

**EDUCATOR PARTICIPATION IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A TOTAL QUALITY  
MANAGEMENT STRATEGY: A CASE STUDY**

BY

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I declare that:

Educator participation in the implementation of a Total Quality Management Strategy: A case study

Is my own work and that all the sources that I have quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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## **ABSTRACT**

The principles of Total Quality Management (TQM), initially designed to effect continuous improvement in the business sector, have been successfully applied in educational settings. Hence, this study was undertaken to explore educator participation in the implementation of a TQM Strategy at selected academically underperforming secondary schools in the Moses Kotane Area to address shortfalls. A literature review on TQM provided a conceptual framework for the empirical inquiry. Special attention was given to the role of educators in TQM implementation. The empirical study used qualitative research methods to explore the use of TQM in fifteen schools selected by purposive sampling. Observation, document analysis and focus group interviews were used to gather data. The findings indicate that educators regard TQM as an improvement tool; however, they hold negative and positive views about TQM. Finally, recommendations were made to enhance the implementation of TQM in underperforming secondary schools in the Moses Kotane Area.

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# **CHAPTER 1**

## **INTRODUCTION AND ORIENTATION OF THE RESEARCH**

### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

Like Quality Assurance, Total Quality Management (TQM) is a concept that has recently crept into management literature and practice. While some people think that Quality Assurance and TQM could be used interchangeably, the two are not synonymous. Quality Assurance refers to a whole range of methods of improving and ensuring quality in the production processes; TQM only represents one of the methods of assuring quality.

Jones and Bray (1995:39) suggest that TQM is a technique developed by W. Edward Deming to improve the efficiency of flexible teamwork. The broad goal of TQM is continuous improvement. According to Jones and Bray (1995:39), it aims to impress upon workers, the importance of continuously improving the efficiency of the production process in order to reduce costs, increase quality and reduce waste.

Jones and Bray (1995:39) have noted how TQM has assisted business to improve. In the same vein, the implementation of TQM may improve the standard of public education. Educators should strive to improve performance in order to produce quality results at the end of the academic year. For the day to day activities of educators to improve continuously, educators should accept and be engaged in the process of implementing TQM. This approach is currently implemented in South African Public Schools as the Integrated Qualitative Management System (I.Q.M.S). Siegel and Byrne (1994:18) see the approach as a people – based management system, aimed at continuous increase of customer satisfaction at lower costs.

According to Jenkins and Shermon (1991:97), schools that value continuous quality improvement will survive and prosper. A TQM Strategy encourages teamwork, continuous improvement and good relationships between supplier (school) and customer (parents, community and business sector). According to Arcaro (1995:7 - 8),

an attempt to provide quality education is hindered by the following thinking patterns of some educational managers:

- They believe that quality depends on funds, i.e. that more money means higher quality.
- They resist transformation with regard to the implementation of new strategies and approaches to ensure quality education. While they state that they are committed to Deming's quality transformation, they have not yet developed a new philosophy based on Deming's fourteen points of quality.

## **1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

TQM Strategy advocates that all suppliers should be customer-focused and continually find new ways to meet or exceed customers' expectations (Barry & Tye 1991:5). TQM is a total system and not a separate area or programme (Steyn 1999:35). It works horizontally across departments, involves all staff members and extends backwards and forwards to include the supply chain and the customer chain (Siegel & Byrne 1994:18-19).

TQM is a philosophy and methodology that can assist institutions to manage transformation and set their own agendas for dealing with the plethora of recent external pressure (Sallis 1996:26). TQM does not and will not bring results overnight, and it is not even a panacea for all the problems that beset education. TQM is an important set of tools that can be implemented in the educational institutions (Sallis 1996:28). TQM Strategy supports the constant meeting and exceeding of customer expectations through integrated system techniques and training. This includes continuous improvement of all processes, resulting in high quality products service and reducing scrap and rework (Williams 1994:5). In relation to organisational institutions, the principles of TQM are imperative for the transformation of the education system. Curriculum, organisational and management processes within educational institutions should be a way which serves students, parents and the interests of the community (Murgatroyd & Morgan 1993:13). TQM strives to continually satisfy customer

requirements at minimum costs. Furthermore, the ultimate aim is to go further and delight customers beyond what they expect in having their requirements satisfied (Sallis 1996:23).

The theories of Edwards Deming, Joseph Juran and Philip Crosby have a common theme: participatory management that involves input, problem solving and decision-making by all members of an organisation and its customers (Spanbauer & Hillman 1987).

Deming promotes the role of management as one of facilitating workers to do their best by removing barriers that prevent high quality work and improvement as crucial to product improvement.

Juran suggests that management problems are related to human element errors. He promotes management training in quality concepts and the use of the quality circle to improve employee communication across levels. His focus is on understanding customers' needs.

Crosby promotes a "prevention" process wherein requirements for quality conformance are jointly written by managers and workers.

TQM requires a change of attitude on the part of an organization's management and staff wherein all workers are encouraged, empowered, and committed to seek out improvements in process, products, and services and to accept responsibility for solving problems as they arise. It promotes the use of interdisciplinary teams of workers who must work cooperatively to achieve common objectives and requires the backing of management as evidenced by allocation of time for team meetings and the identification of areas for staff development.

Deming's fourteen points could be applied to improve the quality of education at the academically underperforming secondary schools at the Moses Kotane Area. Bonstingl

(1992:45) discusses the application of Deming's fourteen points to improve the quality of education as follows:

- Create constancy of purpose for improvement of product and service
- Adopt the new philosophy and abandon traditional ways of working
- Move from inspection to continuous assessment and support
- Schools should minimise costs in education
- Improve quality and productivity
- Lifelong learning
- Eliminate fear
- Eliminate the barriers to success
- Create quality culture
- Process improvement
- Help students succeed
- Commitment
- Responsibility

### **1.3 MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY**

Once a school does not meet the norms and standards set by the Department of Education in South Africa, it is important that the challenges it faces be investigated and some means be contrived to help it improve its performance. Fifteen schools in the Moses Kotane Area have failed to meet the minimum requirements of a 50% pass rate in Grade 12 examination for three consecutive years. In terms of the norms and standards of the Department of Education, such schools are regarded as academically underperforming.

Academically underperforming secondary schools in the Moses Kotane Area, referred to above could be regarded as failing to satisfy their customers, that is, learners, parents, the state, private sector and the community. There should be a good customer-supplier relationship among schools, learners, parents, communities and the private sector. The

underperforming schools should adopt the motto of 'Seek to get it right' and should embark on the journey to attain quality. To ensure this, principles of TQM should be applied to the academically underperforming schools in the Moses Kotane Area.

Quality is a valuable criterion for gauging the effectiveness and efficiency of an action since it encompasses both process and outcome. TQM may be seen as an approach, which improves quality. Quality Management will include in its totality, a continuous process of planning, training, monitoring, improving and reviewing the performance of an organization. (Van der Westhuizen, 1991:70).

Quality already exists in some schools in the Moses Kotane Area. The implementation of TQM will build on existing quality and develop it into continuous improvement. The criteria for a Total Quality School are classified as the 'pillars' for quality education (Arcaro, 1995:9). According to Arcaro (1995:9), these pillars are universal and applicable to every educational institution and should be viewed seriously in order to attain the Total Quality School status in the Moses Kotane Area. The beliefs and values of a school determine the success and strength of the quality transformation (Arcaro 1995:10).

TQM may assist principals and educators in the Moses Kotane Area to improve and to view quality education seriously. Every staff member should strive for excellence and the improvement of their own work, for example, through thorough preparation and appropriate methods of assessment. Principals and educators should improve their performance continuously.

Implementation of a TQM Strategy in educational institutions in the Moses Kotane Area will encourage all stakeholders, that is, the School Management Team, the School Governing Body and staff members, to strive for excellence. A TQM strategy advocates that all stakeholders should be customer focused and they should continually find new ways to meet or exceed customer expectations (Barry & Tye 1991:5). By doing this, customers' satisfaction is fulfilled. For the schools to be customer focused, everyone in the school should realise that every educational output is important (Arcaro 1995:70).

Schools in the Moses Kotane Area should be perceived as service organisations which take continuous improvement of quality into cognizance. It is imperative that academically underperforming secondary schools in the Moses Kotane Area should transform and change their school culture.

#### **1.4 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Against the above background, the research seeks to answer the question: *What is the role of educators with regard to their participation in the implementation of a TQM Strategy in academically underperforming secondary schools in the Moses Kotane Area?*

Moreover, the research deals with establishing to what extent educators in the Moses Kotane Area participate effectively in the implementation of a TQM Strategy to improve quality learning and teaching. Currently migration of learners from the Moses Kotane Area to Rustenburg is taking place due to the poor quality of schools in the former area. According to Paterson (1998:18), educational migration patterns are driven by lack of immediate local access to quality educational opportunities.

According to Steyn (2000:20), schools should provide for the optimal development of each child. Quality education is not only about certain levels and standards, but also about empowering learners. Quality education is aimed at enabling the learners to develop to their full potential and should make sense to the relevant stakeholders (e.g. learners, educators, parents and the state), (Steyn 2000:20).

In the light of the problem statement and main research question, the following sub-questions are formulated:

- What is the role of educators in the implementation of a TQM Strategy in the academically underperforming secondary schools in the Moses Kotane Area?

- How can educators improve quality learning and teaching in the academically underperforming secondary schools in the Moses Kotane Area through implementation of TQM?
- Which guidelines can be followed in the implementation of TQM in the academically underperforming secondary schools in the Moses Kotane Area?

## **1.5 RESEARCH AIM AND OBJECTIVES**

The aim of the research is to examine the role of educators with regard to their participation in the implementation of a TQM Strategy at fifteen academically underperforming secondary schools in the Moses Kotane Area. In finer detail, the study aims at the following:

- To explore the role of educators with regard the implementation of TQM at the academically underperforming secondary schools in the Moses Kotane Area.
- To explore and describe how educators can improve quality learning and teaching through TQM at the academically underperforming secondary schools in the Moses Kotane Area.
- To develop guidelines that can be followed in the implementation of TQM at the academically underperforming secondary schools in the Moses Kotane Area.

## **1.6 DELIMITATION**

This research was conducted in the study field of Educational Leadership and Strategic Management. The study was confined to the Moses Kotane Area. This is one of the four areas that form Bojanala, which, in turn, is one of five districts into which the North-West Department of Education is divided. Fifteen secondary schools in the Moses Kotane Area were identified as underperforming because they had obtained less than a 50% pass rate in the Grade 12 Senior Certificate examinations.

This research was conducted in the Moses Kotane Area and not in the larger Bojanala District. However, the findings may be useful to similar schools in the rest of the



Bojanala District, North-West Province and other areas of South Africa. Data were easily obtained due to the researcher's position in a school in the Moses Kotane Area.

## **1.7 RESEARCH METHODS AND DESIGN**

According to Johnson and Christensen (2004:29), research methodology is regarded as a systematic and purposeful framework for conducting a research through scientific methods in order to yield data on a particular research question and to expand knowledge in a particular field of study. In a broad context, according to McMillan and Schumacher (2001:09), methodology refers to a design whereby the researcher selects data collection and data analysis techniques to investigate a specific research problem.

A research design is the general plan and structure of the investigation used to obtain evidence to answer research questions. The purpose of the design is to provide the most valid and accurate answers possible to the research questions.

### **1.7.1 Qualitative approach**

The qualitative approach was used, because this project sought to realise creativity. The project required participants to describe their situations from their own point of view. The aim was to obtain as many different settings of the interviewers' life world as possible. Qualitative research is the interpretation of the life experiences of subjects (De Vos 1998:241). Lemmer (1992:292) argues that qualitative research has its aim, the understanding of the life world of the individuals or groups, studied from their own frame of reference.

The researcher conducted the literature review, focus group interviews, observations and document analysis according to the qualitative paradigm. Interviews may be defined as planned discussions or verbal interactions on the basis of personal discussion (usually between two people) with a particular aim. Huebsch (1983:162) elaborates on this as follows: the stimulus reaction actors of the interview involve the aims, motives,

attitudes and perspectives of both interviewer and interviewee. Both verbal and non verbal communication factors are involved.

According to Verderber and Verderber (1992:348), an interview is also a form of interaction based primarily on asking and answering of questions. Unlike most of interpersonal communication, the interview should be planned ahead. Reason for choosing the focus group interview is that it is easier for the interviewer to get detailed information because the participants are allowed to unfold their opinions without limitations.

### **1.7.2 Sampling and sample size**

Firstly, fifteen underperforming schools in the Moses Kotane were selected as representative of schools in the area in terms of human and physical resources. Some schools are situated in rural areas of Moses Kotane; others in the urban areas of the Moses Kotane Area. Purposive sampling was used to select schools. Purposive sampling, as a dominant strategy in a qualitative approach was adopted for this particular study. Purposive sampling, according to Ary, Jacobs, Razavien and Sorensen (2006:472), in contrast to probabilistic sampling, seeks to select particular subjects from the population that will be representative and provide maximum insight and understanding about the research questions. Information-rich cases were considered those from which the researcher could learn a great deal about issues of TQM.

Data were gathered from a sample of twenty educators from the fifteen academically underperforming secondary schools in the Moses Kotane Area. Ten educators were on Post level 1 and the other ten on Post level 3 and 4. Purposive sampling was also used to select these participants from educators working in the academically underperforming secondary schools in the Moses Kotane Area. Educators were interviewed to elicit data about quality. Semi structured or less structured questionnaires were used to elicit information about the TQM strategy as a tool to address challenges or shortfalls at sampled schools.

### **1.7.3 Data collection strategies**

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2001:41), qualitative researchers employ, to some extent observation, interviewing and analysis of documents to collect qualitative data. For this particular study, interviewing of secondary school teachers (in focus groups), observation of secondary schools, analysis of documents and as literature review were carried out to investigate the stated research questions and achieve stated objectives.

#### **1.7.3.1 Literature review**

According to Mouton (2004:86), a literature review is the first phase of the empirical study and consists of a systematically and critical analysis of the information obtained from primary and secondary sources.

A review of the literature, according to Ary et al. (2006:68-69), serves the following purposes and important functions:

- Defining the research problem
- Placing the study in contextual perspective
- Avoiding unnecessary and unintentional replication and
- Relating the findings to previous knowledge.

Linking with these purposes and functions, a through literature review was done to get more information and views of different authors related to the research problem. Sources, like books and journals, were reviewed to collect information concerning TQM, particularly, to discover the current thinking. This will be achieved by searching relevant documents on the Internet and accessing recent documents on the subject.

### 1.7.3.2 Focus group interviews

According to Ary et al. (2006:480), an interview is a direct method of collecting information in a one-to-one situation as well as an interchange of views between two or more people on a topic of mutual interest. The interchange is between the participant who is experienced and the researcher who wishes to obtain insight in order to provide findings to a research question. Furthermore, the interview is a flexible tool for data collection because it allows the interviewer to make adjustments as the situation requires. It enables the interviewers or interviewees to discuss their interpretations of the world in which they live and to express how they regard situations from their respective points of view.

Structured interviews use a standard set of questions which are prepared in advance. The structured questions are arranged into a whole form, in which each part is related to others. A less structured interview allows a different view of the theme that is studied. The participants are given a more open ended way of giving their views and demonstrating their action (Henning, 2004:5). A focus group interview is a group interview of eight to twelve participants rather than an individual interview. By creating a group environment group members are stimulated by each other's responses and this increases the richness of data (McMillan & Schumacher 2006:206). Probing allows the interviewer to probe with a view to clear up vague responses or to ask for elaboration in cases of incomplete responses.

In this study, the researcher used two semi structured focus group interviews to collect data because such interviews offer a versatile way of collecting data and can be used with all age groups. The first focus group comprised ten educators on post level 3 and 4; the second focus group comprised ten educators on post level 1. Educators on post level 3 and 4 are in promotional posts and are members of the School Management Team; educators on post level 1 are not in promotional posts.

According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007:351), the purposes of the interview in the wider context of life are many, but serve two main purposes:

- to gather and evaluate data information having direct bearing on the research objectives
- to be used in conjunction with other methods to corroborate data.

### 1.7.3.3 Observation

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2001:40-41), observation is an “interactive technique of participating to some degree in a naturally occurring situation over an extended time and ‘writing’ extensive field notes to describe what occurs”. The researcher does not collect data to answer a specific hypothesis, rather explanations are inductively derived from the field notes.

According to Cohen et al. (2007:396), the distinctive feature of observation as a research data collection technique is that it offers the researcher the opportunity to gather ‘live’ data from naturally occurring social situations.

The researcher participates overtly or covertly in peoples’ daily lives for an extended period of time, watching what happens, listening to what is said, asking questions and collecting whatever data are available to throw light on the issues with which he is concerned.

Observation enables the researcher to gather data on (Cohen et al. 2007:396):

- the physical setting (e.g. the physical environment and its organisation)
- human setting (e.g. the organisation of the people, the characteristics of the groups or individuals being observed)

- interactional setting (e.g. formal or informal interaction taking place)
- programme setting (e.g. the resources and their organisation).

#### 1.7.3.4 Analysis of documents

According to Bogdan and Biklen (2007:64), the term document refers to materials, such as photographs, letters, records and diaries that can be used as supplementary information as part of an interpretive study whose main data source is observation and interviewing. Analysis of documents is a form of qualitative research that requires the researcher to locate, collect, collate, interpret and analyze empirical data, and draw conclusions that either describes, interpret, or explain what has occurred (Briggs & Coleman, 2007:281). In terms of data collection, this involves transferring significant quotations and insertions from documents to a field notebook for later analysis. Analysis of documents allows for sufficient data to be collected for researchers to be able to:

- identify the significant features of a particular event.
- establish a plausible interpretation and explanation.
- test for the credibility and validity of these interpretations.

#### 1.7.4 Data analysis

Content analysis was applied in this study. This involves identifying coherent and important examples, themes and patterns in the data. Data that refer to the same idea, issue or concept were obtained and identified. According to Miles and Huberman (1994:14), content analysis entails identifying, coding and categorizing the primary pattern in the recorded data.

Content analysis also involves open and axial procedures. With open coding, raw data were broken down examined and categorised. With axial coding, categories are interlinked and put back coherently in new ways.

#### **1.7.5 Trustworthiness**

Maree (2007:80) states that it is generally accepted that engaging multiple strategies of data collection in qualitative research, such as interviews, observations and document analysis should lead to trustworthiness.

Trustworthiness was achieved by ensuring the validity and reliability of data through mechanical recorded data, triangulation strategies and participant reviews.

#### **1.7.6 Limitations of the research**

This study has a number of shortcomings. Among others, the following are worth mentioning:

- There is a possibility that some participants may not be present on the day of interview and that may result in the postponement of the interview.
- The primary disadvantages of the interview are its potential for subjectivity and bias, its higher costs and time-consuming nature and its lack of anonymity.
- Accurate conclusions and predictions can be made after interviewing a sample of the population but should not be generalised where a small sample has been used (Schaller, 1996:66). In this study, the researcher reached a general conclusion concerning the implementation of TQM in the participating schools. However, typical of a qualitative study, no attempts were made at generalising the findings; however, the findings could remain useful for schools in the area that share similar characteristics with the participating schools.

## **1.8 CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS**

In order to facilitate the understanding of this work, concepts used in the title of this research project and in the statement of the problem need clarification. Definitions of these concepts are:

### **1.8.1 Implementation**

Implementation refers to the tools and techniques which are used for improvement of quality (Fox & Chwartz 1995:272).

Swanepoel, Erasmus and Schenk, (2008:144) define implementation as execution of strategy which entails creating the necessary architectural configuration, including structures, systems, processes and policies.

### **1.8.2. Total Quality Management**

TQM is a comprehensive, systematic, customer centered approach which meets the challenging needs of the customer aimed at continuously improving every activity in the organization. It is an approach, which involves competitiveness, effectiveness and flexibility of the whole organisation (Dale 1994:10).

Van der Westhuizen, (1996:266) define TQM as the systematic management of the customer-supplier relationships in an organisation so that sustainable, steep-slope improvements in quality performance are secured.

### **1.8.3. Quality**

It refers to the degree to which something is excellent. It also explains how low or high and good or bad the standard is. It explains the effectiveness and efficiency (Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English 1978:848).



According to Berry, (1996:3) quality refers totality of features and characteristics of a product or a service that contribute to satisfying stated or implied needs.

#### **1.8.4. Management**

Management is the process or activity of carrying the task of ensuring that a number of diverse activities are performed in such a way that defined objectives are achieved. Management is used to indicate the diversity and multiplicity of the activities to be managed as well as the fact that the activities are largely performed by people (International Dictionary of Management, 1996:64).

Management activities embrace basic management functions that is, leading, planning, organising and controlling. Management requires skills and other competencies, that is, decision-making, communication, motivation, coordination, delegation and disciplining (Van der Westhuizen, 1995:70).

Hampton (1977:9) defines management as the work involved in combining and directing the use of resources to achieve particular purposes. This definition states clearly the ultimate objective of all managerial actions, namely, to achieve a particular purpose. To achieve these particular purposes the manager should combine and direct the use of resources.

From the definitions above the following deductions can be made:

Management is a process consisting of specific components, namely, planning, organising, leading and controlling. Management is an active process and directs all resources.

#### **1.8.5 The Moses Kotane Area**

This study is confined to the Moses Kotane Area. It is categorised into East and West. It is one of the four areas that form the Bojanala West Region, which, in turn, is one of the five regions into which the North West province Department of Education is divided.

### **1.8.6 Effectiveness**

According to Vulliamy (1987:220), the notion of effectiveness in education is explained in terms of education quality which manifests itself in highly qualified teachers with high levels of motivation, adequate teaching and learning facilities, desirable outcomes and relevance of learning to the workplace or to given social, economic and political contexts.

According to Swanepoel et al. (2008:6) effectiveness is if the right service has been rendered.

### **1.8.7 Public school**

A public school is an ordinary school which enrolls learners in one or more grades from grades R to grade twelve. It is under the control of Provincial Education Department and National Education Department. It is funded by the state (South African schools Act 84 of 1996).

Van der Westhuizen, (1996:113) defines a public school as an organisation which meet all the universal, general requirements of an organisation.

### **1.8.8 Educator**

Educator means any person who teaches, educates or trains learners who provides professional services at an institution (South African School Act 84 of 1996).

### **1.8.9 School Management Team**

School Management Team (SMT) is a body with legal capacity to perform its duties in terms of the South African Schools Act no 84 of 1996

## **1.9 CHAPTER DIVISION**

The study is organised in five chapters as follows:

Chapter 1 contains the introduction, motivation of the study, problem statement, definition of concepts, the aim of the research and a description of the method of investigation.

Chapter 2 entails the literature study and past findings with regard to the concepts of TQM.

Chapter 3 deals with the research design, data collection techniques, the sample of the study and the procedure that will be followed.

Chapter 4 provides the results, analysis and discussion of empirical data.

In Chapter 5, the research findings are discussed, recommendations made and the necessary conclusions drawn.

## **1.10 CONCLUSION**

The purpose of this study is to outline briefly the challenges faced by educators in the Moses Kotane Area whose schools are unable to meet the set norms and standards of the National Department of Education. This chapter has provided a background to TQM and outlined the need for a TQM strategy in underperforming schools. The problem has been formulated, the aims of the study stated and an overview given of the research design used to investigate the problem. Based on the findings, the final aim of the study is to provide recommendations for educators in academically underperforming secondary schools in the Moses Kotane Area in order to improve quality teaching and learning through TQM.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **TOTAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT FOR SCHOOLS**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter gives an overview of a Total Quality Management Strategy and its importance to schools. It serves to create an understanding of how educators can participate in the implementation of a Total Quality Management Strategy with the objectives of improving the quality in schools and their overall performance. The concept of TQM, which enabled the post-war Japan to improve the quality of its products which were regarded as inferior and compete globally with European markets, was first introduced by Edward Deming (Van der Westhuizen, 1996:291).

TQM applies to the improvement of the quality of public schools as it does to the quality of industrial products. It can bring about similar positive changes in schools. According to Legotlo and Teu (2000:458), it is an approach adopted to improve quality. In addition, Van der Westhuizen (1996:298) notes that it embodies principles that can be utilised by educators to improve quality in schools. It is thus imperative for every school to make use of principles of TQM to improve and strive for excellence. It behooves every educator in a public school to improve performance and participate actively in the implementation process, to meet the needs of learners and ensure continual improvement of the school.

Sallis (1993:34) describes TQM as a philosophy for continuous improvement, which can provide any public school with a set of practical tools for meeting and exceeding present and future customers' needs, wants and expectations. It is a deliberate level of quality which can exceed the needs of customers. It is a process which cannot end; it is ongoing so that quality is continually improved in a school context.

#### **2.2 TQM FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT**

Educators should adopt an attitude of improving previous efforts. It implies that

educators should improve previous outcomes and quality and also be ready to improve the present outcomes for a better product or service. Van der Westhuizen (1996:307) further notes that continual improvement requires the next effort to be better than the previous one. Therefore, educators can improve on the mistakes of the past and strive for excellence. Every educator need to aim at continuous improvement in all the school activities. Steyn (1996:129) suggests that educators should establish the baseline data that the school can use to measure improvement. Quality results at the end of the year serves as proof of good performance.

Performance of learners in the schools can improve drastically if each and every educator is encouraged to meet the set standards of ensuring that all the learners attain success and improve performance. Van der Westhuizen (1996:287) suggests that schools should produce a product or render a service that is geared towards customer (learner) satisfaction. Baseline data should be used by all the educators as it will encourage them to be focused and to participate actively in the school improvement and determine whether educators are effective or not. Steyn (1996:129) suggests that the following aspects should be included, when the baseline data is gathered:

- Learners' test and examination results

Assessment is essential for obtaining information, to identify learners' strengths and weaknesses, to be considered for developing appropriate interventions, to ensure that effective learning takes place. Every educator should use assessment information gathered, to provide feedback, prepare thoroughly, and use appropriate teaching techniques to improve learner performance. It is only quality results that can serve as an indication that educators in the schools participate fully and understand the implementation process of TQM.

- Learners' school attendance

International studies on school effectiveness indicate that regular attendance by both learners and educators is important for effective teaching and learning. Regions which

have performed well in the Grade 12 results, have rated very high in the learner attendance survey (Department of Education 2006:5). It therefore means that educators should encourage learners to attend school regularly so that learning becomes effective. At the same time, educators themselves should set a good example to learners by attending school regularly. Educators must regard learners as their customers and do everything in their ability to satisfy them by ensuring that effective teaching and learning occurs and should endeavour to improve the overall performance of schools (Department of Education, 2006:9).

- Staff attendance

The establishment of baseline data can enhance proper implementation of TQM because every educator will be compelled to meet the expectations of the customers, in the form of parents, learners and private sector. Daily contact between educators and learners improves performance of learners and it implicates that there should be consistency in school attendance. There is a closer link between attendance and good performance.

- Parental involvement

The home environment plays a critical role in the academic development of learners. An essential factor in the home is the involvement and support provided by parents in the education of their children to enhance learning. Parental involvement has been identified as a critical factor that leads to successful schooling. Cotton and Winkelum (2001:54) maintain that the more intensively parents are involved in their children's learning, the more beneficial are the effects in terms of achievement. The involvement of parents in education involves factors, such as the amount and nature of support provided and how they interact with the school. Not all parents have a clear understanding of parental involvement. Thus, educators should organize mini-workshops to empower parents particularly those learners who are not doing well to explain assessment strategies and how to monitor and supervise learners at home.

- Follow-up information on learners

Follow-up information on learners is one way by which educators can ensure quality teaching and learning in schools. It is advisable that schools should establish a database of all the learners who have gone on to tertiary education. As reflected in the Systemic Evaluation Provincial Report (2006:14), a database will reflect the profile of secondary schools and indicate whether they are effective or not.

Baseline data, serves as a yardstick to measure performance. Once a staff member realises that he/she does not meet the required standards, he/ she should attempt to improve on previous work; hence improvement cannot end. Teaching techniques and assessment strategies should be varied to ensure that a true reflection of the performance of every learner is always given. Participation of educators in the establishment of baseline data can motivate them to work hard and improve quality so that they satisfy their customers, that is, their learners (Barry & Tye, 1991:5).

It is imperative that all the educators in the school situation should be involved in the school activities and work as a team in the improvement of quality so that a new culture is inculcated continuously in the school. The overall performance of the school will improve when all the educators become accountable and responsible for the day-to-day activities of the school. According to Schmoker and Wilson (1993:91), teaching a modern curriculum requires the close integration of academic staff together with the support staff and learning resources.

### **2.3 THE ROLE PLAYED BY EDUCATORS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A TQM STRATEGY**

Educators are the managers of learners' experience. According to Van der Westhuizen (1996:296), educators are supposed to ensure that the needs of the learners are fully met. Learner attainment depends much on the effectiveness and dedication of educators because if educators are not willing to improve performance, learners will not

attain success at the end of the academic year. The role of the educators in the school situation is very important because improvement of quality depends on them.

The culture of teaching and learning should always be renewed; it is not supposed to end, but it should rather be a continuous cycle of improvement. Continuous improvement is a strategy to ensure that educators improve quality at schools through lesson presentation and assessment (Van der Westhuizen, 1996:296)

According to Mager (1992:7), educator competence, performance and effectiveness can serve as guideposts to help educators to improve the overall performance of schools. Self-motivation and self-esteem are interwoven aspects which motivate educators to build self-confidence, which, in turn, sharpens enthusiasm to improve their day-to-day activities. They will be obliged to engage seriously in effective teaching which will stimulate learners to be committed to schooling and ultimately attain academic success at the end of the year. Educators also improve teaching and learning when they are competent. This means they should have the necessary skills to perform their duties. Once educators have acquired the necessary skills to teach and assess learners, the overall performance of the school will improve.

The improvement of quality and training service is essential (White Paper no.1, 1995:20). TQM is thus an appropriate tool to improve quality in schools. Therefore, educators should play a dominant role in the implementation of a TQM strategy, to improve performance and ultimately to satisfy customers. The TQM approach has assisted business to improve and the implementation thereof can improve the standard of education. Participation of educators can improve poor performance of the school and produce quality results at the end of the year. The expectations of parents as customers are that educators should impart knowledge and skills to their children to enable them to succeed. The school can attain this goal if educators improve their classroom and assessment practices (Systemic Evaluation Provincial Report, 2003:87). Rampa (2005:67) suggests that a continuous improvement strategy can improve the academic performance of schools. Poor performance can be improved drastically if all educators



have the same level of commitment and focus on school improvement with the objective of ensuring that the culture of the school also changes (Rampa, 2005:69).

Steyn (1996:357) and Van der Linde (2001:34) are of the opinion that TQM can be utilised by educators to address the challenge of poor quality in schools because it is a strategy that leads to improvement in various areas. This philosophy can be used by educators to improve quality. Educators can achieve this intention if they are self-motivated and have self-esteem to attain their goals, which is, to improve performance of all the learners and to motivate those who are unable to achieve or to meet the pass requirements in tests and examinations.

Educators should not only be engaged in quality teaching but should also conduct quality assessment. Quality assessment can guide them how to improve quality teaching and learning. At same time quality assessment can increase educator accountability regarding the quality of teaching activities. Quality improvement and accountability are the underlying principles of quality assurance in the schools. The objective of quality assurance is quality improvement and it should be the goal that the educators intend to achieve or attain. Boyle and Bowden (1997:111) advise that educators should assess and improve the quality of their activities that is, teaching. If educators are committed to their day-to-day work, results will surely improve. Poor performance can be attributed to lack of commitment and reluctance to prepare thoroughly before going to class.

Educators are an integral part of the school. They are supposed to collaborate and work towards the year-end improvement of the school. They should treat and attend to learners as individuals so that all of them can ultimately achieve quality results (Arcaro, 1995:51). By paying attention to learners as individuals, educators will be able to identify the learners' weaknesses and attend to them.

## **2.4 THE IMPORTANCE OF TEAMS (EDUCATORS) IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF TQM STRATEGY**

The implementation of TQM in schools can be done by individual educators and teams (educators grouped together according to their roles and learning areas). As clearly outlined in chapter one, TQM encourages teamwork, and thus TQM can be implemented by teams (Van der Westhuizen, 1996:322). For the implementation of TQM to succeed, it needs the commitment of all educators. It also involves teamwork, whereby every staff member becomes involved and plays a role in the improvement of quality.

According to Rampa (2005:94), teamwork is a major component of the quality improvement process. To add to that, West-Burnham (1992:92-93) indicates that quality improvement teams can be regarded as a key component and building block for implementing TQM successfully. Educators should have a sense of ownership so that every staff member becomes responsible for the entire performance and improvement of the school (Van der Westhuizen, 1996:308). Each educator must have a sense of ownership of what the team aspires for. It is advisable that educators should group themselves according to the learning areas that they offer and discuss and analyse every significant proof and method that can have an impact on the learners' results and the entire performance of the school (Van der Westhuizen, 1996:307) Educators can empower each other in this way.

It might not be true that when educators work harder, the learning process will easily be facilitated. Spending more time and money will also not improve the quality of learning process. Rather a solution is to involve all the educators in the school in building teams to deliver quality. The school system should be restructured so that it works smarter by using a team management approach. This is another way in which educators are involved in school affairs and become accountable for quality results (Rampa, 2005:94). According to Murgatroyd and Morgan (1993:189), schools can be developed by encouraging educators to operate as a team because teamwork is a building block for success. Therefore, educators in the same department should have regular meetings to

discuss challenges or shortfalls, devise a strategy to improve quality teaching and learning and operate as a functioning unit.

Teamwork is an essential component in the implementation of a TQM Strategy, because it builds trust and improves communication. Trust can improve working relationships among educators; hence, every educator will become eager to participate in the process of improving the overall performance. The synergy required to make quality improvements in the school comes from working together as a team. Therefore, teams become the focus of the design of the school. The idea is that self-managing teams will become responsible for the key processes in the school. Teams can be seen as quality groups created in schools as the major vehicle for organising work (Murgatroyd & Morgan 1993:73). The main challenge is that teams are established, but are seldom trained and developed. This training and development of quality teams should be seen as a priority in the improvement of quality.

The team approach is an applicable strategy which educators can use to improve quality. Educators are usually grouped according to the learning areas (subjects) that they are offering, thus encouraging team spirit (Murgatroyd & Morgan, 1993:74). Harmonious relationship among educators improves quality because in this context every educator will strive for excellence and encourage each other to value quality improvement highly. Educators should trust each other and communicate how best TQM can be implemented to attain the school goals and objectives and become a quality school.

According to Rampa (2005:93), teams are important as teamwork is a major component of the quality improvement processes and they also generate quality products and services. Educators in teams can achieve the vision of the school through the implementation process of a TQM strategy which will enable the school to achieve. Therefore, educators in teams should play a role in the establishment of the policy and objectives of the school to ensure full participation of all staff members.

A team spirit can also encourage every educator to be committed and contribute towards the attainment of quality. School improvement is characterised by the attainment of goals, which includes customer satisfaction and continuous improvement with the purpose of improving the overall performance of the school. Teams also motivate educators to cooperate (Murgatroyd & Morgan, 1993:189). All the educators should operate as a collective to improve the current situation in the school so that it becomes a school of quality where customers' needs are prioritised as the fundamental responsibility of the educators (Murgatroyd & Morgan, 1993:189).

#### **2.4.1 Characteristics of quality teams**

Murgatroyd and Morgan (1993:73) argue that teamwork is more satisfying than working alone. This approach can improve quality in the schools through proper implementation of TQM in teams. However, focus is not only on the role of teams in the implementation of a TQM strategy to improve quality in schools, but also on the role of individual educators. The focus of this study is on educator participation in the implementation of TQM in schools with the purpose of improving poor performance. It is also on continuous quality improvement to effect change in schools. According to Van der Westhuizen (1996:307), collaboration and teamwork are important in TQM schools, where everyone is both a customer and a supplier. Thus, every educator should identify his/her role in these two capacities to understand the systematic nature of the work.

Characteristics of quality teams are illustrated in Figure 2.1.

**Figure 2.1: Characteristics of quality teams** (West-Burnham, 1992:12)

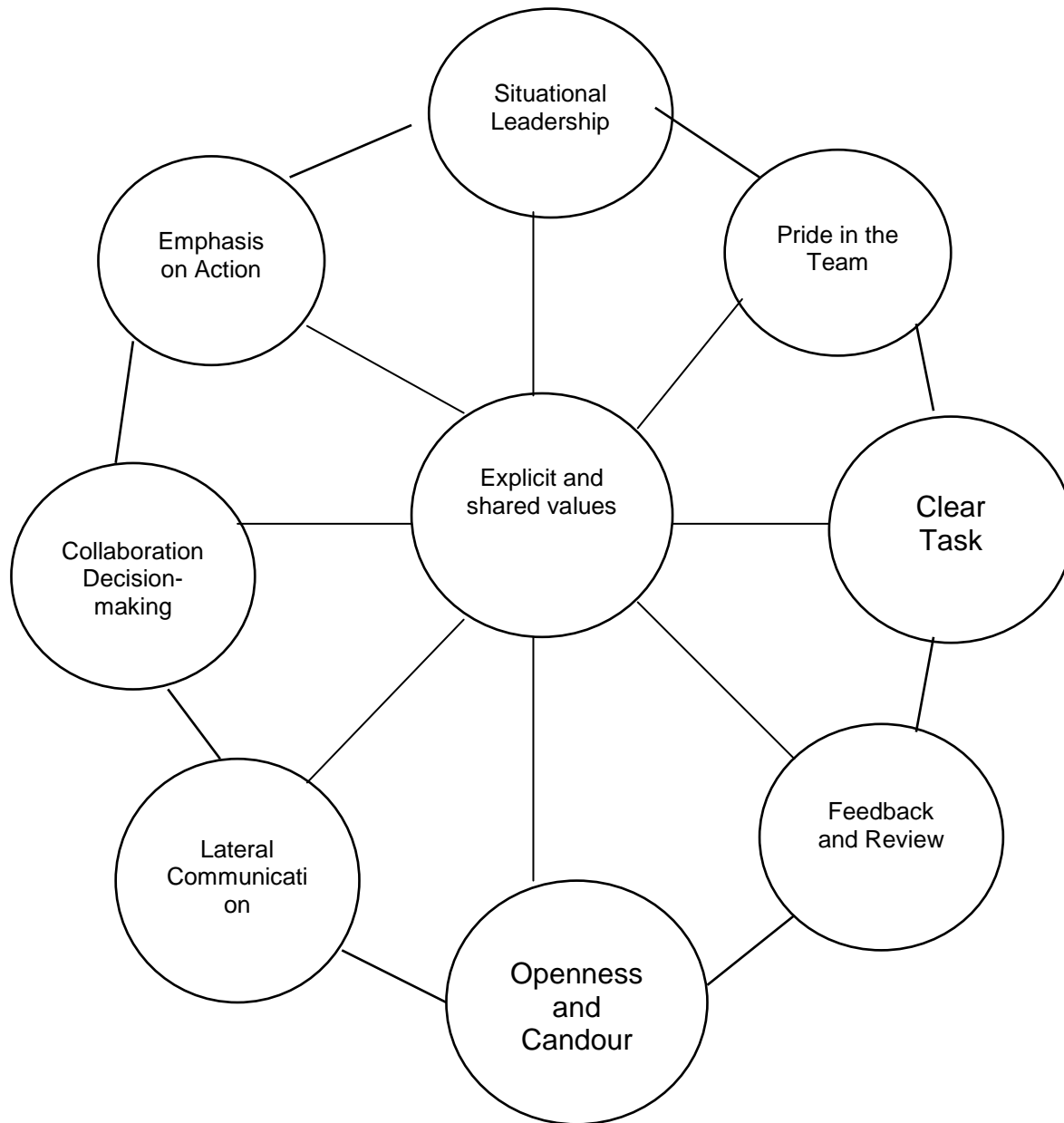


Figure 2.1 shows the characteristics of quality teams which can assist educators to achieve the objective of quality improvement by working as a team. There are:-

- Explicit and shared values

West-Burnham (1992:13) suggests that team members should have a common understanding of what is expected, both in terms of values and outcomes. Therefore, it is necessary that educators should identify the needs of the customers so that clear values are agreed upon and translated into a vision of the school; they should strive to achieve it through quality results.

- Situational leadership

According to West-Burnham (1992:13), leadership is based mainly on the ability to lead the team through a specific issue or activity. One of the SMT members should serve as a facilitator but should not dominate others.

- Pride in the team

This refers to the commitment and involvement of team members and can be seen in high morale and loyalty. There should be mutual respect and trust among members. Trust and respect among the educators will make the implementation process of TQM succeed and this will build high morale among educators, so that every member of the team becomes motivated to participate in all the activities of the school (West-Burnham, 1992:13).

- Clear task

All goals must be clearly formulated, sufficient information must be supplied, realistic targets must be set and time-scale must be provided in order to succeed. During the school's audit, the mission and vision statements should clearly be outlined so that every school strives to attain success. It is imperative that every team member should know exactly what the customers are in need of and which role he/she should play in quality improvement.

- Feedback and review

Effective teams should devote time to seek feedback from other team members. They should review their work from time to time to assess the quality of their work process. Feedback should be given to all the educators to enhance teamwork and willingness to work hard (West-Burnham, 1992:13).

- Openness and candour

There are no hidden agendas in quality teams, because all the issues are open for discussion. Every member of the team must feel free to offer suggestions, ideas, comments, information, praise as well as constructive criticism (West-Burnham, 1992:13).

- Lateral communication

Effective teams are characterised by lateral communication and team members should communicate directly with each other without reference to the team leaders. This process of communication develops skills and builds relationship which benefits the team as a whole. Educators are encouraged to interact and share ideas about the improvement of quality in schools by communicating better techniques which can improve teaching and learning (West-Burnham, 1992:13).

- Collaborative decision-making

Educators should meet on regular basis with the purpose of ensuring that there is a common approach to decision-making and to ensure that pace is almost the same (West-Burnham, 1992:13)

- Emphasis on action

In this regards each team member knows exactly what has to be done, by whom and

when (West-Burnham, 1992:13). Therefore, teams make things happen because their decision is expressed in action. In this case quality is delivered in terms of products and process. Educators should put into practice or implement, rather than theorise (West-Burnham, 1992:121).

Teams cover a wider range of problem solving as compared to an individual educator. This approach is crucial in the sense that challenges will easily be resolved by a team rather than an individual educator (Murgatroyd & Morgan, 1993:74).

#### **2.4.2 Importance of quality teams**

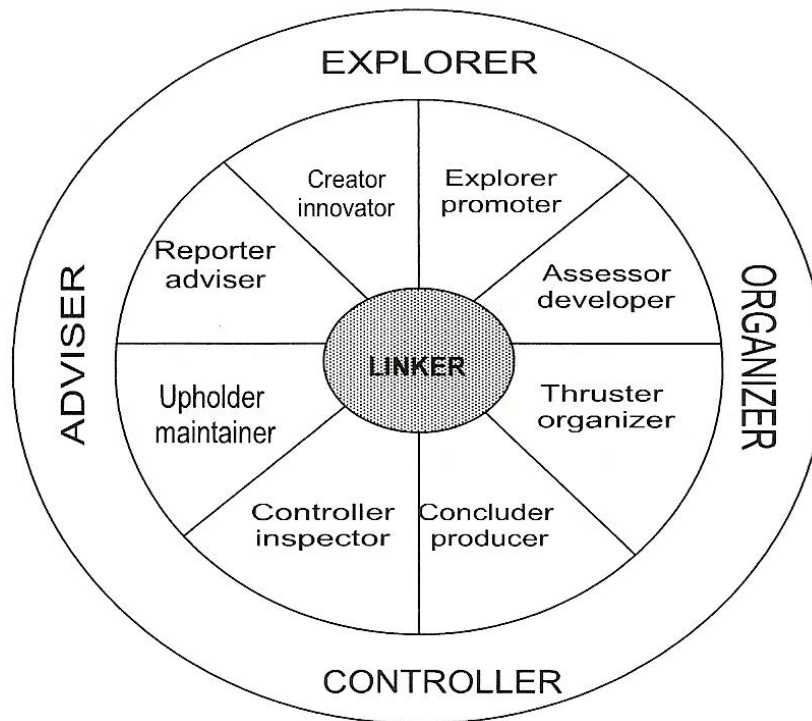
According to Murgatroyd and Morgan (1993:73), teams are important at schools because:

- They maximize the creative talent within the school and promote learning. Teams in a quality school promote learning. Teams in a quality school develop innate and latent talents among the learners. Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation can also be used to encourage independent thinking and effective learning.
- They are learning units because they encourage the transfer of knowledge and skills. Quality learning is geared towards the acquisition of knowledge and application of knowledge.
- Teamwork is more satisfying than working alone. However, teams should be well managed, trained and developed. In the school situation where success is achieved through teamwork, TQM needs the collective effort of all the educators in the school.
- Teams promote collective ownership of problems and their solutions. This point can encourage educators in the same team to view every challenge as the responsibility of a team rather than that of an individual educator.



### 2.4.3 Functions of quality teams

Quality teams play an essential role in the improvement of quality in schools. In a school situation the management team should decentralise power and responsibility to other educators at a lower rank, so that they can participate actively in the implementation of a TQM strategy (Murgatroyd & Morgan, 1993:55-56). Every school should use the TQM strategy to accelerate quality improvement. This can be achieved if all the educators in various committees or teams participate effectively in the school affairs. Murgatroyd and Morgan (1993:147) have identified team roles which could also be applicable to schools. They follow hereunder in Figure 2.2.



**Figure 2.2: The team management wheel** (Murgatroyd & Morgan, 1993:149)

Murgatroyd and Morgan (1993:149) mention the following roles played by members of quality teams:

- Advisor: Gathers and disseminates information in a form which is useful for decision-making. Educators should advise each other about quality improvement

and also advise learners to learn and do school work properly. In this way the results will improve.

- Innovator: Creates new ways of thinking and working. It is advisable that educators should be innovative to stimulate learners to learn meaningful
- Promoter: Takes innovative ideas and sells them to other team members. Educators should share information about the improvement of quality and overall performance in schools.
- Developer: Outlines specifications for alternatives and advises on the best possible way of turning ideas into action. To achieve this goal, educators are supposed to work as a team and work on alternative techniques which can bring about change in the school's context.
- Organiser: Organises the actual implementation of the innovative plan.
- Producer: Does the work associated with the ideas in accordance with the development of work that has been done and also sustains this work over time.
- Inspector: Spends time to control consistency, quality and adaptability. Circuit Managers (Inspectors) and subject specialists are supposed to monitor and evaluate performance of educators and learners to ensure performance.
- Maintainer: Is committed to team and activity maintenance in order to ensure that diverse functions of the team are effective.

Van der Westhuizen (1996:322) views teams as the building blocks for the implementation of TQM. Therefore, teams should be formed and be assigned tasks. Some schools prefer to establish various committees to ensure educator involvement in the school affairs. These include the time-table committee, fund-raising committee, safety committee and examination committee. However, the management team should

supervise and monitor progress of all the teams in the school so that all the teams play a role in the improvement of quality.

## **2.5 TQM PILLARS AND SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT**

TQM is a people process which is on-going and will never be completed (Bonstingl, 1992:32). TQM aims at creating an organisational climate, which provides each educator and learner with an opportunity to be a partner in defining and creating success. Participation of educators can improve and change the nature of the school. Bonstingl (1992:5) has come to the conclusion that there are four essential elements in the new Total Quality Educational paradigm of continuous improvement, which he calls the four pillars of quality, which can also assist educators to remedy the situation in schools. They are namely:

Pillar one: A primary focus on suppliers and customers

Schools should satisfy their customers (parents and learners). Educators should always go extra mile to ensure quality results so that customers' needs are fulfilled. Van der Westhuizen (1996:287) suggests that schools should focus on their customers. Educators, secretarial staff, ground staff and other support staff are part of the school system and should play a dominant role as customers and suppliers of each other in schools of quality to satisfy each other. Educators who develop highly personalised customer and supplier relationships will easily facilitate the school's continuous improvement process.

Pillar two: Constant dedication to continuous improvement

A school of quality should be a true learning organisation in which every educator is striving towards continuous improvement of self, others and the work process in the school (Bonstingl, 1992:7).

### Pillar three: A system/process orientation

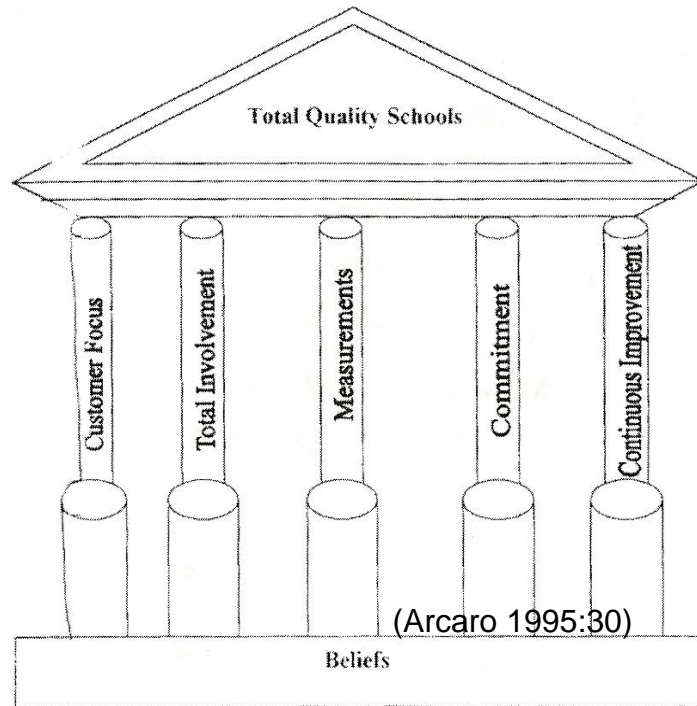
According to Van der Westhuizen (1996:284), a quality product results from quality processes. Improvement of end-of-year results can be obtained when the teaching processes are continuously improved.

### Pillar four: Strong and consistent Total Quality Leadership from top management

Educators who are serving in the school management team should build a relationship of trust and empower other educators to continuously improve quality. Mutual trust in the school context is necessary, because if it is displayed, transformation will occur easily. Thus, all the educators should participate actively and be ready to change their attitudes where necessary. Subsequently, the culture of the school will change. Participation of educators in the school's affairs is crucial because if the School Management Team can initiate change and educators are not ready or reluctant to improve or to change attitudes, nothing will happen. The SMT should always engage educators and provide guidance. The role of the School Management Team is very important as it is accountable for every activity in the school and influences educators to perform and turn schools into Total Quality Schools (Arcaro 1995:9)

In order for schools to become quality schools, certain criteria have to be met. The criteria for a Total Quality School are classified as the pillars of quality for education (Arcaro, 1995:9). According to Arcaro (1995:9), these pillars are universal and applicable to every school and should be present in order to attain the status of a Total Quality School. The beliefs and values of a school will determine the success and strength of the quality transformation (Arcaro 1995:10). Focus cannot be limited to just one pillar but instead it requires a focus on all pillars simultaneously. Each pillar and its function have to be understood before Total Quality Schools can be developed. According to Arcaro (1995:30), the following beliefs are important principles of Total Quality Schools. These are portrayed in Figure 2.3.

**Figure 2.3 Beliefs of Total Quality Schools**



- Customer focus

TQM advocates that all educators should be customer focused, and they should continually find new ways to meet or exceed customer's expectations (Barry, 1991:5). According to Barry (1995:5), not only is customers' satisfaction created but also customer loyalty as well.

- Total involvement

Every educator should participate in the quality transformation. Quality is not just the School Management Teams' responsibility, it is everyone's responsibility. Educators are accountable for the success of the school. Quality demands that everyone should contribute towards quality attainment (Arcaro, 1995:31). Total involvement of all the educators at schools is needed in all the activities.

- Measurement / Assessment

Measurement needs to be continually done against a series of key results indicators, both internal and external (Provincial Systemic Evaluation Report, 2006:71). The latter are more important as they relate to customer perceptions of production or service improvement. Evaluation of the entire school performance of both educators and learners should be done by departmental officials. At the same time a system of peer evaluation should be conducted to build confidence and trust among staff members. Measurement is a tool which should be used from time to time because it reflects whether educators are doing their tasks or not and whether the situation needs any form of attention (Van der Westhuizen, 1996:110).

This is the area where most schools are failing. Good things are happening in education today but the professionals involved in the process become so focused on solving problems, they fail to measure the effectiveness of their efforts. Schools cannot meet the quality standards established by the society unless they have the vehicle for measuring progress. Communities use school budgets to measure the efficiency of school processes (Arcaro, 1995:32). Assessment of TQM should also be done so that educators at schools can be sure that they are using an appropriate strategy to improve quality.

- Commitment

Educators should be committed because if they are not, quality transformation processes will fail. Educators should support quality efforts. Quality is a cultural change that enables the school to support the process of change by providing people with education, tools, systems and processes that promote quality (Arcaro, 1995:32). Therefore, both educators and learners should be committed in the implementation of TQM.

- Continuous improvement

Schools must do things better than, they did yesterday (Van der Westhuizen 1996:307). School Management Teams should constantly be on the lookout to prevent problems. They must solve problems as they develop and make improvements (Arcaro 1995:41). Educators should be engaged in the schools' improvement. Continuous improvement is a tool which can improve quality and satisfy all the learners by ensuring academic achievement and acquisition of skills by all the learners. TQM is about continuous improvement so that on daily basis, activities in the school are done in a different way as compared to the previous day. Once the educators fail to satisfy learners and parents, the enrolment will decline because parents will resort to performing schools to register their children. It thus becomes important that all the schools should become quality schools.

## **2.6 IMPLEMENTING TQM AT SCHOOLS**

TQM work may be a complex task, but it is certainly not impossible, especially for schools that have been doing well in the past. TQM needs to be customised and adopted as a framework in planning its implementation in schools (Rampa, 2005:67). TQM should continuously improve culture as the need for new trends arises (Van der Westhuizen, 1996:297). It thus becomes essentially important that TQM should be well implemented at schools and educators should play a leading role in sustaining continuous improvement. The implementation of TQM in schools should be a managed process so that change is not disrupted and it is the responsibility of all the educators. Educators should implement TQM with the objective to change the culture of the school and to improve quality (Van der Westhuizen, 1996:298).

Focus should also be on school change towards continuous improvement with a view to improve academic performance at schools. Educators need to demonstrate total commitment to the continuous improvement of quality at schools (Van der Westhuizen, 1996:307). Educators need to elevate schools towards academic excellence and improve poor performance. It is thus imperative for schools to develop a strategic plan to

ensure that the implementation of TQM succeeds as it will improve quality in schools.

The purpose of strategic planning is to determine the mission, vision and guidelines which will guide and encourage educators to focus on or move in a common direction (Wildrick, 2002:2). This involves reflection of the TQM philosophy in conjunction with external environmental factors that impact on learners' needs. It is thus imperative for educators to participate fully in the formulation of a mission and vision statement (Murgatroyd & Morgan, 1993:63). Schools must be audited with the purpose of analysing the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to determine the appropriate strategy for improvement. Opportunities and strengths should be used to address the challenges (weaknesses and threats) (Systemic Evaluation Provincial Report 2003:87). Once an appropriate strategy has been devised and implemented, performance at the schools will drastically improve.

Implementation of TQM needs commitment and education and training of all the educators (Sharples 1998:76). School management teams are responsible for ensuring that educators are familiar with the new techniques. Educators should vary teaching and assessment strategies so that learners are in the position to respond positively to the questions. Van der Westhuizen (1996:309) suggests the following steps, to be considered during the implementation of TQM:

Step one: Comprises a plan or process to study and analyse – for example, how the lesson is taught and assessed or how learners' needs are assessed. What improvement can be made? What data are available? What additional data will be needed to assess the improvement and how will data be used? (Van der Westhuizen, 1996:309).

Step two: Do it. According to Van der Westhuizen (1996:309), a plan should be carried out, preferably on a small scale and be gradually improved. TQM should be viewed as a tool which cannot bring change at once, but gradually.

Step three: Van der Westhuizen (1996) suggests that data which affects improvement should be studied or checked. Did the changes work well?



Step four: Act on what the small-scale process shows. Quality already exists in most schools. Quality is about doing the ordinary things extraordinarily well. Therefore, performance of educators will improve if they understand what TQM entails and schools will become quality schools (Rampa, 2005:67). Every educator would like to be associated with excellence; as a result they will change their attitude and implement TQM. However, the implementation of TQM requires perseverance. Every school is supposed to work out a plan to suit its needs and the environment. Besides the steps which educators should consider when TQM is implemented, Van der Westhuizen (1996:320) suggests a five phase strategy, which can be implemented sequentially to improve quality, namely:

Phase One: This phase requires commitment of educators and the school management teams. Educators are supposed to familiarise themselves with the requirements of implementing and maintaining TQM. Poor performance is an indication that educators do not perceive TQM well and are not committed.

Phase Two: It is the preparation phase for the implementation of TQM. It is thus imperative that every educator should identify strengths, weakness and threats. Once strengths and weaknesses have been identified, a strategic plan should be devised taking into consideration the fact that a quality result should be obtained at the end of the year.

Phase Three: This is the phase during which the implementation process is launched. This phase involves the customers' surveys and evaluation of the current process. During this phase educators should incorporate the process into the classroom, and identify areas of development and address them. Classroom practices should be approached in teams, to ensure that all the educators improve and attain school-goals.

Phase Four: It involves the integration and expansion of the process. Quality teams, committees and departments should be established at schools to ensure active participation of all the educators.

Phase Five: It is about evaluation, self-appraisal, adjustment and redesign of the TQM programme. Educators serving in the School Management Teams should evaluate TQM, so that they can identify whether it has worked or not.

## **2.7 EDUCATOR EMPOWERMENT FOR THE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT AND EFFECTIVE SCHOOLING**

Empowerment is the key to effective schooling. This means that effective schooling will take place through empowerment. If learners are not empowered, they will not attend school regularly and may not perform well. Learners should be given direction or strength to enable them to implement what they have gained from educators. If learners are well empowered, they will attend school and do school-work regularly and consequently improve performance (Casey, 1997:45).

Effective schooling requires also empowered educators, a professionally appropriate curriculum and adequate facilities. The studies and proposals for the improvement of schools have also highlighted the importance of the school's features (Maeroff, 1998:417). Technical movements in teaching and curriculum are necessary, but they are likely to be put to work for the benefit of learners if they are supported by a positive school climate, culture or ethos (Rampa, 2005:82).

It is thus important to value work ethics so that the school can move in the right direction. Educators must try to nourish certain perceptions, attitudes and perspectives that all educators hold in common. It is important not only to help individual educators but also to build the collective school-wide ethos. Once quality work is delivered by all the schools, customers (parents, learners and private sector) will be satisfied because their expectations or needs will be met. The departmental officials (inspectors and subjects specialists) have a vital role to play in ensuring that schools deliver quality.

## **2.8 TQM FOR SCHOOL CHANGE**

Active participation of educators in the implementation of a TQM strategy in a school situation is necessary, because a principle of continuous improvement will bring about change. Every educator has an important role to play with the intention of improving quality, particularly end-of-year results. Continuous improvement enables the school to improve service rendered to customers. It is the task of all the educators to keep improving services rendered to the community, through quality teaching and good results at the end of the year. Once educators play a dominant role in changing the culture of the school, the fundamental purpose of TQM will be attained, which is customer satisfaction (Banwet & Karunes, 2004:146).

According to Willis and Taylor (1999:5), educators should view the school as a business which provides services and that their customers (learners) should be satisfied by effective teaching and improving quality in the school. Once there is involvement and willingness on the part of educators to serve and improve quality, the process of transformation will be easy. Transformation is necessary because it can bring about a new situation or environment which is conducive for effective teaching and learning. Van der Linde (2001:535) suggests that the school should be ahead of change, and change should occur in the context of TQM whereby customer satisfaction becomes the pillar of change.

Oliver (1996:4) maintains that change is not just about the creation of new policies and procedures to implement external mandates. Change is also about the development of personal strategies by individuals to respond to and seek to influence the impact of structural and cultural change (personal change as much as schools change). This can be realised through proper participation in the implementation of TQM in schools.

If all educators adopt TQM as a strategy for change, high quality service and products will be delivered by most schools and educational quality will be realised (Williams, 1994:5). The concept of educational quality is complex and multidimensional (Grisay & Mahick, 2000:7). It is argued that quality in education should not be limited to learners'

results alone but should also take into account the determinant factors which influence learners' results such as provision of educators, buildings, equipment and curriculum.

## **2.9 BENEFITS OF TQM FOR SCHOOLS**

According to Rampa (2005:65), a number of scholars, including Bonstingl (1992:1), Blankstein (1999:25) and Mahnley, (1996:41) indicate that principles and tools of TQM have shown tremendous improvements in various areas in some schools in the United States (US) where TQM has been implemented. Some of these improvements include the following:

- Students have become more involved in after-school activities.
- Membership of Parents, Teacher and Learner Associations (PTLAs) has grown.
- Request for admission to schools has increased.
- Schools have raised larger sums of money for new or additional programmes and services.
- The curriculum has been developed to motivate learners intrinsically to study.
- Educators have become enablers and facilitators and not mere taskmasters.
- Work ethics, morale and motivation have improved.
- Schools have experienced academic improvements with a lower dropout rate.
- There have been fewer mistakes with an accompanying decrease in cost due to a diminished necessity to undertake tasks.
- Schools have experienced fewer disciplinary problems.

TQM can bring about similar results in South African Schools. Some of the serious challenges faced by schools can be resolved and improved tremendously through the implementation process of TQM. According to Steyn (1996:357) and Van der Linde, (2001:534), TQM is a powerful vehicle to deal with poor quality in schools, because it provides a structured and educational delivery system that leads to an improvement in various areas. According to Sallis (1996:34), TQM advocates continuous improvement with an aim of improving quality in a school context. Schools may continue to improve

and because there is a determined goal of Improvement, it is ongoing. In the same vein schools should be customer focused and continue to improve quality daily.

## **2.10 ARGUMENTS AGAINST THE USE OF TQM AT SCHOOLS**

TQM failure can be attributed to lack of leadership, and failure to include the customers (learners and parents) in the implementation process (Stephen & Arnold 1998:44). Kock, Roodt and Veldsman (2002:326) also suggest that TQM may take years and much effort before it is adopted by all educators at schools. Blankstein (1999:26) mentions eight reasons why TQM could fail in schools, namely:

- People do not like change: Educators are always not comfortable when the curriculum and assessment strategies are changed particularly well-experienced educators. Parents are also not at ease to adopt a new approach.
- Leaders are supposed to take charge: Reluctance or fear to take proper control over any aspect of the school will disturb the smooth functioning of the school.
- People are lazy: Educators who are not willing to go on extra mile with their day-to-day activities might contribute towards the failure of TQM in schools. Educators' attitudes towards school-work contribute a lot, because once an educator has a negative attitude towards paper-work at school, he/she will not deliver and always complain about challenges in the work-place.
- People cannot let go of grades: Educators are always under pressure to use quantitative goals, such as standardised test scores to measure progress. Parents can even be more insistent than the legislators because they fear that their children's future will depend on grades, but grades and test scores do not reflect the quality of education. They are often based on non-academic factors such as attendance and behaviour.

- People do not have knowledge and training. Educators should couple knowledge with proper training because information about quality, without time to learn from own and other's experiences, will not be put into practice.
- People do not use data to improve systems. Available information about quality should be utilised to improve performance. It becomes difficult when data is ignored because it can provide guidance how effective teaching and learning can be improved.
- State-legislation. The legal frameworks of the Department of Education can clash with new methods of teaching and the manner in which learning should be managed. They can become the stumbling blocks to transformation in schools.
- Using TQM where quality succeeds will not have influence or impact because there is already quality or high performance.

According to Sahney (2004:143), results of TQM are minimal in some schools; hence he suggests that every school should identify customers' needs. Schools should strive to meet various needs, expectations and requirements of customers (parents and learners). This can only be achieved when there is an effective customer relationship in order to improve on quality (Van der Westhuizen, 1996:287).

## **2.11 CONCLUSION**

In this chapter a detailed literature study was presented regarding educator participation in the implementation of a TQM Strategy. It has become important to discuss how a TQM strategy can be used by educators in schools to improve poor performance and also the importance of continuous improvement in a school context. The next chapter will focus on the research methodology and procedures which will be followed during the quantitative study.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **THE RESEARCH DESIGN OF THE QUALITATIVE INVESTIGATION**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter attention will be given to the stages of designing research methods for the current inquiry prior to data collection. A qualitative method was employed; reasons for using this method were stated (in chapter 1) and what the researcher intended to achieve by using such a research method. Following is the description of the qualitative research and its justification in this research.

#### **3.2 METHOD OF RESEARCH**

This section looks at the methodology used to investigate this project. Research methods are the ways the researcher collects and analyses data. Methods were developed for acquiring knowledge by reliable and valid procedures. Data collection may be done with measurement techniques, extensive interviews and observation or a collection of documents. De Vos (1998:240) argues that methodology refers to the researcher's perception of how they can find out about the reality of the world. McMillan and Schumacher (2001:55) mention that methodology refers to a design whereby the researcher selects data collection and analysis procedures to investigate a specific research problem.

In this research, the researcher intends to use a focus group technique, using three data collection methods (observation, interviews and analysis of documents) to obtain information about perceptions and attitudes of educators and principals concerning the implementation of TQM at academically underperforming secondary schools in the Moses Kotane Area. The reason for opting for this research technique (focus group interview coupled with observation and documents analysis), among others, is that it closes the gap between the interview's initial perception of the topic and after reports thereof. More about this technique will be discussed as the study progresses. Following is a detailed description of qualitative method and why was it chosen to conduct this

research in the academically underperforming secondary schools in the Moses Kotane Area.

### **3.2.1 Qualitative research and why was it chosen**

Qualitative research is the interpretation or construction of the lived experiences of subjects (De Vos 1998:214). Lemmer (1992:292) argues that qualitative research has its aim, the understanding of the life world of the individuals or groups, studied from their own frame of reference.

It should be clear that various definitions of qualitative research may apply, but both the above-mentioned authors emphasise that qualitative research tries to describe and understand how the interviewee (participant) experiences his/ her life world as he/she sees it. Qualitative research tries to understand the meanings held by the person or group being studied. Furthermore, the interviewee (subject) can describe spontaneously what he/she feels or does, and what he/she thinks about the theme. Hughes (1976:44) further argues that the qualitative research paradigm in its broadest sense refers to research that elicits participants' accounts, meaning and experiences or perceptions. It also produces descriptive data in the participant's own written or spoken words. It thus involves identifying the participant's beliefs and values that underlie the phenomena (De Vos, 1998:248).

Hughes (1976:45) argues that, like the quantitative paradigm, the qualitative paradigm is more than a set of data-gathering methods. It is a way of approaching the empirical world. The qualitative researcher is concerned with understanding rather than explanation (De Vos, 1998:243), in contrast with quantitative research where phenomena are controlled. It is from this qualitative research that the participant (interviewee) has a possibility of replying back to the interviewer and the interviewee can register and interpret what is said and how it is said. Further, in qualitative research the researcher interacts with what is being studied and it is from this discussion that the researcher intends looking into why this method was chosen hence the researcher will



have a direct contact with educators who are working at academically underperforming secondary schools in the Moses Kotane Area.

The main reason for the choice of a qualitative methodology is that it ensures that the researcher explores the work of other researchers on the subject of a TQM strategy. The idea is to cite relevant literature in the process of presenting the underlying theoretical and methodological rationale for this research. This means citing key studies and emphasising major findings rather than trying to report every study done on the problem or providing unnecessary detail. It concentrates on whether the researcher's findings were consistent or whether they disagree. It leads to the exploration of theories that address the topic. It can also determine whether there are flaws in the body of existing research (Babbie, 1998:112).

### **3.2.2 Importance of qualitative research**

The qualitative research was used, because this project is searching for creativity. The project requires participants to describe their situations from their own points of view, that is, how they understand the implementation of a TQM strategy. The aim is to obtain as many different descriptions from different settings of the interviewee's life-world as possible.

Creswell (1994:145) has identified six assumptions regarding qualitative research. These assumptions are as follows:

- Qualitative researchers are concerned primarily with process, rather than outcomes or products. This assumption makes the qualitative method relevant to this study because this research assumes that the process of implementing a TQM strategy at academically underperforming secondary schools in the Moses Kotane Area will improve quality.
- Qualitative research is descriptive in that the researcher is interested in the process and meaning. It enables the researcher to obtain access to hidden data,

that is, information from actors which is both unexpected and unintended (Lemmer, 1992:293).

- Qualitative researchers are interested in meaning, that is, how people make sense of their lives, experiences and structures in the world. This confirms the relevance of qualitative method in this research.
- Qualitative research is interpretative. As such, the biases, values and judgment of the researcher are stated especially in the research report. Such openness is considered to be useful and positive.
- Qualitative research involves fieldwork. The researcher physically goes to the people, site or institutions to observe or record behavior in its natural setting.
- The process of qualitative research is inductive in that the researcher builds obstructions, concepts, hypotheses and theories from details. This is applicable to this study in which the researcher did not wish to prove a theory. However, he wished to make abstractions from the interviews and form a shared sense of reality regarding the usefulness of TQM from the interviewees.

### **3.2.3 Qualitative research data techniques**

Qualitative research depends on multimethod strategies to collect and corroborate data. Hence, interviews and observations are primary data collection techniques in qualitative research. Qualitative research is interactive face-to-face research, which requires relatively extensive time to systematically observe, interview and record processes as they occur naturally (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:428; Ary et al. 2006:474).

Qualitative researchers study participants' perspectives through interactive strategies. Each qualitative strategy is particularly suited for obtaining a specific type of data (Ary et al. 2006:474).

- Observation is appropriate for collecting data on naturally occurring behaviours in their usual context.
- Interviewing is optimal for collecting data on individuals' personal histories, perspectives and experiences; and
- Document analysis is useful to gain understanding of the phenomenon under study.

For this particular study, interviewing was used as the primary data collection strategy and observation and analysis of documents were also used to verify and corroborate collected data.

#### 3.2.3.1 Interviewing

The interview strategy according to Ary et al. (2006:480) is one of the most widely used methods to gather qualitative data on subjects' opinions, beliefs and feelings about the situation in their own words. Interviews provide information that cannot be obtained through observation or can be used to verify the observation.

Briggs and Coleman (2007:208) share a similar definition and view an interview as a preferred tactic to explore people's views and report findings in their own words as reasonably possible. The interview technique is therefore ideal for acquiring information that is personal and complex. The researcher is therefore required to establish rapport with the subject. The use of interviews, according to Cohen et al. (2007:349), marks a move away from seeing human subjects as simply manipulation and data as somehow external to individuals and towards regarding knowledge as generated between humans, often through conversation.

The interview means a direct method of collecting information in a one-to-one situation and an interchange of views between two or more people on a topic of mutual interest. The interchange is between the participant who has experiences and the researcher

who wants to know the experience in order to provide findings to a research question (Ary et al. 2006:480).

Furthermore, the interview is a flexible tool for data collection because it allows the interviewer to make adjustments as the situation requires. It enables the interviewers or interviewees to discuss their interpretation of the world in which they live and to express how they regard situations from their point of view (De Vos, 1998:248).

The interviews are usually divided into two broad categories, namely, structured and unstructured interviews. In the structured interview, the researcher takes the lead in the interview schedule and types of questions, while in the unstructured interview, the researcher conducts the interview without preconceived ideas (Babbie, 1998:112).

An interview, according to Ary et al. (2006:480), has the following advantages. It provides:

- Insight on participants' perspectives
- The meaning of events for the people involved
- Information on unanticipated issues.

One disadvantage of the interview as a data-gathering strategy is that the interviewees may not be willing to share information or may even offer false information. Interviews also require a great deal of time to conduct and later to transcribe the audio or the notes (Ary et al. 2006:480). Qualitative research interviews are usually more probing. Hence, each school principal and each educator were asked the same set of questions, but with some latitude in the sequence of the questions. All the interviewees were made aware that their responses would be used for research purposes only and that the research report would be made available to them for scrutiny.

In this study, the semi-structured (unstructured) interview strategy was used to collect data. This involved open-ended questions asked to the participants and responses recorded. The interview guide included five questions for educators on post levels 3 and 4 (principals) and six questions for educators on post level 1 (educators) (Cf. Annexure A).

### 3.2.3.2 Observation

Briggs and Coleman (2007:237) regard observation as the most powerful, flexible and 'real' data collection strategy because it is not dependent, like the survey, on the respondent's personal views but seeks explicit evidence through the eyes of the observer directly or through a camera lens. It is a holistic approach concerning the observation of 'everyday' events and the description and construction of meaning.

The distinctive feature of observation is that it offers a researcher the opportunity to gather 'live' data from naturally occurring situations. It is characterised as non-interventionist, where the researcher does not seek to manipulate the situation or subjects, does not pose questions for the subjects, nor deliberately creates new provocations (Cohen et al. 2007:396).

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2001:40-41), observation is an interactive technique of "participating to some degree in a naturally occurring situation over an extended time and 'writing' extensive field notes to describe what occurs". The researcher does not collect data to answer a specific hypothesis; rather the explanations are inductively derived from the field notes.

Observation can be done using a naturalistic approach (participant observation) or formal approach (systematic observation). In the former, the researcher is drawn as a participant in the context of a specific event either overtly or covertly. In the later, the researcher is non-participatory and often uses systematic observation strategies as a means of gathering data (Briggs & Coleman, 2007:240).

McMillan and Schumacher (2001:41) also state that structured observation is a particular kind of data-gathering, in which the researcher directly observes and systematically records the resulting observation. The researcher has predetermined specific categories of behaviour that will be recorded.

For the purpose of this study, both participant and systematic observation techniques were used to observe the attitudes of principals and educators towards the implementation of TQM.

During this study, the researcher was on site for a direct, eyewitness account of the actions and settings before the start of the school day until the end of the school day in fifteen academically underperforming secondary schools in the Moses Kotane Area.

The opportunities of recording by making use of field notes, rather than outside of the group's context and activity, provide a rich understanding of the context, when coupled with the observer's insights and understanding. Furthermore, it provides a more comprehensive perspective on the phenomenon under study.

### 3.2.3.3 Documents analysis

According to Briggs and Coleman (2007:281), document analysis is a form of qualitative research that requires the researcher to locate, collate, interpret and analyse empirical data and draw conclusions that describe, interpret or explain what has occurred. In terms of data collection, this involves transferring significant quotations from documents to a field notebook.

The term 'documents' refers to a wide range of written, physical and visual material, including what other authors may term artifacts (Ary et al. 2006:482). According to McMillan and Schumacher (2001:451), artifacts are tangible manifestations that describe people's knowledge, actions and values in the form of personal documents (such as diaries and letters), official documents (such as memos, minutes, working documents and proposals) and objects (such as symbols and values).

According to Briggs and Coleman (2007:281), documentary analysis allows for sufficient data to be collected for researchers to be able to:

- identify the significant features of a particular event
- establish a plausible interpretation and explanation of data
- test for the credibility and validity of these interpretations
- construct an argument based on these interpretations.

For the purpose of this study, the following documents related to underperformance were scrutinised and analysed at research sites during the onsite observation visits:

- learners' portfolios
- teachers' portfolios.

Now that a clear exposition has been given as to why qualitative research is important in this project, a focus group interview used as a research technique will now be discussed in the ensuing paragraph.

### **3.3 WHAT IS THE FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW?**

Three concepts embedded in this term need to be explained. These concepts are focus, group and interview. A group can be defined as a number of individuals between whom a distinguishable pattern of interaction exists (De Vos 1998:314). Interview signifies the presence of a trained moderator who could skillfully facilitate the discussion that takes place between all the members in the group to elicit information on the desired topic. Focus implies that the discussion that takes place in the group is limited to the specific theme under investigation (Steward & Shamdasani 1990 :10). For the sake of this study,

ten principals out of a total of fifteen were interviewed while ten educators from the fifteen academically underperforming secondary schools were sampled through the purposive sampling technique.

According to Topor (1997:2), a focus group interview comprises a representative sample of a target. In other words, a focus group is six, eight, ten, or twelve people, carefully selected, who represent a specific target audience. Two groups of ten educators from the academically underperforming secondary schools in the Moses Kotane Area were targeted to be interviewed. Barnard and Venter (1996:57) describe a focus groups as a special type of group in terms of purpose, size, composition and procedures. Kruger (1994:121) defines a focus group as being composed of six to twelve participants who are unfamiliar with each other and who share a common denominator, for instance, a common background.

De Vos (1998:314) describes the focus group interview as a purposeful discussion of a specific topic or related topics taking place between eight to ten individuals with a similar background and common interests. The group's interaction will consist of verbal and non-verbal communication and an inter-play of perceptions and opinions that will stimulate discussion without necessarily modifying or changing the ideas and opinions of participating individuals.

The group interview is facilitated by a trained moderator who acts as a data collection instrument by creating an atmosphere in which each group member will feel free to share his or her own knowledge, attitudes and past experiences of a topic under discussion. This aim of focus group interviewing is never to reach consensus on matters being discussed, but to elicit a range of opinions and new views on the subject. This interview eventually provides a forum for opinion gathering (De Vos 1998:315).

The focus group interview is thus conducted as an open conversation on a specific topic in which each participant makes comments, asks question or responds to comments of others, including the moderator (Ferreira & Puth 1988:167). The focus group interview enables the researcher to develop inductively, that is, from the bottom up rather than



from the top down, concepts, generalisations and theories that are grounded in or reflect knowledge of the people participating in the focus group interview.

### **3.4 WHY THE FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW AS A RESEARCH TECHNIQUE?**

For the purpose of this research project, the aim of the focus group interview is mainly to gain insight into this research area, that is, the implementation of TQM as an improvement tool at academically underperforming secondary schools in the Moses Kotane Area.

The focus group interview acquaints the researcher with the language that his/her populations use to describe their experiences and also acquaint the researcher with the research population's cultural values and styles of thinking and communicating about the research topic (De Vos 1998:323). Now that the necessity of the focus group interview in this research project has clearly been epitomised, the focus will be on the advantages and disadvantages of the focus group interview.

### **3.5 ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS**

Focus group interviews have both advantages and disadvantages, which will be discussed below.

#### **3.5.1 The advantages of focus group interview**

Focus group interviews are cheaper to conduct and can be completed in a short time. This interview is also exploratory in the sense that participants are able to express their concerns about a particular issue, that is, it closes the gap between the interviewee's initial perception of a topic and after reports thereof (Byers & Wilcox, 1991:64). Focus group interview allows the researcher to probe, creating flexibility that is so important for exploring unanticipated issues. Indeed, flexibility is impossible within the structured design of quantitative methods, such as social surveys (De Vos 1998:324). Focus group interviews are not rigid in the sense that they create an open, relaxing environment

whereby the interviewees can say anything they want to say without interruptions or limitations. The researcher, on the other hand, is able to ask questions whenever necessary.

The most important advantage of the group interview is that the researcher is confronted with the meanings and assumptions that the individual or group holds in its own life world. This can be substantiated by Brotherson (1994:57) when he explains that the group interview allows for open, reflexive and democratic phenomenon. The group interview offers rich contextual data for understanding the depth and dynamics of phenomena in their particular context. Therefore, Patton (1990:58) as quoted by Brotherson (1994:57) argues that the focus group interview can lead to understanding attitudes, behaviors and contents from many points of views, in other words, to gain insight that would otherwise be less attainable. A focus group interview can also provide speedy results. They have an advantage over other data gathering methods in that they can be conducted and the results analysed and reported in a very short time (De Vos, 1998:325). The main disadvantages of the focus group interviews will be examined in the ensuing paragraph.

### **3.5.2 The disadvantages of focus group interview**

Sampling the right people to participate in the focus group interview is a difficult challenge. Researchers should be able to sample those people who are the best able to discuss the topic at hand. The researcher should be able to match the right people who have the ability to discuss the given topic. This becomes difficult should the researcher fail to match his or her group, for example, having to interview principals and educators in the same group at the same time. That would create a scenario whereby one of the members is unable to express his or her views in the presence of his or her senior. On the other hand, the principal may influence the educator to say what he or she does not agree with and that could cripple the research findings.

Again, the focus group is often difficult to assemble. Participants have to travel or go to a set place at stipulated time to share their views with others for a few hours. Sometimes

some participants may not be present on the day of the interview and that may result in the postponement of the interview.

Having examined both the advantages and disadvantages of focus group interview, it became apparent that the focus group interview would be relevant for this study as it is more democratic, that is, participants can freely speak their minds, unlike in a questionnaire, whereby the interviewee can be asked to answer with yes or no. Haralambos (1990:73) argues that in a questionnaire, it cannot be assumed that entirely different answers can be made to the same question. Researchers assume that they know what is not asked and participants cannot answer questions, which are not asked. For this reason, it is difficult to develop a hypothesis during the course of the research and researchers are limited to testing those theories, which they have already thought of.

With the focus group interview, it does exactly what the name implies (focus). Focus groups have foci and clear agendas. In fact, the topics of discussion in a focus group interview are carefully predetermined and sequenced in an understandable and logical way. As such, they facilitate the natural, spontaneous discussion of events or experiences by the participants. De Vos (1998:325) argues that participants in focus group interviews need not reach consensus, instead, emphasis is placed on findings about the participants' experiences and feelings about the specific aspects of social reality, such as an event, product or services. Now that the disadvantages and advantages of the focus group have been outlined, the process of focus group interview is discussed below.

### **3.6 THE PROCESS OF THE FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW**

As with unstructured interviews conducted with individuals, the focus group interview could be divided into specific phases. The most important steps and decisions will therefore be described on the basis of the following phases:

### **3.6.1 Planning the focus group interview**

In addition to the decisions on what is to be studied, the following appears to be the most important decisions.

#### **3.6.1.1 Identify selection criteria, select and recruit the participants**

According to LeCompte and Pressle (1993:56), all qualitative research uses both selection processes and sampling. LeCompte and Pressle (1993:56) describe selection as a process that involves defining what kinds of people and how many of them can be studied, as well as when, where and under which circumstances will they be studied. De Vos (1998:317) contends that the researcher must ask questions such as; What do I want to know? Who will be able to provide the information? What is the information for? How will I get hold of the participants?

In this research project, the researcher made sure that the appropriate participants were selected. The principals and educators from the academically underperforming secondary schools in the Moses Kotane Area were selected through purposive sampling. In order to ensure a naturalistic setting required by qualitative research, interviews were conducted at the school during working hours (De Vos 1998:318).

In line with qualitative research paradigm, in this research project the researcher allowed the topic under discussion to continue until it was saturated. This point is discussed further by Glaser and Strauss (1967:11) when they state that ideally, a focus group that comments on a specific topic, should continue to discuss the topic until data reaches saturation point and no new issues or categories emerge. However, because of practical problems, such as a limited time span, it is not always possible to continue until all the relevant data have been generated.

#### **3.6.1.2 The size of a focus group**

In most cases, the size of a focus group ranges from six to twelve participants. This appears that the ideal is between six and nine participants (Barnard & Venter 1997:57).

It becomes easier to steer the interview in the right direction when the group is small. Groups with more than twelve members limit each participant's opportunity to share experiences. Groups with four to ten participants are popular because smaller groups are easier to recruit and host. In this research project, the researcher made use of two groups: ten educators on post level 1 and ten educators on post level 3 and 4. Therefore, a total of twenty educators from the academically underperforming secondary schools in the Moses Kotane Area, were interviewed.

#### 3.6.1.3 Ensuring that educators will attend

Focus group interviews are time consuming, particularly for participants who have all day. Therefore, incentives such as the provision of snacks, free transportation and payment for participation are typically used (De Vos 1998:317). The researcher made sure that the above points were satisfied. Also, to ensure that educators would attend, the researcher wrote letters to all fifteen targeted schools requesting permission from the principals to meet with them (principals and educators) to explain the importance of the project, how it could benefit the researcher academically and how the research could benefit their schools (cf. Annexure C). Prior to that the researcher wrote a letter to the District Director at Rustenburg, asking for a permission to conduct research in one of the areas under his jurisdiction, that is, the Moses Kotane Area, focusing on the academically underperforming secondary schools (Cf Annexure B). The participants in this interview encountered no transport problems because the researcher visited the fifteen targeted schools and the interview was held during working hours (De Vos 1998:318).

After the permission was granted by the principals, the researcher met the individual participants at their schools to confirm that they would attend the interview and briefed them on what the interview was all about. In this regard, Kruger (1994:25) says that the invitation should stress that potential participants have special experiences or insight that would be of value in this study.

#### 3.6.1.4 Selecting the interview location

Steward and Shamdasani (1990:56) argue that focus group interviews can be successfully conducted in a variety of settings, but it is always in an area that is well travelled or rather perceived as attractive. In other words, the location should be free from outside distraction, background music or noisy ventilation systems (Steward & Shamdasani 1990:57).

In this project, the researcher provided the location chosen by the participants. Because the interview was conducted during the school hours at one of the academically underperforming secondary schools in the Moses Kotane Area, they chose an office and the researcher agreed on this venue because it was free from all the distractions discussed above.

#### 3.6.1.5 Designing the interview guide

The basic idea of the interview guide is to set down specific issues for the group to discuss or to set the agenda. When constructing the interview guide, close attention should be paid to the ordering of the questions. The questions should be ordered from the more general to the more specific (Steward & Shamdasani 1990:52).

In this case, the researcher arranged the semi-structured interview questions prior the interview process. The researcher made sure that the questions asked would satisfy or answer the research problem. Simple, specific, clear questions were arranged and there was also room for probing in case of an unclear answer emerging or questions not understood clearly (De Vos 1998:318).

### **3.7 CONDUCTING THE FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW**

De Vos (1998:320) suggests the following important steps in conducting the focus group interview:

### **3.7.1 Purposeful small talk**

The researcher should attempt to create atmosphere of trust, friendliness and openness from the moment the participants arrive for a focus group interview, because purposeful small talk facilitates a warm and friendly environment and this puts participants at ease.

### **3.7.2 Physical arrangement of the group**

The participants should be asked to sit around in a circle to ensure maximum opportunity for eye contact with the researcher as well as other participants. Educators were arranged in a circle to enable contact with each other.

### **3.7.3 Handling unwanted participants**

People who are not invited to be interviewed may not be allowed in the interview session because they may affect the interview negatively. The researcher may need to convince the participants to be patient until the interview is over. In this research project, the researcher never experienced such challenges

.

### **3.7.4 The beginning of the focus group interview**

Brotherson (1994:112) suggests that the beginning of the interview sets the tone and the agenda for the rest of the procedure. Therefore, it is crucial that the researcher creates a thoughtful, permissive and friendly atmosphere. The goal is to direct the focus group with limited intervention. De Vos (1998:321), on the other hand, argues that in order to regulate the interaction of participants in a non-directive way, the researcher must clearly set the goal and objects of the interview as well as ground rules for participation during his or her introduction. Brotherson (1994:122) also notes that it becomes imperative that participants are to be made aware that their opinions count and that they are valued.

At the beginning of the focus group interview, the researcher will be regarded as the role model and his/her behaviour will determine the group norm. Steward and Shamdasani (1990:94) point out that securing participation is particularly important at the beginning of the focus group because this will reassure the hesitant participant and provide a basic guideline to overtly dominant members of the group.

### **3.7.5 Techniques employed by the researcher**

To ensure participation by each and every member, the researcher should encourage all participants to speak and ask follow-up questions or probes. The researcher must also help by asking more questions or probing. Another important tactic is the five-second pause, which entails the researcher refraining from responding for about five seconds after a participant has made a comment. In this way the participant is unobtrusively prompted to give more information (Kruger 1994:45).

### **3.7.6 Managing problems during group interview**

During a focus group interview, a number of challenges can arise. De Vos (1998:322) identifies the following problems:

- Participants sometimes spill coffee, feel ill or receive emergency telephone calls.
- Because focus group interviews quickly generate a large number of views or ideas, it is quite difficult to manage the time allocated to a group interview.
- Although focus groups bring a variety of people with differing socio-demographic characteristics together, individual characteristics often pose awkward problems to the moderator.

Although the researcher cannot anticipate all problems during the interview, he must be prepared for the unexpected, and when confronted with such a problem, he must swiftly and firmly guide the group back to its task.



### **3.7.7 Group dynamics**

According to De Vos (1998:322), a focus group interview does not consist of individuals lumped together in a group; it consists of different facets of people shaped by intra- and interpersonal and environmental factors, for example, it could be predicted that the physically attractive person with an extrovert personality would communicate more easily in a group situation than a physically disabled personality. This is to say that difference in groups with regard to economic status and religion can influence participation by the individual and group cohesiveness. The more homogeneous or compatible a group is, the easier it will be for the researcher to make the group dynamic work in service of the goal and objects of the research (Steward & Shamdasani 1990:41).

### **3.7.8 Roles of the researcher and interview styles**

Steward and Shamdasani (1990:89) point out that different styles of interviews found in focus group interviews vary according to personality differences among researchers, different roles, different types of groups and different research aims, but one important dimension is the degree of direction emanating from the researcher (De Vos 1998:323). The second important dimension along which interview styles may vary is the role of the researcher as perceived by him/her. In some cases the researcher takes an objective, distanced stance with respect to the groups and in other cases, he/she may facilitate discussion by offering personal examples (De Vos 1998:323). Finally, the interview style may vary with respect to the use of discussion aids.

### **3.7.9 Concluding the focus group interview**

The researcher must after the interview, thank the participants for having sacrificed their time to attend the interview. Kruger (1994:68) points out that it is advisable to have the main points summarised and to verify the information with the participants. The summary typically lasts a few minutes, after which comments are invited. The moderator

should thank the group for participating in the interview and provides them with travelling expense if promised and also wishes them a safe journey home (De Vos 1998:324).

### **3.8 TRUSTWORTHINESS**

Trustworthiness is the essential component of qualitative research. The findings of the research should therefore reflect the reality of the experiences of the participants and the researcher. To that end the researcher will ensure the trustworthiness of the study through validity and reliability strategies mentioned below.

#### **3.8.1 Mechanically recorded data**

A digital camera was used to record some observations and all interviews were audio-taped to enhance the validity by providing accurate and relatively complete records. The main interviews and several scenes were also recorded in the field notebook. Professional transcripts were made and due to cost considerations some transcripts were done by the researcher.

#### **3.8.2 Low-inference descriptors**

Concrete, precise descriptions from field notes and interview elaborations were the hallmarks of this study to identify patterns in data. This means that during the interviews, descriptions were literal and important terms were used and understood by the participants. This ensured accuracy between the meanings of the interviewees and the researcher's perceptions of those meanings.

#### **3.8.3 Participant review**

The researcher asked the participants to review and verify the transcript or what was heard and seen during the interviews, observations and analysis of documents. The participants were further asked to modify some of the information or interpretations of

the transcript. Then the data obtained from each school were analysed for a comprehensive integration of the findings.

#### **3.8.4 Triangulation strategies**

Triangulation allows for cross-validation among data sources and data collection strategies, time periods, and theoretical schemes (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:478). To find regularities, the researcher compared different sources, situations and methods to see whether the same pattern kept recurring.

For this study, verbal clarifications were triangulated by written references and three data collection methods (observation, interviewing, and analysis of documents) were used. This reliance on corroboration amongst different methods different methods served to enhance the validity of this investigation.

### **3.9 RESEARCH ETHICS**

Research ethics, according to Johnson and Christensen (2004:94), are principles and guidelines that help researchers to uphold things regarded as valuable. McMillan and Schumacher (2001:420) state that the qualitative researcher needs to be sensitive to ethical principles because of their research topic, face-to-face interactive data collection process, an emergent design and reciprocity with participants. Emergent designs require that ethical principles be considered throughout all phases of planning and data collection. Most ethical situations require the researcher to determine situational priorities, which involve discussions with participants. Ethical guidelines include, but are not limited to, informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity and privacy.

#### **3.9.1 Informed consent and permission**

Qualitative research necessitates obtaining the consent, the cooperation and the permission of the participants and of significant others in the institutions providing research facilities (Cohen et al 2007:52). Informed consent, according to McMillan and

Schumacher (2001:421), is regarded as a dialogue and involves procedures in which individuals chose whether to participate after being informed of the purpose of the study and facts that would influence their decisions. Informed consent is a manner that encourages free choice of participation. Before a participant can participate in a research study, the researcher must give the prospective participant a description of all the features of the study that might reasonably influence his or her willingness to participate.

According to Johnson and Christensen (2004:105), the principle of informed consent refers to the fact that a participant, once given the pertinent information, is competent and legally free of the desire of others to make a decision as to whether to participate in given research. In this case, permission was also requested and granted from the Acting District Director to conduct the study in the Moses Kotane Area (Cf Annexure B).

### **3.9.2 Anonymity and confidentiality**

In general, according to McMillan and Schumacher (2001:421), there is a strong feeling among researchers that settings and participants should not be identifiable in print. Cohen et al (2007:64) emphasise the need for confidentiality of participants' identities and state that the essence of anonymity is that information provided by participants should in no way reveal their identity. Johnson and Christensen (2004:112) state that anonymity and confidentiality are important to avoid connecting the participant with any information that would be embarrassing or harmful.

Schools and principals who participated in this study were given full assurance of confidentiality and anonymity. Other than identifying factors such as gender and race of the participants, no personal identifiable information was divulged or specific schools identified by name.

### **3.9.3 Voluntary participation**

Voluntarism entails applying the principle of informed consent and thus ensuring that participants freely choose to take part or not in the investigation and guarantees that exposure to risk is undertaken knowingly and voluntarily (Cohen et al 2007:52).

In this study, each participating individual was requested to be interviewed and each willingly confirmed. All participating individuals were fully informed of the purpose of the study in advance and given an option to discontinue their participation, for any reason whatsoever, at any time during the process.

### **3.9.4 Competency and relationship with participant**

According to Cohen et al (2007:52), competence implies that responsible, mature individuals and skilled individuals participate in an investigation. The researcher has to ensure that he/she does not engage individuals incapable of making decisions because of immaturity. In this case, the researcher possesses a high level of competency and the skill necessary for this undertaking. He has worked as an educator for a number of years and is a principal of a school with 1 200 learners and a staff of 42 educators and non-educators.

On the basis of the above, the researcher endeavored to maintain a healthy relationship with each participant and shared a high degree of trust and respect throughout the investigation.

## **3.10 CONCLUSION**

In this chapter the researcher explained the research method used, its importance and the steps undertaken in conducting the focus group interviews. The next chapter is the presentation of findings. The findings are presented according to responses to the key research questions.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF EMPIRICAL DATA**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

The previous chapter discussed the research methods and design, while the present chapter will focus on the presentation and discussion of research data collected through on site observation, analysis of documents and from the focus group interviews. Two groups (focus groups) were interviewed, ten educators on post level 1 and ten educators on post level 3 and 4.

#### **4.2 PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF EMPIRICAL DATA**

It was indicated that research data will be presented and discussed in three sections. Firstly, data observations, secondly data from analysed documents and thirdly, data from focus group interviews.

##### **4.2.1 Observation data**

The researcher visited the research sites namely the fifteen sample schools on two occasions to explore how educators are utilising TQM as change or transformation strategy in academically underperforming secondary schools in the Moses Kotare Area. Through the implementation of TQM, the sampled schools can deliver the best (highest) quality. The following observations were noted from research sites:

- Eight out of ten principals in the fifteen academically underperforming secondary schools in the Moses Kotane Area are in control of their schools. They implement discipline in the schools and a code of conduct for both learners and educators is in place. Principals believe that schools should provide better service to its prime customers (learners and parents). Data from this study indicate that principals encourage educators to operate in teams; however, the fifteen sampled secondary schools are still not performing well in terms of the Grade 12 results.

- Two out of the ten principals are still struggling to manage their staff, to instill professional discipline in educators and ensure that they implement disciplinary actions when learners misbehave.
- Out of ten educators selected from the fifteen academically underperforming secondary schools in the Moses Kotane Area, only four educators maintain proper control in the classrooms. Teaching and learning is an exercise which is supposed to improved daily. These educators insist that all the learners should observe punctuality and write assignments and tests. Educators use TQM to improve learning in general. Learners are encouraged to be responsible and develop self-esteem. Educators are the managers of the learning centers (classroom). TQM principles have been translated into practice and have changed the classrooms into a warm and supportive environment.
- The other six educators selected from the academically underperforming secondary schools in the Moses Kotane Area experience disciplinary problems. In ten schools out of the fifteen sampled schools it was observed that learners report late for the first period of the day. Educators turn a blind eye on these anomalies. In these ten schools it was seen that learners cause minor classroom disturbances and minor annoying classrooms disruptions, such as talking to a friend while the educator is presenting a lesson, requesting to visit the toilet or engaging in a different activity from the task at hand. However, educators seldom reprimand learners in these instances nor admonish them to behave well. The role of an educator, to improve quality learning and teaching, is not apparent.

#### **4.2.2 Analysis of documents**

For the purpose of this study, the researcher scrutinised and analysed both educators and learners' portfolios respectively.

#### 4.2.2.1 Learners' portfolios

Grade 12 learners' portfolios, ranging from outstanding to average and below average, were examined in all the fifteen academically underperforming secondary schools in the study. Five educators in the sampled schools did not mark and control all the assignments, tests and projects. Feedback is not regular in these five schools.

#### 4.2.2.2 Educators' portfolios

Four out of ten educators at the fifteen academically underperforming secondary schools do not prepare for the lessons. Learning programmes and work schedules are not included in the portfolios, only a few lesson plans are available. In three out of fifteen schools, educators' portfolios are not controlled. Principals have issued warning to educators who do not prepare before going to class.

### 4.2.3 Focus group interviews

Data from the focus group interviews was analysed and the findings presented according to the three main research questions: the role of educators with regard to the implementation of TQM; ways that educators can improve quality learning and teaching through TQM; and guidelines which can be followed in the implementation of a TQM Strategy. Annexure A contains examples of interview transcripts.

#### 4.2.3.1 Lack of educator motivation

Lack of motivation emerged as a predominant theme. To illustrate this, one educator on post level one explained that many educators feel burnt out because they work very hard while coping with a full workload. Attempts to excel even more are, however, not rewarded by recognition or appreciation. This sentiment was shared by several other participants which clearly indicates a lack of motivation among educators. Unfortunately, the School Management Team does not encourage educators to do their work to the best of their abilities, and this erodes the educators' spirit and their work ethic. Central to



TQM philosophy is the role of motivation and each individual or team within the organisation should see it as part of the provision of customer satisfaction to motivate others at different levels within the organisation. Just as educators are called on to motivate learners as customers within the TQM chain, so educational leaders should continually recognise educator endeavours, encourage them and renew their vision.

This is part of the leadership function of the School Management Team: to find ways to motivate educators to commit themselves in their work to produce quality results. High motivation and strong commitment to work are essential requirements for effective schooling. According to participants, educators receive little encouragement from the SMT although they work hard. It implies that both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation are required to encourage educators at the sampled schools to excel and improve quality teaching and learning. The School Management Team should be enlightened as to the principles of management by leading others which includes motivation. This statement is supported by Preedy (1997:14) when he states that in order to improve performance, the SMT must be trained in the management principles, including motivation, to ensure quality of work is done in school. Motivation of educators can take many forms, other than remuneration: opportunities for professional development, public recognition in school assemblies or functions and personal one-on-one acknowledgement.

#### 4.2.3.2 Empowerment of educators

Participants in both focus groups agreed that educators should be empowered by the SMT to ensure effectiveness in the school context. The participants' views were: educators are empowered by allowing them to contribute towards the schools' development and educators are encouraged by participation in decision-making processes. The quality of teaching and learning can be improved drastically by organising regular workshops to discuss and plan for improvement. Monthly subject meetings to discuss strengths and weaknesses in learning areas give educators the chance to express their views and to design strategies for improvement. In this way educators can become empowered. Empowered educators do their work to the best of

their abilities, and they produce quality results, because they are highly motivated. As a result they will be committed towards the improvement of quality teaching and learning.

#### 4.2.3.3 Addressing a lack of commitment among educators

For effective schooling to take place, there should be commitment from educators. Commitment implies motivation, agreement on goals, loyalty and effort (Visscher 1999:145). One out of ten sampled educators on post level three and four indicated that a cause of poor performance was commitment, lack of motivation and lack of support from the parents. Participants felt that in terms of commitment, schools in the Moses Kotane Area compared poorly with schools in the Rustenburg area. A participant remarked: "Moses Kotane area should copy what Rustenburg Area is doing. Culture of learning and teaching should be restored in all the schools."

According to the participants, schools at the Moses Kotane Area are not committed to their task. Poor performance is evidence in the lack of daily preparation and poor record keeping. Moreover, educators seldom work together as teams. A participant mentioned: "It is not easy to advance a specific reason towards poor performance. In my opinion, lack of teamwork can be a contributing factor towards poor performance. Team spirit can encourage all the educators to be committed and contribute towards quality improvement. It can also implicate that all the educators should have the same commitment level by preparing thoroughly for the lesson, they intend teaching."

#### 4.2.3.4 Absenteeism of educators

This study revealed that poor performance at the fifteen academically underperforming secondary schools is also caused by the exceptionally high rate of leave taken by most educators. Two educators on post level agreed on this matter. One remarked: "In our case, I can say that educators are not dedicated to their work and to make things worse, they are always away from the school. They do not attend regularly. It is imperative that educators should have a day to day contract with learners at schools."

A high rate of educator absenteeism has a detrimental effect on performance of learners. Educators are not in the position to complete the stipulated work, if they are frequently absent from work. Learners are left unattended in the classroom and playground and this leads to misbehavior. Another educator remarked: “Absenteeism is one of the factors contributing to low pass rate at schools because if educators continuously absent themselves from the school, they will be unable to complete the syllabus on time and this will affect learners’ performance.”

#### 4.2.3.5 Lack of parental involvement

The interviews contained unmistakable evidence that educators receive minimal support from parents and this has contributes to the lack of learner discipline and poor performance. One educator on post level three and four at the sampled schools remarked: ‘Parental involvement in the school affairs is quite minimal’. According to this participant, they receive minimal support from the parents mainly because a large number of learners are living in the care of grandparents and educators do not have regular contact with their parents.

One educator on post level one stated that “Grade 12 results are gradually deteriorating. It might be caused by lack of parental involvement. Educators do not get support from the parents”. Among other reasons, parents may not participate fully or support learners with homework due to the recent curriculum change, which is unfamiliar to parents. Moreover, parents might not understand their vital role in the education of their children and this challenge can have a detrimental effect on quality learning and teaching.

Parental apathy is evidenced in the poor attendance of parents at school meetings or when they are called to do so by the school. A participant was convinced that parental involvement is crucial for the improvement of quality teaching and learning. He said: “An excellent way to improve quality teaching and learning is to convene a (stakeholder) meeting between educators, parents and the School Governing Body and to provide a dynamic overview of TQM elements and a clear commitment from all the stakeholders efforts to improve quality”. This shows that parental involvement is necessary to ensure

proper discipline and effective schooling. According to a TQM approach parents are customers whose satisfaction should be ensured; they are also agents within the organisation who should be mobilised to support their children's education.

#### 4.2.3.6 Discipline issues

In order for the school to run smoothly and the culture of teaching and learning to be improved, proper discipline should be exercised in schools. Callender (1997:98) maintains that discipline refers to general beliefs concerning the observance of rules.

Two educators at post level one agreed about the role of discipline. One remarked: "Educators are always blamed for poor performance, and ignoring the fact that some learners are ill disciplined, to an extent that they refuse to write home works, assignments and tests". Discipline in a school entails the creation and maintenance of a healthy and stable teaching and learning atmosphere within the classroom and school premises and it is created and maintained through the formation, implementation and observance of the learners' code of conduct by both educators and learners. This implies that discipline is a challenge, hence effective teaching and learning are seriously affected and this leads to poor performance. Serious misconduct such as late-coming, truancy, submission of incomplete tasks or non submission of projects and assignments, leaving school without permission, use of obscene language, theft and possession of dangerous weapons are all indications that TQM is not adequately implemented at the participating schools.

Educators were concerned about their role in creating or ensuring a positive learning and teaching climate and order in the classroom. Hence, educators require an understanding of positive discipline and the skills needed to maintain discipline and this could be provided by professional development workshops and training. This was supported by a participant who proclaimed: "Educators might be ready and hardworking but if learners attend schools as they like and refuse to co-operate with educators, it will not help. Some learners are not ready to learn and work hard that is why the Grade 12

results are very low at these underperforming secondary schools in the Moses Kotane Area. Learners also have a role to play in ensuring that the school is performing well”.

#### 4.2.3.7 The role of educators with regard to the implementation of TQM

The educators on post level 3 and 4 all considered TQM strategy as a useful tool to transform schools to become quality schools or schools of excellence, where quality is highly valued. They believe that continuous improvement (as one of the principles of TQM) can enable schools to do things better than yesterday. They agreed that using TQM in the classroom can improve quality teaching and learning to enable learners to attain success at the end of the academic year. Through team-work and individual effort, educators intend to improve service to customers (both parents and learners) by keeping portfolios (learners and educators’ portfolios). Continuous improvement is a way in which the participants on post level 3 and 4 intend to improve the Grade 12 results and maintain high enrolment. In this way, these participants are convinced that movement of learners to schools in other geographical areas will be minimised.

The ten educators on post level 1 shared the same view: participation in the implementation of TQM can change the school from a traditional school to a TQM school. Educators considered changing the learning environment and making it conducive for learning and teaching. Proper assessment and prompt feedback are regarded as means to enable educators evaluate their own and learners’ efforts.

Two out of ten educators on post level 1 believe that they are responsible for quality improvement. Hence, they have developed learner attainment improvement plans that will assist learners achieve success at the end of the year or improve performance. They regard both TQM and learner attainment improvement plans as strategic plans to enable learners to attain success. They have developed action plans to explain how they are going to make sure that quality teaching and learning is improved. They view TQM as a means of improving performance of underachieving learners by giving remedial work in the form of assignments, tests and projects given to all the learners.

Further, two educators out of ten educators on post level 1 felt that TQM can assist them to develop policies which all the educators can use to change the way in which teaching and assessment are done. They felt that they could use TQM to change the status quo in schools. They considered policies as guidelines which will encourage them to aid learners through standardised tests, projects and assignments.

#### 4.2.3.8 How educators can improve quality learning and teaching through TQM

Three out of the ten educators on post level 1 suggested that Circuit Managers and School Management Teams should play a crucial role in improving quality learning and teaching and restoring the culture of learning and teaching. They regarded regular visits as a way to improve quality. They considered workshops, seminars and conferences as a way to capacitate the educators to vary teaching and assessment strategies.

Two educators on post level 1 regarded teamwork at the level of the school as a means to improve quality in the classroom. One educator summed it up as follows: “Educators who are teaching the same subjects should meet time to time meet, to share and discuss common approaches and assist each other to resolve challenges”.

Two educators out of the ten educators on post level 1 also regarded extrinsic motivation as a means of encouraging and motivating learners to work very hard. They were quite explicit about this and endorsed motivation as the major process to improve performance of learners in the classroom. One explained: “I think it should be a culture of the school to conduct awards ceremony where learners who have done very well are awarded certificates and presents, to recognise achievement”

Two educators out of the ten educators on post level 1 identified school discipline as necessary for the creation and maintenance of a learning and teaching atmosphere through the formulation, implementation and observance of a learners’ code of conduct by educators. “At the beginning of the year, educators should explain code of conduct of learners to all the learners. It is necessary to emphasise good behaviour, discipline and respect. Disciplined learners always do their assignments and tests.” It is the concern of

each educator to create a learning and teaching climate and order in the classroom. Hence, educators require the understanding and skills to maintain discipline. Disciplining learners involves strategies to bring order in the classroom.

One educator out of the ten educators on post level 1 at one of the fifteen schools regarded parental involvement as a technique to improve overall performance of the school. He stated: “An excellent way to improve quality learning and teaching is to convene a meeting between parents, educators and the school governing body (Stakeholder meeting) and provide a dynamic overview of TQM elements and a clear commitment from all the stakeholders, that they will fully support TQM efforts to improve quality learning and teaching.”

Two participants agreed that poor performance can be improved through the implementation of learner attainment improvement plans. This plan is geared towards excellence and quality. They believe that learner attainment improvement plans are a strategic means which is developmental in nature and its goal is to ensure that learners succeed.

#### 4.2.3.9 Guidelines which can be followed in the implementation of a TQM strategy.

Both groups of participants, that is, educators on post level 1 and educators on post level 3 and 4 at the fifteen academically underperforming secondary schools in the Moses Kotane Area, regard TQM as an appropriate tool to improve quality and overall performance of the school, hence they participate in the implementation of a TQM strategy. The following guidelines for the implementation of a TQM strategy were mentioned:

- All educators should have the same commitment level;
- Principles of TQM should be well perceived by all the educators;

- Educators should know and understand principles of TQM, for effective participation in the implementation of a TQM strategy
- Leadership skills are needed to ensure that the implementation process succeeds.
- Empowered educators can participate successfully in the implementation of a TQM strategy to improve quality learning and teaching.
- Consultation in the decision-making process can allow the implementation process of TQM to succeed;
- The School Management Team should oversee educator participation in the implementation of a TQM Strategy;
- Ten educators on post level 1 and ten educators on post levels 3 and 4 at the academically underperforming secondary schools in the Moses Kotane Area indicated that TQM provides information on conditions for quality schoolwork :
- Educators should create a warm, supportive learning environment.
- Learners should be asked to do only useful work;
- Learners should be asked to do the best they can do;
- Learners should be asked to evaluate their own work;
- Quality work should always bring about feelings of satisfaction;
- Quality work should never be destructive.



It is clear from the discussion of empirical data that TQM can address challenges or shortcomings in the sampled schools if it is properly implemented. The implementation of a TQM strategy in the fifteen academically underperforming secondary schools in the Moses Kotane may result in improved communications (between the SMT and educators), increased involvement of educators, improved quality and efficiency in a general context, and improved end of year results.

### **4.3 CONCLUSION**

This chapter focused at the presentation and discussion of data collected through qualitative research methods. The researcher presented and discussed data in relation to the research questions.

In the next chapter, the findings will be interpreted according to responses to the key research questions as formulated during the interviews. Recommendations and a summary of the research are presented.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **SYNTHESIS FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

The previous chapter presented and discussed research data from the qualitative research in line with the research questions. This chapter will present and highlight integrated findings in relation to the research questions. The chapter will present recommendations to interested parties with particular reference to academically underperforming secondary schools in the Moses Kotane Area. The recommendations will be made in combination with views from the literature review, as well the viewpoints of participants and the researcher.

#### **5.2 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY**

Chapter one captured the orientation of the present study by briefly indicating the importance of TQM as a tool to address challenges at academically underperforming secondary schools in the Moses Kotane Area, research aim and objectives, the significance and justification of the study, the research limitations, and chapter division of the report. It was assumed that TQM can be used in schools to improve quality learning and teaching.

In chapter two, the focus was on a TQM strategy as an improvement tool and its importance to schools. TQM emphasises continuous improvement with the intention of improving quality learning and teaching in schools and customer satisfaction.

Chapter three focused on the empirical research. The chapter stated the research methodology. The qualitative research design was explicitly stated, described and discussed.

Chapter four presented the analysis and discussion of the collected data. The findings were stated as part of the chapter summary.

This chapter contains conclusions, recommendations and a summary of the study.

### **5.3 FINDINGS OF THE STUDY**

This section combines significant data from the literature review in Chapter 2 with significant themes that emerged from interviews, observations and analysis of documents during the empirical inquiry. The findings relate to the impact of educator participation in the implementation of a TQM strategy at the academically underperforming secondary schools in the Moses Kotane Area. The purpose is to address challenges faced by the sampled schools.

The findings are presented in the following categories:

*The role of educators with regard to the implementation of a TQM strategy*

*How can educators improve quality learning and teaching through TQM*

*Guidelines which can be followed in the implementation of a TQM strategy.*

#### **5.3.1 The role of educators with regard to the implementation of a TQM Strategy**

The findings of this research indicate that educators on post level 3 and 4 at the sampled schools consider a TQM strategy as a tool to improve quality learning and teaching and the overall performance of the school. Educators concurred that TQM is tool which should be used in all the academically underperforming secondary schools in the Moses Kotane Area to improve quality. They regard TQM as a tool which can assist the schools to improve daily. Sallis (1996:34) describes TQM as a philosophy for continuous improvement which can provide any public school with a set of practical tools for meeting and exceeding present and future customers' needs, wants and expectations. This implies that the fifteen academically underperforming secondary schools can improve overall performance and satisfy parents and learners through TQM

Ten educators on post level 3 and 4 also admitted that performance of learners should be improved through continuous improvement and team-work. Van der Westhuizen (1996:322) views teams as the building blocks for the implementation of TQM. This means that teams should be established and be assigned tasks so that quality improvement becomes the responsibility of all the educators irrespective of post level.

Ten educators on post level 1 from the sampled schools also believe that TQM is a tool which can transform their schools. They have expressed concern about poor performance in their schools; hence they believe that the Grade 12 results can be improved through TQM.

The findings also indicate that two educators on post level1 from one of the sampled schools considers learner attainment improvement plans as an important tool to improve quality teaching and learning to enable learners to attain their goal. They regard learner attainment improvement plans as a technique to assist the slow learners and learners who cannot achieve on their own.

It is evident that the ten educators on post level 1 consider lack of parental support, overcrowding, lack of commitment, absenteeism and poor management style as contributing factors towards poor performance.

The literature review has indicated that educators are the integral part of the school. Every educator should collaborate and work towards the year-end improvement of the school. Rampa, (2005:69) suggests that educators should have same commitment level and focus should be on school improvement with an objective of ensuring that the culture of the school also changes. A reinvigorated school culture will include aspects like encouraging parental involvement in the schools' activities and dedication and commitment by all the educators.

### **5.3.2 How can educators improve quality learning and teaching through TQM?**

Three out of ten educators on post level 1 at the academically underperforming secondary schools in the Moses Kotane Area are of the opinion that departmental officials are responsible for ensuring that quality learning and teaching is improved. They are supposed to support and motivate educators. They suggest that educators should be empowered through seminars and conferences. They believe that empowered educators can participate well in the implementation of TQM to address shortcomings in the sampled school. Casey (1997:45) maintains that empowered educators and learners will corroborate about schoolwork and consequently improve performance. It implies that effective schooling requires empowered educators and learners.

Two educators on post level 1 suggested that TQM can address the challenges in schools through teamwork. This means that educators should implement TQM in the schools as teams rather than as individuals to ensure that problems in the academically underperforming secondary schools are resolved. According to Rampa (2005:93), teams are important as teamwork is a major component of the quality improvement processes and they also generate quality products and services. TQM will only be effective in addressing challenges in the sampled schools if educators operate as a team or a one functioning unit.

Willis and Taylor (1999:5) suggest that educators should view the school as business which provides services and that their customers should be satisfied. The manner in which the schools in this study are operating needs to change to render the schools effective. Two educators from one of the sampled schools considered motivation, specifically extrinsic motivation, as a way in which learning can be made meaningful and attractive in the academically underperforming secondary schools in the Moses Kotane Area.

Two educators from two different schools considered discipline as an important factor in the implementation of TQM to address the shortcomings in their schools. They maintained that learners must also be disciplined to learn effectively but educators must

be disciplined to provide apt role models for learners to ensure quality learning and teaching. The Systematic Evaluation Report (2006:9) indicates that daily contact between educators and learners improves performance of learners and implies that there should be consistency in school attendance. School attendance by educators is essential to improve discipline.

Cotton and Winkelum (2007:54) maintain that the more intensively parents are involved in their children's learning, the more beneficial are the effects. TQM will address the shortfalls in the schools if parents are also requested to support and assist the educators with curriculum issues, for example, homework. An educator from one of the sampled schools considered parental involvement as an element which supports TQM efforts to improve quality learning and teaching.

### **5.3.3 Guidelines which can be followed in the implementation of a TQM strategy**

Ten educators on post level 1 and the ten educators on post level 3 and 4 felt that TQM, if implemented properly, can address problems in the sampled schools. In their discussion, they captured guidelines for implementation of TQM as follows:

- All educators should have the same commitment level.

Participants suggested that all the educators should be involved in the implementation of quality education. It should not just be a challenge for certain individuals. Educators should equally be responsible. All the educators should be involved in the implementation of TQM.

- Principles of TQM.

Both groups of educators (educators on post level 1 and educators on post levels 3 and 4) should be familiar with and understand principles of TQM, particularly, continuous improvement and customer improvement. They are considered the fundamental

principles of TQM as tools to improve quality learning and teaching at the underachieving schools.

- Leadership skills to ensure that the implementation process succeeds.

All ten educators on post level 3 and 4 consider leadership skills as one of the essentials for the implementation of TQM. They suggest that the school management team should play a dominant role in the implementation of TQM. The school management team has to motivate all the educators to address problems in the schools through TQM. They suggest that the school management team should oversee the process of implementing TQM at the schools, thereby improving quality learning and teaching.

- Empowered educators can participate successfully in the implementation of a TQM strategy

All the participants believe that they should be capacitated to implement TQM successfully at the sampled schools. They are of the opinion that the departmental officials should be committed to the improvement of quality learning and teaching by empowering educators through support, workshops and seminars. The officials should develop professional skills in educators and evaluate or monitor their growth to ascertain that all educators in the schools are really engaged in the implementation of TQM, to address challenges.

- Consultation in decision-making

All participants view consultation as a technique to ensure that TQM is profitably used to address the shortcoming by the educators at the sampled school. They advise better cooperation between educators and the school management team.

- The role of the school management team

All participants suggest that the school management teams in the Moses Kotane Area should play a leading role in the implementation of TQM to address the challenges.

- All participants at the fifteen academically underperforming secondary schools in the Moses Kotane Area concluded by mentioning conditions for quality school work. They suggest that the educators at the schools in this study should create a conducive learning and teaching environment for meaningful learning.

## **5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS**

In this section the researcher makes recommendations to assist educators at the fifteen academically underperforming secondary schools in the Moses Kotane Area to implement TQM to address challenges in these schools. The recommendations are made in line with the research questions.

### **5.4.1 Recommendation 1**

- The role of educators with regard to the implementation of TQM

As has been established that TQM is an implementation tool, it is, therefore imperative for educators to be equally committed to addressing the challenges of the sampled schools through TQM. Educators at the sampled schools should participate in the implementation of TQM and improve the overall performance of the school. It should be an exercise which does not end but it should be done continuously so that today's performance becomes better than yesterday's.



#### **5.4.2 Recommendation 2**

- How can educators improve quality learning and teaching through TQM?

Educators at the sampled schools should approach challenges in the sampled schools, in teams. Teamwork and consultation will enable them to make a breakthrough in addressing shortfalls in the sampled schools through TQM. Educators should explain the concept of TQM to the parents and other stakeholders so that they can fully support TQM efforts to improve overall performance of the school. It is also imperative to create a conducive environment for effective teaching and learning.

#### **5.4.3 Recommendation 3**

- Guidelines which can be followed in the implementation of a TQM strategy

The participants should follow a specific pattern or guidelines which will guarantee the successful implementation of TQM in their schools. It is crucial that the implementation process should be a joint activity by all the educators. Educators should have a clear knowledge that TQM is meant to address challenges and improve quality at the sampled schools. To achieve this intention consultation and decision-making should not be compromised. School management teams should consult all the stakeholders in the implementation of TQM.

#### **5.4.4 Recommendation 4**

- Motivation

Educators should be motivated intrinsically (the pleasure of teaching) and extrinsically (e.g., monetary rewards). They must be motivated to work hard and those who produce good results must be awarded merit certificates and receive additional salary notch for the good performance.

#### **5.4.5 Recommendation 5**

- Empowerment

Educators should be empowered in the form of meetings and workshops for improvement of learners' performance and school effectiveness. Empowered educators must also empower learners in classrooms to create a positive atmosphere, which will result in good performance. Development programmes should be drawn up and implemented without failure

#### **5.4.6 Recommendation 6**

- Commitment

Educators must commit themselves in their work to improve learners' performance and school effectiveness because, without commitment, quality teaching and learning cannot take place. The school management team should be assigned the duty of appraising educators' commitment by controlling educators' work. If the SMT finds that educators' work is unsatisfactory, the SMT must develop their professional skills at workshops.

### **5.5 FURTHER RESEARCH**

The following areas need further research:

- Organisational development as efficiency strategy for the school.
- Managing schools towards high performance
- Motivation as an element for school effectiveness
- Educators' perceptions on empowerment

## **5.6 CONCLUSION**

This chapter has concluded the study. It has provided important findings drawn from the data analysed for this investigation.

Conclusions have been highlighted as patterns and specific conclusions tailored to the research questions which the study set out to address have been made.

The objectives of this study were:

- To explore the role of educators with regard the implementation of TQM at the academically underperforming secondary schools in the Moses Kotane Area.
- To explore and describe how can educators improve quality learning and teaching through TQM, in the academically underperforming secondary schools at the Moses Kotane Area.
- To develop guidelines which can be followed in the implementation of TQM at the academically underperforming secondary schools in the Moses Kotane Area.

The study has addressed each of the above objectives. Findings were given in order to improve performance in the sampled schools.

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## **Annexure A**

### Interview protocol

#### ❖ Questions guiding the interview

Educators from the two groups were asked more or less, similar questions

#### ❖ Group one

Educators on post level 3 and 4 (Principals)

To this group, five questions were asked:-

1. What do you think are the cause of low pass rate in Grade 12, in your school?
2. What can be done to curb movement of learners from the Moses Kotane Area to the Rustenburg Ar
3. What is your view point about TQM?
4. Do you think TQM is well perceived by all the educators in your school?
5. How do you empower educators?

#### ❖ Group two

Educators on post level one and two

To this group six questions were asked:-

1. According to the recent analysis of Grade 12 results, your school has obtained low pass rate for the past three years. What led to this kind of a situation?
2. What should be done to remedy this situation?
3. How do you view TQM?
4. Do you think TQM is well perceived by all the educators?
5. Are relevant records kept in your school for both educators and learners?
6. How is the perception and attitude of educators within the staff?

## **Annexure A: Interview transcripts**

Group one: Ten educators on post level 3 and 4

### **QUESTION 1: What do you think are the causes of the low pass rate in Grade 12 in your school?**

Principal 1: "I think that learners are not motivated at home; they do not study. Most of them do not stay with parents. Another thing that can contribute towards low performance is poverty and lack of facilities. Some of the learners from the poor families perform very poorly, as they do not get enough financial support from their parents. Overcrowding also contributes towards poor performance."

Principal 2: "Low pass rates can be caused by wrong grading of subjects and lack of commitment from the educators. Some educators are not doing their work; they do not prepare and teach properly. They are not concerned about the progress of the learners and the interests of parents".

Principal 3: "Well, I think that shortage of textbooks can contribute towards poor performance because if the school is not well resourced, teaching and learning might not be effective".

Principal 4: "I agree with the previous speaker that lack of facilities have a negative effect on the teaching and learning".

Principal 5: "I do not dispute the impact of resources, but reluctance and laziness on the side of educators also play a role in the overall performance of the school. Schools which have high performance and dedicated educators are doing very well".

Principal 6: "The challenge raised here is very crucial because I strongly believe that it is not only a financial resource which can enable the educators to perform to the best of their abilities".

Principal 7: "There is substance in the deliberations of the former speaker. Educators are supposed to use TQM to improve quality teaching and learning by preparing the lessons they are going to teach, attending classes and assessing learners and reflecting to the parents about performance of the learners and overall performance of the school".

Principal 8: "If educators fail to prepare and teach properly, end of year results will not improve. At my school some educators are very lazy. They do not mark learners' books on time, while some throw the answer sheets away and allocate marks to the learners".

Principal 9: "I have notice that very few learners make it at the end of the year, and most learners do not achieve. Another challenge is that educators do not give attention to slow learners and they only concentrate on the gifted children who would answer questions and achieve".

Principal 10: "The attitude of educators among themselves is negative and ultimately it will impact negatively on team work. It is different at the high performing secondary schools. Educators are supposed to operate as a team, to advise and support each other. In this regard there will be a common approach to challenges and even to curriculum issues".

**Question 2: What can be done to minimise movement of learners from the academically underperforming secondary school in the Moses Kotane Area to the well performing secondary schools in the Rustenburg Area?**

Principal 1: "Movement of learners from one school to another can be attributed to good or bad performance of a particular school. Every parent would like to see his/her child doing well. Some schools in our area need to change culture and adopt a new culture that is geared towards quality education. Our schools need to improve performance and satisfy parents by producing quality results. Every school should market itself by producing good results at the end of the year."



Principal 2: “The Moses Kotane Area should copy what Rustenburg Area is doing. The culture of learning and teaching should be restored in the academically underperforming secondary schools in our area. Every school should strive for excellence and satisfy parents and learners”.

Principal 3: “It is important that the academically underperforming secondary schools should deal with their challenges. For example, high rates of absenteeism because if educators are always away from the schools, learners will be left unattended. Educators should attend school and attend all the periods”.

Principal 4: “Underperforming secondary schools in our area need to address challenges of lack of human and physical resources. If enough educators and funds can be allocated to our schools, performance will improve and we will retain a good number of learners”.

Principal 5: “It is possible for all the schools in our area to maintain high enrolment of learners, if all the educators are committed. If we improve quality learning and teaching, our schools will improve”.

Principal 6: “All the schools in this area are supposed to engage all the parents and other stakeholders in the school affairs so that mutual trust can be maintained. Parents should be informed about all the activities of the school. There should be consultation and transparency”.

Principal 7: “Educators need to develop a positive attitude towards TQM and be ready to make use of the principles of TQM to improve quality learning and teaching. Educators are supposed to view continuous improvement as a tool for improvement”.

Principal 8: “Proper assessment is supposed to be done by all the educators and feedback to the learners should be done on time. Parents should also be informed about the performance of learners at least once per a term”.

Principal 9: "Schools which are not performing well should devise a programme or an approach to assist the slow learners".

Principal 10: "I think that it is imperative that educators should operate in teams. Educators should form teams and operate as one functioning unit and assist each other".

**Question 3: What is your viewpoint about a TQM strategy?**

Principal 1: "I am convinced that TQM can be an appropriate tool to remedy the situation at schools. However, it depends on the attitude of the educators. If it is well perceived by all staff members, it will bear good fruit. I think that educators should identify customers' needs and address those needs".

Principal 2: "In my opinion TQM is an improvement tool which can assist our schools to improve quality".

Principal 3: "TQM encourages teamwork, whereby every staff member will be involved in the process of improving the entire performance of the school. It is a holistic approach which ensures quality improvement".

Principal 4: "If TQM is positively perceived, it can transform the school towards excellence or becoming a quality school where continuous improvement becomes an ongoing process. It means the school will be in the position to do things better than yesterday".

Principal 5: "It has been mentioned that TQM encourages teamwork and once there is teamwork in the school, educators will advise and empower each other. Quality will be improved and the school will satisfy customers (parents and learners) by producing quality results at the end of the year".

Principal 6: "I am convinced that through educator participation in the implementation of TQM, learners will attain success".

Principal 7: "TQM does not only encourage teamwork but it can build trust and improve communication among the educators, hence all staff members will be eager to perform better than others".

Principal 8: "TQM is an appropriate tool to transform our schools towards excellence".

Principal 9: "Through TQM, teaching and assessment strategies will be varied. It will have a positive impact on the overall performance of the school.

Principal 10: "The commitment level of all the educators will almost be the same. Educators will be punctual for lessons and learners' books will be marked on time and feedback will be given to both learners and parents respectively".

**Question 4: Do you think that TQM is well perceived by all the educators in the academically underperforming secondary schools in your area?**

Principal 1: "Not all the educators in my school perceive TQM positively. Teaching is no longer a calling like before. Some educators are no longer concerned about quality learning and teaching. They are not worried whether parents and learners are dissatisfied about poor performance. They are not concerned about customer satisfaction".

Principal 2: "To my observation, not all the educators are committed. In some instances, parents complain about the educators who are not committed. They always complain that learners' books are not well controlled. I have noticed that these educators are not ready to change their attitude".

Principal 3: "At all, it is not well perceived. Educators feel comfortable with the status quo. Educators are not ready to change. Most educators at my school are relaxed".

Principal 4: "Some of my educators pretend not to understand what TQM entails. When I request them to improve quality, they complain a lot and mention that they have served the Department of Education for many years".

Principal 5: "I don't think that TQM is well perceived at my school. Principles of TQM are not even known to my educators. Continuous improvement is not considered".

Principal 6: "Sir, educators at my school clearly understand the concept TQM very well. They participate in the implementation of TQM with the intention of improving quality. The serious challenge is shortage of both human and physical resources; hence the workload is a challenge".

Principal 7: "I think educators have a positive perception about TQM and they are ready to participate in the implementation of TQM to improve the overall performance. Educators are convinced that continuous improvement is a way in which quality can be improved, but discipline is a serious challenge at our school".

Principal 8: "I tend to believe what the previous speaker has just said. We have to plan how to use TQM to improve quality teaching and learning but discipline is a serious challenge. It will not be easy for us to attain our goals. It is a fact that we do not have a legal framework which can enable schools to maintain discipline in the classrooms".

Principal 9: "I would say that educators are not ready to improve quality teaching and learning. Their actions and attitude clearly indicate that quality assurance is not their priority".

Principal 10: "There are educators who feel threatened and intimidated when they are told to improve the culture of teaching and learning. Hence they resist all the attempts of ensuring continuous improvement in the school set up".

### **Question 5: How do you empower your educators?**

Principal 1: "Sir, educators are empowered by managing their own classrooms and learners. Educators are also appointed to senior posts. Some of them act as Heads of Departments and are also encouraged to attend workshops, seminars and conferences. Apart from that, educators are encouraged to upgrade their qualifications through correspondence".

Principal 2: "Educators are empowered by allowing them to make suggestions towards the school's development. It encourages every educator to be involved in decision-making. Educators are also empowered by organising workshops whereby the school management team workshop them. By doing this, the school effectiveness improves".

Principal 3: "At my school we normally invite motivational speakers to motivate and empower them, and make them understand that they occupy an important position in the community because they are the torch-bearers. Focus will be on the role of educators towards achieving excellence or a status of a quality school".

Principal 4: "Educators are also empowered by been given the opportunity of ensuring and assuring quality in the school. They are able to take crucial decisions and requested to mentor other educators in ensuring that quality is improved. In this way they will all participate in the implementation of TQM".

Principal 5: "Educators whose learners performed well at the end of the year are recognised at a function as a way of acknowledging and encouraging them".

Principal 6: "Empowerment is a technique which can encourage educators to participate effectively in the implementation of TQM. Educators can also be empowered by encouraging them to attend National Teaching Awards ceremony and conferences".

Principal 7: "Decision-making is a serious challenge in many schools. At my school, they normally complain that they are not involved in school affairs, but I involve them in

decision-making processes particularly on issues like sporting activities, assessment and formulation of policies”.

Principal 8: “I strongly believe that educators should be empowered in all aspects. The government should encourage the educators to further their studies and specialise. Government should give educators bursaries to further their studies, related to the curriculum”.

Principal 9: “Educators can be empowered by encouraging them to attend conferences, for example mathematics conferences. Educators will get the opportunity to network and discuss challenges in the classrooms. Educators will be well equipped with the content and different assessment strategies”.

Principal 10: “All the educators should participate in various committees in the school. They should be given the responsibility to be accountable. They will ensure that examination papers and time-tables are ready on time”.

#### **Group two: Ten educators on post level 1**

**Question 1: According to the recent analysis of Grade 12 results, your school has obtained a low pass rate for the past three years. What led to this kind of a situation?**

The purpose of this question was to identify the causes of the low pass rate at schools, whether the causes are negative attitudes towards the implementation of TQM, absenteeism, lack of commitment or lack of motivation. Scheerens (1995:67) underscores this point by indicating that educators have to stay motivated and committed to play a role in quality education.

Respondent 1: “Regarding the causes of low pass rate it might be that the educators are not conversant with the syllabus or unqualified for the subject he/she is teaching, therefore cannot plan correctly, which at the end, will have negative impact on quality

teaching and learning. Another thing is that educators are not committed to their work. Lack of daily preparations, no record keeping, no monitoring by school management teams can make the situation worse”.

Respondent 2: “Precisely, Grade12 results are gradually deteriorating. It might be caused by lack of parental involvement. Educators do not get support from the parents. Parents do not attend meetings. At times educators call them individually to discuss learners’ performance, they do not bother themselves to come. Parents claim not to have insight into the new curriculum that is why they are unable to support their children at home. An excellent way to improve quality learning and teaching is to convene (stakeholder meeting) a meeting between educators, parents and the school governing body and provide a dynamic overview of TQM elements and a clear commitment from all the stakeholders that they will fully support TQM efforts to improve quality”.

Respondent 3: “In our case, I can say that educators are not dedicated to their work. At some stage, educators do not complete the syllabus because the school management team does not control both educators and learners’ portfolios. Practice makes perfect. In our school, learners are not given more work that is why they perform poorly at the end of the year. Lack of appropriate learner-material is also a contributory factor, because many schools experience a severe shortage of textbooks. Learners are unable to study at home because they do not have study material”.

Respondent 4: “In addition to what has been said, some educators feel burnt out because they work very hard and even if they try by all means to work harder, the payoffs in terms of recognition or appreciation are not there. Stress makes some educators absent themselves from work. Absenteeism is one of the factors, contributing to a low pass rate at schools because if educators continuously absent themselves from the school, they will be unable to complete the syllabus on time and this will affect learners’ performance”.

Respondent 5: “Sir, it is not easy to advance a specific reason towards poor performance. In my opinion, lack of teamwork can be a contributing factor. A team spirit

can encourage all the educators to be committed and contribute towards quality improvement”.

Respondent 6: “Educators are always blamed for poor performance, ignoring the fact that learners are ill disciplined, to the extent that they refuse to write home- works, assignments and tests”.

Respondent 7: “I agree with the previous speaker because educators might be ready and hardworking but if learners attend school as they like and refuse to co-operate with educators, it will not help. Some learners are not ready to learn, that is why the Grade 12 results are very low. Learners also have a role to play in ensuring that the school is performing”.

Respondent 8: “Sir, I think allocation of subjects can also play a tremendous role in poor performance. At my school, maths and science educators are not qualified to teach these subjects. They lack knowledge and skills of teaching maths and science. The school does not have educators who can handle these subjects. Maths and science results are always very poor”.

Respondent 9: “I would like to draw your attention to the challenges of language of teaching and learning. Learners are unable to answer questions because at times, they do not have a clear knowledge of English concepts, as such they misinterpret the questions and fail to achieve due to language barriers. Language barriers can lead to poor performance”.

Respondent 10: “I do not want to dispute tangible reasons advanced here, but we cannot neglect the fact that some educators are lazy. They do not mark learners’ portfolios on time and as a result, feedback to the learners is not timeously done”.



**Question 2: What should be done to remedy this situation?**

Respondent 1: "Well, if all the educators can have the same commitment level, this challenge would be resolved. Educators should prepare lessons thoroughly and they should arouse the interests of learners towards the subject matter. Dialogic teaching and co-operative learning should be encouraged by the school management teams. If there is no commitment, learners will perform badly. Therefore, in our school, both educators and learners' portfolios are controlled weekly. Learning area policies are available and educators are encouraged to operate according to the policy. This will enable the educators to become fully committed. Educators should plan well in advance. However, it is very important that the curriculum specialists should support the educators and make sure that they are well conversant with the syllabus (content particularly). The school management team should encourage parents to attend parents' meetings and ensure that they understand their role."

Respondent 2: "Educators have to meet regularly to discuss issues of common approach, and assist each other to resolve challenges that educators are faced with. If educators can work as a team, they will be in the position to maximise performance. At the same time parents need to be educated about the new curriculum and assessment. Parents should also be encouraged to attend meetings and turn up whenever they are requested to come to school."

Respondent 3: "Learners should be encouraged to compete and to reward those who have done very well. Extrinsic motivation can encourage every learner to work very hard and succeed at the end of the year. The most important thing is that the school management team should ensure that educators complete the syllabus on time and control both educators and learner' portfolios. Learners should be given enough work and parents are supposed to support learners by providing them with learning materials."

Respondent 4 : “I think the departmental officials should visit our schools regularly just to address challenges and to check whether educators and learners’ portfolios are up to date (proper record keeping and learners’ books are been marked). Educators should also be motivated and attend their challenges so that they are in position to teach and assess learners. The SMT should have systems in place to deal with absenteeism.”

Respondent 5: “The Education, Management and Development Units at the Circuit Offices should encourage educators to educate parents about the curriculum and assessment strategies and encourage teamwork, because it can improve quality. We need to form teams and approach challenges as teams. We have established various committees at the school and we resolve issues as a team.”

Respondent 6: “Sir, school management teams are not doing their tasks. They are supposed to meet educators regularly, check the extent that the educators have covered the curriculum and assessment issues so that we can attain the goal.”

Respondent 7: “School Management Teams should also encourage learners to attend daily. Absenteeism has proved to be a factor which contributes a lot towards poor performance schools. I think it is important that at the beginning of the year, educators should explain the code of conduct to learners. It is necessary to emphasise good behaviour, discipline and mutual respect. Disciplined learners will write all the assignments and tests, and educators will be in the position to identify areas where remedial work should be done and ultimately all the learners will achieve”.

Respondent 8: “Sir, I think we need to deal with challenges of lack of qualified educators who can teach maths, science and technology. What we need to do is at least to check educators who once offered these subjects for a time. We should check what the neighbouring schools are doing. These challenges need to be referred to the district officials so that they can redeploy qualified educators to our school.”

Respondent 9: "I think it should be part of the culture of the school to have an awards ceremony and learners who have done very well should be given certificates and presents to recognise achievement. In this way every learner will improve."

Respondent 10: "Sir, I think that slow learners need attention. We should encourage them and instill a mood which will make them feel that they are also capable particularly those who are encountering challenges with the language of teaching and learning. Learners should be encouraged to speak English in the school premises to familiarise themselves with English."

### **Question 3: How do you view TQM?**

Respondent 1: "I think that proper implementation of a TQM strategy can change the culture of the school. We should understand the principles of TQM, so that the situation in our school is continuously improved. If we really want to reach our goals, continuous improvement in all aspects should be a priority for every school".

Respondent 2: "I believe that TQM is an appropriate improvement tool. It can assist the school to improve and restore the culture of teaching and learning. What I like about TQM is that it encourages continuous improvement and quality learning and teaching".

Respondent 3: "Sir, I think it is a strategy which can assist schools to reform. Schools should be transformed. Change in our schools is necessary because technology has also changed".

Respondent 4: "Well, I interpret it to be a technique or approach which can enable educators to satisfy parents and learners".

Respondent 5: "Sir, I do not want to lie, I do not know anything about that concept but I am of the opinion that we must work hard and improve the Grade 12 results".

Respondent 6: "Sir, I think TQM is an approach that educators can use to encourage learners to do the best they can in their schoolwork".

Respondent 7: "*Meneer*, through TQM, human relationships can be improved. There will be mutual trust, love and respect and it will ultimately foster improved performance".

Respondent 8: "It is a strategy which can enable learners to evaluate their own work and encourage quality. Through TQM culture, morals and values of the school can be transformed and improved".

Anna: "*Meneer*, I think TQM is a tool which enables the school to manage continuous movement towards progressively higher quality standards".

Respondent 10: "Sir, I am of the opinion that TQM enables the school to attain the vision and mission statement of the school. TQM is about change therefore through TQM, schools can change the culture".

Question 4: Do you think TQM is well perceived by all the educators in the academically underperforming secondary schools in your area?

Respondent 1: "To a certain extent some educators perceive TQM positively. The problem is that some educators are not prepared to improve quality and overall performance. Principles of TQM are not well understood by all the educators. Learner attainment improvement plans can be implemented through TQM to enable learners to achieve success."

Respondent 2: "TQM is not well perceived by the majority of educators. I have observed that educators in our school are not interested with customers' needs (parents and learners). When the subject specialists advise them, they do not implement suggestions or strategies for improvement and the creation of a conducive learning and teaching environment".

Respondent 3: "*Meneer*, as long as our customers are not satisfied with the end-product, we cannot say that TQM is well perceived by all the educators."

Respondent 4: "Sir, It is not well perceived by those educators who obtain less than 50% in the subjects that they are teaching. It clearly shows that they are reluctant to use TQM principles to improve learning in general".

Respondent 5: "*Meneer*, at my school TQM is well perceived because educators have integrated TQM in the school curriculum".

Respondent 6: "Sir, I think it is not well perceived because there is no team approach in our school."

Respondent 7: "I think it is not well perceived because educators believe in the status quo".

Respondent 8: "TQM is not well perceived because educators are not ready to establish a committee which will plan and ensure the implementation of TQM".

Respondent 9: "TQM is not well perceived because some principals still do not believe in a hierarchy that is working or operating as a team. They believe in giving instructions rather than encouraging all the educators to participate in decision-making".

Respondent 10: "TQM is well perceived because there is a minimum improvement at our school. Continuous improvement is highly valued by majority of educators. I think TQM can be well perceived by all the educators, if the SMT can convince educators to use it to improve quality learning and teaching. It means that all the cyclic processes which include planning action, checking the effect of implementation and the outcomes of the implementation, be made familiar to all the educators."

Question 5: What leadership style do you think your principal demonstrates?

Respondent 1: "The principal possesses all leadership skills such as planning, organising, leading and control because his management is up to standard in the sense that he produces good results in the subject he is teaching. In a nutshell, all leadership skills required are well demonstrated to the school and before the entire staff and the community as well. The principal manages the school properly. He delegates other duties to educators and monitors them. The principal is a democratic ruler because he shares responsibilities with the educators".

Respondent 2: "Regarding our principal's leadership skills, he is too lenient even if there is a need for him to act. The principal lacks leadership skills because his management style is poor. He needs to be inducted on management and leadership and to change his attitude. The principal practices a *laissez-faire* leadership style because there is no planning at all. Explicit goals are rarely set; problems are solved by whoever is on hand. The educators are expected to motivate themselves with little or no feedback on their performance. The principal also leads through suggestion and delegation. There is a lot of freedom in the school. Success of projects undertaken depends exclusively on input of educators".

Respondent 3: "In our case, the principal practises his leadership skills properly. The principal is the motivator who always motivates educators and learners to commit themselves in their work. The principal guides everyone at the school when needs arise. He also encourages effective teaching and learning, and once there is commitment, the quality teaching and learning will be improved which will result in good performance. Accountability is one of the skills demonstrated by our principal. The principal is accountable for everything that is in the school. Accountability plays a prominent role in the whole school management".

Respondent 4: "The principal is very lenient. He does not confront educators who contravene school regulations. He is too sympathetic".

Respondent 5: "He is a dictator who can hardly listen to suggestions. He just implements policies as they are and he is not flexible. The principal do not act based on the situation; he sticks to the policy".

Respondent 6: "Sir, I think our principal is not consistent. He is easily influenced particular those who are next to him and he is also biased".

Respondent 7: "Our principal is too lenient. There are policies in place, but educators who do not obey school rules are not disciplined even though disciplinary procedures are in place. He is afraid to act".

Respondent 8: "Sir, our principal is afraid of the educators. He is too lenient and do not want to become unpopular to the educators".

Respondent 9: "*Meneer*, our principal is a visionary leader with a combination of democratic and autocratic principles. He consults all the stakeholders and become autocratic with implementation of policies".

Respondent 10: "Well, he is a democrat who always consults, but he does not act when educators defy or transgress the school rules".

Question 6: "Does your principal involve you (staff) in decision-making?"

Respondent 1: "Well, he involves us when there is a need. At times he just consults the management team and informs us later. Educators are also consulted when the management team does not find solution of the problem. When suggestions are made, the principal evaluates suggestions before implementing them."

Respondent 2: "Yes, because all staff members have a say. Decision-making allows inputs. During staff meeting, open discussion is allowed where educators must give different opinions that would lead to one opinion."

Respondent 3: "Sir, the principal involves all staff members because the best decisions are made by teams. Educators meet time to time to share ideas with the purpose of ensuring that there is a common approach and the pace is almost the same."

Respondent 4: "Due to the leadership style which the principal demonstrate, he consults educators about all the activities in the school. Educators are nominated to act on various committees in the school to participate in the school affairs."

Respondent 5: "Well, he is a dictator hence educators are not involved in the school-affairs. At times he can advise members to come up with suggestions, but he will never implement them".

Respondent 6: "He involves all staff members but he will implement the decisions of educators who are near to his heart. Particularly the suggestions made by his wife".

Respondent 7: "Well, he consults all the educators, even with crucial management issues. Where he is supposed to finalise them with the School Management Team, he would refer issues to educators and uniformed decisions would be concluded. He does not trust his management teams".

Respondent 8: "Sir, the principal just consults educators for the sake of consultation but not for a good purpose because he acts contrary to the suggestions made by the staff".

Respondent 9: "The principal is a visionary leader who leads educators and implements decisions. However, with crucial issues he consults the School Management Team and informs educators before implementation".

Respondent 10: "Well, I can say she consults all the educators depending on the nature of the problem. Crucial issues are referred to the School Management Team."



## **ANNEXURE B**

P.O BOX 1801  
RUSTENBURG  
0300

The District Director  
Rustenburg District  
Department of Education  
Rustenburg

20 April 2010

Sir/Madam

### **REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT MOSES KOTANE AREA**

I sincerely request permission to interview educators at the academically underperforming secondary schools at Moses Kotane Area. Identity and participation would remain voluntary, anonymous and confidential.

The reason is in fulfillment of Masters Degree with the University of South Africa

I hope my request would meet your favorable consideration.

Thank you in advance

Yours faithfully  
PM Tlhapi

## **ANNEXURE C**

P O BOX 1801  
Rustenburg  
0300

The Principal  
Moses Kotane Area  
Mogwase

20 April 2010

Sir/Madam

### **REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT YOUR SCHOOL**

I kindly request permission to interview the educators of your school on educator participation in the implementation of a TQM strategy. Your identity and participation would remain voluntary, anonymous and confidential. We would decide on the dates and time suitable for the interview late.

The research is in fulfillment of my Masters Degree dissertation with the University of South Africa.

I do hope my request meet your favorable consideration.

Thanking you in advance.

Yours sincerely  
PM Tlhapi

