

**THE EDUCATORS' PERCEPTIONS ON CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION: A  
CASE STUDY OF NKOWANKOWA CIRCUIT SECONDARY SCHOOLS,  
LIMPOPO PROVINCE**

by

**PINNY WISANI MALEMA**

Submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY in EDUCATION**

In the Subject

**CURRICULUM STUDIES**

at the

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

SUPERVISOR: PROF GP BALOYI

January 2023

## DECLARATION

Name : PINNY WISANI MALEMA

Student number : 30972701

Degree : DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY-CURRICULUM STUDIES

TOPIC: THE EDUCATORS' PERCEPTIONS ON CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION:  
A CASE STUDY OF NKOWANKOWA CIRCUIT SECONDARY SCHOOLS, LIMPOPO  
PROVINCE

I declare that the above thesis is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

I further declare that I submitted the thesis to originality checking software and that it falls within the accepted requirements for originality.

I further declare that I have not previously submitted this work, or part of it, for examination at Unisa for another qualification or at any other higher education institution.



SIGNATURE

25 January 2023

DATE

## **DEDICATION**

This study is dedicated to my husband, my anchor, Mahubela Jonas and my two beloved children: son Dr Tshepo Abe and daughter Tebogo

Your unwavering support, love and your encouragements to aim for the stars during my studies kept me going. This one is for you!

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

With gratitude, I would like to acknowledge the following people who made this study possible through their valuable contributions and support:

- My supervisor, Prof GP Baloyi for expert guidance and encouragements.
- My sister in law, Fihliwe Hellen for your love and support throughout my studies.
- My sister, Tryphina Ramatsobane for always being there for me and encouraging me to carry on.
- Limpopo Department of Education, for permitting me to conduct my study in their schools.
- Nkowankowa Circuit – the Circuit Manager, the principals and educators for providing me with valuable data.
- University of South Africa (Unisa) for funding my studies.

## SUMMARY

Curriculum implementation in South Africa, particularly in Limpopo Province has many challenges that ultimately affect the quality of education. This study sought to address educators' perceptions on curriculum implementation in Nkowankowa Circuit secondary schools. Qualitative methods were employed where 16 educators from all eight public schools in Nkowankowa Circuit were purposively sampled on the basis of knowledge and experience on curriculum issues. Face-to-face interviews were conducted to collect data on educator's perceptions on curriculum implementation. Data collected were analysed by means of thematic data analysis method. The study was conducted from an interpretivist point of view. Findings revealed that proper monitoring enforces effective curriculum implementation, which will improve academic performance. Provision of extra classes also boosts learners' academic performance. Lack of necessary resources seem to hamper effective implementation. Managing and monitoring curriculum implementation by School Management Teams (SMTs) ensures proper implementation and compliance to policy and improves academic performance. In conclusion, the researcher advanced recommendations that could be implemented at school and circuit level to assist improve implementation of curriculum which will ultimately uplift quality of education and academic performance in schools.

### KEY TERMS:

Academic performance; classroom interaction; curriculum; curriculum implementation; experiences; monitoring; perceptions;

## NKOMISO

Laha Afrika-Dzonga, ngopfungopfu eka xifundzankulu xa Limpopo swa nonoha ku humelerisa kharikhulamu hikuva ku na mitlhontlho yo tala leyi khumbaka xiyimo xa dyondzo. Phepha leri ri lava ku komba mavonelo ya vadyondzisi eka ku humelerisa kharikhulamu eswikolweni swa tisekondari eka sekete ya Nkowankowa. Ku tirhisiwile maendlelo ya *qualitative* loko ku endliwa ndzavisiso, laha ku nga hlawuriwa khumentsevu (16) wa vadyondzisi lava nga na ntokoto na vutivi bya kharikhulamu kusuka eka swikolo swa nhungu swa mfumo leswi welaka eka sekete ya Nkowankowa. Nhlokohliso wa swivutiso wo langutana wu tirhisiwile ku hlengeleta mahungu ya mavonelo ya vadyondzisi mayelana na ku humelerisa kharikhulamu. Mahungu lama nga hlengeletwa ya hleriwile hi ku tirhisa maendlelo ya ndzavisiso ya *qualitative*. Ndzavisiso wu endliwile hi kutirhisa thiyori ya *Interpretivism*. Mimbuyelo ya ndzavisiso yi paluxa leswaku ku landzelerisa swi nga antswisa ku humelerisiwa ka kharikhulamu, leswi nga antswisaka mbuyelo wa swa dyondzo. Ku endliwa ka tidyondzo to engetela swi nga pfuneta ku antswisa mbuyelo. Ku pfumaleka ka switirhisiwa swi tikomba swi endla leswaku ku humelerisa kharikhulami swi tika. Ku lawula na ku landzelerisa ku humelerisa kharikhulumu hi vurhangeri bya xikolo (SMT) swi nga endla leswaku humelerisiwa no landzeleriwa milawu no antswisa mbuyelo wa swa dyondzo. Hi ku dlayiseta, mulavisisi u mbumabumela tindlela leti loko to landzeleriwa xikolweni na le sekete ti nga antswisa ku humelerisa kharikhulumu leswi nga ta tlakusa xiyimo xa dyondzo na mbuyelo leswikolweni.

## OPSOMMING

Kurrikulum implementering in Suid-Afrika, veral in Limpopo-provinsie, het baie uitdagings wat uiteindelik die gehalte van onderwys beïnvloed. Hierdie artikel poog om opvoeders se persepsies oor kurrikulum implementering in Nkowankowa kring sekondêre skole aan te spreek. Kwalitatiewe metodes is gebruik waar 16 opvoeders van al agt openbare skole in Nkowankowa-kring doelbewus gesteekeproef is op grond van kennis en ervaring oor kurrikulum kwessies. Onderhoude van aangesig tot aangesig is gevoer om data oor opvoeder se persepsies oor kurrikulum implementering in te samel. Data wat ingesamel is, is ontleed met behulp van kwalitatiewe data-ontledingsmetodes. Die studie is vanuit 'n interpretivisme oogpunt uitgevoer. Bevindinge het aan die lig gebring dat behoorlike monitering effektiewe kurrikulum implementering afdwing, wat akademiese prestasie sal verbeter. Die verskaffing van ekstra klasse verhoog ook die leerder se akademiese prestasie. Gebrek aan nodige hulpbronne belemmer effektiewe implementering.. Die bestuur en monitering van kurrikulumimplementering deur Skoolbestuurspanne verseker behoorlike implementering en behoudbaarheid van beleid en verbeter die akademiese prestasie. Ten slotte bevorder die skrywer aanbevelings wat op skool- en kringvlak geïmplementeer kan word om die implementering van kurrikulum te verbeter, wat uiteindelik die kwaliteit van onderwys en akademiese prestasie in skole sal verhoog.

## LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES

Figure 2.1.	Literature Review Roadmap .....	13
Table 2.1.	Education in different countries .....	37
Figure 3.1.	Theoretical Framework Roadmap.....	75
Table 5.1.	Themes and codes .....	130
Table 5.2.	Biographical information .....	131



## LIST OF ACRONYMS

C2005	Curriculum 2005
CAPS	Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement
CBAM	Concern Based Adoption Model
CBC	Competency Based Education
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DSG	Development Support Group
DST	District Support Team
EEA	Employment of Educators Act
ELRC	Education Labour Relation Council
FET	Further Education and Training
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
QMS	Quality Management System
LDoE	Limpopo Department of Education
LOLT	Language of Learning and Teaching
LRA	Labour Relations Act
LTSM	Learner Teacher Support Material
NCS	National Curriculum Statement
NEPA	National Education Policy Act
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NPPPPR	National Protocol Pertaining to the Programme and Promotion Requirements

NSC	National Senior Certificate
OBE	Outcome Based Education
PED	Provincial Education Departments
RNCS	Revised National Curriculum Statement
SACE	South African Council for Educators
SASA	South African Schools Act
SASSA	South African Social Security Agency
SGB	School Governing Body
SIP	School Improvement Plan
SMT	School Management Team
WSE	Whole School Evaluation

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>DECLARATION</b> .....	i
<b>DEDICATION</b> .....	ii
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b> .....	iii
<b>SUMMARY</b> .....	iv
<b>NKOMISO</b> .....	v
<b>OPSOMMING</b> .....	vi
<b>LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES</b> .....	vii
<b>LIST OF ACRONYMS</b> .....	viii
<b>CHAPTER 1: BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY</b> .....	1
<b>1.1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY</b> .....	1
<b>1.2 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY</b> .....	3
<b>1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM</b> .....	4
<b>1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS</b> .....	4
<b>1.5 PURPOSE, AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY</b> .....	5
<b>1.6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN</b> .....	5
<b>1.6.1 Research approach</b> .....	5
<b>1.6.2 Population and sampling</b> .....	6
<b>1.6.3 Instrumentation and data collection techniques</b> .....	6
<b>1.6.4 Data analysis and interpretation</b> .....	7
<b>1.7 CREDIBILITY AND TRUSTWORTHINESS</b> .....	7
<b>1.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS</b> .....	7
<b>1.9 LIMITATION AND DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY</b> .....	8
<b>1.10 DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS</b> .....	8
1.10.1. <i>Academic performance</i> .....	8
1.10.2. <i>An educator</i> .....	9
1.10.3. <i>Curriculum</i> .....	9
1.10.4. <i>Curriculum implementation</i> .....	9
1.10.5. <i>Experiences</i> .....	10
1.10.6. <i>National Curriculum Statement (NCS)</i> .....	10
<b>1.11 PLANNING OF THE STUDY</b> .....	10
<b>1.12 CONCLUSION</b> .....	12
<b>CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW</b> .....	13

<b>2.1 INTRODUCTION</b> .....	14
<b>2.2 THE CONCEPT CURRICULUM</b> .....	14
<b>2.2.1 Curriculum approaches</b> .....	16
<b>2.2.2 Curriculum foundations</b> .....	18
<b>2.2.3 Curriculum design and development</b> .....	19
<b>2.2.4 Curriculum as a policy</b> .....	21
<b>2.2.5 Desirability for good curriculum</b> .....	24
<b>2.3 CURRICULUM IN GLOBAL CONTEXT</b> .....	26
<b>2.3.1 North America</b> .....	27
<b>2.3.2 Europe</b> .....	27
<b>2.3.3 Australia</b> .....	29
<b>2.4 CURRICULUM IN AFRICAN CONTEXT</b> .....	29
<b>2.4.1 North Africa Region</b> .....	30
<b>2.4.3 West Africa Region</b> .....	31
<b>2.4.4 Southern Africa Region</b> .....	31
<b>2.5 CURRICULUM IN SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT</b> .....	33
<b>2.6. COMPARISON OF EDUCATION SYSTEMS</b> .....	35
<b>2.7 ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN LIMPOPO PROVINCE</b> .....	37
<b>2.8 CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION</b> .....	40
<b>2.8.1 Requirements for curriculum implementation at school</b> .....	40
<b>2.8.2 Curriculum implementers outside the school</b> .....	42
<b>2.8.3 The school as an ultimate curriculum implementer</b> .....	50
<b>2.9 ROLES OF CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTERS AT SCHOOL</b> .....	56
<b>2.9.1 The principal</b> .....	56
<b>2.9.2 School Management Teams</b> .....	59
<b>2.9.3 Subject educators</b> .....	63
<b>2.9.4 The learner</b> .....	68
<b>2.10 CHALLENGES OF CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION IN SOUTH AFRICA</b> .....	70
<b>2.10.1 Implementation and Change</b> .....	70
<b>2.10.2 Resources</b> .....	71
<b>2.10.3 Support</b> .....	73
<b>2.11 CONCLUSION</b> .....	74
<b>CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK</b> .....	75
<b>3.1 INTRODUCTION</b> .....	76

<b>3.2 THE ROLE OF THEORY IN RESEARCH</b> .....	76
<b>3.3 THEORY OF CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION</b> .....	78
3.3.1 Profile of implementation.....	80
3.3.2 Capacity to support innovation.....	82
3.3.3 Support from outside agencies.....	86
<b>3.4 THEORY OF CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION AND THE RESEARCH QUESTION</b> .....	91
<b>3.5 JUSTIFICATION FOR THE CHOSEN THEORY</b> .....	93
<b>3.6 CONCLUSION</b> .....	95
<b>CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY</b> .....	96
<b>4.1 INTRODUCTION</b> .....	96
<b>4.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM</b> .....	96
<b>4.3 INTERPRETIVISM PARADIGM</b> .....	98
4.3.1 Principles and features .....	99
4.3.2 Variations of Interpretivism.....	103
4.3.3 Justification of Interpretivism .....	104
4.3.4 Critics of Interpretivism.....	105
<b>4.4 RESEARCH APPROACH</b> .....	106
4.4.1 The nature of qualitative research.....	106
4.4.2 Characteristics of qualitative research.....	107
<b>4.5 RESEARCH DESIGN</b> .....	108
4.5.1 Case study .....	108
4.5.2 Purpose of case study .....	109
4.5.3 Justification of a case study.....	110
4.5.4 Challenges of a case study .....	111
<b>4.7 POPULATION AND SAMPLE</b> .....	113
4.7.1 Sampling procedures .....	113
4.7.2 Accessing participants .....	114
<b>4.8 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE</b> .....	114
4.8.1 The pilot study.....	116
4.8.2 The interview process .....	117
<b>4.9 INTERVIEWS CHALLENGES AND CONTROL</b> .....	118
<b>4.10 DATA ANALYSIS</b> .....	119
<b>4.11 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS</b> .....	120

4.11.1 Informed consent and voluntary participation .....	121
4.11.2 Anonymity and confidentiality.....	121
4.11.3 The research study ethics .....	122
4.12 VALIDITY AND TRUSTWORTHINESS.....	123
4.12.1 Validity.....	123
4.12.2 Trustworthiness.....	123
4.13 THE ROLE OF THE RESEARCHER.....	125
4.14 CONCLUSION.....	127
<b>CHAPTER 5: PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS.....</b>	<b>128</b>
5.1 INTRODUCTION.....	128
5.2 RESEARCH FINDINGS PRESENTATION.....	128
5.2.1 Pilot study .....	128
5.2.2 The sample.....	128
5.2.3 Themes and codes.....	129
5.3 FINDINGS FROM INTERVIEWS AND DISCUSSIONS.....	130
5.3.1 Biographical information .....	130
5.3.2 Theme 1: Academic Performance (AP).....	132
5.3.3 Theme 2: Learner Type (LT).....	136
5.3.4 Theme 3: Educator Commitment (EC).....	141
5.3.5 Theme 4: Perceptions of Curriculum Implementation and Academic Performance (PCI & AP).....	144
5.3.6 Theme 5: Curriculum Implementation Best Practices (CIBP).....	149
5.3.7 Theme 6: Perceptions of Roles and Responsibilities (PRR) .....	151
5.3.8 Theme 7: Curriculum Implementation Challenges (CIC) .....	155
5.3.9 Theme 8: Curriculum Implementation Guidelines (CIG).....	162
5.4 IDENTIFIED SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES .....	165
5.4.1 Theme 1: Academic Performance (AP).....	165
5.4.2 Theme 2: Learner Type (LT).....	166
5.4.3 Theme 3: Educator Commitment (EC).....	166
5.4.5 Theme 5: Curriculum Implementation Best Practices (CIBP).....	167
5.4.6 Theme 6: Perceptions of Roles and Responsibilities (PRR) .....	167
5.4.7 Theme 7: Curriculum Implementation Challenges (CIC) .....	168
5.4.8 Theme 8: Curriculum Implementation Guidelines (CIG).....	168
5.5 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS.....	169

<b>5.6 CONCLUSION</b> .....	170
<b>CHAPTER 6: SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS</b> .....	172
<b>6.1 INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW</b> .....	172
<b>6.2 SUMMARY OF LITERATURE REVIEW</b> .....	173
<b>6.2.1 Research sub-question 1: Educators’ perceptions on the influence of curriculum implementation on academic performance</b> .....	173
<b>6.2.2 Research sub-question 2: Educators’ roles and responsibilities in curriculum implementation</b> .....	174
<b>6.2.3 Research sub-question 3: Challenges experienced by educators in curriculum implementation</b> .....	175
<b>6.3 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS</b> .....	176
<b>6.3.1 Research sub-question 1: Educators’ perceptions on the influence of curriculum implementation on academic performance.</b> .....	176
<b>6.3.2 Research sub-question 2: Educators’ roles and responsibilities in curriculum implementation</b> .....	178
<b>6.3.3 Research sub-question 3: Challenges experienced by educators in curriculum policy implementation</b> .....	180
<b>6.4 CONCLUSION OF THE STUDY</b> .....	182
<b>6.5 RECOMMENDATIONS</b> .....	183
<b>6.6 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES</b> .....	185
<b>6.7 CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE STUDY</b> .....	186
<b>6.8 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY</b> .....	187
<b>6.9 CONCLUSION</b> .....	188
<b>REFERENCES</b> .....	189
<b>APPENDIX A: UNISA ETHICAL CLEARANCE</b> .....	217
<b>APPENDIX B: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT THE STUDY</b> .....	219
<b>APPENDIX C: LIMPOPO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION ETHICAL CLEARANCE</b>	221
<b>APPENDIX D: CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY</b> .....	223
<b>APPENDIX E: FET PHASE SUBJECT EDUCATORS INTERVIEW QUESTIONS</b> .....	224
<b>APPENDIX F: SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAMS INTERVIEW QUESTIONS</b> .....	225
<b>APPENDIX G: LANGUAGE EDITING CERTIFICATE</b> .....	226

## **CHAPTER 1: BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

### **1.1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

The quality of education in South Africa is weak despite high budget channelled to improve it; and educational underperformance affects productivity growth and contribute to high levels of poverty and unemployment in South Africa (Mlachita & Moeletsi 2019:2). Education is a basic right to every citizen in South Africa, as enshrined in Section 29(1) of the South African Constitution. For South Africa to adhere to this constitutional mandate of the right to quality education, ongoing evaluation and review of legislation, policies and laws to enable quality education which will transform future adults and contribute to accomplishment of the country's national developmental goals are essential.

Many countries around the world including South Africa are continually revising their curricula to be responsive of the changing world. The South African education system has also experienced curriculum changes since the dawn of democracy. The quest for changing school curricula by the South African government was based on two main imperatives, namely, the scale of the change in the world and the demands of the 21st century, which require learners to be exposed to different and higher level skills and knowledge than those previously offered by the South African curricula (Munje & Maarman, 2017:33). To date, we have seen the birth of Curriculum 2005 (C2005) in 1998 which focused on Outcomes Based Education (OBE), followed by the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) in 2002, the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) which ultimately gave birth to Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) in 2012. All these changes and reviews were necessary to align the South African education system with the constitutional mandate and to improve academic performance of learners, and to ensure that children can acquire and apply knowledge and skills in ways that are meaningful to their own lives, which will ultimately improve the quality of lives of South Africans.

Previous studies indicate that curriculum policy implementation tends to be hampered by inadequate training of educators, lack of physical and human resources and too much



paperwork. Molapo and Pillay (2018:1) highlight that education in South Africa is politicised where curriculum implementation takes a back seat to institutional and individual political machinations. Other studies conducted in Hong Kong (Cheung & Wong 2012) and Korea (Park & Sung 2013) and in South Africa (Bantwini 2010) indicate that educator workload has a significant impact in curriculum implementation.

Limpopo Province is one of the poorest provinces in rural South Africa characterised by insufficient physical resources, high educator workload and insufficient trained educators. Despite all these challenges faced by the province, other schools in Limpopo Province particularly in Nkowankowa Circuit succeed in implementing curriculum effectively and remains the top achieving schools beyond these challenges.

Sethusha (2015: 53) alludes that learner performance in public examinations has become an issue of common interest to researchers all over the world. Munje and Maarman (2017:34) assert that the continuous under-performance of learners, particularly in previously disadvantaged schools, has prompted many more research studies investigating these existing patterns of poor performance. Many reasons of under-performance by schools have been advanced by literature. For instance, Bayat, Rena and Louw (2014 : 353) conclude that poor performance by schools is sophisticated and heterogeneous. It is evident that the government is continuously improving legislation, policies, procedures, strategies and allocating funds to improve the quality of education in South Africa. Kyei and Nemaorani (2014:83) accentuate that despite the attempts by South African government to make education accessible to all, there is still a high failure rate (over 30%) and low retention rate (44%) of high school students in South Africa, especially in Limpopo Province.

This study will attempt to analyse educators' perceptions on curriculum implementation in Nkowankowa circuit secondary schools.

## **1.2 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY**

The researcher decided to undertake this study after realising that secondary schools in Nkowankowa Circuit of Limpopo Province, which are from the same community with almost similar contextual factors, perform differently academically, with underperforming, average performing and good performing schools from the same circuit. It is said that education is the most essential part of South Africa's national development as it transforms individuals (Bajinath 2018:87). Challenges in secondary school education system may lead to challenges in transitioning from secondary education to tertiary schooling system and the working environment (Mbandlwa 2020:6823; Mlachita & Moeletsi 2019:5). Therefore, the researcher believes that secondary school education is very important for the future of South Africa because secondary education decides whether learners will further their studies for career world or not and whether they would be able to participate meaningfully in adulthood world; hence, this study is undertaken in secondary schools.

Limpopo Province is not performing well in National Senior Certificate (NCS) in South Africa since 2018. Statistics indicate that in 2018, Limpopo Province registered a 69, 4% pass rate which ranked it the last out of nine provinces. Despite ongoing intervention programmes by the national department, provincial department, district and circuit in the form of educator workshops on content, assessment, strategies, multiple examination opportunities, winter and spring schools, Saturday classes and camps, learners' academic performance in South Africa generally and Limpopo in particular still remains a challenge. Some secondary schools in Nkowankowa Circuit are producing good results and others are not producing good results, and this is concerning.

The rationale of this study was to analyse educators' perceptions on curriculum implementation in Nkowankowa Circuit secondary schools in Limpopo Province.

### **1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

There is a challenge of learner academic performance in South African public schools, especially in Limpopo Province. Currently, a large amount of the country's budget is assigned to education and numerous intervention strategies are implemented to improve the quality of academic performance in public schools. Despite the numerous intervention strategies, the country is still not experiencing satisfactory quality performance of learners in secondary schools, especially previously disadvantaged schools. Numerous studies relating to learners' academic performance (Farooq, Chaudhry, Shafiq & Berhanu 2011; Ahmadi, Lukman & Ajibola, 2015; Kye & Nemaorani, 2014; Letsoalo, Maoto, Masha & Lesaona, 2017) have been conducted where various reasons for underperformance such as lack of support by stakeholders, inadequate infrastructure leading to overcrowding etc. have been advanced. Not much research on this problem has been conducted in Nkowankowa Circuit. Therefore, this problem needs to be researched to find out educators' perception on curriculum implementation in Nkowankowa Circuit secondary schools; seeing that Nkowankowa Circuit has high achieving, average achieving and under-achieving secondary schools, with almost similar physical and human resources.

This study sought to thoroughly analyse educators' perceptions on curriculum implementation. The statement of the problem is: Nkowankowa circuit in Limpopo province has secondary schools that underperform, average perform, and those that are good performing, with almost the same resources and from the same community. How do educators in this circuit perceive curriculum implementation?

### **1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The main research question for this study is:

- What are the educators' perceptions on curriculum implementation in Nkowankowa circuit secondary schools in Limpopo Province?

To address the research question, the following sub-questions must be dealt with:

- How does the implementation of curriculum influence academic performance?
- To what extent do educators understand their roles and responsibilities in curriculum implementation?
- What challenges do educators experience in curriculum implementation?

## **1.5 PURPOSE, AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The purpose of this study was to help decision makers in education to identify good practices in curriculum implementation and to identify challenges experienced by educators in curriculum implementation and possible solutions to these challenges. The aim of this study is to get a deeper understanding of how educators perceive curriculum implementation in Nkowankowa Circuit secondary schools in Limpopo Province. The objectives of the study are:

- To analyse educators' perceptions on the influence of curriculum implementation on academic performance in Nkowankowa Circuit, Limpopo Province.
- To determine the extent to which educators understand their roles and responsibilities in curriculum implementation.
- To explore challenges experienced by educators in curriculum implementation.
- To explore possible guidelines envisaged by educators for effective curriculum implementation.

## **1.6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN**

### **1.6.1 Research approach**

A qualitative research approach was used for this research study. A qualitative approach refers to an in-depth study using face-to-face or observation techniques to collect data from

people in their natural setting (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014:5). This study adopted a case study design. In a case study, researchers do an in-depth analysis of a case, often a programme, an activity or a process involving one or more individuals (Creswell & Creswell, 2018: 135). This study was a multiple case study because a number of different cases were combined in this single study.

### **1.6.2 Population and sampling**

A population refers to a group of people or individuals as well as objects or items where participants or participants are taken for measurement (Okeke & Van Wyk, 2017:226). The population of this study were secondary schools in Nkowankowa Circuit of Mopani West District, Limpopo Province. Sampling is the process of selecting participants or a sample from a bigger group or a population, which will be used as a basis for predicting the study's outcome (Okeke & Van Wyk, 2017:224). Nkowankowa Circuit was purposefully sampled for this study. In purposive sampling, the researcher identifies suitable participants by using specific criterion and by entrusting own experiences or previous research to select participants who are representative of the population (Wagner, Kawulich & Garner 2012:93). The circuit has eight public secondary schools, with high achieving, average achieving and under-achieving secondary schools. All eight secondary schools were studied. Purposive sampling technique was also used to sample participants, who were educators implementing curriculum policy at FET phase and SMT members. One educator and one SMT member per school were interviewed. The total number of participants in this study were 16.

### **1.6.3 Instrumentation and data collection techniques**

For this study, standardised open-ended interviews and discussions were used to collect data from educators. In a standardised open-ended interview, a set of open-ended questions are asked in a specific order and exactly as worded (Johnson & Christensen, 2017:237). Accordingly, interviews enabled the researcher to understand the participants' experiences of curriculum implementation and its influence on learner academic performance. Official

documents were studied. Official documents refer to anything written, recorded or photographed by the schools.

#### **1.6.4 Data analysis and interpretation**

Qualitative data analysis is a process of organising data into categories and identifying patterns and relationships among categories, then draw conclusions from the collected data (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014:395). In qualitative data analysis, the collected data is synthesised inductively to generate generalisation. In this study, interviews were recorded in audio tapes. The audio tapes were transcribed, then data were examined for key issues raised by participants in response to each topic raised. From the key issues, patterns were noted and data were categorised and discussed accordingly.

### **1.7 CREDIBILITY AND TRUSTWORTHINESS**

Credibility refers to the extent to which results approximate reality and are judged to be accurate, trustworthy and reasonable (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014:114). Trustworthiness of any study is a very important aspect of qualitative research as it can be used to assess transparency of a study (Adler 2022:599). Strategies or approaches to trustworthiness include credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability as indicated by Guba and Lincoln (2015); Gunawan (2015:10); Conelly (2016:436). For this study, trustworthiness was ensured by applying the above strategies of trustworthiness; that is; Credibility, Transferability, Dependability and Conformability which will be discussed in detail in chapter 4.

### **1.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Research ethics are a set of principles that guides researchers when doing their research (Johnston & Christensen, 2017:125). To observe ethical considerations, the researcher applied to University of South Africa's (Unisa) to get ethical clearance before commencing with data collection. Furthermore, permission letters requesting to conduct the study were

written to Limpopo Department of Education, Nkowankowa Circuit and to the principals of schools that were earmarked to participate in the study. Participation was voluntary and no one was coerced or compelled to participate in the study. Moreover, participation solely depended on the willingness of the participants. To achieve informed consent, participants were assured of the freedom to withdraw from the study at any time without any risks. Moreover, participants were assured anonymity and confidentiality. Participants were also informed that all data gathered would be used for the research purposes only.

## **1.9 LIMITATION AND DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY**

The study focused on educators' perceptions on curriculum implementation. This study was limited to public secondary schools in Nkowankowa Circuit in Mopani West Education District of Limpopo Province. Mopani West Education District consists of 13 circuits, and Nkowankowa Circuit is one of the 13 circuits in the district. Nkowankowa Circuit consists of eight public secondary schools, and all eight public secondary schools were studied. Nkowankowa Circuit has been chosen because it consists of high achieving, average achieving and under-achieving secondary schools. The researcher is also familiar with the community; therefore, it was convenient to access all the schools in the circuit. The study could not be done on all circuits of the Mopani West Education District or Limpopo Province because of time and financial constraints. This study is qualitative, and analysis and interpretations of data collected were done by the researcher. Findings from this study cannot be generalised because only one circuit and few schools in the province have been studied.

## **1.10 DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS**

### *1.10.1. Academic performance*

Refers to the ability of individual learners to demonstrate their intellectual abilities. It can be determined by evaluating whether the objectives of teaching have been achieved. This can be done by evaluating instruction through the assessment of learner achievement to measure learner competencies expected to be mastered. For this study, academic performance refers

to the percentage achievement of learners in the end of year National Senior Certificate (NCS) assessment.

#### 1.10.2. *An educator*

Refers to any person who teaches, educates or trains other persons or who provides professional educational services including professional therapy and educational psychological services, at any public school, further education and training institution, departmental offices or adult basic education and who is appointed in a post of any educational establishment under this act (EEA 76 OF 1998). In this study, an educator refers to anyone who is involved in the act of teaching learners in a classroom on official capacity.

#### 1.10.3. *Curriculum*

Is perceived as different learning activities and experiences taking place in schools in a formal classroom for the purpose of developing learners through learning (Norton, 2016:15). In this study, the term curriculum will refer to CAPS that is currently being administered at all public schools across South Africa.

#### 1.10.4. *Curriculum implementation*

Happens at a classroom and teachers are the implementers of curriculum during teaching and learning in class. Koloti and Jita (2022: 13) maintain that curriculum implementation occurs when teachers engage in teaching by means of instruction and assessment delivery of pre-planned contents. Teaching include deciding how materials and resources may best be made available to the learners to enhance classroom interactions.



#### 1.10.5. *Experiences*

Is the state of being influenced or having acquired knowledge by means of direct observation or participation according to Meriam-Webster online Dictionary. Experiences relates to having been part of happenings to a point where it has an influence on one's world view.

#### 1.10.6. *National Curriculum Statement (NCS)*

Is the official South African public schools curriculum which came into effect in 2012. Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS), is a component of NCS which strengthens the assessment component of NCS.

#### 1.10.7. *Perceptions*

Refers to the process of using one's senses to process information from daily interactions with the world to make sense of the world around us (Qiong 2017:18). A person must understand and be aware to realise with their minds and senses of happenings around them and form their own opinion of these happenings.

### **1.11 PLANNING OF THE STUDY**

This research study was divided into six chapters. The outline will be as follows:

**Chapter 1** gives a general overview of this study by focusing on the introduction and background information. The introduction and background highlight the concepts curriculum implementation and learner academic performance. Statement of the problem is briefly discussed where the research question and research aims and objectives are stated. The research methodology and design to be used and the justification for using the chosen methodology are also discussed. Ethical issues to be considered while conducting this study, limitations and delimitations of the study were also discussed. Key concepts to be used in the context of this study were clarified. This chapter discussed all chapters of this study.

**Chapter 2** focuses on literature review. The chapter started by giving a literature review road map which graphically represents all the topics to be discussed to strengthen the knowledge of

curriculum implementation. Curriculum approaches, curriculum foundations, curriculum design and development were examined to help in thorough comprehension of the concept curriculum and its implementation. Curriculum in global context and in African context was analysed to enable the researcher and the readers to appreciate curriculum in South African context. Academic performance of Limpopo Province in general and Nkowanokwa Circuit which is under study was discussed which gave more insight on how curriculum implementation relates to academic performance. Roles and responsibilities of curriculum implementers inside the school and outside the school were thoroughly discussed to help in comprehending the importance of different stakeholders in curriculum implementation. The chapter was concluded by discussing challenges experienced in curriculum implementation according to different scholars.

**Chapter 3** deals with theoretical framework. This chapter started by outlining the theoretical framework roadmap showing how the chapter will be structured. This chapter mainly focuses on providing the conceptual grounding of the study. The role of theory in research was analysed in detail to give insight on its relevance for research today. Theory of Curriculum implementation which was advocated and popularised by John M Rogan and Diane J Grayson in 2003 underpinned this study which was explored at length. The theory of curriculum implementation assisted the researcher and the readers to deeply understand the phenomenon. This theory will also help in understanding occurrences during the process of curriculum implementation and why they happen. Theory of curriculum implementation and the research questions for this study were discussed to establish whether the theory addresses and responds to the research questions posed. The chapter then justified why theory of curriculum implementation was chosen for this study, then the chapter is concluded.

**Chapter 4** discusses what research paradigm is and its characteristics, then the interpretivism paradigm is introduced and analysed as the paradigm for this study. Justifications for chosen paradigm were also advanced. The chapter then critically discusses what other scholars have reviewed about interpretivism. Research approach and design for this study were also discussed and justification for the chosen approach and design were advanced. Population and sampling, data collection procedures and analysis were also discussed as well as ethical considerations,

credibility and trustworthiness issues were clarified. The chapter then discusses the role of the researcher before the chapter is concluded.

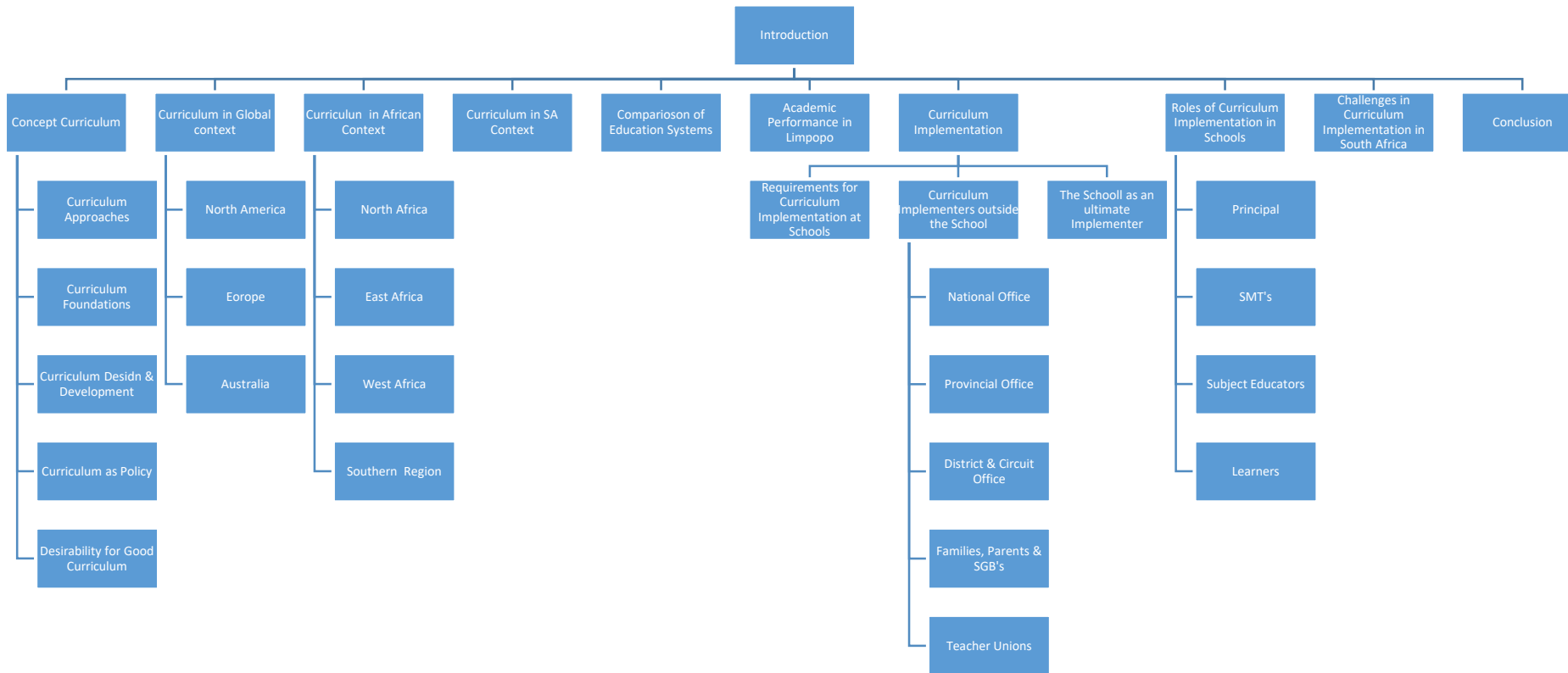
**Chapter 5** focuses on presentation and interpretation of results from empirical study. Biographical information were discussed to gain a deeper understanding of the case under study. Findings were presented and analysed according to the eight identified themes. The data collected from curriculum implementers at schools were analysed in an interpretivist and constructivist approach. The researcher analysed the collected data against existing data to look for patterns, similarities and differences so that general conclusions can be drawn. Data collected were organised into categories, patterns and relationships were identified in these categories.

**Chapter 6** gives the overview of the study, and findings based on objectives identified in Chapter 1. Recommendations were advanced for each objective identified earlier. Contributions of the study were also discussed. Limitations of the study were also mentioned and analysed. The chapter then suggests topics for further research and the chapter is concluded.

## **1.12 CONCLUSION**

This chapter discussed the introduction and background of the research problem. The problem statement was constructed where the research questions, aims and objectives of the study were also discussed. The research methodology which this study had used as well as the design were briefly discussed. The population and sampling for this study were also discussed. Instrumentation and how empirical data will be collected were given. This study's ethics, trustworthiness and reliability were also described. Concepts were also clarified to understand their context in this study. The next chapter discusses literature review.

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW



*Figure 2.1. Literature Review Roadmap*

## **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

The previous chapter focused on introducing and giving a background of the study on educators' perceptions on curriculum implementation in Nkowankowa Circuit secondary schools. The rationale of the study, the problem statement, research questions and the purpose, aims and objectives of the study were also outlined in detail in the previous chapter. The research approach, research paradigm and research design were also briefly described, as well as data collection and data analysis methods.

This chapter will outline literature review on school curriculum and its implementation at secondary schools. According to Efron and David (2019:4), the purpose of literature review is to deliver the contemporary facts through a new and creative outlook that will contribute to new reasoning and comprehension of the topic under investigation. This study will review literature on the topic under investigation to discover comprehensive facts on research already done on the topic and to expand the researcher's opinions, thoughts and voice. The reviewed literature was supported by data drawn from the conclusions on the phenomenon under study.

## **2.2 THE CONCEPT CURRICULUM**

Over the years, scholars around the world have been trying to define curriculum. Fleisch, Gultig, Stephanie and Makaringe (2019:6) view curriculum as more than the government's document that profile subjects to be taught in schools which include how lessons learned within subjects contribute to the realisation of the broad educational goals. Du Preez and Simmonds (2014:1) concur that curriculum is an artefact to be implemented at classroom level and it is likened and identified with subjects and content appearing in written documents provided by schools and the government. In the same vein, Themane (2011:1639) defines curriculum as a written document that systematically describes planned ventures such as goals, objectives content, learning activities, evaluation procedures and so forth. Curriculum must have objectives and outcomes, and it must be able to transform learners to participate in the broader society.

Lalor (2017:2) argues that curriculum is made up of many layers and can be described as such. Formal curriculum includes everything that learners at a particular grade must know and be able to do and value. Operational curriculum is seen as that formal curriculum that is rephrased into a plan of action. Taught curriculum is operational curriculum when it is delivered in the classroom. Assessed curriculum will include all that is contained and written by learners in formal assessments. Learned curriculum, according to Lalor (2017:2), will include what learners gain and grasp in them and walk away understanding as an outcome of their experiences through learning.

It is noted that precise definition of what curriculum is has not yet been established and this indicates the dynamic nature of curriculum (Du Preez & Simmonds 2014:1). Countries around the world and South Africa in particular have proven the dynamism of curriculum by continuously changing and amending their curriculum and other education reforms so that it remains relevant, and to respond to the needs of the modern society.

Van Wyk and Higgs (2011:177) indicate that despite different curricula, all curricula are designed to ensure that knowledge is transferred in a structured, orderly and planned process, so as to impart a combination of knowledge and skills that are deemed to be appropriate and necessary to the society and time. Societies and times change. What is necessary and important for any society at a given time can always change with the changing times and changing society. Therefore, curriculum must always remain relevant to the economic needs of society so that learners can acquire relevant knowledge and skills needed for the time and era in which any society finds itself.

Two main curricula exist which run simultaneously in every South African schools, extra curricula and core curricula. Extra-curricular activities are academic or non-academic activities carried out with the help and support of the school but take place outside the formal classroom time; and these activities do not involve a grade or academic credit and participation is voluntary (Bartkus, Nemelka & Gardner 2012: 698). Extra-curricular interventions support core curricula and enable learners to acquire and develop skills outside

the classroom such as time management and social skills. Extra curricula activities include debate, athletics, soccer, etc.

The main focus of this research is the core curriculum. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisations (UNESCO) (2013:14) defines core curriculum as the body of knowledge, skills and attitudes expected to be learned by all students, generally related to a set of subjects and learning areas that are common to all students such as languages, mathematics, arts etc. Core curriculum lays a foundation for further studies.

In the context of this study, the concept curriculum is defined as formal document that is produced by the government containing all the formal content knowledge relevant to specific age and grade, to be taught by teachers in classrooms on a formal basis and formal times allocated, and to be assessed formally and informally to ascertain whether the goals and objectives of the curriculum have been achieved. To the researcher, curriculum is all the formal content and skills that educators must teach and learners learn at a specific grade which include all tasks to be completed within a specific period and the administration of such. This content and skills become a policy and must be implemented as directed. A learner needs to master core curriculum for a certain grade before proceeding with core curriculum for the next grade. Hence, core curriculum is important because it lays out common intellectual foundation for the next content to be grasped.

In the preceding section, the researcher will discuss diverse curriculum approaches. These entail curriculum foundations, curriculum design and development and curriculum as policy and its implications thereof. Exploring these will ensure more consciousness and comprehension for the concept curriculum.

### **2.2.1 Curriculum approaches**

Curriculum approaches exist and these approaches enable the researcher to form a basis from which to gain more insight on the field. A curriculum approach expresses a viewpoint about curriculum development and design; the role of the learner, teacher and curriculum specialist

in planning curriculum, the curriculum's goals, and the important issues that must be examined (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2018:20). It is imperative to understand these viewpoints because they enable understanding on curriculum issues and the patterns that stakeholders in the curriculum depict. These patterns and characteristics depicted ultimately have an impact on how curriculum is implemented, which affects academic performance.

Behavioural approach emphasises breaking up curriculum content into pieces for ease of learning logically (Oliva & Gordon II, 2013:132). Content to be learned should be fragmented into manageable pieces for learners to be able to consume, rather than to bombard them with large amount of content for easy absorption. Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) adopted behavioural approach because the main topic, usually called a strand, is cut into pieces and distributed over the grades where level of difficulty progresses as learners proceed to the next grade.

Managerial approach considers the school as a social system. Ornstein and Hunkins (2018:21) view a system as a whole, and all parts of the system must put an effort and work harmoniously for the effective functioning of the system. If in a school system, educators, learners or both, do not put effort in their duties, curriculum implementation may not be as effective as expected, and this may affect the performance of educators, learners or both, and this will affect the performance of the whole school, the circuit, the district, the province and the country.

Academic approach attempts to analyse and synthesise major positions, trends and curriculum concepts. According to Ornstein and Hunkins (2018: 24), academic approach advocate training and development of the mind to think critically and creatively, and to be able to master different subject contents relevant for adult life. Academic approach is appropriate for the present world because globalisation requires creative minds. Curriculum implementers who adopt this approach will produce learners who can work independently to make meaning of the content learned in class, and this may help in academic performance.



Swathi (2018:272) alludes that humanistic approach is learner-centred and considers the child as a whole focusing on the learner's emotions and feelings. This approach promotes smaller group work to enable learners to work and help each other in teaching and learning. The current curriculum encapsulates humanistic approach as one of the approaches commonly used in some assessments. During the COVID-19 pandemic, this approach fell off because it could pose health challenges to both learners and educators who are forced to socially distance.

### **2.2.2 Curriculum foundations**

Curriculum implementers and schools are also influenced by different curriculum foundations on their day-to-day discharge of their duties. More importantly, curriculum foundations help in understanding educators' frame of reference from which they discharge their duties of implementing the curriculum.

Three major curriculum foundations are philosophical, psychological and sociological foundations. Greene in Oliva and Gordon II (2013:128) define philosophy as a way of framing distinctive sorts of questions having to do with what is prescribed, perceived, intuited, believed and known. Philosophy has a major influence because it enables a foundation of life and how lives should be, including educational lives (Higgs & Moeketsi 2022:2). Principals and educators must be creative in making schools and classrooms to be inviting and favourable for effective teaching and learning. Stakeholders in curriculum implementation must also be attentive to educational trends that have an effect on teaching and learning and must always attempt to consider new innovation to improve effectiveness of curriculum implementation and academic performance.

There are four major philosophies, namely idealism, realism, pragmatism and existentialism. In addition, four educational philosophies which have roots in one or more of the four major philosophical tradition exist, that is perennialism, essentialism, progressivism and reconstructionism (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2018:51).

The contribution of psychology to curriculum studies is twofold; it provides conceptual models information which can assist educational planning and secondly, it contains methodologies which can be adapted for educational enquiry (Lawton, Gordon, Ing, Gibby, Ping & Moore: 2012:29). Psychology attempts to understand the process of learning, its nature and finding ways to make learning effective (Shakir & Sharma 2017:21). Psychologists believe that teaching and learning is affected by many inherent issues such as emotions, attitudes, behaviours, motivation etc. Lawton *et al* (2012:35) give one possible definition of sociology as the study of people in society and how they interact with each other. Ballantine and Hammack (2016: 2) add that people and their societies are interdependent and interconnected to one another. Therefore, educators and learners as part of the society will be affected, and that the society will affect teaching and learning at schools. Societies are characterised and influenced by social issues, politics, economy, values and beliefs. From a sociological view, any effect on these issues will have a significance in curriculum policy implementation and academic performance.

### **2.2.3 Curriculum design and development**

Curriculum design and development is seen as the process which involve designing, implementing and evaluating of curriculum, which should include all stakeholders from the first stage of the process, such as educators and subject advisors (Obi & Ticha, 2020:16550). Curriculum design refers to the specific arrangement and order consisting of the curriculum's components where functions and objectives, among other components, are included. Curriculum implementation includes all the activities where the actual curriculum design is put into practice, and curriculum evaluation involves mainly information gathering where disparities are planned for and real educational results are evaluated.

In South Africa, curriculum has also been under reform to align it to the changing and dynamic world. The Minister of Basic Education and the National Department of Basic Education are responsible for such reforms. Furthermore, the Minister of Education also established a framework that enable curriculum revision processes to unfold, to ensure that curriculum remains relevant to the dynamic need of the society and the world at large. The

Minister of Education and the DBE enlisted the curriculum developers from universities, non-government organisations (NGOs) and provincial departments to participate in the process. Participants are selected on criteria of knowledge and experience in curriculum matters as well as the need to achieve representation in terms of gender, race and regional representation.

Alsubaie (2016:106) stresses that for effective curriculum development, educators must be highly involved in the development process from the initial stage; however, educator participation, especially in South Africa, is not yet well defined. This is echoed by Du Plessis (2018) who asserts that DBE in South Africa is determining school curriculum and that schools and teachers have little room for curriculum input. It is believed that educators must be given a chance to participate in the development of curriculum. In the same vein, Alsubaie (2016:106) concurs that it is important to integrate educators' opinion and ideas in the development stage of curriculum because educators are better informed in the processes of teaching and they are the ones who ultimately introduce and implement curriculum in the classroom.

Carl (2017:80) proposes that in the development process of curriculum, there are certain basic criteria that cannot be disregarded. A good curriculum must have organising centres where each unit of study must be well organised to reflect the objectives and purpose of the curriculum, and this must be clearly stated. Furthermore, Carl (ibid) points out that a good curriculum must align the standards very well with teaching and learning and assessment. On assessment, quality curriculum must encompass different forms and types which are consistent with the unit standards skills and knowledge to be learned. The structure of a quality curriculum must comprise details of what students are expected to do, why they must do it and what educators will have as confirmation that teaching and learning is taking place and that indeed learners are really learning.

A good curriculum must contribute to the general educating of a child and must help shape the child holistically. The child's psychological and emotional well-being as well as all other aspects that contribute to the child's development should be catered for and be addressed by

a good curriculum as a way of preparing the child for adulthood and preparing them to coexist in this dynamic world. Learners must be assisted by a good curriculum to also understand the importance of the past, present and the future to be able to make meaning to this world and have their own viewpoint and to help shape their values, beliefs and attitudes.

One other important aspect of curriculum development and design is that it must be able to accommodate different changes in the educational community. It must be stated that the education community is influenced by factors taking place in the world around it such as political factors, economic factors, environmental factors, social factors, legal and legislative factors, technological factors, to mention but a few, and it is important that it adapt to these factors and the societal factors in general. Adapting and accommodating these factors will enable effective educational processes that will be targeting the whole learner who will be able to also adapt and live meaningfully in this world.

Lalor (2017: 6) asserts that a good curriculum should include assessment types and purpose to help in validating knowledge and skills acquired by learners during teaching and learning. For example, the CAPS documents general statement physical sciences Grade 10-12 (2003:17) clearly stipulate assessment standards for each learning outcome. Physical Science CAPS Grade 10-12 (2011:9) gives the types and methods of assessments to be administered for this specific subject. Lalor (2017:8) further indicates that good curriculum is also characterised by a structure that indicate what learners must do, why they will do it and what the teacher will have as evidence of student learning.

#### **2.2.4 Curriculum as a policy**

The rest of the world consists of many education policies which are aimed at directing the education system and South Africa is not an exception. South Africa uses NCS and CAPS as some of the policies that addresses curriculum issues. Viennet and Pont (2017:21) define education policy as all the actions which the government undertake in relation to educational practices, and how the government addresses the production and delivery of education in a given system. As a policy, NCS guides educators on how to discharge their day-to-day duties

so that the objectives of the curriculum can be achieved. Policies must be implemented by converting them into a plan of action designed to achieve the overall aim for them to be successful. Rahmat (2015:310) alludes that policy goals can be achieved when there is an effective system of implementation and monitoring. Therefore, one can indicate that successful policy implementation in a way concludes the success of any policy. However, Mthethwa (2012:38) argues that policy implementation does not always happen automatically. A strong and dedicated team is important for successful implementation.

Mthethwa (2012:37) posits that policy implementation refers to the mechanism, resources and relationships that link them to the programme of actions. Policy implementation forms one of the critical pillars on which its management is based. As such, successful implementation is the final litmus test for policy to be successful (Cloete, Wissink & De Coening 2006:180). Mthethwa (2012:38) further maintains that it can be pointed out that policy implementation does not always happen automatically and as a result, it can either be successful or unsuccessful, altered after a decision to pursue it has been made and removed from the agenda because those responsible for implementing it are convinced that it cannot be carried out.

Policy making, including curriculum policy making, goes through different stages. Cloete and De Coening (2011:87) postulate that the policy making process goes through the following stages:

i) Agenda setting – Agenda setting is the initial stage done at a very high level by politicians and the government. At this stage, problems are identified and defined to enable necessary actions to be taken. In curriculum policy making, issues that are problematic in the curriculum policy such as when the curriculum is not in line with the constitution are identified and defined by politicians and the government so that necessary steps can be effected to correct it.

ii) Policy Design – Policy design stage is the stage in which government takes action on the problematic issues identified and defined by designing new curriculum and/or amending

existing one. This stage was supposed to involve ordinary educators who will ultimately teach the designed curricula. Involving educators would enable them to conceptualise and embrace the expected revisions of the curriculum. Resistance to change will be lessened and teachers will work harder to ensure implementation success as they would have been part of the process of the redesign.

iii) Decision making – At this stage, the designed or amended curriculum now needs different types of decisions from various high officials and politicians to ascertain if it is fit for purpose. Values and beliefs of societies are some of the factors considered when decisions are made. At this stage, the researcher believes that ordinary members of the citizen through community structure should be highly involved because societal values and beliefs form a basis for concluding the formal curriculum. This will avoid resistance by communities, like in the case of introduction of ‘controversial sex education’ which was to be implemented in selected schools in 2020 (SA news online by Daily Maverick newspaper article written by Tom Head, 21/10/2019).

iv) Implementation – Implementation stage includes all the actions taken from the highest office down to the classroom to deliver the expected service so that implementation takes place. In most African countries, challenges are almost similar, which calls for governments to come up with new ideologies of implementing new or amended reforms to avoid these challenges and to improve implementation.

v) Evaluation – This can be done outside the school when various stakeholders and independent bodies check if the new or amended policy serves the purpose for which it was intended. Organisations such as UNESCO and the World Bank are constantly publishing reports on curricula of different countries. Inside the school, it is done through formal and informal assessments in the form of formative or summative assessment. Summative assessment at the end of the year are the ones used for evaluating whether a learner mastered the skills and knowledge to proceed to the next grade. Irregularities in any examination are by law in South Africa to be reported to authorities as a means to quality assure summative assessments at the end of the year.

### 2.2.5 Desirability for good curriculum

Education is an important investment because a country's future is dependent on current state of education and curriculum. Republic of South Africa in National Education Policy Act (NEPA) 27 of 1996 4(b) affirms this by stating that the Act *must direct the education system to enable full personal development of each student, and to the moral, social, cultural, political and economic development of the nation at large, including the advancement of democracy, human rights and the peaceful resolution of disputes.* This demonstrates the genuine value of education and its ability to shape the future of progressive countries.

Hadjar and Gross (2016:323) imply that good education systems that may produce world class future citizens are generally characterised by the following:

#### i) Creating equal opportunities

Good curricula should enable the creation of equal opportunities for all. The Bill of Rights in South African Constitution promotes equality for all citizens; hence one of the purposes of South African NCS curriculum is equipping learners irrespective of their socio-economic background, gender, race, physical ability, intellectual ability with knowledge, skills and values necessary for self-fulfilment and meaningful participation in society as citizens of a free country (DBE, 2011:4).

#### ii) Learning for life

A good curriculum must prepare its learners for future life as adults. This was echoed by Kruger 1980 in Carl (2017:80) stating that contents of any acceptable curriculum must be relevant and true to life, and must be able to be utilised in other areas or situations in life. More importantly, content knowledge must be practical to be used to solve challenges rather than learning for fun. NEPA 4 (e) directs that South African education must provide opportunities for and encouraging life-long learning. NEPA directed the South African curriculum to embrace learning for life as indicated above that one of the purpose of South

African curriculum is to prepare learners for meaningful participation in society. Learners today are the country's future adults and must be able to move the country forward by participating meaningfully in societies and in global stages to improve their country.

iii) Reacting to societal challenges in a proactive manner

Successful implementation of a good curriculum must ensure that learners as adults are proactive in reacting to challenges they may face as individuals, in their communities and in their country. Moreover, South African curriculum aims to produce learners who will identify and solve problems, and make decisions using critical and creative thinking, and to use science and technology effectively and critically showing responsibility towards the environment and the health of others (DBE, 2011:4).

iv) Interconnectedness

A good curriculum is characterised by integration of knowledge from other subjects and within the same subject in different grades. Kruger (1980) in Carl (2017: 80) alludes that a good curriculum must ensure meaningful connection between separate curriculum contents. Hence, one of the principles of NCS is progression where it states that content and context of each grade indicate progression from simple to complex (DBE, 2011:5). In CAPS documents, subjects consist of the same strands to be taught in different grades from simple in lower grades to complex as grades progresses.

v) Ensuring smooth transition into vocational training

One of the purposes of South African curriculum is to provide access to higher education and to facilitate the transition of learners from education institutions to workplace (DBE, 2011:4). In South Africa, Grade 9 is also an exit grade for those wishing to follow vocational and technical training. All content learned from previous grades ensures smooth transition to technical and vocational training. Countries with good curricula ensure that their learners



transition smoothly into vocational education and training, which prepares them for career and adult life. The smooth transitions enable them to cope well and to minimise dropouts.

Countries are unique with different needs, but with a common goal of wanting to respond to globalisation. When implementing curriculum, countries must strive to attain the aims and objectives of curriculum as stipulated by their respective countries. Attaining aims and objective will ensure that countries truly shape their future the way they desired it to be. The South African school curriculum seems to meet the standards when looking at studies suggesting characteristics of curriculum. However, it remains to be seen whether the aims and objectives of CAPS would be attained satisfactorily as the country had intended.

### **2.3 CURRICULUM IN GLOBAL CONTEXT**

Countries around the world are consistently revising and modifying their education systems in a bid to be relevant to societal needs and the dynamic world. Reforming curriculum in education is an occurrence being practised worldwide involved in striving for the best educational practices, primarily with the 21st century demands (Ruth & Ramada's, 2019:46). Countries around the world cannot afford to be left behind in producing future citizens who will be able to participate in improving their countries through curricula that are responsive to the 21st century and Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR). Hence, both developed and developing countries continually strive to be competitive in their education systems through betterment of school curricula and other education reforms. Some educational systems of different countries around the world, which are mostly ranked higher among world continents, such as the North America, Europe and Australia will be discussed next to give an overview of curriculum in global context.

### **2.3.1 North America**

The United States of America's (USA) education system is ranked among the best in the world, with implementation challenges that are dealt with on an ongoing basis in a bid to continuously improve the quality of the American education. Like many countries, the USA is continuously undertaking notable modification in education, especially K-12 curriculum setting (Aydin, Ozfidan & Carothers, and 2017:76). Different states and districts in the US are responsible for their education and education law. Every student succeed act (ESSA) was signed into law in 2015 which re-authorises Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), with its main objective stated as to hold all schools in the US accountable for how students in each respective school learn and achieve (US Department of Education, 2020). Education and academic achievement becomes very crucial in the US because it is part of legislation. Some of the goals of public education in the US is to prepare children for citizenship, to cultivate a skilled workforce, help students become critical thinkers and to help students compete in a global markets. Like any other country, implementing curriculum poses challenges such as demographic changes where racial and ethnic diversity is increasing and calls for changes in traditional instruction. Policy changes necessitate implementers to adapt and implement changes. Emerging new technologies which has an impact on how teachers teach and how learners learn; and globalisation which seems to be a challenge to all human life and social systems including education systems adds to the challenges of curriculum implementation (Aydin *et al.*, 2017:76).

### **2.3.2 Europe**

In Europe, all 28 countries have also revised and reformed their education and curricula during the last decade, and it is still ongoing, to include a set of competencies learners should master such as cross curricula, ethical and sustainability elements (Gray *et al.* 2018:vii). Finland, like all countries in Europe, reformed its national core curriculum at all levels of education; that is early childhood, pre-primary, basic (primary & lower secondary) and upper secondary (Halinen 2018:75). Finland is now ranked among the best countries with the best education system in world. Finland's curriculum is comprehensive and consistent throughout

the education system across all levels. Education in Finland is mainly learner-centred, advocating lifelong and life wide development of the whole and well-being of a child to improve their skills so that they may live and exist in a dependable way (Halinen 2018:76).

Denmark is also continuously reforming its education system with the aim of reducing dropouts of students in the vocational and training education (OECD 2014:4). Furthermore, Denmark organised their school day to introduce more optional and sports activities, and also provided more training for teachers and school leaders to improve the implementation of quality education.

Public schools system in Denmark is more decentralised, where funding to such schools is provided by municipalities. The government establishes goals and content to be taught and learned while all the municipalities manage their own overall quality of school and funding (OECD 2014:14).

The Joint Teaching Team oversees all educational issues in the European school system. A new structure for all syllabuses in the system clearly state the path that all schools should take concerning instructional developments including adopting a common structure for all the syllabuses (Gray *et al.* 2018: vii). Some of the challenges in European education as stated by Priestley and Phillippou (2018:152) include the politicisation and economisation in general and the curriculum in particular. This challenge is not unique to Europe, as all countries are experiencing this challenge where politicians interfere with education. The other challenge stated is conceptualisation of implementation. Conceptualising curriculum implementation will enable implementers to straighten out their thinking before they even start with the actual implementation, which will lead to more understanding of what one is expected to do.

### **2.3.3 Australia**

In Australia, Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Act of 2008 (ACARA Act) develops the curriculum at national level. The main purpose of Australian education is primarily to develop practical skills and strengthening productivity (utilisation); preparing learners to deal with the future (21<sup>st</sup> future learning); developing the schools (personalised learning) and critiquing society (equity and social justice).

Jurisdictions such as Australian Capital Territory and Northern Territory embraced the Australian Curriculum developed by ACARA and have not developed any curriculum in addition to the Australian Curriculum. Queensland uses the Australian Curriculum as a base, where educators develop their own teaching and learning programmes to respond to their learners' needs (Watt 2020: 108). Other jurisdictions such as South Wales, Victoria and Western Australia have adapted and incorporated some of the Australian curriculum into their own existing curriculum (Watt 2020:267).

Australian curriculum implementation also experience challenges. Watt (2020:61) indicates the challenges of uncertainty of who is responsible for implementation and monitoring and evaluation of implementation. Another challenge relates to costs of implementing and that schools and educators are not properly resourced for the new curriculum.

## **2.4 CURRICULUM IN AFRICAN CONTEXT**

Most countries in the African continents are classified as developing countries. Over the past decades, developing countries around the world have been investing funds in the improvement of their education (Mbiti 2016:109). Countries in Africa have also been involved in reforming their education to improve the quality of their education. In Africa, many countries adopted competency based curriculum (CBC) which is learner-centred and emphasises outcomes and summative evaluations with the main focus being the development of the entire individual (Ruth & Ramadas, 2019:47). This was in a bid to make their education to also impart skills that are necessary for adult and career life.

#### **2.4.1 North Africa Region**

In the North Africa region, countries such as Egypt offer free education at all levels for any state school and education is compulsory for nine academic years between the ages of four and 14. However, Kraft (2012:7) highlights that distribution of school resources is unbalanced, where socioeconomically disadvantaged students are further disadvantaged, and this affects curriculum implementation because of challenges such as lack of proper infrastructure. This is also echoed by Sobhy (2019:6) who argues that the systematic shortcomings of the Egyptian education system affects student attendance and learning, and their health and dignity. These challenges lead to overcrowding and multiple shifts schools which ultimately have a negative impact on curriculum implementation and improving the quality of education.

#### **2.4.2 East Africa Region**

According to Cheepto and Ramadas (2019:46), East Africa region has signed Africa Harmonisation Policies where countries adopted CBC. Tanzania as a country in the East Africa region also developed and adopted CBC because their training systems negatively affected the quality of graduates for the job market. Teachers are now implementing Outcomes Based Curriculum which supports learner-centred approach to help students acquire the important and required knowledge and skills, and to help the country improve their national examination quality of results (Ishemo 2021:59). Munisi, Werema and Namusonge (2021:39) assert that most public schools are already not performing well and have challenges in the national examination as supported by Ishemo (2021:59) who also indicated that specifically in Tanzania, the national performance of form four (Grade 11 in South Africa) students has been deteriorating for several years since the introduction of the new OBE curriculum. Challenges in implementing the new curriculum in Tanzania include misunderstandings of new curriculum, inadequate materials such as books and laboratories and weakness in school inspection (Ishemo 2021:59).

### **2.4.3 West Africa Region**

In the Western Africa region, Nigeria reformed its education to New Secondary School Curriculum, which aims to motivate all learners to attain their spiritual, intellectual and social potential as well as the relevance of learning in their daily lives (Fleisch *et al.* 2019:29). The New Secondary School Curriculum provides an organised link between the content to be taught and learned and for learning for future content and its broad goal is to prepare learners for higher education and for living usefully within the society (Ahmadi *et al.* 2015:32). However, Olayemi (2015:168) highlights that the Nigerian education system has left teachers uncertain of what happens next because the system itself has become rather clumsy and confusing. It is also believed the problems are systematic rather than the curriculum itself. Some of the challenges include lack of basic infrastructure and instructional material, among others.

### **2.4.4 Southern Africa Region**

In the Southern Africa region, Zimbabwe implemented the Two Pathway education curriculum in 2006. The curriculum offers a skills pathway in technical and vocational subjects and business/commercial subjects to cater for the interests, aptitude and demands of the student's world of work (Pedzisai, Tsvere & Mkhonde: 2014:159). Curriculum Framework for Primary and Secondary Education (CFFPASE) was later implemented in 2017, which is customised in a way that fosters self-sustaining skills for learners to enable them to be more competent in the world of work (Ngwenya 2020:163). Some of the challenges in implementation, among others, include inadequate resources, inadequate learning materials and inadequate and inappropriate infrastructure.

In Botswana secondary education, curriculum aims to help develop the learners' competency in Setswana and English as a way of improving the effectiveness of communication. The primary method of instruction in Botswana is teacher-centred approach with less emphasis on practical work. The Botswana school curriculum also enables their children to get a deeper understanding of their society, culture and patriotism. However, Makwinja (2017:49)

highlights that the quality of education in Botswana is still questionable despite government spending more money on it. Makwinja (2017:49) also indicates that school infrastructure in Botswana has improved over the past years, with many schools having adequate classrooms and furniture, but more can still be done particularly in technology and internet services availability.

Other African countries such as Ethiopia and Kenya in the East Africa region and Ghana in the West Africa region also reformed their education systems to CBC with the main aim of developing their much needed human capital to ensure that their countries respond well to the needs of their societies and the world. What is evident and similar in most African countries is the many challenges experienced in implementing the new reforms as pointed out by different scholars such as Fleisch *et al.* (2019:14,15,16,34); Kizito and Telesphore, 2019:30; Makunja, 2016:32; Pedzisai *et al.* 2014: 164; Ahmadi *et al.* 2015:34). Most countries in Africa are developing countries. Mbiti (2016:110) emphasises that many education systems in public schools in developing countries is marred by challenges of lack of or low levels of accountability in the system. According to Mbiti (2016:10), these challenges lead to further challenges of:

- High rates of teacher absenteeism – this relates to ample teaching and learning times wasted which affect implementation of curriculum.
- Leakage of financial transfers to school – this relates to wasteful and fruitless expenditures and corruption in finances that are meant to improve school resources, and this also affects the implementation processes because schools are under resourced.
- Ineffective school monitoring systems – This relates to understaffing especially in the provincial, districts offices and the schools. Understaffing can be a consequence of lack of funds or the leakage of such funds which ultimately affect how implementation will be monitored, or lack of proper skilled labour or monitoring systems.
- Poor parental engagement – This relates to the level of education of parents and families. Most developing countries are characterised by poverty and low levels of

education, and this influence how parents view education and the support and involvement in their children's education.

## **2.5 CURRICULUM IN SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT**

Curriculum delivery is the core function of all education departments in South Africa. Principals and educators on official capacity at public schools carry out this function of the state by delivering the official curriculum as directed by the state. Like other countries around the world, South Africa is constantly reforming its education quality to be at par with other countries to enable learners to compete in a global stage. The Department of Basic Education is responsible for quality basic education to South African citizens as mandated by the Constitution of the country.

South African school curriculum has also been evolving since the dawn of democracy. The apartheid era curriculum was characterised by inequity and racial discrimination, and did not respond to the diverse South African needs. This evolution is necessary to enable South African curriculum to produce learners who will be more responsive to global academic needs in the future and to respond to the contemporary needs of South African society. The curriculum had to be aligned to the Constitution of the country, and to ensure that it meet the new developmental requirement of the world's economy and technology. South Africa has seen the birth of Curriculum 2005 (C2005) in 1997 which was rooted in OBE. Fleisch *et al.* (2019:18) state that initial challenges such as insufficient resources, poor initial orientation of new approach and overly complicated terminology were experienced. Later, implementation challenges such as outcomes being open to different interpretation and OBE not addressing sequencing, progression and coherence of subject content surfaced. C2005 was later amended to Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) IN 2002. RNCS was not a new curriculum but a streamlining of C2005, which aimed to develop the full potential of learners as citizens in a democratic South Africa (DoE, 2004:2). RNCS was later amended to National Curriculum Statement (NCS) in 2009. To improve its implementation, NCS was amended in 2012 where subject statements, learning programme guidelines and subject assessment guidelines in Grades R to 12 were replaced by CAPS.



National Curriculum Statement (NCS) is at present the official curriculum currently implemented in all public schools in South Africa. CAPS is a revision of previous NCS where terminology such as learning outcomes and assessment standards in the NCS are now called content and skills in CAPS. DBE (2011:3) asserts that the NCS gives expression of knowledge, skills and values worth learning in South African schools. The NCS aims to ensure that children acquire and apply knowledge and skills in ways that are meaningful to their own lives (DBE, 2011:3). For educators, this new curricula emphasises greater professional autonomy and require of them to have new knowledge and applied competencies, which include the use of technologies and radical change in the demographic, cultural and linguistic composition of our classrooms (DoE, 2006).

The DBE indicates that NCS consists of three basic features; CAPS, National policy pertaining to the programme and promotion requirements of NCS Grades R-12 and National protocol for assessment Grade R-12.

CAPS is a single, comprehensive and concise document developed for all subjects in the NCS Grade R-12. It replaced the various policy documents such as Subject Statements, Learning Programme Guidelines and Subject Assessment Guidelines which were used previously (DBE 2017:3). CAPS explicitly outlines to educators what must be taught and assessed in each grade and on a subject by subject basis. The main aim of CAPS is to reduce the administrative burden of teachers and to ensure consistency and guidance for teachers when teaching (DBE, 2017:3). National policy pertaining to the programme and promotion requirements of the NCS Grade R-12 describes the number of subjects to be offered in each grade. This policy document also outlines the promotion requirements of the NCS. National protocol for Assessment Grades R-12 standardises the recording and reporting process for grades R-12 within the framework.

CAPS brought many meaningful changes in assessment methods, educator learner contact time and the new approaches and methods of teaching, which was much needed improvement from the previous curriculum. However, Maharaj, Nkosi and Mkhize (2016:372) point out that CAPS has been characterised by many challenges such as lack or

resources, lack of parental involvement, multiple interpretation of the curriculum, high workloads, inadequate monitoring and support and the shortage of subject specialists. These challenges must be addressed by government for effective implementation of new curriculum.

## **2.6. COMPARISON OF EDUCATION SYSTEMS**

Various studies on education systems and curriculum implementation of different countries have been discussed in the previous sections. From the studied countries, it was evident that all countries are continually modifying their education systems and school curriculum in a bid to ensure quality education for its citizens. Learner-centred teaching and learning approaches are mostly used by the studied countries in their education system, except Botswana which uses a teacher-centred approach. It was also noted that all countries experience challenges in curriculum implementation, however the challenges differ from one country to another. Table 2.1 will highlight the most important facts about education in countries that were discussed:

<b>COUNTRY</b>	<b>EDUCATION</b>	<b>IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES</b>
1. United States	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compulsory for all children</li> <li>• Free from Kindergarten to 12<sup>th</sup> grade (Age 5 -18)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emerging new technology impact implementation.</li> <li>• Demographic changes calls for new methods of implementation.</li> </ul>
Europe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finland offers compulsory and free for lower and secondary education.</li> <li>• Denmark offers compulsory and free education up to the age of 16</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Political interference in education.</li> <li>• Conceptualisation of implementation.</li> </ul>
Australia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education is compulsory to commence at the age of 6.</li> <li>• Education is mostly free but some schools charge “Voluntary Contribution”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uncertainty of who is responsible for implementation, monitoring and evaluation of implementation.</li> <li>• Costs of implementing.</li> <li>• Schools and educators not properly resourced for new curriculum implementation.</li> </ul>
North Africa Region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Egyptian education is compulsory and free for the first 9 years of schooling.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unbalanced distribution of school resources.</li> <li>• Overcrowding and multiple shifts schools.</li> </ul>
East Africa Region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tanzanian education is compulsory from 7 – 14 years,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Misunderstanding of new curriculum.</li> </ul>

	and education is free from primary to university.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inadequate teaching and learning materials.</li> <li>• Inadequate monitoring of implementation.</li> </ul>
West Africa Region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nigerian education is compulsory and free for primary school.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of basic infrastructure.</li> <li>• Lack of teaching and learning material.</li> </ul>
Southern Africa Region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Zimbabwe offers free and compulsory primary and secondary education.</li> <li>• Batswana education is also free and compulsory for primary and secondary school.</li> <li>• South African education is compulsory from 7 -15 years, which is grade 1 to grade 9.</li> <li>• South African education is not entirely free, with fee-paying and non-fee paying public schools.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inadequate resources.</li> <li>• Inadequate teaching and learning materials.</li> <li>• Inadequate and inappropriate infrastructure.</li> </ul>

*Table 2.1 Education in different countries.*

## **2.7 ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN LIMPOPO PROVINCE**

Academic performance means formulated outcomes, a component of measurement of these outcomes that organisations achieve during one particular period and the application of intelligence generated from the measurement (Rehman, Biscchoff & Botha, and 2019:6). Learners are said to perform academically when they are able to demonstrate their intellectual abilities on what they have learned during assessment. Each content being taught to any grade have objectives and outcomes. So, academic performance is measured through assessment to check if the objectives and outcomes have been achieved.

Academic performance of schools in South Africa is mostly gauged by national senior certificate (NSC) results. Sethusha (2015:53) alludes that in South Africa the NSC, commonly referred to as “matric” or “grade 12”, aims to measure learner competencies expected to be mastered over 12 years of schooling. Therefore, school academic performance is measured by learner performances, where formal and informal assessments and end of year results are able to give a picture of whether learners mastered the curriculum or not.

It is important that individuals become successful in their academics drive because it is strongly linked to the positive outcomes that society values (Reiger 2011:1). When learners at a school academically perform exceptionally, the educators and the school will also be able to take the credit. Good performance by schools also makes communities where schools are based more proud and parents want to put extra effort to support the school. Learners from surrounding areas and from far would want to attend the school and be associated with it. Teachers and other staff members also want to work and be associated with good performing schools. Hence, good performing schools attract bright learners and progressive parents, while in the interim attracts good human resource.

Limpopo Province is demarcated into five district municipalities with ten education districts that boasts 1 338 secondary schools. Limpopo Province consists of mostly rural areas with minimal economic activities; hence it is one of the poorest provinces in South Africa, together with the Eastern Cape. Limpopo Province is among the bottom worst performing provinces in the NSC results, together with the Eastern Cape Province. In 2018, the province was position nine out of the nine provinces with an overall percentage of 69, 5%. In 2019, the province improves by recording 73, 2% pass rate. It is important to note that in 2019 NCS results, of the top 33 matriculants in South Africa, the highest number of top achievers was from Limpopo with nine top achievers. The MEC for Education in Limpopo, in her 2019 matric results announcement, indicated that she believes the province did well compared to other provinces because large numbers of diploma and bachelor passes were produced by Limpopo Province.

The circuit under investigation falls under Mopani District Municipality. Mopani District has been divided into two education districts to ease administration, Mopani East and Mopani West. Mopani West consists of 114 secondary schools in 13 circuits. Nkowankowa Circuit is one of the 13 circuits in Mopani West. The circuit is made up of eight public secondary schools, as mentioned in Chapter 1.

Nkowankowa Circuit NSC performance comprises a combination of underperforming schools and high achievers in the education district and province. From their schools, two schools underperformed in the 2019 NSC results with 42, 3 % and 45, 5%. Three schools improved their results compared to the 2018 results. All three schools also improved their quality of results in terms of diploma and bachelor passes. It is, however, important to note that of the five schools whose results dropped compared to 2018 results, one school managed to improve the quality of their results in terms of diploma and bachelor passes. It was also noted that one school is on a decline in terms of performance when comparing the last three years results. The school had 75.0% in 2017, 63.6% in 2018 and 2019 it underperformed with 45.5%. The best performing school had 84.5% and the least performing school had 42.3%. This discrepancy in pass percentages of schools located in the same area is seen as a problem and the problem prompted the researcher to study educators' perspectives on curriculum implementation.

From the foregoing statistics, it is evident that there are schools in Limpopo Province and in Nkowankowa Circuit in particular, that are implementing curriculum in a manner that enables objectives of curriculum policy to be achieved. It is interesting to observe that schools that are in the same area, almost constituted the same with more or less similar resources, and are at an advantage of sharing resources, and which attend extra classes together during weekend and recess, can perform differently.

## **2.8 CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION**

### **2.8.1 Requirements for curriculum implementation at school**

The real measure of successful curriculum implementation is largely determined by the quality of planning, design and dissemination (Carl 2009:134). For planning, design and disseminations to bring success, the following requirements are essential to enable institutions to achieve optimal outputs:

#### **i) Human resources**

It is understood that teachers are the implementing agents of the curriculum and that implementation cannot take place without learners (Chaudhary 2015:984). It is equally important to know that other human resources inside and outside the school, other than the teacher and the learner play a pivotal role in curriculum implementation. Human resources at school level include everyone from the principal, deputy principal, departmental heads, school management teams, subject heads, educators and subject committees, who are involved in the curriculum. Maphalala and Mpofu (2018:65) argue that for curriculum implementation to be a success, professional development is a must to promote a deeper understanding of curriculum theory and practice. Training of human resources responsible for implementing curriculum in institutions becomes a necessity for the meaningful and successful implementation of change.

#### **ii) Learner Teacher Support Material (LTSM)**

Without LTSM, it will be a challenge to implement the curriculum effectively. Teachers use materials to enhance their teaching and to stimulate learning. Materials should be alluring in terms of appearance, user friendly and durable (Kumar, 2017). This will ensure that learners will readily accept it and use it to achieve the goals and objectives of curriculum. LTSM is crucial for both teachers and learners. Furthermore, educators must also have access to

research other LTSM that will be able to enhance their teaching so that learners grasp the concepts with ease.

In Limpopo Province, it is the responsibility of the province, through districts to provide textbooks and worksheets to schools. A catalogue with titles of books for specific subjects and grades is sent to schools. Subject teachers can only choose textbooks for their subjects from the list provided by the province. However, this makes teachers not to be completely in charge of how they want to best implement curriculum in their respective classes. In reality, certain textbooks and authors are able to present certain subject content better and simpler for learners to comprehend than other textbooks and authors. It is, however, unfortunate that teachers do not have complete autonomy in choosing the best books for their learners, and this may have an impact on curriculum implementation.

### iii) Physical resources

There is a link between the physical environment learners are taught in and the teaching and learning effectiveness, as well as learning outcomes as stated in the national policy for an equitable provision of enabling teaching and learning environment P7 (1.2) (Government Gazette 33283 of 2010). This is backed by the Eastern Cape Department of Education in their infrastructure plan 2005-2014 par 2.1.2 where they state that a consequence of poor infrastructure is an environment that does not promote effective teaching and learning. Furthermore, Godstime and Amachi (2019:80) concur that physical resources are essential aspects of education and a very crucial determinant of learner performance in the process of teaching and learning. Effective teaching and learning should take place in an environment which is well suited to facilitate learning. Facilities such as all types of buildings utilised for academic and non-academic activities in schools, including furniture, ablution facilities, storage facilities etc. are very essential for effective implantation of curriculum (Amadi & Ezeugo, 2019:14).

In South African public schools, physical resources are provided by the national and provincial governments. South African School Act 1996 no.84 gazetted regulations relating



to minimum norms and standards for public school infrastructure (Gazette 37081 (3) 2013). The main objective of the regulation was to provide minimum uniform norms and standards for public school infrastructure and to ensure compliance and to provide time frames for eradication of these backlogs. However, schools are still without proper or adequate physical resources and this affect curriculum implementation.

### **2.8.2 Curriculum implementers outside the school**

Many role players inside and outside the school make it possible for curriculum policy to be implemented. Key players are the teacher and the learner. All other stakeholders may put all stops in terms of resources, and everything required for implementation but without the teacher teaching and the learner learning, curriculum implementation will not happen. For teachers to ultimately implement curriculum effectively, there are other role players outside the schools, such as the national and provincial education department and district and circuit offices which play a very pivotal role in curriculum implementation, and if they do not play their role, implementation will not happen.

It is, however, important to note the limiting factors that all spheres of education in the country encounter, as mentioned in Government Gazette no 36324 (3) of 2013 clause 13.1 which stipulates that delegated authority, roles and responsibilities of these spheres are at times not clearly formulated, understood and exercised. All of these spheres are very important and play vital roles in ensuring successful implementation of curriculum. However, because schools are at a bottom of the chain and deal with all these challenges, at times schools get confused as to who or where to look for support and to account to.

#### **i) National offices**

The national DBE oversees the education system in South Africa. Moreover, the DBE deals with all schools in the country from Grade R to 12, including adult basic education. Its main aim is to develop, maintain and support a South African school education system for the 21st century (DBE, 2019). Their strategic outcome oriented goal is improved quality of basic

education by among others, improving the quality of teaching and learning by improving teacher capacity and practices, and by increasing access to high quality learning material. Improved quality of basic education is also achieved by undertaking regular assessment to tracking progress by establishing a world-class system of standardised national assessment and by extracting lessons from ongoing participation in international assessment. The DBE is the umbrella for all provinces and is the main source of funding for provincial education departments.

#### ii) Provincial offices

Provincial education departments (PED) oversee all schools in their respective provinces. Limpopo Department of Education (LDoE) oversees all schools in the province by providing funding to run them. LDoE also provides school infrastructure and furniture, staffing, LTSM among others, as a means of supporting and providing good quality teaching and learning in its schools. Provincial curriculum support teams made up of curriculum specialists also provide annual teaching plans and pace setters to schools in the province so as to track and monitor progress of curriculum implementation by respective districts, circuits and ultimately schools.

#### iii) District and circuit offices

District offices are the official link between PED and their respective schools through circuit. Districts are management sub-units of PED and they are responsible for basic education institutions in their districts by ensuring that all learners have access to education of progressively high quality (RSA GG 36324(3) :1). Districts' main role is to work interactively with school principals and educators with the vital assistance of circuit managers. They also improve educational access and retention, give management and professional support and help schools achieve excellence in learning and teaching by planning, support, oversight and accountability and public engagements.

It is important to note that district offices mostly perform their duties to schools through the circuit offices, but sometimes deal directly with schools without going through the circuit office. Pertaining to curriculum matters, district offices consist of different teams to support education, and among these teams a District Support Team (DST) exists. DST oversees issues of curriculum in its district and its core function are stated by RSA in GG 36324(3) clause 50.1. The core functions include informing schools about the national and provincial policies and assisting schools to implement these policies appropriately. DSTs manage curriculum support including consultation with and advice to teachers, facilitating inclusive education and reporting on school visits. DSTs also promote and organise provision of professional development of educators in cooperation with South African Council of Educators (SACE), and ensure correct and timeous provision of LTSM.

Education districts in Limpopo have district curriculum support teams (DCSTs), which are made up of different subject specialists for both primary and secondary schooling. However, the geographical distribution of schools in Limpopo in general and Mopani District in particular does not make it easy for the specialists to service schools regularly as required. Therefore, one concludes that even though more specialists are constantly hired, more subject specialists are still needed to ensure schools receive the necessary support required for effective and efficient curriculum implementation.

It is, however, important to note the limiting factors, as stated by RSA in GG 36324(3) clause 13.1 and 13.2 that have an effect on how district offices assist in effective curriculum implementation. It is stated in the Gazette that some education districts are responsible for too many schools and this hinders them to provide effective services to them. Limpopo Province had five education districts at first, but were later divided again into ten districts, but the number of schools per district is still a challenge because effective monitoring is not possible in some instances. Another challenge is that delegated authority, roles and lines of accountability are not clearly formulated and understood, and this causes challenges in terms of accountability and relationships.

Circuit offices are field offices for the district and are headed by circuit managers and it is the closest point of contact between schools, district office and provincial office. Principals depend on circuits for information, administrative services and professional support. RSA in GG 36324(3) clause 59 indicates that circuit managers have a special responsibility to advise and support schools that are underperforming and mostly in need of its services. The Gazette further indicates that circuit offices have subject specialists for primary school phase and support to Grade R and primary grade teachers. Circuit offices also facilitate visits of specialist district teams to secondary schools.

The circuit under investigation, Nkowankowa Circuit, also has a circuit manager who execute duties according to legislation, rules and regulations. The circuit has primary and secondary school subject specialists accommodated in their offices. However, the specialists report to the district as far as discharging their duties, and the circuit manager has to request their services through the district office when the need arises.

#### iv) Families, parents and school governing bodies (SGB)

Parents and families form an important part of rearing children and have an important role to play in children's education. Parents and families are the ones who take the responsibility of enrolling their children at schools for teaching and learning. Furthermore, parents and families involvement in the education of their children is a requirement for effective curriculum implementation (Eyiuche, 2014:42). This is echoed by Segoe and Bischoff (2019:166) when they allude that parents and families who play a major role in their children's education are contributing to the fundamental fact of improving high learner performance, especially in disadvantaged communities. This means that parents who are actively involved in the education of their children contribute to their educational achievements and development.

Families and parental involvement does not benefit learners only, but Segoe and Bisschoff (2019:167) argue that active parental involvement helps the school because learners' attitudes towards education are improved, parent teacher relations are also improved, learners

are motivated to do good in all aspects of the school and towards one another and that parents are interested and interact with their children's performance. Parental involvement will not only improve children's attitudes, morale and performance but it also helps in encouraging and fostering good behaviour and ensure good social adjustments in children (Eyiuche 2014:42). It becomes a fact that parental involvement in the education of their children cannot be underestimated as it plays an important role in the smooth running of the school, which will ensure effective implementation and improvement in academic performance.

It is the responsibility of schools to ensure that parents and families are involved in the education of their children by initiating partnerships and establishing shared relationships to strengthen their children's success and the education system as a whole (Durisic & Bunijevac 2017:137). For parental involvement to be active and successful, it is important to ensure that parents view this relationship as a collaboration and cooperation between themselves and the school and educators. This will strengthen the quality of education as well as curriculum matters of their children in particular and the school and the education system in general.

McNeal (2014:567) points out two forms of parental involvement, which can assist in boosting academic performance of learners and schools, Parent-Child involvement and Parent- School Involvement.

*Parent-Child Involvement* can be in the form of parent-child discussions and parental monitoring. Parent-child discussions involve parents taking an interest in whatever happens at their children's schools by asking what the school day was and discussing school topics with their children. By doing so, the importance of school is conveyed to children who will believe that school is also important to their parents, and this will help to modify students' attitudes and behaviours positively which will ultimately improve academic performance of children and school (McNeal 2014:557).

*Parental Monitoring* involves the manner in which parents are deliberately involved in their children's lives by making sure their schoolwork is completed and up to date and to know

where they are at any given point. Parental monitoring enables strengthening and endorsing sensible behaviours and discouraging and dealing with non-desirable behaviours, which will mould students' attitudes and behaviours to do well at school and improve their performance (McNeal 2014:566).

McNeal (2014:143) identified three determining factors that can enhance or reduce parental involvement; that is, parental aspirations, parenting self-efficacy and perceptions of the school. Parental aspirations refer to how parents would like their children's future to be, that is parents' desires and ambitions for their children's future and all the efforts they put to help their children attain them. Conversely, parents and families with no aspirations for their children will find it hard to support, be involved and discuss their children's education. Parents and families need to have positive aspirations for their children by supporting their education and this will help to enhance their academic performance, which will be beneficial for schools and education systems.

Parental self-efficacy refers to parents' beliefs and attitudes to their children's abilities and capabilities to do good and achieve what is expected of them (McNeal 2014:143). Confident parents will most likely boost their children's self-esteem and encourage and motivate them to do good in everything including their education. More importantly, it is imperative that parents have a positive attitude and beliefs towards education and success so that they can be able to view their children's education and future in a positive way to enable them to take a liking and support them to succeed in life.

How the parents perceive the school also plays a vital role on how parents will be involved in their children's education. Schools need to create a warm atmosphere and culture that welcomes parents to be in partnership with the school to tackle educational issues. Teachers must be interested by showing respect to parents and care for children and establish an open communication channel with parents to help set the tone for parental involvement. Therefore, it is important for parents to have good perceptions about their children's schools and education so that they can easily become involved in their education.

RSA in South African Schools Act (SASA) 84 of 1996 mandates parents and communities to be actively involved in education by working together with educators and schools to improve the quality of education. This can be done through formal structures at school called School Governing Body (SGB) where parents' representatives hold the majority membership. SGBs play an important role of governance and supporting all activities of the school so that effective teaching and learning can take place, to improve the quality of education of a South African child. Among others, the function of the SGB as provided by RSA's SASA 84 of 1996 20(1a) is: *Promoting the best interest of the school to ensure its development through the provision of quality education for all learners at the school*

Schools are educational centres and they are a place where curriculum is implemented in class through the process of teaching and learning. The best interest of schools would include effective curriculum implementation through active teaching and learning and ensuring that all the activities that support teaching and learning are running smoothly. It is important that SGBs ensure that they develop, implement, monitor and evaluate policies and rules that will guide, manage and conduct all activities of the school community (Bayat *et al.* 2014:354). By so doing, the SGB will have made sure that all school activities are running smoothly and this will lay a good base for effective curriculum implementation which will at the end improve academic performance of learners and schools.

Another function of SGB as stipulated by RSA's SASA 84 of 1996 clause 20(d) is to *adopt a code of conduct for learners at the school*. A code of conduct for schools consists of all the rules, values, beliefs and principles that all members of the school should abide by. It helps with discipline for all members and by adopting the code of conduct. More importantly, SGBs ensure that the activities of the school take place without hindrances of having to attend to undisciplined learners and staff, which could be time consuming and wasting the much needed time for teaching and learning. Furthermore, Lumadi (2019:45) stresses that schools that have well-disciplined and well-mannered learners have a strong possibility of producing better results and improving on their academic performance.

RSA's SASA 84 of 1996 Section 20 (e) also states: *SGBs of a public school must support the principal, educators and other staff of the school in the performance of their professional functions.* The main role of educators is teaching their subjects. Teaching takes place in schools where there are other staff members teaching other subjects. All staff members at school must support the activities of teaching and learning and curriculum implementation. All activities carried out by different staff members at a school are meant to enhance teaching and learning and to enable effective and efficient implementation of curriculum to improve the quality of education for learners. Accordingly, SGBs have a vital role of availing all forms of support to all staff for smooth implementation of all reforms.

However, Bayat *et al.* (2014:354) highlight that lack of necessary skills and knowledge among SGB members, especially in poorer communities with fewer resources, makes it difficult for SGBs to perform their duties of ensuring quality education properly. This result in unskilled and unknowledgeable SGBs who are constituted as a matter of compliance to legislation, but rendering them useless in improving the quality of education and academic performance. This denotes that SGB roles will not be performed as expected and that will affect the actual teaching and learning which will in turn affect the academic performances of such schools.

#### v) Teacher unions

The Constitution of South Africa chapter 2 (23) and RSA's Labour Relations Act (LRA) 66 of 1995 chapter 11 provides for trade unions and gives educators freedom of association to form, join and participate in trade or federations of their choice. These unions also represent their members at formal structures of government. The state alone will not be able to achieve everything in the education system without the support of these trade unions through teacher unions and federations (Mafisa 2017:10553). As a result, teacher unions in South Africa play a significant role of helping the state to improve the quality of education.

Teacher unions are constituted to support and help the state with among other functions, to engage educators in improving approaches to ensure quality education and high standards.



Unions are also well equipped to play a worthwhile and significant role in ensuring that new reforms meant to improve the quality of education are implemented at schools (Mafisa 2017:10556). Bascia (2015:2) points out that in the democratic era in South Africa, teacher unions play a vital role of defending the public education, especially the education of the previously disadvantaged communities. An example will be during the COVID-19 era when private schools and former model C schools wanted to push that they continue with lessons because they already had the necessary resources and capacity. However, unions were quick to defend disadvantaged schools and learners and pointing out that all learners are equal and should be treated as such. Moreover, curriculum implementation in those advantaged schools would have proceeded smoothly, giving them advantage to improve their academic performance while the disadvantaged communities would have been doomed and this would have affected them later in life.

### **2.8.3 The school as an ultimate curriculum implementer**

Schools are the main ground where curriculum is implemented by educators in the classroom to the learners by means of teaching and learning. Tus (2020:23) views schools as a training ground where individuals are shaped through their psychological, emotional, spiritual and all other aspects that mould them to be responsible adults. More importantly, schools assist learners as individuals to develop their hidden abilities and to strengthen their skills through the process of learning to prepare them for adult life. All these developments on a learner can be achieved when schools offer them quality and competitive education that fosters them to perform well in their academics.

Mathaba, Dorosamy and Parker (2014:50) confirm that for any state that wishes to achieve quality education, quality schooling and quality management, there needs to be quality assurance systems in place which will serve as monitoring tools to ensure that effective teaching and learning do take place and that indeed learners' academic performances are improving. Whole School Evaluation (WSE) and School Improvement Plans (SIPs) are some of the policies that the DBE uses to quality assure its public schools and ensure that quality education is being provided on a daily basis.

i) Whole School Evaluation (WSE)

WSE is mandated by RSA's Education White Paper of 1995, RSA's South African Qualification Authority Act (SAQA) of 1995, RSA's National Education Policy Act (NEPA) of 1998 and RSA's Further Education and Training Policy Act 98 of 1998. According to the DBE (2015), WSE is a system which is used to quality assure public schools and enables schools and external supervisors to account for the performance of the schools. Its main aim is to improve the overall quality of education and improve academic performance of schools. WSE increases accountability in the education system by ensuring that all learners are given opportunities to utilise their abilities at best.

WSE has two parts, the external evaluations conducted by stakeholders outside the school and the school self-evaluation. School self-school evaluation is done by all stakeholders inside the school and it is developed at the end of the year to be implemented at the beginning of the following year. Schools must report on their school self-evaluation on a quarterly basis while external evaluations are scheduled periodically for verifications.

The School Self-Evaluation targets nine areas that support and will improve curriculum if they are carried out as expected.

(a) *Basic Functionality* aims to evaluate how effective and efficient schools function to realise their educational and social goals by checking attendance registers of both learners and teachers in terms of school and class attendance and late coming. Leave records, year plans for the school and availability of school policies give an idea of whether schools are achieving basic functionality towards curriculum implementation and ensuring quality education.

(b) *Quality of teaching, learning and education development* aims to evaluate teaching and learning quality and how schools promote educator development. Curriculum policies, subject policies, curriculum coverage, audit of written works and all other aspects of

curriculum implementation and educator development such as Quality Management Systems (QMS) are scrutinised to assess whether quality education is given to learners.

(c) *Learner achievement* aims to evaluate the academic achievements of learners as well as their extra and co-curricular activities by focusing on school based assessments and overall school assessment including promotional scheduled and matric results for the past three years.

(d) *Leadership, management and communication* are meant to evaluate how effective the leadership is and how communication is managed because these have a bearing on motivating staff and learners to improved achievements. Communication channels and minutes of meetings including duty list of educators are also examined.

(e) *Curriculum provision and resources* aim at checking whether schools have curriculum and enrichment classes and the extent to which it improves performance of schools to improve aims and objectives of the education system. Time tabling and compliance to curriculum policies as well as records of LTSM and its policies and other resources are evaluated to check if they are utilised correctly to enhance teaching and learning

(f) *Governance and relationships* look at the effectiveness of SGBs in fulfilling its roles and responsibilities by evaluating all policies and minutes of meetings of the SGB and its functionality.

(g) *School, safety, security and discipline* evaluate the level of security and how safe and healthy the school environments are by looking at health and safety policies, code of conduct for learners, gate control and incidents registers, among other things.

(h) *School infrastructure* looks at the availability and maintenance by evaluating maintenance policies and availability of school furniture for learners and educators.

(i) *Parents and community* evaluate the extent to which schools encourage parental and community involvement in the education of their children by checking minutes of parent meetings, correspondences and acknowledgement letter.

#### ii) School Improvement Plans (SIP)

School improvement plans are mandated by WSE Policy, and schools are now expected to produce their SIPs since the 2018 academic year (DBE, 2015). SIPs are processes which enable schools to set goals for improving the quality of education in their schools and to make decisions on how and when the set goals will be achieved by individual schools. The purpose of SIP, according to DBE (2015), is to prepare and give learners quality education by ensuring that schools have plans that define their targeted work to improve and raise achievement levels of all its learners, which will improve the overall performance of the country and ensure quality education for all.

The DBE (2015) indicates that literature suggests that as many as two thirds of the SIPs developed by schools do not give rise to improved performance because of three main reasons. Plans are not specific and detailed as a result; schools are unclear of what is expected to be done by them. Another challenge is that plans are not result oriented and leave schools not knowing what would happen as a result of such activity. The last challenge is that these plans are not monitored in terms of who must do what and when to implement.

#### iii) School culture

Culture can be defined as how all people with similar knowledge and principles in a specific organisation or society conduct themselves (Van der Westhuyzen 2013:121). Schools have their own ways of doing things which they build up through time called culture and this culture is responsible for promoting the ability of its learners to learn (Tus 2020:23). Culture and ideology of the whole school community have an influence on curriculum implementation and performance. It is important for schools to create warm climate and culture that is conducive for effective teaching and learning. Moreover, warm school

climates have a positive influence on all its members and it ensures that school environment be a caring and trusting one. Tus (2020:23) comments that schools that have uninviting climate and culture have a negative impact on improving academic performance, and these schools are likely to dampen motivation to teach and learn for both learners and educators. Moreover, schools that are not motivating teaching and learning will in most cases not improve in their academic performance because curriculum implementation will be greatly affected.

Van der Westhuyzen (2013:128) indicates that culture is made up of different aspects, and it is important for all members of the organisation to have a common understanding and viewpoint of these different aspects.

*(a) Beliefs:* Members of a group must have a common view of the world and reality, and the principles they live by. This will strengthen the team because they will all value the importance of quality education, as a result put more effort in achieving it.

*(b) Philosophy:* Common philosophies are necessary for members of the team to build a specific culture of their organisation. It is important for all members of a school to have a common viewpoint of problems concerning the world and how they view the world.

*(c) Vision and Mission:* Schools have visions and missions which are statements that describe and indicate what schools need to achieve as well as their direction and purpose. It is important for all members to own and embrace their vision and mission so that any little activity that members embark on contribute to realising the vision and mission of the school, and this will strengthen the school culture.

*(d) Aims, objective and goals:* Van der Westhuyzen (2013:130) indicates that aims are general statements while objectives are specific statements which guide schools to achieve their outcomes and also underscore the importance of all members to have common aims, objectives and goals so that they work together as a team towards achieving them.

(e) *Ethos* – The school image must be representative of its members. It is also crucial for all members to have common prevailing tendencies and attitudes that will mark their culture. Common appropriate behaviours that are unique to a specific school will enable school culture identifiable and if these tendencies and attitudes are warm and welcoming, then the members would have succeeded in creating inviting culture which will enable all members to work together towards a common purpose.

Deal and Peterson (2016:14) point out the importance of good school culture. Culture affects all aspects of school effectiveness of productivity; hence, schools with warm culture are more likely to achieve more in everything they do, including extramural activities, because these schools value each, and every member and support them in everything they do. School culture improves collegiality and communication. Teamwork and collegiality are very important in any organisation, including the school. It is important to have strong teams with open communication channels where members respect other people's viewpoint. This will enable good communication and minimise conflict.

Deal and Peterson (2016:14) further indicate that good school culture builds commitment and motivation. Inviting school climate will enable positive school culture which will boost commitment levels of all members, including staff and learners. Good teams have common purpose and goals which make them want to put more effort in whatever they do so that the shared goals can be achieved by all. Good culture focuses attention on what is important and valued. Good atmosphere and culture of the school have common values. Moreover, shared values ensure that all members of a teamwork work in unison to attain the set goals and objectives of the organisation and in that way improve their productivity and effectiveness.

## 2.9 ROLES OF CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTERS AT SCHOOL

### 2.9.1 The principal

#### i) Management of change in schools

As indicated, change is inevitable and the curriculum will continually be amended, improved or changed to adapt to the changing world. The process and management of change needs thorough understanding to avoid implementers resisting change. Van der Westhuizen *et al.* (2013:192) indicate that the principal is the key figure around which much of the school's activities revolve, to a greater extent determines the school's successes and failures when change is implemented. The principal must manage change in a way that it will bear the anticipated results taking into consideration factors that may affect the school community as de Bruyn, Erasmus, Janson, Mentz, Meyer, Steyn, Theron, Van Vuuren, Van der Vyver and Xaba (2013:192) consider them a pre-requisite for effective management of change.

The degree to which the entire school community from support staff, educators and learners will be affected by the anticipated change, their awareness and supportiveness to the vision driving the change and its intended consequences must be thoroughly dealt with. All individuals to be affected by change must be well prepared and fully aware of what to expect for them to welcome change positively (Goncalves & Goncalves, 2012: 217).

The climate of change must exist in schools before change takes place. Principals must be supportive and work hard to create a pleasant and motivating working environment (Yilmaz & Kilicoglu 2013:19). Of importance is that principals must ensure that their staff are motivated, have a common vision and look towards the future so that when change is introduced, the entire school community will readily accept any change, and see change as a tool to improve the quality of teaching and learning, and as a tool that will improve their school's academic performance.

The principal as the main manager and a change agent has responsibilities that must be embraced and accepted for successful change. Dull in De Bruyn *et al.* (2013: 198) asserts

that determining the objectives of the proposed change is important. More importantly, determining objectives will help in evaluation phase to ascertain whether the change was a success or not. Principals also need to determine procedures and methods for implementing change. These procedures and methods must be communicated and understood thoroughly by all participants for change to be a success. Reviewing literature on the proposed change will help and prepare everyone for future challenges and how to deal with such challenges should they happen. It will also give people ideas of whether the change is doable or not.

Lastly, if the change is not an overall change for the entire system, but for individual schools, it is important that principals wanting to introduce change must learn from others who have already undergone the proposed change to learn as much as possible and to avoid or manage future challenges that may have been experienced. This will also help the principal to be fully prepared and to know what to expect, and this will help in preparing the entire school community for the anticipated change.

#### ii) Management of curriculum implementation in school

The principal plays a critical role in the success of curriculum implementation (Ornstein & Hunkins 2018:280). The principal is the senior curriculum manager at a school and chairs SMT meetings where curriculum management issues are addressed (Khumalo, 2014:36). The role of the principal, among others, is managing curriculum and leading curriculum delivery, leading planning and implementation of the curriculum through curriculum structures (DoE 2010:19).

A pleasant safe caring and productive workplace tend to stimulate people to put extra effort in their work and enable maximum performance, which tend to make institutions achieve higher. The principal, as the head driver of the institution, is the one responsible for minimising or maximising teacher effectiveness in schools. Principals need to be inspiring leaders who are able to positively influence team members to work hard towards attainment of set goals. According to Selig, Grooms, Arroyo, Kelly, Koonce and Clark (2016:3), good principals ought to be proactive in enabling and managing curriculum implementation.



Principals must lead from the front by showing commitment to abide by the principles of the organisation, but they must also balance these responsibilities by care and concern for others so that a win-win climate for everyone concerned is cultivated. Educators will likely accept changes being implemented because they see that the leader is proactive and wants these changes to be successful and this may motivate educators and learners to work harder.

According to Selig *et al* (2016:3), principals must model humility by allowing teachers to be creative and take risks. This can happen when the principals recognise their own humility by admitting their mistakes and seeing other staff members' mistakes as a learning curve. A leader who models humility tends to intrinsically motivate people around them to want to do more and be willing to take calculated risks that will enable them to perform better and produce best results. Principals must at all times exemplify trustworthiness. They need to be trusted by following through on what they say and being honest with others even in most difficult situations. Educators must be made to feel that the principal will always be there for them even in most challenging circumstances. As a result, principals must accept if they are experiencing challenges so that the whole team can help with ideas of how to overcome such challenges. This will help in building a strong team that is ready to improve their performance.

Principals who offer genuine encouragement focus on positives and constantly look for opportunities to celebrate their teachers' successes. It is important that principals praise their teachers to build their confidence and self-esteem so that they can achieve more success in their daily discharge of their duties. Encouraging educators positively will enable them to do better at whatever they do, and teachers will always be willing to add value to the school and this will improve how they perform their official duties.

Maintaining a sense of perspective at all times is important for all principals (Selig *et al* 2016:3). Principals need not only consider their own perspective, but consider other's perspectives, listen and hear them to increase confidence in teachers. This will enable staff to make sacrifices where they normally would not make such. Staff will not be afraid to suggest ideas that will help improve the performance of the school. Principals ought to be

respectful towards everyone so that they can earn respect from fellow teachers. Respect does not come with their position but is earned by how they treat others. Teachers who feel respected will also respect their work and always try to go an extra mile to also earn respect from their superiors.

Having inspiring principals with the above characteristics will foster good school climate and culture tone where everything and everyone will be willing to work very hard, even if other challenges may be present. Everyone concerned will be pulling their weight to ensure that their schools are among the top achievers.

### **2.9.2 School Management Teams**

School Management Teams (SMTs) are teams that comprises the principal, deputy principal, departmental heads and education specialist and varies according to the size of the school and collaborates with other school structures such as subject or learning area committees etc. to create an enabling framework for teaching and managing curriculum (Khumalo, 2014:35). Because curriculum developers are not based at school level, SMTs must work closely with subject educators to help them make meaning and contextualise the curriculum if there is a need, and to provide resources for better implementation. Furthermore, SMTs are not only responsible for implementation; they are also responsible for interpretation and resourcing of the curriculum on a regular basis (Maphalala & Mpofu 2018:57).

The deputy principal forms part of SMT. RSA's Employment of Educators Act (EEA) 77 of 1998 stipulates that the deputy principal is responsible for curriculum and pedagogy, like choice of textbooks, coordinates the work of subject committees and groups, timetabling, in-service-training and development programmes, and arranging teaching practice. Besides the mentioned responsibilities, it must be borne in mind that the deputy principal is second in charge of the school, and act as a principal when delegated or when the principal is not present. This implies that every role that the principal plays the deputy principal plays it too.

Departmental heads are supervisors who provide direction and guidance and ensure that teachers have the skills to carry out the change (Ornstein & Hunkins 2018:279). Few popular ways for departmental heads to support teaching and learning include classroom observation, demonstration teaching, supervisor-teacher conference and staff development meetings. If departmental heads are effective, teachers are likely to commit to and feel comfortable with the programme being implemented.

SMTs as curriculum managers have important roles and responsibilities to play at schools to enable the success of curriculum implementation. SMTs, with the principal as the head, must also help create a positive climate and culture. They must also be able to provide resources that will aid teaching and learning. Besides the mentioned roles, SMTs also have to play the following roles and responsibilities to enable successful curriculum implementation:

i) Monitoring role

Early scholars have highlighted the importance of monitoring by indicating that schools and districts should monitor the conditions of instructions, the curriculum and instructional practices of teachers to ascertain if students are indeed exposed to teaching and learning that will qualify them to achieve standards and objectives set (Elmore & Rothman 1999:5). In the same vein, Maphalala and Mpofu (2018:66) concur that one of the most important requirements for implementing curriculum successfully is monitoring by national, provincial, districts, circuit and by the school itself.

Monitoring is critical in the implementation processes of all projects, programmes and policies, and in education it becomes a tool to ascertain the effectiveness of education and its programmes (Komar, Komar, Kolomiets, Roienko & Diachuk 2019:234). Monitoring becomes a prerequisite for a successful implementation of the curriculum because it is a window through which superiors gauge whether actual teaching and learning is happening and producing the desired outcomes in terms of achieving the pre-set objectives. It is of utmost importance that monitoring should be continuous to enable SMT to pick up

challenges at their earliest so that these challenges may be resolved in the form of intervention. This will enable successful implementation.

Different strategies and methods of monitoring curriculum implementation may be used by supervisors to ensure successful implementation. Laska (2016:371) and Ngoepe (2015:244) buttress that one of the best methods of monitoring teaching and learning is through observation of actual teaching and learning processes in class and all activities should be observed. Data should be collected and discussions held after observation sessions with the aim of developing educators to improve their curriculum implementation strategies. Amongst other aspects, Laska (2016:371) indicates that communication, teaching process, discussions, assistance and physical environment must be observed and notes be taken for discussions later.

During observation of lessons, the level of communication between the teacher and the learners, tone used, whether instructions are clear and the interaction must be observed because communication tends to have an effect on how subject content may be grasped (Laska 2016:373). The actual teaching process must also be observed closely. How content is put across to make learners understand, how clear is the content, time and manner used to explain are some of the things that are important in the teaching process and can also have an effect on learning and must be closely observed.

Good and advanced planning of time and time management enable educators to teach content properly and efficiently (Sahito, Khawaja, Panhwar, Sidiqi & Saeed 2016:44). How long the discussion and explanation take will also affect how learners learn and grasp the content. Educators must also assist individuals and groups of learners to understand concepts, and this should also be observed during lesson observations as it also affects learning. Learning material such as textbooks must be taken into consideration. Haulle and Kabelege (2020:15) stress that a well-structured textbook stimulates reflective thinking and enable educators to teach the subject matter in a systematic and orderly way.

Educators who are able to master the foregoing matters are one step in making teaching and learning effective. Other aspects that support the actual formal classroom time can be observed outside the formal classroom, such as administration and management.

## ii) Motivation and Support

Motivation is generally understood as the determination and impetus that pushes people to do something by nature. This determination can come from within an individual, and is called intrinsic motivation. Intrinsically motivated educators are more likely to perform their tasks diligently and strive to complete activities in a way that will enhance their professional duties. Blackburn (2016:2) asserts that these educators perform these duties because they value and believe that reforms will add to the good quality of education.

Extrinsic motivation is when the determination is pushed by factors outside the human being. Blackburn (2016:2) points out that motivated educators embrace educational changes and are more willing to support these changes, and contribute to general teachers' improvements by devoting themselves to implementing the new reforms to improve quality of education. According to Blackburn (2016:2), extrinsic motivation has temporary results while intrinsic motivation has long-term effect. Institutions must always strive to motivate its employees intrinsically because this will create a climate of motivated educators who always want to do better.

Burns (2016:2) asserts that teacher motivation is crucial at schools for the following reasons:

- Policy implications – Motivated educators have lower rates of absenteeism and attrition which may lead to teacher shortages. Teacher shortages and absenteeism lead to loss of teaching time which has a direct impact on curriculum implementation by affecting the objectives of policy.
- Programme implication – Motivated educators are always ready to accept, support and implement new educational reforms such as new curriculum and new teaching and learning strategies. These teachers will also ensure that they complete given tasks

by transferring their knowledge to refine everyday teaching and learning in their classrooms.

- Effect on students – Motivated teachers improve their teaching quality, which will motivate their learners to learn and to do better.

Educator support can be described as mentoring, coaching, professional development and feedback (Nkambule & Amsterdam 2018:2). It is also indicated that South Africa's need for teacher support became evident after a series of confusion of continuous change and amendments of curricula and its implementation.

Educator support is equally important and goes together with motivation. Supported educators will be motivated intrinsically and this will have long-term benefit on teaching and learning. Literature points out that teachers do not generally receive sufficient support in most public schools (Van der berg, Gustafsson, Spaul & Armstrong, 2016:26). In Limpopo Province, educator support mainly happens at workshops and trainings conducted by district and provincial subject advisors. If there is support at school, it is not enough and normally provided by people who are not well equipped with necessary skills to help teachers improve their quality of teaching and learning, and those people usually need support too.

### **2.9.3 Subject educators**

Subject educators are the ultimate implementers of all curriculum reforms (Maphosa & Mutopa 2012:99). Subject educator implements the curriculum in a classroom setting by teaching learners the content prescribed by the curriculum. The way subject educators make sense of curriculum policy is governed entirely by their prior knowledge, beliefs and experience (Kane, Sandretto & Heath 2002:177). Therefore, it is important to prepare educators as a whole and to regard educators' beliefs, attitudes and values for successful teaching.

For effective teaching to occur, the subject educator must first understand and acknowledge that for any learning to effectively happen, there are some aspects that must be considered. Killen (2015:28) maintains that educators must ensure that they structure learning activities to guide and lead learners to understand the content taught by enabling their brains to process the content effectively on their own. Educators must also motivate and monitor their learners and understand that the learning environment is ever changing and to adapt their motivation and monitoring strategies as such. Subject educators must also collaborate with others and work together towards achieving the goals of teaching and learning.

It is imperative for educators to understand how teaching and learning takes place and to know and understand all teaching and learning theories and model so that they are well equipped to tackle any teaching and learning challenge that may arise on their daily discharge of duties. Booyse and Du Plessis (2018) assert that knowing how teaching and learning unfold will enable educators to interpret and implement the curriculum effectively because their interpretation will be influenced by their understanding of such. It is clear that having an understanding of teaching and learning theories will enable educators to understand the process of teaching and learning in totality and help them to understand how behavioural changes can be shaped and controlled, and ways to deal with them for effective teaching and learning.

Killen (2015:33) describes the characteristics of a good and effective teacher as someone who deliberately goes to any length to have a deep understanding of the subject they are teaching and how they can facilitate learning so that learners can easily grasp and understand the content. Good and effective teachers are also enthusiastic, confident, and passionate and feel very secure about helping their learners and about their knowledge and skills. These educators have good relations with their learners and all stakeholders and tend to communicate well with everyone and they are dedicated to helping learners acquire the necessary knowledge and skills. Furthermore, good and effective educators are also resourceful and well organised (Killen, 2015:35) and they are always researching and looking for new ways and strategies to adapt to the dynamic education contexts and to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

Chaudhary (2015:985) maintains that the influence of educators in curriculum implementation cannot be debated. Besides providing resources to the educator, training and support are very important. The teachers' attitudes, values and beliefs also play an important role and teachers need to be honest about these. For example, if teachers are uncomfortable teaching certain topics because it clashes with their values and belief system, they should be honest and request help so that the topic concerned should be taught without bias. Teachers must also create an atmosphere and climate conducive for effective teaching and learning.

For educators to discharge their everyday duties of teaching, it is important that the following must be done properly for effective implementation of curriculum:

i) Planning

In terms of planning at school level, Clarke (2012:238) asserts that CAPS documents provide clear and very specific and prescriptive guidelines on what should be taught, how and in some instances when it should be taught. How and when students are to be assessed is also clearly spelt out in these documents. Clarke (2012:238) further maintains that principals should insist that teachers, phase and subject teams follow these prescriptions unless they can provide clear evidence that their alternative proposals are better and are likely to produce improved learner performance. All educators are involved in curriculum planning at the classroom level.

Classroom planning is far more important than any other level of planning because the results of curriculum planning make their impact on the learners (Oliva & Gordon II 2013:39). Planning relates to preparing well in advance before lessons are presented in class. The educator must do thorough research on the subject matter to be delivered. Educators must also research on the strategies to be employed to enable subject content to be grasped with ease. Research must also be done by educators on best teaching aids to be utilised and all other learning material that will enhance teaching and learning, enabling that the aims, goals and objectives of the lessons are achieved. Ayua (2017:1) posits that while planning for



effective teaching and learning, every teacher must not forget to answer the following four basic questions:

- a) What are the educational goals to be achieved? that is, lesson objectives?
- b) What educational experiences are to be provided in order to achieve objectives – Educators need to know what they are to teach; that is the content?
- c) How can these educational objectives be organised? – Teachers also need to know how they are going to teach the content; that is the teaching and learning methods and strategies. It is important for educators to consider their learners’ strengths and abilities when choosing teaching methods.
- d) How can these objectives be determined whether they are attained? – Teachers need to know how they will know and prove if objectives have been attained; that is evaluation.

All the foregoing questions will help the teacher to be more prepared and be able to overcome any challenges that may arise during the lesson. It will also help in promoting productive teaching and learning.

## ii) Implementing

Implementation (policy) is defined as the conversion of resources, mainly physical and financial into concrete service delivery outputs in the form of services or any real outputs which aim to achieve policy objectives (Cloete & Coning, 2011:137). Curriculum policy implementation requires putting into practice the prescribed official programme of academic studies, which translates to putting into practice NCS and CAPS in practice by teachers to learners in a classroom in South African schools. Furthermore, curriculum policy implementation is said to occur as and when learners acquire planned or intended experiences, knowledge, skills, ideas and attitudes that are aimed at enabling learners to participate and function effectively in society (Chaudhary, 2015:9840).

Implementation of curriculum is done by individual educators in class by teaching the learners as they learn. Curriculum implementation requires adjusting personal habits, ways of behaving, programme emphases, learning space and existing curricula and schedules (Ornstein & Hunkins 2018:257). This indicates that the curriculum implementers must not just provide material objects to implement the curriculum, but the person as a whole must also be prepared mentally and emotionally and that necessary support on the person as a whole must be given. Carl (2009:136) argues that the success of curriculum implementation may be assured if the dissemination is effective and specific strategies are followed during implementation. Furthermore, Carl (ibid) identified strategies which consist of two main phases, which must already be in operation before the implementation begins, as these will determine the success of implementation and eventually improve academic performance.

Phase 1 comprises the creation of a satisfactorily orientated environment introduction of change and preparation of consumers, and it is actually a part of dissemination, but will be continued on an ongoing basis during implementation.

Phase 2 entails bringing about sufficient support networks (through instruction, communication, contact opportunities and ongoing discussion meetings) and actually contains elements which should actually already have taken place during dissemination, as well as elements that are initiated or continued during dissemination.

### iii) Evaluation

Evaluation at a school level is done during formal and informal assessment. Evaluations can be done during lessons, weekly and quarterly to indicate to the teacher if learners are really learning and understanding. Assessments will be able to give an overview of whether implementation has been successful and will determine whether adjustments and reviews are necessary or not. The end of year evaluations in the form of examinations are progressing learners to the next grade and for parents and other stakeholders to check if curriculum implementation was successful at schools.

Garret (2014:3) underscores the importance of managing classrooms effectively during teaching and learning because even if all the above aspects have been taken care of, effective classroom management is required for effective implementation of the curriculum. According to Garret (ibid), effective classroom management consists of areas which have a strategic purpose to manage classrooms during teaching and learning. The physical design of the class is very important and helps in organising learning centres and where materials supporting learning are kept. However, it must be noted that COVID-19 has changed the physical design of the classrooms, and educators need to come up with new strategies to make their classrooms more manageable in case of pandemics.

Rules and routine during teaching and learning are very crucial. It is important for educators together with learners to establish rules and routine that will help them to effectively manage their classrooms for effective teaching and learning that will improve academic achievement. Discipline of both learners and teachers also contribute to effective teaching and learning and it is important that educators be consistent in addressing discipline to prevent misbehaviour that can affect effective teaching and learning.

Garret (2014:4) also stresses the importance of relationships in effective classroom management and alludes that educators must develop relationships of mutual trust and support with their learners and parents so that the learners can feel safe around them and be confident enough to express themselves, and that parents will feel welcome to be involved in their children's education. More importantly, educators must also make teaching and learning more engaging and motivating by carefully planning their teaching strategies and ensure that their actual teaching is well organised to help the effective implementation of curriculum.

#### **2.9.4 The learner**

Learners are the recipient of curriculum and curriculum is implemented on them. Without learners, no curriculum will be implemented. All these effort of curriculum and its implementation is done for the learner so that they acquire quality education in the form for

the best knowledge and skills that will enable them to function well in their adult life and the world of work.

Learners are individual beings and their individuality must be respected and considered for effective implementation of curriculum on them. It is also crucial for learners to have support from their homes and families as their home backgrounds have an influence on their attitudes towards learning in general. Learners must be well grounded and have positive attitudes, beliefs and values and be able to accept themselves and their home backgrounds so that effective learning can take place. Moreover, learners also need proper motivation and support to overcome factors inside and outside of them and to perform higher despite these factors. Motivating them and supporting them will help boost their self-esteem and enable them to face and attempt any challenges with ease.

However, it must be remembered that even if educators can be very effective and all implementation requirements met, according to Killen (2015:37), the following points relating to learner development must also be considered. Cognitive development should be considered at all times. Learners' brain capacity must have developed to allow them to grasp new concepts and ideas. In addition, learners are unique beings who develop differently. It is important for educators to take the cognitive development of learners into cognisance so that they employ different strategies to help them to learn. Language and literacy development is also crucial because learners must be able to understand the language of teaching and learning to be able to express themselves in it. With English being the language of teaching and learning in most secondary school subject in South Africa, this becomes a challenge and a barrier to learning because learners must first master the language before they could grasp the content.

Physical development of learners also plays a role in teaching and learning. Learners' strength, coordination, dexterity and other physical attributes sometimes demotivate learners to learn. Emotional stability and how they view themselves and the world such as their beliefs, attitudes, culture and family background also play an important role on how learners

learn. It is important for learners to have a good support structure inside and outside the school to help them cope and learn effectively in spite of such challenges.

## **2.10 CHALLENGES OF CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION IN SOUTH AFRICA**

### **2.10.1 Implementation and Change**

Change is inevitable because we live in a dynamic world. The aim of change is always improvement (De Bruyn et al. 2013:183). Change must happen all the time or from time to time to adapt to the ever-changing times (Onimole 2017:384). This is evident in everyday life through continued reviews of legislation and policies, and the many strategies that are being reviewed to enhance and improve our education system in South Africa. Change can be defined as a planned, systematic process that takes time to come to fruition, is effected by individuals and is a highly personal experience (De Bruyn et al. 213:183).

At times, unplanned change do happen. The COVID-19 pandemic forced the whole world to look at how countries conduct their affairs. Countries had to relook at their education matters to adapt to the unplanned change that happened so rapidly. But for organisation's growth and effectiveness, planned change happens. Planned change is intentional change to change the way things are normally done. This type of change needs thorough planning before it happens to ascertain that all individuals who will be affected know exactly what is expected and how to go about implementing change to meet the organisations' objective and goals.

Implementing (new) curriculum at schools mostly signals changing schools and teachers' practices, beliefs and the material used (Viennet & Pont, 2017:11). Fairly new curricula being implemented tend to bring challenges such as interpretation and implementation to some schools, which will be evident by the percentage pass rates of learners. These schools that experience challenges need to amend and change their implementing strategies. Those schools that are not having many challenges must also continually revise and amend their strategies to help them stay on top to improve their achievements. In light of that, change is

always happening in schools to keep up with the changing world. Now schools around the world, especially in South Africa, experienced curriculum implementation challenges in the midst of COVID-19 pandemic. According to OECD (2020:2), abrupt challenges such as pandemics, natural disasters, unrest etc. cause sudden change. These sudden changes pose an essential adaptive and transformative challenge that forces education leaders to speedily design responses. Whether change is sudden or planned, it becomes a challenge itself which must be well managed so that curriculum implementation is not affected.

### **2.10.2 Resources**

Resources play a very critical role in curriculum implementation. For teaching and learning to take place, basic resources such as human resources, physical resources and LTSM such as textbooks must be in place. All these resources need to be financed. Teachers must be in a furnished classroom with learners who must be having books before any process of teaching and learning can commence. However, it is not always the case because education systems in the African continent and in South Africa are characterised by lack or inadequate human and physical resources, and challenges of LTSM; as a result curriculum implementation becomes challenged.

Inadequate or lack of one of the crucial resources in schools lead to more added secondary challenges. Physical infrastructure is an essential aspect of education, as reiterated by Godstime and Amachi (2019:8) because teaching and learning does not take place in a vacuum. Schools must have proper classrooms to accommodate learners because lack or inadequate classrooms will lead to overcrowded classes. Taole (2015:276) asserts that overcrowded classrooms have been an issue for years, and it makes it difficult, if not impossible, for teachers to successfully implement curriculum. Overcrowded classes create problems, as indicated by Ojunubah (2015: 3) because learners will not be given the necessary attention during teaching and learning. Educators become overworked and this may lead to burnout and all this has a negative impact on curriculum implementation and academic performance.

Limpopo Province still has a huge backlog in terms of eradicating and providing infrastructure and as a result, classes in most secondary schools are still overcrowded or conducted in unsuitable places such as prefabricated classes and under the trees. The DBE has programmes such as Accelerated School Infrastructure Development Initiative (ASIDI) and others (LDoE, 2016:11), which they use to help poor provinces such as Limpopo and Eastern Cape to accelerate infrastructure provisioning. However, this is still not enough because it is clearly visible in Limpopo that most of the infrastructure, especially in deep rural areas, need more attention. Therefore, this affects how curriculum is implemented and it subsequently affects the schools' performance.

Lack of qualified educators also poses a challenge and adds a burden of overcrowded classes, where educators will experience added weight of extra learners to teach, which subsequently leads to overworked and burnt-out educators who will not be able to give much needed attention to learners during teaching and learning processes. Shortage of educators will also affect monitoring and support process where implementation challenges would have been picked up at an early stage and be addressed earlier. This is also a challenge that has a huge impact on curriculum implementation and academic performance.

LTSM such as textbooks are one of the most common resources in teaching and learning. Mithans and Grmek (2020:207) underscore the importance of textbooks in a classroom because they are a tool that facilitates and enables teaching as well as learning. Textbook importance becomes even greater when new topics and content are introduced in class. Lack of textbooks will definitely affect curriculum implementation and academic performance because learners may not be able to follow through on lessons in the classroom and to study on their own after the lesson is concluded in class.

The South African education system is burdened and characterised by scarcity of resources (West & Meier, 2020:1; Zwane, 2018). Limpopo Province schools also experience lack or inadequate educational resources. Organisations such as Section 27 have taken the government to court several times over these challenges because they have an effect on the right to basic education as given to all South African children by the Constitution. Limpopo Province has already been taken to court by Section 27 organisations over textbooks and

infrastructure issues (Mail & Guardian, 2021/05/03; Right to education initiative and Section 27, 2014). This indicates the seriousness of resources and the challenges they pose in the actual teaching and learning processes, and the academic performance leading to quality education.

However, Lumadi (2019:215) points out that labelling schools in challenging contexts is misleading and inaccurate, though most of these schools in challenging circumstances have challenges in curriculum implementation, not all of them do. It should be pointed out that challenges experienced by the South African education system such as overcrowding and lack of infrastructure do not automatically mean that schools will underperform because there are schools in South Africa, and Limpopo in particular that perform exceptionally well under the circumstances. This is also evident in the circuit under study, where some of the under-resourced schools outperform resourced schools in the circuit, district or province.

### **2.10.3 Support**

Nkambule and Amsterdam (2018:1) underscore the importance of support in education for effective implementation of any reforms in schools. Educators rely on support from inside and outside stakeholders to realise the curriculum's objectives. Lack of support poses a challenge and leads to other challenges that would otherwise have been minimised.

Parental support plays a crucial role in curriculum implementation. Mutodi and Ngirande (2014: 279) allude that parental involvement may lead to better academic performance. Family structures in South Africa have evolved over the years. The dynamic world has also changed statuses of families where child-headed families are becoming a reality. This brings challenges to schools because children do not have adult supervisions after schools hours; as a result there is no one to monitor and encourage them on educational matters. Lack of parental support often leads to behavioural problems which disrupt the smooth implementation of the curriculum.



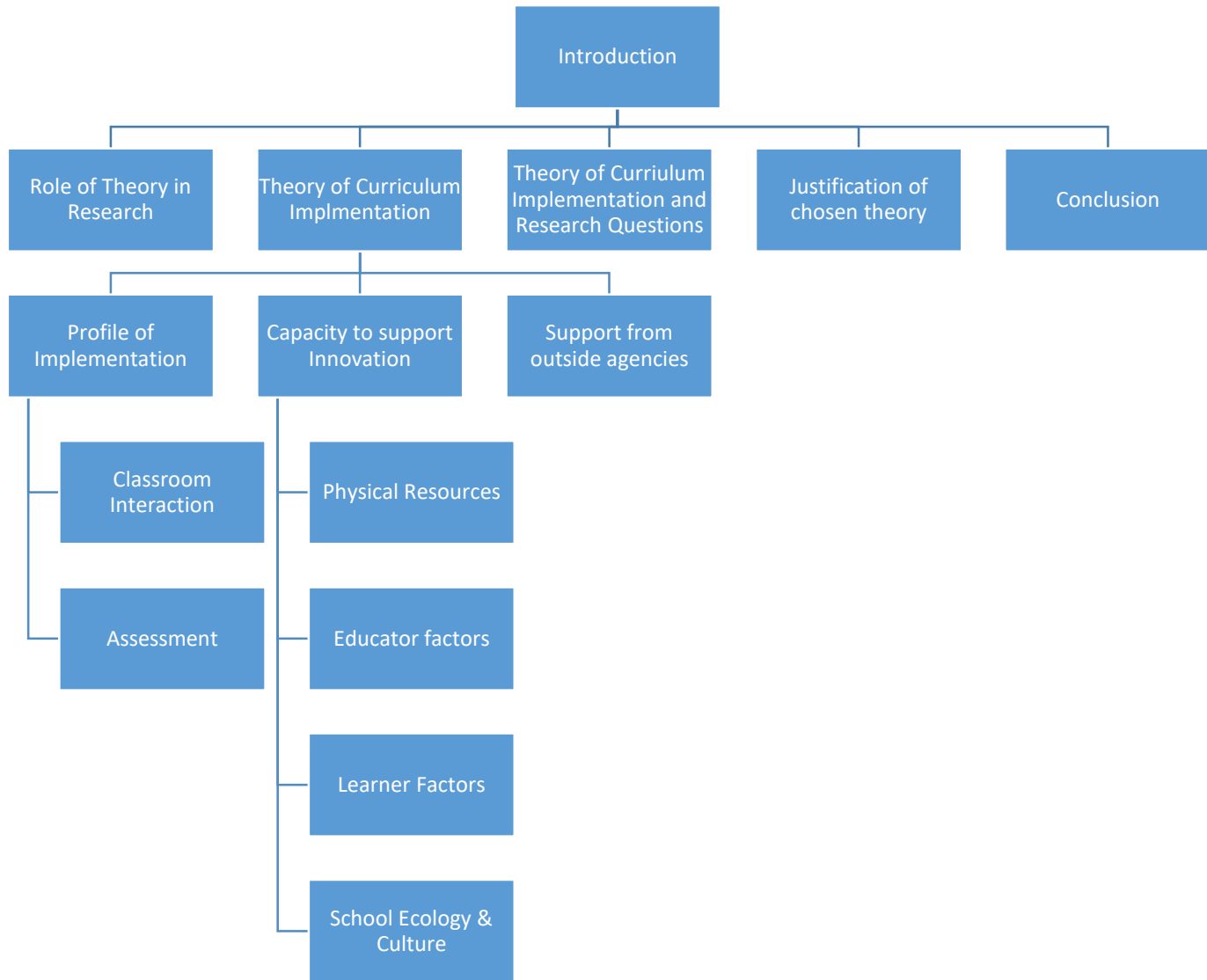
Lack of proper support from other departmental officials such as SMTs and curriculum advisors can be attributed to lack or inadequate human resources as discussed earlier. It can also be attributed to management issues inside the school as stated by Naidoo (2019:1) that the continuous decline in learner performance and low educational outcomes in public schools may be the result of poor leadership. Poor management in schools will also hamper curriculum implementation because management will not be able to offer the necessary support to educators, who are the ultimate implementers of curriculum. Lack or inadequate support may lead to demotivated educators and poses challenges in curriculum implementation.

## **2.11 CONCLUSION**

This chapter focused on reviewing different studies on curriculum implementation and academic performance of schools. Literature indicated that curriculum implementation is a complex issue involving many stakeholders with different values and beliefs, given the diversity of South Africa as a country. Literature also indicated that to some extent curriculum implementation and academic performance can be improved if given guidelines can be implemented by different stakeholders. More importantly, lessons can be learned from different performing schools in South Africa and across the world. These lessons that can enable South Africa in general and Limpopo Province in particular to improve curriculum implementation. However, in challenging the present situation, stakeholders must ensure that they continually strive for effective curriculum implementation that will foster better performance to enable South African learners, who are the future to achieve excellently.

The next chapter will focus on theoretical framework. Principles of the chosen framework, the role of the researcher, the nature of reality according to the chosen theoretical framework and its relevance will be discussed in detail.

### CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK



*Figure 3.1. Theoretical Framework Roadmap*

### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

The previous chapter focused on literature review, which enabled the study to debate existing knowledge of educator's perceptions on curriculum implementation. This chapter will mainly focus on discussing theoretical framework where theory underpinning this study will be discussed at length. The theory to be discussed will serve as a guide in building and supporting this study. It will also provide a structure with which the researcher will approach this study in relation to knowledge and theory and how to generate knowledge. Accordingly, curriculum implementation theory will be discussed which will ensure better understanding and analysis of how curriculum is implemented at schools, and all the other factors that may influence its implementation.

### **3.2 THE ROLE OF THEORY IN RESEARCH**

Nilsen (2015:1) defines a theory as a set of organised ideas or statements which are meant to guide how one observes, understands and explains the world around us. Theories help in explaining, predicting and mastering phenomenon, such as a relationship, event or behaviour (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013:132). Van Der Walt (2017) views a theory as a systematic and formalised expressions of past observed experiences. Theory is concerned with making meaning to previous happenings to advance structured set of expertise knowledge that will help us to understand the world around us. More importantly, theories are based on the past and help us to understand the present and make assumptions for the future.

Nilsen (2015:1) stresses that a 'good theory' will attempt to give a clear and logical explanation of how and why certain relationships lead to specific events and has a specific aims and purposes. The first aim of theory is to describe and guide research into practice, just like the researcher would consolidate all data collected, analyse, discuss and give recommendations that can be used in future implementation of curriculum. The second aim of theory for this study is to help in comprehending and explaining what influences

curriculum implementation in Nkowankowa Circuit secondary schools where the study was undertaken. Theory would also help to evaluate how curriculum is implemented at different institutions.

Theories form a foundation for the researcher to come up with topics for their research and methods to be followed from the beginning to the end of the study (Grant & Osanloo 2014:13). This is supported by Korstjens and Moser (2017:278) and Kivunja (2018:48) when they assert that the entire research process is guided by theory which assists in research question formulation, guiding data collection and analysis and help us to make conclusions by giving us conceivable clarifications of a phenomenon. Theories also help us to formulate clear theoretical assumptions and make the entire research study more focused. Theories have become a very crucial element of research as it guides and gives the study its structure so that the study can be explored in a rational and organised logic (Bailey 2018:51). This indicates that theories have philosophical assumptions where one seeks to understand phenomena based on traditional methods of inquiry. Theory also assists in exploring and examining relationships among ourselves and the universe and constructing meaning of the world around us.

Anfara and Mertz (2015:2) underscore the importance of understanding theory specifically for researchers and the readers in general. Theories are abstract descriptions and give us a deeper and possible understanding of the explanations of how things happen and the underlying causes of such circumstances. They further indicate that understanding theory requires one to take a journey through someone's mind so that one experiences reality the same way that person does so that a shift in mind structure may be experienced so that we can discover that different ways of thinking exists. Mastering theory requires a person to expand their way of thinking so that one can understand the meaning behind those theories as intended by theorists.

A theoretical framework consists of theories developed by specialists through experiencing phenomenon over a period of time in a field of study one wishes to research (Cohen *et al.* 2018:45). In qualitative research, a framework is a structure that is intended as a guide for thinking about the research subject and an interpretive lens through which to view and analyse data (Savin-Baden, 2013:134). Grant and Osanloo (2014:15) view theoretical framework as that which provides structure to the entire study and enable a common worldview or lens from which to support the researcher's thinking on the problem and the analysis of data. This is supported by Collins and Stockton (2018:2) by alluding that theoretical framework is using theories in research to convey the researcher's innermost values and it provides a clearly articulated signpost or lens on how knowledge will be processed in a study.

For this study, theory will play an important role of enabling the researcher to form a base for this study. The importance of theory for this study is that it will enable the researcher to clarify how curriculum is implemented and also work out recommendations that will help in implementing curriculum effectively. Luthans *et al.* (2021:13) point out that theory digs deeper in the underlying processes to enable thorough comprehension of occurrences or non-occurrences thereof. In this light, theory will help this study by giving comprehensive understanding of systematic reasons why implementation of curriculum at Nkowankowa Circuit is carried out or not carried out as expected.

### **3.3 THEORY OF CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION**

This study sought to understand educators' perceptions on curriculum implementation in Nkowankowa Circuit secondary schools in Limpopo Province. As discussed earlier, the South African education system, like other countries, is characterised by ongoing curriculum reform in a bid to improve performance of schools; that is educator and learner performance in their processes of teaching and learning that will enable improvement in the quality of education given to its citizens. Ongoing reforms require the education system, including

curriculum implementers and all other stakeholders to adapt to the ongoing changes that would have an effect on education.

Theory of curriculum implementation has been selected as the main theory to underpin this research study. This theory assisted the researcher and will assist readers in gaining more understanding about curriculum implementation. Theory of curriculum implementation will also assist in guiding this research study and help the professional practice to effectively implement curriculum in an effort to improve the quality of education as envisaged in the Constitution, all citizens and the world at large.

Theory of curriculum implementation was developed by Rogan and Grayson in 2003 as an attempt delve deeper into curriculum implementation. This theory was developed in a bid to improve previous models of curriculum implementation as they identified that other models were unclear about the complex nature of the process of curriculum implementation (Mathura 2019:253). Furthermore, Rogan and Grayson (2003:1171) noticed that government and foreign aid sponsors were continuously coming up with measures to improve education in developing countries but the details of how these initiatives should be implemented by schools were not well clarified by the government and the curriculum developers. Theory of curriculum implementation is intended particularly for developing countries and fits well in the South African context because a new curriculum that embraces all South African races and cultures has been introduced. Unlike the previous curriculum that focused on gaining knowledge only, the modern curriculum is focused on a learner in totality where gaining knowledge and skills are emphasised. Implementers are still trying to come up with best strategies for implementation to enable better academic performances.

The theory of curriculum implementation assumes that the need for curriculum change has already been dealt with and focuses mainly on issues regarding implementation of new reforms and innovations to enable the new reforms to begin yielding better quality education for learners. Furthermore, the theory of curriculum implementation was developed as a guide to school-based implementers and other relevant stakeholders while taking the circumstances and contexts of developing countries, like South Africa. This theory postulates that schools

are not the same and that any curriculum innovation or reform must consider the diversity and uniqueness of schools instead of neglecting existing diversity when complex and comprehensive system changes take place because other schools may or may not be ready to cope with these new reforms.

The theory of curriculum implementation is rooted on the idea that current realities of circumstances must be identified and used to build on the countless components of the system such as educators, learners and their school contexts. This theory is based on three major constructs or pillars, that is, profile of implementation, capacity to support innovation and support of outside agencies, which will be discussed next. According to Furiwai and Singh-Pillay (2020:245), the three major constructs are very crucial as they promote the interconnectedness and complex nature of curriculum implementation in reality.

### **3.3.1 Profile of implementation**

Rogan and Grayson (2003:1181) suggest that the profile of implementation examine and explore how the actual curriculum reforms and its intentions as stated in the curriculum policy are being put into practice in actual teaching and learning in the classroom, as reiterated by Tawana (2009), Mamba and Putsoa (2018) and Hakutumbulwa (2021). Subject educators implement curriculum by utilising different strategies to teach learners in their formal capacity as curriculum implementers. Profile of implementation recognises the role of educators in curriculum implementation as they are the ultimate curriculum implementers by means of actual teaching and learning activities.

The profile of implementation has four sub-constructs or dimensions, namely, classroom interaction; science practical work; science and society, and assessment. This study will focus on two sub-constructs, which are, classroom interaction and assessment because these two sub-constructs are applicable to any subject and learning area (Grayson & Rogan, 2003:1182).

## i) Classroom Interactions

Mpanza (2013:29) explains that implementation factors such as classroom interactions are very crucial because they have a direct bearing and influence on teaching and learning, and the success or failure of curriculum implementation. Educators are key in classroom interaction that is in the process of curriculum implementation. Ayua (2017:1) and OECD (2016:5) highlight the significance of educators by regarding them as pioneers in the educational transformation processes and view them as the most crucial component of effective teaching and learning. This means that the spotlight of success or failure of any curriculum implementation revolves mainly around educators.

Because of uniqueness of educators as individual subject teachers, the theory of curriculum implementation stresses that different educators will have their own ways of classroom interactions. Therefore, there will be many different ways utilised by educators to implement the same curriculum (Hakutumbulwa 2021:10). However, planning well before any classroom interaction or the process of teaching and learning is crucial for all educators irrespective of their own approach to teaching and learning processes. Ayua (2017:5) alludes that thorough planning directs and fosters proper lesson preparations, which will facilitate well organised lesson presentation. Well organised lesson presentation will strengthen the effectiveness of teaching and learning thereby ensuring effective curriculum implementation to improve academic performance of schools.

Many ways of implementing a curriculum will exist as there are many educators implementing it. For effective classroom interaction, teachers must be able to utilise different strategies suitable for their lessons. Killen (2019:33) asserts that all teaching strategies are important and educators must be able to utilise strategies that will foster effective teaching and learning and ensure that the learning outcomes of any lesson presentation are realised. It is also very crucial, according to Garret (2014:63), for educators to utilise strategies that will ensure that teaching and learning strengthen learners' interest and motivation in the process of learning.



## ii) Assessment

The theory of curriculum implementation emphasises the importance of assessment in curriculum implementation. Assessment in education is the process of compiling proof to ascertain whether the learning outcomes have been attained by evaluating the knowledge, skills, attitudes and beliefs of learners emanating from the process of teaching and learning (Teltemann & Jude 2019:250; Barkley & Major 2016:24). Khumalo and Maphalala (2018:282) point out that assessment provides inevitable information on the effectiveness of teaching and learning and helps in the determination of proper remedial strategies to be utilised where necessary.

Through the process of continuous assessment as dictated NCS and CAPS policies, educators are able to track down teaching and learning progress, and to modify their teaching strategies to ensure effective curriculum implementation for quality education. Assessment is also very crucial in the new South African curriculum because it is a way through which stakeholders in education account to the public on whether the intended outcomes of teaching and learning are achieved as envisioned (Teltemann & Jude 2019:250). All these indicate that proper and effective curriculum implementation requires continuous forms of assessment throughout the year to ensure good quality academic performance of schools, teachers and learners.

### **3.3.2 Capacity to support innovation**

Capacity to support innovation recognises the uniqueness of every school in terms of its context and capacity. This is echoed by Mpanza (2013:29) and Furiwai and Singh-Pillay (2020:245) when they indicate that capacity to support innovation relates to all unique contextual factors that can make or break curriculum implementation processes. The different school circumstances and capabilities play a major role in enabling success or drawbacks in curriculum implementation. Owing to this uniqueness of conditions in which different schools find themselves, it should be acknowledged that schools are not the same and will not possess the same capacity to implement curriculum. Curriculum implementation will be at different levels of use for each and every school as dictated by their circumstances.

Theory of curriculum implementation's capacity to support innovation proposes four pillars that cannot be ignored in curriculum implementation which are, physical resources, educator capacity, learner factors and school ecology and management, which are discussed next:

i) Physical resources

Physical resources in the form of school infrastructure is a major factor in curriculum implementation because teaching and learning cannot take place without proper infrastructure as dictated by the Constitution of South Africa. Non-governmental organisations in South Africa such as Equal Education are continuously making efforts in ensuring quality and equal education for all South Africans. Provision of proper and adequate school infrastructure in South Africa is still not realised, especially in rural areas.

The theory of curriculum implementation suggests that lack of resources limits performance and have an adverse effect on the quality of teaching and learning thereby affecting the general quality of education. Scholars such as Mafugu and Anderson (2022:249), Amadi and Ezeugo (2019:14) and Sakiz (2015:115) emphasise that physical resources enable a very conducive climate for teaching and learning which stimulates educators' and learners' emotional and psychological needs. Furthermore, Amadi and Ezeugo (2019:15) allude that conducive learning environments have a positive effect on fulfilling educational goals and objectives. This normally leads to high performance by both educators and learners. It is evident that for effective implementation that will enable high levels of performance, schools require proper physical infrastructure to create a conducive teaching and learning environment.

Practical subjects require specialised infrastructure such as laboratories and libraries to enable learners to learn practically rather than theorising. Mafugu and Anderson (2022:248) hint that scarcity of resources coupled with lack of support may be pushing many educators (and learners) to resist change by continuing teaching and learning based on their own initial perspectives which lead to challenges in implementation.

## ii) Educators' capacity

Educators are individuals with their own values, beliefs, attitudes and efficacies which are important for any educator in accepting and supporting new curriculum reforms which will influence the effectiveness of implementation. These new reforms and strategies that are continuously introduced as a way to improve the quality of education causes change in the way that educators normally discharge their duties. Roles and responsibilities of both educators and learners, and to the normal day-to-day running of institutions are also changing.

School change is viewed as a predictable element that will always exist and it is a non-negotiable part of education systems of all countries (Tomal *et al.* 2013:1). In the same vein, Goncalves and Goncalves (2012:29) concur that change has now become a great certainty because it happens in all areas at an increasing speed. Whether educators embrace or resist these change depends largely on their values, beliefs, attitudes and experiences because according to Mandukwini (2016:20), people tend to resist change because change confront people's beliefs, perceptions and the way they normally practice and discharge their day-to-day duties.

Kotter and Schlesinger (2013:7) indicate that some of the strategies to ensure that educators' attitudes, beliefs and values are aligned to effective curriculum implementation and to minimise resistance to change is to thoroughly educate and communicate with everyone concerned, by giving them adequate and accurate information about the anticipated change. Participation and involvement is another important strategy, as Goncalves and Goncalves (2012:297) point out that change agents must encourage participation by involving those directly affected by change from the onset to enable positive influence on change outcomes.

Ornstein and Hunkins (2014: 233) posit that educators' concerns must also be adequately addressed for curriculum implementation to be successful. Moreover, prior knowledge, beliefs and experiences play an important role in ensuring that educators make sense of policies to be implemented (Kane *et al.* 2001:177). Therefore, educators need to learn new

skills and formulate new attitudes so that they can be able to work together as a team to make adjustments to achieve objectives and outcomes of teaching and learning.

Another important factor is the knowledge of subject matter to be taught. Educators must be knowledgeable in the subject matter to boost their confidence and to enable them to embrace the new reforms. Ayua (2017:1) points out an effective educator is the one who continuously do research on their subject to ensure that they are knowledgeable of what and how to teach. This, according to Killen (2019:5), will transform learners from a frame of mind of not understanding to a state of in-depth understanding. Thorough monitoring and support will enable educators to get the necessary help in learning new strategies and content. It is important for supervisors to shape the educators' beliefs and values at the first stage of profile of implementation by providing good orientation and preparation and continually support them so that their attitudes are dealt with and shaped for effective teaching and learning.

### iii) Learner factors

Learner factors such as background of learners and school help shape their attitudes towards school. Schools must also play their role of satisfying the learner's psychological need. Sakiz (2015:115) accedes that contextual factors particularly the psychological and motivational atmosphere impact among others, their learning behaviours, self-beliefs and attributions. Learners' strengths and weaknesses will shape how they readily learn. Their confidence also plays an important role on their learning. Moreover, the school and the home have an important role to play to positively influence their attitude toward school for them to readily learn for better performance.

### iv) School ecology and management

School ecology and management are factors that must be considered in curriculum implementation. Good leadership and management are basic requirements and most important for improving school performance (Atkinson, 2013:3). In the same vein, Senguo and Ilomo (2020:105) concur that effective school management enables good planning and

aids in motivating and encouraging learners (and educators) to commit towards their work thereby enhancing their performance and achievements. Schools with good leadership and management qualities offer conducive environment and culture for effective curriculum implementation. Such schools offer highly motivated and disciplined educators and learners and offer support to all on an ongoing basis. It is believed that for the schools that are dysfunctional, the first step will be to restore order and discipline; hence, the WSE notion that the DBE introduced in schools to restore basic functionality of the school as a means to enhance curriculum implementation at school level.

In terms of curriculum implementation in South African context, capacity to support innovation has a huge impact. It was discussed in literature that most schools in South Africa, especially those in previously disadvantaged communities, lack basic resources such as classrooms, laboratories, toilets, textbooks etc. The government and donors are investing finances to address resources challenges to schools, especially infrastructure challenges. But with the vastness of the challenges coupled with mismanagement of financial resources and corruption often experienced by the country, these challenges will take time to be resolved. Despite the fact that government is trying to address such, the pace is not as fast as many schools would like, and this affects mostly those previously disadvantaged schools in curriculum implementation.

### **3.3.3 Support from outside agencies**

Mathura (2019:254) indicates that actions taken by outside organisations have an influence on implementation either by supporting or hindering it. Outside agencies, according to theory of implementation, can be government departments, local and international donors, NGOs, unions and other stakeholders. All these agencies have an influence on curriculum implementation, materially and non-materially.

The importance of outside agencies, also called stakeholders, indicate that education in general and schools in particular are systems. A system is viewed as groups or combinations of elements that are part of a logical whole structure that are interrelated, interdependent and

are interacting (Arnold & Wade 2015:7; Du Plessis 2013:60). Lalande and Baumeister (2015:2) concur that the interaction between the parts of the system enables better understanding of how complex reality is. Schools need other stakeholders for their existence. Should one or more stakeholders inside or outside the school not perform their duties as expected, the whole system will not be effective in implementing the objectives and outcomes of teaching and learning. Inconsistencies in a system will definitely affect performance of any system.

School organisations with their main purpose of implementing curriculum are made up of different institutional components such as individuals holding different positions performing different functions by functioning as a whole are viewed as a system (Bozkus 2014:52; Mutangadura 2019:2). Schools rely on the outside environment by nature especially the learners that are brought by parents and funding from outside for survival. Schools also rely on human resources, physical resources etc. for survival, which are also provided for by outside agencies. The fact that schools depend on the inside and the outside factors for effective functioning makes them open systems.

Public organisations such as schools rely heavily on resources provided by stakeholders for effective teaching and learning. Inputs in the form of resources are provided through the process of interaction of the interrelated and interdependent environments to enable attainment of set goals and objectives (Van den Bekerom *et al* 2017:626). Inputs refer to all the energy and materials that are provided to the school by the outside environment so that they can be processed to attain the learning outcome and the objectives of education. It is well known that for effective curriculum implementation at schools, human resources, physical resources and financial resources are important factors. In South Africa, the government, which is an outside agency according to the theory of curriculum implementation, is responsible for providing these resources, although the community and private sector may also help in providing such resources.

Proper support and monitoring from outside agencies will help in motivating educators to work hard towards effective curriculum implementation. Anggraeni (2017:2) maintains that

the processing of all resources provided by the inside and outside environment result in good products or services in the form of outputs, and schools are accountable for their outputs (Bozkus 2014:53). Outputs relate to attainment of the goals and objectives of institutions. Conversely, inputs and transformation process will dictate the outputs of schools. Leбата and Mudau (2018:30) assert that outputs of schools expose whether parts of the system were working together where every part was carrying out its responsibility diligently. Schools exist to produce quality education through the process of teaching and learning, and their goals and objectives will not be achieved if there is no harmonious and mutual interactions of all the stakeholders in the school system.

Mutangadura (2019:3) and Lunenburg (2010:2) allude that good school outputs are in the form of highly educated learners who acquired skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary for them to function well in adult life. Good outputs in the form of good quality education is one of the aims and objectives of the CAPS curriculum and what the Constitution of South Africa envisages for learners as future adults. Good outputs also relate to good academic achievement levels of learners and educators. It will also lead to improved confidence levels of both learners and educators, and this will motivate them to improve their performance to reach higher levels of satisfaction. The outside agencies such as communities and other stakeholders would also like to relate with such schools. Schools with good outputs have challenges of higher learner enrolments and employee turnover because people generally like to associate themselves with good performing schools.

The theory of curriculum implementation through its sub-construct of support from outside agencies help in identifying and considering all factors and environments surrounding the implementation of curriculum process and how these factors and environments have an influence on the crucial implementation process. Educators are curriculum implementers. However, there are many factors and stakeholders involved which have a direct effect on the process of teaching and learning. These factors cannot be ignored and need to be explored for the researcher to have a holistic perception of curriculum implementation.

The theory of curriculum implementation is summed by the following propositions, as stated by Grayson and Rogan, 2003:1196:

- There is a zone of feasible innovation. Steps must be taken to ensure implementation happens in an orderly manageable way. It is important to recognise and acknowledge that different schools will be at different levels of implementation owing to their capacity and circumstances. Educators as individuals will also be at different stages regarding their attitudes, beliefs and values to embrace the new reforms and this individualism must also be managed with utmost care to alleviate resistance to changes.
- Profile of implementation and capacity to support innovation need to be developed and enhanced simultaneously for implementation to be successful. Outside support should look at the capacity of the school to implement curriculum and ensure that they develop the capacity of the school so that they can be in a position to implement curriculum as anticipated, taking special care and noting the uniqueness of schools and educators.
- Curriculum implementers must make meaning of the intended changes and contextualise it themselves for effective implementation. Classroom interaction, that is teaching and learning, will be affected by contextual factors that are unique and different from school-to-school and this will also affect the school culture. Employing new ways and methods of curriculum implementation should be considered as change in school culture rather than a technical matter so that everyone involved should readily embrace the new culture meant to enhance performance of all involved.

All three constructs, namely, profile of implementation, capacity to support innovation and support from outside agencies must be well aligned to enable success in curriculum implementation.



Molapo and Pillay (2018:4) concur that most ideas of theory of curriculum implementation holds but believe that the theory does not accommodate the extent of influence of external political forces in curriculum implementation. The researcher also believes that South African politics have a direct control on curriculum implementation at schools. Aggrieved communities on political issues such as service provisions matters or preferences in municipal demarcations and any other political factional issues use learners and schools as their weaponry and this affects teaching and learning at schools.

Scholars have alluded that lack of resources often translates into poor academic performance (Okongo, Ngao, Rop & Nyongesa 2015:135; Adebayo, Nzimande & Ngema 2020:3768). However, the researcher noticed that lack of resources does not always translate into poor implementation of curriculum. There are schools in South Africa, and in Nkowitz Circuit with minimal resources that produce good results compared to schools with better resources. There are also best performing learners who have challenges of family and parents backgrounds, and learners who perform the worst with all the good family support structure and background. At times, educator factors are a challenge but learners are able to rise above the challenge and perform best amidst these challenges. The study concludes that the capacity to support innovation has an effect on implementation. However, some schools will still be able to maintain effective implementation with the minimum of the constructs. Having all four constructs met does not translate into effective implementation.

### **3.4 THEORY OF CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION AND THE RESEARCH QUESTION**

Theory of curriculum implementation assisted in giving more insightful understanding of the main research question posed earlier, which is, “what are the educators’ perceptions on curriculum implementation at Nkowankowa Circuit?”

Curriculum implementation through the process of teaching and learning is a very complex subject. Killen (2019:2) refers to the fact that the complexity of teaching and learning is impacted by several different factors of which some can be controlled by educators but none of them are fully understood. Through the theory of curriculum implementation, the researcher realised that educators would have different perceptions owing to the fact that schools and educators are unique, with different capacities to support new innovations. Different schools and individuals, even from the same communities, exist within their own and unique contextual factors which have a bearing on how these educators will perceive curriculum implementation based on their individual circumstance.

The study also sought to answer the following research sub-question:

“How does the implementation of curriculum influence academic performance?”

Theory of curriculum implementation demonstrated that curriculum implementation mainly require the three constructs to be understood and met. Capacity to innovate, profile of implementation and support from outside agencies must be addressed and all challenges in each sub-construct must be addressed for effective implementation. Educators must be well capacitated to offer meaningful and effective teaching during classroom interaction. Assessment must also be continuous so that strategies may be adjusted accordingly for effective implementation of the curriculum. The profile of implementation underscores the importance of infrastructure in schools. Scholars such as Mokaya (2013:11), Usman and Madudili (2019:3), Barret *et al* (2019: xii), Nugroho & Wibowo (2019:608); Mгимба and Mwila (2022:17) and many more have indicated how conducive learning environment with

safe and healthy infrastructure support teaching and learning, thereby improving academic performance. This has also been pointed out by theory how important infrastructure is to teaching and learning. Support from outside has been highlighted as a requisite for effective teaching and learning because schools do not exist in isolation but are very much dependent on support from these agencies such as the circuit office, district office, provincial and national offices, teacher unions, parents and community etc.

The research sub-question:

“To what extent do educators understand their roles and responsibilities in curriculum implementation?”

It is evident from discussions that educators are well aware of their roles and responsibilities as they have signed employment contracts with their job descriptions. The stakeholders are also continuously offering workshops to help strategise in response to the changing environments in which schools find themselves. However, theory of curriculum implementation postulates that educators experience challenges in discharging their official roles and responsibility because of contextual factors such as under-resourced schools which are beyond their control. Minimal or lack of monitoring and support because of understaffing also adds to the challenges. For example, educators in schools without science laboratories know their role and responsibility of practical assessment but are unable to do so, and this poses a challenge.

The research sub-question:

“What challenges do educators experience in curriculum implementation?”

The theory of curriculum implementation posits that for effective implementation there must be capacity to implement, the profile of implementation must also be dealt with so that challenges are minimised and that there must be adequate support from outside agencies. If

all the constructs are not ironed out, the whole process of curriculum implementation will be negatively affected, and this in itself is a challenge to curriculum implementation.

### **3.5 JUSTIFICATION FOR THE CHOSEN THEORY**

Implementing curriculum properly has a positive impact on the future of any country. Learners who are the future will be well equipped with necessary skills and knowledge important for their adult life. According to Hadjair and Gross (2016:323), countries with good education systems that offer quality education often produce world class future citizens. For South Africa, offering learners quality education will also ensure that they are competitive globally and able to adapt to the dynamic world.

Many factors play a role in curriculum implementation, and it has been established through the theory of curriculum implementation that implementation brings change. This change does not happen on the education system only, but educators as individuals also experience change differently from one educator to another. It is important for this change process to be managed well by giving necessary support to minimise challenges and resistance to change. This theory will enable managers to see the value of giving individualised support to schools based on their unique characteristics.

Educators and institutions may be working at the same school where change is taking place to all of them. Through the theory of curriculum implementation, it was evident that every individual educator and school will respond in their own way because people and institutions are unique and give meaning to the world around them differently. This theory acknowledges the uniqueness of educators and schools, and this will help to clarify how some educators and schools are able to implement curriculum more effectively than other educators and schools.

The theory of curriculum implementation will also help shape our understanding of how proposed new reforms in education are put into practice and how different factors play a role in the success or failure in the implementing process. This theory gave meaningful insight

on how outside organisations influence curriculum implementation. Furthermore, this theory gave a broader detailed understanding of how the context within which curriculum is implemented has a major effect on teaching and learning. Moreover, the researcher understands that the real process of teaching and learning mainly involves a teacher and a learner in a classroom. Nonetheless, the researcher cannot underestimate the importance of other stakeholders such as the parents, communities, circuits, district etc. and their vital role in enabling proper curriculum implementation. Through the theory of curriculum implementation, it was noted that teaching and learning is a very complex process which requires that all contextual factors and environments surrounding the schools and the teaching and learning processes must also be explored and considered for a holistic understanding of curriculum implementation.

This theory also helped in understanding the importance of stakeholders in curriculum implementation. Scott and Davis (2016:31) point out that environments in which schools find themselves have a tendency of filtering through the school processes, thereby supporting and shaping them. This indicates that schools do not exist in isolation but depends on many factors inside and outside the school for effective functioning. Therefore, it is of utmost importance that schools be understood in totality. All stakeholders in curriculum implementation must be able to perform their roles and responsibilities diligently for the whole school system to be effective.

Through the theory of curriculum implementation, the researcher discovered that for any curriculum implementation process, convictions and experiences play a very crucial role. This is also confirmed by Hudson, Hunter and Peckham (2019:7) when they allude the importance of perceptions and experiences of curriculum implementers and how their behaviours affect the implementation process. Convictions supersede contextual factors because they direct how everyone involved in curriculum implementation perceives the process. There are many poor schools in the country which are operating at minimal or no resources at all, but because of the right attitudes, beliefs and values of everyone involved, such schools manage to produce the best results despite the challenging contexts within which they find themselves. Conversely, it is also true that there are well-resourced schools

that produce the poor results because the attitudes and values of everyone involved are misplaced. Therefore, the researcher learnt that convictions play a major role and for any implementation process to be effective, individuals must be supported and motivated to shape their convictions.

### **3.6 CONCLUSION**

This chapter discussed the role of theory in research and theoretical framework for this study, that is, theory of curriculum implementation. The chapter also justified the chosen theory, which is, the theory of curriculum implementation and its relevance to this study. This theory was discussed and contextualised in this study. The theory of curriculum implementation gave a frame of reference of how curriculum is implemented and the contextual factors that play a role in implementation processes. This chapter also examined how the theory of curriculum implementation addresses the research questions posed earlier in this study. Justification for using theory of curriculum implementation was given, then the chapter was concluded. The next chapter will detail research methodology and methods for this study.

## **CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

The previous chapter mainly discussed theory underpinning this study. This chapter will focus on research paradigm for this study. Research methodology and research methods used in this study will also be clarified. Research methodology enabled this study to solve research challenges identified by means of using scientific and proven approaches, while research methods helped in outlining all the systems and processes applied for undertaking this study. The chapter will also clarify and justify the approach used for this study and all the processes followed in a quest to unearth possible responses to the identified problem. The main focus will be a particular course of action which will be followed to select, generate and interpret all data pertaining to the study. Research design, data collection, data analysis methods and techniques used to gather and interpret data for this particular study will be discussed in detail.

### **4.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM**

A paradigm refers to the researcher's viewpoint or suppositions about the world on what knowledge is and how it is constituted, and how such knowledge is produced (Kivunja & Kuyini 2017:26). Paradigms in research can be viewed as philosophical perspectives that guide and direct how researchers think in the process of conducting their studies (Mertens 2015:7). In concurring with the foregoing definitions, researchers ought to surely have certain philosophical assumptions and beliefs that will help them throughout their studies to enable them to put together a scientific study that can be relied upon. This study will be conducted from an interpretive viewpoint because the researcher believes that through interpretive philosophical beliefs, a comprehensive reliable study utilising scientific and proven methods will be conducted.

The viewpoint of people can be the same or they may differ, depending on many contextual factors, beliefs and any other things that may influence their experiences around them. These viewpoints may at times change owing to the fact that the world in which we live is ever changing technologically, economically, socially, legislatively and so forth. Because individuals perceive and understand the world from their own experiences and from experiences of others around them, this leads to inconsistencies of worldviews and mandates for ongoing exploration of answers to phenomenon locally and globally (Sefotho 2015:26).

Many different classifications of paradigms exists but for this study the researcher focused on major paradigms that are normally employed for research purposes. Three major paradigms in research are interpretivism, positivism and pragmatism. It is important for this study to have insight of these three paradigms so that an understanding of the chosen paradigm can be justifiable.

Positivism, as stated by Taylor and Medina (2013:2), is seen as 'scientific' because positivists are engaged in investigating, confirming and predicting law-like benchmarks of behaviours, and it is useful in research that test theories and hypotheses. Furthermore, positivists believe that only single reality exists and are focused on the objective research process. Positivists assume realist ontology, objective epistemology and quantitative methodologies (Taylor & Medina 2013:3).

Pragmatists believe in single and multiple realities viewpoint. As a result, they are not committed to one system of philosophy. Pragmatists are open to different and multiple methods and methodologies as they have different and multiple viewpoint of their surroundings and the world. Sefotho (2015:28) maintains that pragmatism paradigm ensures that researchers become more open-minded and attentive to other viewpoints and ideas.



Therefore, paradigms underpin each research study and anyone who undertakes to conduct a research must select a fitting and suitable paradigm that will direct their actions and thinking in undertaking their work. Sefotho (2015:26) indicates that researchers must be thorough in choosing a paradigm by ensuring that the research approach, philosophies as well as methodologies are well-positioned and are suitable and acceptable with the chosen paradigm.

This research study was approached from an interpretivism philosophy as the researcher is concerned about understanding curriculum implementation from experiences of educators. The researcher attempted to make meaning and to understand the reality of curriculum implementation from the respondent's viewpoints, and from the circumstances of their daily lived experiences as curriculum implementers at schools.

### **4.3 INTERPRETIVISM PARADIGM**

This study is conducted on assumption and ideology of interpretivism, also referred to as constructivism. This paradigm was developed as a way of improving positivism to accommodate a more subjective point of view as confirmed by Raghvan (2021:19) by stating that interpretivism emanated as a response to positivism being over dominant. Constructivists believe in multiple realities and seek to understand phenomenon as experienced by human beings. Interpretivism mainly ground social sciences research because it seeks to understand human being's lived experiences as they interact among themselves and with others, and researchers rely mostly on participants' views on the occurrence under study.

Alharahsheh and Pius (2020:40) indicate that this viewpoint is more concerned with contextual inconsistencies and describes interpretivism as a paradigm that believes that human beings are different from other physical phenomena because they detail a thorough and comprehensive understanding of circumstances; therefore, they cannot be investigated the same way physical phenomenon is investigated. Different schools have their own sets of

beliefs and values that dictate their culture and how curriculum is implemented, and that should be considered according to interpretivism. These beliefs and values guide how social realities and meanings on curriculum implementation are developed. Educators are unique and have their unique ways of doing things and thinking. Hence, interpretivists focus on the quality of perceptions of participants to analyse and conclude their studies.

Littlejohn and Foss (2009) allude that interpretivist researchers and scholars have common characteristics of conducting their research study. Interpretivists' interest lies on how communities through their cultures and as individuals construct meaning from their inherent actions, rituals, interactions and experiences. They focus on interpreting community meanings by means of situating and including these formulations into the community's historical, geographical, political, ideological, economic and cultural background. These researchers and scholars are more interested and focused on meanings. They are also theory and philosophy oriented who themselves make every effort to explore ideas, meaning and interpretations in and of themselves.

#### **4.3.1 Principles and features**

Interpretivism assumes that truth and reality cannot be discovered but it is formed in one's mind because there are multiple realities of circumstances out there (Raghvan 2021:19). The key principle of interpretivism, as described by Kivunja and Kuyini (2017:33), is that reality is created through social interactions. The phenomenon curriculum implementation is relative and that it has many realities experienced through social relationships acquired by means of educator's lived experiences, which can be investigated, then understood by making meaning out of these lived realities. This paradigm assumes relative ontology, subjective epistemology, naturalist methodologies and balanced axiology.

##### **i) Relative Ontology**

Ontology refers to the study of reality and how individuals, through their interaction with one another and the world, form their own outlook and interpretation of life. Brinkmann

(2018:6) explains that ontology explores the essence of reality around us and what is important to know and believe about the many realities that exist in a world around us. It is only ideal that the many realities and viewpoints that exist be explored by researchers so that they ultimately select the best outlook for their research studies. Researchers have their own perspective and outlook of the world, and also form their own nature of reality in their world. Therefore, researchers have their own ontology and it is this viewpoint that they must acknowledge in their research studies.

Relativist ontology postulates that multiple realities can be explored and be recreated when individual beings interact among themselves as participants in the research study and through interacting with the researcher (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017:33). The phenomenon curriculum implementation has many realities that must be investigated to get an in-depth understanding of it. The researcher believes that these multiple realities can be investigated and explored meaningfully by focusing on viewpoints of those who have lived these experiences.

The researcher was very much involved in the study by interviewing participants, listening to them and all other interactions that enabled her to get as much data as possible. This study sought to understand the social experiences of educator's perceptions on curriculum implementation from their own lived experiences and how they perceive it in their own natural setting. The researcher was drawn to rely upon participants' views of the phenomenon being studied which enabled her to fully understand educator's own reasoning and sentiments.

In this study, the researcher believes that curriculum implementation is diverse, and it is influenced by many factors. Curriculum implementers have many realities and viewpoints about curriculum implementation based on their lived experiences and their particular contexts. The researcher also believes that curriculum implementation has an influence on academic performance, and this is the researcher's viewpoint and nature of reality on the phenomenon under investigation.

## ii) Subjective Epistemology

Epistemology can be seen as a reasonable view of type of the knowledge that can be produced and how the produced knowledge can be validated. Epistemology is a theory or philosophy of knowledge which is concerned with how a research study is carried out to best gather relevant data (Raghvan 2021:14; Brinkmann 2018:10). In addition, Kivunja and Kuyini (2017:27) point out that paradigm epistemology emphasises the nature of human knowledge and the researchers' comprehension of such to have a holistic understanding of phenomenon and field of research. Epistemology seeks to unearth and discover knowledge that can be used in future to explain realities. Ritchie, Lewis, McNaughton and Ornston (2014:6) suggest that epistemology is more focused with more approaches to be followed to know and learn the world around us and what constitutes knowledge. Therefore, it is important and obligatory for researchers to give a clear direction of their epistemological position guided by their paradigm, as a means of positioning their study and giving it direction for themselves and anyone who will utilise the study.

Subjective epistemology assumes that the researcher attaches their own meaning to collected data by means of their own thinking and their own world view. There is a clear connection between the research study and the research subjects and through the process of research. For this study, the researcher sought to understand and acquire knowledge on curriculum implementation by broadening and deepening their understanding on how educators perceive curriculum implementation in Nkowankowa Circuit secondary schools.

The researcher was fully involved by entering into dialogue and mingling with the participants to get a deeper understanding of the participants' point of view of the phenomenon under study. The researcher then constructed meaning of the data by means of own cognitive processing of data guided by interactions with the participants (Kivunja & Kuyini 2017:33).

### iii) Naturalist Methodology

Methodology of a paradigm can be seen as all proven approaches and methods that researchers may utilise in their studies to gather information needed and analysing the collected data. Mertens (2015:7) defines methodology as the appropriate approach researchers utilise to organise and standardise their inquiries. Therefore, methodology indicates how data and analytic methods were generated, that is, it is about all the processes that were guiding the study to attain the research objectives.

Interpretivists utilise naturalist methodology such as qualitative research approach (Kivunja & Kuyini 2017:33). Data are collected in a natural setting using interactive methods of interviews, observations and document study by the researcher themselves through interactions with the participants. The collected data are analysed inductively using qualitative methods of data analysis to enable the researcher to draw conclusions and make recommendations.

For this study, qualitative methodologies were employed. Qualitative methodologies helped to give meaning to curriculum implementation and enabled the researcher to understand this phenomenon from lived experiences of educators as curriculum implementers. This study was a case study, which enabled the researcher to delve deeper into understanding the different contextual circumstances in which curriculum is implemented. Face-to-face interviews were used to collect data and this helped the researcher to have an understanding of the educators' perspectives on curriculum implementation in their natural settings. Through qualitative data analysis methods, the researcher was able to identify patterns and themes from the responses which helped in understanding curriculum implementation in more details, and how other educators are more successful in curriculum implementation than others.

In this study, all these were realised by adopting suitable methodologies and method which aided in unearthing educators' lived experiences and viewpoints to get a deeper understanding of their perceptions on curriculum implementation.

#### iv) Balanced Axiology

Paradigm axiology deals with issues of ethics and its nature. It is a prerequisite for all studies to be conducted under approved ethical procedures and principles as described by universities and government. Currently, universities and the relevant governmental department have to approve and issue ethical clearance certificate when they are convinced that correct ethical principles will be followed when conducting a study irrespective of philosophical paradigm employed for the study.

Balanced axiology postulates that the researcher's attitudes, values and belief system were reflected in the outcomes of the research (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017:34). This study was value bound and the researcher was part of the research by interacting with participants seeking to understand educators' perceptions on curriculum implementation. The researcher presented a balanced research report and findings founded on ethical considerations. For this study, ethical clearance was granted by the university and the province under study. This assisted the researcher to conduct the study in an ethical manner to enable a more balanced report and findings of educator's perceptions on curriculum implementation.

#### **4.3.2 Variations of Interpretivism**

Three variations of interpretivism exist, as stated by Littlejohn and Foss (2009). Hermeneutics refers to how individuals interpret and understand philosophy and their main focus is biblical sources of wisdom literature (Alharahsheh & Pius 2020:42). Hermeneutics assumes that interpretation is not only a process of uncovering the meaning of texts but is seen as an approach of interpreting the social world and meaning of daily lived experiences (Littlejohn & Foss, 2009).

Carter and Fuller (2015:10) define symbolic interactionism as a sociological perspective exploring how humankind and their communities are created and maintained by the interactions between themselves. It assumes that symbols are very significant as they provide ways to validate how reality is constructed and viewed. Symbolic interactionists believe in

the use of language and symbols by human beings in their environments to make meaning of the world around them. Symbolic interactionism interprets society's viewpoint and meaning attached to objects, events and behaviours around us.

Phenomenology seeks to make meaning and get a deeper understanding of the world through experiencing direct phenomena and understanding. This study adopted phenomenology as a paradigm because it is based on understanding and constructing meaning on how educators perceive curriculum implementation. The research study is phenomenological also because it studies human beings and their social lives. Educators at their natural setting, which are schools, are studied to understand their perceptions on curriculum implementation.

#### **4.3.3 Justification of Interpretivism**

Interpretivism enables researchers to have a thorough understanding of environments and their circumstances through the gathering and analysis of qualitative data which give rise to a deeper comprehension and conclusions which varies from one person to another. Two or more people may undertake to study a phenomenon under the same contexts but through interpretivism, each researcher will construct their own meaning and conclusions, which may be different from other researchers.

In interpretivism approach to research, the data gathered, analysed and the results are characterised by high levels of validity (Myers 2008) because the researcher was highly involved in the study. The researcher experienced what the participants were also experiencing as a result the acquired data were based on different contextual factors. The participants and the researcher add their personal contributions to the study in the form of their viewpoint and how they perceive the phenomena under investigation.

Interpretivism is not interested in only one factor but enables the researcher to examine many different factors that a play role or have an effect such as behavioural patterns of participants and how their experiences have shaped the world in which they live now and how these experiences gave rise to how they perceive the world and the phenomenon under study.

Moreover, the researcher considers the social and ethical values and beliefs as well as attitudes and culture of participants closely in understanding how they carry on their day-to-day activities and how they perceive and give meaning to their world. Interpretivism enabled the researcher to explore and describe reality according to the researcher's assumptions and beliefs. This indicates that not only the participants' beliefs, values, attitudes and ethical and social construct are important, but the researchers' construct also plays an important role. The researcher's point of view and the experiences lived during the research study through interactions and dialogue with the participants and their contexts also played a role on how the researcher analyses and concludes her study.

In interpretivism, different contexts exist, and it is only proper to treat each context as unique because circumstances are not the same as well as participants involved. Participants are human beings who through their experiences make their own meaning of life, which will differ from one individual to another. Contexts also are not the same; different contexts have their own circumstances which make its human beings to perceive it differently from other contexts and make meaning out of those differing contexts which will be unique to those contexts only.

#### **4.3.4 Critics of Interpretivism**

Interpretivism assumes that reality is subjective. This means that reality differs from one being to another and because of this, participants cannot provide a general interpretation of the phenomenon under study as interpretation of reality is subjective; every human being makes their own meaning of circumstances.

Interpretivism leads to less likely generalisability of collected and analysed data owing to the fact that data were dependant on unique contexts and world view of participants (Alharahsheh & Pius 2020:42). It is not easy to generalise interpretations of circumstances if one believes that each circumstance is unique and it has its unique sets of beliefs and viewpoint, as interpretivists assume. Each context is unique and consists of multiple realities and must be treated as such.



## **4.4 RESEARCH APPROACH**

The main aim of any type of research, as indicated by Mishra and Alok (2017:2), is to explore unknown realities and facts which still need to be uncovered by applying suitable approaches and methods. This study employed qualitative approach and methods. In a qualitative research, a complete and thorough study employing face-to-face or observations techniques to collect data from people in their natural setting, is undertaken (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014:5). Qualitative methodologies enable researchers to gather descriptive data of people's own words and records of people's behaviour and are preferably suited to explore the world from different points of views (Taylor, Bogdan & De Vault, 2016: 26). This approach helped the researcher to enable participants to convey their point of view and sentiments in their natural space and draw conclusions from such.

### **4.4.1 The nature of qualitative research**

Merriam and Grenier (2019:3) state that the main cue to grasping qualitative research approach is based on the ideology that the value and meaning of the world around us is socially formulated through individual interactions among themselves and the world. This is the only way of making meaning because it is believed that there is no single agreed upon or a measurable circumstances, reality and the world are not fixed. Multiple realities depend on the viewpoint of individuals who have come to experience the world on their own, then attach meaning to every lived experience which shaped their world view as such.

In qualitative research, many factors may emanate during data collection. Some of these factors have never emanated or surfaced in previous studies or have never occurred to the research (Merriam & Grenier 2019:4). All aspects that may emerge from any viewpoint irrespective of the social class, level or position of participants during the research process are valuable and deserve to be studied (Taylor *et al.* 2016:5). For a qualitative researcher, the main focus is to explore contexts and people holistically because it is believed that in all settings and in every human being, there is something valuable to be discovered and explored. This alludes to the fact that every piece of information gathered through qualitative methods is important and usable in analysing and concluding the study of a phenomenon.

Taylor *et al.* (2016:4) purport that people's actions and thoughts in their everyday lives and their experiences, are the main concern of a qualitative researcher. Researchers are seen as naturalistic because they need to carefully choose strategies that will complement peoples' actions as they go about their daily lives' activities. Furthermore, qualitative researchers are concerned with unearthing people's understanding and lived experiences within particular contexts at specific time periods. These people's understanding and experiences help shape their world view.

This study was concerned about educator's actions and thoughts about curriculum implementation in Nkowankowa Circuit. The study focused on Nkowankowa Circuit secondary schools educator's experiences which helped shape their viewpoints on curriculum implementation based on their everyday lives as they discharge their duties. The study further considered every piece of information and viewpoint, irrespective of level or position of educators as invaluable. This valued information enabled the researcher to make sense of how educators perceive curriculum implementation. This also guided the researcher in analysing and making worthwhile conclusions for this research study.

#### **4.4.2 Characteristics of qualitative research**

Qualitative research is an inductive process (Merriam & Grenier 2019:6; Taylor *et al.* 2016:8). It is an inductive process because researchers start with observations and understanding gathered to build a theory, and to advance perceptions and understanding by studying patterns in the collected data. Research findings are also inductively constructed from collected data in the form of themes and categories formed and through meaningful theories that speak to real life situations (Merriam & Grenier 2019:6).

The researcher was the primary instrument for collecting and analysing data and the researcher became more focused on how people construct meaning and understanding from their own frame of reference and how they make sense of their lives to understand the world around them (Merriam & Grenier 2019:5; Taylor *et al.*, 2016:7).

Qualitative research produces rich descriptive data in the form of actual written or spoken words by participants. Observations of behaviours and patterns in an actual context are used to communicate what the researcher has observed and learned. Data collected become evidence for findings and the researcher may support findings by using direct phrases from participants during the interviews.

Qualitative research is a craft where the researcher becomes a craftsman because it needs a specialised kind of skill for researchers to pull them through (Taylor *et al.* 2016:11). This is because of its flexibility on how one conducts the research and that the different methods that can be used are not as standardised like those of other approaches, and this gives researchers the latitude to apply their specialised skills to collect and evaluate valuable data.

## **4.5 RESEARCH DESIGN**

### **4.5.1 Case study**

This study is a descriptive case study seeking to understand educator's perceptions on curriculum implementation. A case study is a design where researchers do an in-depth analysis of a case, often a programme, an activity or a process involving one or more individuals (Creswell & Creswell, 2018: 135). In this case study, eight schools in Nkowankowa Circuit with similar characteristics were studied. Their actions as individuals and as members of groups in their natural environment were investigated thoroughly to understand their views and opinions on curriculum implementation.

The researcher elucidated incidents and occurrences at Nkowankowa Circuit secondary schools so that educators' perceptions on curriculum implementation can be understood. In this case study, the researcher was compelled to report a set of circumstances as they are because the researcher did not have direct control over variables; so, the researcher must report what is happening or what happened, based on educators' views and experiences (Mishra & Alok, 2017:2).

This study was a multiple case study. Nkowankowa Circuit has eight public secondary schools. All eight schools in the circuit were investigated and combined in this single study. An extensive analysis of all eight different schools in the circuit was combined and studied to thoroughly understand the educators' perceptions on curriculum implementation. The researcher then interpreted data and actions of the educators in their real life or natural contexts and made deductions and conclusions from such, and then construct recommendations thereof.

#### **4.5.2 Purpose of case study**

A case study mainly focuses on a phenomena occurring to single or small number of cases, where a case refers to either an individual, or a group of individuals such as a family, village or an organisation (Patten & Newhart 2018:174). The main purpose of case studies as alluded by Cohen *et al.* (2018:187) is to explore human beings as individuals or groups and their circumstances by analysing and interpreting them in their real life environment. This is achieved by researchers through presenting and representing authentic reality, as experienced by participants in their everyday life and the researcher during the research study.

This study sought to explore educators, who are human beings, by interpreting how they perceive curriculum implementation in their respective schools, which is their natural environment for implementing curriculum. Furthermore, the researcher analysed educators' experienced challenges and exploring their position in terms of their behaviours when implementing curriculum so that the she can have a better understanding of how these educators perceive the phenomenon being studied. The researcher used a case study to explain a complex phenomenon of curriculum implementation and also explored relationships between factors in the educators' real life situations.

Case studies are said to be idiographic. This means that the researcher in a case study makes it a point to investigate phenomena holistically, focusing on different factors that have an effect on the phenomena especially by analysing the context. This is also echoed by Cohen *et al* (2018:187) that case studies have a unique character of being a holistic treatment of

phenomena, which is explored in depth from extensive sources of data. During data collection, the researcher was able to experience the context under which educators implement the curriculum, and this assisted the researcher to get a clearer understanding of some of the contextual factors that educators mentioned, and to help the researcher to understand educators' viewpoints.

Case studies are also viewed as contextual. This is owing to the fact that case studies focus on the milieu and surroundings in which cases find themselves because the milieu has an influence on phenomena as experienced by different cases. Case studies do not only focus on the individual, groups or events, but understand that the environment also needs to be studied to get deeper understanding of cases. In this study, the researcher addressed the idiographic element during data collection by seeking to understand contextual challenges that may affect how educators implement curriculum in their schools. This information assisted the researcher to have a holistic understanding of educators' perceptions on curriculum implementation at their respective schools, and at Nkowankowa Circuit as a whole.

Case studies are also nomothetic. They are seen as exploratory studies that have an effect on future nomothetic studies of the same phenomena. Patten and Newhart (2018:174) describe a nomothetic study as a study that focuses on investigating relationships of few variables carefully and how one variable influences an outcome so that data can be generalised to a population.

#### **4.5.3 Justification of a case study**

Case studies are well known for their flexibility in terms of time and reporting (Simons 2018:7). Although other case studies may be carried out over a long period of time, other cases may be carried out in a few days, weeks or months. This factor, according to Simons (2018:7), allows case studies to be carried out in many contexts, including in circumstances where unanticipated incidents such as a change in policy calls for revision of the design because case studies are not constrained by resources or time.

That case studies are carried out in natural environment where natural language is used makes case studies flexible in terms of reporting. The familiar methods such as interviews and observations allowed participants and the researcher to interact and engage in research and enabled them to contribute to the generation of new knowledge for this case. Reporting is made easier because the actual phrases and statement of participants' responses can always be used as evidence of what transpired during the interviews.

Starman (2013:36) indicates that as an advantage, case studies are stronger where quantitative studies are weaker because case studies have a potential to achieve greater validity, have strong procedures for fostering new hypotheses and that case studies have a capacity for addressing causal complexity. Cohen *et al.* (2018:379) concur with Starman (2013:36) by indicating that case studies acknowledge the complexity and position of social truths and how these complexities shape individuals viewpoint. However, it is added as an advantage that case studies allow generalisation about occurrences.

#### **4.5.4 Challenges of a case study**

A sample of one becomes a challenge to people who assume that for a research to be valid, a large sample must be drawn particularly if the results will inform policy. This is also echoed by Patten and Newhart (2018:174) by indicating that case studies are condemned for relying on small sample, especially by those who believe in quantitative methods. Simons (2018:7) also adds that the disadvantages of case studies is that the large amount of collected data that need to be processed by the researcher may lead to researchers leaving out important pieces of information that would otherwise help in drawing conclusions. Another challenge of a case study is the fact that researchers fully participating in the study as main data collection instruments may lead to researcher bias and that is a disadvantage if researchers do not make effort to avert their bias during data collection and analysis (Simons 2018:7).

#### **4.6 JUSTIFICATION FOR RESEARCH APPROACH**

In a qualitative approach, the explanations and interpretations people give to everything in their lives are the main concern of the researcher. Through interviews, the researcher was able to get a sense of how educators attach meaning to curriculum implementation in their own world and how they perceive all aspects pertaining to curriculum implementation in their own opinions as they have experienced it in reality. This approach enabled the researcher to represent the participants' viewpoint and perspectives in this study. Moreover, this case study also enabled the researcher to interact with and report the intricacy of this social and educational activity of curriculum implementation and to acknowledge perceptions of individual educators in a school context.

Taylor *et al.* (2016:9) assert that in a qualitative methodology, the researcher focuses on the settings and people completely, where people and their settings are viewed as a whole. The researcher viewed the participants and their natural environments as a whole, where their past circumstances and their present environments were studied to understand them in totality. Through this approach, the researcher explicitly interacted and experienced the real contextual conditions that curriculum implementers at schools are faced with, giving her a holistic understanding of the phenomenon being studied. This enabled the researcher to understand their opinions and how these contextual factors have a bearing on how they attach meaning and perceive curriculum implementation in their own contexts.

Qualitative approach also enabled the researcher to contribute to generating knowledge on educators perceptions on curriculum implementation. Existing and new concepts were used by the researcher to help in explaining how individuals and groups think and behave in social settings. This approach also helped this study because the researcher recognised the importance of using multiple sources as evidence, and the value of face-to-face interviews because it enabled the researcher to experience most of the facts that came out during interviews, as most of them were easy to notice in their real contexts.

## **4.7 POPULATION AND SAMPLE**

A population refers to a group of people or individuals as well as objects or items where participants are taken for measurement (Okeke & Van Wyk, 2017:226). The population of this study was all public secondary schools in Nkowankowa Circuit, Mopani West District, and Limpopo Province. Nkowankowa Circuit is one of the 13 circuits in Mopani East District office. Mopani East forms part of the ten education districts in Limpopo Province. The latter consists of approximately 3 960 schools categorised as combined schools, primary schools, secondary schools and special needs education (SNE), of which 1 338 are secondary schools.

Participants were educators implementing curriculum policy at FET phase and SMT members. Characteristics of participants chosen were based on the knowledge and experience they possess in implementing curriculum at a secondary school. Two educators were interviewed per school, one subject educator and one member of the SMT, namely, principal, deputy principal, departmental head or any other educator serving in the SMT. Nkowankowa Circuit currently has eight public secondary schools, and all the eight secondary schools in the circuit were studied.

### **4.7.1 Sampling procedures**

Sampling is the process of selecting participants or a sample from a bigger group or a population, which will be used as a basis for predicting the study's outcome (Okeke & Van Wyk, 2017:224). Nkowankowa Circuit has been purposefully sampled for this study. In purposive sampling, the researcher identifies suitable participants by using specific criterion and by entrusting own experiences or previous research to select participants who are representative of the population (Wagner *et al.*, 2012:93). The circuit has eight public secondary schools, with high achieving, average achieving and underachieving secondary schools. All eight secondary schools were studied. Purposeful sampling technique was also used to sample participants who were educators implementing curriculum policy at FET phase and SMT members. One educator and one SMT member per school were interviewed. The total number of participants who will participate in this study is 16.



#### **4.7.2 Accessing participants**

In preparation for the actual collection of data, the researcher put thorough plans in place to ensure a seamless process. The first phase of gaining access to participants at their respective schools involved the researcher writing a letter to Limpopo Department of Education (LDoE) requesting permission to collect data for research purpose (Appendix B). LDoE forwarded the request to Limpopo Provincial Research Ethics Committee (LPREC) at the Office of the Premier. Then permission was granted by LPREC and LDoE (Appendix C). A letter informing Nkowankowa Circuit Manager about the intended interviews was sent together with the permission letter from LPREC and LDoE, who also granted the researcher permission. Then eight information letters to eight principals of secondary schools in Nkowankowa Circuit were sent out requesting interviews with their educators. A week before the interviews were conducted, principals of schools were reminded of the actual days in which the researcher will be conducting interviews at their respective schools.

#### **4.8 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE**

Data collection in a qualitative study can be defined as the selection and production of linguistic or visual material for analysing and understanding phenomena, social fields, subjective and collective experiences and the related meaning-making process (Flick 2018:7). There are different approaches and strategies for collecting data in research. Selecting a strategy or instrument to be used for collecting data is not a matter of preference, random or automatic decision making as indicated by Cohen *et al.* (2018:469), but it is a careful and conscious process where one needs to consider the idea that the instrument must be well suited to produce intended results.

Interviews were employed to select, produce and provide data about perceptions of secondary school educators on curriculum implementation. Interviews were valuable for this research because they allowed the researcher to closely examine the participant's description of circumstances and their viewpoints, and also to closely analyse the participant's values,

beliefs, feelings, perceptions and attitudes (Hammond & Wellington 2013:91). An advantage of interviews is that they enabled the researcher to view events and contexts from the viewpoint of participants and that interviews are interactive in nature allowing researchers and participants to seek clarification of questions and help in identifying unexpected themes.

Face-to-face interviews were conducted in various schools of Nkowankowa Circuit in April 2021, when South Africa was on COVID-19 alert level 1 and normal school activities were fully taking place. The researcher employed face-to-face interviews because of its advantage of presenting rich responses from the participants. Face-to-face interviews also allowed the researcher to show participants a symbolic commitment to accessing the participant's voice (Hammond & Wellington 2013:91) which enabled the researcher to build appropriate rapport with the participants, and that made participants to be relaxed throughout the process. Face-to-face interviews also enabled the researcher to closely look at non-verbal gestures, such as facial expressions and tones used to make meaning of the participant's responses. These descriptive data are important as they indicate relevant features of how talk transpired, and the interviewer was able to make meaning by also focusing on both context and how utterances were made (Flick 2018:209).

Standardised open-ended interviews were conducted, where predetermined same questions were asked in the same order to all participants. In doing so, the researcher tried to gain more insight by understanding and comprehending educator's opinions and experiences of the phenomenon under investigation. Structured open-ended interviews also enabled the researcher in organising the collected data and the analysis of the collected data thereof.

A voice recorder was utilised to record questions posed to participants and their responses. Recording the interview allowed the researcher to focus more on listening rather than having divided attention of taking notes while listening, which would lead to missed opportunities of being fully involved in the conversation. Another advantage of recording interviews is that the collected data can be shared among research team more easily, while considering the

ethical issues regarding confidentiality and anonymity involved in collected data (Patten & Newhart 2018:162).

#### **4.8.1 The pilot study**

A pilot study was conducted six weeks prior to the actual interviews. Pilot studies are conducted by researchers before the actual data collection of the study commences and plays a crucial role in any type of study (Gumbo 2014:386; Fraser, Fahlman, Arscott & Guillot, 2018:262). Testing the interview guide was necessary to iron out any areas that would be unclear in advance before the actual collection of data and that would potentially have a negative effect on the actual data collection process (Patten & Newhart 2013:162; Fraser *et al.* 2018:261). For the pilot, three educators, two subject educators and one departmental head with similar characteristics to the intended sample participated in the pilot study. More importantly, the researcher wanted to ascertain the time needed to complete the interview, if questions were well framed and understood by participants as a means of testing the effectiveness of the interview schedule.

The pilot study enabled the researcher to practice how to closely inquire and improved her interviewing skills (Dikko, 2016:522). The pilot study revealed that the average time required to complete the interview is nine minutes. This enabled the researcher to do thorough planning of how to utilise the time outside the formal interviews at respective schools. During the pilot study, the researcher realised that some participants answered part 2 of question 1 (*In terms of the last three years of NSC results, how will you rate your school performance? What do you think is the possible cause of this performance in your school?*) while at the same time touching on question 2 (*In your opinion, how does curriculum implementation influence academic performance?*). The researcher then decided that during the actual interviews, it must be indicated to participants that question 1 and 2 are related, but question 1 relates to the participant's school while question 2 relates to curriculum implementation in general.

#### **4.8.2 The interview process**

Interviews were conducted after school, with some few that were conducted during school breaks or on educators' free periods, as per the request of other participants. In most schools, school principals were kind enough to lend us their offices for privacy. In other schools with good infrastructure, offices of either deputy principals or the departmental heads were utilised.

Before the interviews commenced, participants were given information sheet, consent forms and demographic forms to go through and complete whenever they were ready. The researcher made an effort to verbally explain everything that is contained in the information sheet and the consent forms, and allowed the participant to ask questions and seek clarity before the actual interview started. This process also helped in building rapport because the researcher was using the participant's home language in explaining but indicated that the interviews will be conducted in English. Three principals, two deputy principals, three departmental heads and eight subject educators were interviewed. A total of 16 educators from eight secondary schools in Nkowankowa Circuit were interviewed using the same questions in the same order.

The formal interview durations ranged between seven minutes to 16 minutes per interview. This gave the researcher ample time to look at documents such as NSC results for the past three years, learner enrolment and to take note of other physical features such as infrastructure availability. Furthermore, the researcher was also able to also note how schools were conducted in terms of discipline and order by taking note of the environment, especially at schools that were visited during formal school times. For schools that were visited after school, the researcher also noted how educators and learners utilised the time after school, and how orderly or disorderly they conduct the afternoon studies and lessons.

Hammond and Wellington (2013:91) elucidate that interviews are regulated by ethical rules and principles that need to be strictly adhered to by researchers. These rules and principles concern consent for the interview, consent for recording participants' responses and consent for maintaining participants' anonymity as well as the confidentiality of the participants. The researcher applied ethical rules and principles, and this will be discussed under ethical considerations.

#### **4.9 INTERVIEWS CHALLENGES AND CONTROL**

The fact that interviews were face-to-face during level 1 of COVID-19 posed a health challenge risk. The interviewer adhered to all COVID 19 protocols. The schools ensured that they arranged proper well ventilated spaces, which also allowed proper distancing between the interviewer and the participants. The interviewer always made sure to properly sanitise all equipment used for data gathering such as pens, voice recorders and the tables and chairs where participants were to sit. The interviewer also ensured that masks were worn properly by everyone who was part of the study.

Another challenge experienced was that some educators who were asked by the school to participate were absent on the actual day of interviews, with some attending departmental meetings and some were on leave. However, on arrival the schools which were affected managed to replace those educators, but the interviews would start a bit later than the scheduled times.

One participant misunderstood the questions posed as a result gave a response that was not relevant to the question. The interviewer asked the question again by rephrasing it so that the relevant response to the question can be captured. Question 1 and 2 seemed to be the same as indicated in the pilot study discussed in 4.8.1. The interviewer clarified to participants during the interview that question and 1 and 2 are related, but question 1 relates to the participant's school while question 2 relates to curriculum implementation in general.

#### **4.10 DATA ANALYSIS**

Qualitative data analysis is a process of organising data into categories and identifying patterns and relationships among categories, then draw conclusions from the collected data (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014:395). The main aims of qualitative data analysis as stated by Flick (2014:5) is to comprehensively describe a phenomenon in greater detail, to discover conditions that form basis for such differences and to develop a theory from analysing data. Data were analysed in this study to give a detailed description of educators' perceptions on curriculum implementation in their respective settings and to help discover explanations of how other schools perform better than others in the same circuit and same communities.

Flick (2018:5) asserts that data analysis also aims to describe a phenomenon thoroughly. This study attempted to describe circumstances under which curriculum is implemented by secondary school educators in Nkowankowa Circuit. The analysed data helped in identification of different conditions and the basis of such differences. Nkowankowa Circuit has a mixture of good performing, average performing and under-performing schools. Through the process of data analysis, the researcher was able to look for explanations for such differences in academic performance and whether there were differences on how curriculum is implemented at different schools and by different educators.

Data analysis of this study has a phenomenological influence of describing experiences of human beings in their natural context. Furthermore, the phenomenological influence ensured that the researcher provides distinctive lived experiences of educators in their everyday duties of implementing curriculum at their respective schools so that the researcher gains an understanding of how these educators perceive the phenomenon of curriculum implementation. The sequence of conceptualising the phenomenon under study, reflecting on the data, segmenting the data and presenting findings and drawing conclusions and recommendations was followed, as phenomenology dictates.

Recordings from face-to-face interviews were transcribed and typed by the researcher. After transcribing, the researcher started to familiarise herself with the data, trying to make sense

of the responses. The next step was coding the data to enable the researcher to save time by organising the large data into manageable data. In coding the data, the sections were labelled and grouped by categories, then examined and compared both within and between categories (Flick 2014:24). Coding assisted the researcher to identify patterns and similarities in the participants' responses.

Thematic analysis was employed. Thematic analysis refers to a method of analysing qualitative data which explores experiences, thoughts and behaviours in data sets, where patterns and meanings are constructed into themes (Kiger & Varpio, 2020:846). The collected data were reduced by categorising and summarising, considering capturing of important ideas within a set of information. Major and key themes were identified, categorised and highlighted, then the researcher went back to review the themes to quality check the themes and to ascertain if certain important pieces of data were not missed. The themes were then defined and labelled so that the researcher can ultimately write a quality report from the analysis. All collected data were synthesised inductively to generate generalisation in the form of summary of the study, conclusions and recommendations.

#### **4.11 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Research ethics can be perceived as a set of accepted principles and values that serves to direct the research and the researcher in conducting their studies (Johnston & Christensen, 2017:125). These principles are generally common beliefs and values of what is the correct or acceptable conduct to be adhered to in conducting a research study. This study adhered to Unisa's Research Ethics Committee and Limpopo Provincial Research Ethics Committee (LPREC). Clearance certificates were issued and granted for this study by both research committees (Appendix A and Appendix B). This study is classified as low risk by Unisa Research Ethics Committee and LPREC. Participants were inconvenienced of their time and minimal discomfort to some of the participants as issues of curriculum implementations are sometimes viewed as controversial.

#### **4.11.1 Informed consent and voluntary participation**

Participants were fully informed that participation in this study is voluntary and that they may withdraw at any given point without penalty. Consent forms to participate in the study were given to participants to read, sign and return back to ensure that all participants participated in the study voluntarily. The information sheet with all necessary information about the research was also given to participants before interviews started. Moreover, participants were free to ask any information regarding the study and the researcher was available to provide clarity participants. Participants granted the interviewer permission to interview them knowing fully what the possible consequences of participating in the study were. One participant who is the principal was unavailable owing to work commitments, but the deputy principal of the school voluntarily agreed to be interviewed. Although the information sheet had all the necessary information, the researcher had to explain all ethical issues and considerations before the interview started, as a way of achieving a reasonable informed consent with the participants.

The researcher made an effort to explain the purpose of the study and the purpose of interview, and all the processes to be followed for the interview and the research study. The researcher also ensured that all inquiries pertaining to the study and the interview were addressed, and also provided contact numbers for the researcher and the supervisor for future inquiries and communications about the research study. The researcher explained possible discomfort and possible risks to be expected as classified in the ethics certificates and the possible benefits that the research study will yield to the DBE in general and to Nkowankowa Circuit and their schools in particular.

#### **4.11.2 Anonymity and confidentiality**

Anonymity and confidentiality aim to address and protect participants' privacy. Participants' anonymity is protected by ensuring that from the collected data and information provided, the researcher or any other person cannot recognise who the participant is (Cohen *et al.*



2018:129). In addition, anonymity was adhered to by ensuring that all data collected, including the notes and the interview recordings, cannot be linked to any respondent. Pseudonyms for schools and participants were used, only referring to schools as school A participant A1. All data collected were used for research purposes only and handled by designated persons only to avoid compromising confidentiality and anonymity of participants.

Hammersley and Trainou (2012) view confidentiality as a form of secrecy and controlling rather than publicising of collected data, while anonymity involves maintaining privacy to protect participants from harm such as public embarrassment or financial or physical threat. Anonymity and confidentiality clause were clearly indicated in the information sheet and the consent forms. To ensure confidentiality, only the interviewer and the interviewee were allowed where the interviews took place. All recordings and notes were kept secretly on a computer which is password protected where only the researcher had access to them. All field notes have been photographed and also stored in password protected computer.

#### **4.11.3 The research study ethics**

In adhering to ethical considerations, the researcher conducted this study with the principle of honesty and fairness by choosing methodologies that enabled relevant data collection method, data analysis and correct reporting of results. Moreover, the researcher ensured accuracy by acknowledging contributions made by each author in this study and everyone else who contributed to the success of this study. Rights of the participants were respected at all times and their confidentiality was maintained throughout. The researcher was also objective and open during interviews by encouraging participants to elaborate their stories and opinions about how they perceive curriculum implementation in their own worlds.

All efforts were made to ensure transparency and maintaining integrity for this study. All data pertaining to this study is readily available for review, as evidence to support finding

and conclusions, and for inspection or scrutiny. Yin (2016:44) asserts that researchers ought to maintain integrity of their studies by being consistent with their own theoretical perspectives when drawing conclusions of their studies and ensuring that their data represent real truth to the state of affairs and statements.

## **4.12 VALIDITY AND TRUSTWORTHINESS**

### **4.12.1 Validity**

Yin (2016:88) asserts that it is not easy to attain complete validity in a research study. However, researchers must ensure that they address concerns and challenges to strengthen their study's validity. For this study, the researcher tried to interpret data properly to enable accurate thoughts and representation of real viewpoints of educators' perceptions on curriculum implementation.

To minimise bias, the researcher focused on being attentive to her own attitudes, opinions and expectations so that these may not influence her to lose focus during the research study, especially when collecting and analysing data. The researcher also tried not to have preconceived theories of educators' perceptions on curriculum implementation because having those would have contributed to bias. To clarify misunderstanding of the participants' responses, the researcher reiterated what the participant has answered, so as to ascertain and confirm what the participants were saying. The participants were also at liberty to ask if they did not understand what was posed.

### **4.12.2 Trustworthiness**

Trustworthiness in this study was established by ensuring credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability.

### i) Credibility

It is important for research studies to be credible and that can be achieved by affirming that data were properly collected and analysed by means of established research methods, and that the findings and conclusions reflect the contexts and occurrences of the environments that were studied (Yin, 2016: 35). Hence Stahl (2020:26) alludes that credibility asks “How congruent are the research findings with reality.”

To ensure credibility, the researcher ascertained that participants presented themselves accurately by looking and confirming the working conditions such as infrastructure availability, understaffing and other facts that were easily identifiable by being in their natural world. As a result, it was easy to identify with some of the responses about contextual issues. Credibility was also ensured by following up the participants where transcribed notes from face-to-face interviews were given to some participants to verify the researcher’s interpretation of captured data.

### ii) Transferability

Transferability can be viewed as a possibility of transferring qualitative research findings from one context to another using different participants (Bailey 2018: 146; Stahl & King 2020:27). Another strategy for ensuring transferability is through thick descriptions because they support and ensure transferability of studies (Anney 2014:277). Analysing the verbal reports through interviews and the departmental reports of NSC results and any other information provided by educators, in the form of staff establishment, learner enrolment etc. benefited the research study in terms of rich data collected. The researcher believes that these multiple sources of data gave the researcher thick descriptions that enabled her to gain more insight and understanding for analysing, concluding and making recommendations for this study.

### iii) Dependability

A study is said to be dependable if another researcher studies the research results and come to a conclusion that the research findings are logical with regards to how the study was conducted (Bailey 2018:146). All records for this study such as raw data and any other information are kept safe for audit purposes.

### iv) Confirmability

To achieve confirmability, researchers ought to demonstrate that research findings are as close to objective reality (Stahl & King 2020:28). This study is rooted on interpretivism paradigm, which outlines strategies employed for this study.

## **4.13 THE ROLE OF THE RESEARCHER**

According to Sutton and Austin (2015:226), the researcher plays a very vital role in qualitative research because they must carefully retrieve participants' thoughts and feelings about the topic under study. The researcher becomes the eye through which people would come to understand perceptions of Nkowankowa secondary schools educators on curriculum implementation. Furthermore, it is important that the researcher accurately presents the true and actual processes and findings as experienced and studied. Approved methodologies and methods as well as approved principles and rules of research and ethics were adhered to so that this study should be accepted as a true reflection of what transpired in the real world during data collection.

Every effort was made by the researcher, during data collection to guide participants to stay within the boundaries of the phenomenon being studied and to ensure that all participants are given equal and fair opportunity to respond. This was done by allowing participants to respond until they themselves indicated that they are done responding. It is important to note that all qualitative researchers are involved in the study. As a result, they become

fieldworkers who interact and engage in conversation with participants during data collection. The researcher made sure that the following roles were carried out effectively:

- Listening – To be a good listener, one must be observant of the world around themselves (Yin 2016:28). The researcher observed everything that participants were pointing out that could be seen in the environment. The researcher also employed all his senses and also looked for non-verbal language in the form of body language. By listening and observing carefully, the researcher was able to gather more useful information that strengthened the collected data, that would not have been gathered should non face-to-face interviews such as telephonic interviews were employed.
- Data handling – Buhomoli and Muneja (2021:53) point out that the quality and impact of any study lies on how data are collected, stored and preserved. Validation and transparency will certainly improve the quality of any research. All collected data for this study and other important information was handled in a careful and approved ethical manner to protect privacy and ensure anonymity and confidentiality of participants. It is also important to indicate that every piece of data collected is kept safe in a password protected computer and that only the researcher and the approved persons can have access to the research data.
- Multi-tasking- This is a skill that requires one to manage more than one activity concurrently while switching between activities (Lin 2015:37). All researchers must possess multi-tasking skills to be able to conduct their studies effectively and efficiently. Accordingly, the researcher was able to attend to multiple tasks during this study, for example collecting data while correcting some of the chapters, interviewing while noting some of the important aspects such as body language etc. and taking note of contextual issues at the respective schools.

#### **4.14 CONCLUSION**

This chapter described the research methodology of this study in detail. The research approach and research design employed were also explained in detail and the justification for using such methodology and methods was argued. The population of the study was also described and the sample and sampling procedures were also described. Qualitative data collection method of face-to-face interviews, how these interviews were conducted and how the collected data were analysed was sequentially reported. Ethical considerations and the role of the researcher were also highlighted.

The next chapter will present, discuss and interpret the findings from the analysed data.

## **CHAPTER 5: PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS**

### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

The previous chapter described research methodologies and methods used for this study in detail. Research paradigm for this study was also described in depth. This chapter focuses on presentation and interpretation of results from empirical investigations conducted by the researcher based on research questions posed in Chapter 1. Collected data will be presented, interpreted and discussed from an interpretivism viewpoint under the key theory underpinning this study which is, theory of curriculum implementation. Findings on educators' perceptions on curriculum implementation will also be presented in an attempt to clarify the research question and the research objectives of this study.

### **5.2 RESEARCH FINDINGS PRESENTATION**

#### **5.2.1 Pilot study**

The pilot study conducted by the researcher before the actual interviews prompted the researcher to do some minor adjustments on questions to be posed to the participants. The researcher learnt during pilot study that question 1 and 2 were almost similar to the participants. Therefore, the researcher decided to clarify participants before the actual interviews started that question 1 relates to the participants' school while question 2 relates to schools in general. The researcher decided to leave the number of participants at 16 after realising that time needed to interview one participant was manageable, at an average of nine minutes.

#### **5.2.2 The sample**

Data for this study were collected through face-to-face semi-structured interviews from 16 participants. Eight participants were educators not in the SMTs or in promotional posts. The

other eight educators consisted of educators serving in the SMT, which comprised three principals, two deputy principals and three departmental heads. Three schools are located in Nkowankowa Township, with three schools in Nkowankowa section B and the other one from Nkowankowa section A. The other four schools are located in villages neighbouring Nkowankowa Township.

### 5.2.3 Themes and codes

From the data collected through interviews, common responses were grouped together to allow logical discussions and analysis, and to minimise reiteration. Eight themes and six sub-themes emerged from the six questions posed to participants. The questions were probing the participants' perceptions on curriculum implementation in Nkowankowa Circuit secondary schools. All participants responded to the same questions, with question 4 and 5 probing participants on their specific job as an SMT member or an educator. From the responses, the following themes and sub-themes and codes emerged:

<b>THEME</b>	<b>CODE</b>
1. Academic Performance	AP
2. Learner Type	LT
2.1. Learner Background	LB
3. Educator commitment	EC
4. Perceptions of Curriculum Implementation and Academic Performance	PCI & AP
4.1. Monitoring	M
5. Curriculum Implementation Best Practices	CIBP
6. Perceptions of Roles and Responsibilities	PRR
6.1. Educators Roles and Responsibilities	ERR
6.2. SMT's Roles and Responsibilities	SRR
7. Curriculum Implementation Challenges	CIC



7.1. Challenges Experienced by Educators	CEE
7.2. Challenges Experienced by SMT's	CES
8. Curriculum Implementation Guidelines	CIG

*Table 5.1. Themes and Codes*

### **5.3 FINDINGS FROM INTERVIEWS AND DISCUSSIONS**

Pseudonyms for the schools were used to protect the identity of schools where schools are named as school A, B, C etc. and participants represented by 1 or 2. A1 represents respondent 1 from school A and A2 represent respondent 2 from school A etc. It is also important to note that according to Limpopo Department of Education (LDoE), any performance below average of 65% is classified as under-performance and the researcher also classified the schools as such.

#### **5.3.1 Biographical information**

Biographical information of interviewed participants in the form of gender, responsibility and teaching experience is summarised and presented in Table 5.2.

PARTICIPANT	GENDER	RESPONSIBILITY	TEACHING EXPERIENCE
A1	Male	Deputy Principal	20+ years
A2	Male	Educator	10 – 20 years
B1	Female	Acting Deputy Principal	10-20 years
B2	Female	Educator	5-10 years
C1	Female	Educator	10-20 years
C2	Male	Departmental Head	20+ years
D1	Male	Principal	20+ years
D2	Female	Educator	Less than 5 years
E1	Male	Principal	20+ years
E2	Female	Educator	Less than 5 years
F1	Male	Principal	20+ years
F2	Male	Educator	10-20 years
G1	Male	Departmental Head	10-20 years
G2	Male	Educator	10-20 years
H1	Male	Departmental Head	20+ years
H2	Female	Educator	20+ years
SUMMARY	M=10 F=6	Educators=8 Departmental Heads=3 Deputy Principals=2 Principals =3	Less than 5 = 2 educators 5 to 10 =1 educator 10 to 20 = 6 educator 20+ = 7 educators

*Table 5.2: Biographical information*

From the biographical information, the researcher noted that 14 curriculum implementers have experienced the curriculum changes and reforms that the country experienced over the past years, except two participants who are new entrants with less than five years' experience.

Worth noting is that all principals interviewed were male, and this can be attributed to the fact that of the eight public secondary schools in Nkwankowa Circuit, six are headed by male principals with only two secondary schools headed by a female principal, where one

female principal has been recently appointed. All the principals interviewed have more than 20 years of experience in curriculum implementation which is teaching. SMT members in Nkowankowa Circuit are a mixture of male and female educators with more than ten years' experience in curriculum implementation. This is as a result of number of years' experience required for educators to be employed in management positions in schools, as outlined in EEA (2003). Two of the SMT members, one male and one female had between ten and 20 years' experience as curriculum implementers with the rest of the SMT members interviewed having more than 20 years' experience as curriculum implementers.

Of the eight educators interviewed, five were female and three were male. It is also important to note that of the eight educators, two were new entrants in the teaching profession with less than five years' experience. Five educators have between ten and 20 years of experience in teaching, with one educator having more than 20 years' experience in curriculum implementation. Important to note also is that in two schools where they indicated understaffing challenges, they requested experienced educators to act as SMT members to help in the smooth running of the school.

### **5.3.2 Theme 1: Academic Performance (AP)**

The theme academic performance (AP) emerged from the first question that participants were asked which sought to explore their particular school's performance in the previous NSC result and what the possible cause of such results would be. Participants from six schools; school B, school C, school D, school E, school G and school H rated their school performance as fluctuating but above average while participants from school A and school F rated their performance as below average. This was also confirmed by looking at the documented previous years' NSC results for all the schools in the circuit.

Participants from all good performing schools perceive their performance to be attributed to extra lessons that they offer to their learners outside the normal schools hours. Morning, afternoon and Saturday classes are compulsory to attend by all learners at their schools. Other contributing factors were also mentioned by another participant. One participant from good performing school responded as follows:

Participant B1 said: *“I think job done by educators and their time given to learners because, for example in our school, we have afternoon classes, we have morning classes...”*

This was also reiterated by another participant who is a principal at the best performing school, when he said that learners are offered lessons even after formal school time. The participant said:

Participant D1: *“Commitment of teachers...I always see them (teachers) remaining with children...”*

Participants in the two underperforming schools, which is school A and school F, perceive their underperformance as being attributed by lack of parental support. When one participant was asked, the response was:

Participant A1 *“Lack of participation by other stakeholders like for example, parents because in most cases when we invite parents, the turn up is very low... Education is a societal issue; it is not educators alone who must be actively involved but even parents are very important for them to assist...”*

This was also indicated by another participant from another underperforming school by saying:

Participant F2 *“... they (parents) don't follow their children's education even, even when we need support, we don't get the adequate support, mmm, lack of support.”*

However, the best performing school D, which is located in a village, indicated that their good performance is as a result of good parental support they receive as a school. One participant at this school indicated that:

Participant D2 “...most of our parents in our local are, they are very supportive...they always make sure that they are available...”

Another reason cited for by participants in the underperforming schools is lack of resources such as LTSM. This has an effect on how curriculum is implemented at their schools because learners are unable to continue reading on their own when they are at home. One participant responded as follows:

Participant A2 “...Infrastructure, eeh, not necessarily infrastructure I am talking about the things of textbook issues, unavailability of textbooks...subjects contributed unfairly to these learners because you find that they are only taught in class and they do not have apparatus to actually pursue their education when they are at home...”

Another participant from school F, another underperforming school indicated that lack of LTSM is also a challenge in their school. The response was:

Participant F2 “...we are running short of teaching aids, not enough LTSM or nothing at all in Maths and Physics...”

The good performing schools also mentioned inadequate LTSM in their schools. One participant said:

Participant H2 “...like the imbalance there in terms of materials, materials as in LTSM. You find that school I has more resources than school B in the same circuit...I feel that we must be level where we strike a balance in our schools in the circuit.”

This was also again indicated by another participant at another good performing school. The response was:

Participant G2 “...*the challenge is basically in form of...to be specific, like textbooks, LTSM yes...*”

Although School F indicated lack of resources such as LTSM as one of the contributing factors for their underperformance, the participants at that school pointed out their major challenge as understaffing because of the process of restructuring and redeployment (R&R) which has an adverse effect on their school’s curriculum implementation. When probed, one participant who is a principal responded as follows:

Participant F1 “... *because of R & R ...we had excess educators that have been moved out of the school, then we remain being eight and the subjects that we are supposed to cater it was ten, so it means three educators were teaching two subjects in matric, which means they would not concentrate...even now it is worse we are seven...*”

Understaffing was also confirmed by another participant at that underperforming school as a challenge. The participant said:

Participant F2 “...*we are always understaffed although we are trying by all means to get funding...*”

The theme, AP highlighted the fact that schools as organisations have different capacities which can be influenced by their own contextual factors in which schools find themselves. School A, B and D are from rural villages surrounding Nkowankowa Township, with school A and B located in the same village. However, school B and D are the best performing school in the circuit with school C in the township being the worst performing school.

It has come to light that these two underperforming schools have challenges that are unique to their environment, which other surrounding schools may not be experiencing to an extent they are experiencing it. Some of their challenges are similar to challenges in good performing schools. However, other schools are more capacitated to overcome such challenges effectively than the two underperforming schools. Rogan and Grayson's theory of curriculum implementation, as discussed earlier, highlighted that schools are not the same, and that any curriculum innovation or reform must consider the diversity of schools instead of neglecting existing diversity when complex and comprehensive system changes take place. Because of the schools' uniqueness, these underperforming schools experience implementation challenges and it is evident in their academic performance that they may not be ready to cope with these new reforms because other challenges need to be addressed and solved first for smooth implementation of the curriculum.

### **5.3.3 Theme 2: Learner Type (LT)**

This theme 'Learner Type' (LT) emerged when participants were probed of the last three years of NSC results of their respective schools and what they think can be the possible cause of this performance in their schools. Participants' perceptions is that the type of learners that they teach every year has an impact on how curriculum is implemented in class. Participants mostly from good performing school B, C, D and E, indicated type of learners as another challenge and a contributing factor to their fluctuating good NSC results. When probed the participants responded by saying:

Participant B2 “... *because learners are not the same, maybe you find a group of learners where they are not the same good learners as the last group ... the results are fluctuating depending on the type of learners we are getting...*”

Two other participants from good performing schools added that learners are not the same every year and this could be one of the reasons their academic performance is fluctuating. Their responses were as follows:

Participant C2 “...*Just because of the type of learners...*”

Participant D2 “...*another thing, every year, we have different types of learners, there are certain years in which...we have a group which are learners with flying colours, and then there are certain years where we have learners who are average...*”

This was again indicated by a participant who is a principal at a good performing school when mentioning that:

Participant E1 “...*the type of learners are not the same; this year we have this crop of learners and the following year they are not the same because the very same teachers who were teaching in 2018, 2019, 2020 are the same so I can say it's the crop of learners...*”

Participants from school B and D, who are not in management indicated that the type of learners they teach per year is a challenge and added that this challenge of type of learners is caused by the departmental policies. These participants highlighted the progression policies of the department which have an adverse effect on curriculum implementation and academic achievement.

Participant B2 “... *maybe you think that this year there are more learners like 19, 20 years old who failed Grade 11 twice thrice but they are bound to go to Grade 12 because of the law given by the department that no learner must repeat a grade, so we are forced to take them to the next grade...*”

Participant D2 “...*and again, the department will request us to progress learners who are just average, so you find that there are other years where we have a lot of progressed learners...and some of them are no longer interested it's just that they are forced to come to school and finish matric...*”



Participants from both good performing and underperforming schools also acknowledged that besides learner issues caused by departmental policies, there are other issues within learners themselves that also contribute to their NSC results because they would ideally love to achieve 100% every year. These issues led to the emergent of ‘learner background’ (LB) sub-theme that will be discussed next.

**a) Sub-theme 2.1: Learner background (LB)**

Backgrounds where learners come from, such as their families and communities, have an effect on shaping children’s behavioural patterns and characters. Participants from good performing schools indicated that learners from disciplined families normally are disciplined and committed to their schoolwork and this makes curriculum implementation a success because parents are able to support their children even at home; this helps to boost their academic achievements. Their responses were as follows:

Participant C1: *“Most of our learners in our school, those who are performing high, they are those who come from disciplined families...”*

Participant D2 *“...and whenever you have a problem with the learner then the parent comes and discusses, it’s even easier because the parent will be observing the child at home... it makes the learners to be more committed once they know that at home I’m being watched...”*

School D is the best performing school in Nkowankowa Circuit, and both participants indicated that because of good parental support they receive, it enables their learners to be more disciplined and committed because both the school and the parents are working together to help schools in curriculum implementation.

On the contrary, participants from underperforming schools in the circuit, school A and F, cite learner behavioural problems as a challenge in implementing curriculum effectively. When probed their responses were:

Participant A1 “...*their (learners) behaviour are not good...*”

Participant A2 “...*discipline, so far as the learners are concerned that is another challenge...discipline will stretch so far to even the fact that they don't understand why they are here for...they don't have goals...they don't even know why they are here for...*”

Child-headed families and poverty are also a challenge as identified by participants in underperforming school A and F, which was also supported by some participants at good performing school. Children are parents themselves with no one to enforce discipline to them which leads to ill-discipline and absenteeism of learners which hinder proper curriculum implementation. Parents are either absent owing to work commitments or they have passed away; so school children become parents themselves.

Participant B2 “...*most of our learners are playing a parental role, you find that a 19 year old girl or an 18 year old is left with siblings that are in primary, so she must make sure that they eat, get food before they go to school and then they are failing to concentrate so it is not easy for them...*”

This was also highlighted by participants in school F, which underperformed when they indicated that:

Participant F1 “...*our intake is from child headed background...*”

Participant F1 “...*our learners are from child headed background...learners who are ill disciplined, we spend more time dealing with behavioural problems rather than academically...*”

Participants from the two underperforming schools added gangsterism and substance abuse which also aggravate ill-discipline at their schools. When probed the response was:

Participant A1 “...you find that they (learners) are addicted to these drugs...some learners were involved in this gangsterism in the village...”

Which was also said by participant F2:

Participant F2 “...most of them are gangsters from A village, they just come to school because they need documents just to show that they are attending school...”

A participant from one of the good performing schools also mentioned that poverty affects their curriculum implementation; hence, performance that they got. Poverty affects learners’ self-esteem because they may not afford to have basic necessities for the school and personal use. When probed, the respondent said:

Participant C1 “...some because of poverty at home, they are not doing well at school...”

Parents’ level of education was also indicated as a reason for underperformance by school F, claiming that uneducated parents might not give their children the necessary support. This might lead to ill-disciplined learners who know that their parents will not follow-up on their schoolwork. One participant said:

Participant F2 “...I mean the feeder community if from A village and so on, where their parents are not educated, they don’t follow their children’s education...”

The sub-theme LB indicated how important learners’ background plays a vital role in their education. Parents must be supportive towards their children’s education so that learners may

develop a positive attitude towards education, as noted from the participants. Parents and families who play a major role in their children's education are contributing to the fundamental fact of improving learner performance, especially at disadvantaged communities. Issues experienced by some of the schools such as ill-discipline, gangsterism and substance abuse can be curbed by families that are involved in their children's lives to make issues of discipline to be manageable at school.

The communities in which schools are located also play a role in shaping learners' attitudes and values and also contribute to the school's culture. Communities form part of learners' background. This indicates how schools are dependent and influenced by their surrounding environments. Schools are mutually dependent and highly interact with the outside environment, as the theory of curriculum implementation alluded that outside forces play a vital role in the existence of schools. Whatever happens in the surrounding community such as substance abuse, gangsterism etc. will filter to the school community. However, the uniqueness of schools and their capacity to deal with the problems will determine the success or failure of such schools in curriculum implementation within those challenges. These cannot be ignored as they influence and impact on school operations, and curriculum implementation is also affected

#### **5.3.4 Theme 3: Educator Commitment (EC)**

The theme 'educator commitment' (EC) emerged when participants were asked what they thought was the reason for their NSC performance. Commitment and dedication from educators were given as other reasons for effective curriculum implementation and good performance, mostly by school performing well. Educator commitment is also displayed in good teamwork spirit when discharging their duties, as other participants cited by indicating:

Participant D2 “...*commitment of the teachers...*”

Participant G2 “...*we have educators that which are full of determination...*”

Three SMT members from good performing schools also indicated that dedicated and hardworking educators contribute positively to curriculum implementation and their academic achievement. Their responses were as follows:

Participant B1 “...so teachers are dedicated most of the times in these learners...”

Participant E1 “...but all in all our teachers are trying their level best to teach learners; so, they are hardworking...so they put more effort to their work...”

Participant H1 “...its dedication of teachers....and learners are willing to listen to their educators in class...”

A participant from the best performing school clarified that the dedication of educators and their commitment is not motivated by anything external, such as incentives, but educators feel the need to help the learners. This is evident in the fact that educators sacrifice their time after hours to remain with learners and teach them. The participant who is also a principal at the best performing school indicated that:

Participant D1 “...I attribute the improvement to teamwork, we work together as a team, and commitment on the part of the teachers...not because they are motivated by some monetary incentives...I always see them remaining with kids, working until late...”

Team teaching, as practised by most performing schools in the circuit, also highlights how committed and dedicated other educators are. Team teaching means that if school A has an educator who is best in a particular subject or topic, they request that educator to help school B, or organise that learners from surrounding schools come together and the identified best teachers teach them. This happens at school level and at circuit level. To the participants, this demonstrates how committed educators are to see learners in their circuit improve their academic achievements. The participant responded:

Participant D1 “...we also have team teaching, ehhh by team teaching, I don’t refer to only the school, but it’s team teaching as a circuit. We usually exchange the educators, you find that educator from school A goes to teach to school B, ehhh so that’s also helping...”

Another participant from one of the good performing schools also indicated how their school participates in team teaching. The respondent said:

Participant B1 “ ...we have Saturday school as a circuit, so what we do , teacher A goes to school C to teach during Saturday classes...and then you find that in curriculum teacher A is not good in a topic, then we exchange teachers. When we are not good in that subtopic we ask our neighbouring teachers to come and teach our learners...”

The researcher learnt that committed educators are motivated educators themselves and they in turn motivate their learners. Motivated learners are also dedicated and committed to attend classes, even after hours and to work very hard. Learner commitment is also attributed to the good parental support they receive as individual educators and as a school. Learners work very hard not to disappoint their educators and their parents and with the support from home, learners are always achieving good results. Most participants from these good performing schools indicated that teacher and learner commitment at their respective schools is as a result of the best support that they receive from most parents, principals, SMT members and the Circuit.

Worth noting is that both the underperforming schools indicated lack of dedication and commitment by learners as another challenge in curriculum implementation at their schools. They responded as follows:

Participant A2 “...I would say mostly (lack of) learner commitment...they don’t have goals and no nothing about goals...”

Participant F1 “...we work very hard, but our effort is not rewarded ehhh because of other external contextual factors, because this school ehhh it’s a special school of its own because of learners that are ill disciplined...”

The theme EC emphasised that dedicated and committed educators will ensure that they constantly look for innovative ways to improve curriculum implementation and more effective alternative versions to best implement curriculum changes and reforms for the improvement of their school academic performances. Committed educators will also strive to fully implement curriculum and continuously do research on the best practices of implementing the new innovation. These educators are always willing to seek information outside the school to intensify their strategies of implementation; hence the commitment to teamwork and to utilise their own time towards making sure that their respective schools achieve higher performance in their academics. These educators’ values, beliefs and attitudes are inclined towards the improvement of curriculum implementation and improving academic performance.

#### **5.3.5 Theme 4: Perceptions of Curriculum Implementation and Academic Performance (PCI & AP)**

This theme PCI and AP emerged after participants were asked whether curriculum implementation has an influence on academic performance at schools. All participants in both good and underperforming schools discern that curriculum implementation do affect academic performance in schools. However, participants from five schools, school A, B, C, E and H added that for good performance, proper curriculum coverage where all aspects of the curriculum are treated thoroughly as expected constitute effective curriculum implementation. Some of them responded as follows:

Participant A1: *“Yes...and making sure that all the activities that are expected from both teachers and learners are done...”*

Participant A2 *“...finishing every aspect of the curriculum as required...and then we follow it to the letter we are sure that it will influence the performance of the school positive...”*

A participant from school C highlighted how not finishing the curriculum in a year negatively impacts academic performance. The participant indicated that:

Participant C1 *“...the syllabus is sometimes long, then sometimes we cannot manage to finish the syllabus on time, so I see some of the impact...”*

Other participants who are members of the SMT at their schools agree that curriculum implementation impacts positively on academic performance if all content is covered. They responded as follows:

Participant E1 *“...and curriculum coverage so if you follow it, the learners are going to pass as expected...”*

Participant H1 *“...it affects learner performance because if we do not follow the required curriculum according to what the department has said, we are not going to finish our syllabus in time and that is going to disadvantage the learners...”*

This was also reiterated by a participant who is an educator by saying:

Participant H2 *“...that teaching and learning takes place in class and making sure that all the activities that are expected from both the teachers and the learners are done...”*



Other participants added that finishing the syllabus by properly implementing the curriculum as expected also positively impacts on academic performance. Other participants mentioned that proper planning is very important, with one respondent from school C stressing that planning at school and the department's level must be aligned. Their responses were as follows:

Participants C2 “...one way or the other it has a bearing...the teacher would plan to do things this way, curriculum will plan the other way, curriculum section, exam section of the department, their planning actually does not sit well with what is happening at school...”

Another participant from a good performing school underscored the importance of training teachers on proper curriculum implementation by saying:

Participant E2 “...I think proper implementation will influence the performance of learners correctly...if an educator gets enough training on the implementation of the curriculum and then is then that the educator will implement it correctly and then the output will also be positive on the learners' performance.”

Both participants from school F, which is the worst underperforming school in the circuit, again repeated that proper resources such as enough educators and enough LTSM must be provided for effective implementation to impact positively on academic performance. Their responses were as follows:

Participant F1“...curriculum implementation depends on human resource...learner management, educator management, parent management, physical resources management is part of implementation; that's why desired results are not forthcoming quickly...”

Participant F2 “...yes...*the issue of teaching aids....it’s really a challenge you have to improvise...it has got a high impact we rely mostly on theory in teaching, so it affects in a negative way...*”

#### **a) Sub theme 4.1: Monitoring (M)**

The sub-theme ‘monitoring’ (M) emerged when participants were asked if curriculum implementation impacts on academic performance. Some participants, mostly SMT members, recognise that good and proper monitoring of curriculum implementation is key to good academic performance. However, some participants emphasise that because of under staffing, monitoring at school level is not carried out as it should be. Proper monitoring will ensure that challenges are picked up and addressed earlier to minimise future challenges in curriculum implementation.

Participants who are all SMT members highlighted the need for monitoring by responding as follows:

Participant A1 “...*we must make sure that all the activities that are expected from both teachers and learners are done by these monitoring....as SMT members we have to advice these educators to close gaps and even motivate both the staff and learners...*”

Participant B1 “...*the SMT they must make sure that the curriculum is implemented correctly and by checking educators...*”

Monitoring was also indicated by a participant who is a principal at an underperforming school as important by saying:

Participant F1 “...make sure that teachers implement subject assessment guidelines, monitoring and support teaching and learning itself, you won’t achieve the desired performance ... curriculum implementation needs human resources, needs monitoring tools...”

School D1, which is the best performing school in the circuit, also agrees that monitoring is important and shared how they carry it out at their school. The participant who is also the school principal indicated:

Participant D1 “...we have tools that we use as members of SMT, just to ensure that educators play by the books in terms of curriculum implementation. For example, audits of written work, particularly in Grade 12...”

In one of the good performing schools, the participant who is also an SMT member gave a scenario that happened at their school because of lack of monitoring which is aggravated by understaffing. When probed he responded as follows:

Participant G1 “...like in our case we have a challenge of monitoring, I am an HoD but I am having more periods than CS 1...you start to realise challenges after you have done the analysis of results after tests...the issue of monitoring is a challenge even for the top management; like last year, no one even monitored my work the whole year... if you are not monitored, for example in one of the grades I realised that they wrote two different papers for the same subject and it is the same grade, different teachers and it was done because there was no monitoring...”

Other participants underscored the importance of proper curriculum implementation where all aspects of curriculum are given enough attention by means of proper teaching and

learning. Other participants believe that informative workshops on proper and effective implementation will help iron out implementation challenges. It was, however, indicated that proper monitoring is very important because there has to be monitors to ensure that educators are accountable for their roles and responsibilities in curriculum implementation. Monitoring will also enable implementation challenges to be identified earlier and be addressed so that proper support can be given as soon as possible for effective implementation.

### **5.3.6 Theme 5: Curriculum Implementation Best Practices (CIBP)**

The theme CIBP emerged after participants were asked their opinion of what the best practices of curriculum implementation in good performing schools were. Participants cited different strategies, which, if implemented effectively, will ensure thorough and proper curriculum implementation and ample revision time. Offering extra classes and enforcing studies, especially after formal contact time and on weekends and school holidays proved to help many good performing schools. Participants said:

Participant A1 “...*teachers must go an extra mile by having morning lessons and afternoon lessons even some weekend classes...*”

Participant B1 “...*we have Saturday classes as a circuit...*”

The two participants from schools in surrounding villages also reported offering extra lessons as their best practice for good academic performance. When probed, they responded as follows:

Participant D2 “...*we are having teachers arriving at 06h30 am...and then we teachers remaining after school until 16h00 and they are still teaching at that time, and there are teachers who even come to school on Sundays requesting learners to come...*”

Participant E2 “*Doing extra work...whether we you are doing extra classes on Saturdays or in the afternoon, we make sure that we keep learners here...*”

Outsourcing of best educators is another strategy used by good performing schools, as observed by a participant in one of the underperforming schools. The response was:

Participant F1 “...*outsourcing of best educators...*”

One participant from one of the good performing schools added that thorough curriculum implementation at lower grades can also help in effective curriculum implementation at higher grades. The response was as follows:

Participant C2 “...*everything lies in hard work...learners are not given enough attention from lower grades, if learners are taught thoroughly in Grade 8, 9 and 10, obviously when they get to matric they would know everything they need to know...*”

Offering proper support to the learners by also engaging them individually is another strategy cited by other participants as beneficial for effective curriculum implementation. Their responses were as follows:

Participant D1 “...*we engage our learners individually ...and that helps in terms of ensuring that they perform...*”

Participant H2 “...*support, the support, the parents you know, all stakeholders...*”

Other strategies include using different approaches such as visual and practical approaches as well as sharing lessons and activities on WhatsApp platforms, as indicated by participant F2 and G2.

From the theme CIBP, good performing schools were able to share their best practices of how they remain good achievers. The two underperforming schools were also able to indicate what they observed being practised at their neighbouring best performing schools. Though

they indicated that lack of financial resources might be hindering them not to practise what best performing schools practise, the researcher noted that their ill-disciplined learners and insubordination by educators may defeat these good practices because absenteeism is also one of their challenges.

### **5.3.7 Theme 6: Perceptions of Roles and Responsibilities (PRR)**

The theme PRR emerged when participants were probed on their roles and responsibilities in curriculum implementation. Both the educators and the SMT members were asked the same question which was specific to their positions at their respective schools to understand their perceptions of their specific roles and responsibilities with regards to curriculum implementation. The theme PRR gave rise to 2 sub-themes discussed next.

#### **a) Sub theme 6.1. Educator's roles and responsibilities (ERR)**

The researcher probed the participants to ascertain how they perceive their respective roles and responsibilities, as entailed in their contracts of employment. All eight participants indicated that their core duty is implementing curriculum by means of teaching in class. Participants responded as follows:

Participant B2 *“my roles and responsibilities eehh, teaching...”*

Participant C1 *“...responsibility is one of my roles in class, going to class every period or every day...”*

Participant D2 *“...is to go to class and deliver the content...”*

Other participants also outlined their perceptions and experiences of how they understand their roles and responsibilities by saying that:

Participant E2 “...we just have to implement it (curriculum), I think we are expected to implement it 100%.”

Participant G2 “My role is just to teach; I think that is the bottom line...”

Participant H2 “...to teach, to be involved, highly involved in everything that the school is supposed to do...”

Participants from the two underperforming schools also pointed their perceptions of their roles and responsibilities at their workplace by saying:

Participants A2 “...I think as an educator obviously my role is curriculum implementation...”

Participant F2 “Is to unpack the subject to teach, to make it more simpler to learners...”

One participant B1 indicated his roles and responsibilities of teaching the curriculum in class and added that proper planning of lessons by doing thorough research beforehand to help enhance his lessons, was also part of his job. When probed, the response was:

Participant B1 “ ...teaching, going all out, finding information, some we got it on the internet some you don't have resources, then I Google for them the resources and I make sure that my learners they have everything that they need to do with the subject I am teaching.”

It was also indicated by another participant from the best performing school D by reiterating:

Participant D2 “...is to prepare whatever I'm going to deliver in class...then I go to class and deliver the content...”

Participants from the two underperforming schools also seemed to understand their roles and responsibilities, as stipulated in the EEA. They added that finishing the curriculum properly was also part of their roles and responsibilities. Their responses were as follows:

Participant A2 “...is to make sure that I cover all aspects right from the beginning of the year in each term so that I make sure that every curriculum that is supposed to be covered is done so as to allow time in the last term for enough revision...”

Participant F2 “...to finish the syllabus in time, and use all sorts of approach, make sure they are exposed...”

#### **b) Sub theme 6.2. School Management Teams (SMT) roles and responsibilities (SRR)**

The researcher probed the participants who are members of the SMT to see how they perceive their roles and responsibilities as stated in their employment contracts. From the participants, three participants were departmental heads, two participants were deputy principals and three were principals. The responses of the departmental heads were as follows:

Participant C2 “...almost all over...I’m almost all over...I assist in the number of areas, extra mural activities such as debate, I’m almost all over as I said.”

From the foregoing response, the researcher concluded that participant C1 did not clearly outline his exact roles and responsibilities as stated.



Participant G1 at another good performing school articulated his roles and responsibilities clearly by saying:

Participant G1 “...to monitor the work of educators under my department...and also calling subject meetings and to make sure that teachers are teaching according to the annual teaching plan...and that one of making sure that teachers comply with subject policy...”

Another participant from school H stated his roles and responsibilities as follows:

Participant H1 “...to make sure that educators are going to class according to their allocation in the timetable...to make sure that educators are giving learners tasks...and to see whether the tasks which are given to learners are correspond with what is in the curriculum...”

Deputy Principals responded to the same question outlining their perceptions on their roles and responsibilities. They perceive their main role as that of curriculum management, where they monitor HoDs to ensure that they together with subject teachers, are implementing curriculum as expected. Their responses were as follows:

Participant A1 “...responsible to see to it that teaching and learning takes place in class and making sure that educators attend their classes...making sure that I check their work...”

Participant B1 “...to make sure that curriculum is implemented accordingly and make sure that HoDs do their job...”

The principal’s responses indicated that their roles and responsibilities mainly revolve around curriculum management which involves proper monitoring and support of deputy

principal and departmental heads to ensure that they discharge their roles and responsibilities as expected, for effective implementation. Their responses were as follows:

Participant D1 “...*to manage curriculum...making sure that teachers go to class prepared....because we don't have a deputy principal....to monitor work done by HoDs...*”

Participant E1 “...*always to monitor and control....because they are almost the same thing...*”

This was also stated by a participant from an underperforming school, by stating that:

Participant F1 “...*support, monitoring and support...and making sure that learners are assessed on monthly basis...*”

From the theme PRR, educators are well aware of what is expected of them, including educators from underperforming schools. Proper planning and covering all aspects of curriculum in time were also mentioned by educators as part of their roles and responsibilities. Most SMT members also understand their core duty of curriculum management which include monitoring and support. Understaffing, as mentioned by some participants, hinders their monitoring duties because SMT members are overworked with little or no time to perform proper monitoring and support duties.

### **5.3.8 Theme 7: Curriculum Implementation Challenges (CIC)**

The theme CIC emerged after participants were probed by the researcher to find out if they are experiencing any challenges in their respective duties and position in relation to curriculum implementation. Two sub-themes also emerged and are discussed next:

### **a) Sub theme 7.1: Challenges experienced by educators (CEE)**

From the responses, it emerged that the very same factors that made schools to achieve the way they achieved in the previous NSC results, especially the two underperforming school A and F, are the same challenges they experience in implementing curriculum effectively. The challenges are classified by the researcher as learner challenges. Educator challenges and contextual challenges, and the findings are discussed next:

#### **a) Learner challenges**

Drugs and substance abuse and ill-disciplined learners are some of the challenges experienced by school A and C, where participants stated:

Participants C1 “...we have many challenges, first of all ill-discipline, drugs, most of the learners are smoking dagga at school then when they come back they start laughing at you, they don't hear anything that you are saying in class...”

Participant A2 “...discipline as far as learners are concerned, discipline will stretch to even to fact of discipline so far as understanding what they are here for...”

Three participants pointed out learner challenges that pose a challenge in their everyday implementation of curriculum, such as language barrier, slow learners, demotivated learners and absenteeism by learners are also a challenge. Some of their responses are as follows:

Participant B2 “...the challenge that we have is language barrier. Our kids have a problem of language barrier...you might find that the learner from primary school is being

*progressed, progressed, progressed and when the learner comes here in high school, we are expecting them to understand English...”*

Participant D2 from the best performing school indicated that “slow” learners are also a challenge. ‘Slow’ learners lack commitment and do not want to acknowledge their challenges. As a result, they do not want to accept support from educators. The participant said:

*Participant D2 “...they don’t want to accept that they are slow, so that’s where the problem comes because it becomes difficult for teachers to help that particular learner...and these learners say teachers don’t like them...”*

Participant F2 stresses that demotivated learners and absenteeism by learners poses a challenge. His response was:

*Participant F2 “...absenteeism by learners that is the big challenge, the other thing they don’t have that much motivation when it comes to learners themselves...”*

## b) Educator challenges

One participant indicated lack of teamwork as a challenge in curriculum implementation. When probed, the response was as follows:

*Participant H2 “I feel that there should be a collegial approach, we should be one in more often than not...teamwork, there is lack thereof...”*

c) Contextual challenges

Lack of resources and understaffing that add to workloads of educators was cited by two participants as a challenge to curriculum implementation. One participant in school that is based in a village added that lack of resources such as Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is a challenge to them because they have to use their own personal resources at their homes for doing research to enhance their lessons. When probed, the response was as follows:

Participant E2 *“Because of the things that are being implemented you find that they don’t fit perfectly with our situation, example, if they say in the curriculum you have to do a lesson, maybe it’s like e-learning you don’t have those resources especially in villages we don’t have resources...”*

A participant from the underperforming school F indicated that lack of LTSM poses a challenge in curriculum implementation in their school. This was also mentioned by two participants in two good performing schools, where they indicated that:

Participant B2 *“...the issue of resources...our school learners are doing Physical Sciences but don’t have a laboratory, they do Life Sciences we don’t have a laboratory...”*

Participant G2 *“The challenge is basically resources...to be specific like textbooks. LTSM...and the infrastructure...and overcrowding, some of the classes in a normal situation you find one class having more than 70 learners...”*

## **b) Sub-theme 7.2. Challenges experienced by SMTs (CES)**

Like educators' challenges discussed earlier, SMT challenges are also classified into three: learner challenges, educator challenges and contextual challenges which will be discussed next. A participant from school F indicated:

Participant F1 *“Lack of support from parents whose learners are a challenge, is our challenge...”*

This was also repeated by a participant in school H by responding:

Participant H1 *“...challenge which we are having, which is the main one, is that sometimes we call parents, they don't come to school. The parents does not support us...”*

### **a) Learner challenges**

Absenteeism by learners is a challenge at school G. A participant's response at that school was as follows:

Participant G1 *“...even learner absenteeism is another challenge, and that one of learner absenteeism I can address...”*

### **b) Educator challenges**

Educator absenteeism and late coming at school A, which is an underperforming school, is a challenge. The participant who is a deputy principal indicated:

Participant A1 “...Yah, there challenges are there, you find that; absenteeism is a challenge to us, you find that educators say that I am not well, she is not coming and you find that learners are without educators, even that thing of late coming, although we try to motivate them. Late coming is also a challenge to us as SMT...”

This was also echoed by a participant who is an HoD at one of the good performing schools, school G, by uttering this:

Participant G1“...and then another one that is also very serious is educator absenteeism that one is affecting... but for educators, there is no way I can address that as an HOD, they report to the principal. You find a situation where for the whole week, learners are without an educator...”

Participants in school A and C added insubordination by staff members as another challenge limiting effective curriculum implementation.

Participant A1 “Sometimes some educators just disappear without our knowledge; it is also a challenge...”

Participant C2 “One can say the first one is insubordination because of our democratic processes have been relaxed back there on authority; some educators would like to prove that...”

c) Contextual challenges

Participants who are principals cited workloads as a challenge to them in curriculum implementation. When probed, their responses were follows:

Participant D1 “...*the most obvious one is that we are understaffed and this creates a very huge burden...*”

Participant E1 “...*we sometimes go to meetings, we are overworked.*”

Understaffing and being overworked were also mentioned by participant F1 from the underperforming school, who also added lack of resources to his list of contextual challenges. When probed, the response was as follows:

Participant F1 “...*another one it’s understaffing, burn out because of workloads...lack of resources, financial because we see that enrichment classes are necessary for the kind of learners we have. I think it is worth mentioning that the type of learners we have, we are a special school on itself. They need extra, so extra classes need extra funds.*”

From the theme CIC, it is evident that schools in Nkowankowa Circuit which represents other schools in general, are characterised by many challenges which will take time to mention all of them. Challenges mentioned by participants in this study are the most common ones and are just a tip of what other educators are experiencing. However, other schools are able to perform best with the same challenges as underperforming schools or with far less resources than the underperforming schools, as the researcher noted in this case study. Other educator challenges such as absenteeism and insubordination can be solved by good and effective management and leadership.



Understaffing is a challenging issue, and the process of restructuring and redeployment (R & R) adds to this challenge by leaving other schools severely understaffed as mentioned by participant F1 when he mentioned that:

Participant F1 “...*because of a R and R excess where we had excess educators that have been moved out of the school, then we remain being eight, so as a result, the subjects that we are supposed to cater it was 10, so it means three educators were teaching two subjects in matric,...*”

### **5.3.9 Theme 8: Curriculum Implementation Guidelines (CIG)**

To get the participants’ perceptions on strategies to be employed to improve curriculum implementation which will ensure improved academic performance, all participants were asked the same question as follows:

“What can you do to improve curriculum implementation in your school?”

One participant from school B believed that it is beyond their school’s control by indicating that:

Participant B1 “...*what can be done to improve the curriculum implementation is beyond my control, the person that can do that is the department... I think the Department of [Basic] Education are the ones who can solve this problem by employing more teachers to our school...*”

It was also agreed upon by another participant at school H that there is nothing they can do about most of the challenges they are facing. The response was as follows:

Participant H1 “...I know that these challenges the department is not going to do anything about it, because it is of no use to say the department must do this and this but what we can do is that even though there are challenges we have to make sure that we improve our results because we cannot be pleased by 80%. Our main aim is to make sure that every learner that is in our school proceed to the next grade at the end of the year...”

Other participants acknowledge that there are some things that they can do or improve in their respective schools to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Participants A2 and C2 believe that giving learners more support and encouraging them more will go a long way in improving curriculum implementation. Participant A2 who is an SMT member indicated that giving learners previous question papers to work on them as a way to practising the format and questioning of the final examinations would help them immensely because learners will be kept busy and be taught to exercise their minds on the type of questions they may encounter during final examination.

Participants E2 and F2 indicated that they need to involve parents more in the education of their children. They pointed out that parents must always be up to date about their children’s education so that they can work together with educators to help solve challenges that learners may experience at an early stage so that the academic performance of children can improve. Their responses were as follows:

Participant E2 “...the parent involvement, stakeholders...”

Participant F2 “...first of all to win parents support, yah to win parent support and educate them their roles and responsibilities...”

Other participants indicated that motivating fellow educators would also be beneficial for the effective implementation of curriculum because some other schools are experiencing lack of teamwork spirit and educators are demotivated. One participant said:

Participant D1 “... my, my wish is to have more workshops, just to ensure that I capacitate my staff members, so that ehhh, like they say “dogs of the same street bark alike”, we need to bark alike, and workshops will go a long way in terms of closing that gap.”

Other strategies that participants think may help in curriculum implementation include outsourcing and twinning. However, one underperforming school indicated a challenge of financial resources which makes outsourcing impossible in their school. Another strategy would be to use more of their personal time to help learners prepare for examinations, involve other stakeholders more like communities, police services and psychologists to help them in maintaining order and discipline to those troublesome learners. Others indicated that they would appreciate more support from outside curriculum advisers. Some of the responses were as follows:

Participant C1 “...call the parents for the learners trying to help each other in order to maintain law and order in school, again we involve the community, the police and every community member whose structure is involved in education...”

Participant E1 “...the parent involvement, stakeholders, outsourcing some educators where we are having challenges and twinning of schools with those that are performing well...”

One participant who is SMT member pointed out that revitalising departmental heads to carry out their duties, roles and responsibilities in curriculum implementation will enable proper monitoring and support.

Participant C2 “...the best thing could be to, eeh, revitalise the activities of the heads of departments because if heads of departments are doing well, obviously things will improve, so the heads of departments must carry out their responsibilities as prescribed by the statutes...”

Other participants cited the following strategies to help improve curriculum implementation by saying:

Participant A1“...*is to make sure that we implement the policies of the department to the latter, to do everything that is required from us our roles and responsibilities, making sure that the teachers are in class teaching, checking the work of the learners, making sure that these educators do their preparations...*”

Participant G1 “...*just to go back to the basics, making sure that teachers they are in class, on time, and then, they are in class on time teaching, and also that one of monitoring also is very much important, because you know even if they go to class and teach, if you are not monitoring, how sure are you that they are teaching the right way...*”

Getting enough resources, especially financial resources, will also help support curriculum implementation activities such as hiring educators where there is understaffing and outsourcing the best experts in subjects to help educators and learners. As mentioned earlier, funding will enable schools to purchase additional LTSM such as study guides and other material that will enhance curriculum implementation and support teaching and learning.

## **5.4 IDENTIFIED SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES**

### **5.4.1 Theme 1: Academic Performance (AP)**

All participants from good performing schools in the circuit attribute their good performance to extra lessons offered to learners outside the formal school hours. The good support that they receive from parents also enables these good performing schools to perform better. In contrast, the participants from underperforming schools points out the opposite, which is non-parental support and lack of dedication and commitment by learners. Both participants

from good performing and underperforming schools indicated understaffing as the cause of their fluctuating academic performance.

#### **5.4.2 Theme 2: Learner Type (LT)**

Only participants from good performing schools acknowledge that the type of learners they teach each year are not the same and it affects their performance and cause their results to fluctuate. They also believe that the type of learners may be caused by the departmental policies such as the progression policy and slow learners who refuse help from educators.

##### **a) Sub theme 2.1. Learner Background (LB)**

On the other hand, participants from underperforming schools believe that their underperformance is as a result of issues stemming from background of learners which cause learners to be ill disciplined, to be involved in gangsterism and substance abuse.

#### **5.4.3 Theme 3: Educator Commitment (EC)**

Participants from good performing schools credit educator dedication for their academic performance. Dedication of educators is evident in the fact that they go to greater lengths to offer extra lessons, twinning and team teaching. Participants from underperforming schools believe their performance is as a result of lack of dedication by learners.

#### **5.4.4 Theme 4: Perceptions of Curriculum Implementation and Academic Performance (PCI & AP)**

All participants from good performing and underperforming schools agree that proper curriculum coverage where educators thoroughly plan their lessons will help to improve curriculum implementation.

**a) Sub theme 4.1. Monitoring**

Participants agree that proper monitoring is key to effective curriculum implementation. They also agree that SMTs must develop proper and effective monitoring tools to help in monitoring curriculum implementation.

**5.4.5 Theme 5: Curriculum Implementation Best Practices (CIBP)**

All participants from good and underperforming schools agree that thorough curriculum coverage and offering, extra lessons are the best practice for better academic performance.

**5.4.6 Theme 6: Perceptions of Roles and Responsibilities (PRR)**

**a) Sub theme 6.1. Educators' role and responsibilities (ERR)**

All participants in good performing and underperforming schools know their core duty of teaching their allocated subjects with others adding thorough planning and completing the curriculum content as part of what is expected of them.

**b) Sub theme 6.2. SMT's roles and responsibilities (SRR)**

SMTs showed that they understand their role and responsibility of managing curriculum by making sure that proper monitoring is done though they indicate that understaffing challenges hinder them to carry out monitoring duties effectively. Only one SMT member seemed not to be sure of what his core duties were.

#### **5.4.7 Theme 7: Curriculum Implementation Challenges (CIC)**

##### **a) Sub theme 7.1 Challenges experienced by educators (CEE)**

All educators mentioned different challenges they are experiencing in their daily duties of work, ranging from learner challenges, educator challenges and contextual challenges. All participants are experiencing challenges, with the common being understaffing.

##### **b) Sub theme 7.2 Challenges experienced by SMTs (CES)**

SMT members, like educators, also experience understaffing as a common challenge, with other more different challenges. Participants who are principals all have a common challenge of being overworked.

#### **5.4.8 Theme 8: Curriculum Implementation Guidelines (CIG)**

Participants acknowledged that there are strategies that they would like to implement to improve curriculum implementation in their school. However, some believe that these strategies are beyond them and require the department to implement. Other participants mentioned different strategies that they believe they can implement to improve curriculum implementation and their school's academic performance.

## 5.5 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Brief summary of findings from face-to-face interviews seeking to understand educators' perceptions on curriculum implementation in Nkowankowa Circuit secondary schools will be given. Data used for this study were gathered through face-to-face interviews conducted by the researcher at different schools. The interviews were recorded in audio tapes, then transcribed by the researcher. Audio and electronic copy of responses have been made. Face-to-face interviews were done when South Africa was on level one lockdown under strict COVID-19 measures.

The researcher noticed the willingness of participants to be part of the study. The researcher also noticed that participants understand the importance of good quality education of learners, they seem aware of what needs to be done to improve the status quo at their respective school to improve the circuit, district, province and South Africa's education. Although some of the working conditions still need intervention, it was clear that educators understand that they need to make the best out of challenging by having positive outlook of their contextual factors. Ultimately, thriving at work amidst challenges is a mental state which is very much related to employee attitudes, behaviour and performance (Yang & Li 2021:1).

The researcher also observed that good leadership qualities that foster good team spirit are key to the smooth running of schools. Muteswa (2016: 139) affirms that good leaders with good leadership qualities ensure that their organisations have clear directions to be followed by employees so that the vision of the organisation will be attained. Most schools that are good performing in the circuit do so with minimal resources such as lack of classrooms and understaffing. However, the researcher could easily notice the orderly manner in which these schools are run the moment one enters the premises. Good leaders motivate and support their staff members and that boost the staff morale. Mughal (2019:17) asserts that good organisational support can ensure a positive significant impact on employee performance



which will ultimately motivate them to push themselves to perform better. Happy staff members will always go to extra lengths to boost the academic performance of their learners and the school to build a good image of their schools.

The good performing schools mostly attribute their success to dedicated educators with some participants adding learner commitment. However, the underperforming schools attribute their failures to lack of commitment by learners. The researcher, being a teacher herself, believes that as educators we need to self-introspect, especially in worst case scenarios. Educators need to be honest with themselves by also looking deeply at how they implement the curriculum because there is always room for improvement. More importantly, educators also need to have the right frame of mind where their attitudes, values and beliefs are inclined towards betterment of learners' lives through provision of quality education.

The researcher also noticed the circuit manager's efforts to support all schools in the circuit, especially the secondary schools and that participants were aware and appreciate the support that they receive from their circuit manager. Forson, Ofosu-Dwamena, Opoku and Adjavon (2021: 1) expound that motivation and support are vital for the success of organisations and fuel performance and lead to satisfied employees. It also came into light that the twinning of schools is done at a circuit level, with the circuit manager taking a lead on it. School holiday classes are also conducted at a circuit level for all learners at the eight public secondary schools. Moreover, this is an effort towards making sure that no school is left behind, but because there are different dynamics in each school; we find that other schools in the same circuit are best performing schools while other schools underperform.

## **5.6 CONCLUSION**

The findings have been presented, analysed and discussed to understand educators' perceptions on curriculum implementation in Nkowankowa Circuit, Limpopo Province.

Noted similarities and differences in the research findings were also briefly discussed. The chapter concluded by giving a brief summary of face-to-face interviews findings.

The next chapter will discuss findings of the study and final conclusions and recommendations will also be presented.

## **CHAPTER 6: SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS**

### **6.1 INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW**

This study focused on the educators' perceptions on curriculum implementation. Different literatures have been reviewed on the topic under study and face-to-face interviews helped to gather empirical data. This final chapter will mainly focus on summarising literature and findings. Conclusions and recommendations of this study will be made. This chapter will also advance recommendations for further study and limitations of this study.

The study sought to find out educators' perceptions on curriculum implementation in Nkowankowa Circuit secondary schools in Mopani East District of Limpopo Province. The main research question for this study was:

- What are the educators' perceptions on curriculum implementation in Nkowankowa Circuit secondary schools?

The following sub-questions were dealt with to address the main research question:

- How does the implementation of curriculum influence academic performance?
- To what extent do educators understand their roles and responsibilities in curriculum implementation?
- What challenges do educators experience in curriculum implementation?

The study focused on the following objectives of the study to address the main research question and the sub-questions:

- To analyse educators' perceptions on the influence of curriculum implementation on academic performance.
- To determine the extent to which educators understand their roles and responsibilities in curriculum implementation.

- To explore challenges experienced by educators in curriculum implementation.
- To explore possible guidelines envisaged by educators for effective curriculum implementation.

## **6.2 SUMMARY OF LITERATURE REVIEW**

Literatures reviewed in this study helped in shaping and strengthening the phenomenon being studied, which is, educators' perceptions on curriculum implementation. Literature pointed out that curriculum is a policy that needed to be adhered to like any other policy. Like any other policy implementation, an effective system of implementation and monitoring is required for effective implementation of any policy, curriculum policy included (Rahmat 2015:310). It has also come to light that it is not only South Africa that is constantly revising its curriculum and strategies, but other countries globally are also revising their curriculum to make it more relevant to the dynamic and changing world (Ruth & Ramadas 2019:46; Govender 2018: 51).

### **6.2.1 Research sub-question 1: Educators' perceptions on the influence of curriculum implementation on academic performance**

Literature indicated that curriculum implementation is the actual teaching and learning which takes place in a classroom where teachers are the key role players (Chaudhary 2015:9840), and that curriculum implementation has an impact on academic performance. Through literature review, the theory of curriculum implementation highlighted different issues that must be dealt with for effective implementation which will enable positive impact on academic performance. Educators, as ultimate curriculum implementers, have different perceptions of this phenomenon because of the different contextual circumstances in which they find themselves in at their different workplace. These different circumstances impact their daily duties and the academic performance of their schools.

Literature reviewed indicated that contextual factors such as lack or inadequate resources have an impact on everyday teaching and learning processes, as discussed in earlier in Chapter 2. Lack or inadequate classrooms relates to overcrowded classes where educators will not be able to give individual attention to their learners during the process of curriculum implementation. This will affect learner performance. Shortage of textbooks will also pose implementation challenges because learners will not be able to continue with their studies as expected and this will also affect their academic performance. Financial resources enable schools to acquire all other resources that may ensure proper curriculum implementation. This study highlighted that lack of finances will also impact proper curriculum implementation which will definitely affect academic performance. Understaffing will lead to huge workloads and burnt-out educators, and this will also pose challenges in curriculum implementation processes. However, Mupa and Chinooneka (2015:128) argue that inadequate resources cannot be regarded as the ultimate effect of poor performance but believe that learners' aptitude should also be considered in the process of teaching and learning, because it has an effect on academic performance.

### **6.2.2 Research sub-question 2: Educators' roles and responsibilities in curriculum implementation**

EEA of 1998, as discussed in Chapter 2, outlines the official roles and responsibilities of all levels of educators in the Personnel Administration Measures document, as dictated by ELRC Resolution no 8 of 1998. All public schools' educators signed employment contracts where they were acknowledging their expected roles and responsibilities, and they are bound to discharge their duties as expected by policy. Failing to discharge these duties as an educator equals to breach of employment contract and steps may be taken against any educator found in breach of these roles and responsibilities.

South African education system has monitoring systems in place from the national level to school level to ensure proper implementation of all educational policies, including curriculum policy. Monitoring is seen as a continuous exercise that is meant to be performed

daily (Kabonga 2018:3). If monitoring could be carried out as expected, pre-set goals of attaining quality education could be achieved, because through day-to-day monitoring, schools will be checked if they are delivering quality work and challenges will be picked up at earlier stages and addressed before they impact the education system negatively (Sfaryan 2020:176). However, Hudson *et al.* (2019:7) indicate that monitoring implementation is unlikely enough to guarantee effective implementation especially on implementation of complex policies that are long term in nature, such as curriculum policy. Implementation support will enable effective implementation where perceptions and experiences of curriculum implementers whose behaviours will mould the implementation process must be offered thoroughly (Hudson *et al.* 2019:7).

Systems such as Quality Management Systems (QMS) are meant to monitor, support and remedy how educators discharge their roles and responsibilities at their respective work environment. Only if such systems that are in place were adhered to without challenges, will we reach a state where all educators discharge their roles and responsibilities as expected and academic performance would improve.

### **6.2.3 Research sub-question 3: Challenges experienced by educators in curriculum implementation**

Literature study indicated that curriculum implementation is characterised by many ongoing different challenges that are mostly posed by the changing world. Contextual challenges experienced by most countries were discussed earlier in Chapter 2. However, there are some challenges that have a significant impact and are common in most schools particularly in South African public schools and these challenges will be summarised next.

The importance of contexts in which schools find themselves has been highlighted by the theory of curriculum implementation. Many scholars underscored the importance of availability of necessary resources such as physical resources like classrooms, human

resources such as educators and learner teacher support materials such as textbooks and teaching aids. Inadequate or lack of such resources pose curriculum implementation challenges and affect academic performance in schools (Mafugu & Anderson 2022: 249; Furwai & Singh Pillay 2020: 245; Amadi & Ezeugo 2019:15 etc.). It has also been evident from literature that most African countries' education systems are facing the challenge of inadequate financial resources, which is also the same challenge affecting South African education (Mbiti 2016: 10). This leads to inadequate or lack of proper school infrastructure, which aggravate overcrowded classes and understaffing.

Another challenge relates to educators and learners themselves. All the aforementioned resources can be in place but the educators and learners beliefs, attitudes and values must be inclined towards good quality education for them to be intrinsically motivated and have positive attitudes, beliefs and values towards education (Sakiz 2015:115; Killen 2091:5). Johnson (2017: 47) argues that educators' beliefs in their capabilities can help in motivating learners to learn and that educators' interests in teaching and learning processes affect how student learn. Educators with a positive outlook of education will go beyond the call of duty to help learners succeed in their education. Likewise, learners with positive attitudes towards education will also work harder to achieve outstandingly in their academic performance.

## **6.3 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

### **6.3.1 Research sub-question 1: Educators' perceptions on the influence of curriculum implementation on academic performance.**

The concept curriculum implementation is perceived by educators as the actual process of teaching and learning. Educators also perceive curriculum implementation as a process that include all the administration and management that they must undertake to enhance teaching and learning to enable quality education that will improve academic performance and ultimately the quality of life of future adults. As discussed in Chapter 2, academic performance in South Africa is gauged by Grade 12 results, commonly referred to as 'matric',

where competencies expected to be mastered over 12 years of schooling are measured (Sethusha 2015:53).

Research findings pointed out that all educators perceive curriculum implementation to have an influence on academic performance of learners and schools. However, educators from underperforming schools' perceptions is that effective curriculum implementation for better academic performance can only happen when all contextual factors that affect teaching and learning have been addressed. This is not the same perception from good performing school as they have proven that despite contextual challenges, they can still produce good results.

In curriculum implementation, which is the actual teaching and learning, the educator plays a very pivotal role that can determine the success or failure of such process thereby affecting academic performance. Findings revealed that there are other contextual factors that can pose challenges to implementation as also pointed out by theory. Findings revealed that curriculum implementation impacts positively on academic performance. However, the researcher discovered that the educator must be an inspirational educator who has mastered the art of influencing learners and everyone around them to work very hard towards academic performance of high standards. Educators ought to assist their learners to take ownership and develop personal interest in their schools work, as this will help push their internal drive to learn (Johnson 2017:47).

Educators must also possess excellent work ethics to enable them to go beyond their call of duty to deliver lessons that will be well understood and received by learners. Well organised and presented lessons, coupled with revisions from inspirational educators, tend to be well received by learners, and learners will also do everything in their power to perform better during assessments, not wanting to disappoint their educators.



The era that we live in with so many challenges socio-economically, technologically etc. gives new meaning to actual teaching and learning. Educators believe that more contact time and revisions of content taught is needed. Formal school hours are not enough to do all this; it can only be done outside formal school hours. Naturally, teaching and learning, which is curriculum implementation, need to be augmented by extra classes outside the formal teaching times where efforts should be made to ensure that learners understand the content, revise the content and have supervised study time. All these measures have proven that academic performance does improve in schools and in subjects where educators offer extra classes and supervise studies.

Adhering to teaching plans as stipulated by CAPS and curriculum advisors, coupled with proper monitoring and support also relates to effective curriculum implementation, as indicated by educators. Effective monitoring and support systems may improve the implementation process and academic performance. Moreover, findings highlighted that through monitoring and support processes, the SMTs will be able to pick up implementation challenges and other challenges that learners and educators might be experiencing at an early stage. This will help to put necessary interventions in place to avoid disasters of poor academic performance at a later stage. Monitoring implementation is a legislative mandate and all educators, if well monitored and supported will be able to carry their contractual obligation of effective curriculum implementation that will ultimately improve academic performance.

### **6.3.2 Research sub-question 2: Educators' roles and responsibilities in curriculum implementation**

This study found out that educators and SMTs members are well aware of their roles and responsibilities as stated in the official documents. Most of the educators and SMTs also quote the official documents where their roles and responsibilities are outlined. However, discharging these roles and responsibilities become a challenge to some educators as they cite many contextual factors that hamper them to discharge their duties as expected.

Findings revealed that educators perceive their main role and responsibility as to teach the subjects allocated to them. Furthermore, educators also understand that all administration and management of their subjects including thorough planning and research to enhance their lessons, and to deliver insightful lessons that will be well grasped by learners is also their responsibility. Through this study, it was revealed that educators believe that producing quality results is their responsibility, as such, they also accept the role and responsibility of teaching learners outside the formal school time because they believe that the formal school time is not enough for learners to learn and master the content.

Educators in Nkowitz Circuit took upon themselves the role and responsibility of team teaching, where learners from different schools gather in one school and the best teachers in the subject teach learners, especially during weekends and schools holiday. This is in line with their roles and responsibilities as stated in the Personnel Administration Measures (3.1.6.) document, where educators are expected to come up with a variety of strategies that will ensure that outcomes of the curriculum are met.

However, through this study, it became clear that some educators find it difficult to discharge their roles and responsibilities because of lack of parental involvement and lack of resources, but the researcher realised that some schools perform way better with minimal resources and minimal parental involvement. Another finding made by this study is that educators' attitudes, beliefs and values play an important role on how they will view and discharge their roles and responsibilities. Clearly, other educators at other schools in the same circuit have a positive attitude and they go beyond their call of duty to ensure that their learners get the best quality education that will enable these learners perform well academically.

SMTs also understand well that beside their roles and responsibilities as subject educators, they have added responsibilities of monitoring curriculum implementation and supporting all activities of curriculum implementation. Findings pointed out that most schools are understaffed, and this poses a challenge of proper monitoring and support to the SMTs. This

study found out that other schools co-opted other members of staff to assist in monitoring and support. However, the researcher also learnt that there are schools which are severely understaffed in the circuit, but these schools have the best monitoring and support systems, and are among the best performing schools in the circuit. Attitudes, beliefs and values again play an important role on how SMTs perceive and discharge their roles and responsibilities.

### **6.3.3 Research sub-question 3: Challenges experienced by educators in curriculum policy implementation**

Educators and SMTs were very quick to point out a very extensive list of challenges they are experiencing in their daily discharge of duties. This was expected because challenges are part of life, as discussed in Chapter 2, and that almost all countries around the continent are also experiencing challenges, some similar to us in curriculum implementation. Even in the best developed countries, challenges are part of their everyday discharge of formal roles and responsibilities.

Challenges revealed by this study range from educator specific challenges, learner challenges, school challenges and outside factors, all these hampering educators and SMTs to carry out their roles and responsibilities properly.

#### **Educators:**

- Massive workloads of educators in general result in educator burnout because educators must teach, manage and administer everything.
- Educator absenteeism is a challenge. This is owing to many challenges that society is faced with, and educators as members of society also experience life's challenges.
- Low staff morale because of lack of collegial approach and unequal distribution of duties.

#### **Learner:**

- Ill-disciplined learners who are frequently absent from school, and if they do come to school, these learners are always late and also bunk periods.
- The type of learner is an important factor. Progressed learners owing to age are a challenge because the workloads that educators have leave them with no time to adequately help these progressed learners.
- Drug and substance abuse in some schools and teenage parents hampers educators to implement curriculum effectively. All these lead to higher levels of absenteeism and that means that valuable contact time is lost, and most of these learners do not attend extra lessons outside formal schools time.

**School:**

- Lack of resources such as financial resources, human resources, physical resource, technological resources etc. has been pointed out by almost all the educators. As discussed in Chapter 2, these are prevalent challenges in developing countries, especially in the African continent.
- Lack of monitoring and support by SMTs owing to workloads enables other teachers to have a tendency of not discharging their duties as expected. In some schools, educators come late to school and to class, with some even bunking classes which result in loss of contact time.

**Outside issue:**

- Lack of parental involvement because of child headed families and other challenges pose a serious challenge because learners are not properly monitored and supported at home.
- Inadequate monitoring and support from subject advisors.

- Lack of support from the surrounding community members.

#### **6.3.4. Possible guidelines for effective Curriculum Implementation**

Through this study, educators were able to indicate an extensive list of possible guidelines which they believe may improve the effectiveness of curriculum implementation, despite others indicating that some of these guidelines are beyond them and can only be addressed by the department. The possible guidelines include:

- Giving learners more support and encouragement.
- Practising with previous question papers so that learners can adapt to the language and type of questions to expect in the final examination.
- Involving parents more will lessen discipline problems.
- Stakeholder involvement such as psychologists.
- Management building good teams to motivate and support educators.
- Dedication and commitment by educators to sacrifice their time to help learners, especially during examination times.
- Revitalising departmental heads so that proper monitoring and support happens.
- Outsourcing subject experts and twinning of schools.
- More support from curriculum advisors.
- Getting sponsors to finance outsourcing and purchase of other LTSM materials.

#### **6.4 CONCLUSION OF THE STUDY**

In concluding this study, the researcher has learnt that inadequate classrooms, overcrowding and understaffing have been an ongoing challenge for decades as indicated by literature and empirical findings. The researcher also noted that the state is always trying to close the gap but issues such as natural disasters, riots and generally inadequate finances will always

hinder the progress of resources provisioning. This insinuates that these problems will always be with us. As a result, educators should adapt and acquire new skills on how to improve academic performance amidst these challenges. We are seeing many schools who have mastered the skill of performing with minimal resources around the country and also in Nkowankowa Circuit. This study found out that in Nkowankowa Circuit, the best performing schools do not have enough classrooms, they do not have enough educators and have high learner enrolments while some of the underperforming schools have enough infrastructure and educators. Therefore, many lessons can be drawn from this case on how to perform at your best despite the many challenges that will always be there.

## **6.5 RECOMMENDATIONS**

The main research question for this study was: What are the educators' perceptions on curriculum implementation in Nkowankowa Circuit secondary school? Three sub-questions to address the main research question above will be discussed and recommendations be advanced.

Sub-question 1: Educators' perceptions on the influence of curriculum implementation on academic performance.

Educators realise that how they implement curriculum has an impact on academic performance and that schools are different. Therefore, more work need to be done by stakeholders to fine tune educators' attitudes, beliefs and values towards effective curriculum implementation. The modern era in which schools find themselves calls for change on how things are done. Lack of resources, pandemics, child-headed families etc. are new realities where curriculum must be implemented in; so, educators should have a positive outlook within these new realities. This means their attitudes, beliefs and values should change with the changing times. It is important for school managers to seek out strategies and best approaches to teaching and learning in the modern era because educators are expected to

implement curriculum effectively to improve academic performance of their learners and schools. Managers need to understand that some individual educators attitudes should be worked upon and that schools also cannot be at the same level of readiness to implement new reforms because of contextual factors that make their circumstances unique.

Sub-question 2: Educators understanding of roles and responsibilities in curriculum implementation.

Educators know their roles and responsibilities as stated in the PAM documents. Of utmost importance is not knowing one's roles and responsibilities but discharging your role and responsibilities in a diligent way that will ultimately meet the objectives of curriculum. The new era that we find ourselves in comes with added roles and responsibilities of which ongoing trainings and workshops should be given to educators of all levels to cope with the ever changing world. The new era also calls for educators at all levels to keep up to date with the new trends so that they can properly adjust their strategies to enable their schools to still perform best amidst the ongoing trends and pandemics. This study recommends that during change processes, managers should take a lead. Managers should ensure that they introduce change process gradually, and to continually monitor and support educators throughout to minimise implementation challenges that could otherwise be avoided.

Sub-question 3: Challenges experienced by educators in curriculum implementation

Lack of resources as well as other contextual factors are the main challenges experienced by many countries, especially African countries including SA. The 21st century era also adds more challenges to the already burdened system. This study recommends that educators should explore new ways of discharging their duties effectively in the presence of these challenges. Student educators should be equipped with skills, and those already in the system

should be constantly trained and also equipped with skills so that they are able to perform their best despite the challenges.

From the foregoing discussions, educators perceive curriculum implementation to be the core of their duties and has a positive effect on academic performance which will enable learners to succeed in their lives. Although they perceive academic performance to be influenced by how they implement curriculum, and are also fully aware of their roles and responsibilities, many challenges that they come across in their workplace has an effect on their daily discharge of duties, which some have proven that they can overcome. Effective curriculum implementation becomes very important for South Africa because it will enhance matric results, which will enable learners to gain entry to study for the careers of their choice, and this will uplift the standards of their living. As a result of effective curriculum implementation, South Africa will have excellent communities where unemployment and crime rates will be minimised. This will improve the economic state of South Africa. Effective curriculum implementation will also enable learners to be more skilled, and the country will have more specialists in different fields, rather than relying on other countries for such.

## **6.6 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES**

The dynamic world will always bring challenges of understaffing at some point to institutions, but effective implementation is still expected despite these challenges. Findings from this study suggests further research on strategies for effective monitoring and support in understaffed environments.

Noting that the new era presents new family dynamics that are beyond anyone's control, the researcher also suggests that further research should be conducted on how communities can be fully involved for effective curriculum implementation to improve academic performance.



## **6.7 CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE STUDY**

This study's contributions in relation to literature review and face-to-face interviews is summarised as follows:

It is vital in the 21st century to understand educators' viewpoint on curriculum implementation and the many challenges they constantly face. The fast paced world add to the already challenged and burdened educators and the system. Social, economic, technological etc. factors cause a change and a shift on how curriculum must be implemented, hence the viewpoints of educators, as curriculum implementers must be understood.

This study indicated that despite the many challenges, educators are still able to produce stellar performance, that is, good academic performance. This proves that there are educators who are dedicated and willing to work very hard in the midst of difficulties. This study will enable curriculum planners to help curriculum implementers with the 21st century strategies and skills to cope with a variety of challenges and still be able to produce good results. Educators need to be thoroughly capacitated with the latest contents of their subject and new workable and winning strategies to keep up with the changing school dynamics.

That schools are dependent on their environment to realise their outcomes and objectives makes it vital for all stakeholders in and around the school environment to work together towards common goals. Any inconsistencies in any of the stakeholders will definitely affect the performance of the schooling system. It is common knowledge that social environments, technological and economic trends etc. massively impact school systems and how they function. It is of utmost importance that these environments be well managed at schools by ensuring that curriculum implementers are well capacitated to work amidst this dynamic environments. Curriculum planners must ensure that educators and stakeholders are able to manage and work in these new trends and changes. They must also help their teams to adapt

to the new ways of doing things. Strategies must be in place to help especially during crisis times such as pandemics, unrest, natural disasters etc. because these too bring change in the normal schooling.

The importance of human beings in totality, that is, educators in totality cannot be underestimated. It is vital that stakeholders in curriculum implementation understand that educator's feelings, attitudes, beliefs and values are vital in times of change and must be taken into consideration. This study recommends that educators must be supported in totality and understood. Stakeholders must understand that educators as human beings go through different feelings in a bid to fine tune their inner beings to embrace new reforms and strategies that bring change in their lives. Proper and adequate support by managers inside and outside the school will enable educators to welcome and accept changes and help them to perform well and improve academic performance in their respective school.

## **6.8 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The researcher employed qualitative methods on this study, which has helped the researcher to explore educators' perceptions in curriculum implementation from different viewpoints. Qualitative method also enabled the researcher to focus more on how people construct meaning and understanding from their own point of view and how they make sense of their lives in relation to curriculum implementation, to understand the world around them. More research on the subject using quantitative and mixed methods is needed to offer in depth understanding of the phenomenon under study.

The study was limited to educators at public secondary schools and to educators teaching FET phase. Independent schools and other grades were excluded. This limits generalisability of the study. However, Nkowanowa Circuit schools reflect schools in Limpopo Province and South Africa at large. More study is required to get a comprehensive understanding of

how curriculum is implemented in independent schools and other lower grades, to gather different viewpoints on educator's perceptions on curriculum implementation and how other grades' academic performance is.

This study was conducted over a period of four years. Because of limited time, only Nkowanowa Circuit could be studied and not all literature based on the phenomenon under study could be reviewed. The study was more inclined on educators perceptions rather than learners perceptions because of limited time. Learners' perceptions still need to be studied to have a holistic understanding of curriculum implementation.

## **6.9 CONCLUSION**

This study highlighted the fact that education is very important for any country. Countries spend large amounts of revenue on education in a bid to improve the quality of education. Therefore, curriculum implementation must improve academic performance of learners so that countries can have future adults who are well equipped with quality education to move their countries forward. This study also confirmed what many scholars have already highlighted that is; many challenges in curriculum implementation hinder effective implementation. However, there is a literature gap on how curriculum policy or any other policy can be effectively implemented amidst challenges because this study has proven that lack of resources does not relate to poor curriculum implementation and having resources does not mean effective implementation. Nkowanowa Circuit, which is a reflection of schools in Limpopo, has proven that.

## REFERENCES

- Adebayo, AK., Nzimande, N., & Ngema, ZG. 2020. Availability of Educational Resources and Student Academic Performance in South Africa. *Universal Journal of Educational Research*. 8(8) pp 3768-3781.
- Adler, RH. 2022. Trustworthiness in Qualitative Research. *Journal of Human Lactation* 38 (4) pp 598-602.
- Ahmadi, AA., Lukman, AA. & Ajibola A. 2015. Issues and prospects of effective implementation of new secondary school curriculum in Nigeria. *Journal of Education and Practice*. 6 (34) pp 29-39
- Alharahsheh, HH., & Pius, A. 2020. Review of key Paradigms: Positivism Vs Interpretivism. *Global Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*. 2 (3) pp 39-43
- Alsubaie, MA. 2016. Curriculum Development: Teacher Involvement in Curriculum Development. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 7(9)
- Amadi, E., & Ezeugo, CR. 2019. Physical Resources Availability and the Academic Performance of Students in the Universal Basic Education, Rivers Estate. *Journal of Innovative Development and Policy Studies*, 7(1) pp 13-23
- Anfara, VA., & Mertz, N. 2015. *Theoretical Framework in Qualitative Research*. SAGE. Washington.
- Anggraeni, K. 2017. The Role of Open System and Human Capital in Education. *Institute of Islamic Studies*. (IAI) pp 1-11.

- Anney, VN. 2014. Ensuring the Quality of the Findings of Qualitative Research: Looking at Trustworthiness Criteria. *Journal of Emerging Trends in Educational Research and Policy Studies* 5 (2) pp 217-25
- Arend, EC.2017. *Teacher Empowerment through curriculum development: Theory into Practice*. 5<sup>th</sup> Edition. Cape Town: Juta & Co.
- Arnold, RD., & Wade, JP. 2015. A definition of Systems Thinking: A Systems Approach. *Procedia Computer Sciences*. 4(1) pp 49-61.
- Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACCARA) Act. 2008.
- Atkinson, M. 2013. *Educational Leadership and Management in an International School Context*. University of Derby.
- Aydin, H., Ozfidan, B., & Carothers, D. 2017. Meeting the challenges of curriculum and instruction in school settings in the United States. *Journal of Social Studies Education Research*.8 (3) pp76-92
- Ayua, GA. 2017. *Effective teaching strategies*. DOI:10.13140/RG.2.2.34147.09765
- Bajinath, N. 2018. Learning for Development in the Context of South Africa: Considerations for Open Education Resources in Improving Higher Education Outcomes. *Journal of Learning for Development* 5 (2) pp 87-100
- Bailey, CA,. 2018. *A Guide to Field Research*. 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. SAGE. Washington.
- Ballantine, JH, & Hammack, FM. 2016. *The Sociology of Education: A Systematic Analysis*. 7<sup>th</sup> Edition. New York: Routledge.

- Bantwini, BD. 2010. How Teachers Perceive the New Curriculum Reform: Lessons from a School District in the Eastern Cape Province, South Africa. *International Journal of Educational Development*. 30(1) pp 83-90.
- Barkley, EF., & Major, CH. 2016. *Learning Assessment Techniques-A Handbook of College Faculty*. Jossey-Bass. San Francisco.
- Barret, P., Shmis, T., Ambasz, D., & Unistova, M. 2019. *The Impact of School Infrastructure on Learning-A Synthesis of Evidence*. *International Development in Focus*. World Bank. Washington.
- Bartkus, KR., Nemelka, B., Nemelka, M. & Gardner, P. 2012. Clarifying the meaning of extra-curricular activity-A literature review of definitions. *American Journal of Business Education*. 5 (6) pp 698.
- Bascia, N. (Ed.) 2015. *Teacher Union in Public Education-Politics, History and the Future*. New York: Palgrave McMillan.
- Bayat, A., Rena, R. & Louw, W. 2014. Investigating the confluence of factors impacting on underperformance at selected secondary school in the Western Cape, South Africa. *International Journal of Educational Sciences* 7 (1), 41-45. Kamla-Raj.
- Bayat, A., Rena, R., & Louw, W. 2014. The role of School Governing Bodies in Underperforming Schools of Western Cape –A Field Based studies. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*. 5(27) pp 353-363
- Bisschoff, T., & Segoe, BA., Parental Involvement as part of Curriculum Reform in South Africa. *Africa Education Review*. 16 (6) pp 165-182
- Blackburn, BR. 2016. *Motivating struggling learners-10 ways to build student success*. New York. Routledge.

Board of governors. 2012. Report. Office of secretary general of the European schools.  
<https://www.eursec.eu/en>

Booyse, C., & Du Plessis, E., 2018. *Curriculum Studies-Development, Interpretation, Plan and Practice*. 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

Bozkus, K. 2014. School as a Social System. *University Journal of Education*. 4(1) pp 49-61.

Bradutanu, D. 2015. Resistance to change: A new perspective. *Business and Economics Journal*. 6(4). DOI: 104172/2151-6219.1000186.

Brinkmann, S. 2018. *Philosophies of Qualitative Research*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Buhomoli, OS. & Muneja, PS. 2021. Research Data Handling by Researchers in the Selected Universities in Tanzania. *University of Dar-es- Salaam Library Journal*. 2(2021) pp 53-67.

Burns, M. 2016. *Motivating teachers to be motivating teachers*. Education Development Center.

Carl, AE.2009. *Teacher empowerment through curriculum development: Theory into practice*. Juta.

Carl, AE.2017. *Teacher empowerment through curriculum development-Theory into practice*. Cape Town: Juta.

Carter, M., & Fuller, C. 2015. Symbolic Interactionism. *Sociopedia*.159. PP 1-17 DOI: 10.1177/205684601561

- Chaudary, GK. 2015. Factors affecting curriculum implementation for schools. *International Journal of Applied Research*. 1 (12), pp 984-986.
- Cheepo R., & Ramadas, V. 2019. The “Africanised” Competency Based Curriculum: The Twenty First Century Strides. *International Journal of Education* 7 (4)
- Cheung, ACK., & Wong, PM. 2012. Factors Affecting the Implementation of Curriculum Reform in Hong Kong: Key Findings from a Large Scale Survey Study. *International Journal of Educational Management*. 26(1) pp 39-54.
- Chisholm, L., 2005. The Making of South African Curriculum Statement. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*. 37(2) pp 193-208
- Clarke, A.2012. *The handbook of school management*. Cape Town. Juta.
- Cloete, F., Wisink, C. & De Coening, C. Eds. 2006. *Improving public policy-Theory, practice and results*. Pretoria. Van Schaik.
- Cloete, F., & De Coening, C. (Eds.) 2011. *Improving public policy-Theory, practice and results*. Pretoria. Van Schaik.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. 2018. *Research Methods in Education*. 8<sup>th</sup> Edition. London. Routledge.
- Collins, C., & Stockton, CM. 2018. The central role of theory in qualitative research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*. Volume 17 pp-10
- Conelly, LM. 2016. Trustworthiness in Qualitative Research. *Medsung Nursing* 25 (6)



- Creswell, JW., & Creswell, JD. 2018. *Research design-qualitative, quantitative and mixed method approach*. Los Angeles: Sage.
- De bruyn, PP., Erasmus, M., Janson, CA., Mentz, PJ., Meyer, LW., Steyn, SC., Theron, AMC., Van Vuuren, HJ., Van der Vyver, CP & Xaba, MI. 2013. *School as Organisations*. Pretoria. Van Schaik.
- Deal , TE., & Peterson, KD., 2016. *Shaping School Culture*. 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition. John Wiley & Sons. San Fransisco
- Department of Basic Education. 2003. *Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC)*. Pretoria. Government Printers.
- Department of Basic Education. 2003. *National Curriculum Statement grades 10-12 general statement Physical Sciences*. Pretoria. Government printers.
- Department of Basic Education. 2004. *The implementation of CAPS*. Pretoria. Government printers
- Department of Basic Education. 2010. *Lead and manage a subject, learning area or a phase*. Pretoria: Government Printers.
- Department of Basic Education. 2011. *Curriculum and assessment policy statement FET grades 10-12 Physical Sciences*. Pretoria: Government printers.
- Department of Basic Education. 2015. *Action Plan: Towards Schooling 2030*. Pretoria: Government Printers.
- Department of Education (Limpopo). 2016. *Infrastructure norms and standards report*.

- Department of Basic Education. 2019. *National Curriculum Statement (NCS) Grade R-12*. Pretoria: Government Printers.
- Dickson, A., Yeboah, A., & Ankrah, AK. 2016. Constructivism philosophical paradigm: Implication for research, teaching and learning. *Global Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences*. 4(10). pp 1-9.
- Dikko, M. 2016. Establishing Construct Validity and Reliability: Pilot Study Testing of a Qualitative Interview Research in Takaful (Islamic Insurance). *The Qualitative Report*. 21 (3) pp 521-528
- Du Plessis, E. 2013. Insights form Returning Teachers; Exposure to Curriculum Change and Professional Development. *Acta Academia* 45(1) pp 58-78.
- Du Preez, P. & Simmonds, S. 2014. Curriculum, curriculum development, curriculum studies 88Problematizing theoretical ambiguities in doctoral thesis in the education field. *South African Journal of Education* 34(2) pp 4.
- Duriscic, M., & Bunijevac, M., 2017. Parental Involvement as an Important Factor for successful education. *Center for Educational Policy Studies Journal* 7(3) pp 137-153.
- Elmore, RF. Rothman, R. (Eds.) 1999. *Testing, teaching and learning. –A guide for states and school districts*. Washington. National Academy Press.
- Efron, SE., & David, R. 2019. *Writing a Literature Reviews: A Practical Guide*. Guilford Press. New York.
- Eyiuche, IO. 2014. Parental Involvement in Curriculum Implementation as Perceived by Nigeria Secondary School Principals. *Journal of Education and Learning*. 3(1).

- Farooq, MS., Chaundry, AH., Shafiq, M., & Berhanu, G. 2011. Factors Affecting Student's Quality of Academic Performance-A Case Study of Secondary School Level. *Journal of Quality and Technology Management*. Vii (ii) pp 01-14.
- Fleisch, B., Gultig, J., Stephanie, A., & Makaringe, F.2019. Background Paper on Secondary Education in Africa: Curriculum, Reform, Assessment and National Qualification Framework. University of the Witwatersrand.
- Flick, U. 2014. *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Data Analysis*. London: SAGE Publication.
- Flick, U. 2018. *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Data Collection*. London: SAGE Publications.
- Forson, JA., Ofori-Dwamena, E., Opoku, RA., & Adjavon, SA. 2021. Employee Motivation and Job Performance: A Case Study of Basic Teachers in Ghana. *Future Business Journal* 7 (1) pp 1-12
- Fraser, J., Fahlman, D., Arscott, J., & Guillot, I. 2018. Pilot testing of feasibility in a study of student retention and attrition in online undergraduate programs. *International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning*. 19 (1).
- Furiwai, S., & Singh-Pillay, A. 2020. The Views and Experiences of Grade 10 Life Sciences Teachers on Compulsory Practical Examination. *Perspectives in Education*. 38(1) pp 242-254.
- Garret, T. 2014. *Effective Classroom Management-The Essential*. Teachers College Press. London.

- Godstime, TC. & Amachi, OJ. 2019. Influence on School Environment on Student's Academic Performance in Technical Colleges in Rivers State. *International Journal of New Technology and Research (IJNTR)*. 2454-4116.
- Godwill, EA. 2015. *Fundamentals of Research Methodology-A holistic guide for Research completion, Management, Validation and Ethics*. New York: Nova Publishers. Hammersley.
- Goncalves, JM., & Goncalves, RP da Silva. 2012. Overcoming resistance to change in Information Technology organisations. *Procedia Technology* 5(2012) pp 293-301.
- Govender, S. 2018. South African teacher's perspectives on support received in implementing curriculum changes. *South African Journal of Education*. 38(2) pp s1-s12.
- Grant, C., & Osanloo, A. 2014. Understanding, selecting and integrating-A theoretical framework in dissertation research: Creating blueprint for your 'house'. *Administrative Issues Journal*. 4(2) pp 12-26.
- Gray, SL., Scott, D., & Mehisto, P. 2018. *Curriculum reform in the European schools-Towards 21<sup>st</sup> century vision*. Palgrave MacMillan. Switzerland.
- Guba, EG. & Lincoln, Y. 1985. *Naturalistic Enquiry*. SAGE. New York.
- Gumbo, MT. 2014. An Action Research Pilot Study on the Integration of Indigenous Technology in Technology Education. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*. 5 (10)
- Gunawan, J. 2015. Ensuring Trustworthiness in Qualitative Research. *Belitung Nursing Journal* 1 (1) pp 10-11

- Hadjar, A., & Gross, C. 2016. *Education systems and inequities: International comparisons*. Bristol University Press.
- Hakutumbulwa, G. 2021. Teachers Experience Regarding Implementation of the Revised Social Studies Curriculum: The Case Study of Khoma Region, Namibia. Thesis.
- Halinen, I. 2018. The New Educational Reforms in Finland. *Improving the Quality of Childhood in Europe*. Printon-AS. Tallin-Estonia.
- Hammersly, M., & Traionou, A. 2012. *Ethics in Qualitative Research, Controversies & Contexts*. Los Angeles: SAGE.
- Hammond, M., & Wellington, J. 2013. *Research Methods-The Key Concepts*. New York: Routledge.
- Harries, E., Stanz, K., Zaaiman, J & Groenewald, T. 2004. The stages of user's concern when adopting new technology. *S.A Journal of Human Resource Management*. 2(3) pp 54-61.
- Haulle, E., & Kabelenge, E. 2021. Relevance of Quality of Textbooks Used in Primary Education in Tanzania: A Case Study of Social Studies Textbooks. *Contemporary Education Dialogue* 18 (1) pp 12028.
- Higgs, P., Letseka, Moeletsi. 2022. *Philosophy of Education Today: An Introduction*. 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition. Juta Company (PTY) Ltd. Cape Town.
- Hudson, B., Hunter, D & Peckham, S. 2019. Policy Failure and the Policy-Implementation Gap: Can Policy Support Programs help? *Policy Design and Practice* 2 (1) pp 1-14.
- Ishemo, RA,. 2021. Progress on the Implementation of the learner-centred approach in Tanzania. *International Journal on Integrated Education*. 4(4) pp 55-72

- Johnson, D. 2017. The Role of Teachers in Motivating Students to learn. *BU Journal of Graduate Studies in Education* 9 (1) pp 46-49
- Johnston, B., & Christensen, L. 2017. *Educational Research-Quantitative, Qualitative, and Mixed Approaches*. USA. SAGE.
- Kabonga, I. 2018. Principles and Practices of Monitoring and Evaluation: A Paraphernalia for Effective Development. *Africanus: Journal of Development Studies* 48 (2)
- Kane, R., Sandretto, S & Heath, R. 2002. Telling half the story: A critical review of research on the teaching belief and practice of University Academic. *Review of Educational Research*, 72 (2): 177-228.
- Khoboli, B., & O'toole, JM. 2011. The concerns-based Adoption Model: Teachers participation in action research. *Springer Science + Business Media LLC* pp1-12. DOI 10.1007/s1213-011-9214-8.
- Khumalo, PN., & Maphalala, MC. 2018. The Experience of Pre-Service Teachers in Implementing Formative Assessment During Teaching Practice. *Journal of Gender, Information and Development in Africa (JGIDA)*. 2018 Special Issue pp 279-308.
- Khumalo, VP. 2014. Thesis: The school as a curriculum management site in an era of curriculum change. UNISA.
- Kiger, ME., & Varpio, L. 2020. Thematic Analysis of Qualitative Data. AMCC Guide No 131. *Medical Teacher* 42 (8) pp 86-854
- Killen, R., 2015. *Teaching Strategies for Quality Teaching and Learning*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. Cape Town: Juta & Company.

- Killen, R., 2019. *Teaching Strategies for Quality Teaching and Learning: A concise Version*. Cape Town: Juta & Company.
- Kivunja, C., & Kuyini, AB. 2017. Understanding and Applying Research Paradigms in Educational Contexts. *International Journal of Higher Education* 6(5) 26-41.
- Kivunja, C. 2018. Distinguishing between Theory, Theoretical Framework and Conceptual Framework: A Systematic Review of Lessons Learned in the Field. *International Journal of Higher Education* 7(6) pp 44-53.
- Kizito, N., & Telesphore, HH. 2019. Rwandan new competency base: curriculum implementation and issues, sector bases trainer. *A Journal of Contemporary Research*. 16 (1) pp 24-41.
- Koloti, A., & Jita, T. 2022. Curriculum Implementation in Early Childhood Education: A Case Study of Selected Lesotho Grade R Classroom. *The International Journal of Early Childhood Learning*. 9 (1) pp 13 – 24
- Komar, OA., Komar, OS., Kolomiiets, NA., Roienko, LM., & Diachuk, PV. 2019. Implementation of Monitoring Systems in the Education Process in Primary School. *International Journal of Learning and Teaching Research* 18 (11) pp 232 -244.
- Korstjens, I., & Moser, A. 2017. Series: Practical Guidance to Qualitative Research Part 2- Context, Research Questions and Designs. *European Journal of General Practice*. 23(1) pp 274-279.
- Kotter, JP., & Schlesinger, LA. 2008. Choosing strategies for change. *Harvard Business Review*. 86 (7/8). pp 130-139.
- Kotter, JP., & Schlesinger, LA. 2013. Choosing strategies for change. *Harvard Business Review*. [www.hbr.org](http://www.hbr.org) Reprint R0807M

- Kraft, C. 2012. Challenges Facing the Egyptian Education System-Access, Quality and in equality. *SYPE Policy Brief*. No 2
- Kumar, S. 2017. *Teaching material and teaching aids-1*. Epg Pathsala Volume 12.
- Kyei, KA., & Nemaorani, TM. 2014. Establishing factors that affect performance of grade ten students in high school: A case study of Vhembe District in South Africa. *Journal of Emerging Trends in Educational Research and Policy Studies (JETERAPS)* 5 (7): 83-87.
- Lalande, D., & Baumeister, RF. 2014. *Systems Theory*. Salem Press Encyclopaedia of Health.
- Lalor, AM. 2017. *Ensuring high quality curriculum: How to design, revise or adopt curriculum designed to students*. USA. ASCD.
- Laska, L. 2016. Monitoring and evaluating the performance of teachers through the process of observation in class. *European Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies*. 1(2) pp 370-378.
- Lawton, D., Gordon, P., Ing, M., Gibby, Bill., Pring, Richard & Moore, Terry. 2012. *Theory and practice in Curriculum Studies*. London: Routledge.
- Lebata, MC., & Mudau, AV. 2018. Using the General System Theory to Explore Perceptions of Teachers Regarding the Poor Performance of Learners in Biology 5090 at Selected High Schools in Lesotho. *Journal of Educational Studies*. 17(12) pp 27-41.
- Letsoalo, M.E., Maoto, R.S., Masha, J.K., & Letsoana, M.A. 2017. The Effect and Gender on Learner Achievement in Gauteng and Western Cape Provinces of South Africa. *Gender and Behaviour*, 15 (2), 9177-9184.



- Lin, Lin. 2015. Multiple Dimensions of Multitasking Phenomenon. *International Journal of Technology and Human Interactions*. 9(1) pp 37-49.
- Littlejohn, SW., & Foss, KA. 2009. *Encyclopaedia of Communications Theory*. SAGE. Oaklands.
- Lumadi, MW. 2019. Reimagining a link for achievement and attrition in curriculum implementation. *Africa Education Review*. 16(6) pp 214-228.
- Lunenberg, FC. 2010. Schools as Open Systems. *Schooling* 1(1).
- Luthans, F., Luthans, BC., & Luthans, KW. 2021. *Organizational Behaviour-An Evidence Based Approach*. 14<sup>th</sup> Edition. Information Age Publishing. North Carolina.
- Macupe, B. 2021. Section 27 back in court to argue for the eradication of pit toilets in Limpopo. *Mail & Guardian*. 03 May [mg.co.za/education/2021-05-03-section-27-back-in-court-to-argue-for-the-eradication-of-pit-toilets-in-limpopo/](https://mg.co.za/education/2021-05-03-section-27-back-in-court-to-argue-for-the-eradication-of-pit-toilets-in-limpopo/)
- Mafisa, LJ.,2017. The role of teacher unions in education with specific reference to South Africa. *Gender and Behaviour* 15(4)
- Mafugu, T. & Sanderson, A.2022. Lecturer Support in the Implementation of a New Curriculum during the COVID 19 Pandemic. *Springer*. 2022(53) pp 243-259.
- Maharaj, L., Nkosi, T., & Mkhize, Mbelekezi C. 2016. Teachers' Experiences of the Implementation of CAPS in Three Primary Schools in KwaZulu Natal. *Africa's Public Service Delivery and Performance Review*. pp 371-388.
- Maimela, HS. 2015. Impact of Curriculum changes on Primary School Teachers in Seshego Circuit, Limpopo Province. Doctoral Thesis, Unisa.

- Makunja, G. 2016. Challenges facing teachers in implementing competency based curriculum in Tanzania: The case of community secondary schools in Morogoro municipality. *International Journal of Education and Social Sciences*. 3 (5) pp 30-37.
- Makwinja, VM. 2017. Rethinking Education in Botswana: A need to Overhaul the Botswana Education System. *Journal of International Education Research*. 13(2) pp 45-58.
- Mamba, D., & Putsoa, B. 2018. Secondary School Science Teacher's Knowledge of Effective Strategies in High Performing School in Swaziland. *African Journal of Research in Mathematics, Science and Technology Education*. 22(1) pp 14-26.
- Mandukwini, N. 2016. Challenges towards curriculum implementation in high schools in mount Fletcher district –Eastern Cape. UNISA Maters Thesis.
- Maphalala, MC. & Mpofu, N. 2018. Exploring the teachers' views in implementing high school curriculum-A South African view. *Journal of Education Studies* 17(1) pp57
- Maphosa C., & Mutopa, S. 2012, Teachers awareness of their role in planning and implementing school based curriculum innovation. *Anthropologist*. 14 (2). 99106. DOI:10.1080/09720073.2012.11891226.
- Mathaba, RSR. Dorosamy, N., & Parker, KM. 2014. Effectiveness of Whole School Evaluation on underperforming secondary schools in Mpumalanga Province. *Common Wealth Youth and Development*. 1292) pp 49-68
- Mathura, P. 2019. Teachers Perspectives on Curriculum Change: A Trinidad and Tobago Case Study. *International Journal of Innovative Business Strategies (IJIBS)*. 5(1) pp 252-263.

- Mavhungu, EM., & Mavhungu, AM. Crisis of decolonising education: Curriculum implementation in Limpopo Province of South Africa. *Africa's Public delivery and Performance Review*. ISSO: (online) 2310-2152.
- Mbandlwa, Z. 2020. The Articulation of the Secondary Education System to Tertiary Institution in South Africa, A Deliberate Mismatch. *Solid State Technology* 63 (6) pp 6821-6835
- Mbiti, MI,. 2016. The need for accountability in education in Developing Countries. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*. 30(3) pp 109-132
- McMillan, JH & Schumacher, S. 2014. *Research in Education*. Boston: Pearson
- McNeal Jnr, RB. 2014. Parental Involvement, Academic Achievement and the Role of Student's Attitude and Behaviours as mediators. *Journal of Education Research*. 2(8) pp 564- 576
- Merriam, SB,. & Grenier, RS. 2019. *Qualitative Research in Practice*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. John-Wiley & Sons. San Francisco.
- Meriam-Webster Online Dictionary. [meriam-webster.com/dictionary/experience](https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/experience)
- Mertens, DM. 2015. *Research and Evaluation in Education and Psychology*. 4<sup>th</sup> edition. SAGE Publishers. Thousand Oaks, CA.
- Mgimba, AE,. & Mwila, PM. 2022. Infrastructure Challenges Influencing Academic Performance in Rural Public Secondary Schools in Iringa District, Tanzania. *Centre for Research Implications and Practice*. 6(2) pp 17-24.
- Mishra, SB. & Alok, S. 2017. *Handbook of Research Methodology-A Compendium for Scholars & Researchers*. Educreation Publishers. New Delhi.

- Mithens, M., & Grmek, MI. 2020. *The Use of Textbooks in Teaching-Learning Process*. DOI <https://doi.org/10.1869011978-961-286-358-6.10>
- Mlachita, M., & Moeletsi, T. 2019. Struggling to Make the Grade: A Review of the Causes and Consequences of the Weak Outcomes of Education System. *IMF Working Paper WP/19/47*
- Mokaya, ZM. 2013. Influence of School Infrastructure on Student's Performance in Public Schools in Kajiato Country- Kenya. Thesis.
- Molapo, MR. & Pillay, V.2018. Curriculum implementation-The case of primary schools. *South African Journal of Education*. 38(1)
- Mosoge, MJ, Pilane, MW. 2014. Performance management: The neglected imperative of accountability systems in education. *South African Journal of Education*, 34(1).
- Mpanza, MN. 2013. A case Study of Teachers' Implementation of the Grade Four Natural Sciences Curriculum. Thesis.
- Mthethwa, RM. 2012. Critical dimensions for policy implementation. *African Journal of Public Affairs* 5(2) 36-47
- Mungal, K., & Saha, G. 2017. Assessing Concerns and Leading Pedagogical Innovations in Higher Education: A case study of the Arthur Lok Jack Graduate School of Business. *Journal of Curriculum, Teaching, Learning and Leadership in Education*. (2)1 pp 17-35.
- Munisi, IS. Werema, S. & Namusonge, GS. 2021. Assessment of free secondary education policy on quality of secondary education in Tanzania-A Case study of Meru District Council. *International Journal of Social Sciences and Information Technology*. VII (III) pp 37-45.

- Munje, PN. & Maarman, R. 2017. Do school resources matter? The effects of school resources on learner performance in poor school communities. *Journal of Educational Studies* 16(1).
- Mupa, P., & Chinooneka, T. 2015. Factors Contributing to Ineffective Teaching in Primary Schools: Why are Schools in Decadence? *Journal of Education and Practices* 5 (19).
- Mutangadura, R. 2019. A School as an Open System <https://www.studocu.com>great-zimbabzwe> university.
- Mutodi, P., & Ngirande, H. 2014. The Impact of Parental Involvement on Student Performance: A Case Study of a South African Secondary School. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences* 5 (8).
- Myers, Micahel D. 2008. *Qualitative Research in Business and Management*. California: SAGE.
- Naidoo, P. 2019. Perception of Teachers and School Management Teams of the Leadership Roles in Public Schools. *South African Journal of Education* 19 (2) pp 1-14
- National Education Evaluation and Development Unit. 2018. it's time to Implement SIP: Identifying and prioritizing strategies for Improvement. Policy Brief N-02/2018
- Ngoepe, LJ. 2015. Embedded Observations of English for Specific Purposes Students in South Africa. *South African Journal of Higher Education* 29 (5) pp 244-262
- Ngwenya, VC., 2020. Curriculum Implementation Challenges Encountered by Primary Teachers in Bulawayo Metropolitan Province. *Africa Education Review*. 17(2) pp 158-176

- Nilsen, P., 2015. Making sense of implementation theories, models and frameworks. 2015. 10-53. DOI 10.1186/s13012-015-0242-0
- Nkambule, G. & Amsterdam, C., 2018. The realities of educators support in South African Schools. *South African Journal of Education*. 38(1).
- Norton, MS. 2016. *Guiding Curriculum Development: The Need to Return to Local Control*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Nugroho, AA., & Wibowo, UB. 2019. Influence of School Infrastructure on Student Learning Activeness: A research Study. *Advances in Social Sciences and Humanities Research* 397 pp 607-612.
- Obi, UN., & Ticha, IK., 2020. Involvement of teachers and subject advisors in the curriculum development process in South Africa. *Gender and Behaviour*. 8 (4) pp 16549-16563.
- OECD. 2014. Education Policy Outlook. Denmark. [www.oecd.org/edu/policyoutlook.htm](http://www.oecd.org/edu/policyoutlook.htm)
- OECD. 2016. Teaching Strategies for Instructional Quality. Insights from Talis-Pisa Link Data. [Oecd.library.org](http://Oecd.library.org)
- OECD. 2020. Supporting the continuation of teaching during COVID 19 Pandemic. Annotated resources for online learning. [www.oecd.org/education](http://www.oecd.org/education)
- Ojunubah, JO. 2015. Impact and Solutions of Overcrowded Mathematics Class on Student's Achievements in Schools. *Journal of Resourcefulness and Distinction*. 11(1)
- Okeke, C., & Van Wyk, M (Eds). 2017. *Educational research: An African approach*. Cape Town: Oxford University Press.
- Okongo, RB., Ngao, G., Rop, Naftal K., & Nyongesa, WJ. 2015. Effect of Availability of Teaching and Learning Resources on the Implementation of Inclusive Education in Pre

- School Centres in Nyamira North Sub-Country, Nyamira Country, Kenya. *Journal of Education and Practice*. 6(35).
- Olayemi, AA. 2015. The Inconsistencies of Nigeria's Education System and its Implications for Curriculum Implementation. *Journal of US-China Public Administration*. 12(3) pp 167-179
- Olibie, EI. 2014. Parental Involvement in Curriculum Implementation as Perceived by Nigerian Secondary School Principals. *Journal of Education and Learning*. 3(1).
- Oliva, PF. & Gordon, W II. 2013. *Developing the Curriculum*. London: Pearson Education Inc.
- Onimole, S.O. 2017. Introducing change in organisations-Implications for human resource development practices. *Ife Psychology* 25(2).
- Ornstein, AC. & Hunkins, FP. 2014. *Curriculum: Foundations, Principles and Issues*. Boston: Pearson.
- Ornstein, AC. & Hunkins, FP. 2018. *Curriculum: Foundations, Principles & Issues*. London: Pearson Education Inc.
- Park, M., & Sung, Y. 2013. Teachers Perception of the recent Curriculum Reforms and their Implementation: What can we learn from the Korean Elementary Teachers? *Asia Pacific Journal of Education*. 33 pp 15-33
- Patten, ML., & Newhart, M. 2018. *Understanding Research Methods-An Overview of the essential*. 10<sup>th</sup> edition. New York: Routledge.
- Pedzisai, C., Tsvere, M., & Mkhonde, M. 2014. The Zimbabwe Two Pathway Curriculum: Insights into policy implementation challenges and opportunities. *International Journal of Advanced Research in Management & Social Sciences*. 3 (15) pp 158-169.

- Priestley, M., & Phillipou, S. 2018. Curriculum making as a social practice: Complex webs of enactment. *The Curriculum Journal* 29 (2) pp 151-158.
- Qiong, O. 2017. A Brief Introduction to Perceptions. *Studies in Literature and Language* 15 (4) pp 18-28.
- Raghvan, A., 2021. *Research and Evaluation in Education and Psychology*. Canada. Society Publishing.
- Rahmat, AA. 2015. Policy Implementation: Process and Problems. *International Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities Research* 3(3):306-311
- Rehman, S., Bisschoff, CA., & Bottha, CJ. 2019. A model to measure academic performance of private higher education institutions. *Journal of Contemporary Management*. 16(2) pp 178-200.
- Reiger, J. 2011. Why is Academic Success Important? SASKATCHEWAN School Boards Association. <https://saskschoolboards.ca>.
- Republic of South Africa. 1996. *South African Schools Act 84 of 1996*. Pretoria: Government Printers.
- Republic of South Africa. 1998. *Employment of educators act. Act 77*. Pretoria: Government Printers.
- Republic of South Africa. 2013. Government Gazette 36324 (3). Pretoria: Government Printers.



Republic of South Africa. 2013. Government Gazette 37081 (3). Pretoria: Government Printers.

Republic of South Africa. 2016. *Personnel Administration Measures (PAM)*. Government Gazette 369684 (170). Pretoria: Government Printers.

Republic of South Africa. 2017. *National Policy Pertaining to the Programme and Promotion Requirements of the National Curriculum Statement (NPPPPR)*. Government Gazette 36042 (3). Pretoria: Government Printers.

Republic of South Africa. 1995. *Further Education and Training Act*. 1995. Pretoria: Government Printers.

Republic of South Africa. *National Education Policy Act NEPA*. 1995. Pretoria: Government Printers.

Republic of South Africa. 1995. *South African Qualification Authority Act*. Pretoria: Government Printers.

Republic of South Africa. 1995. *The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa*. Act 106. Pretoria: Government Printers.

Republic of South Africa. 2010. *The National Policy for an equitable provision of an enabling school physical teaching and learning environment*. Government Gazette 33283. Pretoria: Government Printers.

Republic of South Africa. 1995. *White Paper on Education and Training*. Pretoria: Government printers.

- Right of Education Initiative & Section 27. 2014. The Limpopo Textbook Crisis in South Africa. RTE-Success-Story-Limpopo-2014-en-O.pdf
- Ritchie, J., Lewis, J., McNaughton NC., & Ormston, R. 2014. *Qualitative Research Practice- A guide for Social Science Students and Researchers*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. New York: SAGE Publishers.
- Rogan, JM,. & Grayson, DJ. 2003. Towards a Theory of Curriculum Implementation with Particular Reference to Science Curriculum Education in Developing Countries. *International Journal of Science Education* 25(10) pp 1171-1204.
- Rogan, JM,. & Grayson, DJ. 2003. Towards a Theory of Curriculum Implementation with Particular Reference to Science Curriculum Education in Developing Countries. *International Journal of Science Education* 25(10) pp 1171-1204.
- Ruth, C., & Ramadas, V. 2019. The “Africanised” Competency Based Curriculum: The twenty first century strides. *International Journal of Education* 7 (4) pp 2558-134.
- Sahito, Z., Khawaja, M., Panwar, UM., Siddiqui, A., & Saeed, H. 2016. Teachers Time Management and the Performance of Students: A Comparison of Government and Private Schools of Hyberabad, Sindh, Pakistan. *World Journal of Education* 6 (6)
- Sakiz, G. 2015. Perceived Teacher Factors in Relation to Student’s Achievement-Related Outcomes in Science Classroom in Elementary School. *European Journal of Science and Mathematics Education*. 3(2) pp 115-129.
- Savin-Baden, M., & Major, CH. 2013. *Qualitative Research-The essential guide to theory and practice*. London: Routledge.

- Scott, R., & Davis, GF. 2016. *Organizations and Organizing- Rational, Natural and Open System Perspectives*. London: Routledge.
- Segoe, BA., & Bisschoff, T. 2019. Parental Involvement as Part of Curriculum Reform in South African School: Does it Contribute to Quality Education? *Africa Education Review*. 16(6) pp 155-182.
- Sefotho, MM. 2015. A researcher's Dilemma: Philosophy in Crafting Dissertations and Theses. *Journal of Social Sciences*. 42 (12) pp 23-36.
- Selig, WG., Grooms, LD., Arroyo, AA. Kelly, MD., Koonce, GL & Clark jnr, HD.2016. *Enhancing Teacher Performance- A toolbox of strategies to facilitate moving behaviour from problematic to good and from good to great*. USA. Rowman and Littlefield Publishers.
- Senguo, EA., & Ilomo, OO. 2020. Effect of School management on Students' Perceived Academic Achievement Among Seventh-Day Adventist Secondary Schools in North East Tanzania. *East African Journal of Education*. 1(3) pp 105-110.
- Sethusha, MJ. 2015. An exploration of the challenges facing underperforming schools in the Vhembe district, Limpopo Province, South Africa. *Journal of Educational Studies* (Special issue 1) 53-71.
- Shakir, M., & Sharma, S.2017.Learning process, its nature and the ways to make it effective. *International Journal of Education*. 8(3) pp 20-28.
- Simons, H. 2018. Case Study Research-In depth Understanding in Context. *Oxford Handbook of Qualitative Research*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition.
- Slattery, P. 2013. *Curriculum Development in the Postmodern Era-Teaching and Learning in the age of accountability*. USA. Routledge.

- Sobhy, H. 2019. Expensive Classrooms, Poor Learning-The Imperative of Reforming School Construction in Egypt. *Alternative Policy Solutions*. Max Planck Institute MMG-MPG
- South Africa.1998. *Employment of Educators Act 76 of 1998*. Pretoria. Government printer.
- South Africa.2010. *The National Policy for an equitable provision of an enabling school physical Resources*.
- Stahl, NA., & King, JR. 2020. Expanding Approaches for Research. *Journal of Development Education* 44 (1)
- Starman, AB. 2013. The Case Study as a type of qualitative Research. *Journal of Contemporary Educational Studies*. (1) pp 28-43.
- Sutton, JA., & Austin, Z. 2015. Qualitative Data Research: Data Collection, Analysis and Management. *Canadian Journal of Hospital Pharmacy (CJHP)*. 68(3).
- Swathi, CH. 2018. Humanistic Approach to Language Acquisition. *Language in India*. 18. No 49042
- Taole, JM. 2015. Towards a meaningful curriculum implementation in South Africa: Senior Phase Teachers' Experiences. *African Education Review*. 12 (2) pp 226-279
- Tawana, L. 2009. Identifying Relevant Factors in Implementing a Chemistry Curriculum in Botswana. Johannesburg: Witwatersrand.
- Taylor, S., Bogdan R., De Vault, ML. 2016. *Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods- A guide book and resources*. New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons Inc.
- Taylor, PC., & Medina, MND. 2013. Educational Research Paradigms-From Positivism to Multiparadigmatic. *Journal for Meaning-Centred Education* 1.

- Taylor, PH., & Richards, C., 2018. *An introduction to curriculum studies*. New York: Routledge.
- Taylor, SY., Bogdan RO., & De Vault M., 2016. *Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods-A Guide and Resource*. 4<sup>th</sup> Edition. New Jersey: John Wiley and Sons.
- Teltemann, J., & Jude, N. 2019. Assessment and Accountability in Secondary Schools. *Research in Comparative International Education Journal*. 14(20) pp 249-271.
- Themane, MJ. 2011. Understanding curriculum: A challenge to curriculum development in teachers education programme. *South African Journal of higher education*. 25(8) pp 1639-1651.
- Thien, LM., & Razak, NA. 2016. A proposed Framework of School Organisation from Open System and Multilevel Organisation Theories. *World Applied Science Journal*. 20(6) pp 889-899.
- Tomal, DR., Schilling, CA., & Trybus, MA. 2013. *Leading school change-Maximising resources for school improvement*. Rowman & Littlefield Education. UK.
- Tus, J. 2020. An Assessment of the School Culture and its Impact on Academic Performance of Students. *International Journal of All Research Writing*. I(II) pp 23-28
- UNESCO IBE *Glossary of curriculum terminology*. 2013. International bureau of education. Switzerland.
- United States Agency for International Development (USAID). 2015. *Theories of change-Concerns-based adoption model*. @USAID education

US department of education. 2020. [www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/education\\_index.html](http://www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/essa/education_index.html)

Usman, YD., & Madudili, CG. 2019. Evaluation of the Effects of Learning on Student's Academic Performance in Nigeria. *Federal Road Safety Corps Nigeria*.

Van den Bekerom, P., Schalk, J., & Torenvliend, R. 2017. Transforming Input into Output: How Downward Networking Mediates the Effect of External Networking on Organizational Performance. *Public Performance and Management Review* 4(4) pp 625-651.

Van der berg, S., Gustafsson, M., Spaul, N., & Armstrong, P. 2016. *Improving education quality in South Africa- Report from the National planning commission*. Stellenbosch. Dept of Economics.

Van Der Walt, G., Theories for Research in Public Administration. 2017. *African Journal of Public Administration Affairs*. 9(9) 183-202

Van der Westhuyzen, PC., 2013. *School as Organisation*. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

Van Wyk, B & Higgs, S. 2011. The curriculum in an African context. *Indiliga African Journal of Indigenous Knowledge Systems*. 10(2) pp 171- 181.

Viennet, R., & Pont, B. 2017. *Education policy implementation: A literature review and proposed framework*. OECD Education working paper no 162. EDU/WKP (2017)11.

Wagner, C., Kawulich, B., & Garner, M. 2012. *Doing action research-A global context*. London: McGraw-Hill.

- Watt, MG. 2020. *The national school reform agreement: Its implications for stage –level curriculum reforms*. Tasmania. Australia.
- West, J., & Meier, C. 2020. Overcrowded Classrooms-The Achilles of South African Education? *South African Journal of Childhood Education* 10 (1).
- Yildiz, A. 2020. A discussion on accurate and effective data collection for Qualitative Research. *Journal of Current Research on Education Studies (JoCURES)*. 10(2):17-24
- Yilmaz, D., & Kilicoglu, G. 2013. Resistance to Change and Ways of Reducing resistance in Educational Organizations. *European Journal of Research in Education* 1 (1) pp 14-21
- Yin, RK. 2016. *Qualitative Research-From Start to Finish*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. New York: The Guilford Press.
- Zwane, T. 2018. Challenges Facing Limpopo Province Education System. Inside [education.co.za/challenges-facing-limpopo-province-educational-system/](http://education.co.za/challenges-facing-limpopo-province-educational-system/)

## APPENDIX A: UNISA ETHICAL CLEARANCE



### UNISA COLLEGE OF EDUCATION ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Date: 2020/11/11

Ref: **2020/11/11/30972701/22/AM**

Dear Mrs PW Malema

Name: Mrs PW Malema

Student No.: 30972701

**Decision:** Ethics Approval from  
2020/11/11 to 2025/11/11

**Researcher(s):** Name: Mrs PW Malema  
E-mail address: 30972701@mylife.unisa.ac.za  
Telephone: 082 744 8686

**Supervisor(s):** Name: Prof GP Baloyi  
E-mail address: baloygp@unisa.ac.za  
Telephone: 072 201 9276/

**Title of research:**

**THE EDUCATORS' PERCEPTIONS ON CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION: A CASE STUDY OF NKOWANKOWA CIRCUIT, LIMPOPO PROVINCE.**

**Qualification:** PhD Education

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 2020/11/11 to 2025/11/11.

*The **low risk** application was reviewed by the Ethics Review Committee on 2020/11/11 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 will ensure that the research project adheres to the relevant guidelines set out in the Unisa Covid-19 position statement on research ethics attached.
2. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.



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



3. 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.
4. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.
5. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing.
6. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.
7. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data requires additional ethics clearance.
8. No field work activities may continue after the expiry date **2025/11/11**. Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

*Note:*

*The reference number **2020/11/11/30972701/22/AM** should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.*

Kind regards,



**Prof AT Motlhabane**  
**CHAIRPERSON: CEDU RERC**  
motlhat@unisa.ac.za



**Prof PM Sebate**  
**EXECUTIVE DEAN**  
Sebatpm@unisa.ac.za



Approved - decision template – updated 16 Feb 2017

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

## APPENDIX B: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT THE STUDY



4460 The Woods Crescent

Thornhill Estates

POLOKWANE

0699

24 November 2020

Limpopo Department of Education

Private Bag X9489

POLOKWANE

0700

Dear Sir/Madam

**REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT NKOWANKOWA CIRCUIT PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS, MOPANI WEST DISTRICT, LIMPOPO PROVINCE**

**RESEARCH TITTLE : THE EDUCATOR'S PERCEPTIONS ON CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION-A Case Study of Nkowankowa Circuit, Limpopo Province.**

I **Pinny Wisani Malema** am doing research under supervision of **Baloyi G.P.** a Professor in the Department of **ABET and Youth Development** towards a **Doctor of education (DEd)** at the University of South Africa. We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled **The educator's perceptions on curriculum implementation: A case study of Nkowankowa circuit.**

The aim of the study is to **contribute research based evidence on the influence of core curriculum policy implementation on academic performance of Nkowankowa circuit secondary schools.**



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

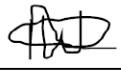
The study will entail interviewing 2 educators per school; one SMT member and one FET phase educator. The benefits of this study are that good practices of curriculum implementation to improve academic performance will be shared.

Potential risks of inconvenience of educators after hours time is foreseeable.

There will be no reimbursement or any incentives for participation in the research.

Feedback procedure will entail availing findings and recommendations to the department on request.

Yours Sincerely



PINNY WISANI MALEMA

RESEACHER



APPENDIX C: LIMPOPO DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION ETHICAL  
CLEARANCE



**LIMPOPO**  
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

---

DEPARTMENT OF  
**EDUCATION**

CONFIDENTIAL

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

**Malema PW**  
4460 ThornHill Estate  
Polokwane  
0700

**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 EDUCATORS PERCEPTIONS ON CURRICULUM-A CASE STUDY OF NKOWANKOWA CIRCUIT, LIMPOPO PROVINCE”**
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).

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH: MALEMA PW

---

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!*

3.6 Upon completion of research study, the researcher shall share the final product of the research with the Department.

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.



**Mr Mashaba KM**  
**Acting Head of Department**

24/03/2021

**Date**

**APPENDIX D: CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY**

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

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

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

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

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


I agree to the recording of the interview.

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

Participant Name and surname (Please print) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant Signature Date

Researcher's Name and Surname (Please Print) \_\_\_\_\_

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Researcher's signature Date

18/09/2020

## **APPENDIX E: FET PHASE SUBJECT EDUCATORS INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

1. In terms of National Senior Certificate (NSC) results, will you say your school is good performing, average performing or underperforming? What do you think is the possible cause of this performance in your school?
2. In your opinion, how does core curriculum implementation influence academic performance?
3. What do you think are the best practices of core curriculum implementation in good performing schools?
4. What are your roles and responsibilities in core curriculum implementation?
5. Do you think you are carrying out this roles and responsibilities as expected or not? What can you do to improve curriculum implementation in your school?
6. What are the challenges encountered by educators when carrying out their roles and responsibilities of curriculum implementation?

## **APPENDIX F: SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAMS INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

1. In terms of National Senior Certificate (NSC) results, will you say your school is good performing, average performing or underperforming? What do you think is the possible cause of this performance in your school?
2. In your opinion, how does core curriculum implementation influence academic performance?
3. What do you think are best practices of core curriculum implementation in good performing schools?
4. What are your roles and responsibilities in core curriculum implementation?
5. Do you think you are carrying out this roles and responsibilities as expected or not? What can you do to improve curriculum implementation?
6. What are the challenges encountered by School Management Teams when carrying out their roles and responsibilities of curriculum implementation?



## APPENDIX G: LANGUAGE EDITING CERTIFICATE

### **EDITING AND PROOFREADING CERTIFICATE**

7542 Galangal Street

Lotus Gardens

Pretoria

0008

19 May 2023

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

This certificate serves to confirm that I have language edited PW Malema's thesis entitled, **"THE EDUCATORS' PERCEPTIONS ON CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION: A CASE STUDY OF NKOWANKOWA CIRCUIT, LIMPOPO PROVINCE."**

I found the work easy and intriguing to read. Much of my editing basically dealt with obstructionist technical aspects of language, which could have otherwise compromised smooth reading as well as the sense of the information being conveyed. I hope that the work will be found to be of an acceptable standard. I am a member of Professional Editors' Guild.

Hereunder are my contact details:



Jack Chokwe (PhD)

Contact numbers: 072 214 5489

[jackchokwe@gmail.com](mailto:jackchokwe@gmail.com)

Professional  
**EDITORS**  
Guild

**Jack Chokwe**  
Associate Member

Membership number: CHO001  
Membership year: March 2021 to February 2022

076 471 6881  
012 429 3327  
[jackchokwe@gmail.com](mailto:jackchokwe@gmail.com)  
[www.academicproeditor.com](http://www.academicproeditor.com)

[www.editors.org.za](http://www.editors.org.za)

