

**THE EFFECT OF EDUCATORS' PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT ON LEARNERS'  
ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN VUWANI CLUSTER OF VHEMBE DISTRICT**

by

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## DECLARATION

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I, Mashaba Mviseni Julia, hereby declare that the work contained in this dissertation is my own original work and that I have not previously submitted it in its entirety or in part to any other university for purposes of obtaining a degree. Sources that have been used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of a complete bibliography.

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DATE

(Mviseni Julia Mashaba)

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SIGNATURE

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My Heavenly Father, who is the source of knowledge and wisdom.

## **DEDICATION**

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I dedicate this dissertation to members of my family who were by my side during this journey.

## ABSTRACT

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This study examines the effects of educators' professional conduct on learners' academic performance. The researcher used quantitative research methodology and design. Data was collected in eighty primary schools, mostly in a disadvantaged context, in the Vhembe District in Limpopo Province, South Africa. A researcher-designed questionnaire was administered to eighty primary-school principals who were randomly selected.

The research revealed that the implementation of the educators' code of professional ethics may improve the quality of educators. The achievement of high learner academic performance may be determined by the manner in which principals lead, manage and encourage educators to adhere to the tenets of professional conduct. This research also revealed that although educators are aware of professional conduct, they show unprofessional behaviour such as disrespecting learners, leaving class unsupervised, excessive use of mobile phones during lessons, and excessive absenteeism. Learners who lack effective educator support tend to achieve lower results than expected. Learners whose educators behave professionally achieve good academic performance.

**Key words:** educator, learner, primary school, professional conduct, ethics, academic performance, Vuwani Cluster, Vhembe District

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

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	<b>Page</b>
<b>DECLARATION</b>	<b>i</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>DEDICATION</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>ABSTRACT</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>LIST OF FIGURES</b>	<b>xii</b>
<b>LIST OF TABLES</b>	<b>xiii</b>
<b>ACRONYMS</b>	<b>xiv</b>
<b>CHAPTER ONE: BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT	5
1.3 PURPOSE STATEMENT	7
1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES	7
1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS	7
1.6 ASSUMPTIONS	8
1.7 RESEARCH HYPHOTHESIS	8
1.8 THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK	8
1.9 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN	9
1.9.1 Research methodology	9
1.9.2 Research design	9
1.9.3 Research data collection instrument	9
1.9.4 Sampling	9
1.9.4.1 Population	10
1.9.4.2 Sample size	10
1.9.4.3 Sampling technique	10
1.9.4.4 Data collection process	10
1.9.4.5 Data analysis	11

1.10 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY	11
1.11 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY	11
1.12 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY	11
1.13 DEFINITION OF TERMS	12
1.13.1 Educator	12
1.13.2 Professionalism	12
1.13.3 Professional development	12
1.13.4 Learner	12
1.13.5 Academic	13
1.13.6 Performance	13
1.13.7 Academic performance	13
1.13.8 Enhancing	13
1.13.9 Primary school	13
1.13.10 Vuwani Cluster	14
1.13.11 Vhembe District	14
1.14 STRUCTURE OF THE DISSERTATION	14
1.15 CONCLUSION	15
<b>CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW</b>	<b>16</b>
2.1 INTRODUCTION	16
2.2 CONCEPTUAL THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	17
2.3 THE ROLES OF EDUCATOR	19
2.3.1 Educator as learning mediator	20
2.3.2 Educator as interpreter and designer of learning programmes and materials	21
2.3.3 Educator as leader, administrator and manager	21
2.3.4 Educator as scholar, researcher and lifelong learner	21
2.3.5 Educator as community, citizenship and pastoral role	22
2.3.6 Educator as assessor	22
2.3.7 Educator as subject specialist	23
2.4 THE ROLES OF EDUCATOR UNIONS IN EDUCATORS' PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT	23
2.5 EDUCATORS' PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT	26

2.5.1 Educators’ professional conduct in foreign countries	27
2.5.2 Educators’ professional conduct: South African perspective	28
2.5.2.1 Punctuality	29
2.5.2.2 Self-efficacy	31
2.5.2.3 Effective teaching	32
2.5.2.4 Honesty and integrity	33
2.5.2.5 Respectful	35
2.5.2.6 Highly motivated	35
2.5.2.7 Diligent	36
2.5.2.8 Wisdom	38
2.5.2.9 Competency	39
2.5.2.10 Communication skills	40
2.5.2.11 Caring for learners’ needs	41
2.6 LEARNERS’ ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE	42
2.6.1 Factors affecting learners’ academic performance	42
2.7 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EDUCATORS’ PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT AND LEARNERS’ ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE	44
2.7.1 Relationship between educators’ punctuality and learners’ academic performance	44
2.7.2 Relationship between educators’ self-efficacy and learners’ academic performance	45
2.7.3 Relationship between educators’ effective teaching and learners’ academic performance	46
2.7.4 Relationship between educators’ respect and learners’ academic performance	46
2.7.5 Relationship between educators’ caring and learners’ academic performance	47
2.7.6 Relationship between educators’ communication skills and learners’ academic performance	47
2.7.7 Relationship between educators’ honesty and integrity and learners’ academic performance	48
2.7.8 Relationship between educators’ motivation and learners’ academic performance	48



2.7.9 Relationship between educators' competency and learners' academic performance	48
<b>2.8 EDUCATORS' UNPROFESSIONAL CONDUCT</b>	<b>49</b>
2.8.1 Poor time-keeping	49
2.8.1.1 Reporting late for work without a valid reason	50
2.8.1.2 Leaving work early without permission	51
2.8.1.3 Unauthorised breaks	51
2.8.1.4 Unauthorised absence from the workplace	52
2.8.1.5 Not attending to their classes	52
2.8.1.6 Excessive use of mobile phone	53
2.8.1.7 Sleeping on duty	53
2.8.1.8 Social gathering	54
2.8.1.9 Shirking of duty	54
2.8.2 Calling learners by disrespectful names	55
2.8.3 Poor classroom management	55
2.8.4 Lack of subject knowledge	57
2.8.5 Insufficient curriculum coverage	57
2.8.6 Inappropriate assessment practices	58
2.8.7 Lack of monitoring and support of learners' work	59
2.8.8 Lack of provisioning and utilisation of relevant resources	59
2.8.9 Lack of professional development	59
<b>2.9 CAUSES AND EFFECTS OF EDUCATORS' UNPROFESSIONAL CONDUCT</b>	<b>60</b>
2.9.1 Stress	60
2.9.2 Financial constraints	61
2.9.3 Substance abuse	62
2.9.4 Working in the same school for a long period	62
<b>2.10 STRATEGIES THAT CAN PROMOTE PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT OF EDUCATORS</b>	<b>64</b>
2.10.1 In-service training	65
2.10.2 Professional development courses	66
2.10.3 Meetings	67

2.10.4 Induction	67
2.10.5 Management of leave form	68
2.10.6 Monitoring	69
2.10.7 Mentoring	69
2.11 FACTORS THAT ENHANCE LEARNERS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE	70
2.11.1 Presenteeism	70
2.11.2 Adequate subject knowledge	70
2.11.3 Hundred percent curriculum coverage	71
2.11.4 Effective teaching method	72
2.11.5 Relevant qualification	73
2.11.6 Educator experience	74
2.11.7 Utilisation of relevant resources	74
2.11.8 Monitoring and support to learners	75
2.12 CONCLUSION	75
<b>CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN</b>	<b>76</b>
3.1 INTRODUCTION	76
3.2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	76
3.2.1 Brief overview of a quantitative research methodology	76
3.2.2 Research design	77
3.2.3 Research population	78
3.2.4 Sample and sampling technique	78
3.2.5 Research instrument	79
3.2.5.1 Validity of instrument	79
3.2.5.2 Reliability of instrument	80
3.2.6 Data collection process	80
3.2.7 Data analysis	81
3.3 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS	81
3.3.1 Informed consent	82
3.3.2 Confidentiality and anonymity	82
3.3.3 Deception, privacy and empowerment	82

3.3.4 Harm, caring and fairness	83
3.4 CONCLUSION	83
<b>CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION</b>	<b>84</b>
4.1 INTRODUCTION	84
4.2 DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THE PARTICIPANTS	84
4.2.1 Age distribution	84
4.2.2 Teaching experience	85
4.2.3 Experience as a principal	86
4.2.4 Highest qualification	86
4.2.5 Grades taught	86
4.2.6 Currently trained in NCS-CAPS	87
4.3 OPINIONS REGARDING THE EFFECT OF EDUCATORS' PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE	87
4.3.1 The roles, professional conduct, code of ethics and professional development of educators	88
4.3.2 Roles of educators	88
4.3.3 Educators' professional conduct	89
4.3.4 Code of professional ethics	90
4.3.5 Educator's professional development	92
4.3.6 The types of educators' unprofessional conduct commonly practised by educators in schools	93
4.3.7 Causes and effects of unprofessional conduct	96
4.3.8 Strategies to promote professional conduct of educators	97
4.3.9 Factors enhancing learners' academic performance	99
<b>CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<b>101</b>
5.1 INTRODUCTION	101
5.2 SUMMARY OF CHAPTERS	101
5.3 SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	102
5.3.1 Summary of key findings	102

5.3.2 Discussion	105
5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS	106
5.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY	108
5.5.1 Return rate of questionnaires	108
5.5.2 Responses	108
5.5.3 Demarcation	108
5.5.4 Time frame for approving ethical clearance	108
5.6 RECOMMENDATION FOR FURTHER STUDY	108
5.7 CONCLUSION	109
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	<b>110</b>
<b>APPENDIX A: PERMISSION LETTER TO CONDUCT RESEARCH STUDY IN VUWANI CLUSTER, VHEMBE DISTRICT</b>	<b>124</b>
<b>APPENDIX B: RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE</b>	<b>125</b>
<b>APPENDIX C: LETTER OF CONSENT</b>	<b>135</b>
<b>APPENDIX D: APPLICATION LETTER TO CIRCUIT REQUESTING PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH</b>	<b>137</b>
<b>APPENDIX E: APPLICATION LETTER TO CIRCUIT REQUESTING PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH</b>	<b>139</b>
<b>APPENDIX F: APPLICATION LETTER TO CIRCUIT REQUESTING PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH</b>	<b>141</b>
<b>APPENDIX G: APPLICATION LETTER TO CIRCUIT REQUESTING PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH</b>	<b>143</b>
<b>APPENDIX H: EDITING DECLARATION</b>	<b>145</b>

## LIST OF FIGURES

	<b>Page</b>
Figure 2.1: Conceptual theoretical framework showing educators professional conduct and learners' academic performance	19
Figure 4.1: Percentage distribution of respondents by age (N=68)	85

## LIST OF TABLES

	<b>Page</b>
Table 1.1: Learners' Academic Performance, Vhuronga One Circuit, 2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter 2014	6
Table 3.1: Composition of the population	78
Table 4.1: Teaching experience (n = 65)	85
Table 4.2: Experience as a principal (N = 50)	86
Table 4.3: Highest qualification (n = 69)	86
Table 4.4: Grades taught (n= 69) – Multiple-response question	87
Table 4.5: Roles of educators	88
Table 4.6: Educators' professional conduct	89
Table 4.7: Code of professional ethics	90
Table 4.8: Development activities	92
Table 4.9: Aspects of educators' behaviour observed	94
Table 4.10: Causes and effects of unprofessional conduct	96
Table 4.11: Strategies to promote professional conduct of educators	98
Table 4.12: Factors enhancing learners' academic performance	99

## ACRONYMS

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ANA	Annual National Assessment
CAPS	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement
CK	Content Knowledge
COLTS	Culture of Teaching and learning Services
DoBE	Department of Basic Education
DSM	District Senior Manager
EEA	Employment of Educators Act
ELRC	Education Labour Relation Council
FAL	First Additional Language
GHS	General Household Survey
HoD	Head of Department
NCS	National Curriculum Statement
NEPA	National Education Policy Act
PCK	Pedagogical Content Knowledge
PEU	Professional Educators Union
RNCS	Revised National Curriculum Statement
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SACEA	South African Council of Educators Act
SACE	South African Council of Educators
SADTU	South African Democratic Teachers Union
SASA	South African Schools Act
SEP	Science Education Project
SGB	School Governing Body
SMT	School Management Team
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

## **CHAPTER ONE:**

### **BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

#### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter serves to introduce the research problem under investigation. The chapter provides a brief explanation of the background of the study, the problem statement, research objectives and questions, the purpose of the study, the research hypothesis, the research methodology and design, sampling, delimitations and delineation of the study, the significance of the study, assumptions underpinning the study, definitions of terms and an outline of the structure of the dissertation. This chapter therefore serves as a mind-map or blue-print for the entire research project.

The core business of a school is learning and teaching. The school as an organisation functions with the participation of various stakeholders. According to Shepherd (2013:2), a school comprises stakeholders, namely learners, educators, principal, members of the SGB, parents, administrative staff and the community at large. Each stakeholder has its own roles and responsibilities towards the success of the school. One of the primary tasks of the principal as leader and manager of the school is to ensure that the school ethos and morale are conducive for effective learning and teaching.

According to Shepherd (2013:2), stakeholders in education consider educator quality to be the most important determinant of learner academic performance. According to the 2009 General Household Survey (GHS) of the South African households who do not send their children to the nearest available education institution, approximately 13 percent cited “poor quality of teaching” as the reason for doing so. Almost two decades after the end of apartheid, it is claimed that as many as 90 percent of South African schools can be labelled as dysfunctional (Cohen & Seria, 2010). According to Paddy (2013:36), education in South Africa is in crisis and the crisis is driven by two pillars of dysfunctionality, namely weak capacity in the educational civil service, which leads to poor schooling outcomes and general lack of respect for education, and a culture of patronage, which pervades almost all areas of education. Based on Paddy’s findings, educators as part of the civil service should also perceive education as a pre-condition for social and economic development. It can be concluded that the achievement of high academic performance cannot be seen as optional but a must for all schools.



The educator is probably the single most important factor affecting learners' academic performance – at least the single most important factor that we can do much about (Wright, Horn & Sanders, 1997). Furthermore, Wright *et al.* (1997) conclude that the most important factor affecting learners' learning is the educator. Effective educators appear to be effective with learners of all achievement levels, regardless of the levels of heterogeneity in their classes. If the educator is ineffective, learners under that educator's tutelage will achieve inadequate progress academically, regardless of how similar or different they are regarding their academic achievement.

Moreover, Malambo (2012:10) asserts that to achieve quality education, there is a need for educators to prepare their lesson plans in advance and present them to learners in more interesting and effective ways. As a result, society has high expectations of educators. Educators are expected to acquire knowledge and have high academic skills and maintain high ethical standards. Although promoting learners' academic progress has always been their primary responsibility, educators are also expected to further learners' social, emotional and moral development and to safeguard learners' health and well-being.

According to Malambo (2012:10), the educator has an essential role to play in the classroom. Therefore, Malambo (2012:10) notes that even in the most democratic classrooms, educators have more influence than learners because they are responsible for what goes on when learners are with them; setting the pace, evaluating the process and deciding whether learners should pass or fail. How an educator utilises this power is crucial. In fact, Malambo (2012:11) argues that competent and committed educators are needed for societal and national development. Well-trained educators are cardinal to every society because they help mould the nation. Service provided by educators to the learners is very important because they open the minds of the learners to a life-long search for competencies needed for professional life. Murphy (2005:14) and Malambo (2012:11) concur that educators are those who influence the learners in the school setting. Furthermore, Nordenbo, Larsen, Tiftiqi, Wendt & Ostergaard (2008:50) assert that educators' professional conduct is the most important factor for learners' academic performance, even more important than class size and the performance gap. Additionally, Khalid, Yasmin and Azeem (2011) conclude that educators are the most influential school-related factors affecting learners' academic achievements.

Although school quality is an important determinant of learners' academic performance, the most important predictor is educator quality. It follows that the school with adequate resources cannot produce good academic performance if the educators' conduct is unprofessional (Khalid *et al.*, 2011:63). In contrast, Shah (2009:34) states other factors that may affect teaching, namely type and size of the institution, size of the classroom, learning levels, fields of knowledge, instructional aides available, educator-learner ratio, climate of the institution, socio-economic background of the learners, aptitude of the learners, personality of the educator, experience in teaching, workload of the educator, health condition of the educator, variability and verbalisation of teaching.

Bascia and Osmond (2013:12) believe that educators are at the centre of most current educational reform efforts, either because the reforms themselves focus on educators, or because the reform proposals directly affect educators' work. For example, new curriculum and learners' assessment schemes place greater controls on what and how teaching is carried out, and require more time and energy spent on administrative tasks by educators. New educators' inspection practices affect them in terms of workload, bureaucratisation, stress, demotivation, alienation and feelings of insecurity. The crisis in teaching and educators' work has led to large proportions of the educator population exiting the profession after a few years (Bascia & Osmond, 2013:12).

Educators' professional conduct affects learners academically, emotionally and in their development as a whole. The learners' academic development and emotions direct educators to act in a professional manner at all times, as stipulated in the Employment of Educators Act (EEA) No. 76 of 1998 (Republic of South Africa, 1998). Furthermore, during the cognitive development of learners, they are most likely to imitate any conduct that educators may display in the classroom. Therefore, the professional conduct of educators has a significant and pivotal role to play in shaping the futures of learners (Gibson, Wang & Slate, 2013). Their conduct can influence learners both positively and negatively, inside and outside the classroom and in their lives generally. Learners' perceptions of educators are valid and memorable. Consequently, educators' professional conduct – how they teach or treat learners – permeates throughout the remainder of learners' educational journeys and beyond. So, for instance, educators who come to school late are likely to be imitated by learners (Gibson *et al.*, 2013:11).

The EEA No. 76 of 1998 (Republic of South Africa, 1998) propagates and promotes learners' academic performance and puts in place instruments to measure quality through results analysis. The professional conduct of educators is regulated within the Code of Conduct of Educators (Republic of South Africa, 2000). Educators who contravene the provisions of the SACEA (South African Council of Educators Act 31 of 2000) are mostly charged, suspended, dismissed, transferred, and/ or have their contracts terminated, get fined, and/or demoted when found guilty. Furthermore, in 2000 the Department of Education printed the *Policy Handbook for Educators* (Education Labour Relations Council, 2003), containing the entire legislative framework that regulates the operations of education in South Africa.

The researcher has supervised educators and monitored learners' academic performance since being appointed as a primary-school principal at Vhuronga One Circuit in the Vuwani Cluster, Vhembe District. The researcher has shared the information on how learners perform and how educators behave with colleagues who are principals of primary schools. Furthermore, the researcher has experienced and learnt about the effect of educators' professional conduct on learners' academic performance and results from the principals themselves and from the circuit managers during the unveiling of the circuits' quarterly results. This information concerns matters such as absenteeism, late-coming, failure to attend classes, disrespect of learners, dereliction of duties, lack of supervision and monitoring of educators' and learners' work, poor classroom management, curriculum not covered, excessive use of mobile phones during contact time, and ill-discipline on the part of educators.

While educators are expected to obey rules and implement curriculum delivery policies, their focus must be on achieving high learners' academic performance. Learning is based on performance and results rather than on rules and regulations (Collinson, Kozina, Lin, Ling, Matheson *et al.*, 2009:3-4). Additionally, the goals and objectives of an educator are to produce good academic performances and quality results from their learners. The question about teaching as a profession is important for the restoration of a culture of learning and teaching services (COLTS). If teaching is a profession in the true sense of the word, educators will reflect the characteristics of a professional person and that will link directly to the traits of positive COLTS. To enhance COLTS, motivated, self-disciplined people with a true professional attitude are needed.

In Vuwani Cluster, many learners begin schooling with impoverished vocabularies and weak academic backgrounds and struggle both academically and socially. It is the responsibility of educators to identify the learners' potential and empower them with knowledge, skills, and attitudes and values so that they can produce quality results. Learners who lack basic skills at primary level face serious challenges at secondary level, often resulting in them dropping out of school (Palumbo & Sanacore, 2009:275). Although several studies have been conducted regarding factors that affect learners' academic performance, very few have examined the nature of professional conduct and its effects on learners' academic performance, more particularly at Vuwani. These issues, and other related observed factors, motivated the researcher to examine the effect of educators' professional conduct on learners' academic performance in the Vuwani Cluster, Vhembe District. Therefore, this study aimed to examine and analyse factors that affect the quality of learners' academic performance, with reference to educators' professional conduct.

## **1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

There are concerns, complaints and comments from different stakeholders regarding the academic performance of learners in Vuwani Cluster, Vhembe District. It seems that there is a mismatch between the expectations of parents regarding learner achievement and learners' actual performance. For example, an analysis of term two academic performance of Grade 6 learners at Vhuronga One Circuit in 2014 reveals that of the 1000 learners who wrote English FAL, only 32 percent passed and of the 961 learners who wrote Mathematics, only 17 percent passed. The breakdown of the results is shown in Table 1.

Furthermore, all ninety-nine the primary schools in the Vuwani Cluster were declared underperforming schools by the Limpopo Province Department of Education in the letter entitled: "Declaration of your school as underperforming", signed by the HoD on the 7<sup>th</sup> of February, 2013. The reflection from clusters' academic results stimulated the researcher's interest in investigating whether educators' professional conduct has an effect on learners' academic performance or not. The rationale for this idea was encouraged by the observation of educators' absenteeism, cases of educators' unprofessional conduct reported in the media and local cases I witnessed from local communities. Therefore, the researcher wanted to investigate the effect of educators' professional conduct on learners' academic performance in the Vuwani Cluster, Vhembe District.

**Table 1.1: Learners' academic performance, Vhuronga One Circuit, 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter 2014**

<b>NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF LEARNERS PERFORMING AT 50% AND ABOVE IN THE 2<sup>ND</sup> QUARTER OF 2014</b>						
<b>School</b>	<b>English FAL</b>			<b>Mathematics</b>		
	Number wrote	≥ 50%	%	Number wrote	≥ 50%	%
<b>A</b>	16	6	<b>38%</b>	16	2	<b>13%</b>
<b>B</b>	29	29	<b>100%</b>	29	13	<b>45%</b>
<b>C</b>	23	20	<b>87%</b>	23	0	<b>0%</b>
<b>D</b>	25	10	<b>40%</b>	25	10	<b>40%</b>
<b>E</b>	39	15	<b>38%</b>	39	17	<b>44%</b>
<b>F</b>	48	11	<b>23%</b>	48	6	<b>13%</b>
<b>G</b>	53	48	<b>91%</b>	53	14	<b>26%</b>
<b>H</b>	54	32	<b>59%</b>	54	10	<b>19%</b>
<b>I</b>	14	1	<b>7%</b>	14	0	<b>0%</b>
<b>J</b>	21	5	<b>24%</b>	21	2	<b>10%</b>
<b>K</b>	48	14	<b>29%</b>	48	12	<b>25%</b>
<b>L</b>	43	13	<b>30%</b>	43	9	<b>21%</b>
<b>M</b>	66	1	<b>2%</b>	66	3	<b>5%</b>
<b>N</b>	73	9	<b>12%</b>	79	16	<b>20%</b>
<b>O</b>	82	22	<b>27%</b>	82	6	<b>7%</b>
<b>P</b>	24	22	<b>92%</b>	24	5	<b>21%</b>
<b>Q</b>	57	12	<b>21%</b>	57	18	<b>32%</b>
<b>R</b>	37	16	<b>43%</b>	37	5	<b>14%</b>
<b>S</b>	33	10	<b>30%</b>	33	5	<b>15%</b>
<b>T</b>	120	13	<b>11%</b>	120	15	<b>13%</b>
<b>U</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13%</b>
<b>Circuit</b>	1000	324	<b>32%</b>	961	165	<b>17%</b>

### **1.3 PURPOSE STATEMENT**

The purpose of the research study was to examine the relationship between the nature of the professional conduct of educators and its effects on learners' academic performance in Vuwani Cluster of Vhembe District. The intention was to reach evidence-based conclusions and recommendations that may add value to the existing knowledge and suggest possible practical solutions for addressing the challenges that exist within the school as a learning organisation. In order to achieve the purpose of the study the researcher developed research objectives as set out below.

### **1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

The study aimed at achieving the following research objectives:

- To examine the relationship between the professional conduct of educators and its effect on learners' academic performance.
- To identify the types of educators' professional and unprofessional conduct that may affect learners' academic performance.
- To find out the causes and effects of the unprofessional conduct of educators.
- To develop strategies to improve educators' professional conduct as a way of enhancing learners' academic performance.

### **1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The researcher wanted to answer the following main research question:

- What is the relationship between the professional conduct of educators and learners' academic performance in Vuwani Cluster of Vhembe District?

Subsidiary questions:

- What are the types of educators' professional and unprofessional conduct commonly practised by educators in schools?
- What are the causes of the unprofessional conduct of educators?
- What are the effects of educator's conduct on learners' academic performance?
- What strategies could be developed to improve educators' professional conduct as a means of enhancing learners' academic performance?

## **1.6 ASSUMPTIONS**

According to Udo-Akang (2012:90), the research assumptions and goals determine the approach to theory researchers utilise. The main assumption in this research was that educators' professional conduct has an effect on learners' academic performance. The researcher conducted this research on the following assumptions:

- that educators in Vuwani Cluster are not adhering to the Code of Professional Ethics;
- the educators' unprofessional conduct may affect learners' academic performance;
- the educators' behaviour might change for the better for achieving high academic performance;
- the sample would be representative of the primary-school population of Vuwani cluster in Vhembe district.

An assumption was also made that the respondents who were to be used for data collection would give true and honest responses to the research questions posed in the questionnaire.

## **1.7 RESEARCH HYPHOTHESIS**

Udo-Akang (2012:90) asserts that hypotheses are crucial bridges between theory and data. The following directional hypothesis is formulated for conducting this research: "*Educators' professional conduct has a negative effect on learners' academic performance*".

## **1.8 THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

The researcher has to conduct research against a particular theoretic and conceptual framework to gather data that will answer the research question of the study. According to Creswell (2009), theory is a set of interrelated constructs or concepts, definitions, and propositions that present a systematic view of phenomena. Udo-Akang (2012:90) asserts that theories are systematic sets of interrelated statements and constructs intended to explain some aspect of social life. Furthermore, Udo-Akang (2012:90) defines theory as an informed conceptual framework that provides an initial understanding and explanation of the nature and dynamics of the issues, problem, or phenomenon that is the focus of the theory.

## **1.9 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN**

### **1.9.1 Research methodology**

The researcher should have a mind-map or what could be called a roadmap of how the research will unfold with the aim of yielding the expected results. Leedy and Ormrod (2010:94) assert that quantitative research involves looking at amounts, or quantities, of one or more variables of interest. The researcher chose quantitative research methodology as she intended to study two variables, namely educators' professional conduct and learners' academic performance. The data collected was numeric in terms of number of cases of professional conduct, number of educators involved in cases of unprofessional conduct, number of learners affected by educators' misbehaviour and the figures on learners' performance statistics. The researcher employed a descriptive and interpretive research paradigm where data collected by means of a questionnaire was described and interpreted and critically analysed to derive meaning from the comparison of similarities and differences.

### **1.9.2 Research design**

Creswell (2009) states that research design is the process that involves the overall assumptions of the research to the method of data collection and analysis. The researcher used a survey research design. The survey is a research technique in which data is gathered by posing questions to a group of individuals, called respondents, who have been chosen to take part in the survey.

### **1.9.3 Research data collection instrument**

The main research data collection instrument was a structured, closed-ended questionnaire. The questionnaire was composed of five sections (Section A-E). These were designed on a four-point Likert scale, i.e. SA (Strongly Agree), A (Agree), SDA (Strongly Disagree) and DA (Disagree). The researcher chose the use of a questionnaire because it can collect quantitative data and is easy to administer to principals as respondents who are very busy in the performance of their duties. It might not be easy for the principals to have enough time for personal contact or face-to-face interviews.

### **1.9.4 Sampling**

The researcher could not distribute the questionnaire to the entire population as it would be time-consuming, expensive and difficult to analyse the large volume of data. Different types



of sampling apply to quantitative and qualitative design. Purposive sampling is relevant to a qualitative research design because the researcher is interested in interacting with knowledgeable people who can give relevant information about the phenomenon under investigation during observation and interviews to construct meaning from coded data and analysis of themes. Simple random sampling was relevant to this quantitative research project as no special attributes of the respondents were required regarding the research topic. Therefore, the researcher used random sampling to identify principals who would respond to the constructed questionnaires.

#### ***1.9.4.1 Population***

A population is the group to which a researcher would like the results of a study to be generalised (Gay, 2005). The population used in this study were ninety-nine (N=99) primary-school principals from which eighty principals were then randomly sampled from Vuwani cluster schools, Vhembe District, Limpopo Province.

#### ***1.9.4.2 Sample size***

The sample size of this study was eighty (N=80) primary-school principals of Vuwani Cluster, Vhembe District.

#### ***1.9.4.3 Sampling technique***

The researcher used simple random sampling where she compiled a list of all primary-school principals and wrote seventy numbers following to fixed pattern. Principals from the list who matched the number of the researcher's sample list were selected as respondents (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010:213).

#### ***1.9.4.4 Data collection process***

Self-administration of a questionnaire was employed for this research. The researcher visited eighty (N=80) primary schools for the study and personally distributed questionnaires to eighty school principals (self-administration). Sixty nine (N=69) responses were received. In this way data was collected from the respondents who completed the questionnaire at their own place and time.

#### ***1.9.4.5 Data analysis***

After the collection of the data, it was organised, tabulated, analysed and interpreted. The researcher captured the data into a computer package called Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 19.0, which makes it possible to produce tables and graphs. The SPSS programme was used because it can analyse all numerical data and allows the researcher to discuss the results critically, arrive at conclusions and recommend possible solutions to research questions raised.

### **1.10 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

This study revealed information about educators' professional conduct and the effect it has on learners' academic performance. Strategies to overcome problems in the learning environment were recommended. An understanding of educators' behaviour in relation to teaching and learning may assist in improving learners' academic performance. The findings will add to the existing body of knowledge concerning the relationship between educators' professional conduct and learners' academic performance. Therefore, information generated from this study could be used to establish school-based interventions to support the academic achievement of primary-school learners. Furthermore, the findings will allow educators to become aware of the impact of their unprofessional conduct on learners' academic performance. This, in turn, will enable educators to consider their attitudes and approaches to the education of learners, with a view to improving the quality of teaching and learning. Finally, the research findings may therefore contribute to improving learners' academic achievement in primary schools.

### **1.11 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY**

The study was undertaken within the four circuits that constitute the Vuwani Cluster within the District of Vhembe in the Limpopo Province. Eighty (N=80) principals were sampled from ninety-nine (N=99) principals in Vuwani cluster.

### **1.12 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

This study focused on only one selected cluster of Vhembe District, Limpopo Province. As a result, the study findings could not be generalised as the research did not cover the whole district. Eighty principals were randomly selected and the integrity, honesty or faithfulness of such respondents could not be guaranteed. Eleven of the eighty sampled principals did not return the questionnaire. Some of the responses of the participants who returned their

questionnaires reflected their lack of understanding or perhaps their misinterpretation of one or more questions and they thus responded in an unsatisfactory manner.

## **1.13 DEFINITION OF TERMS**

### **1.13.1 Educator**

According to the EEA 76 of 1998 (Republic of South Africa, 1998), *educator* denotes any person who teaches, educates or trains other persons or who provides professional educational services. Apart from having professional training for this purpose, the educator should behave appropriately in an academic situation (Khalid *et al.*, 2011:63). In this study, an educator is a professional adult who teaches Grade R to Grade 7 learners in a primary school.

### **1.13.2 Professionalism**

Mkhize (2000:2) defines *professionalism* as the state of being able to display acceptable behaviour appropriate to a profession. For an educator, this means showing appropriate professional conduct such as honesty, integrity, accountability, fairness, the pursuit of excellence, keeping promises, respecting and caring for others. In this study, professionalism means conforming to the code of professional ethics as stipulated in the SACEA 31 of 2000 (Republic of South Africa, 2000).

### **1.13.3 Professional development**

Van der Nest (2012:22) explains that, for educators, *professional development* refers to any activities engaged in by educators that enhance their knowledge and skills and enable them to consider their attitudes and approaches to the education of learners, with a view to improving the quality of teaching and learning. In this study, professional development refers to the exhibited competence of educators in managing curriculum and co-curriculum activities that conform to the attainment of quality results and the good academic performance of learners.

### **1.13.4 Learner**

The South African Schools Act (SASA), 84 of 1996 (RSA, 1996) defines a *learner* as any person receiving education or obliged to receive education in terms of this Act. In this study, a learner means a person who is attending school from Grade R to Grade 7. Some scholars call the learner a “student.”

### **1.13.5 Academic**

According to Hornby (2004:5), *academic* is connected with education, especially studying in schools and universities. In this study, academic means any formal activities performed at school to mould the child to responsible adulthood.

### **1.13.6 Performance**

Hornby (2004:865) defines *performance* as the act or a process of performing a task or an action. It also refers to oral and written work such as class and homework, weekly, monthly and quarterly tests and examinations performed by learners, whether informal or formal. In this study, performance refers to academic achievement of learners at the expected level of each grade.

### **1.13.7 Academic performance**

Bellon (2000:161) defines *academic performance* as a process whereby learners are able to express the results of their discipline inquiry in written, symbolic and oral discourse. In this study, academic performance refers to the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) requirements for Grades 1 to 3. These are the following: Home Language 50% level 4, FAL and Mathematics 40% level 3; Grades 4 to 6: Home Language 50% level 4, FAL, Mathematics, Natural Sciences and Technology, Social Sciences and Life Skills 40% level 3; and Grade 7, which still has the RNCS requirements, namely Home Language 50% level 4, FAL, Mathematics, Natural Science, Social Sciences, Economic and Management Sciences, Technology, Arts and Culture and Life Orientation 40% level 3.

### **1.13.8 Enhancing**

*Enhancing* means to improve the value, quality and effectiveness of education (Ndimande, 2005:5). In this study, *enhancing* refers to the strengthening of educators' professional conduct for the improvement of learners' academic performance.

### **1.13.9 Primary school**

Piet and Mahlangu (1990:47) describe a school as a formal institution for instruction or preparation for adult life that transmits culture to the next generation. In this study, primary school means all the schools with Grade R to Grade 4 (Junior Primary School), Grade 5 to Grade 7 (Senior Primary Schools) and Grade R to Grade 7 (Combined Primary Schools) in

Vuwani Cluster, Vhembe District. Some scholars call the primary school “elementary school”.

#### **1.13.10 Vuwani Cluster**

Vuwani Cluster is one of six education clusters in Vhembe District. It comprises four circuits, i.e., Vhuronga One Circuit, which stretches from Hamangilasi to Tshimbupfe; Vhuronga Two Circuit, which stretches from Ha-Masia to Ha-Mashau; Dzondo Circuit, which stretches from Tshakhuma to Lwamondo; and Dzindi Circuit, which stretches from Mapate to Shayandima.

#### **1.13.11 Vhembe District**

Vhembe District is one of the five (5) districts in Limpopo Province. It consists of twenty-seven circuits categorised into six clusters, namely: Hlanganani, Malamulele, Mutale, Thohoyandou, Vuwani and Zoutpansberg.

### **1.14 STRUCTURE OF THE DISSERTATION**

The purpose of this research was to identify the professional conduct of educators and the effects thereof on learners’ academic performance in primary schools in the Vhembe District of Limpopo Province. The focus was on identifying the effect of educators’ unprofessional conduct on learners’ academic performance. The dissertation is organised into the following five chapters:

Chapter 1 presents the problem under investigation. It comprises the background to the study; problem statement; purpose statement; research objectives and questions; hypotheses, significance of the study; delimitations; assumptions and definition of terms.

Chapter 2 provides the conceptual theoretical background regarding the relationship between educators’ professional conduct and learners’ academic performance. The theoretical background attempts to reveal the critical roles of educators in the teaching and learning process. Professional and unprofessional conduct is identified. Causes of unprofessional conduct as well intervention strategies to minimise educators’ unprofessional conduct are discussed in detail. The chapter also presents a critical review of literature in relation to the phenomenon.

Chapter 3 concentrates on the research methodology and design, sampling, the development of the research instrument, and reliability and validity in quantitative research. The potential ethical dilemmas are also highlighted.

Chapter 4 deals with data presentation, analysis and interpretation.

Chapter 5 provides a summary of the study, the conclusions derived from the study, the recommendations on how to reduce educators' unprofessional conduct, limitations of the study and topics that call for further research.

## **1.15 CONCLUSION**

In this chapter, the researcher has presented the background of the study and the purpose of the research, problem statement, purpose statement, hypotheses, population, sample and sampling techniques, research methodology and design, research instruments, data collection processes, data analysis methods and ethical concerns. In Chapter 2, the researcher will provide a review of relevant literature regarding the nature of educators' professional conduct and the effect thereof on learners' academic performance. A conceptual theoretical framework on the effects of educators' professional conduct on learners' academic performance will also be discussed.

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

In the previous chapter, the researcher presented the research problem, research questions and plan of action on how the research study would be conducted. In this chapter, the researcher reports on a review of books, magazines, theses, dissertations and articles with intention of evaluating how far the topic under study and those related to the study have been researched. The views of different scholars were compared with the aim of identifying similarities, differences and gaps that still exist in our knowledge of issues around educators' professional conduct.

A literature study can be defined as an extensive, exhaustive, systematic and critical examination of publications relevant to the research project (Lobiondo-Wood & Haber, 2006). Marshall and Rossman (1995:3) believe that a thoughtful and insightful discussion of the related literature helps to build a logical framework and contextualises the research within a tradition of enquiry and a context of related studies.

The literature review is therefore significant in guiding and planning the whole research project. It determines whether the researcher's endeavours are likely to add to existing knowledge in a meaningful way (Ary, Jacobs & Razavieh, 2002:67). According to Ary *et al.* (2002:67), knowledge in any given area consists of the accumulated outcomes of numerous studies conducted by generations of researchers. One should therefore review the literature for purposes of finding a link between one's own research and the accumulated knowledge in one's field of interest. A research project with no link, or one that is not rooted in the existing literature, will produce fragments of information that are of limited use (Ary *et al.*, 2002:67). If the research questions are too broad or vague to be put into practice, a careful review of the literature helps the researcher to alter and revise the preliminary questions so that the theme can be easily investigated (Ary *et al.*, 2002:67).

Furthermore, the literature review assists the researcher in choosing the appropriate methods (Strauss & Corbin, 1990:51). In addition, the exposition of the findings and the recommendations made as a result of the research are guided by the literature review and it is therefore used to support the validation of the accuracy of the research findings (Lobiondo-Wood & Haber, 2006).

The present research examined the conduct of educators and the effects thereof on learners' academic performance. The focus was on finding solutions to educators' unprofessional conduct in order to enhance learners' academic performance. The purpose of this chapter is to determine the theoretical perspectives that underpin this study. In this chapter, the following aspects are presented as a framework for bringing together, in a dynamic way, the investigations of educators' conduct and the effect thereof on learners' academic performance: conceptual theoretical framework; the role of educators as the promoters of learners' performance; educators' professional conduct; educators' code of professional ethics; learners' academic performance; educators' unprofessional conduct; causes and effects of educators' unprofessional conduct; strategies that promote professional conduct of educators; and factors that enhance learners' academic performance.

## **2.2 CONCEPTUAL THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

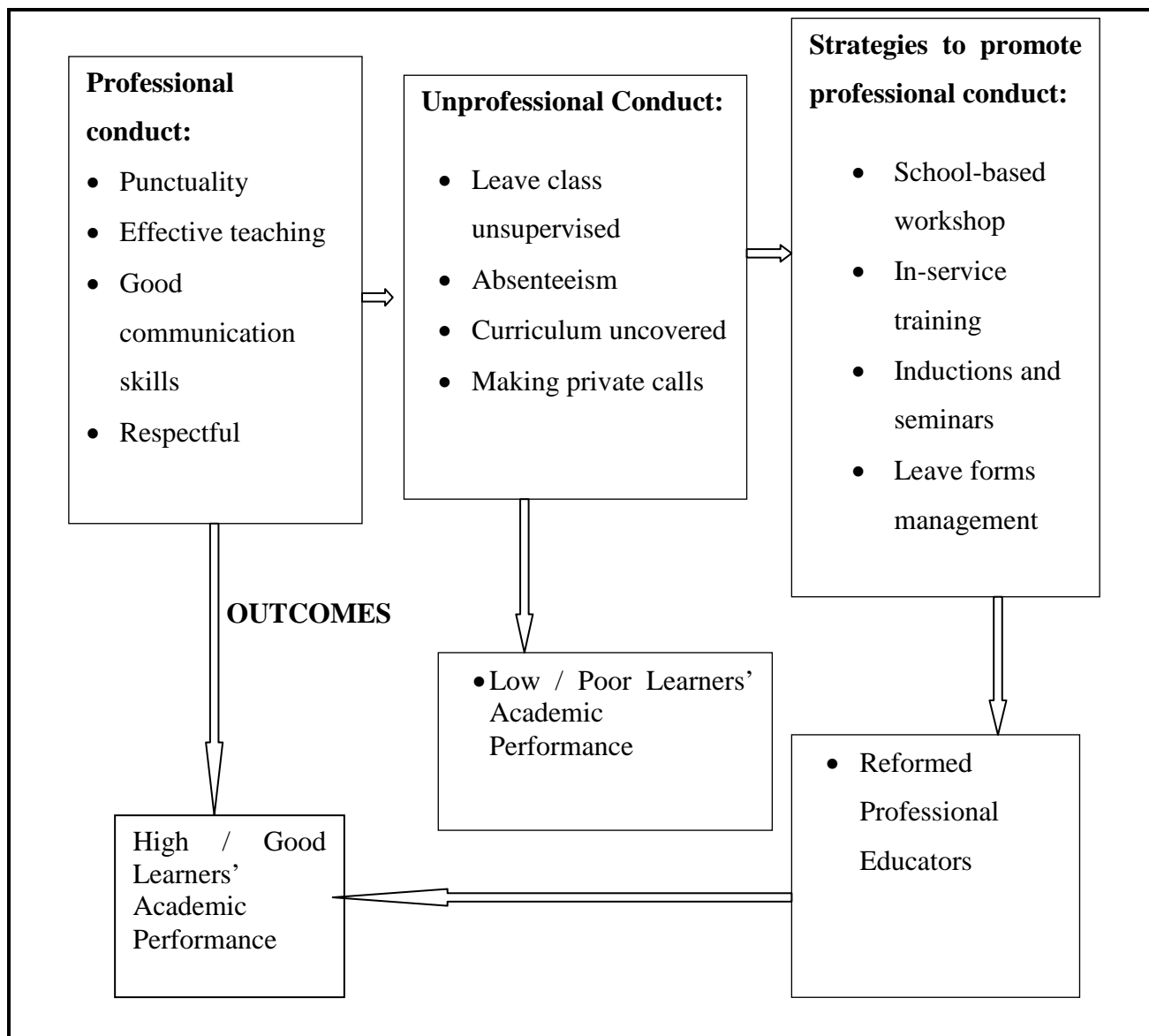
According to Kitchel and Ball (2014:189), theory has taken many different meanings, there are different kinds of theories used, and there is confusion among the terms for identifying and situating theories within the literature review of a manuscript. Proper theory used begins with clarity about what theory is, a delineation of appropriate types of theory and clarity of terminology for theory. Furthermore, Kitchel and Ball (2014:190) assert that terminology around theory, such as theoretical frameworks and conceptual frameworks in social sciences literature reviews also differ. Reynolds (2007) acknowledges that there are multiple interactions and intentions for the term theory. When the words framework model are added to the discussion, theory assumes multiple meanings for various disciplinary uses (Kitchel & Ball, 2014:190). Miles and Huberman (1994) define a theoretical framework as a visual or written product, one that explains, either graphically or in narrative form, the main things to be studied – the key factors, concepts, or variables and the presumed relationships among them.

This study examined the relationship between the nature of the professional conduct of educators and the effects thereof on learners' academic performance in Vuwani Cluster of Vhembe District. As indicated earlier, the "key factors" or concepts studied were educators' professional conduct and learners' academic performance. Mkhize (2000:2) states that professionalism is the state of being able to display acceptable behaviour appropriate to a profession. For an educator, this means showing appropriate professional conduct such as honesty, integrity, accountability, fairness, the pursuit of excellence, competency, wisdom,



respecting and caring for others. Bellon (2000:161) asserts that academic performance is a process whereby learners are able to express the results of their disciplined inquiry in written, symbolic and oral discourse. When a learner writes a test or examination, for example the expected pass rate or academic performance is 50% in Home language and 40% in other subjects. Moreover, Malambo (2012) defines academic performance as learners' involvement in the learning process and the application of his and her cognitive faculty, i.e. reading, writing and general performance in school assignments. The quality of results may depend on the educators' professional conduct. If educators are punctual in any activity they perform at school, teach specific allocated time and relevant subject content and have good educator-learner relationships, learners academic performance may be high, and *vice versa*. Figure 2.1 indicates a model representing the relationship between educators' professional conduct and learners' academic performance.

Camp (2001:18 as cited by Kitchel & Ball, 2014:190) posits that when a conceptual framework is used in a research study, it is done in the absence of a grand theory or reputable middle-range theory. Furthermore, Camp asserts that if a conceptual framework begins with a supportable premise and then extends that premise through a logical path of reported research and clear reasoning to form the basis for the study, then it is in fact a substantive theory. It follows that the conceptual model in Figure 2.1 represents a theory, as Shoemaker, Tankard and Lasorsa (2004:112 as cited by Kitchel & Ball, 2014: 190) state although a model is not a theory, a model can be used to represent a theory. Furthermore Shoemaker *et al.* (2004:112) conclude that a model helps describe an object or process, but theory is needed if the researcher intends to understand how the object or process works.



**Figure 2.1: Conceptual theoretical framework showing educators' professional conduct and learners' academic performance**

Sources: Adapted from Ng'oma & Simatwa, 2013.

### 2.3 THE ROLES OF EDUCATOR

Educator' roles involve more than simply standing in front of a classroom and lecturing. In fact, even though an educator spends the major part of the day in the classroom, the actual teaching component is only part of the job. An effective educator understands that teaching involves wearing multiple hats to ensure that the school day runs smoothly and all learners receive quality education. Numerous studies have shown that, above all other factors, it is the educator in the classroom who inspires, cultivates and facilitate learning.

Based on the functions that the educator performs in different activities, several authors (Republic of South Africa, 1996a; Harden & Crosby, 2000:334-347; Potenza, 2002; Harrison & Killion, 2007:74-77) variously identify the roles of educator as controller, assessor, organiser, prompter, participant and resource-provider, the lecturer, the clinical or practical educator, the on-the-job role model, the role model as an educator, the learning facilitator, the mentor, the learner assessor, the curriculum assessor, the curriculum planner, the course planner, the resource materials creator and the guide producer; learning mediator, interpreter and designer of learning programmes and materials, leader, scholar, researcher and lifelong learner, community, citizenship and pastoral role, assessor and learning area/subject specialist. The seven key roles are briefly explained below.

### **2.3.1 Educator as learning mediator**

The educator must serve as a link between the subject content and the learner. According to Potenza (2002), a mediator is somebody who goes between, who facilitates a dialogue, which makes it possible for an idea or feeling to be communicated. Harrison and Killion (2007:74-77) concur with the National Education Policy Act (NEPA) 27 of 1996 when they assert that educators should mediate learning in a manner which is sensitive to the diverse needs of learners, construct appropriate learning environments, communicate effectively showing recognition of and respect for the differences of others, demonstrate sound knowledge of the learning subject, strategies and resources appropriate to teaching in a South African context, and be an inspiration to the learners.

Harden and Crosby (2000:334-347) are in accord with NEPA 27 of 1996 when they state that educators would be able to function most effectively if they have subject-based knowledge. To acquire subject knowledge educators should learn with and from one another, and this can make them focus on what most directly improves their teaching. Their professional learning therefore becomes more relevant, focused on their classroom work and aligned to fill gaps in learners' knowledge. These factors build teamwork at the school (Harrison & Killion, 2007:74-77). The educators' role is not to inform the learners but to encourage and facilitate them to learn for themselves, using the problem as a focus for learning. Furthermore, the educators need to communicate with learners in an informal way in the small group sessions and encourage learner learning by creating an atmosphere in which open exchange of ideas can be facilitated (Harden & Crosby, 2000:334-347).

### **2.3.2 Educator as interpreter and designer of learning programmes and materials**

The role of educator as an interpreter is to communicate with learners, transfer subject content knowledge and create an understanding of subject content. Educators are expected to understand and interpret already existing learning programmes, design their own learning programmes and select and prepare suitable textual and visual resources for learning. They also need to sequence and pace learning in a way that shows sensitivity to the needs of the learning area or subject and those of the learners (Republic of South Africa, 1996a, Potenza, 2002, Mashau & Mutshaeni, 2013:36). According to Harden and Crosby (2000:334-347), educators select, organise and deliver subject content knowledge and assist learners to interpret it using one of a variety of educational strategies. Teaching and learning may become effective when learners have appropriate resource materials available for use. Therefore, the role of educators is to develop resource materials keeping abreast with changes in technology.

### **2.3.3 Educator as leader, administrator and manager**

The educator must lead and manage his or her classroom. In addition, the educator must acquire leadership skills and management strategies that will enhance learning and teaching. According to Harrison and Killion (2007:74-770), leadership skills that the educators should display include managing learning in the classroom, carrying out classroom administrative duties efficiently, and participating in school decision-making structures. These competences should be performed in ways that are democratic, that support learners and colleagues, and that demonstrate responsiveness to changing circumstances and needs (Republic of South Africa, 1996a, Harrison & Killion, 2007:74-77; Potenza, 2002, Mashau & Mutshaeni, 2013:36).

### **2.3.4 Educator as scholar, researcher and lifelong learner**

Educators' knowledge must match with current educational needs of the learners. The behaviour and learning capacity of learners in modern society call for advanced teaching methods. According to NEPA 27 of 1996, the educators achieve ongoing personal, academic, occupational and professional growth through pursuing reflective study and research in their learning area, in broader professional and educational matters, and in other related fields. (Republic of South Africa, 1996a, Mashau & Mutshaeni, 2013:36)

Indeed, Harrison and Killion (2007:74-77) consider educators as life-long learners. Harrison and Killion (2007:74-77) argue that educators explore new strategies to teach and are willing to discuss these strategies and how they influence teaching and learning. Furthermore, they achieve on-going personal, academic, occupational and professional growth through pursuing reflective study and research in their learning area, in broader professional and educational matters, and in other related fields.

### **2.3.5 Educator as community, citizenship and pastoral role**

The educator is expected to develop learners in totality, that is, physically, spiritually, morally, cognitively, psychologically and emotionally. NEPA 27 of 1996 documents that educators should practise and promote a critical, committed and ethical attitude towards developing a sense of respect and responsibility towards others. The educator should uphold the constitution and promote democratic values and practices in schools and society. Within the school, the educator must demonstrate an ability to develop a supportive and empowering environment for the learners and respond to the educational and other needs of learners and fellow educators.

Furthermore, the educator should develop supportive relations with parents and other key persons and organisations based on a critical understanding of community and environmental development issues. One critical dimension of this role is HIV/AIDS education (Republic of South Africa, 1996a; Potenza, 2002, Mashau & Mutshaeni, 2013:36). The wellness of the affected and infected learners is of utmost importance.

### **2.3.6 Educator as assessor**

The effectiveness of teaching can be judged through informal and formal assessment of learners. According to Mashau and Mutshaeni (2013:36) and Potenza (2002), assessment is an essential feature of the teaching and learning process and should be integrated into it on a continuous basis. Educators need to understand the various purposes of assessment, including identifying the needs of their learners, planning learning programmes, tracking learner progress, diagnosing problems and helping learners to improve their work, judging the effectiveness of the learning programme and assessing their own teaching. Educators are expected to design and manage both formative and summative assessment and keep detailed and diagnostic records of learner performance.

Furthermore, Harden and Crosby (2000:334-347) believe that it is a major part of an educator's job to assess the learners' work. As an assessor, the educator does two things, that is, correcting mistakes and organising feedback. Correcting should be gentle. Gentle correcting involves showing that incorrectness has occurred, but not making a big fuss about it.

### **2.3.7 Educator as subject specialist**

According to the Norms and Standards document, to be considered a specialist in a subject requires being well grounded in the knowledge, skills, values, principles, methods and procedures relevant to your field. It means that the educators should know about different approaches to teaching and learning and how these may be used in ways that are appropriate to the learners and their context (Republic of South Africa. 1996a).

According to Harrison and Killion (2007:74-77), as subject specialists, educators are familiar with the content knowledge of particular subjects. They know the content to be covered per term, the assessment form and strategies, the format of question papers and marks allocated per item or question. They design the curriculum to align with standard requirements of that subject and influence fellow educators to maintain standards. They understand and interpret available policy documents.

Harrison and Killion (2007:74-77) believe that given all these roles, the importance of the contribution that educators make towards the academic performance of learners remains very clear. The physical presence of educators in the classroom plays a significant role in learners' holistic development. Learners' effective interaction with support materials such as textbooks requires the guidance of educators. The period within which learners interact with particular learning materials takes place effectively in the presence of the educators. Educators' roles shape the culture of their schools, improve learning, and influence best practice among their fellow educators.

## **2.4 THE ROLES OF EDUCATOR UNIONS IN EDUCATORS' PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT**

Educator unions are crucial to improving the education system. The two educator unions represented in most schools in Vuwani Cluster are the South African Democratic Teacher Union (SADTU) and Professional Educators Union (PEU). A small number of educators in Vuwani Cluster are members of the National Professional Teachers' Organization of South

Africa (NAPTOSA). One of the primary functions of educator unions is to act as the vehicles by which educators' concerns about the conditions of teaching and learning reach the attention of policymakers. In a context where educators by definition have little formal authority to participate in policy discussions, and where educational decision makers have limited knowledge about the dynamics of educational practice, educator unions' role is critical (Bascia & Osmond, 2013:8). The review of the legislative framework that governs educator unions in South Africa indicates that although the Labour Relations Act 66 of 1995 (LRA) includes educators in its provision for employees to join trade unions and the Education Labour Relations Act 46 of 1993 (ELRA) provides for educators to use representatives such as educator unions, there is no legislation to govern the roles and boundaries of educator unions specifically. While the Constitution and the South African School's Act 84 of 1996 (SASA) provide for the rights of learners, the policy framework seems to indicate that teacher unions and legislation protect the rights of educators while no clear provision is made for the rights of learners. On the other hand, the Employment of Educators Act 76 of 1998 (EEA) defines educator misconduct and provides for corresponding sanctions to be enforced by SACE. Therefore, some may argue that the existing legislation and procedures that impact on teacher unions should suffice to ensure that educator unions remain accountable to perform their mandate without compromising the education of learners and the inherent professional nature of education (Paddy & Jarbandhan, 2014:154).

According to Paddy (2013:13), educator unions are perceived to be protecting poor performing educators in schools. Educators' strikes occur worldwide. In South Africa, educator unions mobilise strike action against a number of government plans, including linking educators' promotion to learners' academic performance and performance reviews.

Bascia (1998:911), an American expert on educator unionism, mentions that no other organisation except educator organisations has a responsibility for representing educators in discussions about educational practice. She further asserts that educators need union presence, vigilance and representation. Bascia's (1998) views bear testimony to the militant and vigilant manner that one of the major educators' unions in South Africa, the South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU), has adopted since its inception in 1990. The Constitution of SADTU, as amended in October 2010, states that the main aim of SADTU is to eradicate all forms of discrimination in education and to strive towards a free and democratic system of education in South Africa. The SADTU adopted this stance in order to

make the voice of educators heard during the policy formulation and implementation process (Paddy & Jarbandhan, 2014:155). It is the same vigilant and militant attitude of the SADTU members at school level that seems to irritate some principals.

Paddy (2013:13) argues that the South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU) is interested in advancing educators with no regard for learners. This is the case when government ignores educator unions at their peril when constructing education policies, whereas strong educator unions provide an important counterweight to the influence of neo-liberal reform, and union-government relations have the potential to improve the quality of educational practice. Educator unions also have the capacity to support educator involvement in decision making, articulating and promoting a positive professional identity, and quality conditions for teaching and learning independently of government (Bascia & Osmond, 2013:8).

According to Bascia and Osmond (2013:13), educator unions may play an advisory role with respect to substantive policy issues, but in many jurisdictions, their purview is restricted to the only concerns in which they could claim some legitimate involvement, such as matters of educators' salary, benefits and working conditions. According to Moore-Johnson (2004:34), unions are motivated by self-interest when negotiating for educators' rights. She asserts that unions are only concerned with educators' rights and overlook learners' rights during negotiations.

The SADTU code of conduct for its members is the same as that stipulated by SACEA 31 of 2000. SADTU indicates that if an educator enters into improper association with a learner or shows undue personal favour or disfavour towards a learner, it is regarded as abuse. Furthermore, SADTU clearly states that the educators shall, to the best of their abilities, work to promote the qualities of initiative, self-reliance and independence in their learners. In so doing, they shall recognise the human right to self-determination and strive to endow learners with the confidence necessary to become agents of their own learning and discoveries.

The Professional Educators Union (PEU) is a national trade union that is proudly South African. PEU's goal is to organise educators – the educators of the nation, regardless of colour, creed and gender – and represent them in labour-related grievances and during collective bargaining to ease the pressure that comes with the nature of the teaching profession. The union aims to make educators' lives easier so that they continue empowering



the youth with the most important tool – education – without stress or worry (SNUPIT, 2014).

PEU documented that by 2030 South Africans should have access to education and training of the highest quality, leading to significantly improved learning outcomes. The performance of South African learners in international standardised tests should be comparable to the performance of learners from countries at a similar level of development and with similar levels of access. Education should be compulsory up to Grade 12 or equivalent levels in vocational education and training.

During its 7th Annual NAPTOSA North-west Conference in Klerksdorp in 2013, in its keynote address NAPTOSA indicated that educators should add value to young people's lives, while remembering that our learners need honest, eager and well-trained educators who will pick up the metaphoric labour rope and help ease our economy, welfare and responsible citizenry forward step by step. It urged that the educator should not make the mistake of waiting for the day when their work will become the most thrilling aspect of their life – they need to make it happen themselves. It also urged that learners must be educated under safe conditions and educators must be able to work safely. Moreover, the argument was that the right to run schools was important for educators to teach and for principals to manage as professionally trained people. It emphasised that running the school falls in the lap of the educators, not the learners.

The conference emphasised that in the Code of Professional Ethics, under the sub-heading General educator accountability towards determining the quality of education in South Africa was noted as being mirrored by educators' attitude, commitment, self-control, principles, training and behaviour. Furthermore, upholding and advancing fundamental rights, fulfilling their professional obligations by acting accountably and acting in such a manner that their conduct causes no dishonour to the teaching profession were mentioned (NAPTOSA, 2013).

## **2.5 EDUCATORS' PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT**

Educators, as civil servants who have the mandate to transfer knowledge, skills and values to learners, are expected to adhere to their professional code of conduct. They are also expected to transfer moral values to the learners who are to be developed in totality. Nabukenya (2010:17) revealed that educators, by the very nature of their profession, are meant to be role models and authority figures to convey moral values by living up to the code of conduct.

Educators' professional conduct will be discussed in comparison with that of foreign countries with the aim of gaining insight on challenges and possible solutions implemented in other countries.

### **2.5.1 Educators' professional conduct in foreign countries**

Nabukenya (2010:21) revealed that Indian educators had better organisational commitment in the affective and normative components, and Iranian educators were found to have better organisational commitment in the continuance component. In both countries, age groups and subjects taught by educators did not have any influence over their organisational commitment.

According to Betweli (2013:82), in North America, the USA in particular, some incidences of educators' sexual misconduct such as sexual touching, request for sexual favour and unwelcome sexual advance have been revealed by learners in various parts of the country. Similarly, European countries experience several problems related to educator unethical practices. In Germany, for example, some educators were involved in selling examination questions and marks, selling front-row seats to students in large classes and forcing students to buy certain materials or additional materials to take private lessons. In Asian countries, China and Bangladesh in particular, the rate of educator unprofessional conduct has been increasing tremendously. Educators are reported to engage in selling examination papers or allowing someone else to take the examination for a certain candidate (Betweli, 2013:82).

In Africa, the Sub-Saharan countries experience more problems of unprofessional conduct among educators and other educational administrators. Educators' unprofessional conduct and unprofessionalism, together with corruption among education administrators, threaten to undermine the current initiatives to improve educational quality in many low-income countries, including most of Sub-Saharan Africa (Betweli, 2013:82).

In Tanzania, the incidents of educators' unprofessional conduct can be traced through various studies that were previously done in the country. Betweli (2013:82) reveals educators' professional malpractices that are commonly practised by educators. These include immoral conduct, absenteeism, corruption, private tuition, unethical dressing, examination fraud, and sexual misconduct. Similarly, mass media such as radios, televisions, and newspapers have revealed several forms of unprofessional conduct committed by educators in different parts of

the country. For example, male educators were accused of having sexual relationships with their female students (Betweli, 2013:82).

### **2.5.2 Educators' professional conduct: South African perspective**

Educators' professional conduct is based on the expected code of ethics. Ethics is a code of values that guide our choices and actions and determine the purpose and course of our lives. According to Johnson (2007:8), most professional organisations such as medicine, law, and many others have developed a code of ethics. These codes essentially state that the members will not do anything to compromise the integrity of the profession. For example, doctors will "first, do no harm", accounting professionals will follow sound accounting practices, lawyers will maintain client attorney privilege, and coding specialists will maintain patient confidentiality

The SACEA 31 of 2000 stipulates the following Code of Professional Ethics for educators:

An educator:

- respects the dignity, beliefs and constitutional rights of learners and, in particular, children, which includes the right to privacy and confidentiality;
- acknowledges the uniqueness, individuality, and specific needs of each learner, guiding and encouraging each to realise his or her potentialities;
- strives to enable learners to develop a set of values consistent with the fundamental rights contained in the Constitution of South Africa;
- avoids any form of humiliation, and refrains from any form of abuse, physical or psychological;
- refrains from improper physical contact with learners;
- refrains from any form of sexual harassment (physical or otherwise) of learners;
- refrains from any form of sexual relationship with learners at school;
- uses appropriate language and behaviour in his or her interaction with learners, and acts in such a way as to elicit respect from learners;

- is not negligent or indolent in the performance of his or her professional duties; and
- recognises, where appropriate, learners as partners in education.

Any educator who breaches any of these codes of conduct is conducting him/herself unprofessionally and can be suspended, demoted, transferred, have their contract terminated, be dismissed and/or have their certificate taken away by the SACE.

The codes of ethics are summarised as the Code of Conduct of Educators. The SACEA 31 of 2000 stipulates the relational conduct of educators with different stakeholders. This includes the educators' professional conduct towards learners, their relationships with parents, colleagues, other professionals and the Department of Education.

Being professional means adhering to an ethic or moral principle that derives from a freely undertaken commitment to serve others as individual human beings worthy of respect, care and attention. Hugh and Rene (1995:47) assert that professionalism is inextricably bound up with widely shared values, understandings and attitudes regarding the social order by which others may instigate a claim on us.

Stronge (2007:5) and Johnson (2007:3) identify educators' professional conduct such as: integrity, respect, competency, being a team player, ethical behaviour, time management, resilience, communication skills, reliability, punctuality, educator self-efficacy, effective teaching, being motivated, diligence, wisdom and caring for learners' needs. Some of these aspects of professional conduct are illustrated below.

### ***2.5.2.1 Punctuality***

Punctuality is the characteristic of being able to complete a required task or fulfil an obligation before or at a previously designated time (Wikipedia, 2015). Punctuality embraces other educators' professional conduct as respect, love, integrity, responsibility, self-control and being realistic. Educators are expected to be at their work place prepared to work at the scheduled time. When educators arrive on time at school, it shows that they are capable of honouring their words. Furthermore, it shows that they are dedicated to their job, interested in the work and capable of handling responsibility.

However being punctual helps educators to project a sense of professionalism and commitment. The expected arrival time at school is 10-20 minutes before the starting time,

and educators are required to stay 10-20 minutes after knocking off time (Department of Basic Education, 2013:8). Educators are expected to show up every day and spend the time necessary to provide learners with quality education. During a SADTU day celebration in Mangaung, Free State, in February 2012, the South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU) put out a clear call to take forward the quality learning and teaching campaign and the 2030 Vision. It reminded SADTU members to adhere to their revolutionary tasks such as being punctual, prepared for work, refraining from sexual relations with the learners and abolishing corporal punishment. In addition, educators, learners, parents and support staff in all institutions of learning must take a pledge to stop bullying in the school and its environs.

Furthermore, in his State of National Address (SONA) 2012, the President of the Republic of South Africa, Jacob Zuma, also reflected on some non-negotiables of an educator. These include being punctual (to be at school, in classroom, on time, and on task.), show good professional conduct and observe the seven hours of teaching. In addition, they must honour the seven-hour rule by spending seven hours inside the schoolyard, including breaks and the period(s) in which the learners are not at school (Republic of South Africa, 1998). These elements constitute professional conduct of an educator as expected by the Department of Education.

Effective time management assists in cultivating a culture of learning and teaching. According to McKay and McKay (2012), when educators are punctual, it shows that they:

- respect learners and colleagues;
- are dependable;
- respect themselves enough to keep their word;
- prove that they can be trustworthy;
- appreciate for being on time;
- can be regarded as reliable;
- are seen as professional;
- build and reveal their discipline;
- build a strong reputation for their character;
- open doors and attract more opportunities for themselves;
- eliminate stress from their lives by removing the anxiety of being late;
- do the right thing and feel good about it.

### ***2.5.2.2 Self-efficacy***

According to Hoy (2000), efficacy is shown in an educator's confidence that their ability to teach can support learners' learning. Shaffer (2012:44) defines efficacy as a critical component in the manner in which educators create and sustain relationships with learners. Bandura (1994) defines self-efficacy as people's beliefs about their capabilities to produce designated levels of performance that influence events affecting their lives. Therefore, self-efficacy beliefs determine how people feel, think, motivate themselves and behave. A strong sense of efficacy enhances human accomplishment and personal well-being in many ways. Bandura (1994) asserts that educators who are confident in their capabilities approach difficult tasks as challenges to be mastered rather than as threats to be avoided.

Shaffer (2012:42) and Bandura (1994) concur when they assert that educators with high efficacy have an intrinsic desire to continue to pursue high instructional goals, which enables them to build relationships with learners and reach even the most challenging learners. Within the classroom environment, educators determine the best means to impart knowledge through instructional practices. Educators' underlying thoughts can contribute to how well their learners learn, based upon their personal beliefs. In fact, efficacious educators take action to reach all learners through establishing relationships and supporting academic success. An educator's self-efficacy belief depends on the extent to which the educator perceives their capacity to influence learners' academic performance.

Bandura (1994) argues that educators set themselves challenging goals and maintain strong commitment to them. They approach threatening situations with assurance that they can exercise control over them. Educators who have established trust with their educational leaders and colleagues become self-motivated and collaborate on school improvement issues, which helps sustain a positive school climate (Moye, Henkin, & Egley, 2005). Educators' confidence plays an important role in the academic performance of learners. Confidence to teach subject matter influences learners' academic performance. If professional educators believe in themselves, they achieve a lot in the classroom, and learners know who is in charge, and the educator knows what material to cover, and how to teach it. Professional educators are passionate about teaching and the subject (Rubio, 2009:40).

Educators who have self-efficacy react adequately to learners when their behaviour is disruptive to save instructional time. In fact, they are skilful enough in the classroom to raise learners' academic performance. They do not necessarily rely on the principal for guidance

regarding the type of teaching methods they apply in their classes. These educators rely heavily on their own judgement, motivation, self-reflection, capability, experiences, and collegial relationships to affect learners' learning (Adu, Tadu & Eze, 2012:11).

According to Shaffer (2012:47), high educator self-efficacy has an impact on learners and their instruction because efficacious educators' exhibit specific behaviours that lead to successful practices. Educators with high efficacy set priority goals, put forth effort in helping learners achieve, are persistent in working with challenging learners, and possess a greater sense of resilience. Educator self-efficacy increases when they believe that they have the ability to control factors, rather than base learners' success on luck or chance. Educators who have high self-efficacy tend to criticise learners less frequently, taking accountability for learners' motivation.

### ***2.5.2.3 Effective teaching***

According Akiri and Ugborugbo (2009:108), teaching effectiveness has been accepted as a multidimensional construct since it measures a variety of different aspects of teaching, such as subject mastery, effective communication, lesson preparation and presentation.

According to Michael (2011:83), effective educators have been further described as caring, enthusiastic, motivated, fair, respectful, reflective, and dedicated individuals with a sense of and humour who interact well with learners. Educators' effectiveness is defined in terms of what learners do, not what the educators do or can do (Sayer, 1992:4). Rubio (2009:25) argues that these days, many people can be educators, but the question is, whether many people can be effective educators. Clearly, to be an effective educator is more complicated and difficult than many people think. Michael (2011:90) emphasises that effective educators are thoroughly prepared and keep their learners actively involved in the teaching and learning process. Stronge (2002) believes that when educators are actively and positively engaged in the classroom dynamics, there is little opportunity or desire to misbehave. Rubio (2009:2) states that to be an effective educator does not only involve having a deep content knowledge, but also organisational, management and communication skills, being able to organise instructions, and providing relevant assessment and fair evaluations. Educators and teaching need to be creative to allow the learners to learn naturally. Delaney, Johnson, Johnson and Treslan (2010:8) have isolated seven qualities that they believe are common elements of good teaching and transcend time, place, discipline and instructional type. These qualities are:

- accessibility and approachability
- fairness
- open-mindedness
- mastery and delivery
- enthusiasm
- humour
- knowledge and inspiration imparted

Delaney *et al.* (2010:9) identify five attributes of effective educators as follows:

- commitment to learners
- knowledge of material
- organisation and management of the environment
- desire to improve
- collaboration with others

Effective educators know their learners and how to communicate with them, both as individuals and collectively. They consider the learners when they impart the subject matter to them (Stronge, Turker & Hindman, 2004:9). Thus, learners taught by educators with greater verbal ability learn more than those taught by educators with low verbal skills. Fully prepared educators understand how learners learn and what and how they need to be taught. They have greater subject-matter knowledge; teaching is clearly presented and they tend to ask high-level questions to stimulate high-order thinking skills. In effect, they involve learners in the lessons and allow more learner-directed activities (Stronge, 2007:5).

According to Rubio (2009:36), effective educators need to focus on learners' academic performance, they do not teach in front of the class doing a good demonstration on the extensive and deep content knowledge, they teach to promote and enhance learners' academic performance.

#### ***2.5.2.4 Honesty and integrity***

Honesty and integrity work hand and glove with love, respect and commitment to one's job. According to Johnson (2007:4), integrity is often described as doing the right thing when no one is watching. It is about doing what is right rather than what is perhaps easy and intertwined with honesty, reliability, and responsibility. Educators who demonstrate



truthfulness, sincerity, decency and freedom from deceit reach all learners, despite the challenges that exist. They are willing to do anything to ensure that all learners receive the education they need and deserve the truth about trust, honesty and integrity at school.

Trust underpins effective working relationships. The more learners trust their educators, the greater the likelihood they will co-operate, share information and work effectively together. By increasing trust levels at school, educators can drive significant improvements in performance by motivating staff to commit additional discretionary effort. Johnson (2007:2) identifies five fundamental skills and qualities that educators need in order to be trustworthy:

- openness
- effective communication
- the ability to make decisions
- integrity and
- competence in their role

According to Johnson (2007:12), the educators should display the following dimensions at school:

- Ability of educators to do their job.
- Understanding – displaying knowledge and understanding of their learners and their roles and responsibilities as educators.
- Fairness – behaving fairly and showing concern for the welfare of their learners.
- Openness – being accessible and receptive to ideas and opinions.
- Integrity – striving to be honest and fair in decision making.
- Consistency – behaving in a reliable and predictable manner.

Building workplace integrity involves developing and maintaining a professional and respectful workplace. It involves ethical leadership, active management and supervision, the right people, effective processes and confident professional reporting. In essence, building workplace integrity is about creating a workplace that fosters the development of high professional standards, and demonstrates the values of the organisation. An ethical and

professional workplace is the best safeguard against risks to integrity, including improper conduct, misconduct and corruption (Johnson, 2007:4).

#### ***2.5.2.5 Respectful***

The behaviour or character of an educator, and his or her appearance will send a message to all learners in his or her class. For learners to respect others, they must learn respect. The South African Schools Act (Act 84 of 1996) documented that every learner has a right to dignity and has the right to have his/her human dignity respected. Professional educators treat their learners with respect and expect the same in return, enhancing the learners' academic performance. They also create a warm environment and a relationship with the learners in which respect will enhance academic performance. They should respect the dignity, beliefs and constitutional rights of learners and fellow educators, which includes the right to privacy and confidentiality. The South African Council of Educators Act (Act 31 of 2000) stipulates the code of professional ethics for teachers, which states that an educator respects the dignity, beliefs and constitutional rights of learners and in particular children, which includes the right to privacy and confidentiality. The educators should recognise the value and worth of each learner, knowing and believing that each one is unique.

#### ***2.5.2.6 Highly motivated***

Michael (2011:85) asserts that motivation refers to all those strivings that are designated by such terms as "wishes," "desires," "needs," and "drives. Lai (2011:2) argues that motivation refers to reasons that underlie behaviour that are characterised by willingness and volition. Intrinsic motivation is animated by personal enjoyment, interest, or pleasure, whereas extrinsic motivation is governed by reinforcement contingencies. Edwards (2003:43) believes that motivated educators are enthusiastic, skilled, happy to share knowledge and wisdom with their learners, and happy to share their success with fellow educators. A motivated educator is one who not only feels satisfied with his or her job, but also is empowered to strive for excellence and growth in instructional practice.

According to Rubio (2009:40), highly motivated professional educators make learners increase their academic self-concept, their interest in the subject and the desire to learn more, and therefore to have a high level of achievement. It has also been stated that learners see the educator as a motivational leader when the educator encourages them to be responsible for their own learning. Educators need to be open and approachable. They must give the learners

advice about their personal and academic problems and counsel them, if necessary. This professional conduct of educators can enable the learners to feel free to ask questions and participate in class activities (Delors, 1998:146).

#### ***2.5.2.7 Diligent***

According to Simaile (2004), the qualities of diligent educators are that they are approachable, organised, motivating, inventive, knowledgeable, honest, devoted, responsible, communicative, and loving. Each educator will have an individual style and approach that works for them. Diligent educators work with learners who have different intelligence quotients. However, for the gifted learners, they make lessons highly informative; for average learners, lessons become challenging; and for some learners, they make lessons fun. Diligent educators do not simply surrender to whatever kind of learners they might have. Ten qualities of diligent educators are:

- Approachable

A diligent educator is a happy person who demonstrates a sense of humour along with an empathetic sense of humanity is capable of putting learners at ease and in return can create an atmosphere where mutual communication can flow.

- Organise

Educators keep their teaching tools in the same place all the time, so they know where they are. They work closely with the calendar so they can plan events in a calm, 'no rush' manner.

- Motivating

Psychology is useful in education when dealing so directly with learners. Educators should understand the different ways learners learn, reason and communicate is vital when helping them reach their fullest potential. Positive reinforcement is a much stronger motivator than negative condemnation. A diligent educator will have an array of strategies for motivating their learners to practise, listen, express, and create.

- Inventive

An educator who uses games, illustrations, analogies, exercises, and demonstrations considers individual learners. An active mind not only learns better, but information is stored in the brain systematically, which makes retrieval easier. Emotion affects much more strongly than cold facts. An inventive educator is able to evoke an emotional

response from a cold fact, which will then have an impact on the learners and can add to their growing knowledge.

- Knowledgeable

Educators do not know everything about a subject- even if they make a living out of it. However, it is impossible to teach something one does not 'know'. As well as accumulated knowledge, a diligent educator will know how to access information, as well as communicate it.

- Honest

The learners seek out an educator for genuine help, guidance, and advice – not flattery. Honesty, however, does not mean being rude. An educator needs to employ some aspect of diplomacy, as learners deserve respect. It may be true that a learner does not have a good background. A diligent educator will find a way to express this concern without causing undue offense.

- Devoted

A dedicated educator is one who thinks personally about each learner in their classroom and feels committed to finding and developing each learner's abilities, talents, and passions.

- Responsible

An effective educator-learner relationship is based on trust; a diligent educator must demonstrate at all times their worthiness of this trust. Punctuality, dependability, concern for physical safety and personal growth are qualities all professional educators must strive for.

- Communicating

An educator is a brilliant performer with a huge amount of personal talent or accumulated knowledge, and will be of no benefit at all to learners if they cannot convey concepts in a manner learners can use. Adapting presentations to each individual learner is an invaluable skill when teaching. A diligent educator must be able to convey thoughts and concepts to learners.

- Loving

There is nothing more contagious than a person's warm enthusiasm. A diligent and effective educator is one who openly has and demonstrates an infectious love for the

subject, a love for teaching, and can share that because they have a love for learners. (Simaile, 2004)

#### **2.5.2.8 Wisdom**

Sternberg (2009:20) defines wisdom as the application of intelligence, creativity and knowledge mediated by positive ethical values towards the achievement of a common good through a balance between intrapersonal, interpersonal and extra-personal interests. Wisdom is gained, not only from continuing professional development, but, more importantly, from daily experiences. Six components for wisdom are: reasoning ability, sagacity, learning from ideas and environment, judgment, expeditious use of information, and perspicacity (Sternberg (2009:20). These components can be compared with those that emerged from a similar scaling of people's implicit theories of intelligence, which were practical problem-solving ability, verbal ability, intellectual balance and integration, goal orientation and attainment, contextual intelligence, and fluid thought. Educators gain wisdom when they fully understand the teaching and learning process. Wise educators such as Nelson Mandela see beyond their own personal interests to the interests of learners and the school. Wise educators desire to learn more, teach learners effectively and produce the best academic performance possible. If educators are not wise, they can disrupt the well-being of learners because wisdom is the ethical application of knowledge that includes multiple modes of thinking and understanding, encompassing analysis, reasoning, intuition and synthesis. Furthermore, wisdom involves motivational, emotional, social, and personality factors (Sternberg, 2009:19-21).

Wisdom manifests itself as a series of processes that are typically cyclical and can occur in a variety of orders. These processes are related to what (Sternberg, 2001:232) have referred to as "meta-components" of thought, including: recognising the existence of a problem; defining the nature of the problem; representing information about the problem; formulating a strategy for solving the problem; allocating resources to the solution of a problem; monitoring one's solution of the problem and evaluating feedback regarding that solution. In deciding about a teaching job, for example, one first has to see both taking the position and not taking it as viable options (problem recognition), then figure out exactly what taking or not taking the position would mean for oneself (defining the problem), then consider the costs and benefits to oneself and others of taking the position (representing information about the problem).

### 2.5.2.9 Competency

Sayer (1992:4) defines educator competency as a specific knowledge, ability, or value position that an educator either possesses or does not possess, which is believed to be important to success as an educator. Celik (2011) believes that competent educators know their learners and their learning styles, know the content and how to teach it and plan for and implement effective teaching and learning. They encourage learning, believing that all learners can learn. They treat all learners fairly, have a sense of humour, set a high but achievable standard and are flexible. They take every opportunity to improve on their own professional practices in order to provide quality learning. Furthermore, competent educators are leaders who win the hearts and minds of learners. Such educators see the value in developing and working with others. They understand the importance of developing themselves before they are able to support the learners. They maintain high standards of personal and professional integrity when carrying out all duties and responsibilities (Ilukena, 1998). Competency is the combination of knowledge, skills, and behaviours needed to work effectively on the job. Competencies are observable and measurable. Synonyms of competent are capable and proficient (Johnson, 2007:6). Competent educators know their strengths, and more importantly, know their limitations. True professionals recognise their need for guidance and supervision when faced with performing a new skill. Educators demonstrate competency by:

- knowing what their employer expects,
- following policies and procedures,
- never using shortcuts,
- maintaining the highest possible technical standards,
- knowing when to ask for help or saying, “I don’t know or I am not sure.”
- performing to the best of their ability all of the time,
- referring work to other employees when their own skills are not sufficient,
- being accountable and learning from errors, and
- continuously seeking out educational opportunities to upgrade skills. (Johnson, 2007:7)

Nordenbo *et al.* (2008:69) state that competences built up as a combination of cognitive and practical skills, knowledge, motivation, value orientation, attitudes, emotions, and other social and behavioural components that together can be mobilised for effective action. The

subject of classroom educator competence has been and remains the focus of many essays and articles published in education law literature. While most of the pieces deal with instructional competencies such as academic or subject matter, teaching capabilities and effectiveness. According to Vacca (2011:1), several authors discuss educators' personal or social interactions and relationships with learners—where legal and policy issues of sexual harassment and liability loom in the background. Furthermore, Vacca (2011:1) states that educator's fitness may not be measured solely by his or her ability to perform the teaching function and ignore the fact that the educator's presence in the classroom might, nevertheless, pose a danger of harm for a reason not related to academic proficiency.

#### ***2.5.2.10 Communication skills***

According to Rubio (2009:39), one of the very important professional attributes of good educators is their communication skills. Teaching, as a profession, depends heavily on communication. Communication skills are vital for anyone who has a teaching job. Professional educators are always effective communicators. They communicate clearly about concepts, content and testing, making sure to provide a rationale for learning particular material and adapt instruction to their learner's level of knowledge and skill. Absence of communication means that the learners will not understand key concepts at all, or they will do so incorrectly. Educators must communicate to teach, share experiences and ideas, and impart knowledge to learners. They communicate their expectations to learners and share those expectations with parents. Iiukena (1998) believes that good communication is an effective tool for promoting learning and growth and can serve as a means of influencing the instructional behaviour of educators. Good listening skills as well as effective communication skills are also essential for the educator in the classroom – knowing when to talk, and when not to. Good communication skills include not just being able to convey what you have to say and lending a patient ear to others, it also refers to the ability to filter harmless office conversations from malicious gossip. Casey (2006:2) appreciates that part of being a true professional is being a good communicator. The educators should always ask themselves: “Are we really good listeners? Could we be the better communicators? Would it be useful to take an effective communication course?” Words are a powerful entity that can make or break work relationships. What educators choose to say reflects a lot about the person that they are.

### ***2.5.2.11 Caring for learners' needs***

According to Rubio (2009:41), caring goes beyond listening, understanding and knowing the learners, it is being patient, kind, warm, sensitive, and human with them. It is to be adaptable to particular learners' situations, honest, trustworthy, encouraging, and having and showing affection and love for them. The South African Council of Educators Act 31 of 2000, under code of professional ethics, documented that an educator acknowledges the uniqueness, individuality, and specific need of each learner, guiding and encouraging each to realise his or her potentiality and recognises, where appropriate, learners as partners in education.

Additionally, Rubio (2009:39) believes that learners cannot be taught well if educators do not know them. Professional educators use techniques that best serve the learning needs of their learners. They use them to have each learner working on tasks that engage and challenge them to perform best. Focusing on the educational needs of learners is what parents expect from the educators of their children. Educators are expected to show caring attitudes to encourage learners to achieve their goals. Professional educators are warm, accessible, enthusiastic and caring. Educators must be approachable so that learners feel free to go to them with queries and problems. They possess good listening skills and take time out of their tight schedules for learners, colleagues, and parents who are in need. Such educators forgive easily and leave their personal problems outside the school premises.

In fact, Rubio (2009:39) concludes that good educators enjoy talking about their subjects and show eagerness and excitement when approaching their topics. Professional educators care about their learners in order to bring out the best in each one to encourage learning. Miller (2008:13) asserts that the theory of caring describes a certain kind of relationship with others. Caring describes something one does in a relationship, not a specific set of behaviours. Every interaction is an option to relate in either a caring or a non-caring manner. Caring is not a programme or strategy, but rather a way of relating to learners, their families, and each other that conveys compassion, understanding, respect, and interest. Miller (2008:14) defines an ethic of caring as "acts done out of love and natural inclination" with the goal of helping each learner grow and actualise him or herself.

According to Miller (2008:14), the concept of caring applies to the notion of developing caring abilities. When a person cares, s/he really hears, sees, and feels what the other is trying to convey. When two people care, they consider the other's point of view and the other's wants, needs, and expectations. To care is to act by affection and regard for the other. There



is no recipe for caring; the educators must explore the elements and behaviours of caring (Miller, 2008:14). Miller (2008:14) identified five basic elements of the caring process: faith in the student, respect, trust, perceived sincerity and attentiveness. Caring educators are perceived to be fair and place value on the learners as individuals.

## **2.6 LEARNERS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE**

Various authors define academic performance in different ways. Kiggundu (2009:5) perceives it as the degree of achievement by learners in their class assignment tests, beginning-of-term exams, mid-term examinations, terminal and national examinations. When a learner writes a test or examination, the expected pass rate is 50% in Home language and 40% in other subjects. Jubber (1998:287) states that it is a gross measure of how well or badly the child does at the school-test score. The test results indicate whether the learner is achieving or not achieving the assessment standards.

### **2.6.1 Factors affecting learners' academic performance**

The social and economic development of the country is directly linked with the learners' academic performance. The learners' academic performance plays an important role in producing the best citizens who will be responsible for the country's economic and social development (Mushtaq & Khan, 2012). Two types of factors affect the learners' academic performance. These are internal and external classroom factors and that strongly affect the learners' academic performance. Internal classroom factors include learners' competence in First Additional Language (FAL), class size, class test results, learning facilities, homework, environment of the class, educators' role in the class, technology use in the class and the examination system. The external classroom factors include extracurricular activities, family problems, financial, social and other problems (Mushtaq & Khan, 2012).

Malambo (2012:15) and Mushtaq and Khan (2012) state the absence of a homework policy in some schools is another factor responsible for poor learner performance. Kelly and Kanyika (2000) reveal that there is a positive relationship between learning achievement and frequency of homework. The Ministry of Education policy insists on homework being given to learners at least twice a week in all the subjects (Malambo, 2012:15). Some schools perform poorly because of educator-related factors such as inadequate educator preparation and educators' lack of dedication to duty. High-school educators are expected to prepare what they teach in class. These preparations could be in the form of schemes of work, records of

work, and lesson plans to guide the teaching process (Malambo, 2012:12). Other schools perform poorly academically due to the fact that they have poor school facilities.

Wegner, Sanders and Allan (1995) noted that in America, poor examination performance is caused chiefly by substandard quality of education background. They further argue that the lack of educator competence and not giving tests or examinations to the learners on a regular basis contribute to poor performance in academic work. Another factor responsible for poor academic performance in some learning institutions worldwide is poor leadership. D'Souza (1994:112) notes that leaders and their styles affect everyone and everything in their organisation. When leadership is bad in an educational organisation, poor performance will be the result. Lack of effective supervision can adversely affect the performance of learners (Malambo, 2012:12).

The National Assessment Surveys carried out in Zambia in 1999 and 2003 revealed that staff and learner absenteeism, late coming and knocking off early had a negative bearing on learning achievements (Kasanda, 2003: 31-52). Another factor responsible for the poor learners' performance is over enrolment. According to Ndoye (2007:3), most schools in Zambia are characterised by large enrolments that have a negative impact on the quality of education. This in turn results in higher pupil-teacher ratios, pupil-classroom ratios, pupil-book ratios and pupil-desk ratios that eventually affect the performance of the learners. Mbozi (2008:127) argues that over enrolment of about sixty (60) pupils in a class made learners fail to concentrate on their work while it also made educators fail to mark learners' work and avoid using group work, which is an effective mode of teaching. Teaching done by educators faced with such challenges is not exciting to learners at all. Such unfavourable and uninspiring classroom atmosphere promotes absenteeism and may lead to pupils dropping out of school (Malambo, 2012:14).

According to Mbozi (2008:127), poor educator and learners' interaction was cited as one of the factors that caused poor learner performance. She found out that there were situations that made learners feel threatened by their educators. According to her, there were incidents when the educators used bad and threatening language at the learners for various reasons. In such cases, learners became inactive in class and eventually performed poorly academically (Malambo, 2012:15). Shah (2009:34) identifies other factors that may affect teaching, namely: type and size of the institution, size of the classroom, learning levels, fields of knowledge, available instructional aides, educator-learner ratio, climate of the institution,

socio-economic background of the learner, aptitude of the learner, personality of the educator, experience in teaching, workload of the educator, health condition of the educator, variability and verbalisation of teaching.

## **2.7 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EDUCATORS' PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT AND LEARNERS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE**

There is a close relationship between educators' professional conduct and learners' academic performance. Scholars such as Nabukenya (2010:16) states that teaching is governed by the professional code of conduct. In this regard, diverse authors and researchers on educators' performance maintain that the code of conduct is vital for enhanced educators' performance. Nabukenya (2010:16) argues that professionalism goes hand in hand with performance and states that one of the hallmarks of any profession is the commitment of its members to a code of ethics which sets out professional values and responsibilities. Unfortunately, they do not show how the code influences actual educators' performance. On the other hand, Michael (2011:81) revealed that the code is very important to educators and educators who observe their code of conduct through exhibiting a sense of responsibility, respect, decency, integrity, and trust influence learners who may succeed in achieving better academic performance. In political discourse, the term professional has come to connote skills, efficiency, reliability, compliance and anti-intellectualism. To be a professional is to be an efficient deliverer of a predetermined product (Hugh & Rene, 1995:61).

### **2.7.1 Relationship between educators' punctuality and learners' academic performance**

Educators who are punctual in the institution show that they are respectful and that they value their other staff members and learners' time. Unpunctuality affects learners' academic performance because if educators submit their work late or if they do not arrive on time, tasks have to be relegated to others in order to keep on schedule. This means that their tardiness is affecting the schedules of others, not just their own. Being punctual proves that educators are reliable because they can be counted on always to reply on time or to submit work on time. When educators are on time, it helps increase learners' academic performance because educators have more time to work and focus. If educators are tardy, tardiness affects their work schedule and leads to more procrastination. It also causes educators more stress because they have to spend more time catching up on their work than simply working on it at an efficient pace in the first place.

Educators' punctuality builds personal relationships with learners, colleagues, the school management team, parents and the Department of Education. Therefore being punctual is the quality of professionalism, which increases the respect an educator has for their school and their performance. Furthermore, when educators are punctual, it exhibits a work ethic to aspire to (The Art of Manliness, 2008). Stabroek News (2015) asserts that when an educator has a high rate of unpunctuality, it becomes an even more serious matter since it affects the programme and purpose of the education system. Hence, the learner is deprived of the opportunity to benefit from a full national curriculum. In addition, a bad role model is presented to the learner who would inculcate the wrong values and attitudes, including growing up not feeling morally obligated to give a full day's work to an employer.

### **2.7.2 Relationship between educators' self-efficacy and learners' academic performance**

Educator-efficacy is educators' confidence in their ability to help learners to learn. According to (Bandura, 1994) educator-efficacy has an effect on his or her learners' academic performance. It is important that educators believe in themselves and in their abilities as a role model and educator, because it plays an important role in their learners' self-perception and academic performance. It also helps educators communicate more effectively with learners as well as with the overall perception of their learners' strengths and weaknesses. Educators with self-efficacy have a positive impact on their learners' academic performance. It is something that all educators need to build, because it is believed to have an important role in learners' academic performance. Educators who doubt their capabilities shy away from difficult tasks, which they view as personal threats, they have low aspirations and weak commitment to the goals they choose to pursue. When faced with difficult tasks, they dwell on their personal deficiencies, on the obstacles they will encounter rather than concentrate on how to perform successfully. They fall easy victim to stress and depression (Bandura, 1994).

Nordenbo *et al.* (2008:60) assert that if an educator believes that all learners can learn, this leads to greater learners' academic performance than if the educator has the perception that some learners can learn while others cannot. Educators who believe that their learners learn individually, that is, that every learner learns in their own way and that they as educators have a responsibility to organise their teaching accordingly, increase learners' academic achievement when compared with educators who believe that all learners learn in the same fashion and who teach accordingly. Educators who have an investigative approach to the

object of teaching, and educators who have a cognitive and constructivist view of learning, increase learners' academic performance.

### **2.7.3 Relationship between educators' effective teaching and learners' academic performance**

Nordenbo *et al.* (2008:55) posit that educators who can manage and employ a variety of teaching methods contribute to increase learners' educational achievement. In fact, they encourage learners in meta-cognition to improve their academic performance.

They prepare alternative approaches and explanations for the content of the teaching, and they choose teaching methods based on the facilitation of individualised learning to improve learners' comprehension of the subject matter. According to Akiri and Ugborugbo (2009:108), the ineffectiveness of educators in classroom interaction with the learners could be responsible for the poor performance of learners. Poor educators' performance in terms of accomplishing the teaching task, negative attitudes to work and poor teaching habits that have been attributed to poor motivation result in learners' poor academic accomplishment.

According to Wong (2001), the learners will learn based on whether the educator is effective or ineffective, district variables do not matter; school variables do not matter, programme variables do not matter, it is the educator that matters. Additionally, Wong (2001) noted that the ineffective educators get poor results, the effective educators get good results and programmes do not produce achievement; educators produce learner's achievement (FDSFoundation.org, 2003). According to Moloko, Mphale and Mhlauli (2014:115), the educator's effectiveness is measured by learners' academic performance in both internal and external examinations. It is a general feeling that learners who fail the examinations are taught by ineffective educators; on the other hand, those who excel are taught by very effective educators. Research so far has shown that educator's effectiveness has an influence on the learners' academic performance.

### **2.7.4 Relationship between educators' respect and learners' academic performance**

Nordenbo *et al.* (2008:62) assert that educators who signal warmth, respect, trust, empathy and a positive relation to learners promote learners' academic performance. Respect is associated with school success. Sonn (1999:21) stresses the fact of self-respect and respect to others. If self-respect prevails in the school situation, learners will learn self-discipline. If there is self-discipline, there are more chances of having direction in the fulfilment of the

learners' goal, so positive academic performance is possible. Lewis and Doorlay (1995:95) emphasise that if the educators themselves are well disciplined and understand their work as well as their learners and possible challenges, there could be only good results in learners' academic performance. Educators would be exemplary and know their work and understand that the learners are working with them. So learners will be in a good position to achieve academically with educators who have self-respect and understanding. Rubio (2009:40) added that learners expect educators to treat them equitably in any situation, in case of either misbehaviour, assessment results, religion, ethnic background, age, etc. and to avoid favouritism. Therefore, effective educators who continually demonstrate respect to their learners (inside or outside the classroom), fairness and equity regarding individual situations, age, background, ethnicity, religion, economical status, and so forth enable higher academic performance.

#### **2.7.5 Relationship between educators' caring and learners' academic performance**

When the child's learning needs are met, motivation for further achievement is enhanced (Michael, 2011:85). Showing care includes listening to the learners, not only when they are in the classroom, but also about their particular lives and/or personal problems. Rubio (2009:42) states that the role of the effective educators, is to be good listeners, paying attention to, and showing understanding through tenderness and patience. Effective, caring educators know the learners individually, give them individual attention, and develop productive relationships with them. They treat their learners with respect and expect the same in return, enhancing the learners' academic performance.

#### **2.7.6 Relationship between educators' communication skills and learners' academic performance**

Kosgei, Mise, Odera and Ayugi (2013:78) assert that there is a positive relationship between educators' verbal ability and learners' academic achievement. Verbal ability has been considered an indicator of educator quality. The basic logic is that educators rely on talk to teach (explaining, questioning, and providing directions). What verbal ability means and how to measure it, it turns out, is not straightforward. Lai (2011) measured educators' verbal ability with a 30-item sentence completion test. Lack of communication means that the learners will not understand key concepts at all, or they will misunderstand them.

### **2.7.7 Relationship between educators' honesty and integrity and learners' academic performance**

According to Lumpkin (2008:46) integrity means consistently doing what is right, even when it would be easier to do something that is personally more beneficial. Lumpkin (2008:45) believes that the educator has the wisdom to know right from wrong; is honest, trustworthy, fair, respectful and responsible; admits and learns from mistakes; and commits to living according to these principles. An educator's integrity, or lack thereof, is observed by learners. Learners evaluate the character of their educators based on how they are treated and taught. Learners know when their educators are committed to their psychomotor, cognitive and affective learning and they can tell when their educators genuinely care about them and are trustworthy, honesty and respectful (Lumpkin, 2008:47). Integrity and honesty are closely connected. Educators display honesty by telling the truth and acting in an honourable way. According to Lumpkin (2008:47) honesty includes fulfilling promises and commitments, such as maintaining the confidentiality of learners' records. Honesty also includes not lying, cheating or stealing as educators fulfil their professional responsibility. Educators with honesty and integrity serve as a model where learners would like to associate and learn from them. Therefore, there would be the possibility for high learners' academic performance.

### **2.7.8 Relationship between educators' motivation and learners' academic performance**

Educators of quality tend to be those who are both highly motivated and accumulate more subject knowledge. Parents with a preference for achievement will select to enrol their children in schools and/or classrooms with high quality, motivated and knowledgeable educators (Shepherd, 2013:2). Educators' expectations of learners also play a big role in the motivation of learners. Rules and goals also have an important role the thoughts and beliefs of the learners. It is important for educators to view themselves as being able to stimulate learner motivation to learn. Tasks given to learners can help increase motivation by being challenging and achievable and showing learners that the skills involved in a task can be used in the real world. Verbally providing the reasons for the tasks to learners is also helpful. Attribution retraining provides learners with focus on a task rather than the fear of failure (Brophy, 1996).

### **2.7.9 Relationship between educators' competency and learners' academic performance**

Learners require experienced professional educators with appropriate education and training. The qualities of educators envisaged by the Norms and Standards for Educators (Republic of

South Africa, 1996a) include competencies and qualification frameworks, among others. Furthermore, the same qualities are captured in the seven roles as reflected in the NEPA (Republic of South Africa, 1996a).

According to Akiri and Ugborugbo (2009:1), the quality of results may depend on the educators' professional conduct. Educators have an important influence on learners' academic achievement. They also play a crucial role in education achievements because they are ultimately responsible for translating policies into actions and principles during interaction with the learners.

## **2.8 EDUCATORS' UNPROFESSIONAL CONDUCT**

According to Betweli (2013:82), educators play a vital role in the attainment of goals in the education in any nation. They are responsible for high standards in education, and the transmission of national values and norms to their pupils by teaching them and/or being good models. Educators are the transmitters of knowledge who ensure that learners learn; they are role models to learners; and in most rural communities, they are the most educated and respected personages. They are at the front line of developing learners' understanding, skills, learning and core values. Moreover, Betweli (2013:91) argues that the unprofessional conduct of educators is a problem of great concern in both rural and urban schools that affects educators' work performance, the teaching and learning process, and the overall quality of education.

Furthermore, Betweli (2013:82) asserts that educators are the most important elements in producing quality education; thus, they are expected to abide by the professional code of ethics. Several authors (Jacobs & Kritsonis, 2007; Finlayson, 2009; Vacca, 2011:2; Betweli, 2013:82; Gibson *et al.*, 2013) mention examples of educators' unprofessional conduct, including the following: poor timekeeping, incompetency, moral misconduct, noncompliance with school laws, persistent negligence, inefficiency, insubordination, failure to maintain classroom discipline, conduct unbecoming an educator, unprofessional conduct, conviction of a felony, absenteeism, corruption, private tuition, unethical dressing, examination fraud, and sexual misconduct.

### **2.8.1 Poor time-keeping**

The educator should be disciplined for poor timekeeping as being absent from the institution impacts on learners' academic performance. Poor timekeeping includes:



- reporting late for work without a valid reason;
- leaving work early without permission;
- taking extended tea, lunch breaks, or toilet breaks;
- not attending to their classes;
- sleeping on duty;
- social gathering;
- attending to private business during working hours; this could include excessive use of mobile phone, sending and/or reading personal emails, surfing internet for non-work related matters, or any other activity that is of a private business nature (Munro, 2007:23).

#### ***2.8.1.1 Reporting late for work without a valid reason***

By being late and keeping learners waiting, educators are communicating the wrong message to learners who have taken the trouble to be on time. Educators are saying that it is perfectly acceptable to be late. The Employment of Educators Act 76 of 1998 (Republic of South Africa, 1998) documents that an educator shall be on official duty-

1. (a) in the case of an educator at a school-

(i) during the service periods laid down in the school timetable which reflects the curriculum or the times approved by the school; and

(ii) during the times in which such activities, which do not constitute part of the school timetable, but are related to school affairs, take place; and

2. an educator shall, during his or her official duty, give full attention to the duties entrusted to him or her and shall not without the consent of the head of the relevant institution be absent from his or her school during his or her hours of official duty.

Lack of punctuality affects the other educators, learners and the curriculum. It may lead to resentment, as colleagues who are on time compare themselves to late-comers. Being late throws the educator out of the loop, as they may miss important information. This causes a

harmful division among others. When leaders are late, it sends an irresponsible message to employees, which may lower morale.

Lateness leads to stress, and stress leads to learners' poor academic performance. Being consistently late may cause educators to start rationalising their lateness. When this happens, they begin to blame outside circumstances and lose focus on potential solutions. Constant lateness can lock the educator into a pattern. When tardiness becomes the norm, the educators' job might be in jeopardy. Educator finances suffer as well because ten minutes of tardiness over the course of one year will cost the educator the equivalent of one week's paid vacation.

### ***2.8.1.2 Leaving work early without permission***

In terms of Section 4 of the Employment of Educators Act, 1998 (Republic of South Africa, 1998), all educators should be at school during the formal school day, which should not be less than seven hours per day, except for special reasons and with prior permission of the Principal. The National Education Policy Act 27 of 1996 (Republic of South Africa, 1996a) states the guidelines of the scheduled teaching time of primary schools as:

- Post level 1 (CS1) : Between 85% and 92%
- Post level 2 ( HoD) : Between 85% and 90%
- Post level 3 ( Deputy Principal) : 60%
- Post level 4 ( Principal) : Between 10% and 92%

Leaving school before the scheduled time results in loss of teaching time that can affect learners' academic performance negatively. Curriculum coverage for each term will enable learners to master all the subject content demarcated for their level or grade.

### ***2.8.1.3 Unauthorised breaks***

Taking early break and coming late after break affects learning time. Loss of six minutes per day per week is equivalent to a loss of a 30-minute period. Educators can take unauthorised breaks when visiting colleagues to discuss personal matters during contact time. Not responding to the school bell, especial after breaks, is another way of taking unauthorised breaks. This applies particularly to smokers who leave their class unsupervised. Learners discipline is distorted and learners lose focus, which can lead to poor academic performance.

#### ***2.8.1.4 Unauthorised absence from the workplace***

Jacobs and Kritsonis (2007) believe that a high level of absence by educators lowers the morale of the remaining educators, resulting in high educator turnover. They believe that primary-school educators miss the most days. Learners whose educators are frequently absent lose the desire to learn. According to Bessong (2011:27), educators depend on each other. When an educator is absent, it puts a strain on the colleagues present who have to take the additional learners from the absent educator's class. Munro (2007:21) believes that absenteeism, however, usually has different meanings for employers and employees respectively. From an employer's perspective, absenteeism is a huge problem as it affects service delivery, puts pressure on those employees who are working, highlights the health and safety ramifications in some workplaces, and could lead to loss of revenue. Nandamuri and Rao (2011:324) argue that the educator attendance rate also has a negative effect on learners' achievement. Educator absenteeism adds up to an average of two weeks per year due to normal sick leave, special leave, family responsibility, and other types of leave. Educators are known to request permission to be absent when they are already on leave. Instead of filling out the leave form before they leave, they request leave telephonically for planned leave such as family responsibilities.

#### ***2.8.1.5 Not attending to their classes***

Some educators leave classes unsupervised. Macfarlane and Chaykowski (2012) assert that educators who do not attend classes cause learners to fail. The report says that educators not attending their lessons are a major cause of learners' poor academic achievement. Educators' weak subject knowledge and their resulting lack of confidence in the classroom are also serious barriers to learner success. The same report indicated that South African educators did not teach 60% of their lessons and the Batswana failed to teach 40%. Educators said they did not attend classes because: they might not like teaching, they might not be confident or they were not trained in the subjects (Macfarlane & Chaykowski, 2012). When it comes to classroom time management, the class educator is the key player. An educator who is not time conscious is not disciplined and this is a disadvantage as far as curriculum implementation is concerned. For instance, an educator of English who goes to class five [5] minutes late for each lesson in a particular class every day, will have lost 25 minutes at the end of the week. That is a lot of learners' time wasted and will derail the implementation of the curriculum, since curriculum developers consider time when developing the curriculum.

Educator absenteeism from work for various reasons costs the learners their learning time, while learner absenteeism from school also deprives the learner of learning time. In addition, the need to devote an inordinate amount of time to the management of problems of large classes effectively reduces learners' time on the learning task, which results in the failure to complete the intended content for the lesson and will necessitate the allocation of more time to the same task (Mkandawire, 2010).

#### ***2.8.1.6 Excessive use of mobile phone***

Educators can use mobile phones to access all the world's information no matter where they are, just by using a device small enough to fit into one hand. According to Organista-Sandoval and Servano-Santogo (2014), excessive or obsessive mobile phone use can cause conflict inside and outside the classroom among educators, the school management team and the principal. Excessive use of mobile phones may lead to insufficient learning contact and face-to-face conversation with learners. The main disadvantages of mobile phone usage for both students and teachers are: distraction caused by phone use, the excessive emphasis on non-educational matters and the high connectivity costs. According to Baron (2011), educators respond to private calls, SMSs or mobile phone banking during contact time at the expense of their learners. Mobile phones might also be bad for educators as they develop the habit of checking their cell phone in short intervals of time, like every five minutes. Learners in the classroom eventually lose the desire to learn due to breaking of contact time. Additionally, Baron (2011) believes that educators harm their image by accepting calls during class time. Furthermore, this can affect the learners-educator relationship. Mobile phones allow educators to communicate when, where, and with whom they wish if a mobile policy is not adhered to. However, educators are often troubled to find themselves always available to learners others have left behind.

#### ***2.8.1.7 Sleeping on duty***

In terms of Section 18 (1p) of the Employment of Educators Act 76 of 1998 (Republic of South Africa, 1998), an educator commits unprofessional conduct if he or she sleeps on duty without authorisation. Sleeping on duty refers to educators falling asleep in front of the learners during contact time. Drunkards, stressed, depressed and demotivated educators fall into this trap. This leaves classes without subject teaching. An educator working in the sane classroom environment, with the same learners and the same learning material can become passive. An example is Foundation Phase educators who teach an hour period and may fall

asleep, leaving learners to complete the task without supervision. Learners often struggle with difficult tasks without the facilitator and therefore they gain little subject knowledge. A present absent educator fails learners.

#### **2.8.1.8 Social gathering**

Mkandawire (2010) believes that in most schools, a lot of time is taken up by activities such as assemblies, meetings held by visiting government officials, health talks, variety shows held during lesson time, educator-service programmes such as District Support Meetings which last the whole day while learners are either sent away or asked to stay away from school, unplanned holidays such as when a teacher dies, teachers' day, women's day, mother's day and many other unforeseen eventualities that take place at the expense of learners. Municipal meetings, Imbizo and educator union meetings are activities that can reduce contact teaching time. It happens that educators send condolences to a bereaved family as early as 10h00 in the morning, attend memorial services, visit family and friends and pay visits to the sick in hospital during contact time or official hours. This causes a loss of contact time with learners. Mostly, on Thursdays, educators often leave the school at 11:00, ostensibly to attend memorial services of colleagues or fellow educators. This means that most Thursdays are half school holiday for learners; hence, they lose focus until they gain momentum again the next Monday. Consequently, coverage of the curriculum and delivery of subject content knowledge fall behind, to be hastily covered within two weeks, which jeopardises learners' academic performance.

#### **2.8.1.9 Shirking of duty**

The Cambridge dictionary (Cambridge University Press, 2015) defines *shirk* as to avoid work, duties, or responsibilities, especially if they are difficult or unpleasant. Merriam-Webster Dictionary Online defines *shirk* as to avoid doing something that you are supposed to do. Educators who are no longer interested in teaching may shirk their duties. Instead of giving learners tests, they request them to write notes; instead of preparing a new task, they will take the old task, change the date and give it to the learners to complete. Educators who are unwilling to teach, talk on mobile phones in class, narrate stories irrelevant to the content of the lesson, rush through lessons in order to smoke, gossip, knit or sew in front of learners. They may leave the class to have tea and then come back at the end of the period (Gibson *et al.*, 2013). Poor time management by school administrators and educators is another factor. Curriculum implementation is also hindered by what goes on in learning institutions.

Learners' learning time is mismanaged by administrators and the class educator (Mkandawire, 2010).

### **2.8.2 Calling learners by disrespectful names**

The South African School Act 84 of 1996 documents that every learner has the right to be protected from maltreatment, neglect, abuse or degradation. All appropriate social and educational measures must be taken to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of any person who acts in loco parentis. Abusive educators humiliate learners, whereas the South African Council of Educators Act 31 of 2000 under code of professional ethics stipulates that an educator avoids any form of humiliation, and refrains from any form of abuse, physical or psychological and uses appropriate language and behaviour in his or her interaction with learners, and acts in such a way as to elicit respect from the learners. The use of insulting and objectionable language constitutes unprofessional conduct. Bluestein (2001:10) noted that learners who are taught by abusive educators do not feel a sense of belonging, of being welcomed and valued, of being treated with respect, dignity and acceptance. The educators harass and intimidate learners through labelling, name-calling, ridicule, and criticism. Educators who scream and have tantrums in the classroom leave negative impressions on learners. Verbal abuse and emotional abuse by educators can leave bruises and scars on learners that go unseen (Gibson *et al.*, 2013:6). According to Casey (2006:2), many unprofessional conduct complaints are caused by poor communication between the professional educators and the learners or between the professional educator and their colleagues.

### **2.8.3 Poor classroom management**

The classroom is the immediate environment for learners' formal knowledge acquisition. It is made up of the educator, the learners, learning equipment and the environment. Kimberly (2001) stated the five characteristics of a classroom as security, open communication, mutual liking, shared goals and connectedness.

Management on the other hand, can be seen as the process of designing and maintaining any setting in which people work in groups for the purpose of accomplishing predetermined goals (Adeyemo, 2012:367). Classroom management is the term used by educators to describe the process of ensuring that classroom lessons run smoothly despite disruptive behaviour by

learners. According to Adeyemo (2012:368), classroom management also implies the prevention of disruptive behaviour. Classroom management is the heart of teaching and learning in the school setting. A well-managed classroom can provide an exciting and dynamic experience for everyone involved. Good classroom management implies not only that the educator has elicited the cooperation of the learners in minimising misconduct and can intervene effectively when misconduct occurs, but also that worthwhile academic activities are occurring more or less continuously and that the classroom management system as a whole is designed to maximise learners engagement in those activities, not merely to minimise misconduct (Adeyemo, 2012:72). Educators play various roles in a typical classroom, but surely one of the most important is that of classroom manager.

Effective teaching and learning cannot take place in a poorly managed classroom. If learners are disorderly and disrespectful, and no apparent rules and procedures guide behaviour, chaos becomes the norm. In these situations, both educators and learners suffer. Educators struggle to teach, and learners most likely learn much less than they should. In contrast, well-managed classrooms provide an environment in which teaching and learning can flourish. But a well-managed classroom does not just appear out of nowhere. It takes a good deal of effort to create—and the person who is most responsible for creating it is the educator (Adeyemo, 2012:72).

Professional educators manage and organise the classroom in the beginning of the year, according to the learners' needs and preferences, to create an optimistic and warm learning environment for all the learners, and enhance learning (Rubio, 2009:38). However, management is to anticipate learners' needs, and then prepare a suitable year plan, procedures, activities, assessment, evaluation criteria, and above all, clear instructions to the learners to promote learner motivation, enthusiasm and learning. Professional educators use low classroom rules, and more routines to maintain a relaxed and warm environment to enhance learning. Poorly managed classrooms, on the other hand, do not have classroom rules, a class register, a class list and class timetable. Very little learning actually takes place. Learners who are interested and eager to learn and participate in class may become discouraged by disconnected and unmotivated educators who do not have control of their classes, have poor classroom management skills, do not correct disruptive behaviour and have chaotic classrooms (Gibson *et al.*, 2013:5).

#### **2.8.4 Lack of subject knowledge**

According to Shepherd (2013:2), the World Economic Forum recently ranked South Africa 137<sup>th</sup> out of 139 countries in terms of mathematics and science education. This is in spite of the fact that education gets the biggest share of the country's budget and spending per learner far exceeds that of any other African country. The dismal state of affairs has in part been ascribed to poor educator education, as well as a broad national concern over the poor state of educators' knowledge, particularly their subject content knowledge. The President's Education Initiative research project (1999) concluded that the limited conceptual knowledge of educators – including poor grasp of subject - was the most important challenge facing educator education in South Africa.

Educators who lack knowledge of their subject content may talk about things unrelated to learning or subject content. They lose track of the lesson, go off the topic and may ramble (Gibson *et al.*, 2013:5). This educator may not attend classes, may not teach the topic which s/he knows, may read from the textbook, set easy tests or even record false marks in the record sheet. Long (2011:35) states that teaching is a combination of educators, learners and subject matter. The educator is the transferor of knowledge (Khalid *et al.*, 2011:63). Failure to transfer knowledge can lead to poor academic performance of learners.

#### **2.8.5 Insufficient curriculum coverage**

Educators are the most important human resource in curriculum implementation, since they are the ones who adopt and implement the ideas and aspirations of the curriculum designers. This implies that the success of the curriculum depends on the educators (Okello & Kagoiren, 1996). Learner performance is directly linked to curriculum management. According to Shepherd (2013:6), there is the significant positive relationship between learner academic performance and curriculum coverage. This implies that there is a need to strengthen the curriculum management capacity of schools in order to improve learner performance.

Monitoring of adherence to work schedules and the moderation of both formal and informal assessments continuously reveal that some schools do not cover the prescribed curriculum for a particular grade. Educators' absence from schools, poor attendance of classes and lack of time management greatly contribute to poor curriculum coverage. In some instances, educators avoid teaching those sections of the curriculum in which they are not competent.



### **2.8.6 Inappropriate assessment practices**

Assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning. According to McTighe and O'Connor (2005), classroom assessment and grading practices have the potential not only to measure and to report learning but also to promote it. Assessment can be an effective learning process. Well-designed classroom assessment and grading practices can provide the kind of specific, personalised, and timely information needed to guide both learning and teaching. According to Guskey (2003:6-11), teachers who lack specific training rely heavily on the assessments offered by the publisher of their textbooks or instructional materials. When no suitable assessments are available, teachers construct their own in a haphazard fashion, with questions and essay prompts similar to the ones that their own teachers used. To use assessments to improve instruction and student learning, teachers need to change their approach to assessments in three important ways: make assessments useful; follow assessments with corrective instruction, and give second chances to demonstrate success. Guskey (2003:6-11) asserts that when as many as half the students in a class answer a clear question incorrectly or fail to meet a particular criterion, it is not a student learning problem—it is a teaching problem. Whatever teaching strategy was used, whatever examples were employed, or whatever explanation was offered, it simply did not work. Ill-prepared educators treat assessments as evaluation devices to administer when instructional activities are completed and to use primarily for assigning students' grades. Professional educators, on the other hand, have good expertise in a variety of assessment methods, equitable practice, and a good and fair evaluation system (Rubio, 2009:40). The poor learner performance in both languages and mathematics is a clear indication that learners are not exposed to appropriate assessment practices throughout the year. Consequently, there is a need to ensure that learners are exposed to good quality formal and informal assessment tasks as regularly as possible. Fuchs and Stecker (2003) warn that most classroom assessment is based on mastery of a series of short-term instructional objectives or mastery measurement. To implement this type of assessment the teacher determines the educational sequence for the school year and designs criterion-referenced tests to match each step in that educational sequence. According to Guskey (2003:6-11), if a teacher is reaching fewer than half of the students in the class, the teacher's method of instruction needs to improve. Moreover, teachers need this kind of evidence to help target their instructional improvement efforts.

### **2.8.7 Lack of monitoring and support of learners' work**

Recurring challenges in primary schools are that the monitoring and support provided by educators is not yet yielding desired results. According to Fuchs and Stecker (2003), monitoring is used to assess learners' performance in those areas in which they were identified by universal screening as being at-risk for failure (e.g., reading, mathematics, social behaviour). It is the method by which educators determine if learners are benefiting appropriately from the typical instructional programme, identify learners who are not making adequate progress, and help guide the construction of effective intervention programmes for learners who are not profiting from typical instruction. Moreover, most of the educators who provide monitoring and support are themselves not competent enough in subject content and methodology. It is therefore necessary to strengthen the capacity of all educators to ensure that learning and teaching benefit from internal support provided in the schools.

### **2.8.8 Lack of provisioning and utilisation of relevant resources**

Resources play a vital role in facilitating learning and providing conducive environments for teaching and, if used appropriately, can yield better results. Schools have basic resources to support reading, counting and thinking skills. It seems that educators are often not willing to use these resources properly. DBE supplies learners' workbooks that have tasks to be completed by learners every day. However, most of the learners' workbooks may be incomplete at the end of the school term.

### **2.8.9 Lack of professional development**

According to Betweli (2013:91), inadequate professional knowledge among educators was also identified to be a responsible factor for educators' unprofessional conduct. Teaching as an educational exercise requires alignment, contextualisation and acquisition of new knowledge and training as situations change with time. The necessary support that should be offered to primary-school educators remains unavailable. The absence of this much needed and necessary support negates the intentions of the EEA 76 of 1998 (Republic of South Africa, 1998), which clearly outlines some of the educators' duties. These cannot happen without necessary professional development and technology cannot replace the contact between the educator and the learners in the classroom.

## **2.9 CAUSES AND EFFECTS OF EDUCATORS' UNPROFESSIONAL CONDUCT**

Teaching is viewed by some as a frustrating, boring and stressful job. Moreover, Burger (2009:20) states that teaching has been identified as one of the occupations with the highest levels of stress. Researchers such as Exforsys (2006) and Burger (2009:20) have identified the following as sources of unprofessional conduct: stress, financial constraints, substance abuse, lack of accountability, working at the same school for long periods, a lack of mentoring and supervision, family matters, and the HIV pandemic. Difficulties in a professional's personal life affect their work-life. The work can affect our personal and home-life and difficulties in our personal and home-life can negatively affect our work. Personal difficulties might be related to problems with marriages, relationships, children, finances, or depression. It is common for serious personal difficulties being experienced by a professional to "spill-over" into the workplace, giving rise to a risk of unprofessional conduct (Casey, 2006:2).

Various environmental factors can be a contributing cause to a professionals engaging in unprofessional conduct. For example, there may be excessive work demands, a lack of mentoring and supervision, or inappropriate workplace practices. A professional may also be assigned tasks by their employer that the professional is not completely competent to perform due to inexperience or lack of training in a particular area (Casey, 2006:3). The researcher briefly describes the following causes of unprofessional conduct:

### **2.9.1 Stress**

Educators' stress is caused by high workloads, curriculum changes, lack of professional recognition, lack of discipline, and time pressure. Burger (2009:20) states that the consequences of stress affect not only the individual educator but also the school, because of an increase in absenteeism, educator turnover and poor academic performance. Edwards (2003:22) wrote that stress leading to burnout among public school educators is not a new occurrence. He cited reports written as early as 1932 that described low educator morale. What is new, he noted, is the extent and prevalence of burnout. Edwards (2003:32) added that the most commonly used school-based approach to employee stress is the workshop. However, he noted, educators often feel manipulated by these workshops (Edwards, 2003:36).

According to Maslach and Leiter (1997), work overload has become more intense, demands more time, and is more complex than in the past. They specifically noted that educators spend more of their time doing administrative tasks. This overload leads to emotional, creative, and physical exhaustion that eventually can result in physical symptoms.

An educator can also exhibit behavioural problems when under stress, such as aggression, substance abuse, absenteeism, poor decision-making, lack of creativity, or even sabotage. A stressed educator may neglect their duties, impeding workflows and processes so that the broader organisation slows down and loses teaching time. Principals should keep an eye out for such behaviours as possible indicators of workplace stress (Boundless, no date).

Work-related stress can occur when educators sense a lack of respect from their peers or principal or feel they are not being fairly compensated. An over-abundance of rules or a lack of opportunities for advancement can contribute to the creation of stress. Educators may become stressed if they are not provided with a means to air their concerns, or if management is consistently unclear in communication. Educators who are micro-managed and who are not empowered to make decisions frequently experience stress. Team members who consistently experience a work environment where they do not feel valued may not be compelled to work to their full potential. The result may reflect a school that is not achieving its good results or strategic goals.

According to Reynolds (2007), effects of stress in the institution may include the following:

- High absenteeism
- High labour turnover
- Poor time keeping
- Poor performance and productivity
- Low morale
- Poor motivation
- Increased educator complaints
- Increased ill-health, accidents and incident reports.

### **2.9.2 Financial constraints**

Besides the fact that educators earn very little, they do not have financial management skills. They are sometimes unable to pay for transport to work. This causes late arrival, early

departure and absenteeism. Furthermore, educator financial stress has been known to result in negative productivity behaviours such as absences, tardiness, mistakes, loss of concentration, and poor learners' academic performance.

### **2.9.3 Substance abuse**

Merriam-Webster Dictionary Online (2015) defines *substance abuse* as excessive use of a drug (such as alcohol, narcotics, or cocaine), or use of a drug without medical justification. Casey (2006:2) states that alcohol and drug abuse are the most serious sources of unprofessional conduct. Many educators with substance abuse problems have destroyed their entire professional career because they have either refused to seek help or sought help too late. Educators who abuse alcohol and drugs often abuse sick leave privileges. They are not concerned when there is low quality or no teaching at all. They are not committed to learners, have little knowledge of the subject content and are unable to monitor and manage learning.

Drug use, abuse, or addiction among educators and their family members can cause expensive problems for the institution, ranging from disrespect of learners, absenteeism, injuries, fatalities, theft and low educator morale, to an increase in health care, legal liabilities and workers' compensation costs. Effects of drug problems in the institution result in:

- Inconsistent work quality
- Poor concentration and lack of focus
- Poor learners' academic performance
- Increased absenteeism
- Unexplained disappearances from the school
- Carelessness, mistakes or errors in judgement
- Needless risk taking
- Disregard for safety for self and learners
- Extended break periods and early departures.

### **2.9.4 Working in the same school for a long period**

Edwards (2003:45) believes that a cause for disenchantment is educators who work at the same school for a long period, in the same level (e.g. a post-level one educator with experience of 40 years in teaching at the same school) and who can be emotionally exhausted due to job dissatisfaction. Such educators can also become rigid in their approach and resist

change (Edwards, 2003:45). Veteran educators, like all employees, need to be recognised and rewarded for their efforts.

Edwards (2003:45) reminds us that educators need recognition not only for achievement, but for effort—at times simply for their struggle—to meet the ongoing everyday demands of the job. Recognition and reward are powerful organisational tools. Klubnik (1995:20) wrote that recognition can affect an organisation's effectiveness both positively and negatively. Companies that encourage employees to recognise each other's contributions are rewarded with a healthier environment in which staff members openly and comfortably interact with each other. Edwards (2003:47) asserts that recognition and rewards are simple, cost-effective means to help all educators deal with job stress.

Klubnik (1995:18) believes that today's educators have an increased need for support systems to help reduce the stress caused by workplace redesign and reengineering. Rewards and recognition make good business sense and help people deal more effectively with a workplace in turmoil. Indeed, Edwards (2003:46) maintains that because of the distinctive characteristics and circumstances of midcareer educators, there are specific needs that should be addressed in the work environment. These needs are: growth, recognition, variety, and interaction with colleagues. Growth should include opportunities for choice and exploration, and should model the leader's (usually the principal's) desire for growth. Recognition is needed to combat the tendency to take veteran educators for granted and to honour their successes over the years.

According to Edwards (2003:104), veteran educators need more recognition than beginners, not less. Variety is achieved by allowing and encouraging staff to use their special talents, develop new skills, and increase occupational independence. Collegiality is needed to lessen educators' feelings of isolation and to encourage mutual trust. As veteran educators approach retirement, new considerations arise. Megyeri (1996) states that retirement is naturally accompanied by feelings of withdrawal. Educators and administrators need to realise that these feelings are healthy and an expected outcome of this phase of the individual's career. Edwards (2003:53) believes that veteran educators are prone to lack of growth opportunities and the impression that they are unchallenged and have reached a plateau in their careers. In addition, the DoBE does not adequately prepare educators before the implementation of new curriculum. Therefore, the educators are left without a full understanding of what is expected. While the departmental authorities dictate to educators what must be done, they struggle with

methods they are unable to practice, teach subject content that is unfamiliar to them and assess learners using assessment tools they do not understand.

Other factors such as divorce, separation, sickness, and violence experienced by educators can affect their entire lives and work performances. The HIV/AIDS pandemic, regarded as a social catastrophe, can affect the life of an educator in many ways, including absenteeism by educators due to the effects of the disease.

## **2.10 STRATEGIES THAT CAN PROMOTE PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT OF EDUCATORS**

Ways and means to empower educators needs to be developed in support of educators' positive attitude and personal development. Scholars have identified the following strategies that can promote educators' professional conduct: in-service training, professional development and staff development, educators' workshops, ethics courses, inductions, meetings, management of leave forms and mentoring (Maphosa, Mutekwe, Matshingambi, Wadesango & Ndofirepi, 2012:548; Kosgei *et al.*, 2013:77-78; Long, 2011:16; Edwards, 2003:49-50).

At the annual conference of the Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development held in San Antonio, Texas, on March 9, 2002, Hoffman and Skerritt (2002) outlined 16 methods to motivate educators as follows:

- coaching;
- consulting;
- walk-through of classrooms--ongoing with staff and more frequently with educators experiencing problems;
- space--this involves meetings and problem solving done outside of the classroom setting;
- co-observation/coaching the coach--done by and for principals and central office staff throughout the year;
- goal conference for all employees at the beginning and end of the year;

- mid-year checks are optional;
- formal evaluation for all employees by their supervisor;
- drop-in visits--planned or unplanned contacts by the administrator;
- personal reflection--journals and portfolios;
- peer coaching/mentoring;
- staff development;
- curriculum development--“content summits” to spark interest;
- study groups--reading groups, projects, and technology facilitation are examples;
- action research/review of learners work--portfolios and projects are possibilities;
- demonstration lessons--possibly done by a specialist or in demonstration classrooms and use of both formal and informal data--district and state assessments, site data such as grade 6/7 transition studies.

A brief explanation of each of these factors is given below.

### **2.10.1 In-service training**

Educators have to be appropriately trained. Proper and meaningful interpretation and implementation of the curriculum rest on the quality of the educator. According to Uysal (2012:15), considering educators’ needs, experiences, and contexts as central, valuing their ideas, negotiating content, accepting educators as experts, and encouraging them to reflect on their current beliefs and behaviours are important factors to induce long-lasting changes in educator practices, as these help educators develop a sense of ownership of the new ideas. Such programmes also enhance educators’ consciousness about their teaching. In addition, Uysal (2012:15) noted that holistic and experiential educator training approaches to in-service education programmes (INSETs), in which a range of methods and techniques are modelled and in which trainers are allowed to practise and analyse the modelled lessons or approaches by being both learners and educators, were found to be more effective than the traditional transmission-based linear approaches.



According to Ingersoll and Strong (2011:5), in-service refers to periodic upgrading and additional professional development received on the job, during employment. Mkhize (2000:21) states that educators should attend in-service training and staff development seminars in order to keep abreast of professional developments. Educators' attendance of in-service training is one of the indicators of their level of experience. In the Science Education Project in South Africa (SEP), the objectives were mainly formulated by the developers after having consulted various experts who had experience with Education in Africa. The educators in this programme had been and did not have any experience with practical work. Only in a later stage of their in-service training course they had a better idea of the possible content and methods, did formulating objectives of their own lessons become part of the programme (Kosgei *et al.*, 2013:78).

### **2.10.2 Professional development courses**

Professional development courses should be undertaken by educators to improve their academic and professional standing. The process and activities of professional development should be designed to enhance the professional knowledge, skills, and attitudes of educators so that they might in turn improve the learning of learners (Long, 2011:16). Workshops should be school based and at circuit and district level, and based on subject content, methodology and utilisation of workbooks, textbooks and supplementary materials. Edwards (2003:53) asserts that staff development has been suggested as a means for educator motivation and revitalisation. Staff development, however, presents its own problems; among these are funding and time. The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (2002) addressed the need for quality staff reform and suggested possible guidelines and strategies. These include:

- Stable and high-quality professional development should be created. One percent of state and local funding should be spent to support this staff development. This funding would be matched by local school funds;
- New sources of professional development should be organic. These new sources could include educator academies, school-university partnerships, and learning networks beyond the physical school plant, and
- Professional development should become a continuous part of educators' day-to-day work through joint planning, study groups, peer coaching, and research.

### **2.10.3 Meetings**

Meetings truly can be valuable and productive. Staff development meetings (subject and phase meetings) should be an integral part of school curriculum improvement plans. However, support meetings should be conducted at the beginning of each term to discuss progress in teaching and learning and to address challenges. Regular meetings on ethics should be conducted and discussions held with educators on ethical /conduct issues that they may experience. Holding onsite staff meetings, retreats, study groups, and social gatherings to energise faculty encourages professional conduct (Edwards, 2003:51).

### **2.10.4 Induction**

Novice educators should be inducted before assuming their duties. Induction programmes would help them to improve practice, learn professional responsibilities and positively affect learners' academic performance. According to Ingersoll and Strong (2011:1), most of the studies reviewed provide empirical support for the claim that support and assistance for novice educators have a positive impact on three sets of outcomes: educator commitment and retention, educator classroom instructional practices, and learners' academic performance. Induction is intended for those who have already completed basic pre-employment education and preparation. These programmes are often conceived as a bridge from learner of teaching to educator of learner (Ingersoll & Strong, 2011:5). According to Feiman-Nemser (2001) and Ganser (2002), the theory behind induction holds that teaching is complex work, pre-employment educator preparation is rarely sufficient to provide all of the knowledge and skill necessary to successful teaching, and a significant portion can only be acquired while on the job. The DoBE should purchase and distribute the Policy Handbook for Educators (Education Labour Relations Council, 2003) to all educators. Educators should reference them when necessary. Moreover, teacher induction can refer to a variety of different types of activities for new teachers— orientation sessions, faculty collaborative periods, meetings with supervisors, developmental workshops, extra classroom assistance, reduced workloads, and, especially, mentoring.

There is a necessary role for schools in providing an environment where novices are able to learn the craft and survive and succeed as teachers. The goal of these support programmes is to improve the performance and retention of novice educators, that is, to both enhance, and prevent the loss of, educators' human capital, with the ultimate aim of improving the growth and learning of learners.

### **2.10.5 Management of leave form**

According to Munro (2007:21), absenteeism is probably one of the biggest problems that a principal has to handle on an ongoing basis, as it affects learners' academic performance and staff morale. If the cause has been identified and solutions implemented and an educator continues to be absent from his/her institution then the only solution would be normal disciplinary procedures. The school management team (SMT) should implement the provisions of the Act in order to manage leave forms. In terms of the Basic Conditions of Employment Act No. 75 of 1997 (sections 22-24), an employee is entitled to six weeks' paid sick leave in a period of 36 months; (sections 25 & 26) is for maternity leave where a pregnant employee is entitled to four consecutive months' maternity leave; (Section 27 ) is for family responsibility leave. Full-time employees are entitled to three days paid family responsibility leave per year, on request, when the employee's child is born or sick, or in the event of the death of the employee's spouse or life partner, or the employee's parent, adoptive parent, grandparent, child, adopted child, grandchild or sibling. When an educator takes leave, used days should be recorded and left days to be known by the educator. In terms of the Employment of Educators Act No.. 76 of 199, an educator appointed in a permanent capacity is deemed to be discharged if he/she is absent from work for a period exceeding 14 consecutive days without permission of the employer. Munro (2007:22) noted that there are times when an employee may not be able to tender his/her services to an employer. This requires proof of not being able to tender such services and this is the responsibility of the employee. According to statute law, namely the Basic Conditions of Employment Act, an employer is required to pay an employee if he/she is too ill to work, provided a medical practitioner's certificate of not being fit to work is produced. However, an employer is entitled to check on the validity of all medical certificates. Absence for one or more days has to be recorded by managers as sick leave, which is deducted from the employee's sick leave balance. This is a straightforward process. The issue of how to handle absenteeism if an employee reports for duty and works for a short period during a shift before going off sick should be clearly spelt out in a policy (Munro, 2007:22). The period of time not present at a workstation should be recorded by the employer and when a full day is completed this should be deducted from sick leave provisions.

### **2.10.6 Monitoring**

According to Raposa and Mujtaba (2003), employee monitoring has emerged as a necessity and yet as a very controversial issue due to the complexity and widespread use of technology. Employee monitoring is the act of watching and monitoring employees' actions during working hours using employer equipment/property. Employers are concerned with proper employee behaviour and code of conduct compliance in relation to their industries and related organisations. While more and more employers are using monitoring devices to check or keep track of their employees' actions, some employees feel that too much monitoring is an invasion of their privacy. Dufour and Mattos (2013) state that beyond the time demands, the premise behind the policy of having principals observe educators and help them improve is fundamentally flawed. The authors were both award-winning principals who devoted massive amounts of time and energy to trying to improve teaching through their different systems of supervision and evaluation processes. They typically found that educators were unpersuaded by their recommendations. Furthermore, they assert that the principals are sometimes able to help educators to become aware of unintended instructional or classroom management patterns. They could express appreciation for the wonderful work an educator was doing because they had witnessed it first-hand. They observed powerful instructional strategies that they were able to share with other educators. They increased educators' knowledge about what constitutes effective teaching.

### **2.10.7 Mentoring**

Mentoring is the personal guidance provided, usually by experienced educators, to beginning educators in schools. Edwards (2003:52) believes that mentoring involves the coaching of new educators by those with more experience. Mentoring educators reported a sense of pride in being able to give back to a profession that nurtured them, a heightened sense of professionalism, and new visions as to possible future outlets for their careers. Johnson and Kardos (2002) emphasised that the school day must contain time for mentors to interact with novice educators. Edwards (2003:53) reported that the mentoring of novice educators by seasoned professionals is becoming an important facet of schools. Mentoring not only helps the new educator but is also a method for the veteran educator to enhance his or her career. According to Ingersoll and Strong (2011:5), mentoring programmes give newcomers a local guide, but the character and content of these programmes also vary widely. Duration and intensity, for example, may be very different from programme to programme. Mentoring

programmes can vary from a single meeting between mentor and mentee at the beginning of a school year, to a highly structured programme involving frequent meetings over a couple of years between mentors and mentees who are both provided with release time from their normal teaching loads.

## **2.11 FACTORS THAT ENHANCE LEARNERS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE**

In contrast to the schools that perform poorly, those that perform well are often well organised and have clear roles and responsibilities defined for everyone. Furthermore, they have clear lines of authority and communication is regular. Put differently, staff and learners know what is expected of them.

The enhancement of learners' academic performance can largely be attained through the acquisition of the factors as outlined by the researcher. The educator's level of competence, one of the requirements when practising as an educator (Republic of South Africa, 1996a), remains one of the most important factors.

### **2.11.1 Presenteeism**

According to Munro (2007:21), usually most organisations require a low absenteeism rate to meet objectives. Employees usually do not believe that they are failing to meet their fundamental obligation of service delivery when they are not at allocated workstations doing what they are paid to do. They see themselves as being at work, whereas the employer sees them as being unproductive and not focusing on the organisation's goals and objectives.

Presenteeism refers to the tendency of educators to come to school when they are sick. They come to school to minimise the strain their absence can put on their colleagues. In order to protect their colleagues from overwork, educators subordinate their health to their work (Schwartz, Pappas, Bashook, Bordage, Edison *et al.*, 2009:28). Munro (2007:22) argues against Schwartz *et al.* (2009:28) when he defines presenteeism as another aspect of absenteeism, as this refers to an employee who is present at work but not actually rendering a service due to a range of reasons, such as chronic ill health, or personal problems.

### **2.11.2 Adequate subject knowledge**

Educators should know and teach learners appropriate subject content, following the pace setter or work schedule for that grade. Nassozi (2010:16) states that a well-equipped educator is an important factor in education and subject matter is an essential component of educator

knowledge. Teaching entails helping learners to learn; therefore understanding what is to be taught is a central requirement of teaching. According to Shepherd (2013:8), educator knowledge has been found to be positively related to factors associated with effective teaching, such as high educator quality, opportunity to learn and quality of training, but not to level of education. Furthermore, Shepherd (2013:5) distinguishes between four broad kinds of knowledge that an effective educator should possess: general pedagogical knowledge; content knowledge (CK); pedagogical content knowledge (PCK); and curricular knowledge. Pedagogical knowledge is generally obtained formally through pre- and in-service training and informally through trial-and-error in their own classrooms and through observing of their peers. CK is principally obtained through educator's former pre-service training, and may be further subdivided into common or specialised CK. PCK refers to the manner in which CK is applied for teaching others and is obtained through practice or highly skilled training programmes. The notion of PCK has gained wide appeal as it links content knowledge and the practice of teaching.

### **2.11.3 Hundred percent curriculum coverage**

Educators should cover the curriculum specified. They should not make predictions for examination questions or teach only the content with which they are familiar. Taylor (2011) finds that, when combined with time on task, teacher knowledge leads to substantial gains in student learning. However, this only occurs at a very high level of knowledge, indicating a non-linear relationship between teacher knowledge and learner performance. The strongest finding by Taylor (2011) is the significant positive relationship between learner outcomes and curriculum coverage

The DoBE has put together specific subject content that needs to be covered in a particular grade for a learner to acquire the necessary knowledge and competencies required in the next grade. Furthermore, in Norms and Standards for Educators the DoBE designed relevant competencies to be inculcated, such as applied competence, fundamental competence and reflexive competence. This would be taught to educators during their training (Republic of South Africa, 1998). In-service training therefore becomes a necessity if such competencies are to be realised. However, there is very little support and monitoring from the Department of Education officials in order to make sure that educators cover their subject content. It is indeed a reality that complete curriculum coverage contributes towards enhancing learners' academic performance.

Curriculum management remains an overarching component in a learning situation. The learning process requires monitoring and evaluation in order to check its impact. However, the management of the curriculum should be supplemented by identifying gaps during implementation. General school timetables, class timetables, homework timetables and assessment plans should be managed and educators monitored to use them effectively.

#### **2.11.4 Effective teaching method**

According to Ndimande (2005:18), for learners' academic performance to improve, certain conditions must prevail in class, and the educator, as a classroom manager, needs to create and control these conditions in a way that assures successful learning. Furthermore, Ndimande (2005:18) states that for the lesson to be successful, the educator needs to have the ability to motivate the learners to take part in the teaching-learning situation. The author proposes that the educator should implement different techniques to place less emphasis on his/her contribution and more on that of the learners during lessons.

Nassozi (2010:16) posits that even the best curriculum and the most perfect work schedule remain dead unless quickened into life by the appropriate methods of teaching. Educators should have basic teaching skills. Long (2011:38) states that highly effective educators not only disseminate knowledge, but also initiate learning through discovery, teamwork, cooperation, and individual research, and use methods such as demonstrating and experimenting. According to Ndimande (2005:18), to enhance the academic performance of learners, educators need to perfect the skill of questioning as a way of involving learners in a lesson. Ndimande (2005:18) further contends that educators who are well trained in the skill of questioning will not only be able to raise the level of learner achievement, but create a more effective learning environment in the classroom. Ndimande (2005) maintains that questions should always be asked with a specific vision in mind. Additionally, the educator can ask questions to focus the attention of learners on a specific fact or concept, to arouse curiosity and interest, or to diagnose problems inhibiting learning. It is therefore clear that questioning as a skill can help to improve learner performance, especially if it is used to ensure active participation by all learners in a lesson. It can also be used to develop thinking skills of learners (Ndimande, 2005:18).

### **2.11.5 Relevant qualification**

A qualified educator is defined as one who is fully certified and holds the equivalent of a major in the field being taught (Nassozi, 2010:18). Kosgei *et al.* (2013:77) support Nassozi when they define a well-qualified educator as one who is fully certified and holds the equivalent of a major in the field being taught. Although the formal qualification of educators is an important indicator of their knowledge and competence in teaching, it has only limited utility in analysing how well prepared educators are for what they have to teach in schools. More detailed knowledge of the courses they have taken during their training needs to be compared to the actual content and skills required to teach the school's curriculum.

According to Shepherd (2013:4), the Norms and Standards for Educators regard educators who have obtained a three-year post-school qualification, or REVQ13, as adequately qualified. The minimum requirement has since been updated to a four-year degree or equivalent qualification (REVQ14), as stated in the 2007 National Policy Framework for Teacher Education. However, a REVQ13 remains to be the norm as an adequate qualification level. In 2004, only 48 percent of educators met the minimum qualification of a REVQ14. In-service programmes offered by universities have allowed educators to upgrade their qualifications to the necessary level. This is reflected in the rising proportion of annual graduates in Education that are educators upgrading their existing qualifications. According to the Quarterly Labour Force Surveys (QLFS, Statistics South Africa) of 2010, the proportion of secondary and primary-school educators with REVQ14 and higher was 78.9 and 36.0 percent respectively (68.7 percent together). A further 18 percent are adequately qualified at an REVQ13 level. This implies that in 2010, 13.3 percent, or approximately 55000, of Basic Education educators remained under-qualified, even by the more lenient requirements that applied in 2000.

Whenever possible, an educator should possess a BEd or MEd degree in the subjects s/he is offering (Khalid *et al.*, 2011:63). Kosgei *et al.* (2013:77) document that educator qualification accounted for approximately 40 to 60 percent of the variance in average of learners' achievement in assessment. Kukla-Acevedo (2008:5) states that using a strong value-added design that includes educator fixed effects, holding either BA or MA in mathematics, has a statistically significant, positive relationship with learners' mathematics performance. According to Shepherd (2013:10), educators with at least a university degree performed better in literacy but not significantly different in mathematics when compared with educators



with only a post-matric but non-degree qualification. When compared to educators with complete high school or less, educators with university degrees performed significantly better in both numeracy and literacy.

### **2.11.6 Educator experience**

Educator experience has a significant effect on learners' academic performance at primary-school level. Learners taught by more experienced educators achieve at a higher level, because their educators have mastered the content and acquired classroom management skills to deal with classroom problems. More experienced educators are considered more able to concentrate on the most appropriate way to teach particular content to learners who differ in their abilities, prior knowledge and background (Kosgei *et al.*, 2013:78). According to Kosgei *et al.* (2013:78), educators' attendance of in-service training is one of the indicators of experience. Educators' motives to attend in-service training can be manifold, e.g. increase in salary, career planning, keeping up with developments, filling in lacunae, removing insecurity and meeting colleagues. Therefore, the more the educators know about learners, the better the educators can connect with them and the more likely they will be able to benefit from the educators' experience in reconstructing their world. The knowledge that educators need about learners in order to connect with them is gained through interaction. Ferguson (1991 as cited by Kosgei *et al.*, 2013:78) reveals that at the high school level, students taught by teachers with more than nine years of experience had significantly higher test scores than students whose teachers had five to nine years of experience.

### **2.11.7 Utilisation of relevant resources**

According to Ndimande (2005:16), in order to achieve high learners' academic performance, local resource allocation (financial, educators, training, facilities) becomes critical.

Amongst the available resources for enhancing learners' academic performance, the most important is the educator himself/herself. Other resources include:

- The school's physical structures, e.g. classrooms.
- The learning materials and resource aids such as projectors, copiers and computers.
- The school's human capital (educators, learners and non-teaching support staff).

Learners' academic performance depends mostly on parental involvement as a resource for learning in the school community and their relations with educators in the school. Therefore

educators should have a positive relationship with parents as they should remain a relevant resource that could be utilised. Parent involvement in schools is actioned by general participation, helping in classrooms or sponsoring and supporting school programmes, and participating in school governance (Ndimande, 2005:17). There are a variety of learner and educator resources such as overhead projector videos and libraries with which educators and learners interact in teaching and learning. Teaching media such as charts and overhead projectors should support textbooks. The educator's effective use of resources like audio-visual equipment is important. It is concluded that both human and material resources are essential for achieving high learner performance.

#### **2.11.8 Monitoring and support to learners**

Educators should monitor learners' tasks and give support to underachievers. Any tasks, whether informal or formal, should be marked and feedback given. The SMT (at school level), curriculum advisors and circuit manager (at circuit level), DSM (at district level) should monitor and support educators who are the pillars of good academic performance. Learners' work and educators' files should be checked and moderated on a quarterly basis. Recommendations should be provided for improvement.

#### **2.12 CONCLUSION**

In this chapter, the literature review focused on the professional conduct of educators on academic performance under the following sub-headings: the concepts; professional conduct; academic performance; the role of the principals and the educators, educators' code of professional ethics; educators' professional conduct; unprofessional conduct; causes and effects of unprofessional conduct of educators; strategies to promote professional conduct of educators; and factors that enhance learners' academic performance. Critical analysis of the existing literature was provided.

In the next chapter, the researcher focuses on quantitative research methodology and design, sampling, data analysis and ethical considerations.

## **CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN**

### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

In Chapter 2, the researcher presented a review of the literature on the effect of educators' professional conduct on academic performance elsewhere. The chapter analysed the concepts of professional conduct and academic performance; the roles of educators as promoters of learners' academic performance; educators' code of professional ethics; unprofessional conduct; causes and effects of unprofessional conduct of educators; strategies to promote professional conduct of educators and factors that enhance learners' academic performance. The study therefore seeks to establish "educators' professional conduct" as a phenomenon that contributes to the academic performance of learners.

### **3.2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study used the quantitative research methodology. A brief overview of this methodology follows.

#### **3.2.1 Brief overview of a quantitative research methodology**

According to Leedy and Ormrod (2010:182), quantitative research methodology involves either identifying the characteristics of an observed phenomenon or exploring possible correlation among two or more phenomena. It is a means of testing objective theories by examining the relationship among independent and dependent variables. These variables, in turn, can be measured, typically on instruments, so that numbered data can be analysed using statistical procedures (Creswell, 2008). Like qualitative researchers, those who engage in this form of inquiry have assumptions about testing theories deductively, building in protections against bias, controlling for alternative explanations, and being able to generalise and replicate the findings (Creswell, 2008). In quantitative studies, researchers advance the relationship among variables and pose this in terms of questions or hypotheses. Decisions about the choice of a design are further influenced by the research problem or issue being studied, the personal experiences of the researcher, and the audience for whom the researcher is writing.

The research design is specified before the start of the investigation. The primary purpose is to determine cause-and-effect relationships. In the study, educators' professional conduct was

the independent variable and the learners' academic performance was the dependent variable (Hopkins, 2000:1). According to Aliaga and Gunderson (2000), quantitative research is explaining phenomena by means of the collection of numerical data for the purpose of analysis using mathematical methods. Quantitative methods convert data into mathematical or measureable form. This creates an opportunity to easily categorise and work with data. The concept is similar to the manner in which computers convert all data to binary constructs. This categorisation allows a researcher to answer specific questions from complex data sets (Aliaga & Gunderson, 2000). The study was done to establish the effects of educators' professional conduct on learners' academic performance in Vuwani Cluster.

### **3.2.2 Research design**

According to Creswell (2011:3), research designs are plans and the procedures for research that span the decisions from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection and analysis. This plan involves several decisions, and they need not be taken in the order in which they make sense to me and the order of their presentation here. The overall decision involves which design should be used to study a topic. Informing this decision should be the worldview assumptions the researcher brings to the study; procedures of inquiry (called strategies); and specific methods of data collection, analysis, and interpretation. As mentioned above, the selection of a research design is also based on the nature of the research problem or issue being addressed, the researchers' personal experiences, and the audiences for the study.

The research design took the form of a survey to elicit the quickest responses with the least strain on principals and yet informative enough to provide results that could serve as accurate representations of the principals' opinions. Survey research design provides a quantitative or numeric description of trends, attitudes, or opinions of a population by studying a sample of that population. It includes cross-sectional and longitudinal studies using questionnaires or structured interviews for data collection, with the intent of generalising from a sample to a population (Babbie, 2010). This study was cross-sectional, which involved collecting data from individuals in a single time period. Leedy and Ormrod (2010:187) state that survey research involves acquiring information about one or more groups of people –perhaps about their characteristics, opinions, attitudes, or previous experiences – by asking them questions and tabulating their answers. The researcher posed a series of questions to the participants;

summarised their responses with percentages, counted frequency and then drew inferences about the population from the responses of the participants (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010:187).

It used the quantitative research approach because the researcher wanted to establish the opinions of principals concerning the unprofessional conduct committed by educators and how it affected learners' academic performance. The Vuwani Cluster is one of six clusters within the Vhembe district. The socio-economic conditions and the sizes of these clusters are similar. A research outcome relevant to the one can therefore be applied to the other. It is in this context that quantitative research methodology was used for this study.

### 3.2.3 Research population

The word "population" is used to refer to the entire group of individuals to whom the findings of a study apply. The population that was used in this study was ninety-nine (N=99) primary-schools principals of four circuits of Vuwani Cluster, namely: Vhuronga One Circuit, Vhuronga Two Circuit, Dzondo Circuit and Dzindi Circuit of the Vhembe District, Limpopo Province. This simply means the population of this study was a group of primary-school principals in the Vuwani Cluster. Table 3.1 shows the population of Vuwani Cluster.

**Table 3.1: Composition of the population**

Circuits	Principals		Total
	Male	Female	
Vhuronga One	14	10	24
Vhuronga Two	11	11	22
Dzondo	20	11	31
Dzindi	10	12	22
<b>Total</b>	55	44	99

### 3.2.4 Sample and sampling technique

Sampling refers to the process of selecting a sample from a defined population with the intent that the sample accurately represents that population (Gay, Mills & Airasian, 2006:220). According to Best and Kahn (1993), the size of an adequate sample depends upon the nature of the population of interest for the study. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) assert that the sample size is determined by the intended research design. In the present study, the selection of the sample considered different factors such as the information required, the purpose of the

study and the time frame. The researcher used simple random sampling to select eighty (N = 80) primary-school principals of Vuwani Cluster, Vhembe District. Random sampling was employed to select the sample in such a way that all individuals in the defined population would have equal and independent chances of being included for the sample.

### **3.2.5 Research instrument**

The main research data-collection instrument was a researcher-designed closed-ended questionnaire. Using questionnaires is suitable for research that requires several types of information, as in this study (Wray & Bloomer, 2006:158-159). Strydom (2005:166) states that the main objective of a questionnaire is to obtain data from people who are informed about an issue. The questionnaire was used to determine educators' professional conduct inherent in the Vuwani Cluster primary schools and the effect thereof on learners' academic performance. The primary-school principals chosen for this study were therefore able to provide information about the educators because they work with them. The questionnaire (Appendix B), consisting of sections A to E, had 123 items. Section A collected principals' biographic information and sections B to E had 115 closed-ended questions consisting of a Likert scale with four possible responses per item (Maree & Pieterse, 2007:93-94): (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) agree and (4) strongly agree.

#### ***3.2.5.1 Validity of instrument***

Content validity, criterion validity and construct validity are measures that are used to assess the validity of data collection tools (Peat, 2002:28). From this list, a brief overview of content validity is advanced here because of its applicability to the research instrument used for this study.

Content validity refers to whether or not a tool appears to others to be measuring what it says it does; face validity is a simple form of content validity (Carter & Porter, 2000:28). In order to establish the content validity of a measuring instrument, the researcher must identify the overall content to be represented. It is therefore usually suggested that the researcher ask recognised experts in the area of study for their opinion on the validity of the tool (Carter & Porter, 2000).

During the research instrument developmental stage, three principals with more than six years' experience were requested to check whether the research instrument was valid for the

purposes of this research study, before piloting them. The Content Validity Index (CVI) was calculated using the formula below (Brennan & Hays, 1992):

$$CVI = \frac{\text{Number of items judged by both judges as right}}{\text{Total number of items in the questionnaire}}$$

CVI for the questionnaire was 0.84 and therefore the questionnaire was considered valid.

### **3.2.5.2 Reliability of instrument**

Reliability refers to the consistency that the research instrument or procedure demonstrates (Best & Kahn, 1993:208). It is concerned with the replicability of both procedures and findings. In this study, the researcher measured the educators' professional conduct and its effect on learners' academic performance. In order to ensure internal consistency (reliability), the questionnaire was piloted to five principals with an educational background similar to that of the study sample. A Cronbach alpha coefficient ( $\alpha$ ) was computed from the results using the formula below (Cronbach, 1951:299):

$$\alpha = \left( \frac{K}{K-1} \right) \left( 1 - \frac{\sum S_i^2}{S_{sum}^2} \right)$$

Where:

K= number of components (K- Items);

$S_i^2$  = variance of K individual items;

$S_{sum}^2$  = variance for the sum of all items.

Cronbach alpha coefficients were obtained for each item. An overall  $\alpha$  value of 0.73 was obtained for the questionnaire, representing low reliability. Any item with a coefficient of  $\leq 0.70$  was not included in the instrument.

### **3.2.6 Data collection process**

Data was collected by the researcher in a period of two weeks. A self-administered questionnaire was distributed among eighty (N = 80) primary-school principals of rural and semi-urban schools for the collection of data. At each school, the researcher introduced herself to the principal and briefed him or her about the purpose of the visit and the study.

The researcher explained the principals' role in the study and how to respond to the questionnaire, and requested them to complete it within a week. The principals were requested to sign two informed consent letters. One remained with the principal and the other was taken by the researcher for record purposes. The researcher set a date for collection. Although the sample consisted of eighty (N = 80) primary-school principals, 69 principals returned the questionnaires, giving a response rate of 86.25%. The response rate was very high, considering that for self-administered questionnaires it can be 50% or less (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010:216).

### **3.2.7 Data analysis**

There are different methods of quantitative statistical data analysis, namely: Alpha level p level; Statistical tests; Mann-Whitney U-test; Spearman rank correlation test and Kruskal-Wallis test. Descriptive statistics was carried out on the data from the questionnaire (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2007). The collected data was analysed with the help of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 19.0 and Microsoft Excel. The researcher selected SPSS based on the following conditions: the level of data; the number of samples in the research study; data collected from an independent group and the characteristics of the data. The researcher used the SPSS because it is a statistical software programme that is user-friendly (logical and easy to follow). It can do just about any calculation, using any statistical test. It allows the researcher to summarise and display data tables and bar graphs. It reduces the time and effort of the researcher in the process of drawing the graphs based on the data (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010:283-284). Percentages were used to indicate the frequency of various responses expressed by the respondents. Data was also illustrated, using tables and figures in order to show the key features of the data in a more interpretable manner (Gall *et al.*, 2007).

### **3.3 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The researcher is obliged to interact with respondents who would give information or data needed for answering research questions. Ethics concern the appropriateness of the researcher's behaviour in relation to the rights of those who become participants of the research or who are affected by it (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2000:130). Babbie (2008:67-72) cites potential ethical dilemmas such as informed consent; confidentiality and anonymity; deception, privacy and empowerment; as well as harm, caring and fairness. A discussion of these ethical dilemmas follows.



### **3.3.1 Informed consent**

This entails obtaining permission to enter the field. Letters were written to the DSM of Vhembe District to obtain permission to carry out the study in the selected circuits. After getting permission, the researcher wrote letters to each Circuit Manager. The intended use of the data was explained in the letters and to the participants. It was emphasised that participation was voluntary and being judgemental and interfering would be avoided. Also, insincerity and manipulation would be guarded against.

### **3.3.2 Confidentiality and anonymity**

Confidentiality of participants' data is important. Private information obtained from respondents might make others feel unhappy and strain relationships (Babbie, 2008). In this study, confidentiality and anonymity were imperative since principals were expected to comment on the (un)professional conduct of educators. If informants were identified, consequences might be harmful in that the educators might be offended (Babbie, 2008). Therefore, it was important to disguise features of the settings in order to make individuals indistinguishable from others. The informants were assured of anonymity and confidentiality, hence their names were coded. All participants were assured that the results were strictly for purposes of the study only.

### **3.3.3 Deception, privacy and empowerment**

Respondents should be protected at all cost. Strydom and De Vos (1998:27) view deception as either withholding information or giving false information so that the participants who could have opted not to participate, are lured into participating. It sometimes happens that even participants who have been fully informed and who subsequently cooperated feel betrayed when they read research findings in print (Babbie, 2008). What stands out here is that there are no guarantees that observing ethical issues will always result in happy endings. This implies that the researcher should, in addition to being sensitive to ethical issues, also highlight the influence of the participants in the success of the study (Babbie, 2008). Their sense of importance may compensate for the inconvenience they may suffer (Babbie, 2008). In this study, the participants were thus informed accordingly and encouraged to discuss any problems they experienced during the administering of the questionnaire.

### **3.3.4 Harm, caring and fairness**

According to Gay *et al.* (2006:81), freedom from harm is focused on not exposing participants to risks. In this study, the focus was on the educators' professional conduct. Babbie (2008) cites a potential ethical problem in the principle of persons being treated as ends, rather than as a means to an end. This occurs when the researcher is only concerned about the results, regardless of any personal humiliation that people may experience, or damage to interpersonal relationships (Babbie, 2008). Therefore, one has to be caring and fair. All participants were encouraged to focus on making a meaningful contribution to the improvement of academic performance of learners, rather than using this as an opportunity to expose other people's weaknesses.

Based on the discussion above, one has to be always wary of the potential ethical dilemmas at all stages of the research process. A written request to carry out the study within the Vuwani Cluster was sent to departmental officials, stating the aim of the research. Anonymity and confidentiality were assured in the request. In addition, all the stakeholders were assured that the collected information was solely for purposes of the study. A copy of a permission letter is included in the appendix.

### **3.4 CONCLUSION**

This chapter has focused on the methodology employed in the study. The quantitative approach was chosen because it allowed for the establishment of the commonalities and the unique features of educators' professional conduct, as it was practised in a variety of settings within Vuwani Cluster schools. The development of the questionnaire used in the study was discussed. The population, sample and sampling technique used to choose participants was also explained together with how data would be analysed. Reliability and validity of the research instrument were explained to ensure that other researchers view the research as credible. In an effort to avoid problems related to ethical issues, informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity, harm, caring and fairness were all taken into consideration. Empowerment of the participant as a way of encouraging participants to overlook a loss of privacy in favour of the valuable contribution they were making by their participation was highlighted. The next chapter will focus on data presentation, analysis and interpretation.

## **CHAPTER FOUR:**

### **DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

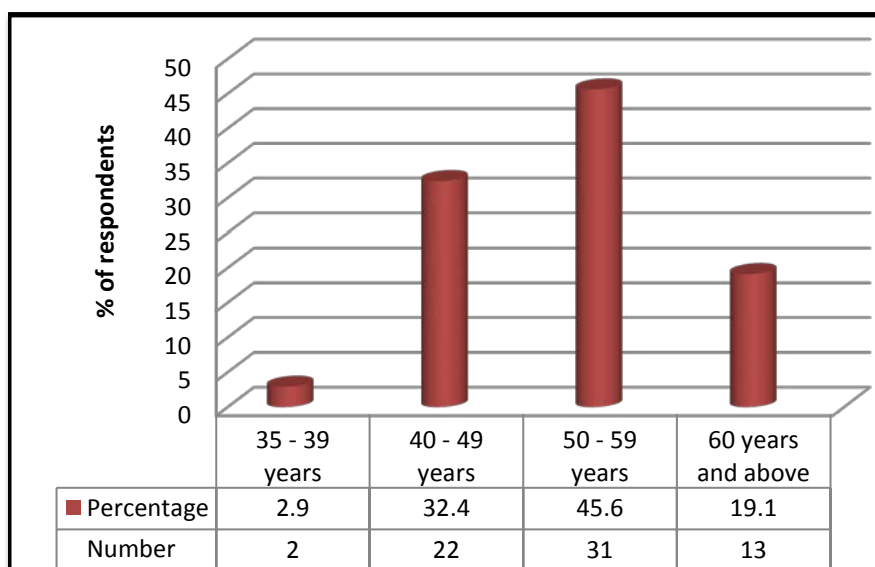
In the previous chapter, the research methods and techniques used in this study were discussed. This discussion dealt with the quantitative approach, population and sample, development of the questionnaire and its reliability and validity, a pilot study and ethical issues.

This chapter focuses on data presentation, interpretation and findings. The purpose of this quantitative study was to examine the professional conduct of educators and the effects thereof on learners' academic performance in Vuwani Cluster, Vhembe District. The findings addressing the research objectives are based on the results of the empirical survey of the principals in Vuwani Cluster, Vhembe District. The demographic profile of the participants is presented in Section 4.2. The research results are discussed in Section 4.3 to determine the nature of the professional conduct of educators and the effects of their conduct on learners' academic performance. The summary and discussion of findings and recommendations will be presented in Chapter 5.

#### **4.2 DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THE PARTICIPANTS**

##### **4.2.1 Age distribution**

Only one respondent did not indicate age group, thus there were 68 valid responses. Almost half of the respondents (45.6%; N= 31) were between 50 and 59 years old. This may be attributed to the fact that most principals are given the post when they have been in the service for a long time and are mature. The diagrammatic presentation tallies with the national ages of principals. The distribution of the respondents across age groups seems to be slightly negatively skewed as depicted by the bar chart in Figure 4.1.



**Figure 4.1: Percentage distribution of respondents by age (N=68)**

#### 4.2.2 Teaching experience

In terms of teaching experience, most of the respondents, 69.3% (N=45), had more than 25 years teaching experience whilst 16.3% (10) had no more than 20 years teaching experience, as shown in Table 4.1.

**Table 4.1: Teaching experience (n = 65)**

Teaching experience	Frequency	%	Rank
7 – 10 years	1	1.5%	5
11 – 20 years	9	13.8%	4
21 – 25 years	10	15.4%	3
26 – 30 years	15	23.1%	2
31 years and above	30	46.2%	1
	<b>65</b>	<b>100%</b>	

It can be observed that there seems to be an almost equal number of principals with 11 to 20 years' experience and 21 to 25 years. Very few principals had less than 10 years' experience as a teacher.

### 4.2.3 Experience as a principal

There were 50 valid responses. In terms of experience, most of the respondents, 66% (N=33), had less than 10 years' experience as a principal. The information is shown in Table 4.2.

**Table 4.2: Experience as a principal (N = 50)**

<b>Experience as principal</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Rank</b>
1 – 9 years	33	66.0%	1
10 – 15 years	4	8.0%	4
16 – 20 years	5	10.0%	3
21 – 25 years	7	14.0%	2
26 – 30 years	1	2.0%	5
	<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>	

From the information gathered from the respondents, one can conclude that the majority of the principals had less than 10 years' experience. This may be attributed to the fact that to become a principal s/he would have had many years of experience as a teacher.

### 4.2.4 Highest qualification

The majority of the respondents, 55.1% (N=38), had an honours degree; 15.9% (N=11) had a first degree and only 13% (N=9) had a diploma. Very few principals did not hold degrees. The majority had at least a degree, as shown in Table 4.3

**Table 4.3: Highest qualification (n = 69)**

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Rank</b>
Diploma	9	13.0%	4
Degree	11	15.9%	2
Honours degree	38	55.1%	1
Master's degree	10	14.5%	3
Doctoral degree	1	1.4%	5
	<b>69</b>	<b>100%</b>	

### 4.2.5 Grades taught

All respondents indicated the grades they taught. This was a multiple-response question as principals teach more than one grade. The majority of the principals teach higher grades. The information is shown in Table 4.4.

**Table 4.4: Grades taught (n= 69) – Multiple-response question**

<b>Grades</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Rank</b>
Grade R	3	4.3%	1
Grade 1	2	2.9%	2
Grade 2	2	2.9%	3
Grade 3	6	8.7%	3
Grade 4	32	46.4%	5
Grade 5	23	33.3%	6
Grade 6	33	47.8%	9
Grade 7	46	66.7%	9

#### **4.2.6 Currently trained in NCS-CAPS**

The highest percentage of 94.1% (n=64) indicated that they were currently being trained in NCS-CAPS whilst 5.9% (n=4) were not trained. Thus, the majority of the principals have been trained in NCS-CAPS.

#### **4.3 OPINIONS REGARDING THE EFFECT OF EDUCATORS' PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE**

The respondents were asked to give their views on the following areas:

- The role and professional conduct of educators;
- The code of ethics and professional development of educators;
- The types of educators' unprofessional conduct commonly practised by educators in schools;
- Strategies to promote the professional conduct of educators; and
- Factors enhancing learners' academic performance.

The aspects were rated on a Likert scale with four possible responses per item: (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) agree, and (4) strongly agree.

### 4.3.1 The roles, professional conduct, code of ethics and professional development of educators

There were four subsections, that is, the role of educators, the professional conduct of educators, the code of professional ethics and the professional development of educators.

### 4.3.2 Roles of educators

The respondents were asked to give their views on aspects of the role of educators. There were 10 items and the information is shown in Table 4.5.

**Table 4.5: Roles of educators**

Role	Level of Agreement				Sample Size	Rank
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree		
As learning facilitator	42.6% (29)	55.9% (38)	-	1.5% (1)	68	1
As class leader	44.1% (30)	51.5% (35)	4.4% (3)	-	68	2
As classroom supporter	44.1% (30)	51.5% (35)	2.9% (2)	1.5% (1)	68	2
As mentor	36.4% (24)	57.6% (38)	4.5% (3)	1.5% (1)	66	4
As coach	37.7% (26)	55.1% (38)	7.2% (5)	-	69	5
As resource provider	26.5% (18)	66.2% (45)	5.9% (4)	1.5% (1)	68	6
As life-long learner	30.9% (21)	52.9% (36)	11.8% (8)	4.4% (3)	68	7
As catalyst for change	29.4% (20)	54.4% (37)	13.2% (9)	2.9% (2)	68	7
As curriculum specialist	31.9% (22)	44.9% (31)	17.4% (12)	5.8% (4)	69	9
As instructional specialist	16.2% (11)	60.3% (41)	17.6% (12)	5.9% (4)	68	10

Table 4.5 indicates that the majority of principals viewed educators as learning facilitators, class leaders and classroom supporters, but 16.2% of principals disagreed that educators were life-long learners, 13.2% disagreed that educators were agents of change, 23.2% disagreed that educators were curriculum specialists and 23.5% did not believe that they were instructional specialists. The information is cause for concern. Learners achieve more in classes where they spend most of their time being taught or supervised by their educators, rather than working on their own or not working at all. The educators are the transmitters of

knowledge and the role models of learners whose role is to ensure that learners should learn under any circumstances. Educators' roles shape the culture of their schools and influence practice among their fellow educators, which improves learners' learning abilities (Harrison & Killion, 2007:74-77).

#### 4.3.3 Educators' professional conduct

There were 10 items regarding educators' professional conduct. For all these items, the respondents achieved overall agreement levels greater than 75%, as shown in Table 4.6.

**Table 4.6: Educators' professional conduct**

Educators' professional conduct	Level of Agreement				Sample Size	Rank
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree		
Are competent	36.2% (25)	56.5% (39)	4.3% (3)	2.9% (2)	69	1
Are honest and have integrity	33.8% (23)	57.4% (39)	7.4% (5)	1.5% (1)	68	2
Have respect towards learners	40.6% (28)	49.3% (34)	7.2% (5)	2.9% (2)	69	3
Care for the learners' needs	39.1% (27)	46.4% (32)	13.0% (9)	1.4% (1)	69	4
Refrain from any form of abuse	34.8% (24)	49.3% (34)	14.5% (10)	1.4% (1)	69	5
Have good communication skills	34.8% (24)	47.8% (33)	13.0% (9)	4.3% (3)	69	6
Have self-efficacy	24.6% (17)	58.0% (40)	14.5% (10)	2.9% (2)	69	6
Are diligent	19.1% (13)	63.2% (43)	16.2% (11)	1.5% (1)	68	8
Are punctual	42.6% (29)	36.8% (25)	14.7% (10)	5.9% (4)	68	9
Are highly motivated	33.3% (23)	44.9% (31)	17.4% (12)	4.3% (3)	69	10

Table 4.6 indicates that the majority of respondents (95.6%) viewed educators as professionals who are competent and 91.2% viewed educators as being honest and having integrity. The respondents (17.3%) agreed that educators do not have good communication skills, 17.4% agree that educators do not have self-efficacy, 17.7% agreed that educators are not diligent, and 20.6% that educators are not punctual, while 21.7% agreed that educators are no longer motivated as professionals.



Highly qualified and expert educators in different subjects are the prerequisite for the improvement of learners' performance, as has been advocated by Sternberg (2009:19-21), who believes that wise educators see beyond their own personal interests to the interests of learners and the schools. This is further supported by Celik (2011), who asserts that competent educators know the learners and how they learn. They find any means necessary to reach all learners, no matter the challenges faced.

#### 4.3.4 Code of professional ethics

The respondents were asked to indicate to what level they agreed on aspects of the code of professional ethics as stipulated in the SACEA 31 of 2000. There were nine items and the information is shown in Table 4.7.

**Table 4.7: Code of professional ethics**

Code of professional ethics	Level of Agreement				Sample Size	Rank
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree		
Refrains from any form of sexual harassment (physical or otherwise) of learners	56.5% (39)	39.1% (27)	2.9% (2)	1.4% (1)	69	1
Respects the dignity, beliefs and constitutional rights of learners and, in particular, children, which includes the right to privacy and confidentiality	44.9% (31)	44.9% (31)	7.2% (5)	2.9% (2)	69	2
Uses appropriate language and behaviour in his or her interaction with learners, and acts in such a way as to elicit respect from the learners	33.3% (23)	56.5% (39)	8.7% (6)	1.4% (1)	69	3
Recognises, where appropriate, learners as partners in education	31.9% (22)	56.5% (39)	10.1% (7)	1.4% (1)	69	4
Strives to enable learners to develop a set of values consistent with the fundamental rights contained in <i>The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996</i>	33.3% (23)	55.1% (38)	11.6% (8)	-	69	5

Code of professional ethics	Level of Agreement				Sample Size	Rank
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree		
Refrains from improper physical contact with learners	41.2% (28)	47.1% (32)	8.8% (6)	2.9% (2)	68	6
Is not negligent or indolent in the performance of his or her professional duties	27.5% (19)	58.0% (40)	11.6% (8)	2.9% (2)	69	7
Avoids any form of humiliation, and refrains from any form of abuse, physical or psychological	31.3% (21)	49.3% (33)	17.9% (12)	1.5% (1)	67	8
Acknowledges the uniqueness, individuality, and specific needs of each learner, guiding and encouraging each to realise his or her potential	29.0% (20)	49.3% (34)	21.7% (15)	-	69	9

Table 4.7 indicates that the majority of principals (more than 90%) view educators as abiding by the following code of ethics:

- Refrains from any form of sexual relationships with learners at school (95.6%)
- Refrains from any form of sexual harassment of learners (95.6%)
- Promotes gender equality (92.7%)
- Does not abuse the position he or she holds for financial, political or personal gain (92.6%).

The respondents (11.6%) disagreed that educators refrained from improper physical contact with learners, 11.7% agreed that educators were negligent or indolent in the performance of their professional duties, 19.4% disagreed that educators avoided any form of abuse, while 21.7% disagreed that educators acknowledged specific needs of each learner.

It appears that codes of professional ethics involving sexual relationships or harassment of learners were most obeyed by educators. It seems that the awareness campaign conducted by educators' unions and the extent of charges laid against those educators who had committed misconduct in the past are alerting others to refrain from such conduct. Some educators have

been dismissed and taken out of the SACE educators' roll. Sections 17 and 18 of the EEA 76 of 1998 (Republic of South Africa, 1998) subsection 1(b) state that an educator must be dismissed if he or she is found guilty of having a sexual relationship with a learner in the school where he or she is employed. The responses suggest that most educators are abiding by this code of conduct.

#### 4.3.5 Educator's professional development

The respondents were asked to give their agreement level on the extent to which educators at their school have developed professionally. There were 15 items and the information is shown in Table 4.8.

**Table 4.8: Development activities**

Development Activities	Level of Agreement				Sample Size	Rank
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree		
Attend workshops regularly	55.9% (38)	44.1% (30)	-	-	68	1
Principal works closely with educators	51.5% (35)	47.1% (32)	1.5% (1)	--	68	2
Attend Union meetings	47.0% (31)	45.5% (30)	7.6% (5)	-	66	3
School Management Team (SMT) supports educators	41.2% (28)	48.5% (33)	10.3% (7)	-	68	4
Get in-service training	31.9% (22)	55.1% (38)	13.0% (9)	-	69	5
School Governing Board (SGB) supports educators	24.6% (17)	62.3% (43)	10.1% (7)	2.9% (2)	69	6
Parents support educators	27.5% (19)	55.1% (38)	15.9% (11)	1.4% (1)	69	7
Hold subject meetings	17.6% (12)	57.4% (39)	23.5% (16)	1.5% (1)	68	8
Obtained higher degrees (professional qualifications)	14.5% (10)	58.0% (40)	23.2% (16)	4.3% (3)	69	9
Circuit Manager (CM) visits the school regularly to address the educators	23.2% (16)	44.9% (31)	27.5% (19)	4.3% (3)	69	10
Register for courses which are relevant to the subjects s/he teaches	13.0% (9)	53.6% (37)	26.1% (18)	7.2% (5)	69	11
Always reads books	14.5% (10)	47.8% (33)	27.5% (19)	10.1% (7)	69	12
Curriculum Advisors visit the school regularly	21.2% (14)	36.4% (24)	34.8% (23)	7.6% (5)	66	13
HoD visits and supports the school	4.4% (3)	13.2% (9)	36.8% (25)	45.6% (31)	68	14
DSM visits school regularly	2.9% (2)	10.1% (7)	44.9% (31)	42.0% (29)	69	15

All the respondents indicated that teachers attended workshops regularly. The developmental activities that had a level of agreement of more than 90% were that:

- They attend workshops regularly (100%)
- The principal works closely with educators (98.6%)
- They attend Union meetings (92.5%).

There were two developmental activities with agreement levels below 50%. The aspect “HoD visits and support school” had an agreement level of 17.6% whilst the aspect “DSM visits school regularly” had the lowest agreement level of 13.0%. One can conclude that the department and district management do not visit schools regularly.

It is evident that workshops are the major instruments for the empowerment of educators. Educators are therefore not receiving the support that they expect from the district officials and this may have a negative impact on the implementation of the skills gained from the workshops. There is a need for monitoring and support by those who are in higher authorities. The RSA Department of Education states three principle roles of district officers as the following: giving support, which includes assisting principals and educators to improve the quality of teaching and learning in their institution; providing an enabling environment for the professional development of educators and administrative staff members in line with the OSD; and the requirement of accountability and to inform and be informed by the public (Republic of South Africa, 2012).

#### **4.3.6 The types of educators’ unprofessional conduct commonly practised by educators in schools**

There were two subsections, namely observational factors and causes of unprofessional conduct.

##### **Aspects of educators’ behaviour observed**

The respondents were asked questions to determine their level of agreement on the observations they made regarding educators. There were 30 items and the information is shown in Table 4.9.

**Table 4.9: Aspects of educators' behaviour observed**

Aspects	Level of Agreement				Sample Size	Rank
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree		
Call learners by disrespectful names	15.9% (11)	27.5% (19)	31.9% (22)	24.6% (17)	69	1
Receive or make private calls during official contact time	8.7% (6)	30.4% (21)	33.3% (23)	27.5% (19)	69	2
Go outside the classroom to talk to other educators	2.9% (2)	30.9% (21)	27.9% (19)	38.2% (26)	68	3
Do not cover curriculum	4.3% (3)	26.1% (18)	42.0% (29)	27.5% (19)	69	4
Leave a class unsupervised	2.9% (2)	27.5% (19)	34.8% (24)	34.8% (24)	69	4
Visit one another during official teaching periods	4.3% (3)	24.6% (17)	31.9% (22)	39.1% (27)	69	6
Send out of the classroom learners who misbehave in class	4.3% (3)	23.2% (16)	40.6% (28)	31.9% (22)	69	7
Poor teaching - teach less than 50% of lesson	2.9% (2)	23.2% (16)	34.8% (24)	39.1% (27)	69	8
Do not use relevant resources to improve academic performance	2.9% (2)	21.7% (15)	34.8% (24)	40.6% (28)	69	9
Bunking classes within official contact time	7.2% (5)	15.9% (11)	31.9% (22)	44.9% (31)	69	10
Making tests too easy	1.4% (1)	21.7% (15)	40.6% (28)	36.2% (25)	69	10
Poor classroom management	2.9% (2)	18.8% (13)	39.1% (27)	39.1% (27)	69	12
Excessive use of technology	7.4% (5)	13.2% (9)	52.9% (36)	26.5% (18)	68	13
Absent from school without permission	8.7% (6)	11.6% (8)	24.6% (17)	55.1% (38)	69	14
Do not follow work schedule and pace setter	2.9% (2)	17.4% (12)	42.0% (29)	37.7% (26)	69	14
Shirk duties	1.5% (1)	18.2% (12)	39.4% (26)	40.9% (27)	66	16
Report late for work without valid reasons	2.9% (2)	15.9% (11)	39.1% (27)	42.0% (29)	69	17
Take unauthorised breaks	1.4% (1)	17.4% (12)	29.0% (20)	52.2% (36)	69	17
Assess learners incorrectly	2.9% (2)	14.5% (10)	37.7% (26)	44.9% (31)	69	19
Use abusive language which hurts learners emotionally	2.9% (2)	13.2% (9)	38.2% (26)	45.6% (31)	68	20

Aspects	Level of Agreement				Sample Size	Rank
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree		
Do not mark learners' tasks	4.3% (3)	11.6% (8)	36.2% (25)	47.8% (33)	69	21
Lack subject content knowledge	2.9% (2)	13.0% (9)	46.4% (32)	37.7% (26)	69	21
Forget learners' test dates	-	14.9% (10)	50.7% (34)	34.3% (23)	67	23
Leave work early without permission	5.8% (4)	8.7% (6)	36.2% (25)	49.3% (34)	69	24
Draw learner from another class without the permission of class educator	4.3% (3)	10.1% (7)	43.5% (30)	42.0% (29)	69	25
Apply corporal punishment	1.4% (1)	11.6% (8)	37.7% (26)	49.3% (34)	69	26
Sleep on duty	2.9% (2)	8.7% (6)	31.9% (22)	56.5% (39)	69	27
Do not listen to learners	1.4% (1)	10.1% (7)	47.8% (33)	40.6% (28)	69	28
Falsely grade learners	1.4% (1)	10.1% (7)	43.5% (30)	44.9% (31)	69	28
Read newspapers or magazines during official contact time	4.3% (3)	5.8% (4)	40.6% (28)	49.3% (34)	69	30

All the aspects had levels of agreement below 50%, with the highest having an agreement level of 43.4%. The observations of at least 30% of the respondents at their schools were that educators:

- Call learners by disrespectful names (43.4%)
- Receive or make private calls during official contact time (39.1%)
- Do not cover curriculum (30.4%)
- Leave a class unsupervised (30.4%)

All the other aspects had agreement levels below 30%. There is cause for concern that two out of every five schools have educators receiving or making calls during official time.

Calling learners by disrespectful names represents unprofessional conduct of educators at primary school as indicated by percentage (43.4%). In addition, leaving learners without supervision is an aspect of the unprofessional conduct of educators that principals see at their

schools. Although some factors have more effect than others on learners' performance, the improper conduct of educators can collectively damage the success of learners in their studies (refer to Chapter 2, item 2.8).

#### 4.3.7 Causes and effects of unprofessional conduct

There were 12 items asking the respondents whether there were causes of unprofessional conduct at a particular school. The information is shown in Table 4.10.

**Table 4.10: Causes and effects of unprofessional conduct**

Causes of unprofessional conduct	Level of Agreement				Sample Size	Rank
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree		
Changes of curriculum	18.8% (13)	46.4% (32)	17.4% (12)	17.4% (12)	69	1
Financial constraints	15.9% (11)	43.5% (30)	23.2% (16)	17.4% (12)	69	2
Stress caused by high workload	15.9% (11)	43.5% (30)	18.8% (13)	21.7% (15)	69	2
Poor teaching and learning environment	10.1% (7)	44.9% (31)	26.1% (18)	18.8% (13)	69	4
Working in one school for a long time	20.6% (14)	27.9% (19)	27.9% (19)	23.5% (16)	68	5
Job dissatisfaction	10.1% (7)	37.7% (26)	29.0% (20)	23.2% (16)	69	6
Family matters	8.7% (6)	39.1% (27)	31.9% (22)	20.3% (14)	69	6
Lack of mentorship	5.8% (4)	40.6% (28)	36.2% (25)	17.4% (12)	69	8
Lack of in-service training	8.7% (6)	36.2% (25)	36.2% (25)	18.8% (13)	69	9
Lack of accountability	7.2% (5)	37.7% (26)	36.2% (25)	18.8% (13)	69	9
Assigned work they were not completely competent to perform	2.9% (2)	36.8% (25)	39.7% (27)	20.6% (14)	68	11
Substance abuse	6.0% (4)	19.4% (13)	28.4% (19)	46.3% (31)	67	12

Four aspects had at least 50% of the respondents acknowledging that there were causes of unprofessional conduct at their schools. These were:

- Changes of curriculum (64.8%)
- Financial constraints (59.4%)

- Stress caused by high workload (59.4%)
- Poor teaching and learning environment (55.0%)

It is evident that close to 65% indicated that changes to the curriculum were the cause of unprofessional conduct. Educators were assigned tasks by their employer that they were not completely competent to perform due to inexperience or a lack of training in a particular area. Concerning finance, difficulties in educators' personal lives could negatively affect their professionalism (Casey, 2006:2). Changes of curriculum, financial constraints, stress caused by high workload, and poor teaching and learning environments are the major causes of educators' unprofessional conduct.

All the other aspects had agreement levels below 50%. The aspects "working in one school for a long time" (48.5%), "job dissatisfaction" (47.8%), "family matters" (47.8%) and "lack of mentorship" (46.4%) were close to 50%. It is obvious that educators are exposed to more stressful conditions than many other careers. This is supported by Burger (2009:20), who states that teaching has been identified as one of the most highly stressed occupations.

#### **4.3.8 Strategies to promote professional conduct of educators**

The respondents were asked to give their agreement level on aspects of the strategies to promote professional conduct of educators. There were 13 items and the information is shown in Table 4.11.

All the aspects had at least 75% of the respondents acknowledging that there are strategies to promote the professional conduct of educators. The aspects that had a level of agreement of more than 90% are:

- Educators encouraged to register for courses related to the subject they offer (95.6%);
- Develop a clear code of conduct for educators (95.6%);
- Conduct school based workshops (94.2%);
- Manage leave forms (94.1%);
- Hold meetings to discuss the educators' professional conduct (94.1%);
- Send educators for in-service training (92.4%);
- Hold subject meetings for content knowledge (91.3%);
- Assess educators' profile with SMT (91.3%);
- Hold phase meetings for unpacking of work schedule (91.3%).



**Table 4.11: Strategies to promote professional conduct of educators**

Strategies	Level of Agreement				Sample Size	Rank
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree		
Educators encouraged to register for courses related to the subject they offer	50.7% (35)	44.9% (31)	4.3% (3)	-	69	1
Develop a clear code of conduct for educators	50.7% (35)	44.9% (31)	2.9% (2)	1.4% (1)	69	1
Conduct school-based workshops	50.7% (35)	43.5% (30)	5.8% (4)	-	69	3
Manage leave forms	55.9% (38)	38.2% (26)	5.9% (4)	-	68	4
Hold meetings to discuss the educators' professional conduct	41.2% (28)	52.9% (36)	4.4% (3)	1.5% (1)	68	4
Send educators for in-service training	54.5% (36)	37.9% (25)	7.6% (5)	-	66	6
Hold subject meetings for content knowledge	44.9% (31)	46.4% (32)	8.7% (6)	-	69	7
Assess educators' profile with School Management Team (SMT)	44.9% (31)	46.4% (32)	8.7% (6)	-	69	7
Hold phase meetings for unpacking of work schedule	43.5% (30)	47.8% (33)	8.7% (6)	-	69	7
Send educators to seminars or conferences for educational matters	42.0% (29)	47.8% (33)	8.7% (6)	1.4% (1)	69	10
Induct novice educators	40.6% (26)	46.9% (30)	9.4% (6)	3.1% (2)	64	11
Hire experts to motivate educators	39.7% (27)	42.6% (29)	13.2% (9)	4.4% (3)	68	12
Purchase and distribute Policy Handbooks for Educators	40.9% (27)	37.9% (25)	18.2% (12)	3.0% (2)	66	13

Educators' professional development through furthering their studies has a positive impact on educators' professional conduct. When educators have adequate knowledge of subject content, they usually develop a positive self-image and a desire to achieve excellent performances by their learners. This can be enhanced by the provision of a clear and self-explanatory code of conduct for the educators that will serve as a guideline on how to interact with stakeholders. This is supported by Ganser (2000), who states that professional workshops, organised in-service programmes and other formally related meetings as

professional development activities experienced by educators have an impact on learners' academic performance.

#### 4.3.9 Factors enhancing learners' academic performance

There were 11 items asking the respondents to indicate their level of agreement on factors enhancing learners' academic performance. The information is shown in Table 4.12.

**Table 4.12: Factors enhancing learners' academic performance**

Factors	Level of Agreement				Sample Size	Rank
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree		
Use of different teaching skills	37.7% (26)	58.0% (40)	4.3% (3)	-	69	1
Educators know and teach learners appropriate subject content	34.8% (24)	58.0% (40)	7.2% (5)	-	69	2
Educators use and implement NCS-CAPS document regularly	42.6% (29)	50.0% (34)	7.4% (5)	-	68	3
Manage to use work schedule and pace setter	44.1% (30)	47.1% (32)	7.4% (5)	1.5% (1)	68	4
Learners are taught by most experienced educators	37.7% (26)	52.2% (36)	10.1% (7)	-	69	5
Educators follow assessment framework	39.1% (27)	50.7% (35)	8.7% (6)	1.4% (1)	69	6
Educators use relevant resources	34.8% (24)	52.2% (36)	13.0% (9)	-	69	7
School management team (SMT) monitors educators work	42.0% (29)	44.9% (31)	13.0% (9)	-	69	8
Educators cover curriculum as per specification	38.2% (26)	47.1% (32)	14.7% (10)	-	68	9
Have qualifications relevant to the subject they teach	34.8% (24)	46.4% (32)	15.9% (11)	2.9% (2)	69	10
Tendency of educators to come to school when they are sick.	11.6% (8)	31.9% (22)	31.9% (22)	24.6% (17)	69	11

The factors that were indicated by the majority of the respondents that had a level of agreement of more than 90% were:

- Use of different teaching skills (95.7%);
- Educators know and teach learners appropriate subject content (92.8%);

- Educators use and implement NCS-CAPS document regularly (92.6%);
- Manage to use work schedule and pace setter (91.2%).

The factor “tendency of educators to come to school when they are sick” had an agreement level of 43.5%. One can conclude that most educators stay at home when they are sick. In contrast, Schwartz *et al.* (2009:28) state that, in order to protect their colleagues from overwork, educators subordinate their health to their work.

Educators who have acquired basic teaching skills, maximum content knowledge and CAPS teaching approaches as well as the ability to make use of work schedules and pace setters will enhance learners’ academic performance. The empowerment of educators is therefore a pre-requisite for the attainment of good results by learners.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

This study on the relationship between the professional conduct of educators and the effects thereof on learners' academic performance focused on tapping some of the contextual challenges and successes in 99 schools in the Vuwani Cluster in the Vhembe District of Limpopo Province. Chapter Four was characterised by the presentation of raw data collected from questionnaires. In that chapter, the results of this study were analysed and interpreted. Based on an analysis of the data collected from questionnaires, in this chapter a summary of the research findings is given. Thereafter the findings are discussed in relation to the research questions as set out in Chapter 1. This is done by referring to the literature study in Chapter 2 and the research data reported in Chapter 4. Finally, the limitations, recommendations and suggestions for further study were discussed.

### **5.2 SUMMARY OF CHAPTERS**

Chapter 1 outlines the problem under investigation. It comprises the following: background to the study; problem statement; purpose statement; research objectives and questions; hypotheses; significance of the study; delimitations; assumptions; and definition of terms.

In Chapter 2, the researcher provided the conceptual theoretical framework regarding the relationship between educators' professional conduct and learners' academic performance. The theoretical background attempted to reveal the critical roles of educators in the teaching and learning process. The theoretical background was used to identify good educator conduct that could be employed to develop an account of how the causes of educators' professional conduct can be minimised.

Chapter 3 concentrated on the quantitative research methodology and design. Selection of the sample, data collection procedures, data analysis, the development of the research instrument and the reliability of the instrument were detailed. This chapter also addressed content validity of the data collection instrument, as well as the pilot study. Finally, it highlighted potential ethical dilemmas.

Chapter 4 focused on data presentation, analysis and interpretation. Information gathered from questionnaires was analysed by the SPSS version 19.0. The researcher analysed the

responses of the participants in order to draw conclusions on findings. The data collected was also coupled with quotations from literature discussed in Chapter 2 as well as other relevant written sources.

This chapter, Chapter 5, summarises and discusses the findings, and draws conclusions and makes recommendations based on the main research question and its sub-questions posed in Chapter 1. These revolve around educators' professional conduct, factors influencing the loss of teaching time and academic performance, causes and effects of unprofessional conduct, strategies to promote professional conduct and factors that enhance learners' academic performance. , the areas that need further research and the limitations of the study are indicated.

### **5.3 SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.3.1 Summary of key findings**

**The main research question was: What is the relationship between the nature of the professional conduct of educators and the effects thereof on learners' academic performance in Vuwani Cluster of Vhembe District?**

This aspect related to the professional conduct of educators in this study and covered issues such as the roles of educators, their code of ethics, and the causes and effects of unprofessional conduct. In terms of unprofessional conduct, the researcher covered themes such as humiliation of learners by educators, inadequate use of contact time because of regular continuous of mobile phone calls, lack of curriculum coverage per quarter, poor classroom management, ineffective teaching by educators, unstandardised formal tasks set by educators, poor observation of periods, absenteeism, poor time management and incapacity due to stress. Aspects relating to learners' academic performance covered issues such as factors affecting learners' academic performance, ways of addressing these factors and challenges facing learners in attaining high academic performance (*cf.* Sections 2.4 & 2.5; Tables 4.6 & 4.7). The respondents agreed that educators were not punctual and highly motivated, which leads to a loss of valuable contact time with the learners and the possibility that the syllabus may be left unfinished (*cf.* Sections 2.8 & 2.9; Table 4.9).

The respondents agreed that the management of the leave register might promote the professional conduct of educators. Another factor that reduces the amount of contact time with learners is the making and receiving of private calls during classes. Calling disrespectful names was reported as a factor affecting learners' academic performance. This kind of unprofessional conduct may affect the self-esteem, self-image, self-acceptance, self-confidence, self-empowerment and self-discipline of learners. When learners are humiliated, their participation in learning activities will be hampered and this could result in poor academic performance.

Leaving classes unsupervised is considered unprofessional conduct that commonly occurs in schools. There can be no effective teaching and learning in the absence of educators. Educators should be developing professionally through furthering their studies because they must be life-long learners and agents of change. Without qualifications relevant to subjects the educator teaches fails the learners. Advanced content knowledge will give the educator confidence and commitment to teach the learners.

Financial constraints affected educators' professional conduct. The welfare of the educators might have a negative or positive impact on learners' academic performance. Stress caused by high workloads affects learners' academic performance as educator desire for teaching deteriorated.

The respondents asserted that curriculum changes were the cause of educators' stress. Negative attitudes to haphazard changes of curriculum affected educators' productivity and competence in teaching the subjects allocated to them. The majority of principals indicated that educators did not come to school when they were sick. Mismanagement of sick leave leaves learners without educators in their contact time and this becomes a burden to the remaining educators and thus affects the general performance of all subjects. The principals were in agreement that educators' professional conduct had an effect on learners' academic performance.

**Research question 2: Findings with regard to the second research question and purpose of the study: What are the types of educators' professional conduct commonly practiced by educators in schools?**

Several examples of unprofessional conduct were identified by the school principals. Firstly, received or made private calls during contact time in the presence of the learners is one aspect

of unprofessional conduct that causes poor learners' academic performance. Learners achieve more in classes where they spend most of their time being taught or supervised by their educators, rather than working on their own or not working at all (*cf.* Section 2.4). Secondly, calling learners disrespectful names affects learners negatively regarding both their academic performance and in their lives during and after school. This affects learners' emotional and psychological wellbeing and can lead to demoralisation, demotivation and discouragement, which leads to poor academic performance (*cf.* Section 2.8; Table 4.9). Thirdly, educators at their schools left their classes unsupervised (*cf.* Section 2.8; Table 4.9) for various reasons. Leaving learners unsupervised has a negative effect on learners' academic performance. Fourthly, educators generally did not come to school when they were sick, which could pose a health hazard for their colleagues and learners (*cf.* Section 2.12; Table 4.12). This contrasts with the findings of Schwartz *et al.* (2009:28), who state that, in order to protect their colleagues from overwork, educators subordinate their health to their work while others abuse the 36 days of normal sick leave by producing false sick notes.

**Research question 3: Findings with regard to the third research question and purpose of the study: What are the causes and effects of the unprofessional conduct of educators on academic performance?**

Firstly, financial constraints affected educator professional conduct (*cf.* Section 2.10; Table 4.10). Difficulties in educators' personal lives may negatively affect their professional and personal development, which can affect their teaching performance at school. A lack of financial management and knowledge can cause educators to incur debt. Secondly, educators had stresses caused by high workloads (*cf.* Section 2.10; Table 4.10). The consequences of stress affect not only individual educators but also affect the school, because they result in an increase of absenteeism, educator turnover and poor academic performance (Burger, 2009:20). Thirdly, curriculum changes were a cause of educators' tension (*cf.* Section 2.10; Table 4.10). Educators are unable to execute curriculum responsibilities and duties due to drastic curriculum changes, inadequate training and a lack of mentorship in the subjects to be taught. The researcher experienced Curriculum 2005 – Outcomes Based Education, the NCS and the RNCS and is now experiencing the CAPS. Very few educators were trained through CAPS for four years while some received training for two days to cover a four-year course. This can cause educators to lose interest in teaching, which, in turn, can lead to learners' poor academic performance.

**Research question 4: Findings with regard to the fourth research question and purpose of the study: What strategies could be formulated to improve educators' professional conduct as a solution to enhancing learners' academic performance?**

Firstly, workshops; seminars; educators' development courses and in-service training (see Section 4.11) improve educators' professional conduct. Schools should conduct school-based workshops and hold phase meetings and subject meetings. Educators who have acquired basic teaching skills, maximum content knowledge and CAPS teaching approaches as well as the ability to make use of work schedules and pace setters will enhance learners' academic performance. The empowerment of educators is therefore a pre-requisite for the achievement of good results by learners. Secondly, educators should develop professionally through furthering their studies because they must be life-long learners. A qualified educator is defined as one who is fully certified and holds the equivalent of a major in the field being taught (see Section 2.12). The workshops organised, in-service programmes, and other formally related meetings regarding professional development activities experienced by the educators have an impact on learners' academic performance (see Section 4.3.4).

### **5.3.2 Discussion**

The respondents were of the opinion that educators' unprofessional conduct such as calling learners by disrespectful names, using mobile phones when making private calls, leaving class unsupervised by visiting colleagues during teaching time and teaching of less than 50% of curriculum were examples of unprofessional conduct by educators. This may have a negative effect on learners' academic performance. Making private calls during lessons steals learning and teaching time. These reflected neglect of duties which impact on learners' academic performance. Some educators make private calls for economic benefits due to financial constraints. The effect of unprofessional conduct by educators on learners may differ from one learner to another and from one school to another as they occur in different contexts or environments. Principals also view unprofessional conduct differently due to their varying levels of experience.

Financial constraints, stress, changes of curriculum, poor teaching and learning environment, working in one school for a long time, job dissatisfaction, family matters and lack of in-service training were cause and effect of unprofessional conduct which have an effect on the academic performance of learners. The principals viewed the following as strategies for improving professional conduct: educators should be encouraged to register for courses



related to the subject they offer. Schools should develop a clear code of conduct for educators; conduct school-based workshops; manage leave forms; hold meetings to discuss the educators' professional conduct; send educators for in-service training; hold subject meetings for content knowledge and assess educators' profile.

The training and development of educators for a better understanding of the code of ethics and their professional obligations may also improve the quality of education provided to learners. This is supported by Ganser (2000), who states that professional workshops, organised in-service programmes and other formally related meetings as professional development activities experienced by educators have a positive impact on learners' academic performance. Motivation and the creation of conducive teaching and learning environments may promote educators' professional conduct and thus enhance the learners' academic achievement. Principals identified the following as factors that could enhance learners' academic performance: the use of diverse teaching skills; educators who know and teach learners appropriate subject content; educators who use and implement the NCS-CAPS document regularly and competently, and educators who manage to use a work schedule and pace setter.

#### **5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS**

From the analysis of the research findings and the conclusions reached, the researcher proposes the following recommendations:

- The Department of Education should implement policies on leave matters. The Basic Conditions of Employment Act No. 75 of 1997 and the Labour Relation Act No. 66 of 1995 must be discussed with educators. Educators who absent themselves from work without valid reasons should not receive remuneration for such days. A monitoring instrument or tool for educator absenteeism must be developed by circuit managers. The use of a time register and period register must be compulsory for all schools.
- The Code of Conduct for Educators outlined by SACE must be revised. Workshops or training on the implications of unprofessional conduct should be made compulsory to all educators in the educator unions and personally to each educator. The SACE certificate must be subject to renewal after each period of five years. Educators should score points through their profile for the period of their contract. Educators who display incompetence or unprofessional conduct may go for rehabilitation

programmes, retraining for other jobs or be dismissed if their scores are very low or unacceptable.

- The Department of Education and Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC) should conduct workshops, seminars and short courses on matters pertaining to labour relations. They must also make available copies of the Policy Handbook for Educators (Education Labour Relations Council, 2003) and distribute these to all educators in the system. Failure to conduct labour relations workshops will still see educators conduct themselves unprofessionally in our schools.
- Educators should be assessed after each workshop through formal tests to ascertain that they have mastered the laws and regulations pertaining to their profession.
- The Acts or policies regulating the functioning of educator unions should be amended. The rights of the educators should be limited so as to recognise the rights of learners as of primary importance. The Code of Conduct for Educators and the disciplinary measures for unprofessional behaviour should be reinforced to reduce conditions of misconduct.
- The Department of Education must provide attractive remunerative package for educators to reduce financial stress. Education on financial management must be offered to the novice educators when they join teaching. Psychological, social and emotional support must be given to all educators to create a favourable disposition and commitment in curriculum delivery.
- School policies must be derived from National Education Policy Act No. 27 of 1996, South African School Act No. 84 of 1996 and Labour Relation Act No. 66 of 1995 so that they can serve as guidelines for the implementation of the Code of Conduct for Educators. The constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act No. 108 of 1996 should be the umbrella for all the mandatory school-based policies. Mobile phone policy should be part of school policies.
- The circuit managers, with the support of the curriculum advisors, should offer continuous support to all educators. Educators with adequate subject content knowledge, and proper and advanced teaching methodology may find teaching interesting, self-enriching and worthy of living an exemplary life to all learners.

Workshops on standardised formal tasks as part of assessment may enhance educator productivity and learners' academic performance. Educators must be engaged in activities that promote love, respect and honour for human dignity as embodied in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa.

## **5.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

### **5.5.1 Return rate of questionnaires**

The researcher distributed all eight (N=80) questionnaires to ninety-nine (N=99) primary schools at Vuwani Cluster and managed to collect sixty-nine (N=69) questionnaires as agreed with the participants. Because the participants were voluntarily completing the questionnaires, some of them did not complete the questionnaire, despite several follow-up calls. Four participants had misplaced the questionnaire and were subsequently provided with replacement questionnaires.

### **5.5.2 Responses**

The composition of the group of respondents was based on the entire population. This means that some of the respondents were not competent enough to respond to some of the questions as their levels of qualifications and experience were inadequate. The attitudes of participants when completing questionnaires were unknown to the researcher. Some may have feared that they would be exposed to the authorities, even when promised anonymity and confidentiality.

### **5.5.3 Demarcation**

The study was conducted only at Vuwani Cluster, Vhembe District. It is possible that different results could have been achieved if the study had been extended to other clusters of Vhembe District. Therefore, the results of the study cannot be generalised to a large district.

### **5.5.4 Time frame for approving ethical clearance**

The ethical clearance application took a long time to be processed. The researcher received the ethical clearance certificate a month after the date it was issued. This matter delayed the completion of the study.

## **5.6 RECOMMENDATION FOR FURTHER STUDY**

The results of this study will be supplemented by a qualitative study by means of in-depth interviews to gauge the lived experience of selected learners, educators and managers in a

few of the schools in Vuwani Cluster, Vhembe District. This quantitative research was focused on the effects of educators' professional conduct on learners' academic performance. Therefore, the researcher suggests the following topics for further research:

- The impact of educational qualifications on the academic performance of learners.
- The management of the school curriculum by an SMT.
- The importance of classroom management.
- The roles of educators in promoting best quality results.
- Causes and effects of educators' absenteeism.
- Challenges facing learners in attaining high academic performance.

## **5.7 CONCLUSION**

In my opinion, the research yielded the expected results. The research managed to address all the research questions raised in Chapter 1 of this study.

The information is cause for concern. Learners achieve more in classes where they spend most of their time being taught or supervised by their educators, who have adequate subject content knowledge and caring rather than working on their own or not working at all.

The changes to the curriculum, financial constraints, stress caused by high workloads, poor teaching and learning environment, job dissatisfaction, family matters, a lack of mentorship, a lack of in-service training and substance abuse were identified amongst the most serious factors determining educators' unprofessional conduct.

An understanding of the CAPS document, experienced, highly qualified educators, the optimal use of resources and effective curriculum monitoring by educators were identified as the most essential prerequisites for effective curriculum delivery.

The researcher has highlighted topics that may be further researched for improving the success of our schools. These include topics on the effects of educator qualifications on teaching and learning, the importance of classroom management, the management of curriculum coverage by the SMT, roles of educators in promoting best results and causes and effects of educators' absenteeism. It is hoped that the findings and suggestions of this study will make a meaningful contribution in this ongoing process.

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**APPENDIX A:**

**PERMISSION LETTER TO CONDUCT RESEARCH STUDY IN VUWANI  
CLUSTER, VHEMBE DISTRICT**



**LIMPOPO**  
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DEPARTMENT OF  
**EDUCATION**  
VHEMBE DISTRICT

REF: 12/2/4/5

ENQ: MANENZHE T.A

TEL: 082 868 3499

MASHABA M.J

P.O BOX 247

TSHAKHUMA

0951

APPLICATION FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH WITHIN VHEMBE  
DISTRICT

1. Permission is hereby granted to you to conduct research within Vhembe district.
2. We advise you to conduct your research with the consent of both the circuit managers and principals of the identified schools.
3. We further would like to advise that at no stage should the research process interrupt the normal learning and teaching time.
4. Wishing you all the best in your studies.

DISTRICT SENIOR MANAGER

2013-06-24

DATE

**APPENDIX B:**  
**RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE**

The effect of educators' professional conduct on academic performance in Vuwani Cluster, Vhembe district.

TO: The Participant [Principal of Primary school]

This questionnaire is intended to gather information about the effect of educators' professional conduct on academic performance in Vuwani cluster of Vhembe district.

I am interested in obtaining your valuable responses so that I can use the information you provide to validate my research on the academic performance of learners and minimise the unprofessional conduct committed by educators at primary schools.

All questions need to be answered completely and accurately. All information will be treated confidentially and anonymously.

Your cooperation in this regard will be highly appreciated.

Kind regards

Mashaba M.J (Mrs)

Field worker contact details:

Name and Surname : MVI SENI JULIA MASHABA

Postal Address : BOX 247 Tshakhuma 0951

Mobile phone : 0721221666 / 0721243421

Email : mashabamviseni@gmail.com

## Section A: Biographical Information

Put a cross(x) where applicable:

1. Setting:

1	Semi-urban	
2	Rural	

2. Gender:

1	Male	
2	Female	

3. Age:

1	35-39 yrs.	
2	40-49 yrs	
3	50-59 yrs	
4	60 yrs and above	

4. Teaching experience in years:

1	7-10 yrs	
2	11-20 yrs	
3	21-25 yrs	
4	26-30 yrs	
5	31 and above	

5. Experience as a principal in years:

1	1-9 yrs	
2	10-15 yrs	
3	16-20 yrs	
4	21 25 yrs	
5	26-30 yrs	
6	31 yrs and above	

6. Highest qualification:

1	Diploma	
2	Degree	
3	Honours' Degree	
4	Masters' Degree	
5	Doctoral Degree	

7. Grade(s) you teach: (You may tick more than one)

1	Grade R	
2	Grade 1	
3	Grade 2	
4	Grade 3	
5	Grade 4	
6	Grade 5	
7	Grade 6	
8	Grade 7	

8. Are you currently trained in NCS-CAPS?

YES	NO

The statements below relate to educators' professional conduct on academic performance. Decide whether you strongly disagree (SD) (1), disagree (D) (2), agree (A) (3) or strongly agree (SA) (4). Put a cross(x) on a number that best describes your position.

**Section B: The Role, Educators' Professional Conduct, Code of Ethics and Professional Development of Educators**

1. Indicate your level of agreement to the extent the educators at your school fulfil the

<b>Roles of educator</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>SA</b>
1.1. as a resource provider	1	2	3	4
1.2. as an instructional specialist	1	2	3	4
1.3. as a curriculum specialist	1	2	3	4
1.4. as a classroom supporter	1	2	3	4
1.5. as a learning facilitator	1	2	3	4
1.6. as a mentor	1	2	3	4
1.7. as a class leader	1	2	3	4
1.8. as a coach	1	2	3	4
1.9. as a catalyst for change	1	2	3	4
1.10. as a life-long learner	1	2	3	4

following roles.

2. Indicate your level of agreement to the extent that the following educators' professional conducts are perceived at your school.

<b>Educators at School:</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>SA</b>
2.1. are punctual	1	2	3	4
2.2. have self-efficacy	1	2	3	4
2.3. teach effectively(as per lesson plan )	1	2	3	4
2.4. show honesty and integrity	1	2	3	4
2.5. have respect towards learners	1	2	3	4
2.6. are highly motivated	1	2	3	4
2.7. are diligent	1	2	3	4

2.8. have wisdom	1	2	3	4
2.9. are competent	1	2	3	4
2.10. have good communication skills	1	2	3	4
2.11. care for the learners' needs	1	2	3	4
2.12. being enthusiastic	1	2	3	4
2.13. refrains from any form of abuse	1	2	3	4
2.14. show professionalism	1	2	3	4

3. State your level of agreement to extent the educators at your school abide by the code of professional ethics stipulated on the SACEA 31 of 2000.

<b>Code professional ethics</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>SA</b>
3.1. respects the dignity, beliefs and constitutional rights of learners and in particular children, which includes the right to privacy and confidentiality	1	2	3	4
3.2. acknowledges the uniqueness, individuality, and specific needs of each learner, guiding and encouraging each to realise his or her potential	1	2	3	4
3.3. strives to enable learners to develop a set of values consistent with the fundamental rights contained in <i>The Constitution of the Republic South Africa, 1996</i>	1	2	3	4
3.4. exercises authority with compassion	1	2	3	4
3.5. avoids any form of humiliation, and refrains from any form of abuse, physical or psychological	1	2	3	4
3.6. refrains from improper physical contact with learners	1	2	3	4
3.7. promotes gender equality	1	2	3	4
3.8. refrains from any form of sexual harassment (physical or otherwise) of learners	1	2	3	4
3.9. refrains from any form of sexual relationships with learners at a school	1	2	3	4
3.10. uses appropriate language and behaviour in his or her interaction with learners, and acts in such a way as to elicit respect from the learners	1	2	3	4
3.11. takes reasonable steps to ensure the safety of the learner	1	2	3	4



3.12. does not abuse the position he or she holds for financial, political or personal gain	1	2	3	4
3.13. is not negligent or indolent in the performance of his or her professional duties	1	2	3	4
3.14. recognises, where appropriate, learners as partners in education	1	2	3	4

4. State your level of agreement on the extent the educators at your school promote professional conduct.

<b>Strategies to promote professional conduct</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>SA</b>
4.1. always read books	1	2	3	4
4.2 attend workshops regularly	1	2	3	4
4.3 hold subject meetings	1	2	3	4
4.4 register courses which are relevant to the subjects s/he teaches	1	2	3	4
4.5 obtained higher degrees( professional qualifications)	1	2	3	4
4.6 get in-service training	1	2	3	4
4.7 attend Union meetings	1	2	3	4
4.8 principal works closely to educators	1	2	3	4
4.9 school management team(SMT) supports educators	1	2	3	4
4.10 curriculum advisors (CA) visit school regularly	1	2	3	4
4.11 circuit manager (CM) visits the school regularly to address the educators	1	2	3	4
4.12 district senior manager (DSM) visit school regularly	1	2	3	4
4.13 head of department (HoD) visits and support school	1	2	3	4
4.14 school governing b (SGB) body support educators	1	2	3	4
4.15 parents support educators	1	2	3	4

**Section C: Unprofessional Conduct Commonly Practiced by Educators in Schools and Causes of Unprofessional Conduct**

5. In my, observation educators at my school

	<b>SD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>SA</b>
5.1. absent from school without permission	1	2	3	4
5.2. bunking classes within official contact time	1	2	3	4
5.3. reporting late for work without valid reasons	1	2	3	4
5.4. leaving work early without permission	1	2	3	4
5.5. take unauthorised breaks	1	2	3	4
5.6. sleep on duty	1	2	3	4
5.7. go outside the classroom to talk to other educators	1	2	3	4
5.8. shirk duties	1	2	3	4
5.9. poor teaching - teach less than 50% of lesson	1	2	3	4
5.10. use abusive language which hurt learners emotionally	1	2	3	4
5.11. poor classroom management	1	2	3	4
5.12. lack subject content knowledge	1	2	3	4
5.13. visit one another during official teaching periods	1	2	3	4
5.14. sent out of the classroom learners who misbehave in class	1	2	3	4
5.15. applied corporal punishment	1	2	3	4
5.16. received or made private calls during official contact time	1	2	3	4
5.17. read newspapers or magazines during official contact time	1	2	3	4
5.18. leave a class unsupervised	1	2	3	4
5.19. does not use relevant resources to improve academic performance	1	2	3	4
5.20. do not follow work schedule and pace setter	1	2	3	4
5.21. does not cover curriculum	1	2	3	4
5.22. draw learner from another class without the permission of class educator	1	2	3	4

5.23. excessive use of mobile phone	1	2	3	4
5.24. assess learners incorrectly	1	2	3	4
5.25. do not listen to learners	1	2	3	4
5.26. call learners by disrespectful names	1	2	3	4
5.27. forgets learners test dates	1	2	3	4
5.28. making test too easy	1	2	3	4
5.29. falsely grade learners	1	2	3	4
5.30. do not mark learners task	1	2	3	4

6. How do you rate the causes and effect of your educators' unprofessional conduct?

<b>Causes of unprofessional conduct</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>SA</b>
6.1. stress cause by high workload	1	2	3	4
6.2. financial constraints	1	2	3	4
6.3. lack of accountability	1	2	3	4
6.4. substance abuse	1	2	3	4
6.5. working in one school for a long time	1	2	3	4
6.6. poor learning environment	1	2	3	4
6.7. lack of training	1	2	3	4
6.8. lack of mentorship	1	2	3	4
6.9. job dissatisfaction	1	2	3	4
6.10. assign work which is not completely competent to perform	1	2	3	4
6.11. changes of curriculum	1	2	3	4
6.12. family matters	1	2	3	4

## Section D: Strategies to Promote Professional Conduct of Educators

7. I implement these strategies to promote professional conduct of educators.

Strategies to promote professional conduct	SD	D	A	SA
7.1. send educators to in-service training	1	2	3	4
7.2. develop a clear code of conduct of educators	1	2	3	4
7.3. conduct school based workshops	1	2	3	4
7.4. hold meetings to discuss the educators' professional conduct	1	2	3	4
7.5 hold phase meetings for unpacking of work schedule	1	2	3	4
7.6 hold subject meetings for content knowledge	1	2	3	4
7.7. purchase and distribute Policy Handbook for Educators	1	2	3	4
7.8. manage leave forms	1	2	3	4
7.9. induct novice educators	1	2	3	4
7.10. educators encouraged to register for courses related to the subject they offer	1	2	3	4
7.11. hire experts to motivate educators	1	2	3	4
7.12. assess educator's profile with School Management Team (SMT)	1	2	3	4
7.13. send educators to seminars or conferences for educational matters	1	2	3	4

## Section E: Factors Enhancing Learners' Academic Performance

8. Indicate your level of agreement to the extent the educators enhance learners' academic performance?

	SD	D	A	SA
8.1 tendencies of educators to come to school when they are sick.	1	2	3	4
8.2 educators know and teach learners appropriate subject content	1	2	3	4
8.3 educators cover curriculum as per specification	1	2	3	4
8.4 manage to use work schedule and pace setter	1	2	3	4
8.5 have basic teaching skills	1	2	3	4

8.6 have qualifications relevant to the subject they teach	1	2	3	4
8.7 earners are taught by most experienced educators	1	2	3	4
8.8 educators use relevant resources	1	2	3	4
8.9 school management team (SMT) monitors educators work	1	2	3	4
8.10 educators follow assessment framework	1	2	3	4
8.11 educators use and implement NCS- CAPS document regularly	1	2	3	4

**Thank You Very Much For Your Time To Respond To These Questions.**

## **APPENDIX C:**

### **LETTER OF CONSENT**

#### **INFORMED CONSENT FORM**

Title: The effect of educators' professional conduct on academic performance in Vuwani Cluster of Vhembe district.

Researcher's Name : Mashaba Mviseni Julia

Supervisor's Name : Professor M.M. van Wyk

Postal Address : P.O. Box 247

Tshakhuma

0951

Cell No : 0721221666

I volunteer to participate in a research study conducted by Mashaba M.J from the University of South Africa. I understand that the research study is designed to gather information about the effect of educators' professional conduct on academic performance in Vuwani cluster of Vhembe district.

1. My participation in this research study is voluntary. I will be one of the approximately 60 principals completing questionnaires for this research.
2. Participation involves completing questionnaires from the researcher. I may spend approximately 15-20 minutes. I understand that I will not be paid for my participation. If I feel uncomfortable in any way during the completion of questionnaires, I have the right to decline to answer any question.
3. I was selected because the study is conducted within my jurisdiction, I may withdraw and discontinue participation at any time without penalty. If I decline to participate or withdraw from the study no one at my school will be told.

4. I understand that the researcher will not identify me by my name in any reports using information obtained from questionnaires, and that my confidentiality as a participant in this study will remain secure. Subsequent uses of records and data will be subject to standard data use policies which protect the anonymity of individuals.

5. I have read and understand the explanation provided to me. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

6. I have been given a copy of this consent form.

---

Name of Participant	Date	Signature
---------------------	------	-----------

---

Name of Researcher	Date	Signature
--------------------	------	-----------

**APPENDIX D:**

**APPLICATION LETTER TO CIRCUIT REQUESTING PERMISSION TO  
CONDUCT RESEARCH**

Enq: Mashaba M.J            P.O. Box 247  
Cell no: 0721221666        TSHAKHUMA  
0951  
26 June 2013

The Circuit Manager  
Dzindi Circuit  
Private Bag x1406  
Lwamondo  
0985

Dear Madam / Sir

**APPLICATION FOR CONDUCTING RESEARCH WITHIN DZINDI CIRCUIT**

1. The above matter bears reference
2. I hereby request for conducting research at Dzindi Circuit on the title the effect of educator's professional conduct on academic performance in Vuwani Cluster of Vhembe District."
3. I am a Master of Education student in the Department of Education Management and Leadership at UNISA. My supervisor is Prof M.M. van Wyk who may be contacted at 083 445 5217 or 012 429 6201.
4. The purpose of the study is to find out the effect of educators' professional conduct on academic performance and to suggest possible solution that may contribute to effective teaching and learning in Vhembe District, in particular the Vuwani Cluster. The outcomes of the study will be used for academic purpose only and the findings will be of great value for the empowerment of education in Vhembe District.



5. The principals will complete the questionnaires. I hereby declare to abide to all ethical code of conduct and that all information will be used for the research study.

6. Hoping that you will this in order

Yours truly

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

(Mashaba M.J)

Date

**APPENDIX E:**

**APPLICATION LETTER TO CIRCUIT REQUESTING PERMISSION TO  
CONDUCT RESEARCH**

Enq: Mashaba M.J

P.O. Box 247

Cell no: 0721221666

TSHAKHUMA

0951

26 June 2013

The Circuit Manager

Dzondo Circuit

Private Bag x1406

Lwamondo

0985

Dear Madam / Sir

**APPLICATION FOR CONDUCTING RESEARCH WITHIN DZONDO CIRCUIT**

1. The above matter bears reference
2. I hereby request for conducting research at Dzondo Circuit on the title “The effect of educators’ professional conduct on academic performance in Vuwani Cluster of Vhembe District.”
3. I am a Master of Education student in the Department of Education Management and Leadership at UNISA. My supervisor is Prof M.M. van Wyk who may be contacted at 083 445 5217 or 012 429 6201.
4. The purpose of the study is to find out the effect of educators’ professional conduct on academic performance and to suggest possible solution that may contribute to effective teaching and learning in Vhembe District, in particular the Vuwani Cluster. The outcomes of

the study will be used for academic purpose only and the findings will be of great value for the empowerment of education in Vhembe District.

5. The principals will complete the questionnaires. I hereby declare to abide to all ethical code of conduct and that all information will be used for the research study.

6. Hoping that you will this in order

Yours truly

---

(Mashaba M.J)

---

Date

**APPENDIX F:  
APPLICATION LETTER TO CIRCUIT REQUESTING PERMISSION TO  
CONDUCT RESEARCH**

Enq: Mashaba M.J                      P.O. Box 247  
Cell no: 0721221666                      TSHAKHUMA  
0951  
26 June 2013

The Circuit Manager

Vhuronga 1 Circuit

Private Bag x1248

Vuwani

0952

Dear Madam / Sir

**APPLICATION FOR CONDUCTING RESEARCH WITHIN VHURONGA 1 CIRCUIT**

1. The above matter bears reference
2. I hereby request for conducting research at Vhuronga 1 Circuit on the title “The effect of educators’ professional conduct on academic performance in Vuwani Cluster of Vhembe District.”
3. I am a Master of Education student in the Department of Education Management and Leadership at UNISA. My supervisor is Prof M.M. van Wyk who may be contacted at 083 445 5217 or 012 429 6201.
4. The purpose of the study is to find out the effect of educators’ professional conduct on academic performance and to suggest possible solution that may contribute to effective teaching and learning in Vhembe District, in particular the Vuwani Cluster. The outcomes of

the study will be used for academic purpose only and the findings will be of great value for the empowerment of education in Vhembe District.

5. The principals will complete the questionnaires. I hereby declare to abide to all ethical code of conduct and that all information will be used for the research study.

6. Hoping that you will this in order

Yours truly

---

(Mashaba M.J)

---

Date

**APPENDIX G:**

**APPLICATION LETTER TO CIRCUIT REQUESTING PERMISSION TO  
CONDUCT RESEARCH**

Enq: Mashaba M.J

P.O. Box 247

Cell no: 0721221666

TSHAKHUMA

0951

26 June 2013

The Circuit Manager

Vhuronga 2 Circuit

Private Bag x1248

Vuwani

0952

Dear Madam / Sir

**APPLICATION FOR CONDUCTING RESEARCH WITHIN VHURONGA 2 CIRCUIT**

1. The above matter bears reference
2. I hereby request for conducting research at Vhuronga 2 Circuit on the title “The effect of educators’ professional conduct on academic performance in Vuwani Cluster of Vhembe District.”
3. I am a Master of Education student in the Department of Education Management and Leadership at UNISA. My supervisor is Prof M.M. van Wyk who may be contacted at 083 445 5217 or 012 429 6201.
4. The purpose of the study is to find out the effect of educators’ professional conduct on academic performance and to suggest possible solution that may contribute to effective teaching and learning in Vhembe District, in particular the Vuwani Cluster. The outcomes of the study will be used for academic purpose only and the findings will be of great value for the empowerment of education in Vhembe District.

5. The principals will complete the questionnaires. I hereby declare to abide to all ethical code of conduct and that all information will be used for the research study.

6. Hoping that you will find this in order

Yours truly

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

(Mashaba M.J)

Date

**APPENDIX H:  
EDITING DECLARATION**

Leonie Viljoen (Dr)  
Language Practitioner

35 Adam Tas Road  
Somerset West  
7130

Postnet Suite 416  
Private Bag X15  
Somerset West  
7129

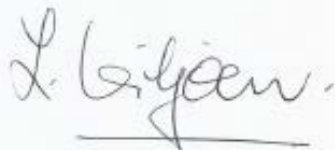
e-mail: viljoel@telkomsa.net  
Cell: 082 9244 733

**Declaration:  
Editing of Thesis**

03 November 2015

To whom it may concern:

This is to certify that I have read and edited the doctoral thesis by **MVISENI JULIA MASHABA** entitled:  
**THE EFFECT OF EDUCATORS' PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT ON LEARNERS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN VUWANI CLUSTER OF VHEMBE DISTRICT**



Leonie Viljoen

ID 4208130077089  
Tax no. 1353971029

DoB 13 - 08 - 1942