

**THE ROLE OF SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAMS IN IMPROVING GRADE 12
LEARNERS' PERFORMANCE IN VHEMBE EDUCATION DISTRICT, LIMPOPO.**

By

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DECLARATION

I, Tinyiko Josephine Nkuzana (Student No 31832679) hereby declare that this dissertation for the degree Master in Education Management at the University of South Africa entitled: The Role of School Management Teams in improving Grade 12 Learners' Performance in the Vhembe Education District, Limpopo, is my own work and it has been submitted by me for degree purposes at this university and not at any other university. All the sources used and or quoted have been acknowledged by means of complete references.

TJ Nkuzana

Signature: 

Date: 18 November 2021

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ABSTRACT

The study explored the roles of the school management teams in improving Grade 12 learners' performance in the Vhembe Education District, Limpopo. There was a need to conduct this research to establish the roles of school management teams (SMTs) in improving Grade 12 learners' performance in the Vhembe Education District. The study was conducted using a qualitative approach; the data was collected using semi-structured interviews and document analysis in which three schools were selected through purposive sampling. Two heads of departments, three deputy principals and three principals in the Vhembe Education District participated in the study. The data was analysed using thematic approach. The study was framed by a conceptual framework made up of concepts gleaned from the theory of instructional leadership.

Among the major findings of the study, SMTs were found to be the core in improving learning outcomes in Grade 12. Data further showed that the SMTs identified the training needs from the Quality Management System (QMS) summative evaluation reports and other monitoring reports. Curriculum challenges were identified through advanced curriculum planning. The SMTs used the school improvement plans as a strategy to demand accountability from the educators. The well-planned enrichment programmes and the SMTs commitment to implement the intervention strategies in the schools had an impact on learner performance. The findings also showed that effective principals are able to influence active participation of parents and it enhances teaching and learning in the school. The study recommended Continuous Training of SMTs on instructional leadership and impact assessment. The study also recommended advance and strategic curriculum planning in the school, professional support for orphans and vulnerable children in the school. Finally, strengthen school safety and intermittent promotion/advocacy of the progression policy.

KEY WORDS

Instructional Leadership Theory, Intervention Strategies, Learner Performance, School Management Teams

OPSOMMING

Die studie het die rolle van die skoolbestuurspanne ondersoek om die prestasie van graad 12-leerders in die Vhembe Onderwysdistrik, Limpopo, te verbeter. Dit was nodig om hierdie navorsing te doen om die rolle van skoolbestuurspanne (SBS'e) in die verbetering van graad 12-leerders se prestasies in die Vhembe Onderwysdistrik vas te stel. Die studie is met behulp van 'n kwalitatiewe benadering uitgevoer en die data is versamel deur middel van semi-gestruktureerde onderhoude en dokumentanalise waarin drie skole deur middel van doelgerigte steekproefneming gekies is. Twee departementshoofde, drie adjunkhoofde en drie skoolhoofde in die Vhembe Onderwysdistrik het aan die studie deelgeneem. Die data is geanaliseer volgens 'n tematiese benadering. Die studie is opgestel deur 'n konseptuele raamwerk wat bestaan uit konsepte uit die teorie van onderrigleierskap.

Onder die belangrikste bevindings van die studie was dat SBS'e die kern was van die verbetering van leeruitkomst in Graad 12. Gegewens het verder getoon dat die SBS die opleidingsbehoefte geïdentifiseer het uit die Summative Evaluasieverslae van die Quality Management System (QMS) en ander moniteringsverslae. Kurrikulumuitdagings is geïdentifiseer deur middel van gevorderde kurrikulumbeplanning. Die SMT's het die skoolverbeteringsplanne gebruik as 'n strategie om aanspreeklikheid van die opvoeders te eis. Die goed beplande verrykingsprogramme en die SMT-verbintenis om die intervensiestrategieë in die skole te implementeer, het 'n invloed op die leerderprestasie gehad. Die bevindings het ook getoon dat effektiewe skoolhoofde 'n invloed kan hê op die aktiewe deelname van ouers, en dit verbeter die onderrig en leer in die skool. Ten slotte word die deurlopende opleiding van SBS'e aanbeveel vir onderrigleierskap en impakstudie, vooruitgang en strategiese kurrikulumbeplanning in die skool. , Professionele ondersteuning vir weeskinders en weerlose kinders in die skool, Versterk skoolveiligheid en intermitterende bevordering / voorspraak vir die vorderingsbeleid.

KHOTSO

Phuputso e ile ya lekola mesebetsi ya dihlopha tsa botsamaisi ba sekolo ho ntlafatsa tshebetso ya baithuti ba Kereiti ya 12 Lebatoweng la Thuto la Vhembe, Limpopo. Ho ne ho na le tlhoko ea ho etsa lipatlisiso tsena ho theha likarolo tsa lihlopha tsa botsamaisi ba sekolo (SMTs) ho ntlafatsa ts'ebetso ea baithuti ba Kereiti ea 12 Seterekeng sa Thuto sa Vhembe. Phuputso e entsoe ka mokhoa oa boleng bo holimo mme tlhaiso-leseling e ile ea bokelloa ho sebelisoa lipuisano tse hlophisitsoeng hantle le tlhahlobo ea litokomane moo likolo tse tharo li ileng tsa

khethoa ka ho etsa mohlala. Dihloho tse pedi tsa mafapha, batlatsi ba hlooho ya hlooho tse tharo le dihlooho tse tharo Lebatoweng la Thuto la Vhembe ba nkile karolo thutong. Lintlha li ile tsa hlahlojoa ka mokhoa o hlakileng. Phuputso e entsoe ke moralo oa mohopolo o entsoeng ka likhopolo tse fumanoang khopolong ea boetapele ba thuto.

Har'a tse fumanoeng haholo tsa boithuto, li-SMT tse fumanoeng e le khubu ea ho ntlafatsa sephetho sa ho ithuta Kereiting ea 12. Lintlha li boetse li bonts'a hore SMT e khethile litlhoko tsa koetliso ho tsoa ho litlaleho tsa tlhahlobo ea boleng bo holimo ba Sisteme ea Tsamaiso ea Boleng bo Kopaneng (QMS) le litlaleho tse ling tsa tlhahlobo. Liphephetso tsa kharikhulamo li fumanoa ka moralo o tsoetseng pele oa kharikhulamo. Li-SMT li sebelisitse merero ea ntlafatso ea sekolo e le leano la ho batla boikarabello ho matichere. Mananeo a ntlafatso a hlophisitsoeng hantle le boitlamo ba li-SMT ba ho kenya tšebetsong maano a ho kenella likolong a bile le phello ho ts'ebetso ea moithuti. Liphuputso li boetse li bontšitse hore lihlooho tsa sekolo tse atlehang li khona ho susumetsa ho nka karolo ka mafolofolo ha batsoali mme e ntlafatsa ho ruta le ho ithuta sekolong mme qetellong, thuto e boetse e khothalelitse Thupelo e Tsoelang Pele ea li-SMTs mabapi le boetapele ba thuto le tlhahlobo ea litlamorao, nts'etsopela le moralo oa moralo oa kharikhulamo sekolong Ts'ebetso ea litsebi bakeng sa likhutsana le bana ba tlokotsing sekolong, Ho matlafatsa polokeho ea sekolo le ho phahamisa / ho buella leano la tsoelo-pele.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AATL	African Association for Teaching and Learning
ACE	Advanced Certificate in Education
APIP	Academic Performance Improvement Plan
CAPS	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Standards
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DBST	District Based Support Team
DoE	Department of Education
DP	Deputy Principal
EEA	Employment of Educators Act
FET	Further Education and Training
HAC	Health Advisory Committee
HoD	Head of Department
QMS	Quality Management System
K.C.S.E	Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education
LTSM	Learner teaching support materials
LDoE	Limpopo Department of Education
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MEC	Member of the Executive Council
NCOP	National Council of Provinces
NCS	National Curriculum Statement
NEEDU	National Education Evaluation and Development Unit
NEEDU	National Education Evaluation and Development Unit
NSC	National Senior Certificate
NSLA	National Strategy for Learner Attainment
PAM	Personnel Administration Measures
SACE	South African Council for Educators
SACMEQ	Southern African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality
SASA	South African Schools Act
SBA	School Based Assessment
SBST	School-Based Support Team
SGB	School Governing Body

SIP	School Improvement Plan
SMT	School Management Team
WAEC	West African Examinations Council

CHAPTER 1

OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The annual release of the National Senior Certificate results creates public interest and puts not only School Management Teams (SMTs), teachers and learners under pressure, but also parents and politicians. Grade 12 learner performance is part of vigorous debates among the educational leaders. The discussion about poor learner performance in the Department of Basic Education in particular Limpopo Province has been a source of interest politically and socially when the NSC results are released.

The researcher investigated the role of SMTs in improving learner performance of Grade 12 secondary schools in the Vhembe Education District. The depth of the problem of underperformance was reflected in showing how the national, provincially and district performed in Grade 12. DBE (2020:6) showed that the performance in Grade 12 was 72.5% in 2016, 75.1% in 2017, 78.2% in 2018, 81.3% in 2019 and 76.2 in 2020. The Limpopo Department of Education for the past five years had performed below the national overall pass percentage. The pass rate achieved in 2020 by Basic Education (DBE) (2020:47) indicated that Limpopo Province achieved a pass rate of 68.2% in 2020, 73.2% in 2019, 70.6% in 2018, 67.4% in 2017 and 62.5% in 2016 in the National Senior Certificate. While the results appeared to have improved from the 62.5% pass rate in 2016, only 26.8% qualified for entrance to a bachelor's degree in 2019. The National Senior Certificate overall results declined from 73.2% in 2019 to 68.2% in 2020. The quality of passes improved in that 29.1% of learners received bachelor's Degree passes and 23.6% received Diploma passes in 2020.

The DBE (2020:85) reflected the performance of Vhembe Education District in the past five years. The district achieved the pass rate of 77.1% in 2020, 81.5% in 2019, 80.1% in 2018, 78.4% in 2017 and 70.3% in 2016. The results of Vhembe Education District is comparable with the Limpopo Department of Education (LDoE) Grade 12 NSC performance. When the district declined in its performance, the province also declined. In 2019 LDoE had an achievement of 73.2% to 68.2% in 2020 and Vhembe Education District achieved 81.5% in 2019 and declined to 77.1% in 2020. The analysis reflected above showed that the performance of Vhembe Education District influenced the performance of the LDoE.

The trends in poor performance are reflected in the results of international tests like the Southern African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ) test conducted in selected ordinary public schools. According to the DBE (2010:10), the SACMEQ report indicated that the main challenges in schools were related to improving the levels of performance and quality of educational outcomes. DBE had introduced workbooks to all public schools as an improvement strategy to improve Languages and Mathematics. According to DBE (2017:3) there is improvement in international tests as reflected in SACMEQ IV project. The SACMEQ IV study project showed an upward trend in performance of Mathematics and Languages. Govender and Hugo (2020:2) attested to the improvement of South Africa in the international tests. The strategies to improve Languages and Mathematics had showed the significant improvement. Mannase (2016:1) asserted that the leadership practices in urban and rural schools contribute to the achievement of learners in Grade 12.

The school cannot be fully functional if run by the principal alone without the involvement of other members of management. The researcher assumed that the collective efforts of the SMT could help improve poor performance in Grade 12. Naidoo, Joubert, Mestry and Mosoge (2008:10) stated that the idea of collective management and leadership has been encouraged in South African schools through the concept of SMTs. Led by principals, SMTs play a critical role in ensuring that the curriculum is delivered, and learners perform better. The DBE has provided a legislative framework that clearly defines the job description of all members of SMTs. All SMT members are expected to perform according to the guidelines provided by the DBE.

The DBE guidelines ensure that schools need to provide quality education and the SMT play a vital role in ensuring that schools are centres of excellence. For effective teaching and learning to take place, the effective execution of the management tasks is required. These include skills of planning, problem-solving, decision-making, policy-making, organising, coordinating, delegating, leading and controlling of school activities or events. Maja (2016:5) emphasised the need for SMTs' understanding of their duties as stipulated in the DBE's Personnel Administrative Measures (PAM). When the SMTs fail to execute the basic management functions, it affects the basic functionality of the school. There appears to be a general concern that SMTs are oblivious of their roles or are reluctant to perform their duties. High performance demands hard work and thorough preparation by the SMTs.

When the SMTs shirk their responsibilities in monitoring and control of curriculum coverage, examination irregularities are bound to follow. The principal is the key person in ensuring that

the SMT work together without conflicts that could lead the school to being dysfunctional. If the relationship is not well managed, it can undermine the good intention of having a management team in the school. Ntseto (2015:2) showed that effective managers are capable of instructional leadership. Skilled site-based managers who take the responsibility for ensuring that each individual within his or her department, the team or business unit succeeds, achieve results. The manager needs to ensure that SMTs understand their roles and responsibilities to improve learner performance.

The SMT needs to monitor the performance of teachers to provide interventions to improve the performance of Grade 12 learners. The SMTs and the subject teachers need to draft intervention programmes informed by their diagnostic reports and the analysis of results. Examples of intervention strategies for improving performance included extra classes in the mornings, afternoons and Saturdays to cover the content and give remedial support to struggling learners. Exchange programmes are used where specialist teachers from one school are used in another school to help mentor those teachers who struggle with content.

1.2 RESEARCH PROBLEM STATEMENT

Learner performance is a matter that occupy the agenda of many countries including South Africa. Research focusing on the role of school leadership in improving learner performance is inadequate. In confirming this assertion, Wills (2016: 108) posits that there is limited research in developing countries on how school leaders might have an impact on learning outcomes. Whereas there appears to be a plethora of studies which investigated learner performance

Heerelal, 2016 Ramathan, 2017, but not enough research has focused on the role of school management teams in improving the performance of Grade 12 particularly in South Africa. Performance of learners in general and Grade 12 learners in particular in South African has been a concern for the education authorities. To illustrate this, the DBE (2011:1) maintains that poor learner performance in Grade 12 National Senior Certificate has been a cause for concern in South Africa and, in particular, in Limpopo Province for several years. The Grade 12 performance in Limpopo Province has not been satisfactory for some time and Vhembe Education District, in particular, faces challenges on many fronts. In this research, the problem that is identified for investigation is the poor performance of learners in the Grade 12 National Senior Certificate examinations in the Vhembe Education District. Many factors account for this problem. In the study, the researcher assumes that the SMTs are ignorant of their roles and that reluctance to perform their roles and responsibilities could be a contributing factor to the

poor results in Grade 12. The researcher would like to test if poor performance is not exacerbated by inadequate monitoring and support of teachers and poor curriculum management to ensure curriculum coverage in all the subjects. To this end, the purpose of this study was to examine the role of school management team members in improving the performance of Grade 12 learners in Vhembe Education District in Limpopo. In order to achieve and focus the study, the researcher identified the following main and sub-questions:

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1.3.1 The main research question

- What are the leadership roles of SMTs in improving Grade 12 learners' performance in the Vhembe Education District, of Limpopo?

1.3.2 Sub-research questions

- What are the specific roles of heads of department, deputy principals and principals in instructional leadership?
- What are the challenges facing schools in the Vhembe Education District that contribute towards poor learner performance in Grade 12?
- How do SMTs employ intervention strategies to curb challenges of poor learner performance?
- How do SMTs deal with the challenges they face and are these interventions effective?

1.4 THE OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- The main objective of the study was to investigate the leadership roles of SMTs in improving Grade 12 learners' performance in the Vhembe Education District, Limpopo.

The objectives were the following:

- To determine the specific roles of the principal, deputy principal and head of the department in instructional leadership.
- To investigate the challenges that contributed towards poor learner performance in Grade 12.
- To ascertain the strategies used by the Vhembe Education District in improving learner performance in Grade 12.
- To explore how the SMTs dealt with the challenges they faced and whether these interventions were effective.

1.5 THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to investigate the role of SMTs in improving Grade 12 learners' performance in the Vhembe Education District, Limpopo. The study described the roles of SMTs, identified the challenges that are faced by the SMTs and investigated the impact of the roles of school management in improving learner performance in Grade 12. This study also analysed literature that was relevant to the research questions such as Employment of Educators Act 76 of 1996, Educators Labour Relation Council of 2003 and National Education Policy Act 27 of 1996 to understand the functions of individual SMT members and their roles in improving learner performance. The study provided recommendations that would help in improving learner performance in Grade 12 in the Vhembe Education District. The major focus was on the SMTs and the impact they had on improving learner performance.

1.6 PRELIMINARY LITERATURE REVIEW

1.6.1 The composition of the SMTs

Crawford, Kydd and Riches (2011:132) contended that the selection of SMTs is informed by staff vacancies in the staff establishment of the school or by inviting staff to become members of SMT. Schools are graded according to the sizes depending on the number of learners they enrol. This criterion is used as a yardstick in determining whether a school qualifies for the role of deputy principal and the number of HoDs. Bigger schools are allocated more deputies and heads of departments. The Employment of Educators Act 76 of 1998 (DoE, 1998: s3) outlines the factors that are taken into account in determining the post provisioning needs of the schools and learners, such as the maximum ideal class size applicable to a specific learning area or phase or the workload of the educators and the size of the schools. These are some of the factors that the head of the provincial department considers before the allocation of posts to schools.

1.6.2 Challenges faced by the SMTs

According to Wills (2016:108), the current policies and their implementation in the area of school leadership development and performance management remain weak while no policies exist to manage school leadership successions. The people who were appointed in management positions were not inducted on current policies and the performance of learners was affected by lack of training on policies for newly appointed SMTs. The appointment of the educators as stated in the Employment of Educators Act 76 of 1998, section 6 rests with the provincial Head of Department.

The filling of educators' posts including promotional posts is done in terms of section 5 of the Employment of Educators Act which states that the educator establishment of a provincial department of education must consist of posts created by the Member of the Executive Council (MEC). When the positions of the principal, deputy principal and HoDs are vacated due to retirement or natural attrition, it often takes time before the vacant post is filled and this destabilises the school. In Wills' (2016:108) view, leadership changes are detrimental to school performance because learners and teachers take time to accept to new leadership and management style.

1.7 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study was grounded on the theory of instructional leadership because its focus was on the instructional role of the SMTs in improving learner performance in Grade 12.

1.8 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This section is about the research design and methodology used in the study. The section outlines the research approach, paradigm and design used in the study. It further outlines the data collection tools used, sampling and selection of participants. It also details how the data would be analysed.

1.8.1 Significance of the study

The study provides an in-depth understanding of the role of SMTs in improving Grade 12 learners' performance in the Vhembe Education District, Limpopo. Data collected in the study would assist the Department of Basic Education re-examine the requirement of the appointment of School Management Teams in the leadership and management position. The study contributed to the body of knowledge in the area of learner improvement. Besides this, the study provided insights into the role of SMTs in ensuring that learner performance is improved. The contributions were of significance in that even though there had been research done in this area, the context in which it was conducted was different.

1.8.2 Benefits of the study

The research will equip the SMTs with the necessary skill for identifying the problems that lead to poor performance in Grade 12 (Ulla, 2018:797). It will also assist the SMTs with ways to address the problems of underperformance in a systematic way. The research will benefit SMTs by providing them with an opportunity to evaluate their roles in improving learner performance in Grade 12. It will allow SMTs to change their management practices as they monitor and support the teachers. Research is a form of continuing professional development.

The research could assist schools in terms of closing gaps which will be identified in the SMTs of the selected schools and all SMTs in Limpopo Province and elsewhere in the world. The study could be beneficial to the policy makers in the Department of Education, circuit managers, principals of schools and school governing bodies.

Seymour, Hunter, Laursen and Deantoni (2003:3) asserted that, in research, we find meaningful data that inform programme development and refinement. The research will help to create an understanding of the strategies that work in improving learner performance in the Vhembe Education District. It will help the researcher and the participants to better understand the instructional roles of the SMTs in improving learner performance.

1.8.3 Limitations of the study

The study was conducted in three secondary schools in the Vhembe Education District. It appears that the lack of contextual richness would be strong limitations because of the number of schools selected for collecting data. The limitation of the study might also be caused by the relationship between the researcher and participants. The researcher was the circuit manager, the immediate supervisor of the principals. Some of the participants could have been reluctant to reveal the truth about the investigation because they might think that their weakness would be known by their supervisor.

Limitations were addressed by using different techniques to collect data because the researcher interacts with SMTs while on duty. The researcher conducted quarterly accountability sessions where the principals' account for learner performance for the quarter, and the researcher met the SMTs during school support visits. The study used a qualitative approach, which, according to McMillan and Schumacher (2014:24), creates a limitation because of its lack of reliable and generalisable findings.

1.9 DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS AND CONCEPTS

1.9.1 School management teams

According to Baloyi (2011:16), the SMT represents the school's management structure which is responsible for the day-to-day running of the school affairs and for the implementation of the departmental policies. The DoE (2005:7) indicated that in a school situation, the school principal, the deputy principal and the HoDs constitute the SMT and their core responsibility lies in the management and the administration of the school. In this research, the SMT are responsible for the quality of teaching and learning. They are also responsible to improve the quality of the learning outcomes in the school.

1.9.2 Principal

The researcher concurs with the definition of a principal as an educator appointed or acting as the head of a school according to DoE (1996b: B-4). The principal is responsible for the professional management of a public school as contemplated in section 16A (3) of SASA and must carry out duties which include the implementation of all the educational programmes and curriculum activities, the management of all educators and support staff. The principal provides professional leadership in the school.

1.9.3 Deputy Principal

According to the DoE (1996b: C-65), the deputy principal assists the principal in managing the school and correctly promoting the education of learners. The deputy principal is responsible for the curriculum management at the school. The HoDs report to the deputy principal on the curriculum activities performed at the school. The deputy principal supervises work and the performance of the teachers.

1.9.4 Heads of Department

The DBE (2016a: A-27) states that the HoD engages in class teaching, is responsible for the effective functioning of the department and organises relevant or related extracurricular activities to ensure that the education of the learners is promoted properly. HoDs are also referred to as teacher leaders whose departments have two or more related disciplines and no fewer than five teachers reporting to the post. The study showed that HoDs provide educational leadership in the areas of pedagogy, curriculum and assessment in their specific academic areas. HoDs advise the principal through deputy principal on work allocation of the teachers where such exist.

1.9.5 Teacher

Teacher is defined by the DoE (1996: A-3) as any person who teaches, educates or trains other persons at an education institution or assists in rendering education services or education auxiliary or support services provided by or in an education department. The word teacher and educator will be used interchangeable in the study.

1.9.6 Learner

In terms of the SASA (DoE, 1996a: B-4), a learner means any person receiving education or obliged to receive an education. The research focused on the improvement of learners' performance in Grade 12.

1.9.7 District-based support teams

District-based support teams (DBSTs) (DBE, 2014: viii) are a management structure at the district level, the responsibility of which is to coordinate and promote inclusive education through training, curriculum delivery, distribution of resources, infrastructure development, identification, assessment and addressing of barriers to learning. In the study, DBSTs is the support structure aimed at building the capacity of the SBSTs to ensure that differentiated support is given to learners.

1.9.8 School-Based Support Teams

School-Based Support Teams (SBSTs) (DBE, 2014: xi) are teams established by schools in general and further education, as a school-level support mechanism, whose primary function is to put coordinated school, learner and teacher support in place. The SBST in the study is about ensuring that the school becomes an inclusive centre of learning, care and support. This team is the same as an institution-level Support Team.

1.9.9 Participative leadership

Bell and Mjoli (2014:451) defined participative leadership as the process of making joint decisions or at least sharing influence in decision-making by the superior and his or her subordinates. Participative leadership has great utility in organisational and team effectiveness. Participative leadership is the approach in leadership that allow and encourage the subordinate to participate in decision that affect the management of the school.

1.9.10 Instructional leadership

The coordination and supervision of curriculum and instruction. According Mangin and Stoelinga (2008:3), instructional leaders facilitate instructional improvement by providing teachers with effective professional development. In this study, the instructional leadership is about the principal's activities having an effect on teaching and learning in the classroom.

1.9.11 National Curriculum Statement

According to DBE (2003:11), the National Curriculum Statement is a tool that lays the foundation for the achievement of learning outcomes and assessment standards and spelling out the key principles and values that underpin the curriculum. NCS aims at build learning outcomes on critical and developmental outcomes that are inspired by the Constitution and developed through a democratic process.

1.9.12 Outcomes-Based Education.

The DBE (2003:12) defines Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) as an instrument that forms the foundation for the curriculum in South Africa. In the study, OBE strives to enable all learners to reach their maximum learning potential by setting the learning outcomes to be achieved by the end of the education process. OBE encourages a learner-centred and activity-based approach to education.

1.9.13 Assessment

The DBE (2011:15) defines assessment as a process of collecting, analysing and interpreting information to assist teachers, parents and other stakeholders in deciding the progress of learners. Assessment is further explained by the DBE (2009:24) as a way of gathering evidence to make a judgement or describe the status of learning of an individual or group. In my study I attempted to show that assessment is linked to learning and teaching and cannot be viewed or conducted in isolation. The quality of assessment contribute to the learning outcomes.

1.10 CHAPTER DIVISION

CHAPTER 1: THE OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

The chapter focuses on the background information of the topic, statement of the problem, research objectives, research questions, and limitations, rationale of the study, literature review, methodology, sampling, data collection methods and procedures, the definition of concepts, and the structure of the dissertation.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Relevant sources to the topic are analysed and include recent sources such as books, government gazettes, research articles, thesis, newspapers, and documents from the internet. All sources consulted and cited are acknowledged in the reference section. Literature review is followed by the research design and methodology.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Chapter 3 provides a discussion on the choice of research design, the definition of research, characteristics of qualitative approaches, the roles of the researcher, the advantages of qualitative research, data collection methods, sampling procedures or selection of participants, sources of data, procedures for data collection, statement of ethics and the trustworthiness of the study.

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Data analysis techniques are discussed in this chapter. Thematic analysis is used for data analysis. The researcher also analyses and discusses the findings and problems and limitations experienced during the data collection stage. In this chapter, themes are developed based on the research questions, literature review, the theoretical framework and data quality and depth.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The researcher discusses and summarises the main findings, and presents the conclusions and recommendations arising from the study. The researcher draws conclusions based on the information collected and analysed. Areas which needed further research were highlighted for future study.

1.12 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The chapter provided an overview of the study. The chapter sets the background for the study and its significance. The problem statement was formulated on the roles of SMTs in improving Grade 12 learner performance in the Vhembe Education District. The theoretical framework that forms the basis of the study was discussed briefly. The next chapter presents a review of existing literature on the roles of School Management Teams in improving learner performance from the international and South African perspective.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this research was to examine the instructional role of the SMTs in improving Grade 12 learners' performance in Vhembe Education District. In this research, the roles of heads of department, deputy principals and principals in instructional leadership are explored. The challenges that contribute towards poor learner performance and the strategies used by DBE in improving learner performance are discussed. In this literature review, the researcher explains different aspects of school leadership and how instructional leadership theory contributes to the improvement of Grade 12 results. The researcher would further explore teamwork and its implications for learner performance in a school.

The chapter begins with a discussion on the conceptualisation of instructional leadership and focuses on the composition of the SMTs as stipulated in Personnel Administrative Measures and regulations regarding the terms and conditions of Employment of Educators Act 1998. It continues with the analysis of the structure of SMT and the roles of SMT in improving learner performance. The researcher further analyses literature that deals with leadership and management of schools in South Africa and abroad. The chapter will also explore the theoretical framework of study. The research is framed within instructional leadership theory. It sought to link instructional leadership and how it contributes to Grade 12 learner performance in Vhembe Education District.

2.2 DEFINITION OF SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

There are different definitions of leadership in education. Smith (2017: 5) defines leadership as an action of influence and relational. Msengana (2006:72) supported that educational leadership is about human relations. It is how the SMT guide the school to make strategic decisions towards improvement of learning outcomes. Alig-Mielcreek (2003:12) asserted that leadership definition in education continues to change and it is influenced by different factors like change in politics, economy and the environmental factors. Pont, Nusche and Moorman (2008:13) defined leadership as a way of steering organisations by shaping people's attitudes, motivation and change of behaviour that benefits the school. Mpisane (2015:9) agreed that leadership is a set of behavioural actions and mental strategies which a person can apply in order to discover and achieve motivation of teachers towards reaching the goals of the organisation, which is to improve the performance of the learners.

Chu and Fu (2006:2) further defined leadership as the process in which a leader exerts influence and is able to inspire and motivate his or her team to work towards meeting the goals of the organisation. The definition shows that the leader has the responsibility to make the team to stay motivated in order to realise the goals of the organisations. Heaven and Bourne (2016:2) expanded on the definition of leadership by showing that leaders create a sense of vision and purpose by inspiring the educators to do the work in order to achieve the vision of the school. When there is a need to make changes in the school, the principal seeks the commitment of all members before effecting the changes. It encourages the team to work harder because their contributions are recognised in decisions that affect their working conditions.

Leithwood, Louis, Anderson and Wahlstrom (2004:3) described school leadership as leadership which is about helping the school set its directions and it influences the teachers to move in the set directions. Holsted (2016:8) also agreed that school leadership influences teaching and learning by developing and implementing the school policies. The school leadership should ensure that the school fund, learner support materials and staffing are allocated in way that promote effective teaching and learning.

According to Southworth (2017:1), school leadership is about improving school effectiveness. Effective leadership improves schools' performances. The quality of school leadership can translate to improved learner performance. Effective school leadership is able to involve the outside stakeholders including the parents to participate in activities that can improve the results. Mothipa, Magano, Mapotse and Mohapi (2014: 367) defined the main role of school leadership as that of creating a conducive teaching and learning environment in schools. The positive school environment can contribute to improvement of results.

According to Southworth (2017:3) strong school leadership is critical for the improvement of learner performance and curriculum development. Learner performance can be improved when school leadership get involved in promoting and participating in the professional development of teachers. Firmaningsih-Kolu (2015:15) stresses that school leadership has an important impact on the quality of the school organisation and on learner performance. The school leadership is key for school improvement and the quality of learners' outcomes.

Day and Sammons (2016:17) stressed the effect of direct and indirect leadership on teaching and learning. The direct impact is through the building of organisational learning through working with teachers and leadership which has a clear focus on teaching and learning. Indirect leadership affects learners' motivation, behaviour, and high level of engagement, learning and

achievement. Collective leadership effects seem to count when it comes to learner performance. Myende, Samuel and Pillay (2018:2) showed that school leadership include financial management. The school principals who are successful in financial management are able to manage the budget and have interventions aimed at improving the results.

2.3 INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP AS A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The researcher employed the instructional leadership theory as the theoretical framework in this study. According to Hallinger (2015:1), instructional leadership came to the fore in the USA in the 1950s and 1960s. The reason for its development was to close the gap that was existing in leadership. Instructional leadership focuses on learner-centred leadership and leadership for learning. Few educational leadership and management styles that were existing during that period were able to link school leadership and learning. Instructional leadership became influential leadership when it started in 1950s to 1980s in the USA. Leithwood and Hallinger (2002:103) expanded on the background of instructional leadership when they noted that, in the 1960s and 1970s, the focus of the SMTs in the Western nations was on the improvement of teaching methods, curriculum design, learning aids and the state of the school facilities.

The main focus in the USA was on instructional innovations and development of school facilities. Leithwood and Hallinger, (2002:103) asserted that when the USA measured learner performance, in some areas, there was no significant improvement. The results of learner performance made the policy makers shift the focus from the classroom to look at the whole school. Leithwood and Hallinger (2002:103) suggested that focusing on one leadership theory would not be able to give the desired results. The SMTs need to use different management and leadership styles depending on the situation at hand.

2.3.1 The definition of instructional leadership

According to Mestry (2017:258), instructional leadership involves the actions that school principals take in order to promote learners' performance. The actions of the instructional leader demands the practice of planning, coordination and improvement of teaching and learning. The principal should take actions based on the plans that would motivate both the learners and educators to show excellence in their schoolwork. Heaven and Bourne (2016:2) discussed the actions that instructional leaders need to take in a school. The instructional leader analyses the pattern of performance of learners in a grade and compares it with the quality of the teaching offered by the educators. The analysis of results could assist to point out where

the problem is with the learner or the teacher and the relevant remedial action that would be taken.

Bendikson and Hattle (2012:2) were of the view that instructional leadership has a stronger influence on learner performance than other leadership styles. When the SMTs are focused on teaching and learning of learners, the school is likely to be effective which will impact positively on the performance of the learners. The SMTs should focus on the quality of the curriculum that is offered, the quality and quantity of the assessment tasks, the nature of the feedback after the marking of the assessment tasks and the quality of the time that the teacher spend in the classroom.

Leithwood et al. (2004:6) showed that instructional leadership focuses mainly on improving the classroom practices of teachers. It is about the importance of keeping teaching and learning at the forefront of decision-making in a school. Mpisane (2015:12) described instructional leadership as leadership that influences the quality of education in schools, enhancing learner achievement and managing resources to effectively improve teaching and learning. It also focuses on managing teaching and learning and the behaviour of teachers in working with learners. According to Smith (2015:42), instructional leadership focuses on the importance of professional development for teachers. The teachers who are developed on curriculum matters are able to manage learning activities in a classroom better than less developed teachers.

Mestry (2017:258) citing Fullan (1991) argued that instructional leadership is collaborative in nature, so, the SMTs should delegate tasks to educators considering their area of interest and strength. Educators get the opportunity to learn new things and their leadership roles are developed. Instructional leadership helps the principal to encourage educators to identify with vision and mission of school. Educators craft strategies that would improve teaching and learning in order to realise the vision and mission of school.

Manaseh (2016:32) posited that instructional leadership is an educational leadership approach aimed at the core or the reason why the school exists, namely, teaching and learning. Effective teaching and learning is achieved when the SMTs clearly define the school vision, mission and goals, manage learning programmes properly and promote a positive school climate. When all the mentioned contributing factors are well managed, it increases the likelihood of the school producing excellent results.

Ovando and Cavazos (2004: 8) stressed the multiple roles of SMTs in instructional and administrative leadership. Instructional leadership focuses on development and

implementation of goals and creating a positive school culture. Instructional management focuses on enhancing learner academic performance. The instructional leadership of SMTs means shaping the direction through creating a vision, mission, goals and school culture which are seen as a major influence on the achievement of learners. Lunenburg (2010:2) argued that there is a demand that is placed on the SMTs in order to make teaching and learning in schools effective. Kassim and Abdullah (2011:46) exposed the functions that the instructional leader should carry out in order to have effective schools. The principal must ensure that when the period starts, teaching and learning is happening in the classroom. The principal should be visible to both the learners and the teachers.

Leepo (2015:62) is of the view that the responsibility of the instructional leader in a school is to ensure that every learner receives quality instruction every day. The SMTs should also support the learners with learning disabilities and learners coming from disadvantaged families. The instructional leader should focus on the effective management of resources including human resources. Instructional leadership is characterised by planning and the coordination of programmes and ensuring that the school have effective language policies. The SMTs use assessment as a way to improve teaching and learning and have programmes for educators' professional development. Tigere (2016:39) argued that in order to improve the quality of learner performance, the principal should focus on curriculum delivery in all the grades, improving the quality and quantity of assessment. There should be efficiency and high levels of accountability in schools, and subject educators should account for poor performance in their subjects.

According to Day and Sammons (2016:20), the primary focus of instructional leadership is for SMTs to promote high levels of achievement by learners. The leadership of the school ensures that there is effective teaching and learning and quality is enforced by monitoring and support. The instructional leaders set educational goals, plan on how they would achieve the set goals and keep on evaluating the teaching and learning and introduce interventions when there is a need to do so.

Alig-Mielcarek (2003:28) postulated that the SMTs should set high expectations and realistic targets for learners and teachers to achieve at the end of each term. The SMTs should strive to provide and promote professional growth for all the educators. The SMTs should create and maintain the school climate that motivates educators to be committed to their work. Learners are also motivated to work to the best of their abilities.

2.3.2 The School Management Teams as instructional leaders

The role of the SMTs in improving learner performance is marked by a variety of perspectives that have developed at different stages in education history and which continue to be influential in the performance of schools. Mafuwane (2011:19) described the important functions of instructional leader as the protection of instruction time and programmes. The programmes that are designed at schools are aimed at improving learner performance. The programmes are evaluated using the learner performance data and the basic functionality of the school. The learner performance data would show how learners are performing at different levels and, if it shows that more learners are at lower levels, the programme needs to be revised and a better plan needs to be implemented.

As indicated earlier, the conceptual framework which informs this research is instructional leadership which involves a number of leadership activities that create an effective SMTs. Southworth (2017:2) defined instructional leadership as leadership that focuses on the core business of the school, which is teaching, learning, assessment and achievement of learners. Kaparou and Bush (2016:4) further elaborated on the concept of instructional leadership as an effective way of the interaction of the principal with the educators with the aim of improving the quality of teaching and learning. According to Ismael, Don, Husin and Khalid (2018:136), the instructional role of the SMT has an important function towards the academic performance of learners in a school. Instructional leadership influences effective teaching and learning in the classroom. According to Calitz, Fuglestad and Lillejord (2002:72), educational leaders should consider ways in which they can facilitate the establishment of an effective learning environment for all their learners and educators to benefit from. The role of the SMTs in the learning environment of the learners should enhance teaching and learning in the classroom.

In conceptualising instructional leadership, Kaparou and Bush (2016:4) asserted that vision for learning should be clearly defined and communicated by the SMTs to the teachers. The aspect of curriculum management is led the principal together with the SMT. The performance of the learners is evaluated in order to track progress and a differentiated improvement strategy is developed to support individual needs of the learners. The performance of the teachers is monitored and supported by the SMTs. The HoD models instructional leadership to the subject teachers and must have mentoring and coaching sessions with newly appointed teachers. Teachers are engaged in continuous professional development so that they can be able to cope with ongoing curriculum changes in education system.

Spillane and Healey (2010:256-257) conceptualised instructional leadership as a form of collaboration practised by the principal, teachers and SMT in leading the school curriculum. It can also be defined as a leadership style that involves different individuals who are appointed to designated leadership and management positions like the principal, the deputy principal and the HoD. Instructional leadership has the distributed elements that allow all the SMT members to take the responsibility for leading and managing learner performance in a school.

Murphy, Hallinger, Weil and Mitman (1983:137) identified factors such as strong administrative leadership as key point in the area of instruction and curriculum management. It is important to create a safe and orderly environment that can allow teaching and learning to take place without any interference by outside factors. The SMTs need to set a norm of academic performance by having high expectations for learner achievement. High targets motivate both the teachers and learners to work hard to achieve the set targets. The educators and the SMT need to have regular monitoring of learners' performance. It would help the SMT to identify learners who need support before they write final examinations. The SMT should strive to have a strong relationship with the community because they also have an instructional role to play.

Southworth (2017:6) argued that instructional leadership is about the importance of keeping teaching and learning at the forefront of decision-making. It encourages the principal to keep focused on the main objectives of the school. To maintain high performance in schools, Hallinger's (1983) model of instructional leadership is relevant and critical. It consists of three sets of leadership dimensions: defining the school's mission, managing the instructional programme and promoting a positive learning climate.

2.3.3 Instructional leadership framework

Hasani (2015:12) citing Hallinger (1985) proposed an instructional leadership framework that can be helpful to SMTs. This framework is composed of the following ten elements:

- Frame the school goals: The SMTs need to formulate the school objectives and set realistic goals that are understood and can be applied by the educators to achieve excellent performance.
- Communicate the school goals: The set goals of the school should be communicated to educators, learners, parents and all stakeholders that have an interest in education.
- Supervise and evaluate the instruction: The SMTs need to monitor the work of the educators through class visits. When the SMTs conduct class visits they can evaluate the

impact of teaching in terms of the realisation of the target. SMTs should also check the learners' work by viewing classwork and homework books.

- **Coordinate the curriculum:** The SMTs should review the curriculum of the school to check if it is keeping with the current trends and align it to the needs of the country. The curriculum should be relevant to the economic needs of the country.
- **Monitor learners' progress:** The SMTs should make sense of the learner performance data that is produced at the end of the term. They need to interpret and analyse and draw an intervention programme to address the gaps.
- **Protect the instructional time:** The SMTs should ensure that the educators are in class on time and that they are prepared to teach. The SMTs should not use contact time to call staff meetings. When time is lost because of reasons beyond the school control, the educators should have a recovery plan to recover the lost time. The DoE (2015a:14) emphasises the protection of teaching and learning time. There is relationship between learning time and learner performance. Increasing learning time is a key to improving the performance and attitudes of the learners.
- **Maintain high visibility:** The SMTs should be visible in the school by walking around when educators are in class, and make use of break times to talk to learners and educators in an informal way. They can also be visible by visiting them in the classroom.
- **Provide incentives for the educators:** It is the SMT's responsibility to provide incentives to educators who are going the extra mile in curricular and extracurricular activities. It serves as motivation to the educators who are doing well and can also attract other educators.
- **Promote professional development:** The SMTs should create opportunities for educators by encouraging them to attend the workshops, seminars and conferences that are relevant to their subjects and enrol with institutions of higher learning to further their education.
- **Provide incentives for learning:** The school should have a programme to reward talented learners in extracurricular activities and reward those who are doing well in curricular activities. The parents of the best achieving learners need to be involved so that they can be able to give moral support to their children.

Manaseh (2016:32) also identified four key areas that the SMTs can use to manage schools effectively. The key areas are curriculum coordination to ensure that all curriculum programmes are well coordinated in a school. The SMTs need to monitor teaching in the classroom through checking the lesson plans and learners' assessment tasks. The SMTs need to conduct class visits as a way of monitoring and supporting educators. The last key factor is

the review of curriculum material by the SMTs to ensure that learner support materials that the teachers are using in the class are the materials required by the curriculum policy.

2.3.4. INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP OF THE SMTS IN IMPROVING LEARNER PERFORMANCE

School leadership performs a variety of functions, one which is instructional leadership. The investigation was about the impact of instructional leadership in improving Grade 12 learner performance in Vhembe Education District. School effectiveness and learner performance is a critical role of the SMTs. Vogel (2018:10) defined instructional leadership as the management of the instructional programme in the school to promote teaching and learning. The implementation of curriculum involves monitoring teachers work and tracking learners' academic performance.

The researcher believes that the instructional leadership of the SMT is key in school effectiveness. It has been shown that the SMTs were able to plan the school activities and coordinate using the management components in the school. Coordination and control of curriculum was evident in the SIP. Monitoring and evaluation of the plans was captured in the quarterly reports and the monitoring reports.

The SMTs track and monitor the progress of the learners informed by the pacesetters to ensure that learners cover the prescribed content for the academic year. The SMT took a lead in setting the goals and define clear directions of their school. They motivated their teachers to give extra effort in order to improve learner performance. It can be concluded that the instructional leadership of the SMTs influences the performance of the learners in Grade 12 in Vhembe Education District, Limpopo Province. The focus on curricular activities, parental involvement and professional teacher development to bring about effective teaching and learning demonstrated by instructional leadership by the school management. The efforts of the SMT impacted on the school improvement of learning outcome.

Figure 2.1 presents a diagrammatic representation of the SMT as framed by the instructional leadership theory. The diagram demonstrates the relationship between instructional leadership theory and the duties of the SMT as prescribed by PAM (DoE, 1998).

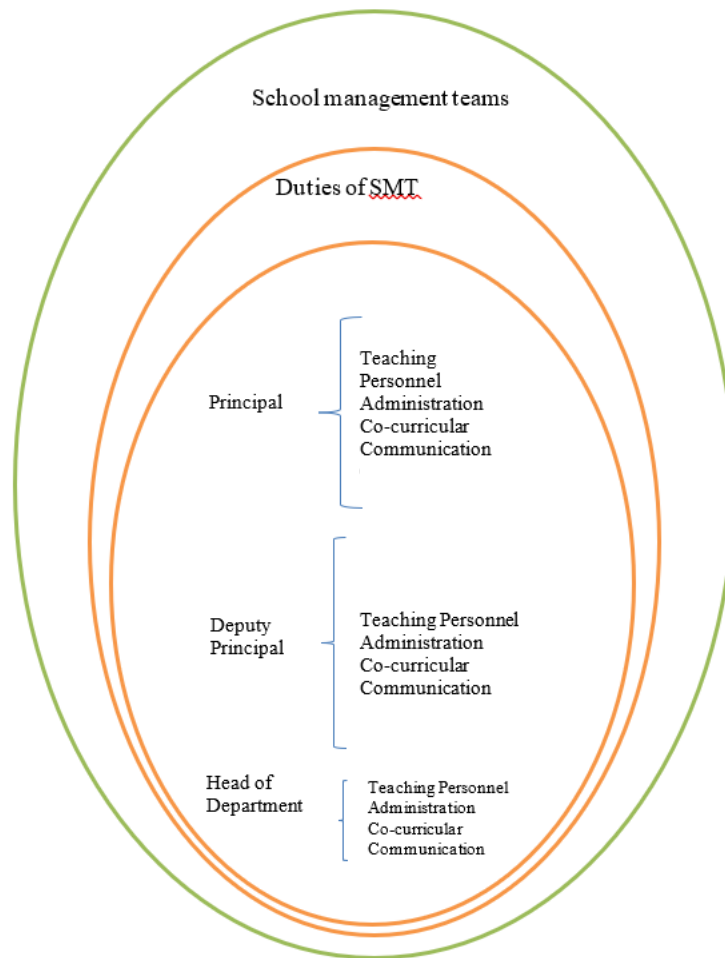


Figure 2.1: The graphical representation of the duties of SMT in relation to Instructional Leadership Theory.

The diagram suggests the interaction between and among the school management teams as they carry out their instructional leadership responsibilities. The principal, deputy principal and head of department have detailed roles as outlined by PAM (DoE, 1998). The implementation of the roles and responsibilities of the SMT in the school contribute to the improvement of learning outcomes.

2.4 LINKING SCHOOL LEADERSHIP APPROACHES TO LEARNER PERFORMANCE

In improving learner performance, there are other relevant leadership approaches that supplement instructional leadership. The following are imperative:

2.4.1 Learner performance and transformational leadership

Alig-Mielcreek (2003:24) defined transformational leadership as a process where the leader and the subordinate have the responsibility to motivate and encourage each other to achieve high levels of excellence in the school setting. According to Day and Sammons (2016:18),

transformational leadership is mostly associated with the vision, setting directions, restructuring and realigning the organisation, developing staff and involvement of external community. Transformational leadership put more emphasis on the vision and inspiration of all concerned stakeholders.

The collective effort of all stakeholders in education has a positive impact on performance of learners. All the stakeholders, particularly the SMT, should know the vision and mission of the school so that their effort should be geared towards the realisation of the vision of the school. Amanchukwu, Stanley and Ololube (2015:8) believed that the focus of transformational leadership is on the connections formed between the SMTs and the teachers. The SMTs need to create a connection that can result in increased motivation and morality of both the teachers and the SMTs. The SMTs as the transformational leaders motivate and inspire the teachers to work towards achieving the set targets of the school.

Bush (2007:396) further suggested that transformational leadership is the process which the SMTs need to follow in order to improve learner performance. The strong point of transformational leadership is that it involves the participation of all stakeholders in the improvement of learner performance. Leithwood et al. (2004:7) asserted that transformational leadership is concerned with all stakeholders who have an interest in education and are concerned about classroom conditions. Transformational leadership is also about changing the conditions that hinder effective teaching and learning.

Southworth (2017:2) noted that transformational leadership focuses on the commitment of the SMTs in leading and managing change in such a way that it would not have negative impact on learner performance. Day and Sammons (2016: 18) asserted that transformational leadership is about defining the vision of the school and setting the direction which the school needs to take in order to achieve the vision. The SMT needs to do the restructuring and realigning of the organisation to be able to deliver the expected results. It can be argued that when school leaders exhibit both instructional and transformational leadership, performance will be improved.

Heaven and Bourne (2016:2) claimed that transformational leadership looks at how SMTs manage change in a positive way and ensure that learners and educators are able to adjust to any changes in the education system. SMTs should be able to manage curriculum change in a way that the good performance of the school is maintained.

2.4.2 Learner performance and participative leadership

Leithwood et al. (2004:6) defined participative leadership as a leadership style which is concerned with how decisions are made about both school priorities and how to pursue them. It is the leadership style that leaders use in organisations such as schools in order to achieve results. Participative leadership can influence learner performance in a school. For example, when the intervention strategy is developed to improve performance, all SMT members need to make a contribution. The contribution of the collective is key to improving learner performance. Amanchukwu, Stanley and Ololube (2015:8) explained that participative leadership is a leadership style that encourages participation and values contributions from teachers. When teachers feel recognised in making decisions about matters that concern their subjects, it can increase collaboration, which results in quality decisions that enhance learner performance.

To Bruyns, Gericke, Kriel and Malan (2003:33), participative leadership focuses on effective leadership, self-management, values, relationships, dignity, location of authority and respect for others. Participative leadership is underpinned by democratic principles. Participative management is about the participation of the SMT members in the management process of the school, including matters of learner performance. Crawford et al. (2011:63) asserted that, in participative leadership, the leader works with others to ensure that the schooling culture and practice are transformed. In participative leadership, the leader is concerned about the participation of all the people in the school towards the improvement of learner performance.

Bush (2007:397) defined participative leadership as a decision-making process that involves the entire SMT instead of the principal taking a decision unilaterally. The benefit of participative leadership is that the whole team owns the decisions and it becomes easier to implement them. There are three main assumptions of participative leadership as illustrated by Bush (2007:397). The first assumption is that the participation of all team members in decisions that affect curriculum activities increases the effectiveness of the school. The second assumption is that participation is based on the democratic principles of the Constitution of Republic of South Africa Act 104 of 1996. The third assumption is that participation is based on contextual factors of the school. When the three assumptions underpin decision-making in the school, this has the potential to enhance learner performance. Heaven and Bourne (2016:2) showed that participative leadership allows equity in the SMTs when it comes to decision-making process.

Ou, Tsui, Kinicki, Waldman, Xiao and Song (2014:39-40) described the key factors of participative leadership as members' willingness to collaborate, share information, make joint decisions and develop a shared vision, all of which are critical for coordinating actions among SMT members and for improving the quality of strategic decisions. Participative management is empowering leadership; it enhances the meaningfulness of work and fosters participation in decision-making. The other benefit of practising participative management is instilling confidence in the team which results in high performance and provides a level of autonomy to the team.

Lopez-Munoz and Escriba-Esteve (2017:178) described participatory decision-making as a practice of sharing power among team members and empowering them to partake in strategic decision-making. The decision is not the product of one person, but the team owns the decision. Participatory decision-making processes are an important relational mechanism that enables more realistic decisions and enhances school performance. Participatory decision-making benefits the whole school organisation because of the involvement of management team and it creates a receptive environment for the decision taken. Participatory decision-making is a mutual and collective decision-making process in which SMT members inform other team members of their actions and are aware of their impact on them; have an understanding of the needs and problems of other SMT members; and engage in frequent discussions about mutual and collective expectations of SMT members.

Bertram and Christiansen (2014:47) described the two benefits of participative leadership: firstly, the participants are actively involved in identifying and then investigating a problem; secondly, the people are actively and directly involved in finding a solution to the problems identified and at the same time are part of implementing the solutions. Teachers are involved in finding solutions that contribute to poor learner performance. Sejanamane (2014:26) further emphasised that participative leadership provide the environment for both the teachers and learners to strive for quality teaching and learning in a school.

Grunig (2008:234) argued that participative leadership is not always best as many theorists from the human resources school of management maintain. Effective leaders vary in style from autocratic to participatory depending on the characteristics of the situation. Effective leaders determine the direction of the team and, if the team lacks capacity to deliver as directed by the leader, the leader implements empowerment programmes. Excellence in learner performance is not determined by the organisation but by effective leadership and management of teachers, learners and the organisation. Sepuru (2018:72) indicated that when all teachers participate in

the leadership and management of the school it is an opportunity to train future leaders in the school. The upcoming leaders in the school are able to sustain the performance of the school.

2.5 THE COMPOSITION OF THE SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAM

Like any organisation, schools are managed collectively and, in schools, this collective management in the South African context is termed the SMT. Van der Mescht and Tyala (2008:1) supported the policy on formation of the SMT in the public school structure. The SMT is constituted by the principal of the school, the deputy principal, and the head of department and the size of the SMT depends on the size of the school, the bigger the school, the more management positions especially the HoDs and the deputy principals. In confirming the assertion above, Bush and Heystek (2006:64) indicated that the structure of the SMT differs depending on the size of the school.

The formation of SMTs is supported by policy documents such as the SASA and the Draft Policy Framework: Education Leadership and Management Development (Van der Mescht & Tyala, 2008:1). The DBE also provided manuals to guide educational managers in the implementation of decentralised management structures such as the SMT. The SMT is a structure that is based on democratic principles. Southworth (2017:1) referred to SMTs as a formal organisational position in school leadership. Figure 2.1 represents the structure of an SMT.

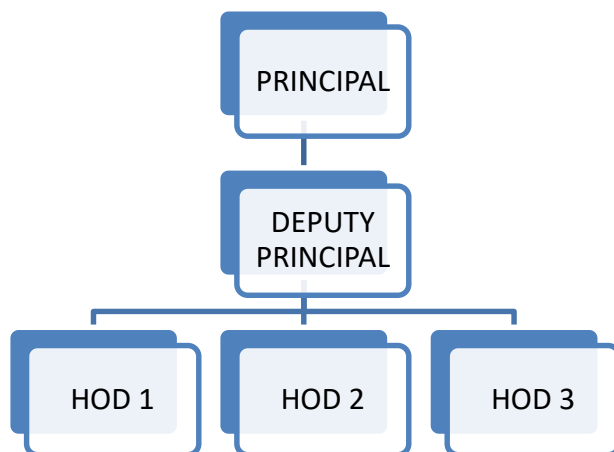


Figure 2.2: SMT structure.

The DoE as outlined in the Employment of Educators Act shows that a provincial MEC for Education has powers to allocate posts to public schools or create relevant posts (DoE, 1998). In terms of the Act, the department appoints educators to schools. Schools with high enrolments

of learners are allocated promotional posts in line with the student numbers. Small schools with no allocation of promotional posts need to co-opt teachers to serve on the SMT.

All South African schools should have an SMT structure irrespective of the school size. The SASA (DoE, 1996a) outlines the responsibilities of the SMTs. The Act identifies the professional management of the school as the responsibility of the principal and the SMTs. The other key responsibility of the SMTs is to manage curriculum in the school. The SMTs should, therefore, strive to achieve effective curriculum delivery within the management and leadership capacity of the school. The existence of the SMT structures enables more teachers to participate directly in issues that need to be resolved at the school.

The DBE provides SMTs with legislation that assists them to execute their roles and responsibilities in a school. There are two main pieces of legislation that govern and guide South African schools. The first one is SASA which governs and regulates the general operations of South African schools. Chapter 3 of SASA, subsection 16 and 16A, outlines the duties and functions of the professional management of the school. The principal together with the SMT accounts to the provincial Head of Department on the performance of the learners. The second piece of legislation is the Employment of Educators Act 76 of 1998 which contains the PAM. PAM outlines the main duties and functions of the principal, the deputy principal, the head of department and teachers. PAM also allocates teaching time per post level as indicated in the table below:

Table 2.1: Scheduled teaching time for secondary schools

Secondary school	Ratio per 1000 educators
Post level 1	Between 85% and 90%
Post level 2 (HoD)	85%
Deputy Principal	60%
Principal	Between 5% and 60% depending on his/her post level

The table 2.1 indicates the scheduled teaching time per post level.

The Education Labour Relations Council (1998: 5) stated that the scheduled teaching time of teachers includes the formal school day and outside of formal school day. Outside of the formal

school day, the teachers would engage in extra and co-curricular duties; and professional development like studying with institutions of higher learning. Formal school day focus on teaching and learning in the classroom. The classroom activities that teachers and learners that aimed at improving the learning outcomes.

The management of the teaching time by SMTs is emphasised by Kayode and Ayodele (2015:5) when they refer to time as an important resource in a school. Teachers' time management has a significant impact on learners' academic performance. The teachers' time used in planning and organising lessons, coordinating class activities, directing the learners on what to do and controlling the learners' work has an impact on their performance. Cattaneo, Oggenfuss and Wolter (2016:9) argued that the impact of scheduled teaching time on learners' academic performance, varies from school to school depending on the type of SMTs.

The scheduled teaching time of the school management teams show that classroom teaching and the quality of monitoring and support by SMTs can influence learner performance if it is fully implemented. Holsted (2016:1) stressed the fact that the SMT influences teaching and learning. The SMT can have an influence on educators' expectations and the quality of teaching and improve the professional working culture. Direct leadership could have a great impact on improvement of learner performance. Indirect leadership affects learners' motivation and behaviour.

Echoing Holsted's (2016) focus on the influence of school management teams, Pont, Nusche and Moorman (2008:19) asserted that SMTs have an indirect impact on learners' improvement because their impact is felt through teachers, classroom practices and by ensuring that there is conducive school climate for effective teaching and learning. There are four key responsibility tasks of school leadership that can assist to improve teaching and learning in a school. The following are mentioned: supporting and developing teacher quality; defining goals and measuring progress of the learners and educators; managing the resources strategically; and collaborating with external stakeholders like traditional leaders, the business sector and religious and political leaders.

The importance of the SMT was emphasised by Ruiz-Jimenez and Del mar Fuentes-Fuentes (2016: 109) in elaborating that the SMT is the group that adopts the general decisions presented to school by the DBE, establishes the objectives to be achieved and designs the means to achieve them. The SMT plays a crucial role in a management of a school. The SMT is an

important asset in the DBE, and its absence or lack of management capabilities is one of the greatest contributors to school failure.

According to Leepo (2015: 20), the SMT is responsible for empowering staff in order to create conditions in schools that facilitate improvement, innovation and continuous professional growth. SMTs should be able to provide leadership; give proper instructions and guidelines for timetabling and placement of learners; refer all the curriculum circulars to relevant departments in a school; and ensure that all teachers have the required policy documents for their specific subjects.

2.5.1 Describing management

Muniapan (2007:2) described management as the art of getting things done through people, efficiently and effectively. Managers have roles that increase organisational effectiveness, namely, interpersonal roles, informational roles and decisional roles. These roles are critical for the school organisation to achieve its main objective, which is teaching and learning. Lunenberg (2011:1) defined management as the process that develops and maintains the effective functioning of the school. There are traditional management functions such as planning of activities and the ability to budget for the planned activities; organising the activities and staffing personnel that would carry out the work; ensuring that the work is controlled; and solving the problems that emerge when work is performed. Mathipa, Magano, Mapotse and Mohapi (2014:367) defined management as a process of organising and using both human and physical resources in order to achieve predetermined goals of the school.

Day and Sammons (2016:13) identified the key areas of management and leadership as providing a defined vision and a clear direction for the school. The SMTs need to prioritise teaching and learning in a school in order to enhance learner performance. Mestry (2017:1) asserted that management includes factors such as supervising the budget, maintaining the school buildings and the surroundings, complying with educational policies and acting to enhance teaching and learning in schools.

Tassiopoulos (2010:50) elaborated on the functions of management, which is about planning, organising, directing, monitoring and controlling of physical, financial and human resources. Management should also be able to delegate and supervise the educators and draw operational plans. The SMTs should possess the required skills like communication, organisation, negotiation, problem-solving, time management and human resource management. SMTs should have management skills in order to improve learners' academic performance.

2.5.2 Teamwork and its implications on learner performance

McEwan, Ruissen, Eys, Zumbo and Beauchamp (2017:1) referred to teamwork as the range of interactive and interdependent behavioural processes among team members that convert team inputs into outcomes. Sanyal and Hisam (2018:16) defined teamwork as a skill to accomplish and achieve the visions, goals, plans and objectives of the school as an organisation. Teamwork can be a driving force in improving learner performance. It seems that there is a link between teamwork and the quality of the performance of the learners.

According to Pitsoe and Isingoma (2014:139), a team is seen as a group of individuals who come together to work cooperatively on a task in order to achieve a common goal, while teamwork refers to the activities of a group of individuals which include effective communication and interaction among the team members to promote knowledge sharing; understanding of each other on a personal level; helping others to achieve a level of excellence; building a sense of unity in the team; and working towards the achievement of common goals.

Salas, Cooke and Rosen (2008:541) described a team as a group of people actively cooperating to achieve the same goal or purpose. The definition shows that the SMTs form a significant part of the school in order for the school to achieve good results. Since the purpose or goal of a school is teaching and learning, working in a team has the advantage that the teachers' workload can be distributed among all the team members. Sanyal and Hisam (2018:15) concurred with the definition of Salas, Cooke and Rosen (2008:541) in defining a team as a group of individuals who work collectively to achieve the common purposes and goals of the school organisation in order to achieve quality results.

Park, Kim, Park and Park (2015:300) elaborated on what teamwork can do in assisting schools to improve learner performance. Teamwork can be used as a learning strategy that promotes self-directed learning, learners' engagement in class and improves interpersonal interaction with other learners. It can also be used to develop a variety of learners' abilities and attitudes including problem-solving skills. Teamwork has the potential of improving academic performance of learners. Teachers and learners have an opportunity to share ideas on how to approach challenging topics.

For the school to benefit from teamwork, Martin et al. (2015:2) suggested that teachers need to improve their teamwork capacity through training in different teaching methodologies and improving their teaching skills because this can influence on learner performance. When teachers' capacities improve, it impacts learners' attitudes and motivation towards their

schoolwork. Van Knippenberg, Dawson, West and Homan (2010:328) showed that team leadership fulfils an important role by creating a focus on and commitment to shared objectives.

A key aspect of effective team leadership is to be able to formulate and communicate a vision or mission of the school to all the stakeholders. Team leadership is elaborated by Ruiz-Jimenez and Del mar Fuentes-Fuentes (2016:111) when they showed that top management teams are more diverse in management capabilities and it translate into generation of a dominant management. The diverse capacities of the SMT can benefit both the learners and teachers who need support in the classroom. There is a great advantage in a team's different management abilities. The principal as the team leader will motivate the management team to achieve better performance.

2.6 THE ROLES OF SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAMS

2.6.1 The role of the head of department at the school level

PAM as determined by the Minister of Education in terms of the Educators Employment Act 76 of 1998, indicates that the main responsibility of the HoD is to support and monitor the work of the teachers in their department. The professional responsibilities of the HoD as stipulated in Educators Employment Act are not limited to the promotion of teaching and learning in the school. The control of test and examination papers as well as memoranda are the core responsibility of the HoD. Newly appointed teachers are coached and mentored by the HoD as the immediate supervisor. The HoD craft the staff development programmes to address the identified subject knowledge gap in the educators during the class visits. HoD assist educators in the department to achieve learner performance goals and participate in educator appraisal processes. The control of the work of educators and learners in the department; and control mark sheets are key responsibilities of the HoD in the school.

Mpisane (2015:11) regarded the HoD as the subject specialist, who needs to ensure that there is effective teaching and learning in a school by monitoring and supervising the educators. They also need to have regular subject meetings with the teachers to keep abreast of the challenges and successes of the DBE. Mestry (2017:8) shared the same sentiments as Mpisane on HoDs' engaging in monitoring and promoting teamwork among subject teachers in order to improve learner performance.

The HoD in a school is seen by Mangin and Stoelinga (2008:77) as an instructional teacher leader who is mandated to build collective instructional capacity of the teachers in the DBE. The HoD provides teachers with effective professional development and the result of the

training will be an improvement in how teachers present the lessons, quality of assessment tasks and improved performance of the learners.

Carl (2009:10) further elaborated on the role of the HoD as an instructional leader in stating that the HoD should empower the teachers to maximise their potential. The success of the school in improving Grade 12 learner performance depends on the efforts the HoD make to keep teachers well-informed of the changes in policy concerning their subject and involvement in subject activities like attending subject workshops or subject committee meetings. In workshops and subject committee meetings, teachers exchange ideas and are trained to set quality assessment tasks at the school in order to prepare learners for the summative external assessment task at the end of Grade 12.

The HoD as an instructional leader should be able to empower the teachers to plan and teach in the manner that would enable the learners to understand and grasp the outcomes of the lesson. Clarke (2007:54) referred to the HoD as the subject team leader who needs to set time aside to do school-based workshops where teachers are able to deal with challenging topics and discuss best practices. Subject teams are ideal instruments for promoting and monitoring good teaching practices in the classrooms.

According to Mpisane (2015:9), the HoD is part of school leadership, he or she needs to influence and communicate a school's vision and mission statement to teachers in their department. The teachers should know the mission that the school want to accomplish and they can make it to succeed in the classroom. The main task of the HoD is to make sure that there is proper teaching and learning. The HoDs should use their position as specialists and subject catalysts to ensure that the school achieve its set goals.

Seobi and Wood (2016:1) emphasised the critical role that the HoDs play in providing quality teaching and learning. Poor learner performance is associated to poor quality teaching by educators in schools. Poor learner performance can be attributed to a lack of instructional leadership by the HoDs. HoDs are strategically placed to give instructional leadership to teachers in order to improve the performance of the learners. The HoDs need to moderate the lesson plan to ensure that it is in line with the subject policy. Moderation of lesson plans would prevent under-pitched lesson and insufficient assessment tasks. Moderation of assessment tasks before they are written would ensure that the teacher set task as required by the assessment guidelines of the subject. Learners would be prepared to answer high order questions.

Monitoring by the SMTs would assist in curriculum coverage to ensure that learners are taught all the content for the term before they write term tasks.

In DBE (2017b:114) NEEDU argued that the work of the HoDs are monitored by the deputy principal as the instructional leader. The HoDs are expected to draw a monitoring plan that indicates the schedule that show the dates when learners work will be collected for monitoring curriculum coverage. The HoD needs to check if the teacher is following the pacesetters provided by the DBE and is addressing the content for the quarter. Mestry (2017:258) asserted that the HoDs need to monitor the activities of their educators. HoDs need to draw up a quarterly schedule for class visits to support the teachers in the class and give timeous feedback to the educators. The HoDs should ensure that educators under their supervision are in possession of appropriate learning and support materials. The discussion show that the HoDs need to be vigilant when performing their work. HoDs should be able to pick the challenge of poor learners early in the year and the learner and educator can then be supported.

2.6.2 The role of the deputy principal

The professional responsibilities of the deputy principal as outlined in Educators Employment Act 76 of 1998 includes amongst others, engaging in class teaching as per the workload of the relevant post level and needs of the school. The schools with high enrollment allocate less teaching periods to the deputy principal to allow them to provide professional leadership at the school. The development of the staff training programmes is the responsibility of the deputy principal. The appraisal processes and assisting staff to achieve the goals and objectives of the educational institution resides in the office of the deputy principal. Ramalepe (2014:35) explained the role of the deputy principal in communicating the targets and strategies that need to be implemented with internal stakeholders like teachers, learners and support staff. The communication of the targets needs to be extended to external stakeholders such as parents, circuit or district officers, traditional leaders and people who are interested in education. It is clear that the deputy principal's role is key in improving the Grade 12 results.

In DBE (2017b:114) NEEDU reported that the role of the deputy principal is to monitor the work of the HoDs. The deputy principal controls teachers' and learners' work and checks how HoDs support teachers in the department. In addition, the deputy principal deputises the principal when the incumbent is absent. The report suggests that the deputy principal should plan a programme to regularly support the educators. The programme could assist with ensuring that the educators are able to cover the content before the learners write the quarterly formal assessment tasks.

2.6.3 The role of the principal

The role and duties of the principal are all encompassing as all aspects of the school operations are directly or indirectly under the supervision of the principal. The principal is the accounting officer at the school. The detailed responsibilities of the school principal are explained in the Educators Employment Act 76 of 1998 includes among others, providing professional leadership at the school, guiding , supervising and offering professional advice to the teachers and other stakeholders. Cisler and Bruce (2013: 18) attested to the critical role of the principal is to perform the duties as stipulated in the Educators Employment Act 76 of 1998. The roles and the duties of the principal are key to the functioning of the SMT in improving the learning outcomes.

According to Musgrave and De Wet (2017:43), the school principal is fundamental in the improvement of quality of education and is seen as the gatekeeper of innovation and change. The principal decides the kind of innovation that should happen at the school. This implies that the principal should be prepared effectively to create good school that will embrace innovation for the betterment of their schools.

Firmaningsih-Kolu (2015:13) argued that the principal is the figure of authority and power at the school. The argument is based on the principal's position on the school organisational structure. The principal occupies the highest position in the structure. The principal must therefore instil mutual cooperation among the teachers and stakeholders. Mathipa, Magano, Mapotse and Mohapi (2016:367) emphasised the key role of the principal by indicating that the principal is the school and all the activities that happen in a school are influenced by the principal.

Murphy et al. (1983:142) argued that there are six basic skills that are key in managing a high performing school: communication with internal and external stakeholders, conflict management, decision-making, group processes, change processes and environmental interaction. Effective schools have established standards and set positive expectations for the learners and teachers. They set targets for subject teachers and learners have their own targets. Teachers profile learners so that they can be supported and be able to reach the set targets.

Budhal (2000:3) described instructional leadership as the process whereby principals of best performing schools totally immerse themselves in the programmes of actual teaching and learning in the school so that they can identify the instructional and general problems that educators and learners experience at the school. The principal as the instructional leader offers strategies that can assist in solving the problem in order to have effective teaching and learning.

The principal's intervention after identification of the problem is very important for effective teaching and learning in the school and should result in an improvement in Grade 12 learners' performance.

Smith (2015:42) argued that the principal as the instructional leader should know the context of the school in order to set goals for the learners and educators to be committed to achieve success and to improve teaching and learning. The principal as the instructional leader also knows and understands the school climate and culture. The understanding of the school context by the principal helps them to support the educators in order to achieve good results within their specific school context.

The report by NEEDU (DBE, 2017b:114) emphasised the key role that the principal as the instructional leader needs to play in monitoring the learners' work to check both the quantity and the quality of the informal task. The principal would know if the teachers are addressing all the cognitive levels of the learners and could check whether the number of tasks being completed is in line with the subject policy which states the number of tasks per week.

Mestry (2017:257) argued that the principals' administrative and management functions of the school have an influence on learner performance. Over and above the administrative and management responsibilities of the school, the principal needs to play the role of instructional leader by emphasising best teaching and learning practices. Practices like quality assessment that are able to address learners' needs and enhance learner performance. Sepuru and Mohlakwana (2020:9) found that there is a leadership and management gap between teaching responsibilities and principals. The improved learning outcomes depend on the effective management and leadership of curriculum activities by the principal of the school.

2.7 FACTORS CAUSING POOR LEARNER PERFORMANCE

Heystek (2015:2) stated that the greatest challenge of the South African principals is to improve the academic results in state schools. Naidoo (2019:3) asserted that the improvement of learning outcomes is the key role of the principal and SMTs are compelled to engage stakeholders. This is further emphasised in the SASA which states that the principal accounts to the DBE for the academic results of their schools. In the same Act, the principals of underperforming schools are expected to compile a school academic improvement plan and submit it to the DBE.

The challenges that are facing schools are categorised into four groups: curriculum, behavioural, resources, and quality of assessment tasks. Figure 2.2 illustrates these factors.

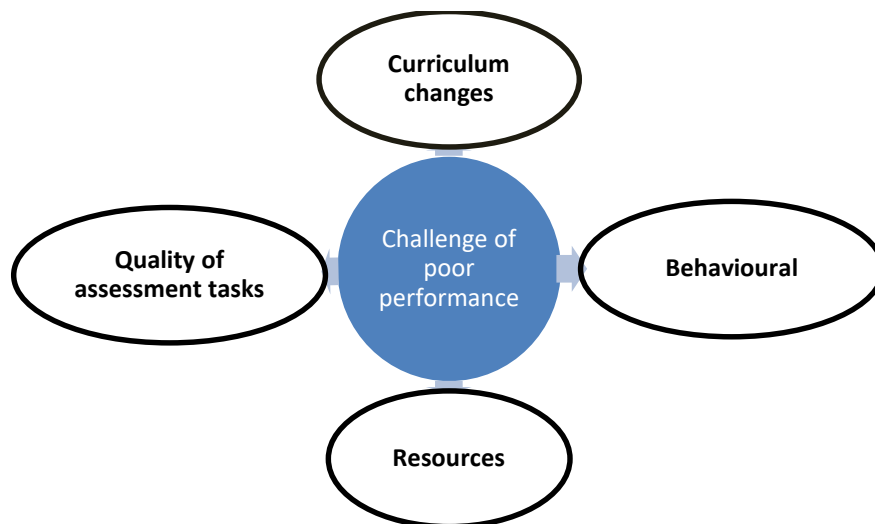


Figure 2.3: Factors causing poor learner performance

The factors outlined above contribute to the performance of the learners in a school. The factors causing poor learner performance are discussed in detailed below. According to Ngema (2016:1), the performance of the secondary school is mainly measured by the Grade 12 results. The analysis of the Grade 12 results compels the school to plan remedial actions to deal with the factors contributing to poor learner performance. The Limpopo Department of Education (LDoE) (2015:13-15) presented a report to National Council of Provinces on some of the contributing factors that lead to poor learner performance in Grade 12. These causes are discussed in following sections.

2.7.1 Curriculum challenges

In South Africa, the curriculum has undergone several radical changes since 1998, the last revision being the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) which was introduced in 2012. Umalusi (2017:3) describe CAPS as a single, comprehensive and concise policy document which replaced the Subject and Learning Programme guidelines and Subject Assessment Guidelines for all subjects listed in the National Curriculum Statement of 2009. Ngema (2016:25) explains that curriculum change may lead to confusion among teachers and learners. The changes might bring fear to teachers on how they are going to handle new content brought into the new curriculum. Blignaut (2017:1) emphasised that curriculum change is a very complex and is characterised by challenges from various stakeholders. Failure to address the uncertainties that are brought about by curriculum change can lead to non-implementation of the new curriculum by educators and result in learners being taught outdated content. Unsuccessful curriculum implementation results in failure to realise the intentions of the policy

makers and it can disadvantage the learners because they can be assessed on the content they are not exposed to in the class.

Scholtz (2013:133) pointed to one of the factors that cause curriculum challenges as a lack of capacity building for educators on curriculum related matters by SMTs and curriculum advisors. The SMTs should create time and opportunities for educators to engage on challenging topics. Some educators find it difficult to expose learners to some of the topics that are challenging to them. The SMTs need to create a culture of openness to enable educators to indicate their content gaps. Alami (2016:1) noted that the challenge of the content gap of some educators could lead to poor teaching methods and the use of improper evaluation instruments for the grades. The other contributing factors that lead to poor learner performance is the poor subject content knowledge of teachers. Some teachers have a shallow knowledge of the subject they are offering and are unable to teach in the way that can make learners gain knowledge of the subject. Educators with content gaps may use teaching materials that do not prepare learners for the final examination.

Mbugua, Kibet, Muthua and Nkonke (2012:91) highlighted factors like insufficient learner teaching support materials and equipment, poor management of teaching time and substandard assessment tasks. The researcher has observed that poor quality teaching is caused by lessons that are not pitched at the correct levels and teaching unprepared lessons. Learners also underperform because of poor curriculum coverage and high teacher absenteeism (Finlayson, 2009:14). The principal should be involved in actual teaching and learning in order to have the experience of what is happening in the classroom.

Maemeko, Nkengbeza and Ntabi (2017:96) maintained that curriculum challenges could be a weakness of the curriculum design, lack of qualified teachers to teach new subjects or content, lack of learning motivation from learners and negative attitudes of teachers because they lack skills to manage changes in content that would require new lesson plans and new teaching methods and approaches. The SMTs and the DBST need to close the gap by organising workshops and training of teachers on the new content. Lack of support on content gaps may contribute to poor learner performance. According to Masino and Nino-Zarazua (2016:54), there are benefits brought by the new curriculum, such as an increase in productivity, economic growth and development. It also can expose teachers and learners to new teaching materials that can be easily interpreted by the teachers in order to improve learner performance (Masino & Nino-Zarazua, 2016:55).

2.7.2 Family and behavioural challenges

Rammala (2009:13) argued that family background could contribute to poor performance of learners. Parents with no educational background are unable to assist their children with homework and projects because some of them cannot read and write. Learners from these families become frustrated with their schoolwork because they lack parental support. Ngema (2016:40) also cited the impact of the home environment on learner performance because children receive their first education and socialisation at home. Learners from poor families might lack cognitive competence because they did not receive early education which can lead to poor mastery of vocabulary and a lack of social skills. Mbugua et al. (2012: 90) emphasised that parents or guardians without an educational background may not be good role models for their children. Parents as role models can influence learner performance in a positive way.

Yator (2003: 24) further showed that there is a significant relationship between the learner's performance and their socioeconomic background. The socioeconomic background has the potential to influence the self-esteem, the aspirations and motivation of the learner. The learners' background can hinder or enhance their performance. Learners from poor family backgrounds even when they are performing well, may be unable to go to the best performing schools.

Behavioural challenges could be the result of factors as determined by Alami (2016:8), like the absence of the parents for various reasons such as parental death or divorce where one parent is no longer available to offer support. The parents can be absent from home because of employment. It is not only the absence of parents that could have a negative effect on learner performance.

2.7.3 Teacher and learner absenteeism

Obeng-Denteh, Yeboah and Montah (2011:7) defined absenteeism as continuous absence from work or school without a valid reason. Khalid and Mehmood (2017:152) explained absenteeism as a tendency of teachers or learners to be away from work or school for no apparent reason. The definition of absenteeism shows that it there is no serious commitment to their duties.

Mboweni (2014:11) pointed out that absenteeism can be associated with the high failure rate of learners or it could result in a decline of the culture of learning in a school. Absenteeism can be an indication of poor individual performance of the teacher or learner and an ineffective SMT. Miller, Murnane and Willett (2008:181) and Ngema (2016:36) argued that teacher absence can have negative effects on learner performance because it leads to a disruption of

the regular routines and classroom procedures. Rogers and Vegas (2009:12) stressed that teacher absence can affect educational access and school completion rates.

Absenteeism of learners results in learners losing learning time and they would then lack the knowledge of what the teacher had taught during their absence. The learners would not be able to answer questions in the examination on the sections they missed. If teachers absent themselves, this could lead to lack of curriculum coverage. Teachers might fail to teach some of the topics that learners may be asked to answer in the examination.

Banerjee, King, Drazem and Paterno (2010:2) asserted that teacher absence and irregular class attendance by learners can affect performance negatively because teaching and learning process demand direct interaction between teacher and learner in the classroom. Rogers and Vegas (2009:12) argued that a high rate of teacher absence occurs in schools serving disadvantaged learners coming from low-income families who depend on the teacher support because of their socioeconomic background. Some of the parents from the low-income group are not educated and they do not have the means of supporting their children in educational matters. Khalid and Mehmood (2017:152) also elaborated on the effects of absenteeism in the class. It can lead to poor participation in class discussions and a lack of information when preparing for assignments or examinations. It might cause the learner to fail the examination and may result in him or her repeating a grade and missing opportunities of employment or bursary funding.

2.7.4 Lack of resources

Different kinds of resources are needed by schools to advance teaching and learning. The school needs financial resources, infrastructure and learner teaching support materials (LTSM). Mbugua et al. (2012:90-91) asserted that insufficient LTSM and equipment could be the result of low parental socioeconomic status. The parents find it difficult to buy additional learning resources and other important requirements because of their low-income status. Ngema (2016:2) concurred that parents' socioeconomic challenges prevent them from buying additional support materials like dictionaries and subject study guides that are not provided by government.

Some of the learners from disadvantaged backgrounds rely only on the study materials provided by the DBE. Seobi and Wood (2016:1-5) stated that under-resourced schools contribute to learners failing to meet the required academic standards because the schools lack

basic resources. The poorest and most disadvantaged children are seriously affected because the parents depend on schools to provide all the needed resources.

The other challenge faced by the SMTs is a lack of sound financial management knowledge. Lack of sound financial knowledge by the SMTs contributes to poor learner performance in Grade 12. Uwizeyimana and Moabelo (2013: 118) illustrated that the school budget should be linked to the school improvement plan (SIP) and the Academic Performance Improvement Plan (APIP). The SIP and APIP are key to improving learner performance but if the SMT fails to link the school budget to the plans, the funds would be used on things that do not have a direct impact on improving the performance of the learners. In some schools there is no implementation of SIPs and APIPs that are drawn up by the school to improve learner performance.

The LDoE (2011: 32) stated that 60% of the allocated funds to schools should be allocated to teaching and learning. The largest amount of the budget is allocated to curriculum delivery and this indicates how serious the issue of curriculum delivery is. The funds should be used to improve teaching and learning in the school. The SMTs are expected to organise and manage curriculum activities and plan strategies that will give priority to the improvement of learning outcomes. The SMTs should use the allocated funds to support and develop the capacities of the subject teachers so that the teachers can manage their classrooms. If teachers were capacitated and were able to manage the teaching time appropriately, learners would benefit and perform better.

The fact that some of the SMTs use the funds allocated to their school inappropriately and are not addressing the factors stated in the SIP and APIP impacts negatively on learner performance. Mestry and Ndhlovu (2014:10) argued that the norms and standards for school funding allocated to school to improve teaching and learning has not improved much in poorer schools. The SMTs need to take full responsibility for ensuring that money is used to improve teaching and learning in the classroom. It is assumed that the education is of vital importance to the growth, development and stability of the local communities where the schools are based. It needs to be managed well so that learners can achieve better results in Grade 12 and expand their chances to be admitted to an institution of higher learning to pursue careers that would allow them to contribute to the development of the economy of the country.

2.7.5 The quality of the assessment tasks

Alami (2016:3) argued that the prominent factors that contribute to learner performance are improper evaluation instruments and the gap between materials used for teaching and the students' needs. The designers of the assessment instruments are not taking into account the socioeconomic background of the learners. Learners from rural areas might find questions related to cities very difficult to answer because they are not exposed to urban life. Booysen (2010:33) asserted that the quality of assessment tasks determine the quality of learning outcomes. The HoDs moderate the tasks to ensure that they cover the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that need to be acquired by learners.

The DBE (2017:19) pointed out the following factors that contribute to poor learner performance in Grade 12: lack of discipline by both the learners and the teachers at schools; lack of time management by SMTs and it led to loss of the contact time; poor communication and consultation across the system; lack of quality teaching, learning and assessment of formal and informal tasks; and inadequate content coverage by the subject teachers leading to learners writing formal assessment on topics that have not been covered by the teacher.

Harb and El (2006:1) alluded to the factor that when learners miss classes are not fully prepared for the assessment tasks. The challenge is that when learners miss out in some topics and the other factor is presented by the use of English as the language of teaching and learning in South Africa. The assessment tasks are set in English and some learners fail to interpret the questions. Sinyosi (2015: 9) showed that some of the factors might be caused by lack of teacher support by school management teams, which stems from poor organisation of supervisory roles expected from SMTs.

2.8 STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING GRADE 12 LEARNERS' PERFORMANCE

According to Umalusi (2017:2), intervention and improvement strategies should come from all levels of the DBE: schools and the national, provincial, district and circuit offices. Well-implemented strategies can have a positive impact on the overall assessment system. The suggested strategies are discussed in the following sections.

2.8.1 The Department of Basic Education's strategic interventions

The DBE proposed a number of learner improvement strategies. DBE (2012) developed the Mind the Gap Study Guide series and distributed it in 2013 in an effort to assist Grade 12 learners to address the gap between failing and passing. The Mind the Gap Study Guide series is an innovative and committed attempt by the DBE to improve the academic performance of

Grade 12 learners in the National Senior Certificate examination. The analysis of 2012 data indicated that the Geography and Life Sciences study guides positively impacted performance in those subjects. Learners, with the assistance of their teachers, had a pass increase in Life Sciences and Geography subjects of about two percentage points.

The National Senior Certificate Diagnostic Report is also a strategy by the DBE to improve the National Senior Certificate results (DBE, 2013:2). It is also a diagnostic tool for improving teaching and learning in Grade 12. The report reflects on the effectiveness of the instructional strategies employed in each of the 11 high enrolment subjects. The report presents an evaluation of learner performance in the selected subjects by highlighting the areas of weakness in each of the subjects and articulating the remedial measures to be adopted at the school level to improve performance in Grade 12. The National Diagnostic Report on learner performance provides teachers, subject advisors, curriculum planners and curriculum implementers with an overview of learner performance in each of the key subjects. The report indicates the common errors, misinterpretations and misconceptions identified during marking and suggestions for improvement are provided. The poor quality of answers given by some learners in certain subjects suggests gaps in the scope of content coverage, teaching methodology and content knowledge of some of the teachers.

The LDoE (2015:16) stressed the use of National Diagnostic Report as an intervention strategy. The subject advisors train teachers on subject content that is highlighted by the report as challenging to the learners. The National Diagnostic Report further focuses on 11 gateway subjects and shows how teachers and learners can handle high-level cognitive questions. The LDoE also holds winter and spring enrichment classes for Grade 12 learners and conducts radio lessons in Thobela FM, Mughana Lonene FM and Phalaphala FM for Grade 12 learners in the province. These radio lessons are presented by best performing teachers in their respective subjects.

Vhembe Education District has action strategies to improve the results of the circuit; for example, the quarterly accountability meeting with the principals to account on performance of the learners in all grades. Vhembe Education District had encouraged schools to profile the learners according to their performance. The District has introduced a programme for top performing learners called 'In Pursuit of Excellence', a programme aimed at improving the number of bachelor passes as required by the action plan.

Vhembe Education District has a programme that clusters learners in a common venue where they are taught the “killer or drawback subjects” by different teachers who are experts in particular sections. “Killer” subjects are subjects that the majority of learners fail which then impacts the pass percentage of the circuit. As part of intervention strategy, the circuit conducts centralised marking and discussion of the memoranda for Grade 10 and 11 to prevent promotion problems. Vhembe Education District officials and circuit managers monitor the use of workbooks that are supplied by National DBE. Subject committees have been revived to ensure that teachers share best practices.

The DBE (2005:4) developed a document titled ‘National Strategy on Learner Attainment’ (NSLA) which focuses on the following key areas to improve learner performance: enhancing the proficiency in the language of instruction; protecting teaching and quality of contact time; effectively implementing credible assessments and examinations; and increasing time-on-task.

Vhembe Education District crafted the district learner attainment strategy guided by NSLA. Vhembe Education District (2017:6) developed a three-year learner attainment strategy plan which is aimed at improving learner performance in all grades by 2020. The plan is designed to improve the results of all grades by 5% per year and increase the percentage of learners passing at bachelor level by 5%. It is also aimed at increasing the number of learners taking Mathematics and Physical Science in Grade 10-12 and ensuring accountability on poor performance across the system. The improvement plan also ensures that learners are developed to realise their full potential and capabilities in preparation for the challenges in life and work after they have completed their schooling.

Van der Berg, Taylor, Gustafsson, Spaul and Armstrong (2011:4) stated that the strategy to improve performance in Grade 12 is to strengthen relationships of accountability and support amongst the stakeholders throughout the school system. The lack of accountability in the schooling system contributes to poor learner performance. Teachers and school principals need to account for learners’ failure to meet the minimum target of a 65% pass rate in the subject and overall school performance in Grade 12.

Leepo (2015:38) argued that the articulation of high achievement standards has an impact on Grade 12 learner performance. The focus should be on ensuring that learners achieve high academic standards in their studies. Teachers articulate high achievement standards when they design their subject targets for the learners and clearly state what the learners should know and be able to do. The teacher should make sure that learners understand and are able to do the

work planned for their particular grade. The teachers are expected to give differential support by assessing the learners according to their strength and needs. The performance of the learner should inform the teachers to determine what strategies to implement to help the learners to meet or exceed the set targets. The teacher should give timeous feedback so that the learner can work on the areas that need improvement.

Mestry (2017:274) asserted that as part of intervention strategy, the DBE has a professional development programme for principals, deputy principals and heads of departments. The SMTs are encouraged to enroll in the Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE) programme which is a leadership and management course. The programme offers leadership and management knowledge and skills to SMTs. The skills and knowledge gained would enhance teaching and learning, better people management, management of finances and physical resources to enhance learner performance.

Support for SMTs by the DBE is further discussed by Heystek (2015:1), indicating that the DBE is committed to improving learner performance in schools by empowering the SMTs. Leadership is one of the contributing factors to achieving quality education in schools. The DBE is investing in the SMTs by allowing them to study for the ACE programme. The programme is aimed at training the SMTs to apply critical understanding, values, knowledge and skills to lead and manage the schools. The schools that are well-managed are likely to improve in learner performance.

2.8.2 Curriculum enrichment

Wiggins, Harding and Engelbrecht (2017:516) defined curriculum enrichment as a way of nurturing academically gifted learners to keep them enthusiastic and help them to discover their potential. Curriculum enrichment also focuses on weak learners or learners at risk of failing to assist them to close the gaps. Successful curriculum enrichment programmes can improve learners' performance.

Wenglinsky (2001:1) stressed that the key to improving learner performance lies in improving schools' academic standards. The school's curriculum and assessment should be aligned to the set standards. When the teachers are able to meet the set minimum standards, this translates into improved learning outcomes. The teachers should be monitored and supported to ensure that their classroom practices meet the set standards of the schools.

2.8.3 Training workshops for teachers

Umalusi (2017:9) argued that regular training, seminars and workshops should be organised for teachers in order to update their knowledge of the subjects they are offering. Teachers should also be trained on the implementation of continuous assessment to assist the teachers to realise the learning objectives. Teachers are encouraged to give effective comments on students' work so that learners can improve on their schoolwork. Darling-Hammond, Hyler and Gardner (2017:2) regarded teacher training as professional development. It is structured professional learning that results in changes in teacher knowledge and practices which could lead to the improvement of learning outcomes in all grades and in particular Grade 12. Teacher training increases the teachers' knowledge of the subject and improves the teaching skills that support learning in the classroom.

Jones (2005:1) emphasised that teachers need training and support to enable them to make valuable assessment decisions. Teachers also need to know how to provide quality feedback to learners and be able to teach learners to receive feedback positively. Learners should be taught how to use the feedback effectively to improve their learning outcomes. Ganyaupfu (2013:39) viewed poor learner performance as fundamentally linked to the use of ineffective teaching methods by teachers to impact knowledge and skills of learners. The quality of teaching is mostly measured by the performance of the learners. For teaching to be effective, teachers need to be trained on how to use different teaching strategies in order to assist learner with different abilities and talents.

2.8.4 Collaboration with other schools

Strong leadership in a school is built and nurtured by the school management team. Preston and Barnes (2017:8) asserted that collaborative leadership enhance teamwork and motivation amongst the staff. When the school promotes collaboration, the staff learn to work together and it improves job knowledge. Learner performance becomes the responsibility of all the teachers in the school. Teacher collaboration is the concept which was not fully utilised in Vhembe Education District schools. The schools need to be trained on the involvement of the stakeholders in matters of learner performance. Collaboration with stakeholders is emphasised in the National Development Plan, Vision 2030. Stakeholders should support schools to achieve quality learning outcomes that would meet the community needs and improve the economy of South Africa. According to Pont, Nusche and Moorman (2008:12), collaboration in some schools is a new leadership concept for school management. The SMTs need to develop their skills to become involved in issues that are beyond the confinements of their own

schools. Mattatall and Power (2014:8) defined collaboration as a systematic process in which people work together to analyse and impact professional practice in order to improve individual or collective results. Teacher collaboration can be explained as a means to improve both teachers' instructional practice and learner performance. Teacher collaboration is a process where teachers meet to share, refine and assess the impact of the intervention strategies and approaches or the methods they are using in the class.

Poulos, Culbertson and Piazza (2016:5) further emphasised the benefits of effective teacher collaboration as associated with strong learner performance because teachers of different abilities draw from working together to solve curriculum problems. Teacher collaboration is seen as key in improving school performance, creating an environment for teachers to improve their practice and develop strategies to address diverse learners' needs.

Graham (2007:2) explored alternative ways of collaboration such as study groups, professional networks and mentoring relationships. Teachers in their different groups are able to develop knowledge and skills that help them create common assessments, identify their own weaknesses and strengths and help each other to improve on their weakness. Teachers engage in collaborative programmes that build their capacity and improve learner performance.

2.9 INTERNATIONAL TRENDS IN LEARNER PERFORMANCE

The study explores the trends of learner performance in two different countries to compare the South African trends. The study addresses the state of learner performance, the role of SMTs in improving learner performance and the educational challenges in the two identified countries to discover the strategies they use to improve their learner performance. Naidoo (2019:4) make a point that many countries like Singapore, have put a requirement to the principalship post like a Diploma in school administration and leadership. In South Africa there is no prerequisite qualification for principalship post. The demands of the position to improve results becomes overwhelming to newly appointed principals.

2.9.1 Malaysian education

The Ministry of Education, Malaysia (2013:65) outlined the purpose of education in Malaysia as enabling Malaysian learners to have mastered knowledge, skills and values that are needed in the world. All Malaysian learners are given equal access to quality education that would enable them to achieve their full potential. Grapragasem, Krishnan and Mansor (2014:85) stated that the vision of Malaysian Ministry of Education is excellence in education. The government uses education as a tool to foster unity and nation building. The Government of

Malaysia strengthens the education policies in order to achieve its vision of excellence in learner performance.

Al-Hudawi, Fong, Musah and Tahir (2014:58) stated that the National Education Philosophy was drafted in 1988 and was aimed at building a united society. Politics influences the education policy and education is used to achieve the objectives of the ruling party. Al-Hudawi et al. (2014: 58) cited Meng (1996) and Sang (2008) in discussing the National Education Philosophy roles. The National Education Philosophy provides guidance and direction to the implementers of education policies at the school level.

Sumintono (2015:2) stated that the new curriculum was introduced in 1980s and was designed to meet local needs. The philosophy of the new curriculum was child-centred. The new curriculum was aimed at introducing new objectives and content, new teaching styles and new types of instructional material. In early 1990s, they introduced an educational project called 'Smart Schools'. The project supported all aspects of teaching, learning and management in school in order to improve the performance of the learners.

In Malaysia, the emphasis is on the practice of instructional leaders in promoting the learning environment that can produce good results (Abdullah, 2011:46). School effectiveness is the most important aspect of Malaysian education. Effective schools regard principals as instructional leaders who can create an effective school climate for all the SMT members to function optimally. The instructional leader should be able to define and establish school goals. They need to create a friendly and cooperative school environment.

Education is a top priority in Malaysia. The Malaysian Education Ministry (2013:81) illustrated the two main challenges in Malaysian education as that there are a number of inadequately trained teachers and they may have a negative impact on the quality of teaching and learning. The other challenge is lack of administrative support within schools can cause an overload of administrative work for teachers. It might hinder teachers from giving more support to learners and it can impact their performance. Some learners may need extra lessons in some topics and teachers may be busy with administrative work and fail to give learners support.

2.9.2 Nigerian education

Sodipo and Adepoju (2015:188) described the education in Nigeria as divided into three main systems: indigenous form of education, Qu'ranic schools and Western education. The indigenous forms of education include participation in community life and training young people in farming. Qu'ranic education is carried out in religious schools called Mediassah.

Qu'ranic education includes learning to read and write in Arabic. Western education was introduced in the 19th century by British colonial masters through missionaries. Western education was aimed at making people read and understand the Bible. The education by British missionaries was intended to make the colonised people follow their beliefs and way of thinking.

Asikhia (2010:230-231) stated that learner achievement in Nigeria is a source of concern for government because of the great importance that education has for the national development of the country. The government is making a huge investment in education but learner performance is poor. Nigeria identifies the causes of poor academic performance among secondary school students (Onah & Ugwu, 2010:255). Some of the identified factors for poor performance among learners are motivational orientation, self-esteem/ self-efficacy, emotional problems, study habits, teacher consultation and poor interpersonal relationships (Onah & Ugwu, 2010:255). The other contributing factor is teaching materials. Well-prepared instructional materials determine the amount of learning that can take place in a learning setting. Asikhia (2010:230-231) spoke about good quality materials motivating interest, maintaining concentration and making learning more meaningful. The need for the use of instructional materials by the subject teacher in the modern age cannot be overemphasised.

Akinsolu (2010:87) stated that learner performance in Nigeria does not match the government expectations or the kind of the investment that parents are making in the education of their children. The government is spending more money on education in order to provide greater access to education and has established SMTs to manage and support learner performance; to monitor the amount of learning that happens in the classroom; and to improve the quality of teaching in the school as a way of improving learner performance.

Kanelechi and Omotere (2013:161) explained the composition of the Nigerian SMTs. They are composed of the principal, the deputy principal and the HoD. The SMT represents the structure that is responsible for implementation of education policies in the school. The SMT plans, organises, leads and implements the strategies aimed at improving learner performance.

Factors that contribute to poor performance in Nigeria are relevant to South African schools. Ayuba and Mohammed (2014:12) identified factors such as learner attitude towards attendance in class; the time learners allocate for studies; parenting style; and high rate of absenteeism of both learners and teachers. On the other hand, Chileya (2016:2) expanded on the factors that

cause poor learner performance by indicating that low performing schools usually lack academic standards, characterised by disruption of lessons and high dropout rates.

The learners struggle with the use of English because it is not their home language. However, English is the official language which is used in most public schools in Nigeria. Children's lack of prior education causes them to struggle to master some basic concepts in class. Supporting Chileya, Ogenyi (2015:166) stressed that poor performance of learners is associated with their competency in the English language. Olanipekun and Aina (2014:1) reiterated that lack of proficiency in the English language can contribute to poor learner performance in all subjects.

According to Igberadja (2015:30), the government also contributes to poor learner performance by poor provisioning of qualified teachers, an inadequate supply of infrastructure and a shortage of learning support materials. Alexander, Sunday and Kola (2014:670) postulated further that the Nigerian government is not paying teachers good salaries and they are consequently demotivated.

Onah and Ugwu (2010:255) identified teacher deficiencies in terms of the content of the subjects they teach; the quality of teaching and learning; and subject teachers and learners' relationships as factors that can negatively influence the performance of the learners. Kalagbor (2016:96) expanded on some factors that can influence failures in public schools such as teacher welfare, principal-teacher relationships, teacher discipline and the teacher- learner ratio and the number of teaching periods the teacher is allocated to teach a subject. Iwu, Ezeuduji, Iwu, Ikebuaku and Tengeh (2018:10) asserted that in Nigeria, the teacher is regarded as the main resource used to help schools to achieve quality learner performance. The teachers are well placed in the classroom to influence the performance of learners.

Alexander, Sunday and Kola (2014:670) discussed the effort of the Nigerian government to address poor learner performance by the establishment of the West African Examinations Council (WAEC). WAEC is an examination board formed for educational development in Nigeria. The council consists of a team of well trained and highly motivated staff that conduct examination at local and international levels. The council ensures that there are no irregularities during the management and administration of the examination in Grade 12.

Discipline is a very important factor in determining learner performance in a school. Yator (2003:26) argued that schools with disciplinary challenges are likely to underperform because both learners and teachers' commitment to their school activities is very low. Lack of discipline can cause teachers to lose teaching time by trying to restore order in the class. It also wastes

time of the learners that come to class and are ready to learn. The SMT should assist teachers by ensuring that there is order in a school.

2.10 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The chapter covered the literature related to instructional roles of SMTs in improving Grade 12 learner performance in the Vhembe Education District in Limpopo. This chapter explored the conceptualisation of instructional leadership and provided a diagrammatic representation of the structure of SMTs. Teamwork and its implications for learner performance were highlighted as were the roles of SMTs and their contribution towards teaching and learning, strategies to improve learner performance and the challenges faced by the SMTs. The chapter discussed how the instructional leadership theory contributes to improvement of learner performance in Grade 12. The chapter concluded by looking at the Malaysian and Nigerian education systems to determine the challenges faced by the SMTs in those countries as a means of comparison with South Africa. The next chapter presents the research methodology used in this study.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a description of the research methodology and design that was used in conducting the research study aimed at examining the instructional roles of SMTs in improving the Grade 12 learner performance in Vhembe Education District in the Limpopo Province in the Republic of South Africa. In this chapter, the research process is outlined showing how the research unfolded and the procedural steps that were followed in the research project. The methodological process is guided by philosophical beliefs about the nature of reality, knowledge and values guided by the theoretical framework which informed the comprehension and interpretation of the research question(s).

The researcher outlines the research paradigm, the research approach, research design and the population, choice of the sample and sampling techniques that were used. Furthermore, the researcher describes the data collection and data analysis. The research paradigm which was used is the constructivist or interpretive paradigm because it uses the qualitative method. The qualitative method is suitable for the interpretation and understanding of the SMTs regarding their contribution to improvement of learner performance in Grade 12.

The SMT was the unit of analysis, i.e. the focal population of the study was the SMTs employed within Vhembe Education District. The SMT comprised the school principal, deputy principal and heads of departments. The population was limited to eight participants from three secondary schools. The data was gathered through interviews and analysis of documents. The researcher strove to provide results that are trustworthy with dimensions of credibility, transferability and dependability. The chapter concludes with the examining the ethical considerations which are associated with the research.

3.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM

Chilisa and Kawulich (2012:1) defined the paradigm as a way of describing a worldview that is informed by philosophical assumptions about the nature of social reality known as ontology and epistemology. According to Guba and Lincoln (1994:107), a paradigm may be viewed as a set of basic beliefs (metaphysics) that deals with the ultimate or first principles. They further postulated that a paradigm represents worldview that defines, for its holder, the nature of the “world”, the individual’s place in it, and the range of possible relationships to that world and its parts. Morgan (2014:7) described a paradigm as a way of creating new beliefs that could

direct the new way of doing things. The SMTs may need to have a new approach on how they perform their duties in order to improve learner performance in Grade 12. The research paradigm can have an influence on how the researcher chooses the research questions and the method to be used in the study. The qualitative research paradigm in its broadest sense refers to research that elicits participants' accounts of meanings, experiences or perceptions of their reality (Devos, 2002:79). Shannon-Baker (2016:320) stated that the research is grounded on the paradigm chosen in the research study. The research paradigm relates to how the researcher thinks about the research problem and how it can be studied in order to have findings that are acceptable to the study and its readers. The paradigm leads a researcher to ask certain questions and demands the use of appropriate approaches to systematic inquiry, i.e. how should we study the instructional role of SMTs in improving Grade 12 learner performance in the Vhembe Education District?

The research paradigm for the purpose of this study is constructivism or interpretivism. According to Applefield, Huber and Moallem (2001:7), constructivism is an epistemological view of knowledge acquisition emphasising knowledge construction rather than knowledge transmission and the recording of information conveyed by others. Knowledge in this study was constructed based on relevant literature and the empirical data that was collected from the participants.

Constructivism is the most suitable paradigm for this study as this paradigm is firmly fixed in the conception that reality is found in people's meanings and experiences (Maja, 2016:36). The study focuses on the experiences of the SMTs as they work towards improving Grade 12 learner performance in Vhembe Education District. The participants shared their experiences of their roles as instructional leaders. The researcher chose the constructivist paradigm because it has a relationship with qualitative methods.

Thanh and Thanh (2015:26) showed that qualitative approaches and the constructivist paradigm relate because one is the methodological approach and one is a means of collecting data. Constructivism seeks to understand human experiences and people's perceptions, and, in this study, this paradigm helped the researcher to understand the instructional role of SMTs in improving Grade 12 learner performance in the Vhembe Education District. Cohen (2006:31) maintains that constructivism is founded on the belief that reality is socially built and it can change based on the circumstances.

This research is located within the constructivist paradigm. The research chose constructivism over positivism which is a quantitative paradigm. Al-Saadi (2014: 2) argued that positivism holds the argument that meaning and meaningful realities already reside in objects and are waiting to be discovered. Positivism believes that truth is static and is always objective. Constructivism argues that knowledge is produced by exploring and understanding the social world of the people being studied, focusing on their meaning and interpretations. Meanings reside in the social realities in a particular situation. Scales (2013:2) emphasised the fact that, in constructivism, meanings do not exist in a way that is free from outside influence, and people have to form meanings informed by their social realities.

3.3 Research approach

McMillan and Schumacher (1993:374) maintained that the choice of the qualitative approach enables the researcher to observe participants in their natural context. The study was qualitative and exploratory in nature. Packer (2011:3) listed the practices of the qualitative research method as interviewing, ethnographic fieldwork and analysis of interactions.

Krauss (2005:764) showed that the focus of qualitative investigation is to understand the complex world of human experiences and behaviour from the point of view of those involved in the situation of the study. McMillan and Schumacher (2014:5) explained the qualitative approach as a way that a researcher uses to collect data from participants through face-to-face approach while Palinkas, Horwitz, Green, Wisdom, Duan and Hoagwood (2015:2) stressed that the qualitative approach is used to explain and find an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon.

Langkos (2014:4) pointed to the advantages of a qualitative approach that gives a clear description and analysis of the research topic. The qualitative approach is mostly suitable for a small sample in which the research findings are not measurable nor quantifiable due to size. In the qualitative approach, the researcher was able to collect and interpret data even if the sample size is smaller as opposed to the quantitative approach.

Langkos (2014:4) also pointed to the disadvantage of qualitative approach in that its effectiveness relies on the talents and capabilities of the researcher. The findings are seen as personal conclusions and interpretations of the researcher. The results of qualitative research may not reflect the opinions of all the SMTs in Vhembe Education District.

Walliman (2011:86) described the difference between quantitative and qualitative research: in the quantitative approach, numbers are used to record much of the information about science

and the society while the quantitative data is characterised by its numerical form. Using the quantitative approach, data is analysed using statistical techniques. The qualitative approach is based on meanings expressed through words in which the approach records people's judgments, feelings, emotions, ideas and beliefs. The findings thereof could be described in words and the analysis is conducted through the use of conceptualisation.

3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN

Akhtar (2016:68) defined research design as the structure of the research. It is the preparation of the strategy of conducting a research. The research design refers to the plan of the research work. Lelissa (2018: 2) asserted that research design sets the procedure on how the required data, methods to be applied to collect and analyse data and how the research questions will be answered. In this study, a qualitative, exploratory, descriptive and contextual design was chosen using the phenomenological method to explain the roles of school management teams in improving Grade 12 learners' performance. The qualitative research approach allowed the researcher to explore the experiences of the SMTs in their various schools through the semi-structured interviews and documents analysis. Valuable and rich data was collected from the SMTs. During the interview the researcher used audio recorder to record the interviewing process. The recordings were transcribed verbatim and data analysis was undertaken by the researcher.

3.5 POPULATION OF THE STUDY

Alvi (2016:10) defined population as all people who comply with certain criteria for a particular research investigation. The population refers to the entire group of people which the researcher would like to investigate. Bret and Bret (2011:7) further explained that population refers to the people to whom we want the results to apply. The target or focal population in the study is the SMTs employed within Vhembe Education District. The study population consists of secondary school principals, deputy principals and HoDs who make up the SMTs.

3.6 SAMPLE AND SAMPLE FRAME

The sample of the study was drawn from two circuits in Vhembe Education District. Lion and Zebra secondary schools were selected from one circuit. Elephant secondary school is from the other circuit. Lion secondary school is found in the township and it is categorized as a quintile three school. Zebra secondary school is found in a deep rural area which is characterized by a high level of unemployment and it is in quintile one. Elephant secondary school is a semi-rural school and it is in a newly formed municipality in Vhembe Municipal District.

3.6.1 Sample frame

Taherdoost (2016: 19) described a sample frame as a list from which a sample is drawn. Rahi (2017:3) emphasized that sample frame is a sample of the target population. The sampling frame should be representative of the population. This is supported by Skinner (2007:17) who indicated that sampling refers to selecting a subset of a whole population, in this case, SMTs in the Vhembe Education District.

Walliman (2011:94) described sampling as the process of selecting a small group of people from a large group. Alvi (2016:10) defined a sample as a small number of people selected from a population for research purposes. The sites from which the sample was selected were three secondary schools in Vhembe Education District, Limpopo Province, South Africa. Three secondary schools were selected as a research sites, and the performance, quintile and the size of the school were used as a selection criterion. The socioeconomic status of the schools was considered; hence, the schools were selected from Quintile 1 to Quintile 3 schools. The quintiles refer to the level of resources to which a school has access. All the selected schools were no-fee paying public schools from relatively poor to very poor socioeconomic environments. In addition, the following categories helped with selection of the sample: high performing schools, average performers and those that were underperforming in the Grade 12 National Senior Certificate examinations. The eight participants were selected from the larger population of SMTs in the Vhembe Education District.

3.6.2 Sample selection

Purposive sampling was used for this study. Mohsin (2016:30) defined purposive sampling as a method in which elements are chosen based on the purpose of the research. Purposive sampling may involve studying the subset of a particular population. Coyne (1997:624) asserted that, in purposeful sampling, the researcher selects people according to the aims of the research. When the researcher selected the participants, factors such as age, gender, status and role or function in the organisation were taken into account. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2002:103) further explained that the sample must be chosen for a specific purpose, and in this study, a group of principals, deputy principals and heads of department (HoDs) of the three secondary schools were chosen because the purpose of this study was to investigate the roles of SMTs in improving learner performance in Grade 12.

Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling technique. Etikan and Bala (2017:2) showed that in non-probability sampling the members of the sample do not have an equal chance of

being selected. Non-probability sampling is not representative of the population; therefore, the results cannot be generalised to the entire population.

According to Taherdoost (2016:20), non-probability sampling consists of quota sampling, snowball sampling, judgement sampling and convenience sampling. Tongoco (2007:147) described purposive sampling as a cautious choice of the participants based on their qualities and the expert knowledge they possess in their field. In purposive sampling, the researcher chose the participants that would be able to provide key information relevant to the study.

The researcher determined the scope of what needed to be known and hand-picked relevant people to contribute to the study. Palinkaset al. (2015:533) argued that the weakness of purposive sampling is that it is unable to give representative data on the population. The SMTs were selected to participate in the study because of the critical role they play in the management of teaching and assessment in the school.

The researcher conducted three interviews per school: principal, one deputy principal, and HoD. The principals were selected because of the critical role they play in the school as the instructional leaders in the top management of a school. The deputy principals are regarded as the curriculum managers and the immediate supervisors of HoDs. The HoDs were selected based on their roles as school-based subject specialists. The oversight of performance in a subject is one of the core responsibilities of the HoD in a school.

3.7 DATA COLLECTION

McMillan and Schumacher (2014:26) stated that data collection in qualitative research emphasises gathering data on naturally occurring phenomena. Most of the data were in the form of words rather than numbers, and the researcher used a variety of methods to get a deep understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews and document analysis.

3.7.1 DATA COLLECTION TOOLS

The methods and the data collection tools that are used to collect data are determined by the purpose of the research. The methods and the data collection tools chosen for this study were semi-structured interviews and document analysis. The chosen data collection tools were appropriate for the study. Semi-structured interviews entailed using different sets of open-ended and probing questions for the participants in the study (Appendix E, F and G). Even though most questions were the same, some of the questions were different depending on the portfolio, which is the principal, deputy and HoD.

There were scheduled meetings with the sampled principals, deputy principals, HoDs to conduct semi-structured interviews. They were asked to supply learner performance results for documents analysis. The data collection tools which were used in the study are discussed in the following sections.

3.7.2 Semi-structured interviews

One data collection method in this study was semi-structured interviews. Diccico-Bloom and Crabtree (2006:315) referred to semi-structured interviews as often being the sole data source for a qualitative research project. The semi-structured interviews were scheduled in advance at a designated time and location. The interview questions were organised around a set of predetermined open-ended questions, with other questions emerging from the dialogue between interviewer and interviewee/s. The semi-structured interviews were systematic, and the discussions were planned. The researcher prepared the questions well in advance. The researcher was able to get detailed information from the participants. The interviews were audio recorded for the maintenance of quality data recording and interpretations.

Even though questionnaires can be used in qualitative studies, interviews are the dominant data collection tools. Newcomer, Hatry and Wholey (2015:6) argued that semi-structured interviews can be used to cover a wide range of topics and are an effective method for providing comparable qualitative data from different participants. Blandford (2013:3) noted that semi-structured interviews fall between structured and unstructured interviews.

3.7.3 Advantages of semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews are effective way to collect important and relevant information because they are based on a series of pre-planned questions that focus on the phenomenon, but the interviewer can be flexible in asking the questions, changing the order if need be and asking additional questions for greater clarity where needed. Adams (2015:493) showed that it assist the researcher to know the independent thoughts of the participants. The participants are not influenced by the responses of their groups. They are able to express their thoughts without fear. Dejonckheere (2019: 7) emphasized that participants are free to share their experiences and the researcher was able to explore the thoughts, feelings and the beliefs of the participants about their roles as SMT members. In the study, the researcher was able to understand the SMT's perceptions and experience because the researcher asked the same set of questions in the exact same order. It assisted the researcher to collect consistent and comparable data in the three sampled schools. Taole (2013: 77) revealed that some participants are more flexible and

can give more information about their experiences with their immediate supervisors. Some of the experiences impact on their roles and responsibilities to support teaching and learning in the school.

3.7.4 Disadvantages of semi-structured interviews

The disadvantages of semi-structured interviews do not outweigh the benefits that are derived from embarking on semi-structured interviews. Adams (2015: 493) showed that the interviewer should be knowledgeable about the topic and need to be sensitive when the participants holds back the information. It is time consuming to prepare for the interview process and it is costly to set up an appointment and travel to the venue. Dejonckheere (2019: 7) further elaborated on the demands for the resources. It is costly to analyse the high volume of notes and to transcribe the recordings. Semi-structured interviews are time consuming because you need a minimum of one hour to conduct interviews. The researcher had to travel for three days because interviews could not be conducted in one day. The challenge was interviews had to be conducted after schools to avoid disturbing teaching and learning in schools.

3.7.5 Conducting interviews

Easwaramoorthy and Zarinpoush (2006:1) defined interviews as a method that are used to collect information. Boyce and Neale (2006:11) suggested that when conducting interviews, the researcher should develop an interview protocol. Interview protocol is defined as the rules that guide the administration and implementation of the interviews. The interview protocol is used to ensure consistency between interviews, and it increases the trustworthiness of the research findings. Jacob and Furgerson (2012:5) emphasised the use of an interview protocol and the creation of the script. The interview protocol shows the researcher on how to start and concludes the interviews. The protocol assists the researcher to note the important information like telling the SMTs about yourself, the reasons why you are conducting the study and, at the end of the interview, and providing contact numbers in case the participants need clarity on the interview.

The researcher drew up interview schedules for each sample (Appendix E, F and G). The interview schedule was divided into three main sections. Section A covered the biographical information of the participants and also asked about the work experience of the participants serving on the SMT. The experience in management could be a proxy indicator to obtain more in-depth information on the knowledge of school managers.

Section B included a description of the roles and responsibilities of the SMTs in improving learner performance in Grade 12. The researcher wanted to know what SMTs do when they manage teaching and learning in the school.

Section C focused on the strategies that are used to improve learner performance in Grade 12. It also focused on challenges and the intervention strategies that are used to improve the results.

Williams (2015:497) pointed out that the researcher should communicate in a simple formal way to communicate easily with the participants. The researcher avoided the use of acronyms and used the language which is acceptable in the profession. The researcher avoided ask questions that might put the participants on the defensive. Probing questions could help detect whether participants were defensive in responding to the interview. When the participants become defensive, it should be reported as a limitation. The researcher needs to have good communication skills to be able to collect data from the participants.

Face-to-face interviews were used to interview the SMTs. The researcher explained how the interview would be conducted and the duration of the interview. The participants were made aware that the interviews would be recorded, and they were allowed to ask questions before the interview started. The researcher made sure that the agreed time was adhered to and all the questions in the interview guide were asked.

Morse (2015:587) pointed out that the researcher can reach a saturation point while collecting data. This was evidenced as participants begin to provide similar responses to the interviews. This was an indication to the researcher that a saturation point had been reached and no new information was forthcoming.

3.7.6 Document analysis

Newcomer, Hatry and Wholey (2015:23) stated that document analysis often used in qualitative research. Document analysis is a form of qualitative research in which documents are analysed and interpreted by the researcher to give voice and meaning to the study. Bowen (2017:27) described document analysis as a systematic procedure for reviewing documents or evaluating both printed and electronic materials. Blandford (2013:19) mentioned that the documents can include field notes and audio files. The information that is gathered in the documents helps to answer the research questions and address the purpose of the study. Egbrink (2013:6) identified three categories of documents that could be retrieved during documents analysis. The three categories of the documents were policy documents, progress documents and assessment reports. The documents were retrieved from the three selected schools. The Policy documents

like school improvement plans were analysed to understand the plans that the school had put in place for the academic year. Assessment reports were used to analyse the performance of the Grade 12 learners and other grades in the schools. Progress documents were the minutes of meetings of different stakeholder, the minutes showed the progress made as the school implement the improvement plan. The main documents that were analysed in this study were the Grade 12 results for the past three years and the intervention strategies that were used to improve learner performance in the school. The documents were interpreted by the researcher to understand the performance trends of a school. The documents were analysed by the content analysis method.

3.6.7 The advantage of document analysis

Bowen (2009:29) called the attention on the advantages of using document analysis. Document analysis is not time consuming like semi-structured interviews. Documents provide the information of what transpired in the particular time and context. It provide the depth of the problem under investigation and how the problem was resolved in the past. Documents could be used to track progress and as basis for further investigation. There is no minimum time to view the documents. According to Dalglish, Khalid and McMahon (2020: 1425) documents could inform new policies and as an assessment report for the implemented strategies. The intervention strategies crafted by the SMTs were analysed and the impact it had in improving learner performance. Elephant secondary school had crafted intervention strategies and there was evidence to show the implementation of the strategies.

3.7.8 The disadvantage of document analysis

The disadvantage of documents analysis as outlined by Bowen (2009: 32) show the limitation of using documents as the source of data in a research. Documents could provide insufficient and incomplete details. The minutes of the meetings might not capture the views of all participants. Retrieval of information could be difficult, some sites are blocked for ethical reasons or its policy of the institution to handle confidential information. The other disadvantage of the documents is bias because most documents were not written for research purposes. The documents could be disorganized and outdated to address the research questions. In the study, Lion secondary school had some minutes of meetings that were disorganized and it was difficult to follow the arguments without asking for clarity from the principal.

3.8 DATA ANALYSIS

McMillan and Schumacher (2014:364) indicated that qualitative data analysis is primarily an inductive process of organising data into categories and identifying patterns (i.e. relationship) among the categories. Polhernus (2011:2) elaborated on data analysis as the process of bringing order and giving meaning to a large volume of collected data. The collected data need to be analysed in order to make sense of the data and to answer the research questions. Then, Rankin and Ali (2014:21) stressed that the process of data analysis is complex and time-consuming. The data is analysed in relation to the questions that are asked in the study. Data analysis entails identifying, coding and restating the key terms in the transcripts and notes. The data collected in the audio form was transcribed into written form for analysis.

The researcher analysed data using the thematic analysis method. Nowell, Norris, White and Moules (2017:9) explained that thematic analysis is a qualitative method that can be used to analyse qualitative data. Thematic analysis is used to summarise key features of the collected data. Bowen (2017:32) described thematic analysis as a way of categorising themes for analysis. The process involves focused reading and continuous review of data. The researcher should ensure that all the main themes that address the purpose of the study are captured. Elo, Kääriäinen, Kanste, Pölkki, Utriainen and Kyngäs (2014:1) emphasised that thematic analysis is the prerequisite for credible study findings. The collected data should be reduced to concepts that describe the research phenomenon. Thematic analysis helps the researcher to handle large volumes of data. It also assists to produce clear and organised final report.

3.9 TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE STUDY

The researcher would assure the trustworthiness of the study by demonstrating how data analysis has been conducted through recording the semi-structured interviews and document analysis. Collier-Reed, Ingerman and Berglund (2009:339) defined trustworthiness as a way of making research findings acceptable to the readers. Nowell, Norris, White and Moules (2019:3) argued that trustworthiness is the way in which a researcher can convince the reader that the research findings are credible and deserve their attention. The trustworthiness of the data is ensured by providing detailed information of the sampling method and giving the participants' descriptions. The data collection method which is used to answer the research question can also be used to ensure trustworthiness of the research findings.

Kawulich (2005:15) explained that for the findings to be considered trustworthy, the researcher must spend a considerable amount of time in a setting, as this prolonged interaction

with the school enables the researcher to have more opportunities to observe and participate in a variety of activities over time. In this study, to establish trustworthiness, the researcher ensured that adequate and credible data was received from the participants and were verified. Because the researcher was a participant observer and an interviewer, efforts were made not to be subjective during the interaction with participants. The researcher ensured that the criteria for trustworthiness was upheld in the study. Lincoln and Guba (1994:108) pointed out that the trustworthiness of a research study is important in evaluating its worth.

Trustworthiness of the study involves four factors, according to Guba and Lincoln (1994:108): the four factors of trustworthiness are credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability. To ensure trustworthiness of the study, the researchers' positionality did not influence the findings of the study. Credibility as one component of trustworthiness was implored in the study. Nowell, Norris, White and Moules (2017:3) described credibility of the study as examining the findings against the interpretation of the raw data. To ensure credibility of the study, face to face semi-structured interviews were conducted. Seven SMT members from three different schools were interviewed to ensure that the data collected from the interviews were valid and reliable. Document analysis was other method that was used to ensure the trustworthiness of the study. The researcher further ensured credibility in the study by voice-recording and thereafter transcribing all the interviews. Korstjens and Moser (2018:121) explained transferability in a qualitative research as how the research finding could be transferred to other situations. Transferability is about research findings being applied to a wider population. The interviews were audio-recorded and later transcribed to avoid distorting the information from the participants. In this study, the scope of research was very limited because it was only three schools sampled. The findings about the roles of school management teams in improving Grade 12 performance could be transferred to other schools in Vhembe Education District and Limpopo Department of Education. Dependability was upheld in study by ensuring that all the materials and the voice recording are kept safe. Sepuru (2018:127) argue that dependability require that the similar results obtained in the study, should be obtained if the study is conducted in the same context, using same methods and participants. According to Korstjens and Moser (2018: 121) dependability need to be ensured by the processes called audit trail. The information about the research process and all the materials used should be kept for the purposes of auditing the research work. The paper trail and all other materials used to collect data are kept for audit of the work done in the field.

In order to ensure confirmability, interview transcriptions were returned to participants to be checked for accuracy, and to give the participants an opportunity to have comments or add information omitted when transcribing data. Moon, Brewer, Januchowski_Hartley, Adams and Blackman (2016: 3) showed that confirmability could be achieved when the results are linked to the conclusions of the research work. The researcher had analysed the data collected through semi-structured interviews and document analysis. The findings about the role of the SMTs in improving learner performance emanated from the data and not from the predictions of the researcher. Confirmability is about the impartiality and the objectivity of the research findings.

3.10 THE ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS OF THE STUDY

Rahman (2017:107) stressed that ethical consideration is applicable in primary research and when using documents analysis. Then et al. (2014:20) emphasised that ethical standards and procedures should be followed in all research. Mavuso (2013: 80) explained that ethical considerations should take into account the expectations of the profession which is under investigation. The professions have different ethics which need to be respected when collecting data from the participants. The purpose of the study, the length of participation, assurance of anonymity and confidence and the communication of the results of the study were included in an informed consent form.

Stevens (2013:3) argued that ethics can be thought of as the study of good conduct and the grounds for making judgments about what is good conduct. The researcher was aware that when conducting research, she needed to consider ethical and legal responsibilities. The researcher ensured that the rights and interests of the participants were protected by ensuring that their contributions were kept confidential and anonymous.

The researcher followed the guidelines that were found in literature on ethical and legal considerations. The researcher wrote letters to relevant authorities to request permission; for example, the researcher wrote to the head of department in the DBE's provincial office and the principals of schools.

3.10.1 Gaining access to the participants

3.10.1.1 Getting ethical clearance from the university (Appendix A)

The researcher contacted the university after the supervisor had approved chapter for ethical clearance. The researcher was given a form in which I explained on how I would collect data and the guidelines were stated on the university policy to ensure that rights of the participants were respected. The university gave approval before the collection of data.

3.10.1.2 Getting permission from the Head of Department (Appendix B)

The researcher wrote to the Head of Department in Limpopo Department of Education to be given the approval to conduct research in the three selected schools in Vhembe Education District. The researcher explained the purpose of the research and the letter also explained the data collection process. The data collection process would not disturb the teaching and learning in the school.

3.10.1.3 Getting permission from schools (Appendix C)

The researcher used the approval from the Head of Department to write to Vhembe Education District. The district advised the researcher to use the approval from the Head of Department to approach the selected schools. The researcher visited the selected schools and provided evidence of approval from the Head of Department and the ethical clearance from the university. The ethical guidelines were explained to the participants and how data would be collected. The participants were informed about their rights to decline participation in the research at any given time. The HoD from Zebra Secondary school withdrew from participating in the interviews on the day the researcher visited the school. The participant was not forced to participate in the research. The steps to maintain the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants were taken. The real names of the schools and participants were changed to ensure anonymity and confidentiality (e.g. Zebra Secondary school: P1).

3.10.2 Deception

According to Department of Health (2004:56), deception is when the researcher hides some information from the participants in order to mislead them about the purpose of study. Tai (2012:221) asserted that deception in research is when a researcher lies to the participants about the nature of the study in order to gain the information that would have been impossible to gather otherwise. The researcher could hide the true purpose from the participants to prevent refusal by the participants. When some participants are exposed to the true purpose of the study, they might think of the potentially negative consequences of the findings. Mavuso (2013:81) stressed that the researcher should inform the participants of the purpose of the study and why they were selected. The participants should be provided with the required information and the implications of their participation in the study.

3.10.3 Privacy

The researcher has a duty to protect the privacy of the participants. The private life of the participants is protected from the public. There would be strict control over the sharing of

information with others in the study. Privacy is mainly about the access to personal records and the researcher respected the participants' right to privacy by not revealing any personal information such as their names or the names of the schools where they worked.

3.10.4 Informed consent

Tai (2012:218) indicated that informed consent is the most critical aspect of research ethics because the credibility of the research study lies in gaining the informed consent of the participants. It is an expression of respect to the participants by allowing them to make the choice to participate in the study. Blandford (2013:19) stated that participants should be informed of the purpose of the study and their right to withdraw at any time from participation in the study. Then et al. (2014:20) argued that informed consent should be acquired from all participants before they participate in the study. The participants should not be pressurized to participate in a study. The researcher ensured that informed consent by the participants was obtained before they were engaged in the study. The participants were given the opportunity to read, understand and sign an informed consent form. The consent form was written in simple and clear language to avoid ambiguity.

3.10.5 Confidentiality and anonymity

The SMTs were assured of their confidentiality and anonymity in order to participate freely (Alig-Mielcart, 2003:85). According to Molapo (2016:46), anonymity refers to the protection of the identity of a participant and the research site. The data was secured and was anonymised to protect the participants in the study. Blandford (2013:19) affirmed that confidentiality of the participants should be respected during data collection, management and when the findings are reported. The anonymity of the participants was maintained to ensure that there was no invasion of privacy. The data was maintained in the strictest confidence to protect the participants. The actual names of the schools were withheld for ethical reasons. The researcher named the selected schools as Lion, Zebra and Elephant.

3.11 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The chapter discussed the research design and methodology of the study. In this chapter the researcher explained that the study was located in the qualitative research approach. The research paradigm, data collection methods and data analysis were discussed in detail. The chapter further explained purposive sampling. The researcher described the sample and explain how the sample was chosen. The researcher used different data collection tools like semi-

structured interviews and document analysis to gather quality data that could assist in improving learner performance in Grade 12.

The chapter described the steps in the research process that were used to gather data from collection and analysis contributing to the scientific knowledge that can be used for decision-making, i.e. the knowledge which will be gathered by this research would be used by decision makers on how to support SMTs. The researcher detailed two methods of data collection, namely semi-structured interviews and document analysis.

The researcher explained how data analysis would be conducted. The analysed data would be used to identify the causes and the consequences of poor learner performance and the instructional role of SMTs. The chapter clarified how ethical considerations would be adhered to during the collection of the data. The next chapter presents the results, an analysis of the results and the conclusions.

CHAPTER 4

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 4 focuses on the presentation, interpretation and the analysis of data obtained from the selected schools. The data was collected using semi-structured interviews conducted with the SMTs, namely, three principals, three deputy principals and three heads of department. In addition, data was also collected through document analysis. The documents that were analysed were minutes of school management meetings, the departmental meetings, intervention strategies and the Grade twelve National Senior Certificate results.

The purpose of this study was to answer the main research question: What are the leadership roles of SMTs in improving Grade 12 learners' performance in Vhembe Education District in Limpopo Province? Collected data was analysed using thematic analysis. Responses from the participants gave rise to four themes: diagnosis of curriculum challenges and intervention through curriculum planning; shared leadership; professional teacher development; and learner performance.

Table 4.1: The table 4.1 represent the research question, themes and sub-themes

RESEARCH QUESTION	THEMES	SUB-THEMES/CATEGORIES
1. What are the leadership roles of SMTs in improving Grade 12 learners' performance in the Vhembe District, Limpopo?	Diagnosis of curriculum challenges	School improvement plans
2. What are the specific roles of heads of department, deputy principals and	Shared leadership	Teamwork effort Parental involvement in improving learner performance

principals in instructional leadership?		
3. What are the challenges facing schools in the Vhembe District that contribute towards poor learner performance in Grade 12?	Learner performance.	Contributing factors Progression of learners
4. How do SMTs employ intervention strategies to curb challenges of poor learner performance?	Intervention through curriculum planning	Intervention strategies
5. How do SMTs deal with the challenges they face and are these interventions effective?	Professional teacher development	Capacity building Teacher support materials

Eight sub-themes were created from the four major themes. An evaluation was conducted to establish whether all the research questions were responded to by the participants.

4.2 THE PROFILE OF THE SELECTED PARTICIPANTS

Pseudonyms were used to protect the real names of the schools and participants as indicated Table 4.2.

Table 4.2 Profile of selected sites

School	Quintile	Designation	Gender	Post level	Experience in the current position
Lion	3	Principal (P1)	Male	4	13 years
		Deputy principal (DP1)	Female	3	10 years
		Head of department (HoD1)	Male	2	2 years
Zebra	1	Principal (P2)	Male	4	5 years
		Deputy principal (DP2)	Female	3	3 years
Elephant	2	Principal (P3)	Male	4	30 years
		Deputy principal (DP3)	Female	3	2 years
			HoD 2)	Female	2

The information on SMTs provided in Table 4.2 presents the profiles of the selected participants in the study. The profiles show the number of years in the current position, post level and the gender of the participants. The experience of the SMT members as indicated in the table is fundamental in that experience contributes to school performance. The table shows the size of the schools in terms of post level categories. The higher the post level, the bigger the school, which means the school that is post level 2 is smaller in learner numbers than the school in post level 3 and so on. The schools were described in terms of their quintile levels, showing that they fell into the no-fee-paying category.

4.3 DATA PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS

The researcher focused on the analysis, interpretation and discussion of the data from semi-structured interviews and document analysis. The data was organised around four themes. The four themes are within the four research questions. The major themes were further spread into sub-themes in order to address the purpose of the research. Figure 4.1 below is a diagrammatic representation of the identified themes and sub-themes presented in the study.

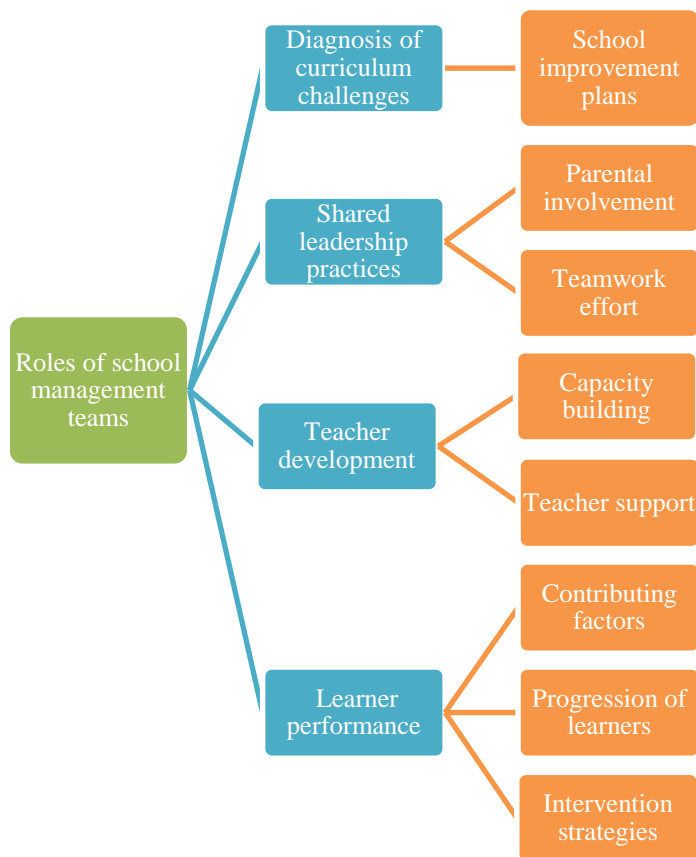


Figure 4.1: The four themes and sub-themes

The four themes and the sub-themes are explored in depth below. The participants' views are captured as follows:

4.4 DIAGNOSIS OF CURRICULUM CHALLENGES AND INTERVENTION THROUGH CURRICULUM PLANNING

Before an intervention to improve performance can be decided, it is critical that the SMT correctly diagnoses the curriculum challenges. Education develops the mental and intellectual potentials of the learner. Akpan (2018:6) citing Akpan (2011) in conceptualising planning as the process of examining the future and drawing up a course of action for achieving specified goals and objectives. The definitions of education and planning suggest that the SMTs need to outline activities that would lead to the accomplishment of learning goals.

Darling-Hammond, Flook, Cook-Harvey, Barron and Osher (2020:103) state that a well-designed curriculum plan should have productive strategies that support the competence of both learners and the teachers, respond to the learners needs in the class and outside the class. The plan requires the engagement of stakeholders to enable the SMT to develop a responsive plan that focuses on learner achievement. In ensuring that proper curriculum and analysis of

the problem occurs, P3 noted that: *“As the principal of the school, I am the accounting officer in terms of the management and leadership of the school. At the beginning of the year, we make sure that year plans and the analysis of the results are available. I make sure that the departments account for their poor or good performance. The departments bring the intervention strategies of the academic year.”*

P1 asserted that holding teachers’ accountable makes the school to work and continued to emphasise the point by saying: *“I analyse the school results and make the deputy principals and HoDs in my school to set the targets based on their highest achievement in the subject. HoDs draw the schedule of subject committee meetings, subject improvement plans and subject targets.”*

In supporting the assertions of the other participants further, P3 stressed his role in planning and support to teachers this way: *“One can say that at the end of each year, I identify the gaps of the educators with my SMT. Identified gaps give us the opportunity to plan on how we can intervene according to the needs of the educators. All teachers are supported in order to improve teaching and learning in the classroom. We plan as a collective on how the learner performance can be improved in the school.”*

The perceptions of the participants showed that the SMT had suitable plans that would assist them to grapple with the problems of poor learner performance in the school. Huenneke, Stearns, Martinez and Laurila (2017: 426) supported the prioritisation of the analysis of the school problems and the development of the plans that would address the challenges that hinder improved learner performance. The SIPs should be administrative and instructional when aimed at improving the performance of the learners. In further emphasising curriculum planning, HoD1 believes that: *“As HoD I plan based on current performance and how we can improve the current performance. We are performing as a department but we strategise, come up with strategic thinking, strategic decisions that will enable the department to grow. I lead my teachers, inspire them and they listen to me. I influence them to help the poor learners. I manage curriculum, second one I must set goals and target for my department. Monitor the work of my teachers like lesson plans as well as assessment plan. I must also allocate the resources to teachers in my department and lastly monitor curriculum coverage for my department.”*

The HoD from Lion secondary school also emphasised monitoring of work, providing resources for the teachers in the department. These extracts show that the HoD has the

responsibility of setting targets and planning how the targets will be met with the teachers in the department. The HoDs set standards and monitor the implementation in the department.

4.4.1 School improvement plans

The SMTs in the secondary schools develop the SIPs in January after the announcement of Grade 12 results. The intervention strategies on how to improve the Grade 12 results are outlined in the SIP. Escobar (2019:442) defined an SIP as the proposal of actions which establishes goals and actions in order to improve learning outcomes. The SMTs need to set priorities and draw the action plan that can assist to implement the strategies. P3 expressed his views on the development of SIPs this way: *“After the analysis of the Grade 12 results, I invite the SMT to bring their subject improvement plans. We consolidate all the subject plans and make it to be one document which will be discussed in the staff meeting. The inputs of the teachers are included in the plan.”*

It is important that these plans are supported by all in the school. The fact that teachers are allowed to develop their own subject specific improvement plans is a plus for the school and they will easily own these plans. P1 indicated that for the SIPs to be owned: *“I make sure that after the consultation with all the professional staff in the school, I invite the school governing body to make inputs and adopt the school improvement plan. I also submit the school improvement plan to the circuit manager for endorsement before we implement. All the stakeholders made the input to the plan and it is quality assured by the district director.”*

The interviews with SMTs revealed that schools develop SIPs as a strategy to improve learner performance. The emphasis of the study was on the quality of the SIPs and on its impact on the learner performance of the school.

4.5 SHARED LEADERSHIP

This study found that the SMT roles are interrelated and they all contribute to the improvement of results. Shared leadership which includes all SMT members, teachers, administrators and parents contributes to school effectiveness and accountability systems in the school. Shared leadership is aimed at ensuring full participation and ownership by all key stakeholders. This assertion is supported by Hou, Cui and Zhang (2019:552) who argued that collective leadership makes all members responsible for improvement of learner performance in the school.

Spillane (2005:146) argued that shared leadership involves multiple leaders and interaction between school leaders. The multiple leaders take the responsibility for leadership in school. The principal coordinates the activities of the teams in the school. It is therefore important for

leaders in the school to have a common understanding of the vision and the mission of the school. The performance of the learners is the responsibility of the team and they own the strategies that are crafted to improve the results. In support of the assertions above on shared leadership, the views of P2, DP1 and HoD1 are presented below.

“I have a very functional SMT committee in my school. I allocate work to my two deputies and four HoDs. The work is shared among ourselves, and the teachers know what is expected from them. It promotes ownership and they try to make the schoolwork. I share responsibilities as a strategy to improve learner performance in my school.” (P2)

“As the deputy principal, I allocate work to the heads of department. At the beginning of the year, they hold meetings with their teachers so that they can draw a plan for the whole year. They need to plan the number of informal and formal tasks, for example, how many exercises, how much homework per week. I also remind HoDs to monitor the learners’ work and the work of educators. I monitor the work of the HoDs and give support when I observe weakness so that they can excel in their work.” (DP1)

“What I can tell you is that the HoD is the principal of the subjects that a person leads. I lead a team of about 10 teachers and at the moment they have given me another subject stream to lead. Meaning that I lead a team of teachers who are in other school. The role of the HoD is number one: to lead the department.” (HoD1)

The views provided by the three participants show that collective responsibility promotes teamwork in the school. It is highlighted that each leader has a role to play to improve quality teaching and learning. Shared leadership demands that the principal is able to lead a diverse team. Hughes and Pickeral (2013:3) asserted that shared leadership is about shared purpose and engaging all the leaders in the activities of the school. The school leaders are developed and promote effective teaching and learning in a school. The strength and skills of the team are engaged in order to improve learner performance in the school.

4.5.1 Parental involvement in improving learner performance

I found from the interview responses that amongst the challenges that retard enhanced learner performance in schools was the minimal or lack of parental involvement by the parents in the education of their children which gave rise to the high rate of learner absenteeism, alcohol and substance abuse, teenage pregnancies and culminated in ill-discipline. I identified parental involvement as one of the strategies that has a positive impact on learner performance. Nye, Schwartz and Turner (2005:3) pointed out that parental involvement is important to the

academic achievement of the school. The parents could be involved in the child's educational activities in the home and the school. The parents' meetings, the extracurricular activities like participating in sporting events and assisting with homework requires involvement of parents in educational activities. One of the participants (P2) indicated that parents try their best to be involved in the school and this was indicated as follows: *"The parents in my school expressed their commitment to provide support to their children to receive quality results at the end of the year. The parents are trying everything in the best interest of the child. The programmes we have at our school is to ensure that learning and teaching objectives are achieved."*

Durisic and Bunijevac (2017:138) reaffirmed the effort of the parents' involvement in the school activities. Learners who receive strong support from their parents are generally successful in school. The parents and the teachers become partners in creating a safe environment that allow learners to focus on their studies. Here are views of P1 and P3 about parental involvement:

"I involve the school governing body and the parents in assisting the school to perform well. I know that learners do not want their parents to be invited at school to solve the problems. Learners try to be disciplined and do schoolwork and we have cooperation of all the parents."
(P1)

"I have seen the benefits of involving parents in the school. I call parents' meetings at the end of the year to prepare for the following year. I show the parents how their children perform and allow them to suggest strategies to improve the results. Some of the parents offer to teach some subjects and others supervise evening classes." (P3)

The responses of the participants show that the involvement of the parents instils discipline in the school. Mahuro and Hungi (2016:4) confirmed the views of the participants that parental involvement improves the learners' performance. Parents have the responsibility to create an environment that supports their children. The benefits of parental involvement in the education of their children include discipline, school attendance and improved academic outcomes. P3 expressed his view on the need for the HoDs to understand the support from the parents and school governing body to enhance learner performance in Grade 12: *"The HoDs need to understand the roles of parents in improving learner performance. When teacher and parent could be provided support and guidance by the HoDs the quality of Grade 12 results could improve. According to the SMT hierarchy, HoDs are closest to the teachers and learners. It is*

the management layer that need to be trained on their roles in order for teachers to be supported in the class.”

P2 acknowledged the role played by parents in the school and stressed the importance of parental involvement: *“I invite the parents of all Grade 12 learners and outline all the planned intervention strategies. I show the parents my expectations in ensuring that all learners attend the programmes. Parents support our programme and at the end of the meeting they sign the commitment register.”*

It is important to separate lack of parental involvement and situations where there is no parent. In some families, the children are without the support of an adult. P1 expressed how the school approached parental involvement: *“The challenge in my school is that I have child-headed families because some of the learners are orphans. We mitigate this by adopting learners without the parents. All our Grade 12 teachers have adopted the learners and they track their performance.”*

The illiterate and poor parents were forced to do casual jobs and it was not easy for them to request time off to attend parents’ meetings and support school activities. P2 and DP2 shared their experience about parental involvement as follows:

“In my school, there is minimal parental involvement because the parents of my learners’ work in farms and some have casual jobs which makes it difficult to attend school meetings. We also have some of the parents who work in other provinces.” (P2)

“In our school the challenge is discipline of learners, I use the code of conduct drawn by the school governing body and it was adopted by all parents and all the learners are given the copy when they are admitted in the school. I involve the parent of the learner and we support the learner.” (DP2)

The principals need to manage parental involvement to enhance their contribution to school activities. When parents provide support and participate in the school activities, learners have more contact with the teacher. P1 explained the critical role that parents play in the education of their children, stating that, even if the parents were illiterate, they could still support school programmes: *“My learners are coming from low and illiterate communities. I encourage parents to attend meetings and supervisor night studies. The parents are contributing their time and they are actively involved in the school activities.”*

The involvement of all the stakeholders in the school programmes is key. The stakeholders bring all their skills and knowledge to assist in managing the intervention programmes. Walker

and Hallinger (2015:564) asserted that parental involvement could tackle learner discipline in the school and lessons could go on without interruptions. It is therefore a priority of the SMTs to have intervention plans that would encourage all parents to become involved in the education of their children. Irrespective of socioeconomic status, parental involvement has a positive impact on learner performance. Increased parental involvement in a school creates a support system for learners both at home and at school. Some parents are able to contribute financially to the educational programmes, while others bring their expertise to the school. The participants' views showed that in the schools where the parents are involved in the education of their children, learner performance improved.

4.5.2 Teamwork effort

I found while collecting data that an improvement in the Grade 12 results could be achieved by the SMT's team effort. One of the participants had the view that teamwork requires strong leadership in order to achieve improved learning outcome. Adding his views on the matter of teamwork efforts, P1 noted that: *"Our school believes in collective management. All members of the team are key in improving the learner performance. I share and make the team to own the plan. The teachers and learners know the vision of the school."*

P3 further expanded on the benefits of teamwork: *"My experience as the principal had proven to me that it takes teamwork to improve the results. My school is called to the announcement of the results by the MEC every year because we work as a team to support the learners. My school is on the map because we share ideas and we implement the plans as a team."*

The participants espoused that when the SMTs work towards the common purpose of improving learner performance in the school, the results are bound to improve. The SMT needs to share responsibilities and have strategies to support teachers and learners. The subject committee meetings should be coordinated to ensure that there is communication and participation in the decision that need to be implemented. When there are consultations, teachers feel that their inputs about the functioning of the school are valued. For the school to benefit from teamwork, Martin et al. (2015:2) suggested that teachers need to improve their teamwork capacity through training in different teaching methodologies and improve their teaching skills because it can influence learner performance.

P2 explicitly shared how he ensures that the SMT works as team: *"I have SMT members who are committed and go the extra mile by supporting both learners and teachers. I delegate*

responsibilities to all the staff members so that they feel that they own the programmes in the school.”

The participants' responses highlighted the importance of teamwork in improving Grade 12 performance. The school principal needs to foster teamwork in order to promote cooperation of all teachers which could impact on the improvement of academic learning outcome. Shuffler, Diazgranados, Maynard and Salas (2018:6) emphasised that teamwork is vital in improving results. The SMT has a role in improving team effectiveness that could assist the team to contribute to improvement of the school. Teamwork creates learning opportunities and the knowledge gained influences the results. Schools do well when they recognise the abilities of the individual team members and allocate duties according to their abilities. The team members are motivated to do extra work to support the vision of the school to improve the results.

4.6 PROFESSIONAL TEACHER DEVELOPMENT

Darling-Hammond, Hyler and Gardner (2017:2) defined professional teacher development as a structured professional learning programme that give rise to a change in a classroom teacher practice based on improved acquired knowledge and improvement of academic learning outcomes. Professional teacher development is meant to expand the teachers' knowledge on how to support the learner in the classroom. It is about how learners learn and how teachers learn how to teach and what content knowledge to provide to the learners which is pitched at the required academic level. This is supported by Malm (2009:79) who emphasised that teacher development is about the quality of teachers and their teaching. Teacher development programmes promote student learning to teachers in order to improve learner performance. To realise the improvement of learning outcomes, the SMTs has the responsibility for the professional development of teachers. The SMT should teachers accountable for the improvement of their instructional skills.

Professional teacher development is critical in ensuring that teachers are kept abreast of the developments in the teaching field. Professional teacher development is meant to enhance teacher professional growth which includes teaching skills, values and knowledge. Jepketer, Kombo and Kyalo (2015:41) asserted that professional teacher development is an effort to improve learner performance by focusing on effective teaching. Teachers influence teaching and learning processes in the school.

The research findings noted that the SMT needs to support teacher practices in the classroom. It is, therefore, the responsibility of the SMTs to build the capacity of the teachers in order to

address poor learner performance. The participants in the study pointed out that professional teacher development had contributed to the improvement of learner performance in Grade 12 results.

The study showed that investing in developing the capacity of the teachers is an effective strategy to produce effective teaching and learning in the school. The sentiments expressed by P3 were evidence emanating from school level that supported the idea that participants view professional development as leading to both improved classroom practice and improved learner performance in the results chain from input to outcomes in the evidenced-based Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) framework:

“I take teacher development seriously in my school. I consolidate the reports from QMS summative evaluation to develop a programme on how teachers would be supported. Teacher development is in the approved budget of the school. The analysis of the Grade twelve was an indication of the impact of teacher development programme.” (P3).

Dewan (2018: 4) stressed that the capacity building of teachers include training on content and train teachers to cascade the content to other teachers in the school. Stressing the importance of capacity building, the views of HoD2 are as follows: *“I conduct school-based workshop to support teachers in my department. I sometimes invite the subject advisor or the best performing teacher from other schools to come and workshop our teachers. I also encourage my teachers to attend workshops organised by the Vhembe District and Limpopo Department of Education. It is the support that we offer for newly appointed teachers and the experienced ones.”*

P1 concurred with HoD2 on strengthening the capacity of teachers: *“I draw class visit schedule and I insist that the programme is followed. I am interested in what is happening in the class. When I receive the class visit report, I attend to the identified support the teacher need. When teachers are developed there is effective teaching and learning.”*

The support for teachers was echoed by Rajoo (2012:4) in that it could have a great impact on teaching and learning. The necessary support for teachers could make learning successful and ultimately learner performance could improve. DP1 and HoD 2 expressed their views about capacity building as follows:

“The HoDs in our school conduct class visits on quarterly basis as a way of giving support to the teachers. The challenge that I have observed is that the HoD complete the monitoring tool and give a copy to the teacher. The HoD, I think should have a meeting to discuss the

observations and suggest the ways in which the teacher can improve the lesson. The monitoring tool only cannot help the HoD to develop the teacher.” (DP 1)

“How do I lead my teachers, at the beginning of the year, the principal give HoDs the mandate to allocate the subjects or periods to our teachers. I try to analyse the strength and weakness of my teachers so determine who is suitable for which Grade. I have the weak links in the department, and it is my duty to motivate those who are weak and hold them by the hand, but those who are inspired, do the work on their own.” (HoD 2)

The above responses show that an effort by SMT to encourage teachers to improve their teaching skills could result in improvement of teaching and learning in the school. In the next section, the roles of SMTs in building the capacity of the teachers in the school are discussed.

4.6.1 Teacher support materials

Because teachers are trained, they are able to use the support materials to improve quality teaching and learning. Teachers use the subject policies with understanding, and it has a positive impact on the academic learning outcomes. Flowing from this, HoD1 provides teachers with support materials whenever they need them. His standpoint on these issues are described as follows: *“I ask them to tell me their curriculum needs so that I can take it to the principal. If they need things like CAPS documents or exam guidelines, I check with other colleagues or subject advisor. I try give them curriculum support materials so that they can give to their teachers. I also provide them with relevant School Based Assessment mark sheets because sometimes you find that they have mark sheets that are no longer used. I make sure that they use the relevant materials.”*

In supporting the view of the provision of support materials to teachers, HoD2 indicated it this way: *“I must make sure that they have necessary documents like subject policy documents, stationery and supplementary materials. Some of the teachers need study guides and ICT equipment. I was provided with the laptop which is loaded with subject content. I encourage teachers to download the information relevant to the topic they are teaching. The subject teachers distribute the textbooks to learners, and they need to keep the record of the books they distributed. I monitor the retrieval of the textbook at the end of the academic year.”*

The SMTs ensure that teachers are provided with the relevant policy materials at the beginning of the year. The SMT monitor the utilisation of the learner teacher support materials by the teachers and learners. When teachers use the prescribed materials to teach and prepare assessment activities, learners are prepared to tackle the final examination at end of the year.

DP2 ensures that teachers in her department are provided with prescribed materials: as the deputy principal, *“I provide HoDs with materials like pacesetters, exam guidelines to make sure that teaching and learning take place on the first day of school reopening. I also make sure that they have enough textbooks for all the learners in their different subjects. I try to make sure that curriculum documents are available and HoDs distribute to all the teachers for effective teaching and learning.”*

The provision of teaching materials by the HoDs is supported by Bambi (2012:100) that HoDs maintain the culture of teaching and learning by providing textbooks, learning support materials and ensuring that the materials are utilised in the classroom by the teachers. Danili and Reid (2004: 219) showed that teaching support materials contribute to improvement of learner academic performance. The materials are designed to support the gifted and learners who are struggling to understand the subject concepts. The learner support materials contain improvement strategies that assist learners and teachers to improve the results.

4.7 POOR LEARNER PERFORMANCE

The DBE (2011:33) provides the promotion requirements for Grades 10-12. The learners may be retained once in the phase to avoid the learner being retained in the phase for longer than four years. The progression policy is intended to minimise dropout and maximise school retention. The SMTs should have intervention strategies to support progressed learners and to improve learner performance in Grade 12.

4.7.1 Contributing factors towards poor learner performance in Grade 12

This study found that there are a number of factors that contributes towards poor learner attendance. Participants cited that some of the reasons for absenteeism were that learners who suffered from HIV/AIDS tended to absent themselves more often than other learners. HoD2 expressed herself like this when it comes to the challenges of learners who are living with HIV/AIDS in the school. *“I have learners who are HIV positive in my class. The learners lose period because sometimes they need to go and collect their medication, or they are absent because they are sick. As a school we have good relationship with the nearest clinic and hospital in terms of supporting the learners. The nurses and social workers have a support schedule to visit our school to offer counselling and give health talks to the learners. The support visits seem to be helpful to learners because absenteeism is minimised. Learners understand what they are going through, and they are taught coping skills.”*

This finding was confirmed by Bialobrzaska, Randel, Hellmann and Winker (2012:5) when they raised challenges of illness such as HIV/AIDS. These kind of challenges have a direct impact on learner performance in the National Senior Certificate examination. The SMTs through the health advisory committee have a record of all learners who need support in the school.

Poor behaviour and frequent absenteeism contribute to a high failure rate because learners miss contact time with their teachers. Poor school attendance is an indication of problems that learners and teachers are facing and measures like the code of conduct could be used to address learners' attendance. The learners lose teaching time and teachers are unable to cover the content which is expected to be covered in the grade. Learners are examined on the subject content which they were not exposed to in the class. The majority of the participants identified poor class attendance as one of the factors that influence poor learner performance. Interviews revealed that strengthening the learner code of conduct helps to improve learner attendance and learner performance in Grade 12.

In emphasising that, P3 contended that not enough emphasis was placed on the learner code of conduct to curb ill-disciplined learners in the school. He argued this way: *“We have learners’ code of conduct which could be used to deal with issues of high rate of learner absenteeism. The point is that if the code of conduct is used and all stakeholders know about and as a principal I enforce. The behaviour of learners could change and we have discipline in the school. Effective teaching and learning could take place and it would translate to improved learning outcome.”*

The challenges that impact on learner performance in the schools differ due to their location and the contextual factors. P2 in elaborating further on the challenges that impact on learner performance raised school safety challenges as a problem. School safety challenges such as gangsterism and high level of bullying were some of the examples P2 mentioned. *“This school is challenged by gangsters in the township. Learners belong to different gangs and they fight due to their differences. Some of the learners bring dangerous weapons to protect themselves. Learners live in fear and it affects them psychologically and the performance in the classroom is affected.”*

Bipath (2017:4) alludes to the challenges of school safety and points out that the SMTs have put safety measures in place. However, the safety measures are not implemented because SMTs lack capacity on school safety. School safety workshops should be organised to build the

capacity of the SMTs and the school safety monitoring system should be in place. School safety problems have a negative impact on both teaching and learning which results in poor learner performance. Contact time which is the amount of time that both the teacher and learner are engaged in, in the delivery of content within a classroom, depends on school safety. For example, the psychosocial needs of learners as whole beings are impacted by the milieu in which they live. Schools should act as safe havens where learners can acquire knowledge in their right state of mind without a threat, violence or unrest. The contribution of school safety remains a subset within a union of all variables that need to be controlled as they contribute to improvement of learning outcomes.

Mlowosa, Kalimang'asi and Mathias (2014:2) pointed to poor family background and learners with special needs. Learners from poor backgrounds lack financial support to get private tutors and buy supplementary materials. Some of the learners depend on social grant for financial support. The home environment in poorer communities is not educationally supportive due to factors like poverty, illiterate parents, emotional problems and other socioeconomic challenges. P3 concluded that some of the learners work hard motivated by their poor family background: *“I have gifted learners coming from struggling families. I buy study guides and some of the supplementary materials for my learners. Some of the teachers also donate study materials and our learners appreciate the support. We have produced a number of learners who produced distinctions from poorer backgrounds.”*

Dikgale (2012:20) reiterated the view of financial problems as a factor that could cause some of the parents to be less involved in the education of their children. Some of the parents are unable to pay for the extra lessons that are used as an intervention strategy to improve the results of the school. The schools have differentiated support programmes for learners from poor background and learners with special needs to cope with the demand of schoolwork. The SMTs create support system that would be able to embrace all learners and promote a culture of effective teaching and learning in the school. Learners should be empowered regardless of background in order to create a better future for themselves and their families. Commenting on this aspect, P3 further posited that: *“I have been in this school for more than twenty years. I know the families in this community, and I have taught the parents of my current Grade twelve learners. I know the family background of my learners, so I know how to support them. I have programme for morning lessons, afternoon and evening classes. I have categorised my learners based on their individual circumstances and it works for my school.”*

Banerjee (2016:2) suggested that learners from unprivileged backgrounds need differentiated support programmes that will close the gap in learner performance. Differentiated support programme such as focusing on the individual needs of a specific group or individual based on learner background could work as a mitigating factor for learners whose parents are less literate or unemployed and are unable to support educational programmes. In some cases, orphaned learners remain at risk due to lack of parental involvement. A targeted support programme remains an effective strategy to help learners to improve their performance in the formal summative assessment such as an examination.

Teachers are key in crafting strategies to assist learners who need remediation. Makofane and Maile (2019:47) highlighted that poor curriculum coverage and poor knowledge of subject content by teachers could result in low academic achievement by learner. HoDs monitor the learners' written work and the curriculum coverage. Curriculum coverage is monitored by using the Department of Basic Education pacesetter and the assessment guideline.

4.7.2 Progression of learners

Learner progression could contribute to poor learner performance in a school. Poor learner performance results in learners who do not qualify to move to the next Grade being allowed to proceed. The SMT need to understand the progression policy and implement it as guided by Circular E22 of 2015. Circular E22 of 2015 sets out the criteria for the implementation of progression in Grades 10–12. The DBE (2016b) defines a progressed learner in a public school as a learner who has not complied with the progression requirements in Grade 10 or 11. These learners may be progressed into Grade 12 if they comply with the criteria set out in the progression policy.

The progression policy allows learners to progress to next Grade even if they did not meet the promotion requirements. The criteria for progressed learners are meant to assist SMT to guide and manage progression in Grades 10 - 12 In view of this, P1 lamented the preparedness of these learners on critical subjects this way: *“We have the highest number of the progressed learners in Grade 12. Progressed learners have serious content gaps mainly in the gateway subjects like Mathematics, Geography, Life Sciences, Accounting and other subjects. Some of the learners are in Grade 12 and never passed any content subject from Grade 10 when they start Further Education and Training (FET) band. I ensure that all teachers profile the learners so that I know how to support them. Teachers do differentiated support to help close the content gap that accumulated from Grade 10 to 12.”*

Smith (2019:9) argued that support for progressed learners in Grade 12 is delayed because the learners were already identified at the beginning of Grade 11. The principal needs to profile the progressed learners and support them according to their difficulties. The profiles of the progressed learners would help the SMTs and the teachers to track the academic performance of the learners. In further agreeing with this point of view, P3 strongly argued that: *“As secondary schools, we do not have remedial teachers to support progressed learners. I organise the motivational session for progressed learners because some see themselves as failures and they are demotivated. The teachers have different programmes to support the progressed learners and the SMT monitors the implementation. I also use retired and the more experienced teachers to offer afternoon lessons to progressed learners. The school and the circuit programmes seem to yield the results. Some of the progressed learners obtain bachelor passes in Grade 12 National Senior Certificate examination.”*

The participants indicated that the progression policy affected both learners and teachers because learners lacked basic content knowledge. Teachers were struggling to teach learners who lacked prior content knowledge and the learners were also frustrated by the work that was taught in the classroom. The finding was confirmed by Darling-Hammond et al. (2019: 3) who pointed to lack of abilities like critical thinking, problem-solving skills, the capacity to analyse and apply the knowledge that is taught in the classroom in the practical situation by the learners. The SMTs should help the learners to acquire the skills that would help them to pass the examinations. HoD 1 expressed his view about the progressed learners: *“I have progressed learners in my class who struggle to understand the basic concepts of the subject. Some of the progressed learners are ill-disciplined and over-aged. Some lack motivation and it is hard to teach discouraged learners.”*

DP2 exposed challenges that are brought by the systems: *“The problem lies with learners who cannot read and construct a meaningful sentence in Grade 12. Learners struggle with concepts in languages, and they memorise without understanding, therefore application of knowledge is a problem to them. Learners struggle with high order questions and representing data in graphs. There is lack of accountability in some learners; they miss writing tests without a valid reasons.”*

My assertions on the matter of progression of learners is that the SMTs are unable to interpret guidelines as stated on Circular E22 of 2015. The inability of schools to implement progression policy properly results in learners moving from grade to grade until they reach Grade 12. Learners find themselves in Grade 12 without mastering basic skills like reading and writing.

Some of the learners were progressed in all the grades and schools did not provide support to close the content gaps. It becomes difficult for some progressed learners to cope with Grade 12 work.

4.7.3 Intervention strategies

Considering the responses and the analysis of learner performance results data, contextual relevance rather than a one-size-fits-all approach would be the best strategy to improve the Grade 12 results in Vhembe Education District. The intervention plans should be specific to the conditions of the school. The SMTs are the drivers of the intervention strategies in order to improve learner performance. The SMTs need to be instructional leaders for them to craft and implement strategies. Here is what P1 had to say about how they craft intervention strategy in their school: *“I collect data to inform the design and delivery of programmes that support Grade 12 learners. I analyse the results with the SMT and we suggest strategies. The suggested strategies are discussed with the teachers because their inputs are key, and I want them to own the intervention plan.”*

For the intervention strategy to be effective, it demands that the SMT creates an environment for effective teaching and learning in the school. Naidoo and Petersen (2016:2) argued that SMTs need to be well informed about the curriculum that is taught at the school. SMTs should be exposed to the teaching methods and the type of assessment that are administered in class to prepare learners for the National Senior Examination. The moderation of the assessment tasks by the SMTs ensures that learners are tested at all cognitive levels. Learner performance is dependent on the instructional leadership of SMTs who prioritise teaching and learning and support the teachers. P1 expressed his views about instructional leaders driving the implementation of intervention strategy, as follows: *“I make sure that the school delivers its key mandate which is curriculum delivery. I lead teaching and learning in my school. As a principal, I monitor what is happening in the class because the results happen in the classroom.”*

Hompashe (2018:4) concurs with the view that instructional leadership of the SMT contributes to the improved academic performance of learners. Curriculum delivery in the school is a key responsibility of SMTs and they are accountable for the academic performance of the learners and the teachers. SMTs promote positive learning climate and protect the instructional time. P3 expressed his views on monitoring instructional time as follows: *“I monitor class attendance of both learners and teachers. I monitor by wandering around and I have the timetable to check if teachers are honouring the teaching periods. I control period registers*

daily and class attendance weekly. When the teacher is absent for some reasons, I need a recovery plan.”

The commitment of teachers and the effective implementation of intervention strategies impact learner academic performance. The instructional leadership in the school environment contributes to learner academic performance. Heck and Hallinger (2014:659) emphasised that the teacher effectiveness depends on the quality of instructional leadership of the SMTs. The leadership of the principal and teachers is reflected in the quality of teaching and the quality of the learning outcomes. The teachers' ability to address the learners' needs and abilities impacts on the learning outcome. Teachers develop classroom activities that should support all the learners in the class. SMTs monitor and support both learners and teachers when they track academic performance. Hallinger (2018:10) further asserted that when principals and teachers lead teaching and learning in the school the performance improves. P2 argued that: *“As a principal, I have a little knowledge of all the subjects that are offered at my school. I check if the lessons are pitched at the correct level and it caters for all the learners. Teachers should know that I know what is supposed to be taught in class because I also check the pacesetter and examination guidelines.”*

A common view amongst participants was that various intervention strategies could be used by SMTs to improve learner performance in Grade 12. Katamei and Omwono (2015:2) explained that for an intervention strategy to improve the results, it needs to be effectively implemented. The SMT should have intervention plans and assign responsible persons. The intervention plan should be monitored and evaluated to assess the impact of the plan. The NSLA is aimed at improving learner performance in the National Senior Certificate examination (DoE, 2007). Subramoney (2016: 3) argued that NSLA is an instrument that the SMT can use to monitor all the activities that support teaching and learning in the school. The schools that implement the NSLA activities have shown improvement. P3 pointed to the benefits of using NSLA as a tool to improve the results: *“I make sure that the activities that are contained in NSLA are captured in our SIP. I have been using the activities and the results of our school improve each year.”*

The HoD of Elephant Secondary cited some of the strategies that are offered by DBE in their school to improve learner performance. This is what HoD1 had to say: *“As the HoD, I make sure that all my teachers use pacesetters and the examination guidelines. I make copies of the diagnostic report so that teachers know the challenging topics and how they are supposed to*

teach the topics. Our school is also identified as the enrichment centre. All the learners benefit from the centre because best performing teachers are appointed to teach in the centre.”

The DBE (2009:46) established the National Education Evaluation and Development Unit (NEEDU) as the intervention strategy to improve learner performance. NEEDU was meant to raise the level of accountability in the SMTs. Accountability across the system needs to be strengthened in order to improve the learning outcomes. The participant emphasised that accountability is needed: *“I hold accountability sessions with the management teams on the allocated responsibilities so that I get progress. I also conduct accountability with teachers of underperforming subjects. Learners account on the targets they set for themselves. I saw it working because all of them know that I want reports on their work.”*(P1)

Peer teaching was one of the strategies that Vhembe District principals are implanting in the schools. P3 had to say this on peer teaching: *“I use peer teaching in the evening classes after the teacher has conducted afternoon lessons. I request subject teachers to identify learners and the topics to be taught in the evening classes. It is the strategy that I used for many years and it works in our school to improve learner performance. Some of the learners that we use as tutors obtain distinctions in the subjects they are teaching.”*

Polirstok (2017:5) agreed with the strategy of peer teaching. Peer teaching by the bright learners could be employed in the classroom to help weaker learners. Peer teaching seems to be an effective strategy to learners to assist their classmates and it increases time on task. Peer teaching builds the confidence of the tutors and increases their academic performance. It also prepares them for their future roles as teachers.

Intervention strategies are aimed at providing adequate support for teachers and learners. The designed plans create opportunities for teachers and learners to come up with innovative ways to speak to their own challenges. The participation of stakeholders in designing plans has a positive impact in the implementation and the outcome of the plan. The success of the plan in improving learning outcomes tends to be relatively high because stakeholders own the plan. The SMT monitors and evaluates the activities to ensure progress in the implementation of the plan. Schunk (2012:25) emphasised that the activities in the SIP should provide multiple learning opportunities for learners with different abilities. The plan should reinforce effective teaching and learning and continuous assessment. The constructive feedback helps the teachers and learners to improve on their learning strategies. HoD2 emphasised the importance of feedback to learners: *“I check the learners’ written work and the feedback by the teachers. I*

check the time the teacher takes to give the feedback to learners. I insist that teachers give timeous feedback while the work is still fresh in the minds of the learners.”

Dixon-Woods, McNicol and Martin (2012:879) argued that there is a correlation between the improvement in the results and the nature of the plan, evaluation methods and the effort to implement the reviewed strategies. The leadership of the school could develop an effective integrated plan that could tackle the problem of poor learner performance. The planned intervention strategies to improve Grade 12 learner performance in Vhembe Education District were informed by the National Senior Certificate examination results. The three secondary schools had an action plan to monitor the implementation of the intervention strategies. However, the availability of the plans does not guarantee the implementation. Participants held the view that improvement could be ensured with regular monitoring and evaluation of the strategies.

4.8 DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

In addition to the semi-structured interviews as data collection instruments, document analysis was conducted in the three selected schools. The purpose of evaluating the documents was to ascertain and to gain the understanding of the roles of SMTs in improving the academic performance of the schools. The list of the documents that were found and analysed in the three selected schools in Vhembe Education District are indicated in table 4.3.

NAME OF SCHOOL	LIST OF DOCUMENTS FOUND IN THE SCHOOLS AND THE FINDINGS
Zebra Secondary	<p><u>Analysis of Grade 12 results for the past three years (2017 to 2019).</u></p> <p>The school had analysed the Grade 12 results including other grades. The analysis showed the subjects with high enrolled learners and their contribution towards the overall pass in the school. The analysis also reflected that the school had subjects that underperformed in the lower grades.</p> <p><u>The improvement strategies for the past three years</u></p> <p>The improvement strategies were crafted by the SMTs, teachers and the SGB. The strategies were not aimed at a</p>

particular group of learners. There was no constant monitoring by the SMT.

Minutes of the SMT and staff

The minutes of the SMT and the staff reflected that there were regular meetings at the school. The improvement of learner performance was on the agenda of the meetings showed that it was a priority in the school.

Minutes of the SGB and parents meetings

The SGB and the parents are engaged on curriculum matters of the school. The minutes recorded the resolutions taken by SGB and parents to support the learners. The parents agreed to monitor the night study to support learners who do not have conducive places to study.

School general timetable

School general timetable is the tool that is used to show teaching the activities allocated to a teacher in a particular class. School general timetable is used to help in the curriculum management and protecting contact time of both teaching and learning. The SMTs used it as an important management tool to help track teaching activities in the classroom.

Teachers' time book

The purpose of the time book is to register the reporting time and control the movement of the teachers. There is no constant monitoring of the time book, some of the teachers do not sign on daily basis. There is no recovery plan for the teachers who arrive late and missed teaching periods.

Learners' written work report

The learners' written work report reflected that there was sufficient written work in Mathematics and English. The performance in Mathematics contradict the informal task assigned to learners. The performance in English

	<p>correspond to the amount of written work that learners use to prepare for formative evaluation.</p> <p><u>School-based target</u></p> <p>The researcher found out that the school set the target that was not informed by the performance data of the institution. The performance target set should be informed by the previous performance of the school.</p>
Lion Secondary	<p><u>Analysis of Grade 12 results for the past three years (2017 to 2019).</u></p> <p>The SMT in Lion secondary school gave a meticulous attention to detail in the analysis of the results. The analysis of results was used to track learner performance over the period of three years. The analyses over a three period is a strong indicator of the capacity of the school to deliver the learning outcomes. It also aids in showing impact of a school to achievement of goals.</p> <p><u>The improvement strategies for the past three years</u></p> <p>The strategies were developed to close the gaps identified as challenges in the SWOT and PESTEL models on curriculum delivery and general whole school evaluation. The strategies found at the school were best suited to be expressed as improvement strategies, the target group was clearly defined and objectives were set.</p> <p><u>Minutes of the SMT and staff</u></p> <p>The minutes were recorded in detail and easy to follow. Curriculum is on top of the school agenda and minutes are read to remind the meeting what was resolved in the previous meeting.</p>

	<p><u>Learners’ written work report</u></p> <p>Teachers are giving the informal tasks as the preparation of the formal work. Teachers mark the written and the SMT do the quality assurance of the tasks. The constructive feedback given to learners help them to master the subject content.</p>
Elephant Secondary	<p><u>Analysis of Grade 12 results for the past three years (2017 to 2019).</u></p> <p>The analysis of the results was done in a meticulous and detailed. The analysis of the results was discussed and intervention program developed to improve the results. The number of bachelor passes and the distinctions obtained was also analysed. The analysis showed the improvement in both the quality and overall performance of the learners. The areas of strength and weakness were reflected in the analysis of results.</p> <p><u>The improvement strategies for the past three years</u></p> <p>The researcher found that improvement strategies developed in the school were for all the categories of learners. The progressed, the average and highly gifted learners are supported according to their abilities. Differentiated support was meant to address the particular needs of the individual learners. The results of the school show the impact of the improvement strategies. Question banks are developed and made available to all the learners.</p> <p><u>Minutes of the SMT and staff</u></p> <p>Learners’ performance is the standing item in the agenda of the SMT and the staff. The school holds the accountability session for all the teachers and they account on the subject performance. The SMT had developed the resolution register where they record the resolutions taken in the meeting.</p> <p><u>Minutes of the SGB and parents meetings</u></p>

	<p>The minutes of the SGB and the parents show the active participation and involvement of parents in the school activities. Some of the parents teach in the evening and on weekends.</p> <p><u>Learners' written work report</u></p> <p>The learners' written work in Elephant secondary school is used to track curriculum coverage. The SMT in this use the annual teaching plans and the pacesetters to monitor the written work. Teachers used the previous question papers to give homework and classwork activities. The findings show that the subjects where there is a lot of quality written, academic learning outcomes had improved.</p>
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Table 4.3: List of documents from selected schools

The full list of the documents analysed is included as Appendix H. Each document was analysed separately. The documents collected and analysed informed the findings in the study. The documents were obtained from the school principals of the selected schools. The analysis of the documents revealed the kind of activities that were performed at the three sampled schools. Lion and Elephant secondary schools have filed the analysis of the results of all the grades. The researcher found that the subjects where learners are not performing well in Grade 12, the same subjects were not performing in the lower grades. Zebra secondary school also has the analysis of results but their analysis is not detailed. Zebra secondary focused on the overall pass percentage.

The improvement strategies for the past three years in Zebra and Elephant secondary school revealed that all stakeholders are part of crafting the improvement strategies. The strategies were informed by the performance of the learners and were aimed at improving the results. The strategies were not same for all the years. Lion secondary school did not have a file for the strategies. The HoDs keep the strategies for their department. The strategies are not shared across the grades. The reports and the minutes of the subject committee meetings by the HoDs indicate schools did an analysis of results and this is confirmed by the findings from the interviews on the diagnosis of curriculum challenges.

Table 4.4: The analysis of the results for the past three years in the three selected school in Vhembe Education District.

School	2017 Wrote	Promoted	% Promoted	2018 Wrote	Promoted	% Promoted	2019 Wrote	Promoted	% Promoted
Lion secondary	155	133	85.81	136	116	85.29	147	110	74.8
Elephant secondary	214	196	91.59	247	228	92.31	254	225	88.5
Zebra secondary	99	89	89.90	44	42	95.45	60	56	93.3

Table 4.5: Bachelor, Diploma and Higher Certificate passes in the selected schools

School	2017 Bachelor	Diploma	Higher Certificate	2018 Bachelor	Diploma	Higher Certificate	2019 Bachelor	Diploma	Higher Certificate
Lion secondary	56	51	26	43	46	27	51	36	23
Elephant secondary	76	72	48	122	77	29	98	70	57
Zebra secondary	30	34	25	22	10	10	31	24	1

The results above show the overall learner performance and also the quality of the results in terms of the bachelor, diploma, higher certificate and the number of distinctions. The analysis of the grade twelve results is an attempt to understand the learner performance for the past three years which is from 2017 to 2019. The intervention strategies are developed guided by how learners performed in the previous year examinations.

The SMTs present the analysis of the Grade 12 results to the school governing body and other stakeholders. The analysis of the results prepares the SMTs on issues that need immediate attention in Grade 12. Maddock and Maroun (2018:207) argued that the analysis of the results demands different teaching and learning strategies. The HoDs used the analysis of the results to develop support programme for the teachers who lack subject knowledge. Support programmes were aimed at improving poor learner performance and building the capacity of the teachers.

The analysed results of the selected schools in the interviews revealed that the underperforming subjects lack sufficient learning materials. The learner support materials is the key tool in enabling learners to study concepts and topics. The principal of Elephant secondary school had this to say about underperforming subjects: *“I have Mathematics and Geography as underperforming subjects in school because learners do not have textbook. Learner are unable to study and do homework at home because they share textbook in the class.”*

Goodier (2017: 20) asserted that lack of minimum required learner teacher support material has a relationship with the learning outcome. Textbook are critical in enabling learners to prepare for homework and to understand the subjects’ concepts. Learners with learner support materials have the potential of improving the learning performance. The deputy principal of Zebra Secondary schools asserted that textbook help learners: *“When I analysed the results I realised that the availability and the usage of the textbook is very important. Some my teachers are not encouraging learners to use the textbook and it results in the poor performance in the subjects.”*

The results analysis also identified the problem of subject change in grade twelve. Learners drop the subjects they were failing in grade 10 to grade 11. This what the deputy principal of Lion secondary school has to say about subject change: *“In our school we have a problem of learners who change the subjects in grade 12. The learners are without the necessary background of the subject and they lack basic concepts. The learners struggle to understand the language of the subjects.”*

Weybright, Caldwell, Xie, Wegner and Smith (2017: 11) subject change in grade 12 influence the learner performance. The results data indicated that learners are performing better in subjects they did in grade 10 to 12 than learners who change the subject. Learners struggle with the subject content and the intervention programme could help the learner to cope with the new content. The HoD of the Elephant secondary school support learners who are struggling with

subject content: *“I have extra classes with learners who changed the subjects. I teach them grade 10 to 11 content so that they can be able to cope with grade 12 content. The support programme in our school help the learners to perform in grade 12.”*

Learners who change subjects and I are supported by teachers are doing well. Learners are using subject change to address underperformance. Parents and teachers should have programmes to close the content gap.

The minutes of the meetings with the staff and other stakeholders are well organized in Elephant secondary. Elephant secondary school hold regular meetings where curriculum matters are standing items on their agenda. Zebra and Lion secondary school do not have frequent meetings like Elephant secondary school. The analysis of the results show that Elephant secondary school performs better than Lion and Zebra secondary schools. The engagement of parents and all the stakeholders contribute to improved learning outcomes. The teachers are accountable to parents and SGB release funds to implement the strategies.

4.9 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The chapter provided the analysis of the research findings on the role of SMTs in improving Grade 12 learners’ performance in Vhembe Education District Limpopo. The data was collected using semi-structured interviews and document analysis. Interview responses were from the three selected school, Lion, Zebra and Elephant secondary schools. The responses illustrated how the roles of SMTs impact on the quality of the leadership of the school and on improving learner performance in the Grade 12 National Senior Certificate Examination results. The interviews with the school management teams substantiated that SMTs contribute to the improvement of learner performance.

The findings suggested that the role of SMTs in driving teacher development has an influence on the performance of the learners in Grade 12 Senior Certificate Examination. The capacity of HoDs determines the quality of the support the teachers receive from their immediate supervisors. The HoDs are the nearest line of management to the teachers. The findings showed that effective principals are able to influence active participation of parents which enhances teaching and learning in the school. The SMT should be able to focus on the quality of learning, assessment, teaching and teacher development. Quality monitoring of the classroom activities could sustain high learner performance in the school. The next chapter presents a summary of the study, the conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, data was collected and analysed through thematic analysis. The data was collected through semi-structured interviews from three head of departments, three deputy principals and the three principals and also through document analysis. Documents like SMT minutes, departmental meetings conducted by head of departments, schools' intervention strategies and Grade 12 National Senior Certificate results for the past three years were reviewed. The study investigated the roles of the SMTs in improving Grade 12 learners' performance in Vhembe Education District, Limpopo. The specific roles of the principal, deputy principal and HoD in instructional leadership were discussed in the study. Through the discussion with the SMTs, the researcher found out how instructional leadership and management of schools could impact on learner performance in a school.

The previous chapter integrated literature to give support for the findings of the study and provided answers to the research questions. The research findings showed that some of the SMTs need to be trained on their roles in terms of the PAM as determined by the Minister of Basic Education. These measures are provided in the Employment of Educators Act of 1998 (DoE, 1998) which clearly indicates the roles and responsibilities of the HoD, deputy principal and the principal in relation to curriculum matters. This chapter provides a summative description of the findings, recommendations for future study, limitations of the study and finally the general conclusion. It is importance at this stage to restate the research questions that guided this investigation which were as follows:

- What are the roles of SMTs in improving Grade 12 learners' performance in Vhembe Education District, Limpopo?
- What are the specific roles of heads of department, deputy principals and principals in instructional leadership?
- Which challenges face schools in Vhembe Education District that contribute towards poor learner performance in Grade 12?
- How do SMTs employ intervention strategies to curb challenges of poor learner performance?
- How do SMTs deal with the challenges they face and are these interventions effective?

5.2 SUMMARY OF CHAPTERS

In this section, a comprehensive summary that outlines what each chapter entailed is presented.

Chapter 1 focused on the background and significance of the study. The problem statement was formulated on the roles of SMTs in improving Grade 12 learner performance in Vhembe District. The theoretical framework that form the basis of study was briefly discussed.

Chapter 2 presented a review of the current literature relevant to the study of the roles of the SMTs in improving learning outcomes. The international and South African literature were reviewed to find different perspective on the study. The chapter further covered the literature related to instructional roles of SMTs in improving Grade 12 learner performance in Vhembe Education District. This chapter explored the conceptualisation of instructional leadership. The literature revealed that SMTs that practise instructional leadership are able to produce quality results in Grade 12. Teamwork and its implications for learner performance were highlighted as were the roles of SMTs and their contribution towards teaching and learning. The strategies to improve learner performance and the challenges faced by the SMTs were discussed.

Chapter 3 discussed the research design and the methodology, data collection and the procedure followed when collecting data. The study employed a qualitative research approach. Semi-structured interviews and document analysis were used to collect data. Purposeful sampling was used to select the participants and the research sites. The participants were SMTs who were purposefully selected from three secondary schools, namely, two school-based HoDs, three deputy principals and three deputy principals.

Chapter 4 offered an analysis of the data obtained from the three schools through semi-structured interviews and document analysis. The collected data was analysed using thematic analysis. The following are the themes that were identified from data analysis: diagnosis of curriculum challenges and intervention through curriculum planning; shared leadership; professional teacher development; and learner performance. The themes were analysed in relation to the roles of the SMTs in improving learner performance in Grade 12.

5.3 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS FROM EMPIRICAL DATA

The sections that follow provide a summary of the critical findings of the empirical study on the problem that was investigated. A number of main and sub-themes were developed from empirical data.

5.3.1 The diagnosis of curriculum challenges and intervention through advanced curriculum planning

The overall perceptions of SMT members on the diagnosis of curriculum challenges and intervention through advanced curriculum planning indicated that they were able to identify curriculum challenges. From the findings, it can be argued that in identifying the challenges related to the curriculum, the subject teachers were engaged, and interventions strategies were not imposed on them. The participants highlighted the importance of communicating the SIPs to all stakeholders.

The SIPs demanded that SMT members develop accountability systems to monitor the implementation of the plan. The subject teachers were made to account for the performance of the learners in Grade 12 and HoDs had to show the support offered to the teachers. The findings demonstrated that the SMTs have strong accountability system at all levels. The SMT members demonstrated their commitment to improve performance for all learners in the school. Data further indicated that SMT members were fully aware of their roles as stipulated in PAM policy document.

5.3.2 Shared leadership

To a significant extent, the views of participants indicated that shared leadership is core in school management and in improving learning outcomes in Grade 12. Shared leadership happens through effective communication and delegation of duties. Teachers are delegated leadership roles which empowers them to take up leadership positions. The findings revealed that shared leadership promoted a culture of teaching and learning in the classroom and the improvement of learner performance. The statements of the participants showed that the commitment of teachers enhanced the learning outcome.

5.3.3 Parental involvement in improving learner performance

As indicated previously, parental involvement is critical to academic success. A plethora of literature has indicated that schools with a high degree of parental involvement have better learner performance. In this study, data demonstrated that in schools where parental involvement is lacking, there were challenges of late coming and ill-discipline of learners. It was evident from the responses of the participants and the results that parental involvement contributes to the improvement of the results.

5.3.4 Teamwork effort to improve results

Participants asserted that they benefitted from the diversity of skills and knowledge of the team. Members of the team owned the vision and the mission of the school and they were committed to the realisation of the objectives set by school. Teamwork provided the opportunity for the SMTs to support the teachers. It also encouraged peer teaching and staff motivation. The culture of effective teaching and learning was promoted amongst the teachers and there was an improvement in the Grade 12 results.

5.3.5 Professional teacher development

The overall perception of SMT members on professional teacher development was that it was a critical programme to support teaching and learning in the school. Data further demonstrated that the SMT identified the training needs from the QMS summative evaluation reports and other monitoring reports developed by the SMT members. In addition, data revealed that teacher development exposed teachers to new subject content and built their confidence to effectively teach in the classroom.

5.3.6 Teacher support material

Support materials play a very important role in ensuring that teachers perform their duties without problems. The SMTs provided the teacher support materials in the school. The SMT had a record of the materials that were distributed to the teachers. The teachers kept registers of learner support materials that were given to the learners. The participants' views attested that teacher support materials contribute to improved learner performance.

5.3.7 Poor learner performance

The overall impression of the participants on poor learner performance showed that there were various causes of poor performance in Grade 12. The management of learning and teaching activities by the SMT played a major role in eradicating poor learner performance. SMT members expressed their concern that some of the factors that contributed to poor performance were factors outside the schools. This was indicated when it was found that the majority of the learners depended on social grants and some were affected by HIV/AIDS. This made learners miss lessons because they went to collect social grants or to the clinic to collect medication during school time. Some missed formal tests that contributed to school-based assessment and their end of the year marks were affected.

5.3.8 Progression of learners

The study presented the following findings on this issues: (a) The interpretation and implementation of the progression policy is not the same in all the schools in Vhembe Education District; (b) some of the progressed learners lack the basic mastery of the subject content; (c) one of the selected schools had a programme dedicated to support the progressed learners; (d) progressed learners that were engaged in differentiated programmes produced bachelor passes and were eligible to enroll for further studies; and (e) intervention strategies were used for the improvement of results.

5.3.9 Intervention strategies

The overall perception of SMT members on intervention strategies was positive. The participants had well-planned enrichment programmes and the SMTs were committed to implementing the intervention strategies in the schools. What emerged strongly in the research was the demonstration of instructional leadership practices of the SMTs. SMT and teachers were involved and clear on the kind of support that would enhance learner performance. The strategies were guided by the DBE and the school developed their own interventions after they had analysed the Grade 12 results. The SMT adapted the strategies to suit the contextual factors of their schools and they knew what made them succeed in producing good results.

5.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The researcher noted few limitations in the study. The study was conducted in three secondary schools and two HoDs, three deputy principals and three principals were interviewed. One HoD decided not to participate in the study for personal reasons. The participants were not forced to participate and were free to withdraw from taking part in the study. The study relied on the responses from the SMTs in Vhembe Education District. Some of the responses were subjective perceptions and the participants could have been tempted to give what they considered to be acceptable answers rather than reflecting on actual reality in the school. There was a lack of perceptions of the teachers on the support from SMTs. The views of the teachers could assist the SMT in implementing the suitable teacher developed programmes and strategies to enhance learner performance.

The other limitation was that the performance in Grade 12 National Senior Certificate was not compared to other grades in the school. The performance in other grades is school-based-assessment and only Grade 12 National Senior Certificate examination is standardised to measure the school performance. The study does not claim that responses are representative of

all the schools in Vhembe Education District due to the limited number of selected schools. The time spent with the participants was insufficient because it was towards the end of the term and the SMT members were finalising the mark schedules for the promotion of the learners. More time with the participants could have resulted in more information to enrich the research findings.

5.5 CONCLUSIONS BASED ON THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS.

Every research project is a scientific journey guided by carefully and clearly considered research questions based on the problem under investigation. This section provides conclusions based on the research questions which guided the study.

5.5.1 What are the roles of SMTs in improving Grade 12 learners' performance in Vhembe Education District, Limpopo?

The researcher argues that the roles of SMTs have an influence in the improvement of learner performance in Grade 12. An overwhelming majority of the participants affirmed that the SMTs have a responsibility to ensure that there is effective teaching and learning in the classroom. The SMTs understood that their primary duty was to ensure that every learner in the school receives the highest quality of instruction in the classroom. Their management responsibilities require that they lead the development of teachers in order to influence the classroom practice and the improvement of learning outcome.

This finding was confirmed by Mogashoa (2013:140) who affirmed that SMTs should train and support teachers on new subject content and provide leadership on curriculum implementation. These views were further advanced by Monametsi (2015:18) in that the SMTs need to have induction programmes, mentoring and coaching of new and underperforming teachers. It was very clear from data that the researcher confidently concludes that the sampled SMTs contributed towards learner improvement.

5.5.2 What are the specific roles of heads of department, deputy principals and principals in instructional leadership?

During the interviews, the focus was also on the specific roles and responsibilities of the HoD, deputy principal and the principals in matters related to the curriculum. These roles are clearly stipulated in the PAM document of the DBE. The duties of the SMT are intended to promote and foster learning in a school to enable learners to participate in the economy of the country. Alberts (2016:100) asserted that the performance of the learners depends on the capacity and actions of the SMT. The performance of the school is a measuring tool that gauges both the

SMT leadership's efficiency and effectiveness with regard to their execution of plans. Given the views of the participants and the document analysis, it can be concluded that in the main, the roles of the participants do promote learning and teaching in the schools that they lead.

5.5.3 Which challenges face schools in Vhembe Education District that contribute towards poor learner performance in Grade 12?

The participants shared the challenges that contribute to poor performance within their respective schools. The involvement of the parents in trying to tackle some of the challenges had worked in some schools. After having realised that that the factors in the township schools and challenges in the deep rural schools are not similar in nature and that that challenges that face school are multifaceted, it can be concluded that sampled schools in Vhembe Education District face challenges which contribute towards poor performance.

5.5.4 How do SMTs employ intervention strategies to curb challenges of poor learner performance?

The DBE provides schools with the diagnostic reports of all the subjects in Grade 12. The teachers are made aware of the questions that were difficult to learners and how they should teach the topics. Some of the strategies proposed include the provision of supplementary learning and teaching materials and teacher development programmes aimed at improving the competence of teachers. A multi-disciplinary task team is one strategy of the DBE to support all the teachers in the school. It is a strategy to offer on-site support to subject teachers. From these findings, it can be argued and concluded that the DBE applies multifaceted strategies in improving learner performance.

5.5.5 How do SMTs deal with the challenges they face and are these interventions effective?

The SMTs created the environment that promotes teaching and learning in the school although the participants stated that they had challenges with teachers and learners. The teachers' challenges are addressed by South African Council of Educators (SACE) code of conduct. The findings revealed that the schools lack the measures that deal with the discipline of teachers at the workplace. The SACE code of conduct is available to assist the SMTs to address the misconduct of teachers. There was no evidence that showed how SMTs handled cases of misconduct.

5.6 RECOMMENDATIONS

The performance of Grade 12 learners is a national concern and the SMTs should ensure that learning outcomes are improved in the school. The roles of the SMT should impact on the

classroom activities. The SMTs should create an environment that support active participation of all teachers in the school. The following recommendations are informed by the research findings:

5.6.1 Recommendation no 1: Continuous Training of SMTs on instructional leadership and impact assessment

PAM outlines the duties and roles of the school management. Instructional leadership or curriculum management is one of the roles of the SMTs in ensuring that there is effective teaching and learning in the school. The researcher recommends that there should be continuous training for SMTs that outline their duties and responsibilities. This training should be conducted by experts in the field.

This should ensure that SMT members perform their instructional leadership role by leading and managing the core business which is curriculum matters and effective use of the available resources. The training for secondary school principals should be conducted at least once per quarter in order to learn on how to improve learning outcomes. The trainings should focus on intervention strategy for the improvement of performance in Grade 12. The findings revealed that the SMTs that practised instructional leadership had a significant effect on the performance of the learners. There was no evidence of the impact of assessment on the training that was provided to the SMTs. It is important that training which takes place should be assessed to measure the impact and the value of the money used. For the LDoE to improve Grade 12 performance, it should increase the budget for development of SMTs.

5.6.2 Recommendation no 2: Advance and strategic curriculum planning in the school

Advance and strategic curriculum planning is one of the management function of the SMTs. Strategic and advance planning are required for effective curriculum delivery. Planning should be strategic through a well-structured and coordinated effort. It was evident in the study that the schools that prepared their plans before the start of the academic year were organised and started teaching on the first day of the school year. The researcher recommends that all schools should do planning at the end of the previous year and the circuit manager should monitor and support the SMT in its planning. The school plan should address the needs of the teachers and learners and should further aim to strategically target curriculum coverage and delivery.

In pursuing the purpose of effective teaching and learning, collective planning strengthens commitment towards the attainment of school target. It enhances teamwork and ownership of the programmes by all teachers in the school. A structured and well-coordinated curriculum

programme could be reviewed after the analysis of the Grade 12 results. Arising from the reviewed programme, the SMT needs to prioritise the needs as diagnosed from the results in order to address poor performance. Advanced planning contributes to the effective management of curriculum activities and the improvement of learner performance. The SMTs need to be able to diagnose the problem and target how to intervene in terms of weaknesses identified.

5.6.3 Recommendation no 3: Professional support for orphans and vulnerable children in the school

The research findings showed that there is a need to support the orphans and the vulnerable in the schools. The researcher recommends that schools should have functional SBSTs and Health Advisory Committees (HAC). Vhembe Education District through its psychological unit needs to train the local school SBST and HAC on how to identify learning gaps and the provision of extra support needed to reduce the effects of poverty on vulnerable learners. These proposed structures should create relationships with sister departments such as social development and health, non-governmental organisations and any other relevant external structure with an interest in education. These structures could provide emotional and psychological services that would enhance learner performance.

5.6.4 Recommendation no 4: Strengthen school safety

There should be a training programme for school safety committees on the implementation of the school safety policy. The implementation of the policy would eliminate or reduce fear in both the learners and the teachers. Learners are attacked by gangs and bring dangerous weapons into the classroom to protect themselves. The SGB and the SMTs should ensure that learners and parents know about the learners' code of conduct and the safety policy. Safe schools create a positive climate that promotes effective teaching and learning. SMTs should ensure that there is safe environment in the school because it brings a sense of security to both learners and teachers. When teachers feel safe in the school, they are effective in the classroom and the results show improvement.

School safety has an impact on the performance of the learners. The researcher further proposes that the school governing body and the SMTs should encourage the formation of school safety champions. The school safety champions should be composed of community role models who adopt schools to promote safety through various platforms. They could make great impact in terms of improving school safety and the provision of quality teaching and learning in schools.

5.6.5 Recommendation no 5: Intermittent promotion/advocacy of the progression policy

The DBE should conduct training to outline progression requirements as stated in the progression policy to SMT members. This will eliminate the wrong progression of learners who have not mastered basic subject content needed for the next grade. There would be uniformity in the implementation of the policy and it would not be subject to the interpretation of the SMT and disadvantage the deserving learners. The DBE should deploy teams at the end of the academic year to support and monitor schools on the implementation of the policy.

5.7 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

While the findings of the study highlight the importance of the role of SMTs in improving Grade 12 performance, it also provided some implications for future research. The researcher acknowledges the knowledge that she gained from experienced and competent SMTs through interviews and well-documented strategies. I suggest that a similar study should be conducted on a larger scale in Vhembe Education District and other districts in Limpopo Province. The investigation would strengthen the curriculum management of SMTs and influence the improvement of learning outcomes.

The study only focused on the role of school management in improving learner performance in Grade 12 without considering the perceptions of the teachers on the SMT support. It would be useful to investigate the perception of teachers on the support they receive from SMTs. This is a limitation in the current study because there might be a possibility of SMT members presented themselves in a positive light. A focus on the perceptions of teachers would perhaps have given different viewpoints. Because teachers are front liners, their views could have provided valuable responses on what actually happens in the heart of the school, which is the classroom. The views of the teachers could provide an opportunity to examine the impact of the programmes in the classroom.

The research study did not focus on primary schools in Vhembe Education District. The researcher suggests that research be undertaken in all the feeder primary schools (i.e. those providing the sampled secondary schools with Grade 8 learners) in order to understand the instructional leadership of the SMT in the primary schools. The purpose would be to enhance the quality of support to learners and to identify the weaknesses in curriculum management in the primary schools. Researchers could establish why learners were progressed without mastering the basic subject content knowledge.

Another area that needs further study is a focus on the curriculum management of by school-based HoDs. Some of the HoDs pay more attention to their roles as subject teachers because they have more teaching periods than deputy principals. The minutes of the departmental meetings revealed that HoDs spent more time in the classroom than monitoring and supporting the teachers.

It is essential to the DBE to have support programmes for the SMTs that perform well. Currently, DBE supports the SMTs of underperforming schools. Findings of the study were influenced by the responses of SMTs in Vhembe Education District in Limpopo context. Lessons were drawn from the experiences of the SMTs during the interviews. There is no doubt that Vhembe Education District, with its geographical and economic context would have to provide a multi-pronged intervention plan to address the improvement of the Grade 12 results. The researcher suggests that the DBE allows SMTs to contextualise the strategies that are sent to schools.

5.8 GENERAL CONCLUSION

In this study, the researcher explored the roles of the SMTs of three secondary schools in improving learner performance in Grade 12. She used the instructional leadership theory in understanding how they manage and lead curriculum activities in the school to enhance learner performance. The SMTs demonstrated an understanding of instructional leadership and their commitment to support all the learners within their school to excel in their academic performance. The SMTs displayed significant understanding and application of shared leadership, teamwork effort and professional teacher development. It was evident in the school improvement plans that were analysed that all the stakeholders were involved in the programmes that were aimed at supporting both learners and teachers. This study concurred with the assertion that the role of SMTs contributes towards the improvement of Grade 12 learner performance.

The study was able to substantially meet the objectives of the investigation in that data indicated that the roles of the SMTs contributes towards the improvement of learner performance. Great school leadership by the SMTs is the bedrock for great schools. The study shown that effective leadership is essential to creating a learning environment where results are improved. In addition, this study provided an in-depth literature analysis in Chapter 2 that in the main supported most of the findings. From international studies conducted by other researchers, the researcher can conclude that management teams all over the world face

challenges in improving learning outcomes. The roles of the SMTs internationally and in South Africa are the main drivers of the curriculum activities that impact on the improvement of learner performance. The researcher identified a number of contributing factors that lead to poor performance and the intervention strategies to improve the results.

The commitment of the SMTs to implement the recommendations in the study and the support by the district could enhance learner performance and instructional leadership in the school. The research findings could assist the DBE to strengthen support to SMTs in Limpopo Province. The study also revealed the major findings to which the DBE should pay attention in order to improve the quality of Grade 12 National Senior Certificate examination results in Vhembe Education District. It can be argued that the study has met the purpose as demonstrated by the research findings.

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APPENDIX A: ETHICAL CLEARANCE

UNISA COLLEGE OF EDUCATION ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Date: 2019/11/13

Ref: **2019/11/13/31832679/07/AM**

Name: Ms TJ Nkuzana

Student No.: 31832679

Dear Ms TJ Nkuzana

Decision: Ethics Approval from
2019/11/13 to 2022/11/13

Researcher(s): Name: Ms TJ Nkuzana
E-mail address: 31832679@mylife.unisa.ac.za
Telephone: 0716764374

Supervisor(s): Name: Dr SS Khumalo
E-mail address: ekhumass@unisa.ac.za
Telephone: 012-429 6839

Title of research:

The role of school management teams in improving grade 12 learners' performance in Vhembe District, Limpopo.

Qualification: MEd in Education Management

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee for the above mentioned research. Ethics approval is granted for the period 2019/11/13 to 2022/11/13.

*The **low risk** application was reviewed by the Ethics Review Committee on 2019/11/13 in compliance with the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment.*

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions 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 should be communicated in writing to the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee.



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APPENDIX B: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH



LIMPOPO
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Ref: 2/2/2 Enq: Mabogo MG Tel No: 015 290 9365 E-mail: MabogoMG@edu.limpopo.gov.za

Nkuzana TJ
P O Box 355
Khomanani
0933

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

1. The above bears reference.
2. The Department wishes to inform you that your request to conduct research has been approved. Topic of the research proposal: "THE ROLE OF SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAMS IN IMPROVING GRADE 12 LEARNERS PERFORMANCE IN VHEMBE DISTRICT, LIMPOPO"
3. The following conditions should be considered:
 - 3.1 The research should not have any financial implications for Limpopo Department of Education.
 - 3.2 Arrangements should be made with the Circuit Office and the School concerned.
 - 3.3 The conduct of research should not in anyhow disrupt the academic programs at the schools.
 - 3.4 The research should not be conducted during the time of Examinations especially the fourth term.
 - 3.5 During the study, applicable research ethics should be adhered to; in particular the principle of voluntary participation (the people involved should be respected).
 - 3.6 Upon completion of research study, the researcher shall share the final product of the research with the Department.

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH: NKUZANA

CONFIDENTIAL

Cnr. 113 Biccard & 24 Excelsior Street, POLOKWANE, 0700, Private Bag X9489, POLOKWANE, 0700
Tel: 015 290 7600, Fax: 015 297 6920/4220/4494

The heartland of southern Africa - development is about people!

4 Furthermore, you are expected to produce this letter at Schools/ Offices where you intend conducting your research as an evidence that you are permitted to conduct the research.

5 The department appreciates the contribution that you wish to make and wishes you success in your investigation.

Best wishes.



Ms NB Mutheiwana
^
Head of Department

26/11/2019

Date

APPENDIX C: REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT SCHOOLS

P.O. BOX 355

KHOMANANI

0933

THE DISTRICT DIRECTOR

Vhembe Education District

Private Bag x2250

SIBASA

0970

Dear Sir

REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THREE SELECTED SCHOOLS IN VHEMBE
EDUCATION DISTRICT FOR MASTER IN EDUCATION

I hereby seek permission to conduct research in three schools in your district, Vhembe education district. I am Tinyiko Nkuzana doing research towards Master in Educational Management. My supervisor is Dr Khumalo SS at the University of South Africa. The title of the study: The instructional role of School Management Teams in improving grade 12 learners' performance in Vhembe Education District in Limpopo Province

The aim of the study is to investigate the instructional roles of the School management Teams (SMTs) in improving grade 12 learners' performance in Vhembe Education District. If you can grant permission for this research to be conducted in your district, I will observe the following: The research will be conducted after formal teaching and learning to allow the school to run without disturbing teaching and learning. The schools and the participants will be informed in advance to avoid inconvenience the participants.

I will follow the University of South Africa ethics regulation and will the information for the purposes of this study only. Participation is voluntary and they may withdraw their participation at any stage during the research process. The names of the participants and the schools will be held in the reporting of the collected data. Confidentiality and anonymity of

participants and schools will be guaranteed. The participants who will agree to participate in the research will be requested to sign a declaration of consent.

Should you have any questions about this research or the content of this letter, please do not hesitate to contact me for further information.

Yours faithfully

Tinyiko Nkuzana

Cell phone number: 0716764374

Email address: 31832679@mylife.unisa.co.za

APPENDIX D: CONSENT TO BE INTERVIEWED

Dear participant

You are requested to give consent to take part in the following study titled: **The instructional role of SMTs in improving Grade 12 learners' performance in the Vhembe Education District in Limpopo Province.** You are informed that all ethical requirements will be respected. It is very important to note that your participation should be voluntary and should you are welcomed to withdraw from participating in the interview, should you wish so.

Yours faithfully

Tinyiko Nkuzana

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APPENDIX E: HOD INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

- What are the instructional roles of the HoD?
- As HoD are you supported by your deputy principal/ curriculum advisor /principal/?
- Do the instructional leadership of the deputy principal/ principal influence teaching and learning at the school?
- What are key factors in the school that enhance learner performance?
- Mention challenges you think affect teaching in Grade 12 which influences the matric results
- Which strategies do you use to ensure that teachers teach effectively?
- What are the interventions that you receive from the Department of Basic Education to ensure that Grade 12 results improve?
- Are these intervention strategies effective or not, elaborate how effective or not effective are they?
- Do you have any question or comment?

END OF THE INTERVIEW.

Thank you very much for your time.

APPENDIX F: DEPUTY PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

- As a deputy do you provide your HoD with curriculum support?
- Explain the type of curriculum support that you are providing
- As a deputy principal do you receive support from the principal, circuit, District or head office regarding the school Grade 12?
- As a deputy principal, are you supported by your principal?
- Do the instructional leadership of the principal influence teaching and learning at the school?
- How did the leadership approach of the principal impact on learner performance for the past three years?
- What are the specific roles of heads of department, deputy principals and principals in instructional leadership?
- How can the deputy principal instill the culture of excellence in schools?
- To what extent do learners, teachers and SMTs understand the mission and vision of school on performance?
- What are key factors in the school that enhance learner performance?
- Which challenges do you experience with regard to Grade 12 in terms of teaching, LTSM, learners, *etc.*?
- How do deputy principals deal with the challenges they face and are these interventions effective?
- Is discipline of teachers and learners have an impact in improving performance in Grade 12?
- What are strategies that subject teachers and HoD use to improve the learners' performance in Grade 12?
- Which strategies do you use to ensure that teachers teach effectively?
- What are the interventions that you receive from the Department of Basic Education to ensure that Grade 12 results improve?
- Are these intervention strategies effective or not, elaborate how effective or not effective are they?
- Do you have any question or comment?

END OF THE INTERVIEW.

Thank you very much for your time

APPENDIX G: PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

- As a principal do you provide your subordinates with curriculum support?
- Explain the type of curriculum support that you are providing
- As a principal, do you receive support from the District or head office regarding the school Grade 12?
- As a principal, are you supported by your circuit manager?
- Do the instructional leadership of the principal influence teaching and learning at the school?
- How does your leadership approach impact on learner performance for the past three years?
- What are the specific roles of heads of department and deputy principals in instructional leadership?
- As a principal how can you instill the culture of excellence in a school?
- What are the key factors in the school that enhance learner performance?
- Which challenges do you experience concerning Grade 12 in terms of teaching, LTSM, learners, *etc.*?
- How do SMTs deal with the challenges they face and are these interventions effective?
- Do socioeconomic factors affect the performance of learners in schools? Which interventions are in place to mediate such?
- To what extent do you think teacher and learner attendance influence learner performance?
- Do you think parental involvement can enhance learner performance?
- Is the discipline of teachers and learners have an impact on improving performance in Grade 12?
- What are the school-based strategies?
- Which strategies do you use to ensure that teachers teach effectively?
- What are the interventions that you receive from the Department of Basic Education to ensure that Grade 12 results improve?
- Are these intervention strategies effective or not, elaborate on how effective or not effective are they?
- Do you have any questions or comments?

END OF THE INTERVIEW.

Thank you very much for your time

Appendix H: Document Analysis Schedule

Name of the document	Author	Details of the documents
Analysis of Grade 12 results for the past three years (2017 to 2019).	The SMT	The grade 12 results for the past three years (2017 to 2019). The analysis of the results that detailed the performance of the school.
The improvement strategies for the past three years	SMTs and teachers	The strategies that are meant to improve grade 12 learner performance
Minutes of the SMT and staff	School secretary	The record of minutes that show that SMT and staff sat and discuss learner performance
Minutes of the SGB and parents meetings	The secretary of School Governing Body	The record of the minutes that reflects the decision taken in SGB and parents' meeting.
School general timetable	School timetable committee	It shows the allocation of the periods
Profiles of the teachers	SMT	It shows the age, qualifications of the teachers.
Teachers time book signed	Principal	It shows attendance of educators
Learners' written work report	SMT	Audit of learners' written work report from SMTs. Monitoring of curriculum coverage
School-based target	SMT and teachers	To track their progress towards the set target

APPENDIX I: HOD TRANSCRIPTIONS SCHEDULE OF ELEPHANT SECONDARY SCHOOL

- What are the instructional role of the Head of Department

The HoD is a principal of the subject or subjects that leads I lead a team of about 10 the roles of the HoD is to lead the department and we know that when you lead you lead when you have planned based on what is happening now and want we will improve now but we always strategies and the decisions that will enable the department to grow I lead the department I inspire my teachers I influence them to help the poor learners and one other thing because we are in a community school the community have passion. At the beginning of the year we know our school do school allocation because our school is big he gives us the mandate to allocate periods to our teachers. I must also motivate the teachers after the allocation I must make sure that they have all the necessary documents policy documents, pace setters the recent ones of course and the exam guidelines and to also check their written work not quantity but quality.

- As the HoD are you supported by your deputy Principal, Curriculum advisors and principal?

Yes they do, the deputy principal make sure that he knows what is happening in the department, problems that we face every day, success stories to inspire him, he wants the reports you see English is the median language at the school so the deputy principal is helping a lot with the curriculum advisor am fortunately I have good human relation I know you know Taki Tibafhuni I know them they taught me a lot the recent information about the curriculum. The principal is inspiring us because this year we managed to take 3 learners to Kwazulu Natal through the inspiration of the principal and learners are taking part in it.

- Do the instructional leadership of the principal influence teaching and learning at the school?

Yes as the HoD here I know that I am expected to do policies from the department by developing themselves and also develop other teachers I will encourage you to come and listen to our English lessons so the instructional leadership is very helpful.

- What are the key factors in the school that enhance learners' performance?

Teamwork most of the teachers around here are young is only the principal the deputy principals who are old but most of us we are young and we inspire ourselves we learn to share the success story the remedy is to visit our field and our field is in the classroom you can't

improve while seating in the office we should achieve so team work is one if the key element so here we have a good human relations I can associate with the principal as if she's my friend as a teacher and as the motivator of the department and the profiling of the learners .

- Mention challenges that you think affect teaching in Grade 12 which influences the Matric results.

Lack of LTSM materials let me indicate that I teach Paper 2 in Grade 12 but I don't have a book you may ask yourself how am I coping its tough but life must go on and those poor learners they must be taught I do is to make copies I don't have short stories but they are performing one other this is that our classes are overcrowded ninety something in classroom so overcrowding is also a challenge.

- Which strategies do you use to ensure that teachers teach effectively?

Make sure that they have the LTSM, pace setters the exam guidelines they must also attend workshops and also encourage them to register and further their studies. And if you notice that they is a teacher who haven't come to your office for a week call him or her and ask him or her politely so and make some curriculum topics.

- What are the interventions that you receive from the department of Basic Education to ensure that Grade 12 results improve?

We host the spring Easter classes so sometimes when we host they are learners from the nearby schools that are not disciplined so we find it hard to teach a drunk learners because ours are very discipline so the principal has applied that we should be in depended at the work shops were we learn from others.

- Are this strategies effective?

Yes I think they are effective on one hand because our learners have time of go through on content of their subjects and know exactly what is required to do I was thing that the department they should allow us to have the topics that we know that learners have difficulties in them and the materials that they give us is also helping us.

- Do you have any questions or comments?

What is your area of focus in this research which problems you have identified in this research that need to be corrected.

APPENDIX J: HOD TRANSCRIPTIONS SCHEDULE OF ZEBRA SECONDARY SCHOOL

- What are the instructional role of the Head of Department

I know that you will expect me to manage curriculum and to set the goals and target for my department and monitor the lesson plans and assessment plans and allocate resources for my department then I must also monitor content coverage of my department.

- As the HoD are you supported by your deputy Principal, Curriculum advisors and principal?

Of cause the deputy principal must make sure that when he comes in and fuss the school he must also make sure that am also following the rules of the school and the curriculum advisors must come and support and check whether am teaching the right thing and also covering the term they must also give my department in the form of by changes that they may occur in the department they must introduce it to us so that we can move at the same path.

- Is the support from the principal also there?

Yes the principal gives us the support because we report to deputy principal.

- Do the instructional leadership of the principal influence teaching and learning at the school?

I will say yes because whatever plan that we have the leadership of the school their duties also is to monitor what we are implementing down there and if they are not supporting us they will fail to know that we have achieved our goals and target and they also have their our targets and their targets is informed by what we sat down there.

- What are the key factors in the school that enhance learners' performance?

Learners performance is enhanced by class attendance and the class attendance and the educators attendance so if we as HoD don't monitor the educators attendance sometimes you may think that learners are learning where else educators are absent so learners have to be assessed daily if there is informal and formal assessments they should be given the other thing is to make sure that learners are given feedback in whatever assessment in the school so if the learners are given feedback they will be able to perform at the end of the year do lastly it will be monitoring of learners marking work if learners work are not being marked it will fail to perm any tasks given.

- Mention challenges that you think affect teaching in Grade 12 which influences the Matric results.

This learners they differs in terms of their performance some are slow learners some they learn quickly so they are the gifted ones they are in Grade 12 we tent to teach them at an equal phase at the teach them in the comfort phase for the gifted ones when we are teaching them with that phase we left the less gifted ones behind so that the challenge so timely we can finish the syllabus at around may and at when we finish the syllabus you may find that we have left some of the slow learners behind that is the main challenge and the secondly when we are in Grade 12 contently because we are preparing if we give a subject for an educator who is particularly no qualified for that subject the educator will struggle and when the educator struggle learners will also struggle that's the observation I have observed. The other thing is this issue of remedial work we are not doing that because if we can do that all this learners will pass.

- Which strategies do you use to ensure that teachers teach effectively?

The strategy that we use is to make sure that they went to their classes prepared they attend to their classes they follow pace setters they also cover the syllabus as the pace the other thing that I have also identified is to make that teachers develop what we call a differentiated teaching like this learners they don't learn at the same pace some are slow some are fast so the other thing that they can do is to develop the peer teaching in the class I encourage that to be implemented so that it can also work.

- What are the strategies that you receive from the department of Basic Education to ensure that Grade 12 results improve?

On the side of curriculum advisors they visited us they monitors learners work and identified the content gaps the topics that we are not teaching then the encourage us to go and teach them and one other thing that we receive is the diagnosis report after marking they give us they assist us a lot because we identifies the topics that are difficult to learners through it you know where the learners are struggling.

- Are this strategies effective?

Yes the issue of diagnosis report is effective and even the item analysis once we do it, it assist us to make sure that we go through the difficult topics

- Do you have any questions or comments?

I don't have any comment.

APPENDIX K: DEPUTY PRINCIPAL TRANSCRIPTIONS SCHEDULE OF ZEBRA
SECONDARY

- As a deputy principal do you provide your HoD with curriculum support?
Yes, I do I normally tell them to tell me their needs when it comes to curriculum so that I can be able to check with the principal and the school neighboring schools or with the other colleagues maybe things like caps documents exam guidelines whatever.
- Explain the type of curriculum support that you are providing
I provide them with curriculum support materials so that they can give their educators things like that and relevant SBA mark sheets sometimes they use marksheets which are longer in use so I have to check the changes.
- As a deputy principal do you receive support from the principal, circuit, District or head office regarding the school Grade 12?
Yes, I do from the principal he normally meets with us as Deputy principals so that he can be able to give us information on how we can work and to inform us with the information from the circuit, district and so on so that we can work cordially according to what the department wants so from the circuit they communicate with us by circular and then we implement what the circulars are informing us about and the circuit also send this curriculum advisors to visit us it help us a lot also and even a district I remember this year the team of district curriculum advisors came to visit us and give us support and check our informal tasks our tasks our files and check whether we have all the information that is needed in our files and if we don't they provide us, with the documents.
- As a deputy principal, are you supported by your principal?
Yes he always support us when we need his intervention.
- Do the instructional leadership of the principal influence teaching and learning at the school?
The issue of instructional leadership it assist but it differs from one educators to others some are not comfortable with the instructional leadership you may find that some need consultant first and discuss the issue around the table and reach the agreement and you may find that they are those you don't have the problem they just receive the instructional leadership from the principal and do their job.
- How did the leadership approach of the principal impact on learner performance for the past three years?

For the past three years this school was performing I think this is the best school in the circuit for past three years and then the approach that the principal is using is using both the democratic and autocratic together with the less fair it means that the leadership approach impacts positively to the learners performance and looking on to past three years.

- What are the specific roles of heads of department, deputy principals and principals in instructional leadership?

The HoDs give support to their educators under their duties restrictions they meet with them discuss their pre and post moderation provide them with the teaching and learning materials monitor them check the recordings of the marks and when it comes to ourselves deputy principal our co business is curriculum it means that we assist the principal with all the delegated duties then I can say I am the go between the principal and the educators together with the SGB and give them information from the principal and the principal is our boss our leader so he sends us to the educators and entire staff maybe sending messages of making sure that marks are recorded so as the deputy principals we make insure that marks are recorded and captured on time and we also give the report to the curriculum to the parents and past requirements and any issue that needs a parents to know like this issue of moderation we inform the parents the specific roles for the principal is to manage the school to insure that the school is running smoothly an defectively and ensure that all the plans from the entire staff are been implemented and he also doing that making sure that we are doing as planned.

- How can the deputy principal instill the culture of excellence in schools?

That can be done by keeping and giving support to the HODs and the entire staff and by also informing the parents by the learners performance which is their children performance in each of every quarter or team we also encourage this educators to have special programmes in keeping the learners in the learners at risks and we also encourage HoDs to submit their programme on the quarterly basis we also encourage the HoDs to submit theirs quotably plans to Improve the results.

- To what extent do learners, teachers and SMTs understand the mission and vision of school on performance?
- *When I check this mission and vision of this school I just realized that learners, teachers and the SMT they do support the mission and vision of this school but we are still lacking behind by just continuously reminding them because I was checking if they know it there is*

this one RE LIBUSA KA MESHOMO YA SHO they know about it is a motor but when it comes to the mission they don't know even myself I don't know the mission and vision of the school am using the motor always,

- What are key factors in the school that enhance learner performance?

I think is the educators commitment although this educators are every committed as am experienced to our circuit this this one of the of the school were educators are committed to their work because you will find them coming with their own plans itself the submit even though they may be told by the principal to come with their own plans but this plans I believe that they are effective they implement them and the principal also allow them to do as their plans and the principal monitor their plans and implementation of their plans.

- Which challenges do you experience with regard to Grade twelve in terms of teaching, LTSM, learners, etc.?

When it comes to LTSM, I have experienced that learners don't have enough LTSM they do share and that is the worry to the educators even though the problem is that this school each and every year the number is increasing they are lot of learners because they are 1400 and when we although we have this issue of top ups sometimes they come late the retrieval I can't say much about the retrievals but we normally encourage them to retrieve I will see them at the end of this year and be able to say about the retrieval it is good and advisable to our educators to use those books which are face out am seeing and we have lot of them I think they should use them also.

- How do deputy principals deal with the challenges they face and are these interventions effective?

I have to relate well with the entire staff including the HoDs so if I relate with them it will be easy to go to any educator not minding their camps because seemingly we have champs so and for me it is easy because when am talking to the educator with anything related to work they act positively I think I have to encourage them to work seriously because when I come here I encourage this issue of whatsapp group so anything I will put it on our whatsapp group so that they will be able to work what they are intending to do.

- Is discipline of teachers and learners have an impact in improving performance in Grade 12?
- What I can say is that teachers and learners of this this school they are discipline and it has an impact looking at the performance each and every year as I have already said that this is the best school in the circuit you will find during Saturdays educators spend their day

teaching is like it is during the week you will find educators parking their cars it means that they are discipline except the other few learners we have such cases especially those learners who are repeating Grade 12 you find some of them being absent is a lack of discipline although we normally call their parents but some parents they are not well educated in a way that they can understand what we are doing we are trying our best.

- What are strategies that subject teachers and HoD use to improve the learners' performance in Grade 12?

The subject educators and the HoDs are doing the best when it comes to the strategies improving the results because they can identify learners who are struggling and they have special programmes to teach those learners who are not performing so that they can all perform they give report to their parents they call the parents on one to one and then they discuss the issue of the learner performance and behavior at school so that the parents can know the type of a learner we have and you the child can be different from home to school you may find that this learner is different this educators also submit their plans to their HoDs and the HoDs will then submit them to the deputy principal and the deputy principal submit to the principal those plans this are some of the strategies that we ensure that results and the learner performance improve and we also outsource during the Saturdays not during the week and the outsource educator it may be suggested by the subject educator because if we outsource for him or her it will impart negatively because him or her he must give the type of topic assist her to.

- Which strategies do you use to ensure that teachers teach effectively?

The issue of monitoring teaching and learning and the we have to remind this educator if he or she is not attending the class we normally remind the HoDs to monitor their educators during periods and this is a bigger school and you may find that we have many staffrooms and in each staffroom we have the HoDs to monitor the teachers whether they are attending classes and also check if learners are attended.

- What are the interventions that you receive from the Department of Basic Education to ensure that Grade twelve results improve?

Department of education is doing a lot in ourselves as school because they come up with the programmes each and every quarter where the schools are being taught to in a cluster level where they also pay them and they also give us the programmes this are some of the things they must be done in school level but they assist us.

- Are these intervention strategies effective or not, elaborate how effective or not effective are they?

To me its effective because when I check especially to our schools you find that learners are performing better in that it is effective it is just that some learners they are not attending in 100% and even the district they normally give us the report that all schools must check the attendance. And then it assist that the principal will also see that their learners they don't attend well and then they make follow up next time they will attend.

- Do you have any question or comment?

What can I say to ourselves as school we adjust the issue of lacking the subject committees the issue of subject committees it should be in place it helps a lot in their meetings they share their experience because they are colleagues sometimes when they meet with curriculum advisors they are not free so the subject committees are every important.

APPENDIX L: DEPUTY PRINCIPAL TRANSCRIPTIONS SCHEDULE OF LION SECONDARY

- As a deputy do you provide your HoD with curriculum support?

Yes , As a Deputy Principal I talk to the HoDs about the work they supposed for example, at the beginning of the year I remind them to hold meetings with their educators so that they can have some expectations for the whole year after they set their expectation as a HoD they must also sat down with their educators trying to check maybe the issue of many classwork are they supposed to give learners how many homework are they supposed to give learners per week I also interact with the HoD reminding them that they are supposed to monitor their learners work so that at the send I must monitor educators each and every time they are support to check learners work and again as a Deputy principal I also talk to the the Hod that if there is any formal task they given to educator so that educator can give to the learners educator or HoD must quality assure the tasks before they give it to the educator and after the educator marked the script as an HoD I must also remind them to check the script after the educators has marked the scripts besides that as an HoD I must also remind them to hold the meetings if the results that they received they must also analyze trying to find out gaps and fill them another thing is a if there is any monitor outside I must also check the repot after the monitor if there is anything that has to be done we must interact together with the HoD and educators.

- Explain the type of curriculum support that you are providing

I have already mentioned the support that I give to the HoD in the school.

- As a deputy principal do you receive support from the principal, circuit, District or head office regarding the school Grade 12?

Yes I receive the support from the principal we usually sit together trying to check most of the things that need to be done in order to improve the Grade 12 results for example if there is any learner who is absent at school we usually communicate with the parent of the learner together with the principle so that such learner will not be absent again without any reason another support that I can say we receive from the outside regarding the Grade 12 is they hold the Saturday classes the winter and spring enrichment classes they come from the district for Grade 12 as a circuit before the learners can write the trial exam they organize the classes for specified subjects.

- As a deputy principal are you supported by your principal?

Yes, the principal support the programmes that I plan in the school. When I need his support regarding the particular matter, he is available to offer advice.

- Do the instructional leadership of the principal influence teaching and learning at the school?

Yes the principal as a leader he influence the teaching and learning of the school in sense that he give us directions on what to do and he also act as a leader he is leading by example he never try to say thing that he is not doing that's what is influence the teaching and learning.

- How did the leadership approach of the principal impact on learner performance for the past three years?

I will only answer this one based on the learner's performance because past three years I was not there but based on the learner's performance I can say that the leadership of the principal impacted very well because on the past years the results are improving year by year.

- What are the specific roles of heads of department, deputy principals and principals in instructional leadership?

I indicated them on the top that as a HoD thy are things is to hold the meeting with their educators, monitor their educators work and support their educators in short that it and also analyze the results if the results has been released and the duties of the deputy principal is the support the HoD trying to see that the HoD are doing their roles and they're roles of the principal is to foresee that the HoD and the deputy principal are doing their work.

- How can the deputy principal instill the culture of excellence in schools?

The deputy principal can instill the culture of excellence in a school in the sense that if learner performed very well that learner need to be rewarded so that the culture of excellence should be instill that school so if there is a great performance it should be accompanied by a reward maybe in the form of the certificate sometimes like the one that happened this year the is a certain gentleman who have donated something in the form of money so that if learners who perfumed very well should be given is another way to instill culture of excellence. It must also be done in the side of the educator if the educator performed well it must also be accompanied by a reward maybe in the educator should be given the certificate that's means a lot.

- To what extent do learners, teachers and SMTs understand the mission and vision of school on performance?

Learners and educators together with the SMT they are all understanding the mission and vision of the school towards the performance and they are also working towards that ,learners are dedicated to their work trying to instill this culture of performance to their school If you manage to school to the school maybe at 6h30 you will see learners running to their class because the see that they are now late to their school and also the educators they are dedicated to their work as an educator they understand the mission and vision of this school very well together with the SMT is more dedicated to their work by that we can say that they understand ant the mission and vision of the school towards the performance we can say that mission means a lot.

- What are key factors in the school that enhance learner performance?

According to my own assessment learners are more dedicated to their work by the reason that they are also motivated by the people outside for example the mayor came to the school he came to give them the donation of the sanitary towels and they he was motivating them he try to tell them his background he try to be on their level trying to tell them that when I was at the Secondary school I was going to school without shoes but if you can see how I am today this can also motivate them they can feel that if I can do that for myself one day I will be like him it can also motivate them it can also talk to them and motivate them.

- Which challenges do you experience with regard to Grade twelve in terms of teaching, LTSM, learners, etc.?

The problem of learner support material I don't think we have but the challenge that we have been experienced in terms of teaching it only happen on those extra lessons specifically the one that holds by the district some of the learners they quit they don't attend them but all in all we can say that as far teaching is concern there is no problem we have that one of extra lessons some learners they denied to come to the extra lessons.

- How do deputy principals deal with the challenges they face and are these interventions effective?

Dealing with challenges to me is not a problem because the challenge that in there most of them they are supposed to be done by the HoD or Educators I don't know how I can say how I deal with them but working with people I don't have a problem with it I know how to deal with different personalities and characters and I know how to approach the person totally I can say that I know how to deal with challenges if I can be in a communication

with you and realized that there is an argument I can quickly say let's leave it and deal with it later.

- Is discipline of teachers and learners have an impact in improving performance in Grade 12?
Yes learners and educators discipline should always have an impact in the improving the performance of the results if educators is not discipline for example if the educator is always absent of school it must have an impact in the learners results or if the learner if always absent at school so such learner the time that learner come to school you can find that learner is always drunkard it must have the impact on the learners results I don't know whether if educators and learners are not discipline it have the impact on the results specifically to the school I cannot see any Grade 12 educator who is not discipline they are discipline.

- What are strategies that subject teachers and HOD use to improve the learners' performance in Grade 12?

The strategies that the subject educators and the HoD use order to improve the results the results for Grade 12 we can say the issue of teaching of extra mile, monitoring the learners we cannot talk about teaching and teaching without assessing learners so learners need to be assessed when learners are assessed by the educators sometimes they may use previous question papers to assess the learners and the other method that must be used to assess the learners we can say what I know that they are lot of strategies but now they are gone.

- Which strategies do you use to ensure that teachers teach effectively?

The strategies that I use to ensure that teachers teach effectively is not the matter of teaching and teaching when the educators teaches at the same time the HoD need to monitor the work of the teacher myself I am supposed to monitor the work of the HoD so that there is effective teaching and learning when monitoring the work I can see that there is a gap when the HoD monitoring the work they can see that they are some gaps there to sit down with the educator make sure that at the end of the day such gaps need to be done.

- What are the interventions that you receive from the Department of Basic Education to ensure that Grade twelve results improve?

As an school we receive like I have already said the compensation of the extra classes sometimes but is on the circuit level they compile the learners and give them the certain person to come and motivate them and is the support we get from the outside and sometimes the top 10 they are invited somewhere so that they can get someone to motivate them and the department of basic education it have the impact in the improving of the results.

- Are these intervention strategies effective or not, elaborate how effective or not effective are they?

Yes the strategies is effective for example on the top 10 learners those top 10 learners who are invited on a quarterly basis they gather somewhere where they are motivated when they come back we can see that there is a difference and we can also see the difference on the next term results they also improve well by that we can say this strategies is effective by even on the meeting that they organize for a whole learners it is also effective in the sense that when learners come from the meeting you can see that there is a strict motivation everytime you will see that they are busy with their books so the motivation is effective we can even say it must be every month.

- Do you have any question or comment?

I don't have the question but I have the comment, this interview help me a lot it's a learning and it's reviving my work as a deputy principal.

- END OF THE INTERVIEW.
- Thank you very much for your time

APPENDIX M: ELEPHANT SECONDARY SCHOOL DEPUTY PRINCIPAL TRANSCRIPTIONS
SCHEDULE

- As a deputy do you provide your HoD with curriculum support?

Yes I do, at the beginning of the year we usually sometimes receive the information from the curriculum section whereby they updates their pacesetters and whatever that is needed for that particular year so we have to make sure that all our HoD have all the recourses which is required for making sure that teaching and learning took place and also make sure that whether textbooks is enough and all the resources that is needed is there for them to be able carry out the curriculum.

- Explain the type of curriculum support that you are providing

I have quarterly meetings with teachers in my department. I sometimes do class visits.

- As a deputy principal do you receive support from the principal, circuit, District or head office regarding the school Grade 12?

Yes we do, from the principal is always on top is always there to support and to give guidance on how do we manage the curriculum so that at the end of the day our educators ,our HoD make sure that our educators finish the curriculum of Couse every now and then make sure that at least by the end of June the teachers has cover all the syllabus so that we will be able to start afresh again and go slowly check where those areas you see they are those areas where learners every time you go there is like is the new time you need to stretch them and make sure that learners at the end of the day even the circuit they also support us they make sure at the end of the month they are meetings were we meet with different schools with different results so that we compare ourselves coz u will never know until you compare ourselves with others so we compare ourselves then we compare ourselves and know where are we now as compared to others they see that by the look of results that maybe we are lacking behind so that we see these learning areas and we will be able to absorbs and the district also support us because they visit always to check I remember even now we were supported by Mr Molekole he said he adopted our school he came to see the environment , the surrounding he came to see everything concerning our school the safety do we have water are teachers accommodated well do we have enough classrooms so we always receive those support so we receive the support.

- As a deputy principal, are you supported by your principal?

Yah, is always there to support whenever he realize that maybe you are not doing well he will call you and give you the support so that at the end of the day you manage the Curriculum well.

- Do the instructional leadership of the principal influence teaching and learning at the school?

Yes, I think he did the way he gives the instructions it helps influence the teaching and learning of the curriculum at the school because usually he always concentrate on the learners and make sure that educators are happy not that he does not control educators but whenever educators have problems with learners he will make sure that it solved from the stretch so that educators will be happy because you see sometimes as leadership when we receive problems from educators we take it for granted we say this teacher is always complaining no if the teacher is not happy then you know the will be no delivery of the curriculum in the classroom you find that when the teacher come and say this learner is always giving me problems then whenever we have those problems the principal will make sure an am surprised by the way he practiced issues because I realized that maybe for the sex of this school because of the management because he makes sure of every now and then if a learner gives trouble is a problem if is during the studies he makes sure that those who are in control ,control your studies and when he said write those who are not there he will make sure tomorrow and he will say tell them I don't want my educators to be in trouble because you see they were supposed to just watch study but they go around and check whose there whose not there so he will make sure he punishment call the parents make sure that all learners are there He does not want the issue of where an educator will be struggling or taking too much time solving one issue for one learner and that we will also take time for other learners so he will solve the problem up to the screech.

- How did the leadership approach of the principal impact on learner performance for the past three years?

Yes the leadership has impacted on the learners because every time he makes sure that curriculum there is the delivery of the curriculum teaching and learning took place if whether there is a memorial service where we have to leave earlier if he's there and not attending any meeting he will say that let us make sure we don't release learners earlier let the learners remain and study until 13h00 until so those learners are used they are used they know that they will remain there study until 13h00 isn't that they will go home then

that approach you realize that even the educators because of this approach they are willing to teach anytime you find that some of them they will arrive earlier 06h30 they are in the classes teaching because I know that if they know that maybe today they are going to the memorial services you will find most of them earlier teaching when you ask why he said is because today we are going to the memorial services then I realized I will be behind so I have to and I so everyone every educator is making sure that the curriculum coverage is indeed covered because I have worked so many schools then when I arrive here I realized that what makes Inthabana to succeed all this year's then I realized that teaching and learning even through when I looked at the other schools where I came from I will realized that maybe they are there most of the time they are there learners are there studying but they are not studying is just that I don't know whether just to be there with the learners so that the community maybe they will see that but here you realized that all the activities you that you can think about of we enjoy ourselves we this leadership is we enjoy ourselves we can knock earlier we go to memorial services we attend those issues we know we have our issues as number 60 this one has this one the parent of this one we also attend those issues but I realized that the moment we go into the class educators teach and the learners will learn and you find that the small time he will always calculate that this week we have three (3) days two (2) days there are memorial services is this and this we will knock earlier then educators let us make sure that we use this three (3) days then you will realize when you go out you will see that educators are making that sure that those 3 days are utilized.

- What are the specific roles of heads of department, deputy principals and principals in instructional leadership?

The Head of the Department they are the one who make sure that the curriculum delivery is done as a deputy principal I make sure that the curriculum the delivery of the curriculum where I look all the resources all the textbooks everything that is concerning the curriculum is there and the principal he just give the instruction and make sure that everything is in order he just put in support.

- How can the deputy principal instill the culture of excellence in schools?

I think the firstly if you are the deputy principal you have to lead by example if you have a class the educators have to see you in class every time teaching giving learners work to do making sure that everything that have to do with a teaching and learning you do it correctly then others will follow because you will never know even though they do not telling you but

some of them they are copying they are looking at you that what is period number 4 is for the deputy principal even if is around he does not go to the class but you will see her carry a time table saying teacher number 6 go to the class then you see you lead by example then others will follow and make sure if you have a subject having Grade 12 whatever subject make sure you teach learners and give the best results.

- To what extent do learners, teachers and SMTs understand the mission and vision of school on performance?

Yah, our mission is to educate learners so that in the near future we see them out shinning then we will realized that they have done something so I realized from this school they start with the love of the learners our educators love this learners they treat them as if they are their own kids so from there you find that every time when the learner is not there we have lot of learners compared to other schools but you will find that a teacher is a class teacher for a Grade 9 where there is 99 learners but if there is a learner who is not there the teacher will make the follow up so it start with the love of learners from our educators then those learners realized they are being loved so the teaching and learning took place then is easy because of that cooperation that relationship that was built between the educators and learners it is easy for educators to teach those learners.

- What are key factors in the school that enhance learner performance?

Discipline is key for this learners. I think discipline is the culture that is here learners know that they are here to learn and nothing else that's why when those when we come out with those policies whereby we said you must not come doing this and this uniform they all wear uniform nothing else we don't entertain those issues where learners will be find with cellphones doing different hairstyles even though we have those learners but you we see that most learners they are in line so I think that is what makes our school to succeed because of discipline our learners are discipline and also our educators are disciplined and the system are in place we know where to go to whenever we need something because you realize that in some school sometimes educators does not know where to go to when they have the problem so the system are in place where how we operate in a manure where all whether is an educator whether is just a man in the gate whether is a food handler whoever is in the school knows how to follow the procedures so that at the end of the day we experience any challenge those challenge will be resolved so that at the end of the day whoever who is here knows what do to.

- Which challenges do you experience with regard to Grade twelve in terms of teaching, LTSM, learners, etc.?

Yah we like last year we experienced shortage of materials of some novels in Grade 12 we have few so we have to make some copies so those are the challenges not that we don't have at all as compared to other schools have the original textbook then we say we have to make some copies maybe it will delays me those are the challenges that we can say in regard of the LTSM but for now because we made our own orders we did received those books and we have lot of them now.

- How do deputy principals deal with the challenges they face and are these interventions effective?

A challenge of being a deputy principal is to make sure that the results are always on top because you have to manage those HoD'S with different department then sometimes you realize that the performance of this specific Grades then you go deeper and look at what is the exactly the challenge because we cannot talk about Grade 10 not performing you have to go deeper and find out find out that English is doing well ,Maths is doing well then you will have to find out one specific subject is not doing well they you will have to make sure and call the HoD what is happening with this subject maybe is it the allocation and those are the challenges that we meet as a curriculum then we may find that maybe the HoD saying that this let us maybe it will give us the results but is not giving us the results we expected as a curriculum managers.

- Is discipline of teachers and learners have an impact in improving performance in Grade 12?

No those teachers I don't know if whether the teachers are aware of the discipline they know what they are here for they come on Saturdays they come during the school holidays they are always teaching and one thing I have realized here all HoDs are teaching in Grade 12 and they make sure they produce good results I never seen an outsourcing is not fashionable thing all this educators maybe they are been asked by the circuit to go and teach there but they teach in Grade 12 all the HoD the teach in Grade 12 so there is a competition even though is not bad but everyone want to perform well.

- What are strategies that subject teachers and HoD use to improve the learners' performance in Grade 12?

The extra classes one is to make sure they finish the syllabus in time two They give written work three feedback because you know is one thing giving the written work and another giving the feedback and a feedback is a correction to different things you find that most of

the educators give the corrections which is not good for a learner but if you give a feedback you show a learner that you were supposed to do this here Why a wrong here why a tick they also learn those are the strategies that the Grade 12 are using and making sure whenever we have a challenge of a learner if is absent that particular learner will have to come with the parent so that we ask the parent whether he/she knows that the learner will be absent and how if the learner absent is during the Saturday it means that the learner will cover that on Sunday so you realized that the punishment that if you don't come on Saturday if means you're ready to come on Sunday and spend that particular hours so learners attendance is very important because I realized that all learners always are there if a learner is absent there is serious reason you we find that sometimes a learner that the learner is not okay then we have to let her but we will find the learner tomorrow in the classroom why because that learner is worried some are getting more I don't want to miss and there is a competition between those learners whenever results are given we show them to parents we show them to learners then I realized the competition start there and we change the grouping of the studies every time when the results for a term come we have 3 classes of Grade 12 then we will group 1-50 this side 50- 100 this side 100-150 this side then second term if the one in class number 3 now moved to number 49 they will move so this competition encourage the learners the learner to move to the other class because the guidance will not be the same we know what types of learners we are dealing in class number A,B and C we also give them different time to study we knock you can knock at 3h00 because we realize that what you are doing is excellent you can knock at 4hoo you need more time unless you move from this one to this you can knock at 5h00 because we realized that as the more time you spend at home you don't spend it correctly you will remain here we will remain with you extend the time study more maybe you have a lot at home study more but if you move from this class to another you will at 3hoo and you find that there is a competition among the learners which gives us the results at the end of the day.

- Which strategies do you use to ensure that teachers teach effectively?

We control the written work and we encourage HoD to control the written work of the learners in comparison with the pacesetter because if you go through the written work of the learner you will be able to realize if learners are given sufficient classwork. Compare the written work with the pacesetter and check if the teacher is moving with the pacesetter or is he behind. Determine the kind of support that can be given the teacher by looking at the pacesetter you can also find out whether there is content gap from the side of the

educator because you can realize that am also teaching nouns preposition there is no summary there and you will find out in with the HoD how will learners know how to write the summary and another thing we don't only control the educators we also control the learners attendance we have the register where we mark our learners we also make sure that educators sign the period register a system that we use that I find effective is the control of the written work because a teacher can just take a textbook and go to the class ,sign a period register and go out and if you go and check the period register the teacher is always there by the look of the register but you have to check whether learners are leaning and sometimes we also look at the results at the end of the quarter are this learners learning we also look the results.

- What are the interventions that you receive from the Department of Basic Education to ensure that Grade 12 results improve?

Yah, I don't know whether is from the district or the department of Education the issues of Saturday, Winter enrichment classes because I have realized that there is such intervention after we have complained because parents were always fighting with school saying why are we paying and the school want to promote the results and we encourage them to poop up something you see and is no fees school so another parent who will not attend the meeting where the resolution is taken by the parent agreement was reached to pay something so that the school will manage to transport the educators then you find that that parent is complaining but now the district is assisting because always is making sure that all the enrichments is paid by the department that is the intervention that I see from the Department of Education.

- Are these intervention strategies effective or not, elaborate how effective or not effective are they?

Yes very effective because our leader our principal is making sure that all educators are there not to just sign the register by the end of the day receive money he make sure that teaching and learning took place and that assist us because by the end of June you find that all educators are done with the syllabus they teach even slow learners get something. So I think is very effective for Grade 12 even now MSMT those learners who are doing Maths and Physical Science we realized that that those Enrichments classes are giving go and we realized that we should start in a Grade 10 we start teaching them in holidays when there brothers and sisters come they must also come if we start with the Grade 10, 11 and Grade 12.

- Do you have any question or comment?

No Comment

END OF THE INTERVIEW.

Thank you very much for your time

APPENDIX N: Elephant Secondary School Principal Transcriptions Schedule

- As a principal do you provide your subordinates with curriculum support?

Yes I do.

- Explain the type of curriculum support that you are providing

Curriculum support to teachers depend on the need teachers have concerning the knowledge of their subject because they are not at the same level of knowledge. When teachers come to school with a knowledge gap it need to be addressed and supported so that they can carry out their responsibilities. We must support teachers so that they can manage their classes accordable and if classes are well managed the school will run properly but at the same time with the SMT you may find that am not the Maths teacher so I will have to find a Maths teacher so I need to guide them on how to run the school and another thing is a disciple they attend meetings and provide meeting information on how to attend classes and school in general.

- As a principal, do you receive support from the District or head office regarding the school Grade twelve?

Yes, we as a school you remember we are at the top 10 now in the province and there are 5 school that are in the top 10 in our district so we have been identified together with Mbilwi we also share information and the knowledge on how to run big schools and the large numbers in the Grade 12 we also share the experience among us.

- As a principal, are you supported by your circuit manager?

Yes she always support and come and motivate learners and our educators also and also give us guidance as a school when we have problems we also relay on her to solve those problems especially on disciple on how to approach parents she support us.

- Do the instructional leadership of the principal influence teaching and learning at the school?

Yes is very important it is in line with the motivation and monitoring if there is no instructional leadership of the principal if you don't go around held meetings with educators on curriculum basis the won't be at direction so you will have to go around and make sure that all is in order you will be in a situation hereby monitoring and support is in place.

- How does your leadership approach impact on learner performance for the past three years?

Yah you see the leadership is all about the influences and experiences and motivation and if you don't have those qualities it will be a problem time and again you must make sure

that teachers are motivated teachers are guided and are inspired to work continuously and if you have problems you are able to solve them accordingly you keep on meeting them time and again so that you can be able to sustain if you don't do that you may find that people rest on their comfort zone and you see at the end of the day you may find the school performance going down is like fire you keep on making sure that the fire is always burning so leadership is also important so my leadership is also impacted a lot in the learners performance. They also say as good as the principal so you have to be there for educators support them so that they can also support the learners.

- What are the specific roles of heads of department and deputy principals in instructional leadership?

You see we work accordingly ton eras you see CSI is been supported by the HOD and the HoD by the deputy principal and the deputy principal by the principal as I told you about the role of department is to make sure that the department are running let's say we have the head of department of Mathematics the head must make sure that he support all the mathematical for example the teachers, History also Physical Science and Xitsonga must be supported by the HoD are the responsibility of the HoD but at the same time they must also make sure that there is a written work to monitor their work there are writings at school and the deputy principal must make sure that all department are working and the principal is only there to oversee and monitor their job and monitor in fact the role of the deputy principal is to monitor and check the teachers and learners work so at the end of the day that will improve the performance and also to make sure that everybody is going to the class ,learners they must go to the class deputy principal must go and check even the HoD and the principal sometimes must check here we are talking about the roles of the principal and the deputy principal they must go and check everything they must not just sit and enjoy the icons you they are employed to monitor the work.

- As a principal how can you instill the culture of excellence in a school?

You see the culture of excellence in a school it takes a lot of energy and effort the principal is at the forefront of everything they must be plans that can be able to sustain based on the vision our vision and you see I don't you that our school has a very large number you can't run that school alone you must know that by so telling you must make sure that there is a team work you must not have groups but teams to work starting from the SMT and the staff as a whole they must work together focusing on the same goal but at the same time they must be allocation when you allocate you must allocate according to teachers interest and

knowledge don't just grab teacher and put him on a Science when he is not a science person and when you make promotions you also look at the streams you guide a learners on how to choose the subjects because you may also find that there is a group of learners that are in Mathematics but they cannot do the Mathematics so you need to guide them guide their parents and we work with the parents also but at the same time you must make sure that there is a discipline at school and make order and create a culture of teaching and learning and that will instill excellence.

- To what extent do learners, teachers and SMTs understand the mission and vision of school on performance?

To a large extent you see vision and mission is not just to write and put it in the office we must also share with it with the learners and SMT members and make sure that they practice that is not good for a school to make plans but not implement that plans you plan and do and if you plan something you must carry it in order to achieve your goals so you cannot do it alone you do it through people you must be a leader of leaders SMT members are leaders of leaders educators are leaders and learners we have got class raps are also leaders they must share the same vision with excellence and go for excellence and we must keep on preaching also regularly we must have meetings with them either is a department or class teacher.

- What are the key factors in the school that enhance learner performance?

Let me mention two or three things that make sure that learners are in the class and teachers are also in the class. Make sure that teachers are teaching when you monitor and you must make that they teach according to the syllabus and so on and so on at the same time you must make sure that discipline is practiced this are the key and knowledge to success. So when we work together and teachers know what they are doing they will be discipline because teachers will know what they are doing.

- Which challenges do you experience concerning Grade twelve in terms of teaching, LTSM, learners, etc.?

The challenges that we have in our school like this year we run out on a certain book but we rely on photocopy and we use those photocopies because they are bulk so we make them share but to us is not a big challenge because sometimes we ask from other schools. So all along we don't have lab and equipment's so we rely on books, chalk, duster we depend on those things we have that philosophy that says equipment don't pass learners even you may find a school with lot of equipment but the learners are not passing so we believe on

teaching we promote quality pass last year we have got 122 bachelors we are number 5 in the district we have got 5 trophies in the cabinet that are from the province we have been part of the top 10 in the province so even now we are performing.

- How do SMTs deal with the challenges they face and are these interventions effective?
The big problem that we have is the big enrolment once we have big enrolment we were supposed to have nine HoD and deputy principal we do have deputy principal but we have seven HoDs that make sure that they check teachers work and also learners 2056 learners that's a big challenge at the same time they also have classes to attend on those big classes because they need to have a teacher as well but at the same time they do with all those challenges they tell other teachers to assist them so this is how they deal with those challenges but this are not big challenges they are not too much to us we are used to this problems.
- Do socioeconomic factors affect the performance of learners in schools? Which interventions are in place to mediate such?
Our school falls under quintile two which means that our learners come from the poor background we have 5 villages and they are rural so there is no water no electricity so most of their parents are working in the town so learners remain alone is not like in urban areas where learners are always with their parents but we are surviving under those circumstances we take that everybody is the same everybody is poor so we encourage that if you suffer 25 years and work hard you are going to enjoy your life and they are working hard they know that if they work hard they are going to improve their standard of life.
- To what extent do you think teacher and learner attendance influence learner performance?
I always tell people that if you come to our school at 07h00 to 07h30 you will never find a learner outside because we start with the morning study at 06h30 from Grade 10-12 and most of the people are coming with buses and taxis excluding those who are from this village so when those people are coming Grade 10-12 they also come with the Grade 8 and 9 so we don't have much problem on late coming because learners are learners and children are children the attendance is very good and the uniform because they put on the uniform so this is the key to success so if learners come late and they don't put on uniform they're behavior will always be bad so they will misbehave they are always need so we have got that good culture.
- Do you think parental involvement can enhance learner performance?

Yes parental involvement is important like I said when we have problems we always call the parents and discuss with them their problems of their learners for example in Grade 12 we take learners to career exhibition last year we took 256 and this year we took 250 so this learners if they are not exposed to outside and other things they won't be motivated where we have the problems with books we have the problem with books some of the parents bought books for learners the English version that we don't have some bought them for their children fortunately so whenever we have anything we discuss it with the parents.

- Is the discipline of teachers and learners have an impact on improving performance in Grade 12?

If teachers are not discipline it they will automatically influence learners because learners can only be discipline if the teachers are also discipline if teachers don't go to classes if teachers don't do their work they go home before time learners are going to do the same because they have nobody to make sure that they look after so monitoring is very important this morning I was talking to the in a meeting telling them that now they have already submitted the marks so they think that they must go home early if they were not discipline they will be able to sneak out but they wait until I tell them to go that is the part of the discipline so now we don't have many problems of teachers being absent of the school most of the time but we do have some few educators who do so, so you see in a school you cannot run it to 100% but if you have 80% discipline even if you have 5 children 2 of them will not be good as others.

- What are the school-based strategies?

The school based strategies the first one is the issue of Grade 10, 11 and 12 morning studies we just decided that let's have this but sometimes it's a challenge that who is going to monitor those morning studies It depends on the influence of the principal but we do have some committees that monitor those morning studies and also in the afternoon studies you the 7 hours at around 14h20 in the afternoon we have committees that monitor afternoon studies until 15h00 and as for Grade 12 until 16h00 and as principal and deputy principal we take our time and monitor to make sure that these learners they study in the afternoon and eventually they will get used to it you may find them studying until 17h00 on their own and while they are busy working we are also busy working so they give us time to our own things we also work on Saturday because of the district they pay teachers for that, that's another support we get from the district and fortunately as a performing school they also

give us a center they don't want us to mix we another schools because we have over 200 learners in Grade 12 .

- Which strategies do you use to ensure that teachers teach effectively?

Teaching effectively depends on the preparation of that teacher if the teacher is not prepared there will not be effective teaching you may find that they are struggling with the proper planning. The other one is that they must also meet and share horizontally as the partners they must have meetings and also encourage learners to have what study guides and all the things but in the department preparation is the key and make sure that they go to the class and we monitor them. Once they are used to it they just do it on their own without been monitored and it became our culture.

- What are the interventions that you receive from the Department of Basic Education to ensure that Grade twelve results improve?

The only intervention we receive now is only tablets but apart from that there is nothing from the Basic Education apart from the district they also give us teachers from the department we have got a full house we have got 60 educators and we have two temporally teachers but we still need more.

- Are these intervention strategies effective or not, elaborate on how effective or not effective are they?

I cannot say they are effective because is minimum is not too much, with the district is good because we meet and so on but from the basic education no I can't say much on the intervention.

- Do you have any questions or comments?

The only comment that I say is that I realized that we are developing ourselves we also encourage our teachers to develop although we don't encourage them to study after school hours but we do encourage them to study and go for post that are around them and one another thing I forgot is that district also contact courses that another support we get from the curriculum advisors and the district also allocate members to adopt u if we have the problem we rely on them and we also appreciate that you came here.

END OF THE INTERVIEW.

Thank you very much for your time

APPENDIX O: LION SECONDARY SCHOOL PRINCIPAL TRANSCRIPTIONS SCHEDULE

- As a principal do you provide your subordinates with curriculum support?
Yes, I do provide my subordinates with curriculum support.
- Explain the type of curriculum support that you are providing
One can say at the end of each year after we after the QMS we identify the gaps with the educators and all that gaps gives us the opportunity to see where as the school we should intervene to each educator according to the needs that we have identified from there we also workshop to address and intervene in order to support our support our educators we do school based workshops.
- As a principal, do you receive support from the District or head office regarding the school Grade twelve?
Yes, in terms of Grade 12 we do receive support in various ways as a school they are programs that are for Grade 12 only that we are given by the district like the enrichments classes winter, spring and Autumn classes and the district curriculums always visits the school to monitor and see how learners are been taught on various subjects and also monitor their work and support the educators.
- As a principal, are you supported by your circuit manager?
Yes every time the support she gave us is the same as the district in terms in curriculum we work together the programs are there but are meant for the Grade 12 learners there are GP support programmes at times we are also called at the circuit level to motivate this learners who are not doing well and some of the programs are meant for top achievers. Yes I see accountability meeting as support because each times when we do this accountability meetings we also find out our gaps where we are lacking and we also intervene.
- Do the instructional leadership of the principal influence teaching and learning at the school?
Yes teaching and learning here is going on smoothly and learners are passing and when learners are passing our enrollment is quite stable and this is results of the influence of teaching and learning because parents always bringing their children to the school because they do have trust in us.
- How does your leadership approach impact on learner performance for the past three years?
I will be specific here with regard to Grade 12 in 2016 we were at 85% , 2017 in 89.88% and 2018 in 95.45 there is an increase.

- What are the specific roles of heads of department and deputy principals in instructional leadership?

Yah in fact their roles here is curriculum management each head of department at the beginning of each year set out the vision of Department and also during their meetings they develop their plans on how they will be managing their curriculum throughout the year and they are doing well on that that's why this is the key role of the head of department they are managing this department very well subject performance doing analysis of results at the end of each term in order to see how far they are going with their plans the deputy principal here is managing all the heads of departments and doing the moderation of the school. She is in charge of the curriculum.

- As a principal how can you instill the culture of excellence in a school?

Yes the culture of excellence here is instilled through hard work we motivate each educator each head of department to own the school and we do work together to improve our results we want our educators to be here at school on time so if ever they miss they will cover it we use the recovery plan we in fact not want to lose each single minute.

- To what extent do learners, teachers and SMTs understand the mission and vision of school on performance?

All this learners know that they are here at school to learn we always motivate them we even give them their code of conduct every learner knows the code of conduct and even when he gets through the school there is board which tells them what we need here at Ligege Secondary School we word according of learners and the code of ethics of teachers they understand the vision and missions for educators we make them to understand they during our meetings more especially our primary meetings we set our plans and expectations of the year that's where we tell them what to do and what they know and what we expect them to do throughout the year.

- What are the key factors in the school that enhance learner performance?

The key factors that enhance learners performance in a school is discipline we always disciple the learners firstly is to come to school on time wear the school uniform so that we can identify the learners we start there and we knock off late every time and we encourage each learner each educator to come to class on time so we don't force the educator to go to class educators knows that they are here for learners and learners are here for learning.

- Which challenges do you experience concerning Grade twelve in terms of teaching, LTSM, learners, etc.?

In terms of learners support materials one cannot say we do have some problems because we have been supplied with learners dynamic support materials on time but the only thing we might see as a challenge is learners when we want them they turn out but we communicate with their parents yes LTSM they are here on time maybe the other challenges we are shorting with furniture.

- How do SMTs deal with the challenges they face and are these interventions effective?
Yes if learners are valley they during their accountability meetings they address they come up with the support plan.
- Do socioeconomic factors affect the performance of learners in schools? Which interventions are in place to mediate such?

Yes here at our school as it is situated in the rural area socioeconomic factors is too a large extent influencing learner performance of the learners because most of the learners come from the child headed families and some of the learners come from a very poor socioeconomic families but here at school we are fortunate because we do have learners support agent if they have problems we refer them to our learners support agent who is doing well they are being supported here at school from the nutrition programme especially during this time when school closes we identify them and give some of the food to this learners and we do have people from outside who are donating some clothes and uniforms to this learners.

To what extent do you think teacher and learner attendance influence learner performance?
Yes learners and teachers attendance influence the performance of the school or learner performance because if the learners is no coming to school regularly he misses some of the important tasks that will impact negatively at the end of the year and also the teacher he or she will work on the pages in order to catch up the lost time.

- Do you think parental involvement can enhance learner performance?
Yes to a large extent if parents are involving themselves in education of their children they results in proof when we face challenges with the learners we use to communicate with the parents and if the parents involve themselves in the education of the learners, learners doing well.

- Is the discipline of teachers and learners have an impact on improving performance in Grade 12?

Yes if teachers are teaching and are well prepared in fact this will instill discipline on learners because teachers will go to class well prepared and make learners to participate in the class if a teacher goes to class on time and leave the class on time you find that discipline is in order. They will be no vacuum in classroom.

- What are the school-based strategies?

We have so many school-based strategies we introduced the morning and afternoon classes and extra classes for all the learners and during the morning we have the support time table for learners in the subjects that they are not doing well teachers come not just to supervise them but to also teach them we also went for an extra mile because there was a extra classes that was monitored and supervised by parents we also do have programs like Saturday classes this is to mention.

- Which strategies do you use to ensure that teachers teach effectively?

- *For the teachers to teach effectively one is to monitor their lesson plans to see what is it that is going to be taught in line with policy we make sure that the teachers submit their lesson plans that is being monitored by the HoD.*

- What are the interventions that you receive from the Department of Basic Education to ensure that Grade twelve results improve?

I have already mentioned this one but I will just repeat to say they are various programmes that are provided by the department of basic education we have enrichment classes and QPS and the programmes for the top achievers during this year I was very fortunate because the director in general was here at Ligege Secondary School.

- Are these intervention strategies effective or not, elaborate on how effective or not effective are they?

One can say they are working on our side because the results are improving each and every year we were going down I will not hesitate that they are not working but you can see that they are working and everyone is ware of the strategies .

- Do you have any questions or comments?

The comment that I can give is I am very happy to be chosen as one who can have an input in your studies because this served to me as a revival. Your interview questions revived me and alerted me reminded me on what must be considered when we are planning forward for the coming year.

END OF THE INTERVIEW.

Thank you very much for your time

APPENDIX P: Declaration of Professional Editing



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Declaration of professional edit

**THE ROLE OF SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAMS IN IMPROVING GRADE 12 LEARNERS' PERFORMANCE IN
VHEMBE DISTRICT, LIMPOPO.**

By

TINYIKO JOSEPHINE NKUZANA

I declare that I have edited and proofread this thesis. My involvement was restricted to language usage and spelling, completeness and consistency, referencing style and formatting of headings, captions and Tables of Contents. I did no structural re-writing of the content.

I am qualified to have done such editing, being in possession of a Bachelor's degree with a major in English, having taught English to matriculation, and having a Certificate in Copy Editing from the University of Cape Town. I have edited more than 200 Masters and Doctoral theses, as well as articles, books and reports.

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