as well as having a positive classroom environment. Blair (2008) asserts that the involvement of parents in the classroom sends a powerful message that what takes place in the classroom is of critical importance. The researcher could not agree more with Blair (2008) as the parent is traditionally regarded as the first teacher. Children tend to model their actions on their parents' behaviour. The message a parent sends, be it positive or negative, has a lasting impression to the child.

#### **2.7.4 Teacher absenteeism**

Education will be a key priority for the next five years. We want our teachers, learners and parents to work with government to turn our schools into thriving centres of excellence. We reiterate our non-negotiable. Teachers should be in school, in class, on time, teaching, with no neglect of duty and no abuse of pupils! The children should be in class, on time, learning, be respectful of their teachers and each other, and do their homework (President Jacob Zuma; State of the Nation Address, 03 June 2009).

The Cambridge International Dictionary of English (1995) defines absenteeism as the act of people not going to work or school when they should. Teacher absenteeism is a serious international concern (UNESCO, 2005). According to Reddy, Prinsloo, Netshitangani, Moletsane, Juan and Van Rensburg (2010), absenteeism leads to loss of instructional time, which in turn affects the learning gains of learners. Therefore, the presence of the teacher in the classroom is of critical importance in producing the envisaged learning outcomes.

Furthermore, Chauke (2014) states that teacher absenteeism in public schools is widely believed to contribute to the underperformance of learners in the schools as it decreases curriculum coverage. The writer gives an example of a study conducted by Carnoy Chisholm in 2012 which found that in the North West Province, South Africa, teachers only taught 52 of the 140 daily lessons scheduled for the year which equals 40% of the lessons. This figure is alarming when compared with 78 in neighbouring Botswana which equals 60% of daily lessons.

In addition, Spaul (2013) quotes a 2010 report commissioned by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) where the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) found that the average teacher in South Africa is away from school or the classroom for between 20 and 24 days a year. The study further revealed that teacher absenteeism varies widely by school quintile, with teacher absenteeism in the poorest 60% of schools being twice as high as in the least poor 20% schools in some provinces. Comment on the issue of teacher absenteeism by the State President indicates that it is a serious government concern.

But, one also needs to mention that teacher absenteeism is a reality that cannot be wished away. All employees, including teachers, are entitled to take leave (Reddy *et al.*, 2010). The general leave measures are set out in the Basic Conditions of Employment Act 75 of 1997 and the Labour Relations Act 66 of 1995. For school based educators, these measures appear in the Personnel Administrative Measures (Government Gazette Vol 404 No 19767). The leave measures relate to health, family and special leave categories. However, the right of teachers to take leave needs to be balanced with learners' right to an education, and one of the conditions to a quality education is that teachers are in school, in class and teaching. Educator leave reduces the amount of contact time that teachers have with learners and can have negative effects on learner performance (Reddy *et al.*, 2010).

### **2.7.5 Teacher attrition**

Cooper and Alvarado (2006) define attrition as leaving teaching altogether, either to take another job outside of teaching, for personal reasons such as to raise a child, health problems, family relocation, and retirement. Literature shows several factors cited as causes for teacher attrition but I will confine the discussion to the impact of this phenomenon on learner performance.

Teacher attrition is a universal problem which is frequently positioned as either a problem for workforce planning and resources, or as an indicator of the relatively poor quality of schooling and teacher morale (Pitsoe, 2013). In the USA, 50% of teachers leave the profession during the first five years of employment (Laurence, 2015). This, according to Borman and Dowling's (2008) view, makes it difficult for schools to attract and develop effective teachers. While well-resourced schools are able to attract good quality teachers, under-resourced and rural schools struggle to do likewise (Laurence, 2015). This leads to learners from poor, low income communities being taught by less experienced, and least effective teachers. The broad consensus among educational researchers is that teacher quality has a larger impact on learner achievement than any other school-related factor (Pitsoe, 2013).

Another consequence of teacher attrition is the likelihood of out-of-field teaching, where teachers teach subjects for which they have not been trained to teach (Pitsoe, 2013). This can result in poor teaching which may hamper students wishing to specialise in those subjects. Teacher morale is affected and there is the likelihood of a public loss of confidence in the teacher and teachers in general.

In addition, attrition creates unplanned instructional and organisational costs which tend to destabilise learning communities and directly affect learning (Ronfeldt, Lankford, Loeb & Wyckoff, 2013). These costs may vary depending on the demographic makeup of a school. An

empirical study conducted by Ronfeldt *et al.* (2013) found that the negative effects of teacher attrition are greater for lower performing and black students than for their higher performing non-black peers.

Furthermore, Simon and Moore-Johnson (2013) assert that attrition destroys the kind of continuity that is needed to build and sustain trustful relationships among teachers, learners, and families. These relationships take time to build and are crucial in forming a sense of community bound by a common mission and an agreed-upon strategy for achieving it. These sustained and stable relationships also allow schools to establish norms for instructional quality, professional conduct, learner behaviour, and parental involvement all which are linked to learner performance.

## **2.8 LEADERSHIP ROLE OF SMTs IN MANAGING LEARNER PERFORMANCE**

There is a widespread belief that the quality of leadership makes a considerable difference to the school and on student outcomes. Schools require effective leaders and managers to provide the best possible education for their learners (Bush, 2007). School management is responsible for curriculum management in a school (Department of Education, 2008). Curriculum management is about managing systems and procedures as well as people to ensure successful learning and teaching and to promote increasing levels of learner achievement in a school (DoE, 2008). Curriculum management is not confined to the principal but is spread to other members of the SMT and in some cases post level 1 educators. Bush and Glover (2009) concur that SMT's should share the overall responsibility for the management of teaching and learning with principals.

As instructional leaders, members of the SMT are responsible for taking the lead in putting their school curriculum into practice and improving it. They are charged with the responsibility of organising activities that support teaching and learning and administering teaching and learning

(DoE, 2008). It is important to look into the role of the principal in leading and managing curriculum matters in a school that will have an impact on the management of specific subjects. The principal has to establish the overall environment conducive to appropriate curriculum management and leadership (DoE, 2008). The principal has to create an environment that enables productive learning. As an instructional leader, the principal plays a crucial role in ensuring that the school's focus is on teaching and learning and that all activities, systems and procedures are aligned around this core function of the school. In this regard, the principal is expected to be directly involved in instructional matters by creating a supportive environment for curriculum delivery and by developing and implementing strategies for successful teaching and learning (DoE, 2008).

But what force can bind the SMT to act in unison for successful teaching to take place? Setlhodi-Mohapi and Lebeloane (2014) assert that shared values can play a critical part in ensuring and forging oneness of purpose and fostering commitment to the course of school achievement. Values can be defined as the principles which one has and which control one's behaviour (Cambridge International Dictionary of English, 1995). The values that the SMT holds should filter down to the whole school community. The researcher has witnessed a scenario where SMT members do not hold common values. Some members would be diligent in honouring their teaching periods while others within the team would not be. In this scenario, post level one teachers in particular tend to take a leaf out of what they witness and follow suit. This makes it difficult to tackle the problem if it exists. However, the impact of the scenario just highlighted can be minimised or even eliminated if the SMT strengthened the use of monitoring mechanisms within the school. Monitoring runs through every level within the school. It is a means by which a school measures the efficiency of its systems.

### **2.8.1 MONITORING**

Cotton (1988) defines monitoring as activities pursued by teachers to keep track of student learning for purposes of making instructional decisions and providing feedback to students on their progress. The author further opines that monitoring learner progress has been identified as a strong predictor of learner achievement.

There are some teacher activities that are associated with monitoring. These include: questioning students during classroom discussions to check their understanding of the material taught; circulating around the classroom during seatwork and engaging in one-to-one contacts with learners about their work; assigning, collecting, and correcting homework, recording completion and dates; conducting periodic reviews with learners to confirm their grasp of learning material and identify gaps in their knowledge and understanding; administering, correcting tests and recording scores; and reviewing student performance data collected and recorded and using these data to make needed adjustments in instruction (Cotton, 1988).

It should, however, be noted that monitoring does not end with the teacher in the classroom. The SMT has an oversight monitoring role of ensuring that teachers perform their expected tasks in terms of curriculum delivery in the classroom.

But on an oversight visit to the 12 education districts in the province in August 2012 to assess progress with regard to implementation of the curriculum in schools, the then MEC for Education in KwaZulu-Natal, Mr E.S. Mchunu made some unexpected discoveries regarding the work of SMTs. For example, SMTs seemed to lack strategy to monitor the implementation of curriculum policy at classroom level. This led to failure to translate the importance of effective teaching and learning into classroom excellence. Secondly, most of the school principals did not play their role of ensuring school functionality. Thirdly, deputy principals did not play their role of ensuring

the functionality of departments. Lastly, heads of department were not effective in ensuring that the subject was fully functional within departments (KZNDoE, 2013).

These were serious weaknesses as most SMTs appeared not frequently walk through classes for observation, conduct curriculum management and delivery meetings and periodically review curriculum-related documents such as exercise books, teacher portfolios, etc. (KZNDoE, 2013). The observations paint a picture of dysfunctionality at schools and are not surprising in view of the final 2014 and 2015 Grade 12 results in the province.

## **2.9 LEADERSHIP STYLES OF MANAGERS OR PRINCIPALS**

Leadership styles are the approaches used to motivate followers. They are selected and adapted to fit organisations, situations, groups, and individuals (Amanchukwu, Stanley & Ololube 2015). The most common six leadership styles are discussed below:

### **2.9.1 Autocratic Leadership Style**

Autocratic leadership is an extreme form of transactional leadership, where the leader has complete power over staff. Team members and staff have little opportunity to make suggestions, even if these are in the best interest of the team or organisation. The benefit of autocratic leadership is that decisions are made quickly, and the work to implement those decisions can begin immediately. However, the drawback of this style of leadership is that the organisation has no shared vision and little motivation beyond coercion. Commitment, creativity and innovation are eliminated (Germano, 2010).

### **2.9.2 Bureaucratic Leadership Style**

Bureaucratic leaders create and rely on policy to meet organisational goals. These leaders follow rules rigorously and ensure that their staffs also follow procedures precisely. They are usually strongly committed to procedures and processes instead of people, and as a result, they

may appear aloof and resistant to change (Germano, 2010). The downside is that leadership's greatest benefit i.e. motivating and developing people, is ignored by bureaucratic leaders. However, this form of leadership can be useful in organisations where employees do routine tasks (Shaefer, 2005).

### **2.9.3 Charismatic Leadership Style**

Charismatic leadership is the most trait-driven leadership style (Germano, 2010). Charismatic leaders have a vision, and a personality that motivates followers to execute it. The commitment and excitement that follows is a huge asset to productivity and goal achievement. The problem with this leadership style is that it is based on the strength of personality. A huge amount of confidence is placed in the leader rather than employees. This can create the risk of a project or even an organisation collapsing if the leader leaves.

### **2.9.4 Democratic/Participative Leadership Style**

Democratic leaders make final decisions, but include team members in the decision-making process. They encourage creativity and team members are often highly engaged in projects and decisions. This leadership style has many benefits. Team members tend to have high job satisfaction and are productive because they are more involved. This style also helps to develop employees' skills. Team members feel part of something larger and meaningful and so are motivated to excel by more than just financial reward. The downside of democratic leadership is that it can falter in situations where efficiency or promptness is essential. During a crisis, for example, a team can waste valuable time gathering input (Germano, 2010).

### **2.9.5 Laissez-Faire Leadership Style**

Laissez-faire leaders abdicate responsibility and avoid making decisions. They may give teams complete freedom to do their work and set their own deadlines. These leaders usually allow

their subordinates the power to make decisions about their work (Chaudhry & Javed, 2012). They provide teams with resources and advice if needed, but otherwise do not get involved. This leadership can be effective if the leader monitors performance and gives feedback to team members regularly. The main advantage of laissez-faire leadership is that allowing team members so much autonomy can lead to high job satisfaction and increased productivity. However, it can be damaging if team members do not manage their time well or do not have the knowledge, skills, or motivation to do their work effectively.

### **2.9.6 Transactional Leadership Style**

This leadership style starts with the idea that team members agree to obey their leader when they accept a job. The transaction usually involves the organisation paying team members in return for their effort and compliance. The leader has a right to punish team members if their work does not meet an appropriate standard. The minimalistic working relationships that result (between staff and managers or leaders) are based on this transaction (effort for pay). The problem with this leadership style is one of sustainability. An organisation may go through lean times when resources are stretched thin and there is nothing left to do a transaction (Germano, 2010).

Based on the foregoing discussion, it is obvious that there is no perfect leadership style. All styles have both positive and negative attributes. That schools are bureaucratic entities by their nature is well known. The state as the custodian of the country's education system sets policies which are transmitted downward to the school level. No deviation from the policies is tolerated along the chain of command. This makes a bureaucratic style of management more suited to a school environment. The government expects a principal to follow processes and procedures rigorously to meet school goals. The principal in turn expects staff to follow rules precisely in the execution of their duties. In this scenario, the principal's job becomes easier as every staff member knows their stand and works accordingly. However, humans are unlike machines.

When humans feel stifled, resentment builds up and may eventually lead to resistance or even open rebellion. This would create conditions that would be detrimental to the learning environment.

It would therefore be ideal to fuse a bureaucratic leadership style with a democratic/participative leadership style. The latter style provides staff with a voice which can result in high productivity and job satisfaction. The reality is that a policy made at national level can prove impossible to implement as a result of failing to consider local dynamics. Thus, consultation, not with the intent of tampering with the policy, becomes necessary. This would ensure that staff has a common understanding of what is expected of them. The staff buy-in would also create ideal conditions for positive teaching and learning performance.

## **2.10 ORGANISATIONAL MANAGEMENT APPROACHES**

There are four main approaches to organization, structure, and management. These are classical, human relations, system, and contingency.

### **2.10.1 Classical Approach**

The classical approach views an organisation in terms of its purpose and formal structure. It places emphasis on the planning of work, the technical requirements of the organisation, principles of management, and the assumption of rational and logical behaviour.

A clear understanding of the purpose of the organisation is seen as essential to understanding how the organisation works and how its methods of working can be improved. Identification of general objectives would lead to the clarification of purposes and responsibilities at all levels of the organisation and to the most effective structure. Attention is given to the division of work, the clear definition of duties and responsibilities, and maintaining specialisation and coordination.

The classical approach puts more emphasis on hierarchy of management and formal organisational relationships (Mullins & Christy, 2011).

### **2.10.2 Human Relations Approach**

The human relations approach seeks to increase production by humanising the work organisation. It strives for a greater understanding of people's psychological and social needs at work as well as improving the process of management. This approach recognises the importance of the informal organisation, which will always be present within the formal structure. This informal organisation will influence the motivation of employees who will view the organisation through the values and attitudes of their colleagues. Their view of the organisation determines their approach to work and the extent of their motivation to work well or otherwise. This approach recognises that people go to work to satisfy a complexity of needs and not simply for monetary reward. It emphasises the importance of the wider social needs of individuals and gives recognition to the work organisation as a social organisation and the importance of the group, group values and norms, in influencing individual behaviour at work (Mullins & Christy, 2011).

### **2.10.3 The Systems Approach**

The systems approach focuses on the total work organisation and the interrelationships of structure and behaviour, and the range of variables within the organisation. The approach encourages managers to view the organisation both as a whole and as part of a larger environment. Any part of an organisation's activities affects all other parts (Mullins & Christy, 2011).

#### **2.10.4 The Contingency Approach**

The contingency approach is based on the belief that the structure of the organisation and its success are dependent upon the nature of tasks with which it is designed to address and the nature of environmental influences. The most appropriate structure and system of management is therefore dependent upon the contingencies of the situation for each particular organisation.

This approach implies that organisation theory should not seek to suggest one best way to structure or manage organisations but should provide insights into the situational and contextual factors which influence management decisions (Mullins & Christy, 2011).

In view of the foregoing discussion, the classical management approach's emphasis on the planning of work and the technical requirements of the organisation lands itself on the school environment. A secondary school's calendar year is approximately 40 weeks. For each day of the week a particular aspect of the curriculum has to be completed. Failure to complete the required tasks may result in knowledge gaps on the part of the learners. This can have a detrimental effect on the performance of the learners. The monitoring role of management is to ensure that all teaching and learning tasks are completed within the allotted timeframes.

In addition, the human relations approach emphasises the human aspect of the organisation. It has been proven that unhappy staffs do not perform to their optimal levels. This may result in unmotivated and demoralised staff resulting in undesired consequences. Therefore, there has to be a balance between a classical management approach and a human relations approach.

However, the contingency approach cannot be ignored as schools as organisations do not exist in isolation but are part of the wider community in which they are situated. This community can consist of cultural, religious, and business groupings. Each of these groupings may have an interest in what takes place at the school. This, therefore, requires that SMT consider them, though not always directly, during their decision-making processes.

## 2.11 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study is underpinned by classical management theories, i.e. administrative and bureaucratic management theories. According to Mahmood, *et al.* (2012), these theories were developed to predict and control behaviour in organisations. Schools are organisations that deal with humans whose behaviour needs to be predicted and controlled.

Classical management theories have salient features. These include the following:

### (a) Chain of Command

In classical management theories, management is distributed in three levels, namely:

- (i) **Top level management:** This level of management is responsible for the development of long-term strategic plans to meet the objectives of organisations (Stoner, Freeman & Danial, 2003). In South Africa, broad policy regarding schooling, along with the education budget, is determined at national level, but implementation remains decentralised to provincial level, with the direct responsibility for the provision and operation of schools falling under nine provincial education departments (DBE, 2013).
- (ii) **Middle level management:** Its responsibilities are to coordinate the activities of supervisors and to formulate policies and plans which are in line with strategic plans of top level management (Stoner, *et al.*, 2003). This level is found in a school setting. School management is responsible for curriculum implementation in line with national and provincial level policies (Employment of Educators Act 76 of 1998).
- (iii) **First level management:** This level of management consists of supervisors. Policies and plans are implemented in this phase. In a school setting, teachers operate at this level (Mahmood, *et al.*, 2012). Through activities such as subject teaching and class management, teachers bring policy determined at national level into reality.

### **(b) Division of Labour**

Complex tasks are broken down into many simple tasks which can be easily performed by workers (Weijrich & Koontz, 1993). This applies to both curricular and extra-curricular activities. Teachers specialise in teaching different subjects per grade. They are also expected to participate in other activities such as sport and recreation (Employment of Educators Act 76 of 1998).

### **(c) Unidirectional Downward Influence**

There is one-way communication in classical management theories. Decisions are made at top level and forwarded downward (Weijrich & Koontz, 1993). The National Department of Education formulates policy which is cascaded down the various administrative levels (DBE, 2013).

### **(d) Autocratic Leadership Style**

In this leadership style, management makes decisions and perform all other functions such as directing, commanding and organising (Weijrich & Koontz, 1993). The SMT has a duty to ensure that the school is managed satisfactorily and in compliance with applicable legislation and regulations as prescribed (Employment of Educators Act 76 of 1998).

### **(e) Predicted Behaviour**

In classical management theories, the behaviour of workers was predicted. If an employee worked according to prediction, his/her service was retained or if not replaced (Shaik, 2008). An educator who is not performing in accordance with the job can have disciplinary measures taken against him/her which can eventually lead to him/her being relieved of duty (Employment of Educators Act 76 of 1998).

## **2.11.1 Administrative Management Theory**

Administrative management theory is a classical management theory developed by Henry Fayol in 1916 (Mahmood *et al.* 2013). The theory is about business management as well as general

management. It also has applicability to schools as the researcher will illustrate below. It has six functions and 14 principles as illustrated below (Onkar, 2009).

**(i) Functions of Administrative Management Theory**

- (a) Forecasting** – It is the process of making predictions of the future based on past and present data and analysis of trends (Cambridge International Dictionary of English 1995). A school struggling with poor Grade 12 results implements a turnaround strategy based on the information it has to improve its results over determined period of time.
- (b) Planning** – Planning is defining a goal and determining the most effective course of action needed to reach that goal (Cambridge International Dictionary of English 1995). The planning function of management controls all the planning that allows the organisation to run smoothly. Towards the end of each year schools formulate plans for the following year. This is normally done after reviewing the current year's activities enquiring if the school achieved its goals.
- (c) Organising** – The organising function of leadership controls the overall structure of the company. The organisational structure is the foundation of a company; without this structure, the day-to-day operation of the business becomes difficult and unsuccessful (Cambridge International Dictionary of English 1995). The organogram serves as the organisational structure of the school. It shows how the school is structured and how the positions are related to each other.
- (d) Commanding** – This refers to the maintenance of authority with somewhat more distributed decision making (Cambridge International Dictionary of International English 1995). The overall authority in the school rests with the principal. But other levels in the school hierarchy possess distributed decision making powers in areas where they are given responsibility. The Head of Department has authority over

teachers in his/her department while the teacher has some authority as a class manager.

**(e) Coordinating** – The coordinating function of leadership controls all organising and planning activity of a company and ensures all activities function together for the good of the organisation (Cambridge International Dictionary of English 1995). The SMT is responsible for the coordinating function in a school. It has to ensure that all school activities are fine-tuned and aligned for proper teaching and learning to take place.

**(f) Monitoring** – This function of management is useful for ensuring all other functions of the organisation are in place and are operating successfully. It involves establishing performance standards and monitoring the output of employees to ensure each employee's performance meets those standards (Cambridge International Dictionary of English 1995). The system of monitoring takes place from the top down the command chain. The principal monitors the work of the heads of department while they monitor the work of teachers. Schools also need to perform the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) throughout the year as an internal quality assurance measure.

**(ii) Principles of Management**

Fayol proposes the following 14 principles (Mahmood *et al.*, 2013):

**(a) Division of work:** Fayol believes that specialisation at work is the best way to use human resources; so, he thinks that work should be divided among individuals and groups to ensure that effort and attention are focused on special portions of the task (Onkar, 2009). At secondary school, level teachers specialise in teaching particular subjects.

**(b) Authority:** In Fayol's theory, authority is the right to give orders and power to exact obedience. Responsibility accompanies authority. When authority is

assigned to anyone, responsibility is also assigned to him/her (Shaik, 2008). The members of the SMT in their various capacities give orders which they expect to be carried out by those they manage.

- (c) Discipline:** Discipline is essential in an organisation. The worker should be fined for ignoring discipline because the success of the organisation requires the common effort of all the workers (Onkar, 2009). Teachers face sanction for failure to comply with departmental directives (Employment of Educators Act 76 of 1998).
- (d) Unity of Command:** An organisation requires unity of command so that workers receive orders from one person (Onkar, 2009). The office of the principal issues a circular to staff even if a decision had been taken jointly in an SMT meeting.
- (e) Unity of Direction:** For an organisation to be successful there should be unity of direction (Shaik, 2008). Staff becomes confused when, for instance, the principal and his/her deputy issue conflicting statements.
- (f) Subordination of Individual Interests to the General Interests:** The interests of the organisation supersede those of the individual (Onkar, 2009). Teachers are expected to go beyond the call of duty in rendering their service. They have to stay longer after school and sometimes over weekends supervising extra-mural activities.
- (g) Remuneration:** Salaries of workers should not be based on productivity but should be based on many variables, such as cost of living, supply of qualified personnel, and success of the business (Onkar, 2009). Teachers' salaries are not based on individual output but on a set of salary ranges which are applicable to a teacher on a specific post level and with a specific Relative Education Qualification Value (REQV) (Employment of Educators Act 76 of 1998).

- (h) Centralisation:** In Fayol's theory, centralisation or decentralisation of management should be opted according to the needs and culture of the organisation. Centralisation is lowering the importance of the subordinate role while decentralisation is increasing the importance of the subordinate role (Onkar, 2009). The complexity of the modern school has necessitated decentralisation of power. Heads of Department can make recommendations on certain aspects of curriculum delivery to the principal. Subject teachers can decide on the best methods to use in their subjects as long as they are within the parameters of accepted practice.
- (i) Scalar Chain:** Organisations should have hierarchies of management. Authority should be assigned to each manager according to the status of the manager in hierarchy. A top level manager should be given most authority and vice versa (Shaik 2008; Onkar, 2009). At school level the principal has the most authority. The principal is followed by the deputy, the HoD's and then teachers in terms of authority.
- (j) Order:** Organisations should operate effectively and efficiently. People and material should be at the right place at the right time (Onkar, 2009). All learning and teaching support material should be at the school before the commencement of the school year. Teachers are expected to be at their work stations seven hours per day five days a week during the school term (Employment of Educators Act 76 of 1998).
- (k) Equity:** All employees should be treated equally. This means that for an organisation to succeed, basic rights, rules and regulations should be the same for all workers (Onkar, 2009). The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa prescribes that all people are equal before the law and should be treated as such (Constitution, 1996).

**(l) Stability of Tenure of Personnel:** Fayol believes that for an organisation to succeed, salaries and other benefits should be given according to length of service in that organisation because for new employees there is cost of recruitment and selection (Onkar, 2009). A teacher is always appointed to the lowest salary position of the salary band applicable to his /her REQV and the post to which he/she is appointed (Employment of Educators Act 76 of 1998).

**(m) Initiative:** For continuous improvement in an organisation, management should encourage worker initiative (Onkar, 2009). Teachers are allowed to make suggestions to management that can help the school to grow.

**(n) Esprit de Corps:** Management should encourage harmony among employees as these increase productivity (Onkar, 2009). Good principals encourage harmony and good relations among staff as this promotes productivity. At my school, for example, members of staff have agreed to contribute a donation towards adverse personal experiences such as death in a fellow staff member's family. Other functions such as year-end parties are also organised.

### **2.11.2 Bureaucratic Theory of Management**

This theory was developed by German sociologist Max Weber (Mahmood *et al.* 2012). According to Weber, bureaucracy is the most efficient form of organisation. The organisation has a well-defined line of authority. Mahmood *et al.* (2012) assert that in Weber's view, organisations should develop comprehensive and detailed standard operating procedures to perform pre-planned tasks.

#### **(i) Principles of Bureaucratic Theory of Management**

Jones and George (2014) provide the following summary of Weber's bureaucratic principles:

- (a)** Managers in a bureaucracy have formal authority which they derive from the positions they hold in the organisation. The DBE gives principals authority, and the principal, in collaboration with the SGB appoints teachers, who in turn are given a certain authority (Van Deventer & Kruger, 2011).
- (b)** Managerial authority is the legitimate power to hold people accountable for their actions and thus provides managers with the legal right to exert direction and control over the behaviour of their subordinates. In a school setting, the principal gives a teacher the authority to carry out the tasks of teaching and learning, and accountability is thus created whereby the staff member assumes responsibility for completing the teaching and learning tasks effectively, and has to answer to the person who delegated the task (Van Deventer & Kruger, 2011).
- (c)** Positions in a bureaucracy should be given to people based on their performance rather than social standing or personal contacts. While in most schools this would be the norm, there have been allegations that in some South African provinces this is not the case. A jobs-for-cash scandal has tainted the basic education sector in that a teacher union is involved in the selling of senior posts (news.iafrica.com 2014).
- (d)** The formal authority and task responsibilities associated with each position in a bureaucracy, and the relationship of that position to other positions in the organisation, should be clearly specified to ensure that – managers and workers – understand exactly what is expected of them and can be held accountable. Schools have a clearly defined organogram that specifies who reports to whom. Furthermore, teacher duties are clearly stated in the relevant legislation (Employment of Educators Act 76 of 1998).
- (e)** Effective exercise of authority in an organisation requires that positions be arranged hierarchically so that everyone knows who to report to and who reports to them. In schools, positions are arranged hierarchically. The principal is the highest authority followed by the deputy principal, the Heads of Department, and the teachers.

(f) Managers must create a well-defined system of rules (i.e., formal written instructions that specify actions that should be taken under different circumstances to achieve specific goals), standard operating procedures (i.e., specific sets of written instructions about how to perform a certain aspect of a task), and norms (i.e., unwritten, informal codes of conduct that govern how people should act) so that they can provide guidelines for effectively controlling behaviour within an organisation and increasing the performance of a bureaucratic system. For every activity that takes place in a school there is policy. There are policies for teachers, learners, sports activities, internal examinations, language, etc. This ensures the smooth running of affairs of the institution.

## **2.12 CONCLUSION**

The focus of this chapter was to review literature on factors that influence learner performance in examinations at secondary schools. It began with an explanation of the concept “performance” in the context of the study. This was followed by an overview of Grade 12 learner performance in KwaZulu-Natal and in Pinetown District between 2010 and 2015. The review continued with a brief historical perspective on South African education which provided a background to the present. Factors influencing learner performance such as location, school culture and funding were discussed. This was followed by learner-related factors. Here, learner discipline, learner motivation, parental involvement, and study skills were discussed.

Factors emanating from outside school then followed. Here, economic and social factors such as family income and teenage pregnancy were discussed respectively. This was followed by teacher factors that affect learner performance. They included continuing professional development, academic qualifications, classroom management, teacher absenteeism, and teacher attrition.

Discussion on the leadership role of school management teams in managing learner performance including monitoring followed. This was followed by a discussion of the leadership styles of managers. These styles were autocratic, bureaucratic, charismatic, democratic participative, laissez faire, and transactional leadership. Moreover, organisational management approaches which include classical, human relations, and systems approaches were also discussed. The chapter ended with a discussion on the theoretical framework underpinning the study.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter focuses on the research approach and the methodology applied in the study. It therefore covers the step-by-step procedures of how the relevant information was sourced, managed and controlled. To fulfil this purpose, a qualitative research approach was considered because this study intend to understand the role of SMT's in managing factors that influence learner academic performance in Grade 12 examinations. Components such as the research approach, data gathering instruments, population and sampling, validity and reliability of instruments and data analysis form part of this chapter. A qualitative research is an interpretive research and as such, matters such as values, ethical issues and permission which are vital to the data collecting process were given attention.

#### **3.2 DEMARCATION OF THE STUDY**

The study was conducted in the Pinetown District in KwaZulu-Natal. Pinetown is located approximately 30kilometres west of Durban. It is the biggest district in terms of size in the province with 164 secondary schools (Dhrurumraj, 2013; DBE, 2015). The district is made up of areas classified as urban and those termed rural. In 2014 the provincial overall matriculation pass rate was 68% which indicated problematic areas in terms of education provision (Daily News, 2015).

#### **3.3 RESEARCH APPROACH**

##### **3.3.1 The qualitative approach as a method of research**

The study was located in the interpretive paradigm as it sought to understand the role of SMT's in managing factors that influence learner academic performance in Grade 12 examinations. Lincoln and Guba (1985) describe interpretive paradigm as a paradigm whereby the researcher

does not aim to predict what people will do, but rather to describe how people make sense of their worlds, and how they make meaning of their particular actions. The purpose was to develop a greater understanding of how people make sense of contexts in which they live and work. Kuada (2012) concurs with Lincoln and Guba when he states that interpretive paradigm emphasises the need to understand how people define situations in which they are involved and the meanings they derive from their experiences. Furthermore, Kuada (2012) reiterates that this paradigm requires the researchers to perceive their actors as engaged in continuous interpretation, meaning creation and sense-making of events and their contexts. Cresswell (2003) says that the researcher tends to rely upon the “participants” views of the situation being studied and recognises the impact on the research of their own background and experiences.

The interpretive paradigm does not generally begin with a theory but it leads to the generation or inductive development of a theory or patterns of meanings (Cresswell, 2003). The approach adopted for this the study was qualitative. According to Nieuwenhuis (2007), “Qualitative research attempts to collect rich descriptive data in respect of a particular phenomenon or context with the intention of developing an understanding of what is being observed or studied. It therefore focuses on how individuals and groups view and understand the world and construct meaning out of their experiences.”

In this study, the researcher was interested in qualitative experiences of SMT’s. The qualitative method was exclusively utilised. The nature of the topic could best be served by this method. Firstly, the topic required that the researcher look at settings and people holistically. A school cannot be reduced to a variable, but needs to be viewed as a whole (Taylor & Bogdan 1984). Furthermore, the school community needed to be studied in the context of its past and the situation in which it finds itself (Taylor & Bogdan 1984). Secondly, this method demanded that the school community be understood from its frame of reference as central to qualitative research, the key was experiencing reality as others experience it (Taylor & Bogdan 1984).

Thirdly, qualitative methods are humanistic. Taylor and Bogdan (1984) assert that when people's words are reduced and acts are reduced to statistical equations, we lose sight of the human side of social life. However, when people are studied qualitatively, we get to know them personally and experience what they experience in their daily struggles in society.

### **3.3.2 The researcher as an instrument of research**

In this qualitative study, the researcher was considered an instrument of data collection (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). This means that data were mediated through this human instrument, as opposed to a questionnaire and machines. The researcher needed to describe relevant aspects of self, including any biases and assumptions, any expectations, and experiences to qualify his/her ability to conduct the research (Greenbank 2003).

Simon (2011) asserts that a good qualitative researcher asks probing questions, then listens, then thinks, then asks more probing questions to get deeper levels of conversation. The researcher seeks to build a picture using ideas and theories from a wide variety of sources. Furthermore, the qualitative researcher, according to Alder and Alder (1994), takes on a variety of member roles when he/she is in a research setting. These roles can range from complete membership of the group being studied (an insider) to complete stranger (an outsider). In this study, the researcher played the role of *observer-as-participant*. This meant the researcher, according to Adler and Adler (1994), observed the participants for extremely brief periods as he attempts to conduct structured interviews.

Sanjari, Bahramnezhad, Fomani, Shoghi and Cheraghi (2014) highlight factors that may act as possible threats during the research process:

- The researcher's mental and other discomfort could pose a threat to the truth value of data obtained from data analyses;
- The researcher not being sufficiently prepared to conduct the field research;

- Not being able to do member checking on findings;
- Conducting inappropriate interviews;
- Not including demographic data in the description of the results;
- The researcher not being able to analyse interviews in depth; and
- Describing the research methodology and research results in a superficial manner.

For the researcher, being an instrument involved identifying, coding, categorising, classifying, and labelling of the primary patterns in the data to determine what is important (Patton, 2002).

### **3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN**

For this particular study, the research design provided a set of guidelines, instructions and prescriptions to follow in addressing the problem under investigation. It served as blueprint or a plan on how the research would be conducted by describing the research sites, how the subjects or participants would be selected, and the data collection procedures with the purpose of anticipating the decisions to be made in order to maximize reliability and credibility of the research findings (Marshall & Rossman 2011). This study used the case design. Denzin and Lincoln (2011) state that, “A case study is an intensive analysis of an individual unit (as a person or community) stressing developmental factors in relation to environment”. Moreover, Rule and John (2011) aver that a case study is a systematic and in-depth investigation of a particular instance in its context in order to generate knowledge. The case investigated in the study involved three secondary schools. In the study, the researcher looked at the case of the managing factors that influence learner performance in Grade 12 NSC examinations at secondary schools. According to Rule and John (2011), a case study allows researcher to examine a particular instance in a great deal of depth, rather than looking at multiple instances superficially. A case study gave the researcher an in-depth understanding of managing factors that influence learner performance in Grade 12 NSC examinations at secondary schools. Two

data collecting tools were used for this study namely; the qualitative interview and document analysis.

### **3.5 POPULATION AND SAMPLING**

In selecting the research sample, the researcher purposely selected three schools that surpassed the 60% overall pass percentage in the last four years since 2012 (2012 – 2015) in the National Senior Certificate (NSC) examination sittings. The schools are located within the township and rural areas of the Pinetown District. According to Rule and John (2011), purposive sampling is where people selected as research participants are deliberately chosen because of their suitability in advancing the purpose of the research. People are therefore selected because of their relevant knowledge, interest and experience in relation to the case. At each school, the principal or deputy, one Head of Department (HoD) and one educator were interviewed. The principal or deputy is responsible for the professional management of the school and better placed to provide an overall view of the existing situation. The HoD is responsible for the management of the curriculum. The teacher is the one in direct contact with the learners through class teaching and better placed to provide first-hand information on the progress of learners. The teachers interviewed had taught Grade 12 within the last three years.

Statistics released by the Pinetown District office (Pinetown District School Pass Rates NSC 2009 to 2014) indicated that there was an on-going pattern of achievement at three secondary schools in the final Grade 12 National Senior Certificate examination. The results of the recent past four years are illustrated in the table 3.1:

**Table 3.1: Pass % of learners in the Grade 12 senior certificate examination**

<b>SCHOOL Pseudo names</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>
Jupiter High - Township	80%	83%	89%	83%
Venus Sec -Rural	83%	94%	75%	94%
Mars High- Rural	82%	73%	82%	68%

Source: (DBE, 2015)

### **3.6 DATA COLLECTION**

As indicated briefly in the previous section 3.4, data were collected by means of semi-structured interviews and document analysis and then the findings were triangulated to increase credibility and trustworthiness. Access to the research sites was important because the data for this research were collected through interacting with the participants by talking to them and recording their responses on audio tapes through their permission.

#### **3.6.1 In-depth interviews**

In-depth interviews were used as the main data source to investigate individual experiences, beliefs and behaviour related to the phenomenon under investigation, which was a review relating to how factors that influence learner performance in Grade 12 NSC examinations at secondary schools are being managed. According to Kuada (2012), the qualitative interview seeks to gain an insight into the lived experiences of the people one is interviewing. Furthermore, it provides the researcher with the opportunity to listen to what the subjects themselves say about issues that are being investigated in their own words. A popular qualitative interviewing technique that was useful in this study is the *critical incident technique*. It allowed the people being interviewed to freely describe their experiences and to unreservedly express their feelings, and to reflect on their experiences while they are talking to the researcher

(Kuada 2012). In this way, the researcher and the participants were able to explore new dimensions in the investigation.

The advantages of using interviews were that they generated a large amount of data. They allowed the researcher to enter the world of the participants in the process of trying to gain understanding of their experiences (Robson 2011) and the researcher was also able to probe for clarity and depth during the interview. The disadvantages of interviews were that transcribing interview data was time consuming and the information gathered may have been biased as it was the perspective of the participants (Cohen 2011).

Each interview was approximately 45 minutes long as the researcher believed this would give sufficient time for each participant to express him/herself adequately. One of the challenges the researcher encountered was the language barrier. Since the study was conducted using the English language, it was envisaged that some participants would prefer an alternative language. To accommodate this IsiZulu was used and translation done thereafter.

### **3.6.2 Document Review**

Document analysis was the second instrument used in this study. The school and SMT's minute books, a sample of class registers, and the teacher attendance register were requested. Minutes books provided insight into what had been discussed during meetings and sometimes shed light on what the school perceived as challenges confronting it. Class registers provided a picture of what learner attendance was like. The teacher attendance register enabled the researcher to determine the extent of teacher presence or absence during school hours.

### **3.7 GAINING ACCESS**

To get access to the research site, permission was sought from the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Department of Education. A form was filled and sent to the relevant office. Once permission had been granted, the researcher sent letters to the schools that have been targeted and then

requested through principals, their participation in the study. All protocols were observed to ensure willing cooperation of the participants.

### **3.8 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

All interviews were recorded using voice recording equipment, namely; a digital voice recorder and alternatively, a computer. One of the systems was used as back-up. Thereafter, information captured through the use of the voice recorder was transcribed into a textual format. This process is supported by Lodico, Spaulding and Voegtler (2010) when they state that the first task in data analysis is to prepare and organise data. This is to ensure that data are in a format that can be easily analysed. The taking of notes was minimised, as, according to Marshall and Rossman (1999), it can intrude on the flow of the interview.

The transcriptions of data were categorised using a coding system. The interview questions and responses were grouped according to the interview questions. Coding is defined by Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000) as the process of translating responses to interview questions to specific groupings for the intention of analyses. Lodico *et al.* (2010) define coding as an inductive process of analysing data including the examination of many small pieces of information and conceptualising a connection between them. These authors claim that a coding system involves identification of different sections of the data that illustrate related phenomena and labelling these parts using broad grouping names. As a result, in analysing data the researcher grouped the responses to each question together and analyse them separately. In addition, the researcher coded the related responses using key terms that were common in the responses. Thereafter, from the coded data, the researcher developed themes in order to scale down the data.

Lodico *et al.* (2010) describe themes as big ideas that combine several codes in a way that allows the researcher to examine sub-questions guiding research. As a result, the themes were developed in contemplation of the key research questions.

The study also made use of document review in generating data. Documents were analysed separately. During this process, all documents were critically examined. The examination was done in order to confirm the reliability and credibility of the documents. According to Punch (2009), analysing documents involves questions such as: How are the documents written? How are they read? Who reads them? For what purpose? On what occasion? With what outcomes? This is in line with Cohen *et al.* (2011) who indicate that there are preliminary issues around ascertaining the authenticity of documents, i.e. verifying the author, place and date of its production. These authors argue that in some cases the documents may have been forged or the authorship in doubt. Only documents produced within the school were utilised. To enhance credibility, the dates in the minutes of the meetings were checked against the notices of the meetings that were issued. This is in line with Cohen *et al.* (2011) who opine that the researcher also needs to take into account the reliability of the document, for example, the credibility of the account of the event.

### **3.9 TRUSTWORTHINESS**

#### **3.9.1 Credibility**

Shenton (2004) defines credibility as the investigator's attempt to demonstrate that a true picture of the phenomenon under scrutiny is being presented. First, in this study, well-established research methods were adopted. For example, the line of questioning in the data gathering sessions and the methods of data analysis were derived from studies that have been successfully utilised in previous comparative studies (Shenton, 2004). Second, triangulation was used by involving a wide range of informants. Most importantly, individual viewpoints and experiences were verified against others so that a rich picture of the attitudes needs or behaviour of those under scrutiny could be constructed based on the contributions of a range of people (Shenton, 2004). Third, tactics to help ensure honesty in informants when contributing data were employed. Furthermore, each person who was approached was given an opportunity

to refuse to participate in the project to ensure that the data collection sessions involve only those who were genuinely willing to take part and were prepared to offer data freely (Shenton, 2003). Participants were encouraged to be frank from the outset of each session, with the researcher aiming to establish a rapport in the opening moments and indicating that there were no right answers to the questions that were asked. Fourth, member checks were employed. This process involved checking the accuracy of the information captured with the participants themselves. Informants were asked to read any transcripts of dialogues in which they had participated (Shenton, 2004).

### **3.9.2 Transferability**

Lincoln and Guba (1985) describe transferability as provision of sufficient detail of the context of the fieldwork for a reader to be able to decide whether the prevailing environment is similar to another situation with which he or she is familiar and whether the findings can, justifiably be applied to the other setting. To ensure transferability, thick descriptions were used. This refers to the detailed account of field experiences in which the researcher makes explicit the patterns of cultural and social relationships and put them in contexts (Holloway 1997).

### **3.9.3 Dependability**

To address dependability, the processes within the study are reported in detail. This will enable a future researcher to repeat the work if not necessarily to get the same result. Furthermore, this in-depth coverage allowed the reader to assess the extent to which proper research practices have been followed.

According to Shenton (2004), the study has sections devoted to:

- The research design and its implementation, describing what was planned and executed on a strategic level;
- The operational detail of data gathering, addressing the small details of what was done in the field; and

- Reflective appraisal of the project, evaluating the effectiveness of the process of inquiry undertaken.

#### **3.9.4 Confirmability**

Confirmability is the researcher's taking of steps to demonstrate that findings that emerge are from the data and not his/her own (Shenton, 2004). To this end, beliefs underpinning decisions made and methods adopted were acknowledged within the research report, the reasons for favouring one approach when others could have been taken are explained and weaknesses in the techniques actually employed admitted. Triangulation of sources, which is examining the consistency of different data sources from within the same method, was used.

#### **3.10 RESEARCH ETHICS/ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

In terms of ethics, the researcher must respect the autonomy of all the people participating in the research (Blanche, Durrheim & Painter 1999). The principals of the sampled secondary schools were informed that information obtained from the research participants would not be revealed to any organisation, person or any other source. They were given assurance that their names and the names of their schools were anonymous and only pseudonyms were used. In addition, the participants were asked to respect the confidentiality of the other participants. The research participants were not coerced into participating in the research and this was emphasised in the permission letters. The letters indicated dates, time and venues of the interviews. Informed consent was obtained from the participants before the commencement of the interviews to ensure they understood the possible consequences of their participation. Participants had a right to withdraw at any time of the study and they were informed that there would be no consequences for doing so. Participants were granted an opportunity to read the transcripts of the interviews to ensure they related to what will be said during the interviewing sessions. This ensures openness and justice to the participants.

The other principle that was observed was the principle of non-maleficence. Blanche *et al.* (1999) point out that the researcher should do no harm either physical, emotional or other harm to any participant. Therefore, in the study the researcher endeavoured to work within the parameters of the research problem and not harm the participants. Furthermore, the principle of beneficence was observed. This research was to be of social benefit even though the participants might not directly benefit from participating. The participants were informed about the value of the study.

### **3.11 CONCLUSION**

In this chapter, the researcher explained and described the research design, selection of the research approach, site selection, sampling, data gathering and data analysis strategies. Ethical issues were also carefully discussed and stringent rules governing this aspect of research were followed throughout the whole process of the study. The results of the research are presented in the following chapter.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the findings of the study based on the interviews and document review conducted by the researcher in three purposely selected township and rural secondary schools in the Pinetown District, KwaZulu-Natal. Responses were obtained based on the questions which sought to find how the three schools manage the factors that influence learner academic performance in Grade 12 NSC examinations. These schools have managed to obtain well-above 60% pass rates between 2010 and 2015 in the NSC examination. In each school the principal, a HoD, and a Grade 12 teacher were interviewed.

Participants for each school included the principal, the HoD, and the educator. The three schools are given the pseudonyms, namely; Jupiter Secondary, Venus High, and Mars High.

#### 4.2 DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

During the interviews with the participants (the principals, the HoDs, and educators), relevant information was collected through an interview schedule. All the participants received the same set of questions to answer. The views of the respondents are provided with italics which serve as evidence. Findings are presented followed by a discussion. In the discussion, the review of literature and theoretical framework from Chapter 2 are integrated since they influence the study. Holliday (2007) attests that the discussion has three elements. The first element is the argument, which the researcher perceives as a major driving force of the data discussion. The second element is the data extracts (verbatim quotes) from the body which when strategically deployed provide evidence to support the argument. The last element is the discursive

commentary which tells the reader which portions of the data extracts are significant and why, showing the reader how they provide specific evidence to support the argument.

The main research question was: **How do school management teams (SMT) manage factors that influence learner academic performance in Grade 12 National Senior Certificate examinations?**

The following were the research sub-questions:

- How does the SMT perceive its role in the management of the curriculum?
- How does the SMT perceive its role in the management of learners and their learning?
- How does the SMT perceive its role in the management of external factors?
- What recommendations can be made based on the literature review and the findings of the empirical study to improve the management of factors influencing learner performance in Grade 12 NSC examinations in secondary schools?

Data is hereby presented under the sub-questions:

#### **4.2.1 How does the school management team (SMT) perceive its role in the management of the curriculum?**

Both the principals of Jupiter Secondary and Mars High stressed the importance of teacher dedication as one of the reasons for their successful learner performance. In both schools, this was evidenced by teachers conducting extra lessons on weekdays, weekends and during holidays. Also, at Jupiter Secondary the principal has the prerogative of deciding which teacher is placed in Grade 12. This is what she said:

*“...when learners get to Grade 12 I have ensured that only people I have observed over the years who are hard workers, people who are prepared to go the extra mile without you pushing them, those are the people I deploy to Grade 12...”*

Furthermore, the Jupiter Secondary' principal cited the option of replacing Grade 12 teachers who were not performing during the term as a strategy the school uses. While the strategy has been unpopular, in her opinion, it has worked for the school. In her words:

*“So, every time I have taken a drastic decision. Come March when we have our first quarterly tests and I see that your performance is not what we expect, I don't hustle. I don't think twice about changing teachers at the beginning of the year.”*

The Jupiter Secondary HoD cited the strategy of not changing the team that teaches Grade 12 as the one they use. Rotating teachers was stopped because it resulted in inconsistency of the school's results. She said:

*“If teacher is producing good results, why take that person out of Grade 12? Why change something that is working? So we work like that.”*

The principal of Mars High attributed their success to learner motivation.

Venus High attributes their success to a school culture that is ingrained in the learners when they join the school at Grade 8. His sentiments are echoed in the following excerpt:

*“We try by all means to lay a good foundation in the lower grades i.e. grades 8, 9, 10, and 11 up until such time that our learners arrive in Grade12.”*

He further added:

*“There are certain things that learners need to know when they are at school...there is a way in which we do things. For example, we start early. We don't do that with the Grade 12s only but we start at 06h30 with all the grades.”*

The principal of Venus High also mentioned networking with other schools as a tool that they use to enhance the success of their learners. Their school works hand in hand with other

neighbouring schools; for example, in the formation of cluster committees and in the setting of common tests.

Both the HoDs of Jupiter Secondary and Venus High attributed learner performance to teamwork mainly among Grade 12 educators. Teamwork enables the teachers to assist each other if there is a need. Jupiter Secondary also highlighted monitoring as a tool they use to track their progress. In the words of the HoDs:

*“We have monitoring tools for the work of educators. Even monitoring late coming, absenteeism, that is the main issue for the high failure rate in Grade 12 when learners are always absent from school.”*

The HoDs of Mars and Venus High respectively confirmed what was mentioned by their principals in terms of holding of extra classes as one of the reasons they attribute to good learner performance.

Both HoDs of Mars and Venus High respectively mentioned curriculum coverage as a tool to prepare learners for Grade 12 examinations. In the words of the Mars High HoD, “...*they are able to ensure that curriculum coverage is done at its best*” while the Venus High HoD said, “*They work hard in such a way that they cover all the curriculum that is expected for Grade 12.*”

Educators at the three schools all highlighted the extra classes that are conducted as one of the main reasons for their success. For the Jupiter Secondary educator, weekend classes enable him to pay extra attention to learners’ needs than it is possible during normal teaching hours:

*“That is an interactive way of enabling the learners to ask questions that they would not ordinarily ask in a classroom situation because there is a timer and you do not have enough time to look at all the aspects that you need to do in a classroom environment...”*

The Venus High educator highlighted another element called team teaching where every teacher is involved in teaching Grade 12. In her words:

*“It is not just a specific team that is teaching Grade 12 only, but every teacher is contributing in teaching Grade 12.”*

This contrasts with the practice at Jupiter Secondary, as mentioned by its principal, where there is a specific team dedicated to Grade 12. What also emerges from the interviews is that every member of the staff needs to play their part in order to achieve success. Venus High further subdivides a subject by allocating more teachers (team teaching) to it especially when a subject is multidimensional. That ensures that teachers specialise on an aspect of the subject which leads to better insight on the part of the learners.

The principal of Jupiter Secondary said:

*“For a school to do well, for teachers to be motivated to do well, learners to be motivated to study hard, they need a good team that is running the school.”*

The Venus High principal stressed the importance of management leading by example. In his words:

*“When teachers want to go the extra mile, the management of the school itself must go the extra mile so that the teachers can be able to learn something or the management of the school becomes a role model as to what is it that needs to be done.”*

The Mars High principal said:

*“The role of school management is about effective leadership.”*

In her opinion effective leadership means that as management they should be at the forefront of all efforts meant to ensure the smooth running of the school. To her, effective leadership is ensuring that:

*“All the systems that we use are intact, for instance, the policies, we keep on reviewing them”*  
She further added that: *“The administrative things such as paperwork, we ensure that even though we are a poor school, everything related to paper is here, the inks are available, the machines are working...”*

To expand on this point, the Jupiter Secondary principal also stresses the importance of having systems and putting mechanisms in place:

*“Early in the year at the beginning of Term One we have our management plan for the whole year in place and they know what to do and we keep on tracking them in between because giving them a year plan is not enough.”*

The Jupiter Secondary HoD thought that it was important for management to become fully involved in teaching so as not to lose touch with what teachers are experiencing. If the management, especially the principal is involved in teaching, she said:

*“That gives teachers support because if, for instance, a learner is problematic, the principal, like ours who teaches Grade 12, would know the learner personally and be able to offer support when things get tough.”*

At Mars High the principal cited staff development as a key. Teachers engage in on-going re-skilling which helps them to be up to date with the latest developments. She said:

*“If there are workshops teachers attend them. They don’t miss any workshop, either organised by the Head of Department [HoD] or the Department of Education or the cluster group. We ensure that they attend those workshops.”*

Furthermore, support for teachers from management was highlighted by the Venus High HoD. She found their school management fulfilling the role adequately:

*“We do have class visits where they supervise and monitor teachers’ work. When they find that there are some challenges that teachers are experiencing, they go all out in trying to get experts from outside to come and assist those teachers in areas where there are challenges.”*

Moreover, the Mars HoD said:

*“They also ensure that resources that teachers need will be acquired by the school and are readily available.”*

The Venus High school teacher emphasised material support given to teachers especially when teachers use their own time for school activities. The teacher said:

*“For example, during winter classes, they (management) finance the teachers with petrol money so that they can travel from home to here because it is the holidays.”*

For both Mars High and Venus High school HoDs, management’s role is to ensure curriculum coverage in all subjects, ensuring that the number of tasks and activities that are supposed to be covered each term have been accomplished.

The SMT needs to ensure of the availability of support material for teaching. The sentiment expressed by the Venus High School HoD on the material support given to the teachers by management is in line with one of the 14 principles of administrative management theory, which is Order (Mahmood *et al.*, 2012). This principle says organisations should operate effectively and efficiently. This means people and material should be at the right place at the right time (Onkar, 2009). In an educational setting all learning and teaching support material should be at the school before the commencement of the school year.

All three principals affirmed the important role of management in ensuring success. This resonates with Bush's (2007) assertion that schools require effective leaders and managers to provide the best possible education for their learners. One aspect function of management is planning. This ensures that school activities can be given space to take place. The management plans laid down by the SMT enable the schools to continually track their progress.

The above confirms the fact that school management is responsible for curriculum management in a school (DoE 2008). The management of the curriculum is usually incorporated into the school's year plan. Before the beginning of the year, a year plan is drawn. When perusing through the minutes of the SMTs of Jupiter Secondary and Venus High, the researcher came upon evidence of its existence. In at least two successive meetings, a review of progress based on the year plan was mentioned. This further confirms the leadership role of management which is about managing systems and procedures as well as people to ensure successful learning and teaching and to promote increasing levels of learner achievement in a school. This also an example of two of the salient features of classical management theories (Mahmood *et al* 2012). The first is Chain of Command. This is about the role of middle level management. Its responsibilities are to coordinate the activities of supervisors and to formulate policies and plans which are in line with the strategic plans of top management (Stoner *et al* 2003). The second feature is Unidirectional Downward Influence. There is one-way communication in classical management theories. Decisions are made at top level and forwarded downward (Weijrich & Koonz 1993). At these two schools, the management is seen formulating plans thereafter cascading them downward to the teachers.

From the principals' responses it is clear that judicious use of available time helps the schools to succeed. Extra time includes morning and afternoon, weekend and sometimes, holiday classes. Time wasting is avoided to ensure that the curriculum is completed. What also emerges is that

many schools make the mistake of putting more focus on Grade 12 while forgetting to lay a good foundation in the lower grades.

HoDs play a crucial role in ensuring that teaching and learning does take place in the classrooms. As subject specialists they offer guidance and support to the teachers while seeing to it that departmental guidelines are observed.

Monitoring is an important aspect of the leadership role of HoDs. The success experienced by the three secondary schools can be traced back to careful monitoring of school activities around teaching and learning. This is in contrast to a finding made by the then MEC for Education in KwaZulu-Natal, Mr E.S. Mchunu. After visiting some schools, the MEC noted that some SMTs, among other things, lacked strategy to monitor the implementation of the curriculum policy at classroom level which led to failure to translate the importance of effective teaching and learning into classroom excellence (KZNDoe, 2013).

Monitoring teacher output enables the Jupiter Secondary principal to review the Grade 12 postings of teachers who are not performing. This indicates one of the noticeable features of classical management theories called predicted behaviour. In these theories, the behaviour of workers was predicted. If an employee worked according to prediction, his/her service was retained or if not replaced (Shaik, 2008).

The testimonies given by the teachers give credence to the statements made by the principals and the HoDs. Evidence of cooperation between the parties is obvious when teachers feel that they are given adequate support to perform their tasks by the SMT. This is credible evidence as all the participants were interviewed separately.

#### **4.2.2 How does the SMT perceive its role in the management of learners and their learning?**

The three principals seemingly agree that teacher and learner behaviour has an impact on teaching and learning. The manner in which a teacher conducts him/herself in the classroom influences the response from the learners in the classroom.

The Jupiter Secondary principal gave an example of a class with a good teacher:

*“When walking around, in a classroom where there is a good teacher who manages the subject and the class very well, learners are paying attention, learners are working, when the teacher is talking the learners are paying attention, even when the teacher is not talking they are doing something and the teacher is walking around checking their work, it’s quiet.”*

What happens when a teacher knows his/her subject matter well, but the results are not forthcoming? This was the scenario painted by the Mars High principal who recounted the story of a teacher who fitted the description. This is what she said:

*“When the school was faced with the situation, the HoD held a one-on-one meeting with the teacher to discuss the matter. It emerged that due to the big class size, the teacher was having trouble managing it. Through the school’s staff development programme the teacher was empowered with classroom management skills to see if there could be any improvement. After the intervention the teacher managed to obtain a 67% pass in Mathematics for the first time in 2014.”*

The Mars High principal cited the motivation of learners as important to success. She said:

*“I think it is the learners’ intrinsic motivation because they are always motivated by the previous performance of the previous Grade 12.”*

The Venus High principal emphasised the importance of the teacher coming into the classroom well prepared. He said:

*“The teacher should use his/her intimate knowledge of the learners to structure lesson plans that accommodate the different types of learners and furthermore, make the learners part of the lessons.”*

The Venus High principal further emphasised the laying down of rules to facilitate successful teaching and learning. In his words:

*“I think it is also important to together lay down some rules as to what kind of interaction is acceptable in the classroom, what kind of interaction is going to be an impediment in your teaching.”*

The HoD also praised the role played by the Representative Council of Learners (RCL) in the creation of a positive school climate that promotes teaching and learning. She said:

*“The members of the RCL are playing a big role. They interact with the learners. They hold meetings with the learners in the absence of the teachers. They are respected by their fellow learners.”*

The Mars High HoD thought it was important for teachers to become role models as learners look up to them. Lack of discipline on the part of the teacher leads to lack of discipline in the classroom. She said:

*“So I think at all times teachers should model the way. From the very minute they enter the school premises, learners should actually see how the teachers conduct themselves, in class, attending lessons, honouring periods, learners see that this educator is dedicated to his/her job hence they also do likewise.”*

The Venus HoD mentioned that at her school teacher absenteeism was not a serious issue. In her words:

*“When the principal makes an analysis of teacher presence, we are always 80% and above which means that teacher attendance is very good.”*

The Venus High HoD stated that it was important for teachers to be punctual when it came to teaching and learning. This contributed immensely to learner discipline in the classroom. In her words:

*“Teachers here go into their classes on time. They do all that is expected of them. Teachers also give learners activities which they mark and give learners feedback on time.”*

The teachers of Jupiter Secondary and Venus High felt that teacher dedication and passion for the job were key factors that contributed to effective teaching and learning. This was crucial because learners looked up to the teachers. It was important for teachers in all grades to attend to their classes diligently. The Jupiter Secondary teacher said:

*“We do not have teachers who always have to be reminded by the SMT to go and attend to their classes. It’s a norm that I found here that whenever it is your time to go to class you always go to class.”*

Reinforcing the point, the Venus High teacher said of the teachers:

*“They don’t always need the principal to run behind them chasing them for their work. They are self-driven and self-motivated. That contributes a lot to the performance of the learners.”*

The Mars High teacher praised the discipline showed by their Grade 12 learners. She said:

*“If you give them activities and assignments, they do them. I think that helps them succeed in their studies.”*

The Jupiter Secondary teacher highlighted the role played by management in helping the teachers fulfil their tasks. The management at the school has introduced initiatives that, for example, minimise learner movement during teaching time:

*“One of them is called Operation Don’t Follow Me. Whenever a teacher leaves the classroom, the learners have to remain inside the classroom until the next teacher comes so that the other teacher can continue teaching and there is that transition.”*

Another initiative by management controls loitering during lessons. About this the teacher said:

*“Whenever somebody is supposed to go out, we have designed a pass out; it’s a card that each learner is given so that they can go out and come back within the shortest possible time. We do not allow another learner to go out before the other one comes so that we minimise the disturbances in the teaching learning and processes.”*

At Jupiter Secondary the teacher cited cooperation that exists between the teachers and the learners as a contributing factor. This cooperation is based on sacrifice and commitment from both parties. This has resulted in learners becoming responsible for their own success. The teacher said:

*“We have cultivated a culture in our learners to meet the teachers halfway by making sure that we teach them that this is their own life. They have to take responsibility for the kind of results they are going to produce at the end of the year.”*

The Jupiter Secondary HoD highlighted the important role played by the class managers in ensuring that classrooms are centres of teaching and learning. She said:

*“Class managers do monitor the classrooms to ensure they are swept daily and that learners know the rules of the class.”*

Looking closely at the comments made by members of the SMT and the Grade 12 teachers, it is apparent that management needs to put efforts towards managing learning. The conduct of the teacher is at the centre of successful learning. The exemplary manner in which the teacher carries his/her duties sets the tone. Punctuality, being well-prepared for lessons and constant presence at school provide the learners with a model of behaviour learners can attempt to emulate. The researcher has to concur with the Venus HoD on the rate of teacher presence. When the researcher was conducting a document review through the time book, he can confirm that over monthly periodic intervals during 2015, teacher presence was indeed above 80%.

For successful teaching and learning to take place, a classroom has to be managed properly. A well-managed classroom with rules everyone abides by, provides a stimulating environment where hunger to learn is of paramount importance.

Management also needs to be innovative in creating an environment which is conducive to learning. The efforts by Jupiter Secondary to control learner movement during lessons indicate a classical approach to management. Some of its principles are a clear understanding of the purpose of the organisation and an understanding of how it works and how its method of working can be improved (Mullins & Christy, 2011). By devising controlling mechanisms management indicates an appreciation of the disruptive effect of learner movement during lessons and its effect on learner performance.

This resonates with Falsario, *et al.* (2013) assertion that classroom climate refers to a group of variables working together to promote learning in a comfortable environment in a classroom. They further add that every classroom is unique because of the wide range of variables that have an impact on the climate in the classroom.

The above further confirms Mtsweni (2008) that management takes place at all levels at an institution like a school. Teachers are also managers as they have to manage learners and a classroom so that there can be discipline in the school.

The above is in line with one of the principles of bureaucratic theory of management (Mahmood *et al.*, 2012) which postulates that managers must create a well-defined system of rules. These could be formal written instructions that specify actions that should be taken under different circumstances to achieve specific goals. These could also be standard operating procedures which are specific sets of instructions about how to perform a certain aspect of a task (Jones & George, 2014).

Furthermore, in terms of the Employment of Educators Act 76 of 1998 among the duties of a teacher is the establishment of a classroom environment which stimulates positive learning and actively engages learners in the learning process (DoE, 1998).

Learners need to be motivated to succeed. Oladele (2005) defines motivation as a process by which a learner's internal energies are directed towards various goal objects in his/her own environment.

Motivated teachers also contribute immensely to the success of a school. They know what is expected of them. They do not require management to prompt them to attend to their teaching duties. The key challenge in many schools is how to get teachers self-motivated.

The Venus High HoD also mentioned the issue of teacher absenteeism. Teacher absenteeism is a serious international concern which, according to Reddy, *et al.* (2010) leads to loss of instructional time, which in turn affects the learning gains of learners. Furthermore, Chauke (2014) posits that teacher absenteeism in public schools is widely believed to contribute to the underperformance of learners in the schools as it decreases curriculum coverage.

The value of continuing education is also not lost on the schools and it helps them to stay abreast of the latest developments. When workshops have been organised, the teachers attend them. This is an example of continuing professional development (CPD). According to Day and Sachs (2004), CPD is a concept used to describe all activities in which teachers take part during the course of their career whose purpose is meant to enhance their practice.

#### **4.2.3 How does the SMT perceive its role in the management of external factors?**

The principals of the three schools each gave a different reason as a response. The Jupiter Secondary principal attributed their learner performance to a combination of good Grade 12 teachers and vigorous motivation given to the learners. She added the element of parental support which in her words, grows when learners reach Grade 12:

*“So, it’s that combination and some of the parents who do support us, especially in Grade 12, as parents do change their attitudes and start taking more interest in the education of their children that makes us able to overcome the challenges.”*

The Mars High principal cited wise use of available resources as key. As a no-fee-school, which receives all funding from the DBE, it was crucial for the school to source additional funds as those they received were insufficient:

*“We ask for donations from parents. Sometimes they donate R50. Sometimes we do fundraising to buy our materials. Even the teachers become donors sometimes.”*

The school also has a programme called Adopt-a-Child where each teacher adopts a learner:

*“Then we take care of the physical and emotional needs of the child. This strategy is applicable only to Grades 11 and 12 and not the entire school.”*

At Venus High, apart from starting early, learners are kept at school a bit longer to enable them to do homework, for example. This is what the principal said:

*“We try as much as possible to be with them so that they can be able to study or even do some of the homework while they are still here.”*

The above point is particularly important as some learners’ home conditions *are not*, in the words of the Venus High principal, *“conducive to studying.”*

It is important for a school to know what works for it, based on its circumstances, and implement it. Understanding learners’ backgrounds and adapting solutions to the problems at hand allows these schools to achieve a level of success that seems to elude many.

Both Mars High and Venus High HoDs cited the cooperation between the school and the parents as a factor that enables them to perform better than other schools. In the words of the Mars High HoD:

*“We work very closely with our school governing body [SGB] structure and other structures in the community in ensuring that the school environment is conducive to learning. Now and again they visit the school to ensure that.”*

The HoD further added that the parents’ financial position did not deter them from taking part in the school:

*“I think that their support, although they are poor, in ensuring that learning takes place, helps the school in a big way.”*

The Venus High HoD had this to say:

*“I think it’s the passion the teachers have together with parental involvement in our school. Parents come in big numbers at our meetings.”*

At Jupiter Secondary, the teachers play a parental role to the learners to offset the impact of poverty. In the words of the HoD:

*“We also interact with the learners; try to be mothers and fathers to them because most of them don’t have parents in their homes.”* She further added:

*“We just give them maybe shoes, uniforms, to help them because poverty leads to crime.”*

The commitment of stakeholders to learner success is evident at these schools. While it is impossible to fulfil every need, the little that the schools can offer has a positive effect on learner performance.

The three teachers provided different responses to this question. At Jupiter Secondary, the teacher cited cooperation that exists between the teachers and the learners as a contributing factor. This cooperation is based on sacrifice from both parties. This has resulted in learners becoming responsible for their own success. The teacher said:

*“We have cultivated a culture in our learners to meet the teachers halfway by making sure that we teach them that this is their own life. They have to take account of the kind of results that they are going to produce at the end of the year.”*

At Mars High, the teacher reiterated the dedication of the teachers to their tasks and the teamwork that exists among them as an important factor. She said:

*“I think again it is the dedication of the teachers who always work as a team.”*

At Venus High, the teacher stated that as a school, they have invited former learners to come and address the current ones. In this way, the current learners would be able to draw inspiration from those who have gone on succeed. In the words of the teacher:

*“I think our learners are looking up to them. By so doing our learners are able to see that the background does not mean anything because even if they come from a poor background, they can be able to do well in their studies.”*

The importance of making learners take responsibility for their learning cannot be overstated. Learners need to be made to understand that they are not at school to please their teachers or/and their parents, but to shape their futures.

All three school principals agreed that poverty and learner pregnancy affect their schools and do have an impact on learner performance. The Jupiter Secondary principal said:

*“From past experience, even learners who are gifted aiming to get good results, when they fall pregnant, their results go down.”*

She further added:

*“Because of the stress of managing their lives, private lives now that there is this complication, they are not yet ready to start families; it creates quite a number of problems. It has affected our results.”*

Poverty also affects learners at Jupiter High. Sometimes there is some learning material the school requires that is not supplied by the DBE. The principal said:

*“Sometimes you want parents to get additional material to support what you are doing in class, additional support that the school cannot afford, but if parents can assist by getting that, but because of the poor home situation, you know you are not going to get it.”*

The Venus High principal asserted that though poverty and teenage pregnancy exist, they did not allow them to affect the school. They have devised ways to manage those factors.

All three HoDs agreed that poverty affects them to a large extent. According to the Jupiter Secondary HoD most of their learners are orphans. In her words:

*“We are dealing with orphans in such a way that they don't have ball pens most of them.”*

At Mars High, the HoD said that learner pregnancy was still a challenge at their school. In her words:

*“You find that a learner will be pregnant even in Grade 12. You tend to question how seriously they take their education.”*

At Venus High, the HoD said this about learner pregnancy:

*“Learner pregnancy affects us because learners drop out during the year and then come back. When they return the learner is far behind the others and needs special assistance.”*

All three teachers agreed that poverty, unemployment and learner pregnancy affect them as schools. At Jupiter Secondary which is in a township, most parents work in the nearby industrial area. According to the teacher: *“There is no job security.”* They can lose their jobs at any time. He stated further:

*“So you find that the levels of concentration for the learner would be low because he/she is learning on an empty stomach.”*

On learner pregnancy the teacher felt it lead to learners not attending school regularly. He said: *“Those that fall pregnant are still given a chance to come back to school and they have this challenge of not attending school regularly because they have to attend to their maternal obligations at some point.”*

The Jupiter Secondary principal stated that, as a school, they were trying their best to deal with the situation. She gave the example of the challenge faced by the science teachers since the school does not have a fully-fledged laboratory. The school only has mobile kits that are supplied by the DBE. Due to financial constraints, the school cannot afford to transport learners to a bigger laboratory somewhere in the district. Science teachers have developed a strategy of

using weekends to do experiments with the learners to counter the lack of proper facilities within the school premises. She said:

*“What the science teachers normally do is, during weekends they dedicate weekends to experimentation. That is when learners would come on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays for the experiments so that using the small facilities that are available, you try and engage as many of them as possible.”*

The principals of Mars High and Venus High praised the School Nutrition Programme for ensuring that each learner is able to receive a meal each day. The schools also have an NGO that supports them with items such as school uniforms and shoes for destitute learners. Both schools are no-fee schools which helps alleviate the burden from the parents. In her words:

*“Before we were catered for with sanitary towels, girls used to absent themselves because they could not afford to buy them. But now that we are supplied, we no longer have that problem.”*

Mars High no longer has a serious teenage pregnancy problem anymore. This is as a result of collaboration between the school and the local clinic which sends its nurses to the school for sexuality education. The principal also felt that the subject Life Orientation has made a difference in lowering the rate of teenage pregnancy. She said:

*“Now learners understand what is going on. It’s much better now, though we still have cases of learner pregnancy.”*

At Venus High, the school deals with learner pregnancy by interacting strongly with parents during meetings. The school also has internal programmes that it runs inside the school. The principal said:

*“There are some awareness programmes that we are running with the learners inside the classrooms to make them aware that if they get pregnant early, then that is going to affect their schooling.”*

The principal also highlighted the importance of motivation as tool that is used by the school to inspire learners. He said:

*“We motivate them as much as possible by bringing in learners that have done well that are coming from the area around to use them as role models, try and instil in the minds of our learners that they are not necessarily supposed to be victims of circumstances instead they can be able to be masters of their destiny.*

At Jupiter Secondary, the HoD mentioned engaging government departments such as the South African Police Service and Department of Social Development to address learners on pertinent issues. The HoD at Mars High was counted the daily meals received by learners as having made a big difference to learners’ lives at school. She said:

*“There are meals prepared. So we can’t say learners cannot come to school because they are hungry.”*

The school is also provided with learner transport by the DBE. Learners do not travel long distances by foot anymore. The school has a life skills counsellor who is based at the school. The counsellor is able to take of the emotional needs of the learners.

The school also receives the services of an NGO that provides learners with school uniforms and food parcels. The HoD said:

*“They help very much in providing learners with school uniforms and sometimes food parcels if need be for those learners who are really needy especially during the holidays when they can’t get any food or anything to eat.”*

At Venus High, the HoD mentioned inviting nurses from the local clinic to address learners on issues of pregnancy. The role played by Life Orientation teachers was also mentioned as crucial in efforts to deal with learner pregnancy.

All three teachers mentioned the role played by Life Orientation teachers as important in educating learners about pregnancy. On Life Orientation, the Venus High teacher said:

*“It teaches learners about teenage pregnancy. I think by so doing we are making learners aware of the consequences if they involve themselves in sexual activities.”*

Mars High has Learner Support Agent (LSA) who advises and counsels learners on any issue they may be having. On the LSA, the teacher said:

*“We identify learners that may be having problems and take them to the school counsellor.”*

At Jupiter Secondary, the school works closely with the Department of Health which periodically sends nurses to the school to talk to the learners about issues of pregnancy. The teacher said:

*“Luckily we are getting a lot of support from the Department of Health and the clinic around here.”*

From the interview accounts, it is clear that the schools are dealing with extreme conditions of poverty in the communities in which they serve. However, they do not allow these conditions to hamper them from the ideal of creating successful schools. One main example is their engagement of the parents as partners. They have recognised the important contribution that parents can make towards learner success. While they are not entirely happy with parental response, their importance is not dismissed.

The schools have also taken proactive steps to deal with socio-economic challenges affecting them. They have not sat back and looked on helplessly. A good example is how they have dealt

with learner pregnancy which the schools feel they have managed to bring under control. The schools have also embraced interventions made by the DBE to alleviate hunger. This can be seen in their efforts to ensure that the school feeding scheme benefits learners.

This confirms results of research which has led to the conclusion that teenage pregnancy does affect the educational success of most teenage girls in South Africa (Sibeko 2012). Although a learner is allowed to return to school after the birth of her baby, she is faced with many challenges in trying to cope with the demands of motherhood and schooling at the same time.

All three schools are no fee-schools which alleviates the burden of school fees on the parents. Oliphant (2008) defines a no-fee school as a school where parents pay no school fees, since government pays for every child who goes to that school. Mars High, for example, is supplied with sanitary towels which used to affect the attendance of girls in the past.

These schools realise that on their own, they cannot cope with the volume of demand for help that comes from within. This prompts them to engage outside agencies that are able to offer a helping hand. The schools are seen cooperating with government departments such as Department of Health and Department of Social Development. These departments strengthen coordination of government arms by visiting schools directly thus offering relief to those in need.

Also, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are not left out. They are seen sponsoring learners with items such as school uniforms, shoes, and even sanitary pads which in many cases learners could previously not afford.

The important role that the subject Life Orientation can play in the lives of learners is also highlighted by the teachers. They see it having an enlightening function in the lives of the learners and believe it is playing a crucial role in the reduction of the incidences of learner pregnancy within their schools.

While the schools have not managed to eliminate the debilitating external factors, their efforts indicate that it is possible to come up with solutions that can reduce their influence on teaching and learning.

#### **4.2.4 What recommendations can be made based on the literature review and the findings of the empirical study to improve the management of factors influencing learner academic performance in Grade 12 examinations at secondary schools?**

The three principals' responses were based on the role that can be played by the DBE to help the schools' results to improve. The Jupiter Secondary principal cited the shortage of textbooks as major concern that needed to be addressed. She said:

*“For those teachers who are willing to work, it is some kind of a setback for them if they have a hundred learners and there are fifty textbooks and they have to share.”*

The limited budget results in the school prioritising Grade 12 at the expense of the lower grades which made her further add:

*“We are complaining about a shaky foundation yet we are not paying enough attention to it in terms of the provision of relevant resources.”*

The Mars High principal focused on the role that can be played by subject advisors if they visited schools on a regular basis.

*“Subject advisors mustn't just come once per term but more so that we can see if we are on the right track.”*

The Venus High principal suggested the employment of more subject advisors as the present number was not adequate. He said:

*“You find that a subject advisor is supposed to be assisting more than 30 schools which makes him/her unable to respond in time when needed.”*

The three principals felt that the schools could do with better parental involvement. The Jupiter Secondary principal lamented the case of parents who send their children on domestic errands during school hours and that it needed to change: *“You tell the parent that the child has been absent from school for the past three days and it is the parent who tell you they had sent the child for some errand or the other.”*

The Mars High principal said: *“Parents must involve themselves intensely. They must attend school meetings and not send anyone else to represent them.”*

For the Venus High principal, parents need to take an interest in what their children do at school: *“When a child comes back from school, the parent should ask what the child learnt at school that day.”*

Two HoDs offered similar responses to the question. The Jupiter Secondary HoD felt their school needed more classrooms as they were currently overcrowded. In her words:

*“Getting more classrooms would help us a lot. The success the school is having is attracting a number of learners from other school. So, we need more classrooms to accommodate them.”*

She further lamented the introduction of the progression system, though she understood the rationale behind it, as barrier to better results.

*“Progression is one of those challenges we face in our schools. Maybe the department needs to reconsider this thing of progression.”*

The Mars High HoD felt the school needed more infrastructural improvement. In her words: *“We don’t have enough resources. We don’t have a proper library and laboratory. Not enough classrooms.”*

The Mars High HoD felt that that the department’s policy of allocating teachers according to needs (Post Provisioning Norm) needed to be better managed as it was highly disruptive: *“Last year we lost quite a number of teachers because of the PPN and that tends to overload the teachers who are left at the school. All of a sudden you have to teach for six hours a day. If you have extra classes, you can imagine what happens.”*

The Venus HoD felt that their teachers needed training in the use of technology to improve performance.

*“We need to be trained in the use of interactive boards. In one of the classes at our school there is an interactive board, but we are not using it because we are not equipped.”*

Both Jupiter Secondary and Mars High teachers agreed that their schools needed more classrooms as they were currently overcrowded. This would ease congestion leading to more learner individual attention. The former said:

*“If we could have enough classrooms to ensure that most of our classrooms are not overcrowded and that would really help us in that teachers would have enough time to contact the learners.”*

The Venus High teacher attested that their school needed to work harder on the more difficult subjects by seeking outside help in order to achieve even better results:

*“We need to ensure that we work harder on the subjects that are a bit challenging by involving other teachers from outside to come and assist us.”*

While the three schools have managed to achieve some success in terms of Grade 12 final examination results, they are not blind to the extent to which they still need to improve. They have taken “the little that they have” to paraphrase the words of the Jupiter Secondary principal, and turned it into something commendable.

However, they believe that the DBE can be of assistance, for example, in the provision of more classrooms and textbooks. Most of their classrooms are overcrowded which does not allow the teacher enough space for individual attention. But the issue of more classrooms is a double-edged sword as it demands more teachers than the DBE can afford.

Participants from these schools reported on a shortage of subject advisors. Subject advisors are able to offer expert advice and leadership on a subject in addition to the work done by HoDs. But as the Venus High principal mentioned, they appear stretched as each advisor sometimes caters for as many as 30 schools. This makes it difficult for him/her to visit schools regularly.

While the schools are happy with the level of parental involvement in varying degrees, they wish it can even be better. My experience is that parents want to be involved in the education of their children. However, they are not sure of the role they can play. Furthermore, schools are sometimes not welcoming towards parents. This results in them staying away. As a solution, I believe schools need to educate parents about what they can do to assist their children.

Another point raised by some of the teachers as an impediment to success is the newly introduced system of learner progression. Progression refers to the advancement of a learner from one grade to the next in spite of the learner not having complied with all the promotion requirements (DBE 2011). While there is some merit to this system, teachers feel it allows unprepared learners to advance which inevitably affects the schools' Grade 12 results.

The Mars HoD lamented the PPN (post provisioning norm) system which determines the number of teachers a school can have based on its enrolment. When teachers have to be

moved to other schools due to falling enrolment figures, the teachers left behind have to share the load left behind.

An interesting point was raised by the Venus High HoD who advocated training in the use of technology in the classroom by teachers. While it is probably every teacher's dream to have technology in the classroom, more research still needs to be conducted in its efficacy. Some schools have a number of computers on their premises, but which are not in use. Provinces such as Gauteng and Western Cape are at the forefront of the technology in the classroom revolution. However, a few years need to pass before an assessment of the effect of this technology can be made.

#### **4.2.5 Data emerging from document review**

The document review included looking at notices of meetings, minutes of SMT and departmental meetings, time-books, and learner attendance registers. Documents requested were for the 2015 academic year and the review consisted of an overall look across the three schools.

Jupiter Secondary and Venus High supplied notices together with minutes of meetings held during Term 1 respectively. The notices listed the following as matters for discussion: learner and educator punctuality, implementation of turnaround strategies for the school and specific subjects, curriculum implementation, role of each SMT member, homework policy, feedback on homework given, ground duty timetable, relief timetable, control of written work, lesson planning, progress with pacesetters, and learner welfare.

In viewing the minutes of the meetings, Mars High supplied the minutes of their meetings which contained many of the matters appearing in the Jupiter Secondary and Venus High notices. The three SMTs meet every week to review progress on the matters discussed at meetings.

The researcher also reviewed minutes of departmental meetings. Some of the common themes that were discussed were: honouring of periods by educators, control of period registers, weekly and daily tasks, marking of homework, tests and feedback to learners, subject improvement plans, morning/afternoon/ weekend and holiday classes, control of written work, progress with pacesetters, and learner welfare. These matters appear in the minutes as having been discussed and progress examined. These meetings are held weekly and sometimes, fortnightly.

Time-books, which record teacher presence and absence, were also viewed. The researcher had a look at three schools' 2015 time-books. The general impression obtained was that, on any given day, over 80% of the teachers were always present. This excludes days when workshops held outside school coincided with end of term moderation sessions.

The researcher requested 2015 Grade 12 registers for Term 1. Below is a table that illustrates the data that emerged:

**Table 4.1: 2015 Grade 12 registers for Term 1**

	<b>Jupiter</b>	<b>Mars</b>	<b>Venus</b>
Number of learners absent	5	2	2
Number of learners enrolled	120	72	90
% of absentees during Term 1	4	2,7	2,2

Source: Class registers

The document review provides an indication into how the three secondary schools operate. The SMT and departmental meetings show that the focus is mainly on matters that promote teaching and learning. It also indicates that the SMTs are able to pick up problems earlier and be able to deal with them.

The review also shows that teachers are largely at the schools most of the time. This ensures that they are able to cover most of the curriculum. Learners also benefit by being mostly present as they are able to learn a large part of the curriculum.

### **4.3 CONCLUSION**

The chapter presented the findings based on the data gathered, analysed and interpreted by the researcher. In the analysis, it has been shown how SMT's managing factors that influence learner academic performance in Grade 12 NSC examinations at three selected township and rural secondary schools in the Pinetown District, KwaZulu-Natal. The findings of the study were related to the relevant literature. In Chapter Five, a summary of the findings is given, conclusions reached, recommendations are made, and suggestions for future research are made.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter, a summary of findings is given and conclusions reached, and delimitations and limitations of the study are discussed. This is followed by conclusions from literature and empirical studies. The chapter ends with recommendations and suggestions for further research.

#### **5.2 OVERVIEW OF CHAPTERS**

##### **5.2.1 CHAPTER ONE**

In this chapter, a background to the study was given. This was followed by the rationale to the study. The purpose and context of the study were followed by the main research question and sub-questions. The aim and objectives of the study were then detailed. These were followed by limitations of the study and the research approach. Data collection and analysis were briefly explained. The theoretical framework that underpinned the study was then briefly explained. Definition of key concepts was followed by an outline of the study.

##### **5.2.2 CHAPTER TWO**

The focus of this chapter was to review literature on factors that influence learner performance in examinations at secondary schools. It began with an explanation of the concept “performance” in the context of the study. This was followed by an overview of Grade 12 learner performance in KwaZulu-Natal and in Pinetown District between 2010 and 2015. The review continued with a brief historical perspective on South African education which provided a background to the present. Factors influencing learner performance such as location, school culture and funding were discussed. This was followed by learner-related factors. Here, learner discipline, learner motivation, parental involvement, and study skills were discussed.

Factors emanating from outside school then followed. Here, economic and social factors such as family income and teenage pregnancy were discussed respectively. This was followed by teacher factors that affect learner performance. They included continuing professional development, academic qualifications, classroom management, teacher absenteeism, and teacher attrition. The chapter ended with a discussion on the theoretical framework underpinning the study.

### **5.2.3 CHAPTER THREE**

In this chapter, the researcher explained and described the research design, selection of the research approach, site selection, sampling, data gathering and data analysis strategies. Ethical issues were also carefully discussed and stringent rules governing this aspect of research were followed throughout the whole process of the study. The results of the research were presented in Chapter Four.

### **5.2.4 CHAPTER FOUR**

The chapter presented the findings based on the data gathered, analysed and interpreted by the researcher. In the analysis, it has been shown how SMT's manage factors that influence learner academic performance in Grade 12 NSC examinations at three selected township and rural secondary schools in the Pinetown District, KwaZulu-Natal. The findings of the study were supported by literature review reported in Chapter Two.

### **5.2.5 CHAPTER FIVE**

In this chapter, a summary of the findings is given, conclusions reached, recommendations are made, and suggestions for future research are made.

### **5.3 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS**

The aim of the study was to enquire how SMT's manage factors that influence learner academic performance in Grade 12 NSC examinations. It sought to enquire how some township and rural secondary schools managed to perform and obtain commendable Grade 12 results between 2010 and 2015 while other schools in similar circumstances failed. Three secondary schools were purposely selected for the study. The selected schools are in the Pinetown District, KwaZulu-Natal. In each school the principal, HoD, and a Grade 12 teacher were interviewed. Furthermore, a document review was also conducted. The research findings and analysis were presented in Chapter Four. This chapter brings to conclusion the findings, recommendations, and suggestions for further research.

#### **5.3.1 Question One: How does the school management team (SMT) perceive its role in the management of the curriculum?**

The SMT, in fulfilling its leadership role, ensures that more time in the form of morning and afternoon classes, extra lessons on weekdays, weekends, and even holidays is used towards the completion of the curriculum as the prescribed time for teaching is not adequate. There is a realisation that time prescribed for teaching and learning is not adequate.

Decisive action is required to achieve good Grade 12 results. This becomes necessary when allocating teachers in the different subjects across the grades. Where possible, only proven and dedicated teachers should be placed in Grade 12.

Constant and continuous motivation to both learners and teachers by the SMT plays an important role towards success. This should be coupled with teamwork among staff to enable teachers to assist each other if and when they encounter difficulties in their subjects. Furthermore, networking with other schools helps. This is done through cluster committees that promote the subject and even facilitate the setting of common examination papers, for example.

The work of educators is closely monitored to ensure that they adhere to curriculum guidelines. This is facilitated through management plans that are designed to monitor and track curriculum implementation which are put in place and strictly adhered to.

In addition, the SMT ensures that resources such as photocopying machines, textbooks, and other materials that aid teaching are readily available.

The SMT leads the way by modelling what it expects from teachers. Moreover, management is fully involved in teaching to avoid losing touch with the classroom.

### **5.3.2 Question Two: How does the SMT perceive its role in the management of learners and their learning?**

The SMT ensures that teachers create an environment that is conducive to teaching and learning. This is done through empowering teachers to better manage their classrooms thus controlling ill-discipline, which improves teaching and learning. Moreover, classrooms have rules that explain the kind of interaction which is acceptable in the classroom and that which is detrimental to teaching and learning.

Management ensures that teachers go to class prepared for their lessons. A precondition to this is teacher punctuality at school and which fosters learner discipline. Minutes of SMT meetings indicate that these two matters are consistently discussed as they form part of the foundation of the schools.

Teacher absenteeism is minimized as it has a detrimental effect on learner discipline and on teaching and learning.

One of the schools has devised a strategy that minimizes learner movement and loitering in between and during lessons.

The SMT involves the RCL in communicating with learners.

Learners are encouraged to take responsibility for their learning as it is about their future.

### **5.3.3 Question Three: How does the SMT perceived its role in the management of external factors?**

Literature reviewed shows the role of parents in the education of their children as important. These schools strive towards strong cooperation between the school and the parents. This can be seen through the close involvement of governing bodies and parents at large in the activities of the schools.

The schools do not allow the general conditions of poverty surrounding the schools to deter them wanting to succeed. This is seen through teachers being prepared to play a parental role by sometimes providing for the learners' material needs. To ensure continuity, former learners are urged to come and address the current ones as a motivational speaking strategy.

As strategy towards learner welfare, the schools enlist NGOs to assist with material needs such as school uniforms, shoes, and sanitary towels for destitute learners.

The schools have generally reduced teenage pregnancy significantly through collaborating with other government departments and some NGOs. Awareness programmes that teach learners about sexuality and pregnancy are organized. Life skills counsellors, where available, are used to cater for the emotional needs of the learners. Life Orientation teachers help educate learners about pertinent issues.

### **5.3.4 Question Four: What recommendations can be made based on the literature review and the findings of the empirical study to improve the management of factors influencing learner academic performance in Grade 12 examinations at secondary schools?**

- The schools require more classrooms as the current ones are mostly overcrowded.
- Tutors, in addition to teachers, can be helpful to struggling learners.

- Additional textbooks are needed as learners have to share and cannot afford to buy their own.
- The policy of learner progression needs to be reconsidered as it allows ill-equipped learners into the next grade where they battle to cope.
- Proper libraries and laboratories are required.
- The education department needs to find ways of minimizing the impact of the post provisioning norm (PPN) system as it overloads the remaining teachers with work.
- Departmental officials such as subject advisors need to visit schools frequently in order to deal with problems earlier.
- Teachers need to be trained in the use of technology in the classroom to enhance the quality of their teaching.
- The level of parental support needs to increase as it is enough.

#### **5.4 DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

This study was limited to SMTs in three rural and township and secondary schools in the Pinetown District, KwaZulu-Natal Province. The purpose of the study was to enquire how SMTs in these schools managed factors that influenced learner academic performance in Grade 12 NSC examinations. The value of a Grade 12 certificate has increased as it is regarded as a gateway to opportunities for further study or the world of work. The sample used was small but the focus of the study was to obtain an in-depth understanding of the participants' views as opposed to making generalisations. The findings of this study apply only to the chosen area and may, therefore, not apply to other areas that were not researched. As a teacher and an SMT member, my bias and subjectivity may have been responsible for over-concentrating on or overlooking other factors that may influence learner academic performance in Grade 12 examinations.

## **5.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

Limitations of the study are the subjective bias of the researcher, the theoretical objectives chosen, and the sample selected as targets which directed the study and resulted in it being based on a few schools only. My interest in the topic and my desire to see an improvement in Grade 12 examination results in township and rural secondary schools may have influenced my interpretation of the findings of the study, but my supervisor acted professionally in keeping this possible bias within bounds. But due to the limited time available to complete this study and submit the work for examination purposes, I may not have deeply probed the topic.

## **5.6 CONCLUSIONS OF THE EMPIRICAL STUDY**

There is a commonly held belief that organizations stand based on the quality of their management teams. Furthermore, the material conditions that surround the organizations do not play a big part. I believe that schools are no different. The three schools that were part of the study prove that it is possible to succeed even under challenging conditions. As the Jupiter Secondary principal attested, it is the human element that makes schools overcome challenges. There are a large number of well-resourced schools that continuously underachieve. Drawing well-thought plans, followed by proper implementation and constant monitoring lead to success.

The findings are in line with the results of a study conducted by Bayat *et al.* (2014) which discovered that in schools where principals displayed leadership qualities, learners responded with good results despite their poor socio-economic environment.

The three schools further indicate that all stakeholders need to play their roles. Cooperation between the teachers, learners, and parents needs to be promoted and strengthened as it leads to desired educational outcomes.

## **5.7 RECOMMENDATIONS**

The following recommendations are made:

- Township and rural schools that are performing well should be given incentives in the form of grants and awards by the DBE to congratulate and motivate them.
- SMTs from these schools should be encouraged to share their experience and expertise with others to increase the pool of schools that are performing well.
- The DBE needs to create dedicated units that will monitor struggling schools and offer guidance and support throughout the year.
- Schools need to find better ways of enticing parents to get closer as their input can greatly improve teaching and learning outcomes.
- Bursaries and scholarships need to be organised for learners from township and rural areas who have defied the odds and achieved better Grade 12 results. This would hopefully encourage learners in the lower grades to emulate them.
- Private companies should be given tax incentives for investing in school infrastructure such as laboratories and libraries as these are sorely needed and the government is unlikely to provide them in all the schools in the foreseeable future.

## **5.8 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

In view of the research findings, the researcher suggests two areas that require further enquiry.

Firstly, why learners do from underprivileged backgrounds seem to struggle with Mathematics and Physical Sciences? This is prompted by the observation that one of the keys to the success of the schools involved in the study was of learners performing well in Mathematics.

Secondly, the impact of the establishment of professional learning communities (PLCs) in wards/districts as a strategy for improving learner performance is another area that is

recommended to be pursued. The schools interviewed cited that collaborating with teachers from other schools enhanced their teaching; hence the good results.

## **5.9 CONCLUDING REMARKS**

The chapter presented a summary of the findings as stated in Chapter Four. Suggestions for further research were also made. What the study showed is that schools do not have the same approach to managing factors that influence learner performance though there are common threads. However, one can conclude that putting learners at the forefront of all teaching and learning activities helps towards overcoming the generally depressed social conditions that exist around the sampled schools.

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## ANNEXURE A



### PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Date: .....

Title: **The Role of School Management Teams (SMTs) in Managing Factors That Influence Learner Performance in Grade 12 Examinations**

Dear Prospective Participant

My name is Michael Togara Tigere and I am doing research with Professor SP Mokoena, professor in the Department of Education Management and Leadership towards a M Ed degree at the University of South Africa. We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled, **Managing factors that influence learner examination performance of grade 12 learners in the KwaZulu-Natal province.**

#### **WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?**

As a researcher I have identified factors that are known to affect learner examination performance in grade 12. The study is expected to collect information on how your school manages these factors.

#### **WHY AM I BEING INVITED TO PARTICIPATE?**

Your school has consistently achieved an above 60% overall pass rate since 2012 in the National Certificate Examination sittings. Your school's contact details were obtained from a KwaZulu-Natal publication entitled "KZNDoE List of Schools with Principals' Cellphone Numbers" (available on the department's website). Confirmation of contact numbers was also sought from the Pinetown district manager's office.

#### **WHAT IS THE NATURE OF MY PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY?**

I am requesting that you avail yourself for a semi-structured interview to shed light on the researcher's questions. Questions such as how the school experiences teaching and learning and how the school experiences socio-economic conditions that affect learners will be asked.

The researcher will use a digital voice recorder and a laptop computer to record the interview. Note that you have a right to refuse to be recorded, in which case the researcher will use notes. The researcher will then proceed to check your rendition of the interview thereafter.

The interview will not last more than an hour in duration.

#### **CAN I WITHDRAW FROM THE STUDY EVEN AFTER HAVING AGREED TO PARTICIPATE?**

Participating in this study is voluntary and you are under no obligation to consent to participation. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a written consent form. You are free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

#### **WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?**

There are no possible benefits for participating in the study.

#### **ARE THERE ANY NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES FOR ME IF I PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY?**

Apart from loss of the participants' time, there are no foreseeable risks associated with the study.

**WILL THE INFORMATION THAT I CONVEY TO THE RESEARCHER AND MY IDENTITY BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?**

You have the right to insist that your name not be recorded anywhere and that no one, other than the researcher, will know about your involvement in this research. Your name will not be recorded anywhere and no one will be able to connect you to the answers you give. Your answers will be given a code number or a pseudonym and you will be referred to in this way in the data, any publications, or other research reporting methods such as conference proceedings.

Be aware that your anonymous data may be used for other purposes, such as a research report, journal articles and/ or conference proceedings. Should any of the preceding possibilities occur, your name and that of your school will not be published.

**HOW WILL THE RESEARCHER PROTECT THE SECURITY OF THE DATA?**

Hard copies of your answers will be stored by the researcher for a period of five years in a locked cupboard at the researcher private residence for future academic purposes; electronic information will be stored on a password protected computer. Future use of the stored data will be subject to further Research Ethics Review and approval if applicable.

Should it become necessary to destroy the information, hard copies will be shredded and/or electronic copies will be permanently deleted from the hard drive of the computer through the use of a relevant software programme.

**WILL I RECEIVE PAYMENT OR ANY INCENTIVES FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY?**

No payment or reward will be offered.

**HAS THE STUDY RECEIVED ETHICS APPROVAL?**

This study has received written approval from the Research Ethics Review Committee of the College of Education, Unisa. A copy of the approval letter can be obtained from the researcher if you so wish.

**HOW WILL I BE INFORMED OF THE FINDINGS/RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH?**

If you would like to be informed of the final research findings, please contact Michael Togara Tigere on 082 7232370 or email [tigerem@vodamail.co.za](mailto:tigerem@vodamail.co.za).

Should you require further information or want to contact the researcher about any aspect of this study, please contact Michael Togara Tigere through the channels highlighted above.

Should you have concerns about the way in which the research has been conducted, you may contact the supervisor on 021-429 3111 or contact [mokoesp@unisa.ac.za](mailto:mokoesp@unisa.ac.za). Alternatively, contact the research ethics chairperson of the College of Education, Dr Madaleen Claassens, email: [mcdt@netactive.co.za](mailto:mcdt@netactive.co.za).

Thank you for taking time to read this information sheet and participating in this study.

Thank you.

.....  
Michael Togara Tigere



education

Department:  
Education  
**PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL**

**ANNEXURE B**

Enquiries: Phindile Duma

Tel: 033 392 1004

Ref.:2/4/8/766

Mr MT Tigere  
PO Box 133  
Botha's Hill  
3660

Dear Mr Tigere

#### **PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DoE INSTITUTIONS**

Your application to conduct research entitled: **"THE ROLE OF SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAMS (SMTs) IN MANAGING FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE LEARNER ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN GRADE 12 EXAMINATIONS"**, in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education Institutions has been approved. The conditions of the approval are as follows:

1. The researcher will make all the arrangements concerning the research and interviews.
2. The researcher must ensure that Educator and learning programmes are not interrupted.
3. Interviews are not conducted during the time of writing examinations in schools.
4. Learners, Educators, Schools and Institutions are not identifiable in any way from the results of the research.
5. A copy of this letter is submitted to District Managers, Principals and Heads of Institutions where the Intended research and interviews are to be conducted.
6. The period of investigation is limited to the period from 13 April 2016 to 30 June 2017.
7. Your research and interviews will be limited to the schools you have proposed and approved by the Head of Department. Please note that Principals, Educators, Departmental Officials and Learners are under no obligation to participate or assist you in your investigation.
8. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey at the school(s), please contact Miss Connie Kehologile at the contact numbers below
9. Upon completion of the research, a brief summary of the findings, recommendations or a full report / dissertation / thesis must be submitted to the research office of the Department. Please address it to The Office of the HOD, Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200.
10. Please note that your research and interviews will be limited to schools and institutions in KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education.

Pinetown District

  
**Nkosinathi S.P. Sishi, PhD**  
**Head of Department: Education**  
**Date: 13 April 2016**

#### **KWAZULU-NATAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

POSTAL: Private Bag X 9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200, KwaZulu-Natal, Republic of South Africa ...dedicated to service and performance  
PHYSICAL: 247 Burger Street, Anton Lembede House, Pietermaritzburg, 3201. Tel. 033 392 1004 **beyond the call of duty**  
EMAIL ADDRESS: [kehologile.connie@kzndoe.gov.za](mailto:kehologile.connie@kzndoe.gov.za) / [Phindile.Duma@kzndoe.gov.za](mailto:Phindile.Duma@kzndoe.gov.za)  
CALL CENTRE: 0860 596 363; Fax: 033 392 1203 WEBSITE: [www.kzneducation.gov.za](http://www.kzneducation.gov.za)

**ANNEXURE C**

**CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY**

I, ..... (participant name), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet.

I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable).

I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings, but that my participation will be kept confidential unless otherwise specified.

I agree to the recording of the interview.

I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Participant's Name & Surname (please print) .....

.....

Participant's Signature

Date

Researcher's Name & Surname (please print) .....

.....

Researcher's Signature

Date

## ANNEXURE D

### INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

For school principals, heads of department, and teachers

1. What factors, do you think, contribute to learners' successful performance in Grade 12 NSC examinations at your school?
2. Your school is in an impoverished rural/township environment. What do you think enables you to achieve better results than other schools in similar circumstances?
3. What do you consider as the role of school management in supporting teaching and learning?
4. To what extent do you think teachers and learners' classroom behaviour contribute to effective teaching and learning?
5. What is your school doing to sustain and improve learners' Grade 12 performance in examinations?
6.
  - 6.1 To what extent is your school affected by factors such as poverty, unemployment, and learner pregnancy?
  - 6.2 What steps are you taking, if any, to minimise the impact of these factors?
7. What steps do you think should be taken by underperforming schools to improve learner performance in Grade 12 examinations?
  - (a) School management?
  - (b) Teachers?
  - (c) Learners?
  - (d) Education department?
  - (e) Parents?
8. Is there anything else that you still need to improve learner performance in Grade 12 examinations?

Thank you for your time.

**ANNEXURE E**

<b>DOCUMENT REVIEW FORM</b>	
<b>Focus Area</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>1. Minutes of Meetings</b>	
<b>2. Timebook</b>	
<b>3. Class registers</b>	

ANNEXURE F



COLLEGE OF EDUCATION RESEARCH ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

13 July 2016

Ref # 2016/07/13/30654084/45/MC  
Student#: Mr MT Tigere  
Student Number#: 30654084

Dear Mr MT Tigere

**Decision: Ethics Approval**

**Researcher** Mr MT Tigere  
Tel: +2731 765 8930  
Email: [tigerem@vodamail.co.za](mailto:tigerem@vodamail.co.za)

**Supervisor:** Prof. SP Mokoena  
College of Education  
Department of Educational Leadership and Management  
Tel: +2782 675 6155  
Email: [mokoesp@unisa.ac.za](mailto:mokoesp@unisa.ac.za)

**Proposal:** The Role of School Management Teams (SMTs) in Managing Factors That Influence Learner Academic Performance in Grade 12 Examinations

**Qualification:** M Ed in Education Management

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the College of Education Research Ethics Review Committee for the above mentioned research. Final approval is granted for the duration of the research.

*The application was reviewed in compliance with the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics by the College of Education Research Ethics Review Committee on 13 July 2016.*

*The proposed research may now commence with the proviso that:*

- 1) The researcher/s will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.*
- 2) Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study, as well as changes in the methodology, should be communicated in writing to the College of Education Ethics Review Committee.*



University of South Africa  
Pretorius Street, Muckleneuk Ridge, City of Tshwane  
PO Box 392 UNISA 0003 South Africa  
Telephone: +27 12 429 3111 Facsimile: +27 12 429 4150  
[www.unisa.ac.za](http://www.unisa.ac.za)

*An amended application could be requested if there are substantial changes from the existing proposal, especially if those changes affect any of the study-related risks for the research participants.*

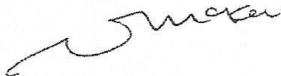
- 3) *The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study.*

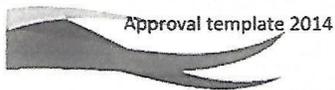
*Note:*

*The reference number 2016/07/13/30654084/45/MC should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication [e.g. Webmail, E-mail messages, letters] with the intended research participants, as well as with the College of Education RERC.*

Kind regards,

  
**Dr M Claassens**  
**CHAIRPERSON: CEDU RERC**  
[mcctc@netactive.co.za](mailto:mcctc@netactive.co.za)

  
**Prof VI McKay**  
**EXECUTIVE DEAN**



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## **EDITING AND PROOFREADING CERTIFICATE**

7542 Galangal Street

Lotus Gardens

Pretoria

0008

05 October 2016

### **TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN**

This letter serves to confirm that I have edited and proofread Mr M.T. Tigere's dissertation entitled: "THE ROLE OF SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAMS IN MANAGING FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE LEARNER ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN GRADE 12 EXAMINATIONS IN KWAZULU-NATAL."

I found the work easy and enjoyable to read. Much of my editing basically dealt with obstructionist technical aspects of language which could have otherwise compromised smooth reading as well as the sense of the information being conveyed. I hope that the work will be found to be of an acceptable standard. I am a member of Professional Editors Group and also a Language Editor at Bureau of Market Research at the University of South Africa.

Hereunder are my particulars:



Jack Chokwe (Mr)

Bureau of Market Research (Unisa)

Contact numbers: 072 214 5489 / 012 429 3327

[jmb@executivemail.co.za](mailto:jmb@executivemail.co.za)

Professional  
**EDITORS**   
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