

**PROCUREMENT OF LEARNER TEACHER SUPPORT MATERIALS IN EAST  
LONDON DISTRICT PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

by

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## DECLARATION

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this dissertation to my family. Thank you very much for your support and encouragement.

## ABSTRACT

This study explores the flawed procurement and delivery of Learner Teacher Support Materials (LTSM) in East London district at public secondary schools in the Eastern Cape province. Poor management of the procurement of LTSM has the result that some schools in the country have limited access to LTSM because of late delivery, non-delivery, incorrect and, or delivery shortages. These problems have contributed to under-achievement in the affected schools and in turn undermine the learners' constitutional rights and educational aims and goals. Like many other provinces, the Eastern Cape also encountered difficulties with the procurement and delivery of textbooks to various public schools.

To investigate the problem, a qualitative and exploratory study was carried out. The data were collected from a sample of 19 participants involved in the three levels of the procurement process; that is, district officials, school principals and the provincial head office officials. The researcher conducted face-to-face interviews using open-ended questions. The research results showed that although the procurement process of LTSM is centralised at the head office level, the other two levels, namely the district office and the school levels, play a significant part. While these levels play an important role in determining and collating the textbook needs, they require additional communication processes and systems to be in place to avoid prolonged timeframes and follow ups that bring about delays of the overall procurement process. Between communication of the relevant guidelines, and collating and submitting book needs information, delays happen along the way at one or more levels and these ultimately lead to either late procurement, late or non-delivery of books to the relevant schools.

The study showed that although there are rules, regulations and various policies that serve as guidelines in the procurement process, the actual implementation and monitoring is flawed. The lack of coherence promotes mistrust and conflict between the relevant stakeholders, which in turn brings about minimal consultation on changes relating to effective management processes during procurement and distribution of LTSM. The study recommends changes that are needed to achieve effective management to alleviate problems encountered during the procurement and distribution of LTSM in the East London district public secondary schools.

**Key Terms:** Learner Teacher Support Material, Procurement, Management, Delivery, Implementation, Centralisation

## ABBREVIATIONS

CIPS	Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply
DOE	Department of Education
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DEAT	Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
ECDOE	Eastern Cape Department of Education
EC PDOE	Eastern Cape Provincial Department of Education
EC	Eastern Cape
EL	East London
EMIS	Education Management Information System
ERP	Enterprise Resource Planning
EPMS	Electronic Procurement Management System
GDE	Gauteng Department of Education
KZN-DoE	Kwa-Zulu Natal-Department of Education
LOGIS	Logistical Information Systems
LTSM	Learner Teacher Support Material
NDOE	National Department of Education
NT	National Treasury
NNSSF	National Norms and Standards for School Funding
OGC	Office of Government Commerce
OECD	Organisation for economic co-operation and development
PASA	Publishers Association of South Africa
PPPFA	Preferential Procurement Policy Framework Act
PDOE	Provincial Department of Education
PFMA	Public Finance Management Act
PSC	Public Service Commission
PO	Purchase Order
RBV	Resource-Based View
RFP	Request for Proposals
RFQ	Request for Quotations
SASA	South African Schools Act

SLA	Service Level Agreements
SA-SAMS	South African School Administration and Management System
SGB	School Governing Body
SCM	Supply Chain Management
SRM	Supplier Relationship Management
TCO	Total Cost of Ownership
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UN	United Nations
UNGC	United Nations Global Compact
WCED	Western Cape Education Department

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## **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY**

### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

This study is focused on the procurement process of Learner Teacher Support Materials (LTSM) within East London public secondary schools in the Eastern Cape (EC). Research conducted by Chisholm (2013) revealed that there are problems with the procurement of LTSM in South Africa. The procurement of LTSM in the government schools in South Africa is centralised at the provincial head office of the Department of Education (DoE). However, the district offices and schools play an important role in the process, which makes the management and monitoring a very complex and problematic endeavour (Veriava, 2013). Although LTSM refers generally to items such as textbooks, stationery, furniture and technological hardware, in this study it refers to textbooks.

Procurement, which refers to the entire process of analysing the need, locating and selecting appropriate service providers, bargaining for prices, buying and following up on delivery, can be challenging. For example, Boateng (2016), Hugo, Badenhorst-Weiss, van Biljon and van Rooyen (2006) as well as Malmberg (2012) asserted that there are many stages involved in the process that makes it challenging and easily mismanaged. In the public sector, although there are policies and regulation reforms on how the provision of public services should be carried out to stimulate economic growth, the implementation of such policies by government departments is flawed (Munzhedzi, 2016). This apparent gap between ideal policies and their actual implementation on the ground affects the procurement and delivery of critical LTSM in the Eastern Cape Department of Education (ECDoE) (Chisholm, 2013).

The procurement of LTSM by the ECDoE happens within an ideological space without adequate guidelines for implementation, management and monitoring (Eyaa & Oluka, 2011; Huka, Mchopa & Kimambo, 2014). The ECDoE operates as an institution, serving a community with very distinct demographic and socio-economic features which are influenced by and dependent on the timely availability and sharing of information using the most available, acceptable and reliable technologies. The EC is one of the nine South African provinces incorporating the former Transkei and Ciskei areas (part of the Xhosa homelands) and most parts of the province are rural. In 2015, the EC economic growth was recorded at a low 0.6% because of socio-economic developments relating to population dynamics, level of income, poverty, education, access to basic services, labour market conditions and economic

stagnation (DEAT, 2017). The EC province after 25 years of the new dispensation still struggles with the aftermath of being an impoverished and poorly managed *homeland* (Ncanywa 2014).

This study seeks to contribute to the body of knowledge by exploring procurement practices of LTSM within East London District Schools. The remaining sections of this chapter explore the background to the problem, providing an overview of the ECDoE and the structure of the LTSM process in the EC, and the stakeholders involved in the procurement process in the public sector. Finally, the problem statement and research design and methodology are discussed.

## **1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE PROBLEM**

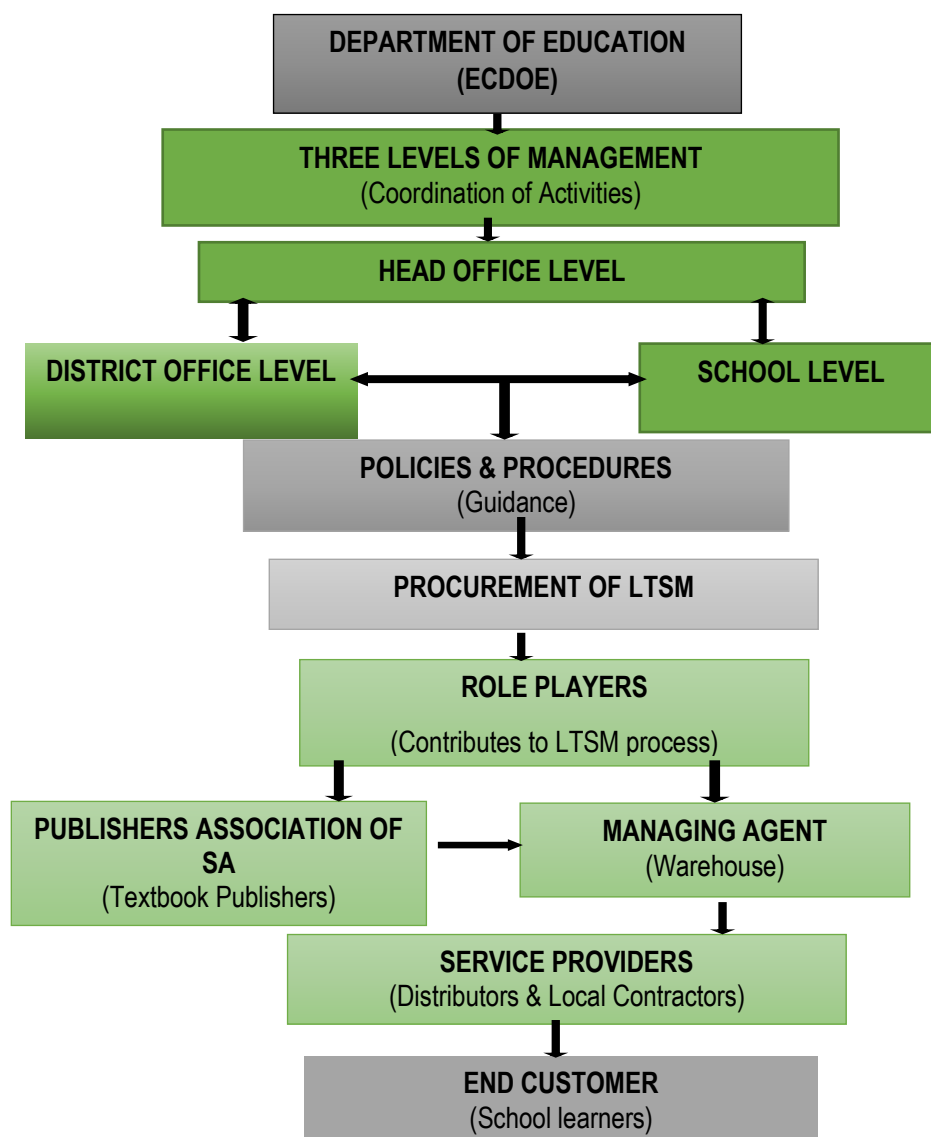
In this section, the background of the study is provided. An overview of the ECDoE, the structure of LTSM procurement process in ECDoE, and the stakeholders involved in the procurement of LTSM in the public sector are outlined. The background clearly shows that the management of the procurement process of LTSM is affected by the ideological and practical implementation disjuncture, as well as by demographic, informational, technological, economic, social and institutional dimensions (Gell-Mann, 1994).

### **1.2.1 Overview of the Eastern Cape Provincial Department of Education (ECDoE)**

As a Member of the Executive Council, the DoE has been given the responsibility, as an overall executive authority, to deliver quality teaching and learning in each province (DoE, 2013). The role of the ECDoE is to offer excellent, lifetime education and training prospects to the citizens of the Eastern Cape Province (Simayi, 2008). Geographically the EC is a large and varied province, covering 169 580 square kilometres, ranging from metropolitan areas that have all the facilities of modern cities (such as electricity, good tarred roads and internet access, to name a few), to deep rural areas where remote villages have none of these advantages (Wright, 2012). The ECDoE has district offices to organise and manage the delivery of education to the communities within the province. The province has twenty-three districts; East London District is one of the education district offices found in the EC which is reported to have about three hundred and seventeen schools characterised as urban but including informal settlements and traditional rural settings (DBE, 2013). These district offices, schools and the provincial head office have an important and interactive role to play during the procurement of LTSM thereby fulfilling their responsibilities in the process.

### 1.2.2 Structure of Learner Teacher Support Material procurement process in Eastern Cape Department of Education

The ECDoE has three levels of operation in which the procurement process is facilitated. The three levels are made up of Head Office, District Office and the School Levels. Figure 1.1 below illustrates the structural process and the key role players involved during the procurement and distribution of LTSM to public schools. These levels each have different activities that are vital to the overall goal of ensuring effective procurement of LTSM. These levels are all governed and guided by policies and procedures to ensure the effective execution of the LTSM procurement process.



**Figure: 1.1:** Structure for the Procurement process of LTSM (Key Role-players)  
**Source:** Researcher

There are role players who contribute and bring value to the procurement and delivery process such as the book publishers and the warehouse-managing agents. The local contractors perform the last mile delivery of the textbooks to the end customer, the school. Figure 1.1 depicts the importance of role players and their individual functions that serve an important part in the whole procurement process.

### **1.2.3 Stakeholders involved in the Procurement of LTSM**

Various role players form part of the stakeholders involved in the procurement of LTSM. All these key stakeholders are responsible for procurement and distribution of LTSM to public secondary schools as illustrated in Table 1.1. The responsibility for the supply and delivery is between book publishers such as Maskew Miller Longman, Van Schaik and Via Africa governed by the Publishers Association of South Africa (PASA), and the provincial ECDoE.



**Table 1.1:** List of key role playing stakeholders, and their functions in the Procurement of LTSM

<b>Key role player</b>	<b>Functions</b>
<b>National Treasury</b> (Quinot & Arrowsmith, 2013)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Managing and administering government expenditure</li> <li>- Exercise overall responsibility for public procurement policy</li> <li>- Issuing of practice notes, procurement guidelines and circulars</li> </ul>
<b>Department of Education (DoE)</b> (DBE, 2013)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Analyse curriculum needs</li> <li>- Make provision for budget</li> <li>- Prepare circular (National catalogue) for requisition of textbooks</li> <li>- Disseminate circular and requisition forms to schools via Regional Offices</li> <li>- Appoint Service Providers to deliver textbooks to schools</li> <li>- Screen and verify requisitions before are captured</li> </ul>
<b>Procurement Specialists</b> (DBE, 2013)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Collate data from requisition forms</li> <li>- Process orders for procurement, distribution and monitoring of supply</li> <li>- Process invoices for payment</li> </ul>
<b>Publishers/ Booksellers/</b> (Simayi, 2008)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Receive and process textbook orders</li> <li>- Deliver the textbooks to the warehouse</li> </ul>
<b>Service Providers</b> (Livhuwani, 2012)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Distribute the textbooks from the warehouse to the schools</li> </ul>
<b>District/ Regional offices</b> (DBE, 2013)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Linking schools and DoE</li> <li>- Communicate relevant information to schools</li> <li>- Collect requisition forms and submit to main warehouse</li> <li>- Monitor retrieval of textbooks in all schools</li> <li>- Monitor and give permission for the disposal of outdated textbooks</li> </ul>
<b>School Principals</b> (Phakathi, 2015)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Accept delivery of textbooks</li> <li>- Implement and monitor the distribution to learners</li> <li>- Implement retention and retrieval of textbooks as guided by the policy</li> <li>- Apply through the Regional office for disposal of outdated textbooks</li> </ul>
<b>Teachers and Learners</b> (GDoE, 2014)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Entrusted with textbooks and study guidelines</li> <li>- Make use of the available resources for teaching and learning</li> </ul>
<b>School LTSM Committee</b> (KZN, DoE, 2013)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- LTSM committee attend to the teaching and learning resource needs and activities</li> </ul>
<b>School Governing Body (SGB)</b> (Mestry & Ndhlovu, 2014)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- SGB was formed in all South African public schools to oversee the administration of the schools</li> <li>- Some SGB's can customise the school's finances with study material's condition due to the power given to them.</li> </ul>
<b>School Management Team (SMT)</b> (Mestry & Ndhlovu, 2014)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Most schools delegate the procurement to SMT's</li> <li>- SMTs are involved in the management of physical assets and the budgeting process</li> </ul>

**Source:** Compiled by Researcher

Table 1.1 shows some of the stakeholders involved in the successful procurement and delivery of LTSM to schools. The accountability of the entire supply chain process starting from purchasing to delivery of goods remains with ECDoE; however, publishers have to

conduct the actual distribution to different schools and eventually submit the invoices to ECDoE to be paid (Simayi, 2008).

#### **1.2.4 Procurement in the public sector**

In this section, the term "procurement" will be defined, followed by a brief discussion of procurement in the South African public sector context. Procurement is the process of obtaining products and services at the best overall price, while getting the correct quantities and acceptable quality available at the exact time and place required (Munzhedzi, 2016). The process is used by organisations to obtain goods and services necessary for the organisations' strategic or daily operations. Within the supply value chain, procurement stands out as the function which focuses on obtaining and purchasing the organisations' products and services (Boateng, 2016). In most organisations, procurement is the means whereby organisations obtain goods and services to use in driving the organisations' strategic goals (Munzhedzi, 2016). Through procurement, organisations employ a tender process to select the required systems and relevant suppliers to be used to obtain the basic and strategic goods necessary to their operational needs (Jefferies & Rowlinson, 2016).

In South Africa, the contracting power of the government vested in the procurement function is used as an empowerment tool to address past inequalities in policies and practices (Quinot & Arrowsmith, 2013). For a long time, public sector procurement played a reactive rather than an active role; however, the new era of procurement forced the industry to move away from traditional and reactive purchasing to a more tactical and strategic sourcing (Miszczak, 2014). These changes called for contemporary change on the overall total cost of purchase and the development of relationships between buyers and sellers. The public sector has been forced to conduct procurement activities with probity while considering the public funds spent to procure the necessary products and services meant for the betterment of the larger public. For the public sector to act, policies and regulations relevant during the procurement process were introduced to be a guiding framework for all the public procurement activities (Quinot & Arrowsmith, 2013).

#### **1.2.5 Procurement of LTSM**

In this section, a brief review of the procurement of LTSM relating to the prevailing procurement processes, policies relevant to procurement of LTSM, their distribution and problems in the procurement process are discussed.

- **Procurement processes**

The public procurement of LTSM happens within the DoE. This process is aligned to and employs government procurement procedures and practices when procuring the LTSM for various public schools. Each year, orders can be divided into three groups, namely: (i) new materials that were never ordered before and are new because of change in the curriculum or book replacement (ii) orders that are meant to replenish book stocks to match the increasing learner numbers (also called top-up orders) and (iii) the mop-up order option that is used to order and provide books to all schools which did not record their orders (Simayi, 2008). A national catalogue is used, from which schools select materials they require for the following year and those with connectivity, capture the requisitions list of required resources online (GDoE, 2011). All the information is verified by the provincial department of education and kept as part of the requisitions by each school.

The sole provider requirement (thanks to strict publishing rights) means textbooks can only be purchased from limited and specific publishers. The purchase orders (POs) prepared for the sole provider act as the contractual and official agreement with the supplier of products or services (Boateng, 2016). In the public sector, all suppliers are paid 30 days after submitting their final invoices. Handfield, Monczka, Giunipero and Patterson (2009) caution that the purchasing department should ensure that the descriptions pertaining to the order's legal conditions on the purchasing contract are maintained.

- **Policies relevant to the LTSM procurement process**

There are various policies relevant and applicable to the procurement of LTSM. However, the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 108 of 1996 (Section 217) provides the overarching framework for all policies. The Preferential Procurement Policy Framework Act, (PPPFA, Act 5 of 2000) was devised to provide a framework for the implementation of the procurement policies. The Public Finance Management Act (PFMA, Act 29 of 1999) regulates financial management in national, provincial and local levels of government. The South African Schools Act (SASA, Act 84 of 1996.) governs funding in public schools (Naude, Ambe & Kling, 2013). The National Norms and Standards for School Funding (NNSSF) policy was promulgated to regulate and guide monetary allocations by provinces to individual schools, and the utilisation as well as the monitoring of school funding (Mestry & Ndlovu, 2014). The LTSM Retention and Retrieval policy is aimed at regulating and setting

parameters for the effective use of teaching and learning resources (Kwa-Zulu Natal (KZN) DoE, 2013).

Racial equity in the state education system was central to education policy making after 1994. The way in which the policies are implemented perpetuates racial inequality (Fiske & Ladd, 2005). The EC like any other province, is governed by significant pieces of legislation that are relevant in providing direction and guidance necessary for planning, organising and controlling. Limited resources deployed during the government provision of public services are a factor which is problematic (Mestry & Ndhlovu, 2014). Government officials who implement LTSM procurement policies and the service providers of LTSM are not attentive to each other's needs (Bush, Joubert, Kiggundu & van Rooyen, 2009). These three facts compound the problems already inherent in the procurement process. It is necessary for schools to have easy access to learning materials, otherwise children cannot have textbooks for learning. The disadvantageous practice of compelling parents in rural and peri-urban predominantly black schools, who cannot afford to buy textbooks to do so compromises the children's' education (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), 2016; Rotich, 2004). Paradoxically the actions of government officials and those of the LTSM providers are in opposition to what the policies suggest.

- **Distribution of LTSM**

The end goal of the procurement process is that all the relevant LTSM should reach the end users, the learners, in schools on time and in a useable state. However frequently books do not reach their destination as a result of constraints at the school, district, regional or national levels (Crabbe, Nyingi & Abadzi, 2014). Distribution relates to receipt of goods by the end user, so getting the right products to the hands of the customer is the aim of distribution management (Saremi & Zadeh, 2014; Segetlija, Mesarić & Dujak, 2011). Unless textbooks are delivered to schools, schools as end customers will likely complain of lack of resources (Fredriksen, Brar & Trucano, 2015). These vital materials could be delivered using various methods: distribution by book publishers directly to the school; distribution by service providers or contractors; distribution by provincial DoE fleet depending on the size of the delivery consignment and delivery by the school principal.

- **Problems in the procurement of LTSM**

Bolton (2007) asserts that public sector procurement is operated under a progressively stricter environment coupled with rapid technological changes and political scrutiny. The provision of textbooks is often a long process involving consideration of different aspects such as curriculum, languages used by schools, subjects, approved bookseller and suppliers. The availability of funds, the timely procurement and delivery of LTSM all contribute to the quality of teaching and learning, which takes place in classrooms (DoE, 2006). There are problems encountered within the process of procurement and the delivery of LTSM. Some problems are due to structural and systems arrangements used in the procurement of LTSM. Other problems are about not adhering to relevant procurement policies and procedures in place (Zitha, Sebola & Mamabolo, 2016). To achieve success stakeholders involved should have a clear understanding of their responsibilities and the value they bring into the process, while governed by the relevant policies (Simayi, 2008). For all the nine provinces, the government spends more than R3.2 billion a year on LTSM, but this public money is not spent effectively, consequently, it does not add much value to the learners' lives due to the poorly managed LTSM procurement process (Bush, Joubert, Kiggundu & van Rooyen, 2009).

### **1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

It might be argued that the current situation in the procurement of LTSM may not require research as it is a process experienced in all schools throughout the country. It is no surprise that comparative measures and estimates are outdated and limited in South Africa. The need for research in this area emanates from the notable gaps in the efficiency of the process. The need arises also because improvements in current and future policies [to be developed] rely on adequate field information that can only be collected through thorough research. It is quite evident that some schools in South Africa have very poor classroom conditions and physical resources; this results in an environment that is not conducive to teaching and learning due to absence of these LTSM (Sabarwal, Evans & Marshak, 2013; Orodho, Waweru, Ndichu & Nthinguri 2013). While teaching and learning support materials are beneficial in the provision of quality education, Bush et al. (2009) report that schools still have difficulties in accessing LTSM due to their current limited nature since each LTSM is meant for a certain group of learners in a specific grade and subject. Due to its limited nature, the annual report by ECDoE (2018) also reported that the more each LTSM is specialized the bigger are the

delays related to procurement processes, which in turn leads to late delivery of these important materials to schools.

In some instances, although learner support materials were designed and translated into various official dialects in advance, these materials were only distributed to schools between April and June of each year, which in turn delayed the start of the academic year and learning activities (Themane & Mabasa, 2002). In addition, while the department managed to secure the order numbers for buying various LTSM on time for the identified schools, the payment process required as part of various procurement steps gets delayed due to late submission of the final invoices (ECDoE, 2018). In KwaZulu-Natal, the late deliveries were the result of schools delaying their requisition submissions (Public Service Commission, 2016). Consequently, there might still be no equality in access to resources in disadvantaged high schools. Although there are currently many recent publications on improvements in this regard, this is a major educational problem, and it raises questions about the quality of education plus the learners' readiness for tertiary education (Sedibe, 2011:129).

Despite the promise for provision of high-quality learning materials, schools do not timeously receive these vital materials. In the EC District Offices officials had to use their own transport to collect LTSM from the warehouse to deliver to schools (Public Service Commission (PSC), 2016). The problems associated with non-delivery and LTSM shortages of textbooks were reported to be one of the intractable problems that continue to severely affect public service delivery required from the ECDoE (Themane & Mabasa, 2002). The Public Protector (2013) reported that, in all schools visited in the Eastern Cape during the investigation, there were issues identified as follows:

- (i) deliveries were done without schools being advised prior to the delivery;
- (ii) some deliveries were done outside official school hours;
- (iii) some schools did not have space to keep delivered materials as some schools were engaged with end of the year examinations; and
- (iv) some schools had no dedicated officials to take charge of the delivered stock or proper document management of school workbooks.

The factors such as non-performance, competence and improper planning in the PDoE render a disservice to the schools as the end customer and provoke distrust amongst all parties. In some instances, LTSM needs assessments were not identified correctly and the exact number of learners at schools was also not determined correctly, resulting in books in the wrong

languages being ordered, the incorrect number of materials being delivered to schools and the distribution of learner materials that were not ordered by that school (National Treasury (UN), 2015). In addition to the above problems, Themane and Mabasa (2002) commented that due to corruption some LTSM were stored by DoE officials instead of being delivered to the deserving schools. The way orders were placed, and textbooks delivered in the EC province is against the acceptable principles of sound administration (Public Protector Report, 2013). In some cases, schools could not make accurate projections of the number of learners expected to enrol in the following year in each grade; this was a generic problem faced by various schools in South Africa (Chisholm, 2013).

In addition to the above challenges arising from the unavailability of LTSM at schools, a study by Browne (2015) highlighted that there is limited literature on the transportation and delivery of LTSM, which forms part of the procurement process. The DoE requires continuous and effective decision-making about locations of warehouses and transportation options to be used for delivering the materials at schools, but this is always lacking (Badenhorst-Weiss, Maurer & Brevis-Landsberg, 2013). In South Africa, there is currently limited information in the literature on school procurement; furthermore, the research reports are outdated, and they do not focus on the procurement process of LTSM in East London. There was a need for this study to be conducted to attempt to fill in the notable gap and serve as a well-informed recommendation for further research. The current study focused on secondary schools as it is a level where learners choose their desired career paths, and they have less chance of succeeding if they are not well-taught due to lack of LTSM.

### **1.3.1 Research question**

Based on the problem stated above, the question that was posed for the study can be stated as, *“How can the procurement of LTSM process be more effectively managed in East London district public Secondary Schools?”*.

The secondary research questions were as follows:

- *What are the current procurement practices employed in the acquisition of LTSM at public secondary schools in East London District?*
- *How are LTSM distributed to public secondary schools in East London District?*
- *Do procurement practitioners in the East London District comply with policies and regulations guiding the procurement of LTSM at public schools?*

- *What are the problems faced with the procurement of LTSM in public secondary schools in East London District?*

### **1.3.2 Research objectives**

The primary objective of this study is *to determine the efficiency at which the procurement process of LTSM is managed at public secondary schools in the East London District.*

To achieve the primary objective, the following secondary objectives were added as follows:

- To investigate the current procurement practices used in the acquisition of LTSM at public secondary schools in East London District.
- To determine how LTSM is distributed at public secondary schools in East London District.
- To find out to what extent the procurement practitioners complied with policies and regulations that guide the procurement of LTSM at public secondary schools in the East London District.
- To determine the problems faced in the procurement of LTSM at public secondary schools in East London District

## **1.4 THE IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY**

This research study concerns the management process of procurement and the example chosen was the Department of Basic Education in relation to LTSM for schools in the EC. The gap that this study fills arises because there are no studies on the topic that have focussed on all three levels of stakeholders that is, schools, districts and head office. There was a need for some investigation at all three levels to understand how procurement is carried out and managed. Interviewing at all the three levels has given the researcher a broader view of the processes. Although procurement is centralised at head office, there are still necessary activities performed by districts and schools, which form part of the concerted effort towards procurement of LTSM.

This study endeavours to make a small but long-term positive contribution to the research about theoretical results and the real impact of effective management procurement and distribution of LTSM in the East London district public secondary schools. Little attention has been focused on the procurement of LTSM to schools as well as how successful it has



been in the overall public-school performance. The study is a contribution to education sector research on the continuing problem.

## **1.5 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

A qualitative research design was used to allow the researcher to become acquainted at first hand with the people involved in the procurement process in EC secondary school, district offices and those at head office (Creswell, 2007; Daniel, 2016). Qualitative research in the study was based on constructivist design (Given, 2008), in which the researcher adopts the position that the viewpoint of the participants, their experiences, perceptions and decisions are significant. The researcher interviewed individuals involved in three levels of procurement, school level, district level and head office level, about the management of their procurement practices.

### **1.5.1 Population and sampling**

The reason for the identification of the targeted population in the sample was to use participants capable of generating answers to the interview questions which were based on an inquiry into the management of LTSM (Etkan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2015; Maxfield & Babbie, 2014). The target population for the study was the government department of education in the Eastern Cape Province. The population consisted of the key stakeholders, which included public secondary schools, the department of education procurement officials situated in both East London district and provincial office that are closely involved in the procurement of LTSM in secondary public schools in East London education district. In practical terms, a small sample of 24 participants was chosen to represent the population (Salkind, 2014). The participants were chosen through a purposive sampling process (Reddy & Kannamani, 2016), because they had knowledge and experience of the subject being studied.

### **1.5.2 Data collection and analysis**

Before data collection, the researcher was granted permission to have access to the research sites. The data were collected through interviews, which were transcribed. A field diary was kept (Given, 2008). A thematic analysis was conducted to identify themes within qualitative data (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017).

### **1.5.3 Ethical considerations**

The researcher adhered to all the ethical guidelines before and during the interviews. This included confidentiality, voluntary consent, credibility, dependability, confirmability,

transferability and authenticity. The participants were reassured that the information shared during the interviews would be kept confidential and each participant gave consent by signing the consent form (Gravetter & Forzano, 2016).

#### **1.5.4 Limitations of the study**

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### **1.6 CHAPTER OUTLINE OF DISSERTATION**

An outline of the proposed research was as follows:

#### ***Chapter 1: Orientation and rationale of the study***

In this chapter an introduction and roadmap of the overall study was provided. This chapter contains the background to the study which included the review of the area being studied and an explanation of the theory that forms the basis for the study. The problem statement, research question and a summary discussion of the research methodology and ethical considerations was given.

#### ***Chapter 2 &3: Literature review***

In chapters two and three literature pertinent to the study was reviewed. Research done by scholars both on procurement and especially procurement relating to schools helped to identify the existing gap in the literature and served as a motivation for this study. Procurement was presented within a broader field by clearly explaining how effective procurement systems and processes might impact the overall procurement process of LTSM for schools. The practices followed within the South African public sector were presented. These included policies and regulations that guide LTSM procurement and the public procurement model.

#### ***Chapter 4: Research design and methodology***

In Chapter Four the background and rationale for the chosen methodological design of the study is presented. The process of choosing a sample, selecting participants and the instruments used to collect data were explained. The process of data collection and analysis of the data is discussed and the ethical considerations for a qualitative study such as this one, are outlined.

***Chapter 5: Analysis of data and discussion of results***

The main aim of Chapter Five is to present the data and explain the data analysis procedure (thematic analysis) followed by the researcher. An outline of the findings from the data collected using open ended, one-on-one interview questions is given. Findings are presented and discussed in the light of what was learned from the literature review.

***Chapter 6: Conclusions and recommendations***

In this chapter the conclusions from the findings are provided. A summary of the research is given as well as a discussion on how the research objectives were achieved. This chapter provides general conclusions and recommendations for future research opportunities.

## **CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF PROCUREMENT PRACTICES: A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE**

### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

In Chapter One, the context of the study, problem statement and the reasoning for the study were provided. Chapter Two presents a theoretical overview of procurement practices. It provides the background to the practice of procurement, its current definition and its importance. There is a discussion on the procurement model followed in the South African public sector.

### **2.2 BACKGROUND TO PROCUREMENT PRACTICES**

For an organisation to enhance the management effectiveness and its procurement practices, it must execute uniform procurement activities throughout its supply chain network (Hamza, Gerbi & Ali, 2016). Before procurement, organisations referred to this function as "purchasing". Purchasing has been around since the invention of money (Ward, 2008). The process of purchasing has evolved according to changes in the socio-economic environment, changed perceptions of its place in the various ways of acquiring and delivering goods and services to the end customer (Thwala & Mathonsi, 2012). Therefore, when organisations engage in procurement, they do so to fulfil operations within the organisation. As the processes unfold, new activities and processes are added to form part of the main ones and in so doing new and overlapping definitions arise.

#### **2.2.1 Definitions of procurement**

Jefferies and Rowlinson (2016) state that tendering and choosing systems are essential steps to acquiring an inventory and/or supplies ranging from low to high value - from paper clips to power stations. A procurement function ensures that service providers deliver to the organisation the correct requirements, package the correct quantities at the agreed times and places and at the best possible price (Hugo, Badenhorst-Weiss, van Biljon, & van Rooyen, 2006). Various scholars have since attached the same meaning to purchasing and supply management (Monczka, Handfield, Guinipero & Patterson, 2010; Baily, Farmer, Crocker, Jessop, & Jones, 2008; Lysons & Gillingham, 2003). Following are some of the definitions and characteristics of procurement as understood and described by various scholars.

“Procurement is a series of sensibly related activities, which culminate in the completion of a major deliverable or the attainment of a milestone”, according to Thwala and Mathonsi

(2012:15). Mofokeng and Luke (2016) take Thwala and Mathonsi's definition further by arguing that procurement should be regarded as a carefully set up number of undertakings meant to ensure that goods and services are received in time and that these goods will satisfy the organisation's requirements and fulfil its goals. A very interesting perspective on procurement is given by Munzhedzi (2016) who in defining this concept emphasizes total cost of ownership, the quantity and quality time and place. For Munzhedzi (2016), when these three factors are carried out to the benefit of the organisation via a contract, procurement is achieved. Boateng (2016) summarizes and simplifies procurement by locating it as a core activity in a supply chain management with a focus on sourcing and purchasing of goods and services within the supply value chain.

From these definitions, it is evident that procurement is not the end but rather the means to an end; and it is not an event like *purchasing*, but rather a process. When firms require goods and/or services to fulfil their operations or to service the end customer, procurement becomes an important component and a decider. Getting the goods on time, at the right place, and in good quality has to result in success for the firms; therefore, a strategic and effective procurement function complements the supply value chain.

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### **2.2.2 Historical contexts of procurement**

The available literature suggests that purchasing is one of the functions or steps within procurement (Jefferies & Rowlinson, 2016). However, this important function was previously perceived as a clerical or low-level managerial activity with a responsibility to execute and process orders necessary for the organisation's operations (Bowersox, Closs, Cooper, & Bowersox, 2013). This kind of purchasing was a procurement approach used wherever there were no proactive sourcing strategies put in place, which caused the supply management function to maintain an entirely reactive role (CIPS, 2014). In the past few years there has been a tremendous amount of change regarding procurement; the role of the procurement officials has become more complex and strategic in nature (Adler, Petty & Randall, 2006).

To effectively manage the purchasing function, planning had to be part of the process to maintain a more active rather than reactive role. The procurement process commences once the need for procurement is identified and ends when the transaction is completed (Bowersox *et al.*, 2013:94). Procurement evolved from being part of a worker's skill set to becoming a job function on its own (Whitmore, 2015). The importance of procurement became evident during the Industrial Revolution (1760-1840) when the new era of procurement forced industry to move away from the traditional and reactive purchasing to a more tactical and strategic sourcing (Miszczak, 2014). The innovative supply chains were formed when humans began trading with each other by obtaining goods from merchants and delivering the requested goods to various buyers (Crandall, Crandall & Chen, 2015:7). Unlike purchasing, procurement became a developed and formal system of obtaining, acquiring and managing the whole process from buying to delivery of the goods (Ward, 2008; Jefferies & Rowlinson, 2016). Because of procurement's proactive role, purchasing had to be embedded as one of the procurement activities. These changes resulted in the modern focus on the total cost of purchase, the development of relationships between buyers and sellers. For this reason, many organisations have promoted procurement to a strategic role vital to the objectives of an organisation (Bowersox *et al.*, 2013). With procurement systems in place, the process of buying becomes a seamless, more organised and an effective supply chain, which brings value to the end customer, and total savings back to the organisations.

### **2.2.3 Procurement objectives**

Even though Makabira and Waiganjo (2014) see procurement as a key and exorbitant activity in an organisation because of the spending of the larger portion of their revenue, it remains indispensable in the bigger picture of things as it cuts the cost of purchasing of goods and services for the organisation. The increasing importance of procurement can be attributed to factors such as the recognition of the budget allotted to purchases in an organisation and the potential overall savings from a viable procurement strategy (Bowersox *et al.*, 2013). Any procurement decision has cost implications to an organisation; and therefore, the objectives for procurement must be known and be advantageous to the organisation. One of the objectives for engaging in procurement is that professionals may reduce the risk by ensuring continuity of supply in the face of unexpected disruption (Miszczak, 2014). The downtime experienced because of production stoppage increases operating costs and may lead to inability to provide finished goods as promised, so having stock is always advantageous (Bowersox *et al.*, 2013). In the public sector, procurement is primarily a vehicle for allowing

organisations to perform their function and deliver key services effectively (Uyarra, Edler, Garcia-Estevez, Georghiou & Yeow, 2014). Globally, public procurement plays a key role in service delivery and the performance of public entities (Dzuke & Naude, 2017). With the clear importance of procurement, organisations set out unequivocal objectives for the procurement function to attain their operating goals while maintaining reasonable procurement costs.

The primary and the ultimate procurement objective is to give organisations an opportunity to realise savings by focussing on the Total Cost of Ownership (TCO) and helping them to achieve operating goals (Bowersox *et al.*, 2013). The following broad objectives of procurement as outlined by Tukuta and Saruchera (2015) are applicable within an organisation for successful operations: (a) ensuring that operational needs are always supported for the requirements of the organisation which is its sustaining force; (b) without effective and efficient management of the procurement process and supplier base and development of strong relationship with other stakeholders or functional groups, the organisation's success remains a pipedream. The objectives help to streamline processes, reduce raw material prices and assist in identifying better sources of supply (Bowersox, *et al.*, 2013). As a way of supporting the vision, goals and objectives of the organisation, procurement experts should design innovative and integrated purchasing strategies (Tukuta & Saruchera, 2015).

Essentially, procurement objectives are multidimensional and have benefits to the organisation such as maintaining continuous supply, minimizing inventory investment, quality improvement, supplier development, access technology and innovation (Bowersox *et al.*, 2013:94). In the quest to ensure continuous supply as one of the procurement objectives mentioned above, supplier development and a progressive improvement in supplier performance becomes important for an organisation as this is used as an opportunity to achieve cost reductions and improvement in product development (Miszczak, 2014). Therefore, it is important to develop close relationships with suppliers to share information and resources to achieve better results and ultimately the organisation's objectives. In the wake of information technology, firms can facilitate and allow access to technology and innovative ideas using the supplier base selected from a good sourcing process (Bowersox *et al.*, 2013; Miszczak, 2014).

#### 2.2.4 Concepts associated with procurement

With procurement comes a myriad of terms used in different stages of the process. These are important to ensure the effective management and coordination of the process. Terms such as Purchasing, Supply Management, Supply Chain Management; Supplier Development; Supplier Relation Management, Strategic sourcing, Category management and Total Cost of Ownership are briefly discussed below.

- **Purchasing:** In the past, purchasing was restricted to the act of buying goods and services, and this still occurs when an organisation reacts to unexpected demands, responding to individual needs as and when they arise (CIPS, 2013; Ward, 2008). The word "purchasing" does not include the process of planning and negotiating with suppliers. When the word "purchasing" refers to the process of buying, learning the need, locating and selecting a supplier, negotiating price and other pertinent terms, and following up to ensure delivery, it has been renamed "procurement" or "sourcing", to sufficiently fit an expanded scope and role (Boateng, 2016; Hugo, Badenhorst-Weiss *et al.*, 2006; Malmberg, 2012). For the purposes of this study "purchasing" and "procurement" will be used interchangeably.
- **Supply Management:** Hugo *et.al*, (2006:53) posit that "supply management is a strategic approach to managing the supply side of an organisation's operations". Boateng (2016:535) describes supply management as "a broad set of activities carried out by organisations to analyse sourcing opportunities, develop sourcing strategies, select suppliers, and carry out all the activities required to procure goods and services". A supply chain involves various participants who perform a sequence of activities in moving physical goods or services from a point of origin to a point of consumption (Crandall *et al.*, 2015). DoE schools advise their needs to the district office, which then relays this information to the provincial head office for further processing.
- **Supply Chain Management (SCM):** The procurement activities as a subset of supply chain management should be directly linked to organisational goals, management plans and stakeholders' expectations (Mofokeng & Luke, 2014). For purposes of this study, SCM basically refers to all the functions central in the management of activities to deliver products, information production and the generation of increased revenue for all participants affected by different stages of the supply chain (Crandall *et al.*, 2015). SCM starts as a set of business processes that are seamlessly worked together to ensure that the requirements of the end user are satisfied within reasonable time and cost limits (Boateng,



2016). In a government department, SCM entails four elements that are crucial for the successful implementation of an effective supply chain network namely: Demand management, Communication, Integration and Collaboration (Crandall *et al.*, 2015:7).

- **Supplier Development:** For a supplier to understand and succeed, an organisation must develop a supplier-training programme and organise supplier development open days (Burt, Dobler & Starling, 2003). More recently, organisations are developing collaborative relationships with suppliers and customers to accomplish true win-win partnerships (Miszczak, 2014). To improve on supplier performance, buying firms usually resort to using a variety of activities. This is achieved through the assessment and monitoring of suppliers' operations, motivating suppliers to improve their performance by using incentives and creating a competitive spirit among suppliers. Establishing a relationship between an organisation and suppliers by working directly with them is crucial. This is achieved through training and other activities (Burt *et al.*, 2003). This has made some firms experience dramatic and even breakthrough improvements in product availability because all parties are interested in each other's operations (Miszczak, 2014). Supplier development is a new way to add value in the supply chain, and more precisely in the procurement process, and to develop mutual supplier-buyer relationships, where the benefits of doing business together arise from sharing and exchanging ideas (Furlotti, 2014).
- **Supplier Relationship Management (SRM):** An effective procurement performance in the supply chain relies on the creation and management of solid relationships with suppliers (Crandall *et al.*, 2015; Nyamasege & Biraori, 2015). SRM is a philosophical grounding for the organisation's strategic management required to control its interactions with the supply base with the objective of extracting the most benefit from the established relationship with the suppliers (Fourie, Badenhorst-Weiss & Nel, 2009). A mature and wise understanding of SRM is to regard it as an instrument for identifying strategic suppliers and establishing a strong network of relationships from which the organisation can get the most benefit and improve its business performance (Poirer, 2012). The DoE has a database of about 42 main suppliers (book publishers) with whom they have signed Service Level Agreements (SLA) and they are used each year during the procurement of textbooks for schools in the Eastern Cape. Mandiyambira, (2012) comments that it is best to engage in long term relationships with a few suppliers when managing the supply side to build supplier trust rather than playing off many suppliers against each other.

- **Strategic sourcing:** Traditionally, sourcing was the process of locating and employing suppliers (Sollish & Semanik, 2011). In modern times, sourcing is strategically positioned as being central in the procurement process with the ability to create value for customers, open space for creativity and innovation. Strategic sourcing is also used to identify new products and market opportunities (Furlotti, 2014). Accordingly, Sollish and Semanik (2011) argue that strategic sourcing can be given a variety of functions like being an organisational procurement strategy and supply management process aimed at locating, developing, qualifying, and employing suppliers that add maximum value to the buyer's products or services. From a strategic point of view, sourcing directs purchasing and supply managers to plan, manage, and develop the supply base in line with the organisation's strategic objectives (Furlotti, 2014).

The following sourcing strategies are likely to be considered and evaluated by an organisation before choosing the best suitable sourcing strategy (Crandall *et al.*, 2015).

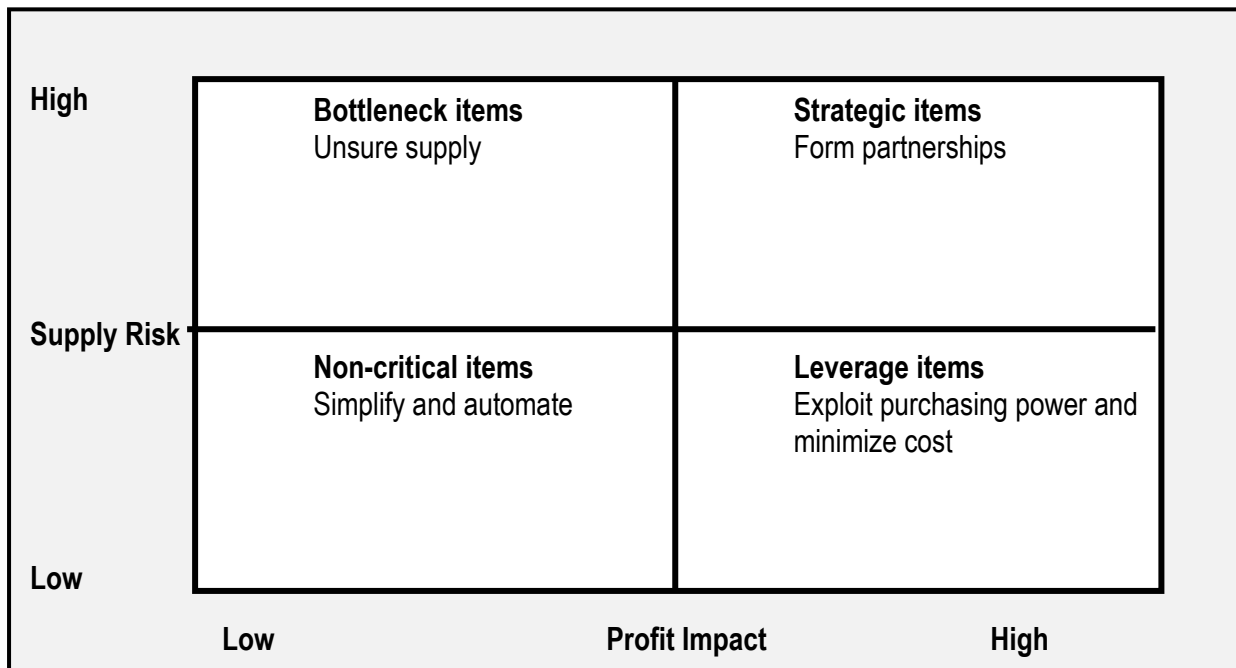
1. **Make-or-buy:** This is the act of deciding whether to produce an item internally or to buy it from an outside supplier. According to Bloem and Bean (2015) the outsourcing of a business function by a company results in the making of a "buy" decision; which is the opposite of when the organisation decides to "make" a product using its internal resources. There are disadvantages and advantages for each chosen sourcing strategy. An organisation always weighs the cost of engaging in one instead of the other. An in-house provisioning refers to as a *make* is a situation where the state or organisation provides itself with the goods or services it needs to fulfil its public functions whereas, procurement or buy involves an external supplier providing a public entity with the goods or services it needs (Quinot, 2014).
2. **Outsourcing:** The process of having suppliers provide goods and services that were previously provided or made internally is *outsourcing*. As always, the reduction of costs is a popular reason for the outsourcing of logistics services (Karrapan, Sishange, Swanepoel & Kilbourn, 2017).
3. **Subcontracting:** Sending production work outside to another manufacturer is subcontracting. A buy decision becomes a viable option when logistical activities do not form part of a central function of the company, where poor in-house information technology (IT) capabilities exist (Bloem & Bean, 2015). The guiding principle for an organisation on its strategic sourcing is to form relationships with companies or suppliers whose strategic business and operational goals correspond with those of the

organisation (Sollish & Semanik, 2011). According to Sollish and Semanik, it can be argued that need exists for greater care to be exercised by an organisation to choose a viable sourcing strategy. Bloem and Bean (2015) support this stance by arguing that the method used for such a choice should be informed among others by factors such as addressing the operational complexities involved, comparing among different outsourcing options on a similar basis, quantifying risks and rewards, keeping the organisation's core competency and long-term procurement in mind. When outsourcing is done successfully, it brings several benefits like a more cost-effective supply chain, better supply chain partners and increased revenue. In the case of a government department, any procurement done is subjected to public procurement regulations (Quinot, 2014). Public procurement focuses on the procurement of goods that are acquired from third parties; included in this process are services and works that serve the public at large. The third parties also provide routine items such as stationery to very complex expenditures such as road construction (Dzuke & Naude, 2017). Therefore, organisations tend to categorise their purchases as either routine or complex as briefly explained below.

- **Category Management:** Category management assists the organisation to decide what type of supplier relationship is needed for each group of products and what procurement process to follow. Effective strategic sourcing should always start with a proper analysis of the total purchasing expenditure of the company. This must be categorized into different sections according to the possible risks involved and the projected amount to be spent (Hugo, *et.al.*, 2006). Before the above strategies can be finalised and approved, an organisation will be required to categorise all the products they procure according to their order of importance. Companies who resolve on transferring the non-core functions to external suppliers enables them to leverage their resources and concentrate on issues critical to survival and future growth (D'amato, Kgoedi, Swanepoel, Walters, Drotskie, & Kilbourn, 2015). Category management assists the organisation to decide what type of supplier relationship is needed for each group of products. The products range from routine or non-critical items, leverage items, bottleneck items, to strategic items.

For each category, different relationships are formed with suppliers. Figure 2.1 below depicts categories of products procured by an organisation. Organisations put products in each category according to the level of importance, differing from one organisation to the other, to follow the cost or profit trends for each product or item. The non-critical item

supply risks can be low if easy substitution possibilities have been established, many suppliers are available and a high availability and standard specifications of product items such as consumables and stationery are in place (Hugo *et al.*, 2006). The advantage for leverage items such as computer hardware is that even though a large amount is spent, nevertheless supply risks are very low. The opposite is true for the bottleneck items for which the amount that is spent is low, but involve high risk because the substitution is difficult, products like fuel (Hugo *et al.*, 2006).



**Figure 2.1:** Analysis of total purchasing spending in the strategic sourcing process  
**Source:** Hugo *et al.*, (2006)

Because of difficulty in substitution for strategic or critical items, large amounts are spent with high risks of availability depending on the strategic importance of the item or service and limited or no competition. The basic rule for critical supplies and services is that the supply base must be always monitored to ensure that existing sources are kept abreast of technology and add improvements as necessary (Solish & Semanik, 2012). After all products have been categorised, an organisation decides which supplier and/or Logistics Service Provider (LSPs) is entrusted with the function of servicing the organisation. The organisation can use this categorisation to decide which procurement method to deploy for procurement of stationery or textbooks.

- **Total Cost of Ownership (TCO):** In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, procurement professionals are focusing on the total cost of ownership (TCO), which is an analysis that places a single value on the complete lifecycle of a capital purchase (Venter, 2017:1). For every

procurement transaction there a substantial amount of money spent. Effective procurement for a TCO depends on the understanding of the components of the life cycle cost view of an asset. This includes acquisition, service, ongoing maintenance, setup, support, and all operating expenses (Boateng, 2016; Solish & Semanik, 2012). One cannot go wrong using the TCO methods because they typically track all the additional costs beyond the purchase price which are inclusive of the life cycle of the materials or service purchased by an organisation (Solish & Semanik, 2012). TCO gives a cost analysis in the ownership of the asset which is normally considered useful when making sourcing decisions (Boateng, 2016). The costs such as transportation and customs duties, installation and maintenance, training, rework, inventory carrying and storage, handling and finally, disposal at the end of life form part of the TCO (Solish & Semanik 2012). Organisations could embark on greater cost saving by reviewing and improving internal business processes to include the TCO.

### **2.3 THEORIES ON PROCUREMENT**

Theories enable people to organise thoughts and knowledge, formalise predictions, generate coherent explanations of real-world phenomena, and integrate knowledge (Flynn & Davis, 2014). Procurement deals with an ongoing decision-making process from deciding which products to buy, which suppliers to use and which customers to target. The timing and precision in making these decisions can be a deciding factor for a successful procurement process. The most prevalent theoretical perspectives on procurement are models drawn from disciplines such as economic and strategic management (Sanderson, Lonsdale, Mannion & Matharu, 2015). The theories include systems theory and game theory, resource dependency theory, organisational decision-making, agency theory, dynamic capabilities, the resource-based view, transaction cost theory and social exchange theory. All the above-mentioned theories are necessary for the holistic survival of an organisation and are used in different situations throughout an organisation's life cycle. These theories are deployed to accomplish different goals and strategic objectives.

This study explores procurement in the public sector that could deploy any of the above-mentioned theories as the need arises. A Resource-Based View (RBV) theory is a theory drawn from strategic management. This research examined the relationship between an organisation from a resource-based view; it also focused on the potential of a specific resource to be used as a strategy to achieve a sustainable competitive advantage without

ignoring the improvement of the organisation's performance (Szymaniec-Mlicka, 2014). The various theories that are applicable to and could be adopted by organisations in different situations are briefly presented below:

- **Resource-Based View:** There are theories guiding various strategic management and management science disciplines, which are indirectly linked to public procurement. Flynn and Davis (2014) stated that little is known of the role that theory has played to date within the public procurement field. He argues that this is the situation that stands in contrast to the related field of supply chain management in which theory is widely discussed and reviewed.

The RBV is a strategic management theory used to examine how resources can drive competitive advantage (Almarri & Gardiner, 2014). Organisations' resources and competences are the two determining factors of the organisation's effective functioning, which at any given moment can be combined to give it a competitive edge over other companies (Szymaniec-Mlicka, 2014). This theory is the most preferable for public procurement compared to other theories. The preference is due to its focus on the interior structure of the organisation, the organisation's resources and capabilities, which allows the organisation a better chance to meet any emerging challenges (Szymaniec-Mlicka, 2014). One of the fundamental rules in procurement is that any company's response to its environment should allow space for advancing strategic flexibility. Moreover, this must be informed by the implementation of the resource approach, which focuses on the company's resources and sharpens its antennae to detect the slightest change in the environment. The result would enable the company to easily adapt and exploit new opportunities (Szymaniec-Mlicka, 2014).

Several factors are worth bearing in mind when deliberating on the role of theory in public procurement. Research has revealed that public procurement research is a new entity in the academic space. This problem is compounded according to Flynn and Davis (2014) by the definitional ambiguity that is suffered by the concept. This makes the application of theory not easy in comparison to mature fields of studies operating within strict parameters. Since the current study investigates how procurement of LTSM could be effectively managed in public secondary schools, a need to look at and evaluate how the available resources (human and financial) are being used to ensure a successful and effective management of the procurement process is important. Public procurement process can benefit from the findings of a more robust theoretical investigation and

debate with the possibility of fruitful interaction with academic research leading to new suggestions and intuitions being recommended (Dimitri, 2013).

- **Organisational decision-making theory:** One of the strategic actions in an organisation is a process of decision-making and it culminates in successful problem solving (Mykkänen & Tampere, 2014). To achieve effective decision-making, organisations should identify values, uncertainties and other things that might influence daily decisions (Ahmed & Omotude, 2012). This process creates a healthy organisational decision-making environment.
- **Agency theory:** Agency theory applies when one actor, the principal, delegates responsibility for the execution of valued activities to another, known as the agent (Sanderson *et al.*, 2015). The principal could be an accounting officer in an organisation while the agent could be the supplier or distributor contracted to supply the organisation with goods and services. Principals normally delegate decision-making to the agents and expect that the agents perform certain actions in exchange for a reward (Boučková, 2015). The principal's responsibility is to ensure that the delegated activities are undertaken in a way that serves the organisation's interests rather than those of the agent (Sanderson *et al.*, 2015). This theory clarifies the roles and responsibilities for each actor and monitors how each actor performs.
- **Transaction cost theory:** According to transaction cost theory it is necessary to study the transaction costs of goods and services among market participants (Ćetković, Lakić, Knežević, žarković, & Sazonova, 2016). The transactional cost theory has become an important anchor for the analysis of a wide range of strategic and organisational issues (Martins, Serra, da Silva Leite, Ferreira & Li, 2010). This theory is essentially a theory of the firm which is constantly trying to respond to the question of why the company exists and what could be done better to service its clientele (Ćetković, *et al.*, 2016). Organisations according to this theory must continue asking questions to be able to exceed the customers' expectations.
- **Social exchange theory:** The social exchange theory is particularly focused on the understanding of the interactive exchange of resources between social participants, be it individuals or groups (Nunkoo, 2016). After a series of mutual exchange of valuable and beneficial resources, the quality of the relationship between the parties become stronger (Mitchell, Cropanzano, & Quisenberry, 2012). It is understood that the

interactions are likely to continue only if both parties feel that they are benefitting more from the exchange than they are giving (Nunkoo, 2016).

- **Resource dependency theory:** The resource dependency theory shows how firms and other organisations rely on each other's resources for their survival and success (Sanderson *et al.*, 2015). One firm requires access to resources such as raw materials, goods, services, finance, and knowledge while the other produces and offers the same to this needy firm. Depending on the quantity of resources one firm requires firms gain power over resource providers by entering into alliances with other agencies (Hillman, Withers & Collins, 2009). In a network resource dependency, the linkages or relationships are characterised by the exchange of existing resources and the co-creation of new resources (Sanderson *et al.*, 2015).
- **Dynamic capabilities theory:** Dynamic capabilities are realised when firms redeploy and reconfigure their resource base to meet evolving customer demands and competitor strategies (Inan & Bititci, 2015). Capabilities vary across firms because of management choices and leadership styles (Pisano, 2015:11). Firms develop capabilities to deal with organisational change and dynamic capabilities enable firms to gain competitive advantage in rapidly changing markets like technology (Inan & Bititci, 2015).
- **Systems theory:** Systems theory gained its popularity from the natural sciences (biology and physics) and has since expanded its influence as a tool for the explanation of processes within and between organisations (Schmidt, 2015). From the perspective of this theory, supply network is seen as a whole, rather than its component parts (Sanderson *et al.*, 2015).
- **Game theory:** Game theory refers to economic decisions involving more than one actor such as a buyer and a supplier, which take the form of a sequential, strategic game involving anticipation by one player of the other player's actions (Sanderson *et al.*, 2015). In several economic articles this theory is applied to the field of public procurement where buyer and seller relationships are important (Schmidt, 2015). The repeated interactions between players enable them to get to know each other and to build trust. For organisations and suppliers to build trust, they need to overcome the lack of information available in a once-off interaction by pursuing long-term relationships.



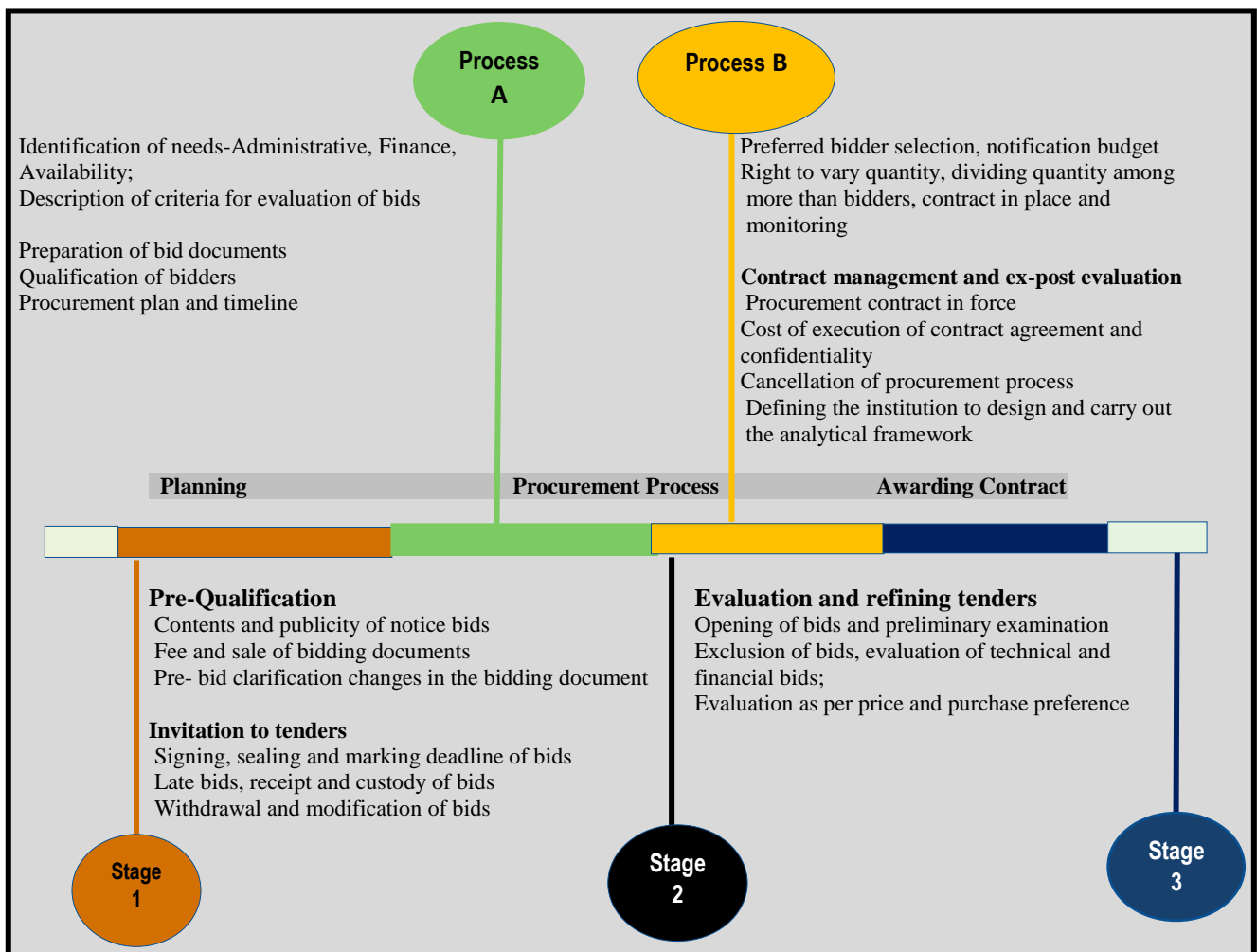
## 2.4 GENERIC PROCUREMENT PROCESS

The procurement process aims at identifying user requirements, evaluating user needs effectively and efficiently, identifying suppliers who can meet these needs and developing agreements with those suppliers (Furlotti, 2014). The entire procurement process is based on recognition of needs followed by the description of these needs. Another important step is the identification of sources of supply without which the whole organisation cannot survive. Then evaluation of the supplier and selection follows. It is then that an order is prepared and placed. Without follow up, the process will be at risk of collapse. When goods are received, a record must be kept for future reference. The goods are inspected on arrival and payment is made when satisfied with the quality of the goods (Huka, *et al.*, 2014:16). The procurement process starts with the receipt of a request through to managing the supplier or contract. During the procurement process, the following concepts inform the process.

- **Purchase Requisition:** The purchase requisition is an electronic or paper form that provides some critical information about the need; it includes a detailed description of the material or service, the quality, date required, estimated cost, and authorisation (Handfield *et al.*, 2009).
- **Purchase Order:** The Purchase Order (PO), is the contractual agreement with a supplier of goods or services that specifies payment terms, delivery dates, item description, quantities, freight terms, and all other obligations and conditions (Boateng, 2016). POs are the most used form of procurement as a contractual document containing all the information outlined in the requirements section, along with the organisation's standard terms and conditions (Solish & Semanik 2012). Since every order establishes the contractual relationships between the organisation and the supplier, the purchasing department should take great care when wording purchase agreements because these are legally binding documents containing the standard legal conditions that the orders are subjected to (Handfield *et al.*, 2009; Musanzikwa, 2013). Once the purchasing department has an acceptable supplier which meets the specifications with an appropriate price, a PO is prepared (Fredendall & Hill, 2012). In other instances, blanket POs are issued to cover a procurement commitment to a supplier for specific products or services at an agreed-upon price for a set period or for a limited quantity and a spending amount (Solish & Semanik, 2012). Blanket POs are used to eliminate many smaller orders to minimize the amount of paperwork processed (Solish & Semanik, 2012).

### 2.4.1 Stages of the generic procurement process

Public and private sector institutions engage in procurement for goods and services, such as office suppliers, computers, or standard software packages (Tadelis, 2012). Since the public sector occupies a key role in the economy, it ensures the optimum utilisation of available funds and resources to benefit its people (Dzuke & Naude, 2017). Generally, the goods are mass-produced and are typically purchased at either list price or using some form of competitive tendering (Tadelis, 2012). Figure 2.2 below depicts the three main stages of the procurement process, procurement planning, procurement process and evaluation stage and contract award and supplier management stage. A brief discussion of the stages is outlined below.



**Figure 2.2:** Three main stages of the Procurement process

**Source:** National Public Procurement Observatory by CUTS Institute for Regulation & Competition (CIRC, 2008)

### 2.4.1.1 Stage one: Pre-Procurement Planning Stage

As outlined in Figure 2.2, the most important step in procurement is planning which helps to determine what to buy, when and from what source. Procurement plans are a product of a long process and effort which help organisations to determine what purchases an institution must undertake in both the short and the long-term (National Treasury, 2015). The importance of the pre-procurement planning stage is that it enables planners to determine whether expectations are realistic or not, especially the expectations of the requested entities. This is important because organisations usually expect their requirements to be met at short notice and over a shorter period when compared to the existing organisational procurement plan (Lynch, 2013). The planning stage includes the identification of administrative, financial and technical needs, budget availability, description of criteria for evaluation of bids, preparation of bids documents, and qualification of bidders, procurement plan and timeline. As part of pre-procurement, the organisation will make a strategic corporate decision regarding the allocation of budget and priorities and outcomes (Murray 2008). For the planning stage to be effective, the buying organisation must identify business needs through consultation with stakeholders about what is needed and the budget that is available to fulfil the needs (OGC, 2008). It is vital for the planning organisation to engage the market to understand the solutions that may be available and to get feedback on how their requirements may be best met. Planning of the procurement process also includes activities such as deciding on the choice of procurement methods to be utilised. If planning is done properly, delivery delays are reduced, recurring contracts and unnecessary extensions are eradicated and the need for emergency procurement is eliminated (National Treasury, 2015).

- **Alternative procurement procedures:** During the planning stage, the types of procurement procedure to be used is also chosen and justified depending on the value of the products, goods or the service being procured. In this stage, the focus is also on issues involved in the choice of the tender process. The open procedures, restricted procedures, competitive dialogue and negotiated procedures are the main awarding mechanisms available to public authorities (Baldi, Bottasso, Conti & Piccardo, 2016).

1. **Open procedure** starts with an organisation placing an advertisement in a widely read newspaper to invite prospective contractors to tender (Ogunsanmi, 2013). Although open auctions are slowly becoming popular, they are not always as good as they appear in public procurement. This is one of the reasons why open auctions are not always recommended as the preferred alternative except after considering important

and unique contract characteristics (Baldi *et al.*, 2016). In addition, Ogunsanmi (2013:217) states that this procedure is strongly criticised for its increased cost of processing.

2. ***The restricted procedures*** specify all project characteristics in the tender notice and each certified firm can bid (Baldi *et al.*, 2016). This procedure uses targeted and limited suppliers and is not open to the public because of the nature of the goods and/or services being procured.
3. ***The competitive bidding system*** is less prone to corruption since it allows free entry by qualified bidders with an objective criterion for selecting the winning bidder (Tadelis, 2012). This procedure is both a substitute and complement for alternative procedures such as negotiated contracts. Therefore, selecting a supplier without a competition bidding mechanism should raise concerns regarding transparency (Tadelis, 2012).
4. ***The negotiated procedure*** applies when a company or client has an established relationship of trust with a contractor and the client is ready to give the contract to this contractor based on the reasonable price (Ogunsanmi, 2013). The use of negotiated procedure is more likely to be recommended for complex projects (Baldi *et al.*, 2016).

The above instruments are characterized by different degrees of flexibility, discretion and manageability and might produce different outcomes depending on projects' characteristics, procurement objectives and organisational goals (Baldi, *et al.*, 2016). Procurement planners can estimate the time required to complete the procurement process and award contracts for each requirement.

#### **2.4.1.2 Stage Two: Procurement Process and Evaluation Stage**

During the procurement process, bidders are invited, the fees and sale of bidding document is publicised, pre-bid clarification changes in the bidding document are done and then the final bid invitation with the deadline goes out. The procurement and evaluation stage refer to the process of selecting vendors, establishing payment terms, strategic vetting, and selection, the negotiation of contracts and actual purchasing of goods (Quinot, 2014). The procuring entity can determine beforehand from the number of requirements on the procurement plan any need for additional staff, including external assistance for completing all procurement requirements listed on the procurement plan (Lynch, 2013). This process starts by selection of the suitable supplier or bidder. For public sector tenders, the names of the prospective

bidders are verified with the NT to ascertain that the successful bidder is not restricted from doing business with the public sector due to past practices (Hlakudi, 2012).

- **Supplier selection:** The metrics used during supplier selection have evolved over the years from the traditional set comprising of price and quality (Chuan, Thiruchelvam, Mustapha, Muda, Husin, Yong, Ghzali, Rusli, Itam, Beddu & Kamal, 2016). Supplier selection is very complex and therefore demands careful handling. There are many factors that should be considered when supplier selection is done, such as the quality of service to ensure a quality product, how the supplier could leverage information technology and the Fourth Industrial Revolution capabilities to benefit both the supplier and the company. Other factors to consider in the selection of suppliers are delivery performance, financial stability of the supplier, the geographic location of the company, what the spread and range is of services offered, possibility of long-term relationship, the reputation of the company or supplier, its prices and optimum cost. The list of these factors that form the criteria for the selection of a supplier is extensive including surge capacity, flexibility in operation and delivery, on time delivery and low error rates and creative management (Karrapan *et al.*, 2015:3). During the supplier selection process, a pool of suppliers is chosen for procurement according to a predefined set of criteria (Chuan *et al.*, 2016). During the supplier evaluation, each supplier is evaluated against the set criteria to ascertain their capabilities. The past performance of the supplier is evaluated as one of the selection criteria (Tadelis, 2012).

#### **2.4.1.3 Stage Three: Contract Award and Supplier Management Stage**

This stage deals with evaluation, tender refining, contract management and ex-post evaluation. The contract award phase begins when the proposal evaluation team completes the evaluation of proposals and selects a contractor or recommends a contractor for award of a contract (Curry, 2016). The ability of the supplier to expedite and allow flexible delivery performance is considered a key supplier selection criterion and a decider during the contract award stage (Wu & Zhang, 2014). Supplier performance may be perceived as how well a supplier is able to provide the required products to the buyer (Pooe, Mafini & Loury-Okoumba, 2015). A supplier who might have scored the highest score in the deciding criteria and shown that its capabilities and experiences can support demands and can grow as needs evolve will be awarded the contract as a qualified vendor (Guth, 2007).

Attention is needed to ensure that the contract is implemented as intended and agreed (Lynch, 2013). The contract management activities can be broadly grouped into three areas as identified below (OGC, 2010):

- ***Service delivery management*** - The role of service delivery management is to ensure that the goods or services are being delivered as per agreement. They must be at the required level of performance and quality to support the business and operational needs of the contract.
- ***Relationship management*** - In the contract management the relationship between parties must be kept open and constructive to resolve or ease possible tensions and proactively identify problems before they occur.
- ***Contract administration and change management*** - Contract administration and change management concerns the formal governance of the contract and responds to changes to the contract documents.

For successful and timely execution of the procurement project, the supplier performance should be tracked carefully, and the sourcing database updated frequently to provide supply managers with information for future decision-making (Fawcet, Ellram & Ogden, 2014). Procurement professionals should remain with suppliers who are responsive and competitive or otherwise identify new suppliers with potential for excellent performance (Tukuta & Saruchera, 2015). A well-performing supplier is likely to remain in the supply chain and grow its relationship with the buying firms, and in turn the firm will obtain the highest possible value for money (Pooe, *et al.*, 2015). An effective management of suppliers will reduce the money lost from unauthorized, irregular, or fruitless and wasteful expenditure (Fourie, 2009). When procurement officials adhere to the relevant governing acts for procuring goods and services at market related prices, the quality of service delivery will be optimised (Zitha *et al.*, 2016).

Monitoring of the procuring process helps to determine how the actual performance compares with planned activities, alert the pertinent departments and make any necessary adjustments to the procurement plan (Lynch, 2013).

#### **2.4.2 Contract Management and Administration**

The contract management is the “process that ensures that all parties to a contract fully meet their obligations” (Boateng, 2016:146). The contract administration phase begins upon award

of the contract and continues until the contractor has fulfilled all its contractual responsibilities (Curry, 2016). The following four elements were recommended by Sollish and Semanik, (2011) to be demonstrated and identifiable for a contract to be legally enforceable:

- **Mutual agreement** - includes an offer to buy and its acceptance as acknowledged by the seller.
- **Legality** - contracts that violate a legal statute or are against public policy are invalid, therefore a contract must be legal.
- **Consideration** - a contract must show evidence that an exchange of some value for a promise is part of the agreement.
- **Capacity** - parties to a contract need to be legally competent to enter and perform its obligations.

The contract managers in both the public and private sectors aim to reduce costs and improve financial and operational performance; this can be realised when parties adopt and agree to more formal and structured contract management procedures (CIPS, 2007). The reports compiled by the relevant departmental employees about the supplier's performance and delivery enables the contract section to conduct supplier reviews and discuss improvement (Sollish & Semanik, 2011). The contract administration staff monitor compliance and performance to ensure the objectives of the contract are met on time and within budget (Boateng, 2016; Lynch, 2013). When efforts to obtain satisfactory performance from the contractor fails, a default letter should be sent to the contractor (Curry, 2016).

## **2.5 PROCUREMENT MODEL AND ORGANISATIONAL DESIGN**

In this section, the procurement models are discussed to showcase the developmental stages of purchasing to supply management.

### **2.5.1 Procurement models**

Procurement has always been recognised as a means of delivering business support to an organisation. It is perceived as the key economic activity, which allows public sector organisations to perform their functions and effectively deliver their services (Witjes & Lozano, 2016). There are some existing scientific models for procurement which are designed to assist procurement professionals in implementing the procurement best practices to improve organisational performance (Versendaal, van den Akker, Xing & de Bevere, 2013). One of the most famous procurement portfolio models was introduced by Kraljic in

1983 and has gained attention in recent literature about professional purchasing and organisational performance (Gelderman & Weele, 2005). This model emphasises the need for companies to attain more effective supply management to guard against disruption by categorising purchases into four kinds, namely bottle necks, noncritical, leverage and strategic items (see section 2.2.4 above) (Gelderman & Weele, 2005). As the model developed, purchasing became a crucial function in supply management. The most appropriate model that fits the purchasing and a procuring organisation would be the Reck and Long procurement model, which outlines the stages of procurement.

The model has different maturity levels starting from low to high and it is suggested that for a purchasing staff member to operate on a higher maturity level, more skills and knowledge are required (Schweiger, 2015; Versendaal *et al.*, 2013). The maturity levels illustrated in Table 2.1 below are associated with improved performance of procurement in an organisation. An organisation typically starts with passive involvement in purchasing; it then moves to a more active involvement over time; and this result in the improvement of the organisation's performance.



**Table 2.1:** Reck & Long’s Procurement Maturity Model

	<b>PASSIVE</b>	<b>INDEPENDENT</b>	<b>SUPPORTIVE</b>	<b>INTEGRATIVE</b>
<b>DEFINITION</b>	The purchasing function has no strategic direction and primarily reacts to the requests of other functions	The purchasing function adopts the latest purchasing techniques and practices	The purchasing function supports the firm’s competitive strategy by adopting purchasing techniques and practices	Purchasing’s strategy is fully integrated into the firm’s competitive strategy and PSM implements a strategic plan
<b>CHARACTERISTICS</b>	High proportion of purchaser’s time is spent on quick-fix and routine operations	The strategic direction of PSM is independent of the firm’s competitive strategy	Purchasers form part of the sales and proposal teams	Established Cross functional training of purchasing professionals
	Purchasing function and individual performance are based on efficiency measures	Performance is primarily based on cost reduction and efficiency measures	Suppliers are considered a resource which is carefully selected and motivated	Purchasing is done for the whole organisation for the realisation of economies of scale
	Little inter-functional communication takes place because of purchasing’s low visibility	Coordination links are established between purchasing and technical disciplines	Markets, products and suppliers are continuously monitored and analysed	Purchasing performance is measured in terms of contribution to the firm’s success

**Source:** Adapted from Schweiger (2015)

According to Table 2.1 organisations start by being passive in their buying behaviours without considering future purchases and relations with the suppliers. From this level, the buyer and the supplier decide to be supportive of each other’s actions and eventually form integrated partnerships to assist in procurement coordination and strategic realisation.

### 2.5.2 Procurement Management functions

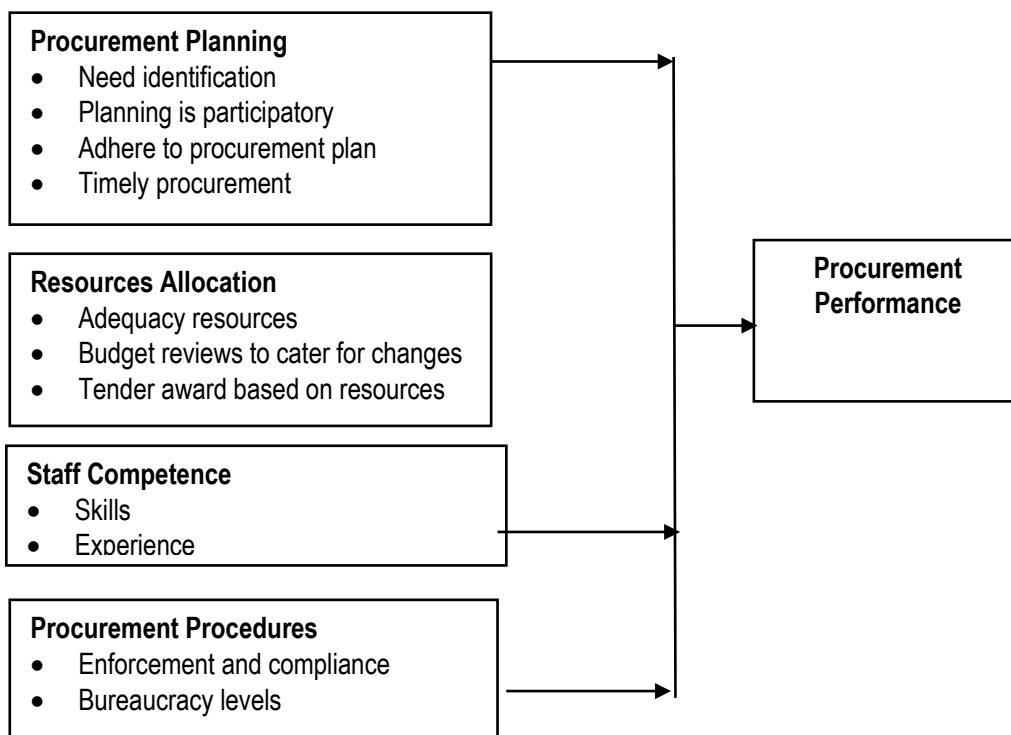
The position of the organisational unit helps to assess the status this unit has in the organisation and the degree to which an organisational unit can influence decisions on the strategic and tactical levels. The levels found within an organisation perform specific roles that have to do with planning, organising, implementing, controlling, and coordinating activities. One of the structural characteristics is formalization of the procedures and rules to direct the behaviour of the members (Kanepej & Kirikova, 2018).

Managers in the organisation have a need to guard against factors that may affect procurement performance. There are strategic factors that affect the performance of the procurement function and the whole organisation such as procurement planning, staff competence in the procurement process, procurement procedures and resource allocation (Hamza *et al.*,2016). These are briefly discussed below.

- **Procurement planning:** Organisations need to have a detailed plan defining and documenting all the purchases required from suppliers. This stage answers questions such as: what to procure; when to procure it; where to procure it; the method of procurement to be used; when will the resources be available; the method of procurement to be used and the people to be involved in the process (Hamza *et al.*,2016). A successful procurement plan culminates with timeframes dedicated to each item that is due to be procured in that period. Managers assist in ensuring that the planning process is implemented.
- **Staff competence in procurement process:** The availability of adequate knowledge in procurement matters and application of skills by the staff members in the organisation leads to performance delivery (Hamza *et al.*, 2016). Unfortunately, many organisations do not have staff with the right competences necessary to perform good procurement process management (Banda, 2009).
- **Procurement procedures:** The procedures are meant to provide guidance to the personnel as to what to follow in the execution of activities, what constraints are put on behaviour and show how the procurement function should work to achieve strategic objectives (Hamza *et al.*, 2016). Without standard procurement procedures the organisation is bound to fail in properly covering all aspects of the procurement cycle such as selection of supplier, negotiating on contracts, placement of orders and payment (Danis & Kilonzo, 2014). It is a management role to ensure that these procedures are in place and implemented successfully. Clear and effective procurement procedures are critical in successful achievement of desired government policy objectives (Monczka *et al.*, 2010).
- **Resource allocation:** The key to the utilization of available assets in an organisation is resource allocation which includes processes for determining the best way these assets can be deployed in serving the organisation to attain the organisational objectives (Bhattacharya, Hasija & Van Wassenhove, 2012). Organisations require resources such as human resources, financial resources, tangible and intangible resources to

perform successfully. It is no use having these resources if they are not effectively managed and deployed for the organisation's advantage (Danis & Kilonzo, 2014).

When these strategic guidelines are properly followed, organisations tend to have a competitive advantage while successfully serving their end customers (Hamza *et al.*, 2016). Procurement function has a significant impact on business performance. Figure 2.3 below illustrates the importance of procurement planning, resource allocation, staff competence and procurement procedures in the effective management and realisation of the overall organisational procurement performance.



**Figure 2.3:** Factors that affect Procurement performance

**Source:** Hamza, Gerbi & Ali (2016)

The responsibility of each senior management and middle management levels is to stress the benefits of transparency and openness during the procurement process and to introduce the necessary control and reporting procedures (OECD, 2000). The lines of reporting and performance should be streamlined according to the existing levels. In a public sector, the Heads of Departments are accountable to their Ministers for the overall management of procurement activities. The Heads of Procurement and senior procurement directors are accountable to heads of departments for various high-level management and co-ordination activities and the individual procurement officers are accountable to Heads of Procurement,

and to their clients, for the services they provide. All the levels have different activities that feed into the overall procurement process (National Treasury, 2015). However, when one of these levels fails to perform their part, the whole procurement process tends to lag. All the stakeholders involved during the procurement of goods and services are necessary in the successful management of the overall process.

### **2.5.3 Centralised and Decentralised procurement process**

From time to time, an organisation switches from procuring its goods and services via a centralised system to a decentralised procurement system, depending on the need and the technological capabilities. Organisations choose between centralised and decentralised processes of procurement. These two procurement processes are both essential for companies operating in the procurement space. In centralization, authority, responsibility, and powers are concentrated within the organisation or buying unit (Kanepej & Kirkova, 2018). Centralization comes with advantages such as the maintenance of good transparency provisions, meaning there is proper recording and reporting of transactions within the organisation. Added to this are effective management controls and an audit trail open to public scrutiny (OECD, 2000). Centralization is commonly practised in public procurement because public institutions as such tend to have larger buying centres and use more specialization, formalization, and complexity in organizing their purchasing functions (Kanepej & Kirikova, 2018). Centralisation allows for a proper enforcement of procurement regulations.

Using centralized data has the advantage of allowing budget experts to compare suppliers and make advantageous deals based on volume, even across multiple locations (OECD, 2000). A decentralized procurement occurs when “all main purchasing is controlled at the different business units, and or divisions” (Islam, 2014:12). In such a system, the buyers are often responsible for a large variety of products, which are bought in smaller quantities compared to a centralized purchasing function. The disadvantage of a decentralised model occurs when a centre has insufficient information to monitor compliance of procurement transactions with the law (OECD, 2000). The advantages and disadvantages of both the centralised and the decentralised procurement systems are depicted in Table 2.2.

**Table 2.2:** Advantages and Disadvantages of Centralised and Decentralised procurement system

PROCUREMENT SYSTEM	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
<b>CENTRALISED</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All purchases go through one central department</li> <li>• Comprehensive spend analysis easily available</li> <li>• Maverick spending is eliminated</li> <li>• With the information stored in a centralized database, procurement managers are better able to improve supplier risk management</li> <li>• Repeat orders can be fully automated, either with an inventory management system or on a time schedule.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corporate procurement adds a layer of bureaucracy to every transaction, and removes decision autonomy</li> <li>• lagging processing and delivery times may occur when a purchasing department makes strategic buying decisions over local suppliers</li> </ul>
<b>DECENTRALISED</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Each office, division, or project manager has purchasing power to order supplies at their own discretion without seeking approval.</li> <li>• Supplies are purchased by each department on demand to meet immediate and long-term needs.</li> <li>• Local managers are in the best position to understand the needs of their divisions.</li> <li>• Order processing is fast and easy, with no wait for approval</li> <li>• Any need that arises can be sourced and filled immediately</li> <li>• Replacements for defective or damaged shipments can be initiated immediately, without routing through the company procurement process.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunities for bulk purchasing across departments, and for negotiating better terms based on bulk are lost.</li> <li>• Orders are typically made by administrative staff, who do not the knowledge and skill to evaluate suppliers and consolidate orders.</li> <li>• A decentralized system often means disorganized data</li> <li>• Compliance issues may arise as managers order or reorder</li> </ul>

**Source:** Kanepej & Kirikova (2018)

For both centralised and decentralised procurement structures there are advantages and disadvantages. There is no one size fits all procurement structure because of the unique procurement circumstances. Procurement officers must follow numerous rules and policies applicable to each procurement structure.

#### **2.5.4 Generic procurement issues**

There are a few challenges identified as threats that hinder the smooth running of the procurement process. The use of technology and system integration, skills and experiences of procurement personnel can be problematic. The identification and evaluation of the existing information systems used for the fulfilment of purchasing process is important in the holistic

and effective management of the procurement process (Panayiotou, Gayialis & Tatsiopoulos, 2004). The emerging technologies have improved communications, data management, visibility, and coordination across supply chain networks (Badenhorst-Weiss *et al.*, 2013). However, not all the procurement organisations have moved from the traditional old systems (Biedron, 2019). These hindrances will be briefly discussed below.

- ***Lack of System Integration:*** lack of system integration is mainly due to limited technological innovations, and this leads to out of date information technology systems (Versendaal *et al.*, 2013). Procurement organisations handle extremely large numbers of documents and transactions that require electronic filing and dissemination of the information, but lack of reliable systems makes it difficult for organisations to manually manage documents (Schweiger, 2015). These are deficiencies when it comes to document standardisation. The available information technology supports a very small percentage of activities; most of the activities are carried out manually. There is a need for system integration which will allow organisations to transact and procure with ease.
- ***Not Enough Skilled and Experienced Procurement Staff Members:*** There is a need to extensively train procurement staff to be able to improve and contribute to the efficiency of organisations (Hamza *et al.*, 2016). For example, schools tend to miscalculate their procurement needs during the need assessment for the required textbooks (Chisholm, 2012). This causes a shortage problem at a later stage. Procurement officials or those that play a role in the process need to be trained on demand analysis and calculations. There is a rather complex approvals process, and it takes a long time to procure goods and services and complete orders (Hamza *et al.*, 2016). There is a need for monitoring skills and management capacity for an effective procurement process. When the process is not monitored, there will be a lot of delivery shortages and mistakes.

## 2.6 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the conceptual context of procurement was outlined in line with the research question and research objectives of the study. This part of the study introduced the procurement terms and definitions important for this study. Background information gathered from the literature was discussed, and the historical contexts of procurement was outlined in detail, including discussions of models and theories relevant for the current study.

## **CHAPTER 3: REVIEW OF PROCUREMENT PROCESS OF LTSM IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR**

### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter the procurement practices, processes and methods followed within the South African public sector, specifically the Department of Education, are presented. Some literature from other countries is also shared as a way to help with understanding the basics of education and how procurement may have an impact on its success. The comparisons between different countries serve as a form of amplification of information to help in the decision-making processes on the depth of current challenges faced in managing the procurement process. There might be differences from country to country as a result of issues that are beyond the scope of the current study; however, there remains some valuable lessons to be learned from how other countries operate their education system. The policies and regulations guiding the LTSM procurement and the supply chain management model applicable within the public sector are introduced. The chapter also includes the comparison of the demographic information and the budgets of the SADC regions with that of South African education. The challenges encountered during the procurement process of LTSM are also highlighted.

### **3.2 PROCUREMENT PRACTICES IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN PUBLIC SECTOR**

In this section, the procurement practices applicable to the South African public sector are discussed with a closer look on the developmental stance and procurement reforms in the South African public sector. The pillars and objectives of public procurement are briefly discussed. This discussion culminates in the applicable public sector procurement thresholds used during the various procurement procedures.

#### **3.2.1 Background to procurement in the South African public sector**

The South African reforms in public procurement were instigated in 1995 to promote the principles of good governance and by introducing a preferential system to address socio-economic objectives (Ambe, 2016). The new government swiftly moved to draw up procurement regulations benchmarked against global best practices (Vyas-Doorgapersad & Kinoti, 2015). The procurement reforms helped with the establishment of Contract Committees and Procurement Units in procuring entities and the restoration of

professionalism in the procurement function (Eyaa & Oluka, 2011). The reforms have improved the performance of procurement procedures through enhancing transparency, accountability and competitiveness (Huka *et al.*, 2014). Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) are developing at a fast pace, and this has forced most developing countries to reform their public procurement systems to cope with such changes. This assists them in adopting excellent professional practices, improving performance and enhancing achievement of value for money (Huka *et al.*, 2014). Public sector procurement reform in South Africa was believed to contribute towards the democratizing of the country's economy and the alleviation of poverty, both of which are consequences of the previous economic, social and political processes (Arendse, 2010). In addition, because of inconsistencies, reform processes were initiated as a way of compensation. This was also meant to address the lack of accountability, supporting structures and fragmented processes (Ambe, 2016). Without taking anything away from the reform process, it remains clouded with organisational, market, legal, technological and political challenges. These unfortunately still affect the implementation and performance of procurement procedures especially in public procurement and donor-funded projects (Huka *et al.*, 2014).

### **3.2.2 Supply Chain management in the public sector**

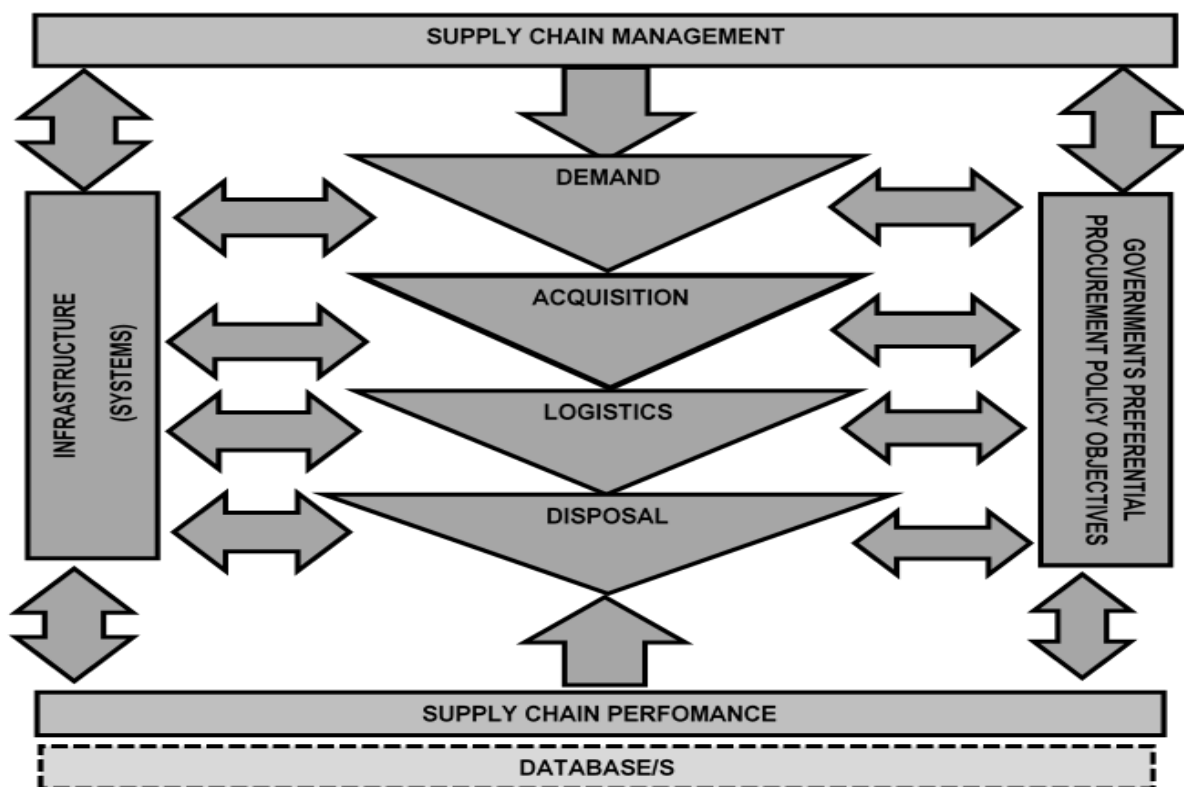
This section includes a discussion of the supply chain management (SCM) model as the umbrella term used in the management of procurement and the concepts associated with procurement in this study. While researchers defined SCM in operational terms involving the flow of raw materials and products, some viewed it as a management philosophy and others viewed it in terms of a management process or as an integrated system. Therefore, SCM has undergone significant changes and extensions (Felea & Albăstroiu, 2013). SCM is an integrating function with a primary responsibility for linking major business functions and business processes into a cohesive and high performing business model to improve operating efficiency (Bowersox *et al.*, 2013; Boateng, 2016). Adopting a SCM business model, which strives for continuous improvement in enabling government to implement policies in management and operating efficiencies, could greatly assist the DoE during the procurement of LTSM for schools. However traditionally SCM has been misunderstood and undervalued (National Treasury (NT), 2015).

The new developments in the South African public sector demanded a shift from merely procurement to a wider SCM in terms of servicing the end customer (NT, 2015). In 2003 the South African government in conjunction with provincial treasuries adopted a SCM policy to



guide uniformity in procurement reform processes (Ambe, 2016). SCM involves the management of all the interlinked activities in the value-adding chain such as planning, procurement, manufacturing or production, distribution and customer service (Ambe, 2012). This means that all the parties involved know the intentions of the other for a smooth and effective management of the supply value chain in fulfilling customer requests (Chopra & Meindl, 2007).

As illustrated in figure 3.1 below, a SCM model or framework applicable to South African public sector procurement takes care of the product lifecycle from demand to disposal. The framework applicable to this country can only be adopted if it follows the standards outlined by the government procurement policy objectives. There are six main sections to the SCM model, the first one being demand management which is an exercise performed at the beginning of the supply chain where a needs assessment is done to ensure that goods are acquired to deliver the appropriate service (NT, 2004).



**Figure 3.1:** Supply Chain Management framework

Source: NT, 2004)

If enough and correct information is shared, any uncertainty in the demand can be reduced (Fredendall & Hill, 2012). This phase will bring the supply chain practitioners close to the

end user, to ensure the achievement of value for money. Acquisition management has traditionally focussed on procurement activities, which helps people to decide on the way the suppliers in the market will be approached. This is important in the SCM process especially after the appropriate procurement method has been decided upon. Logistics management is an aspect that addresses the setting of inventory levels, stores, warehouse and transport management of the procured goods to the end customers.

The DoE should know who will eventually deliver textbooks to schools and this should be part of the agreement in which various stakeholders are involved. Disposal management considerations should be given to obsolescence planning and maintaining a database of redundant materials (NT, 2004). Supply chain performance is a monitoring process, during which a retrospective analysis is undertaken to determine whether the proper processes have been followed and whether the desired objectives have been achieved (NT, 2004). The desired objectives for the DoE should always be the successful procurement and delivery of textbooks to all public schools. Infrastructure and systems are elements in the information technology and planning procedures which aid in improving the organisation's information flow by integrating all necessary business functions into a single system with a shared database (Fredendall & Hill, 2012; Sadrzadehrafiei, Chofreh, Hosseini & Sulaiman, 2013).

### **3.2.3 Procurement objectives in the South African public sector**

Procurement in the South African public sector is used as an instrument to achieve political objectives, to promote legal objectives, social inclusion, to strengthen the country's economic basis and act as an innovation driver for new technologies (Essig, Amann, Boerner, Glas & Kleemann, 2010). Those involved in public procurement aim to obtain and provide goods and services for the benefit of a larger public. This could be realised if public procurement officials could effectively manage the process of goods and service delivery using acceptable and cost-effective supply chain channels (Tjarlou & Darabad, 2017).

There have been inconsistencies in the application of main procurement legislation in relation to section 217 of the constitution (Quinot & Arrowsmith, 2013). For this reason, government introduced the pillars of public procurement applicable to the South African procurement environment. This was a way to reinforce the procurement objectives and the acceptable ethical conduct during the procurement activities. With this initiative, Tjarlou and Darabad (2017) assert that the public procurement environment will be less vulnerable to exploitation

and unethical activities. The importance of the pillars of public procurement is briefly discussed below.

### **3.2.4 Pillars of public procurement in South Africa**

As part of the procurement reforms, government agreed on some basic concepts to serve as a foundation for all procurement activities. These five pillars were meant to drive good governance and efficient procurement thanks to positive values which promote good conduct when dealing with public funds. Any oversight in executing any of the basic concepts has a potential to break the smooth running of the whole procurement system. These Five Pillars are briefly explained below:

- ***Value for Money:*** This pillar is aimed at procurement activities that offer low value for money. However, there have been new developments and it is believed that the other criteria such as quality of goods and services must be evaluated together with the price before pronouncing that a certain service offers the best value for money (Dimitri, 2012). When an organisation aims for value for money, the target could be procurement of services and products that offer maximum benefits at minimal cost (Mofokeng & Luke, 2014). This could be done through avoiding unnecessary costs and delays during procurement while ensuring the continuous improvement of the process.
- ***Open and Effective Competition:*** This pillar promotes public accessibility of relevant regulations, policies and procedures to all the parties involved in the procurement transaction (NT, 2015). The bidding process must be open and transparent so that it can be scrutinised by the public (Mofokeng & Luke, 2014). This also promotes realistic access by potential suppliers to all the relevant procurement opportunities available in the official government advertising platforms.
- ***Ethics and Fair Dealing:*** For the ethics and fair dealing to inform the procurement process ideally, all parties in procurement should adhere to the ethical standards and deal with each other with mutual trust and respect. Behaviour like that would assist actors in the process to conduct their business affairs in a fair and reasonable manner and with integrity (NT, 2015). Fair procurement implies procurement that is impartial and free from discrimination to deal with supplies with the same understanding (Mofokeng & Luke, 2014).
- ***Accountability and Reporting:*** Organisations must be responsible for all the plans, decisions and outcomes. The accountability pillar represents an obligation to answer for

actions (Mofokeng & Luke, 2014). This forces procurement specialists to act with probity and exercise their functions within the set guidelines.

- **Equity:** This pillar relates to activities that are fair and just. For South Africa to maintain equity, government should engage in projects that promote economic development through the implementation of procedures that equally support industries (NT, 2015). This might mean that government implements projects that encourage growth of local enterprises in specific provinces.

These pillars operate best as a whole rather than in part; because the partial implementation might render all the procurement innovations and service delivery dysfunctional (Zitha *et al.*, 2016).

### **3.3 A GLIMPSE OF THE BUDGET ALLOCATION IN THE DoE**

The quality of an education system is seen in the provision of quality textbooks and other educational teaching and learning resources. Textbooks and other learning resources in schools have a positive effect on learning and on the overall quality of education (Musilekwa & Mulenga, 2019). This requires adequate fund allocation as well as a procurement system that is efficient.

Each year the government allocates funds to the Department of Education and the funds are spread accordingly; depending on the department's current needs. In instances where there are limited or no LTSM, the communities experience a higher rate of dropout students as they are not well taught; and their families cannot afford to purchase the text books themselves. (Musilekwa & Mulenga, 2019). When learners are faced with a situation where they are relying on one textbook (usually kept by the teacher), there is usually a lack of engagement by the learners in self-learning (Haamoonga, 2017); and this is a necessary complement to the lesson delivery by the teacher.

For the 2019/20 financial year, the Eastern Cape province had a budget allocation of R82,1bn; with the DoE getting the biggest slice of R36,3bn; making it about 44,2% of the total budget (Capa & Pillay, 2019). Regardless of the high allocation of funds towards education in this province, there remain challenges thanks to procurement and financial management related issues (Kanyongo, 2005). These challenges lead to either a general shortage of books, or a lack of other essential learning materials such as science equipment.

These shortcomings and gaps in the budget allocation and procurement of LTSM necessitate further research that is focused on a systems approach, an approach that is holistic and focuses on details.

When comparing South Africa, Kenya and Zimbabwe with developed countries such as Germany and the United States; there is a big difference in terms of the acceptable ratios on each element used as a measure on the index component. Table 3.1 illustrates the disparities on each of the selected index components when compared amongst the developed countries.

**Table 3.1:** Global comparison of African and Western Countries

MEASURED INDEX COMPONENT	SOUTH AFRICA	ZIMBABWE	KENYA	GERMANY	UNITED STATES
CRITICAL THINKING IN TEACHING (1=<; 7=>)	3.2	3.1	3.7	5.2	5.7
EASE OF FINDING SKILLED EMPLOYEES (1=<; 7=>)	4.0	4.2	4.9	5.2	5.8
PUPIL-TO-TEACHER RATIO (LOWER IS BETTER)	30.3	36.4	30.7	12.2	14.5
RELIANCE ON PROFESSIONAL MANAGEMENT (1=<; 7=>)	4.2	4.7	4.5	5.4	5.9
DIGITAL SKILLS AMONG ACTIVE POPULATION (1=<; 7=>)	3.5	3.8	4.7	5.2	5.8
EXTENT OF STAFF TRAINING (1=<; 7=>)	4.2	3.7	4.3	5.2	5.8

**Source:** Adapted from WEF (2018) *The Global Competitiveness Report, 2018*

The Global Competitiveness Report 2018, amongst many economic index components measured for each of the countries' economies, had the following indices selected to compare the ratios from these countries: (i) critical thinking in teaching (ii) ease of finding skilled employees in each country (iii) pupil-to teacher ratio in a classroom (iv) reliance on professional management by organisations (v) digital skills among active population and (vi) extent of staff training by employers (World Economic Forum (WEF), 2018).

Form the above table, the United States is shown to be the best performing country rated 5.9 - the highest for being the country relying on professional management; followed by Germany, which had the highest rating 12.2 for being the country that has the lowest pupil-to-teacher ratio.

Between the three countries compared, Kenya became the third best performing at a score of 4.9 for its ease of finding skilled employees. South Africa became the fourth best performing

country and scored the lowest rate 30.3 when it came to pupil-to-teacher ratio index when compared to Zimbabwe and Kenya. Zimbabwe became the fifth and the last performing country scoring the highest rating 4.7 when it came to reliance on professional management when compared to other African countries. South Africa could have more budget allocated to education, but it is not doing well on the five selected index measures, which raises a red flag in terms of effective management.

### **3.4 DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND LTSM**

In this subsection, the structure of and the roles played by the key stakeholders involved during the procurement of LTSM are outlined. This is followed by the procurement of LTSM within a global context showing how other countries conduct the procurement of LTSM.

#### **3.4.1 Functioning of the DoE**

From 1994 to 2009, the National Department of Education (NDoE) was responsible for all formal education, budget direction and the Department of Labour was responsible for skills development in the labour market. Following national elections in April 2009 the new government established two departments to administer the education and training sector (DBE, 2011). The new Department of Basic Education (DBE) and the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) share the responsibility for education in South Africa. The NDoE allocates budgets to various provincial departments for textbooks and procures the workbooks for the provinces. The DBE deals with all schools from Grade R to Grade 12 including adult literacy programmes and is responsible for the provision of LTSM for Grade R to Grade 12 learners within public schools while the DHET deals with universities, and other post-school education and training (DBE, 2011). Geographically the EC is characterised as a large and varied province, covering 169 580 square kilometres, ranging from metropolitan areas that have all the facilities of a modern city such as electricity, good, tarred roads and internet access to deep rural areas where remote villages have none of these advantages (Wright, 2012).

The ECDoE has twenty-three education districts with 5715 public schools spread out in these districts. Specifically, East London (EL) is one of the education districts in the EC, reported to have 317 schools, which are characterised as urban with informal settlements and traditional rural settlement types (DBE, 2013). The district offices, schools and the provincial head office play a crucial role during the LTSM procurement process and they are referred to as the three levels in this study because each level is assigned activities that need to be

executed and managed by each to fulfil their responsibilities in the procurement process. The provinces' varied characteristics require that districts are clustered to maintain a strict management and monitoring of public processes (Table 3.2).

**Table 3.2:** Eastern Cape School District Office Clusters

<b>CLUSTER A (WITH 7 DISTRICT OFFICES)</b>		<b>CLUSTER B (WITH 8 DISTRICT OFFICES)</b>		<b>CLUSTER C (WITH 8 DISTRICT OFFICES)</b>	
<b>DISTRICT</b>	<b>Schools</b>	<b>District</b>	<b>Schools</b>	<b>District</b>	<b>Schools</b>
<b>LIBODE</b>	425	Butterworth	397	Cradock	84
<b>LUSIKISIKI</b>	359	Cofimvaba	279	East London	317
<b>MALUTI</b>	227	Dutywa	347	Fort Beaufort	252
<b>MBIZANA</b>	217	Lady Frere	161	Graaff-Reinet	82
<b>MT FLETCHER</b>	187	Mthatha	366	Grahamstown	81
<b>MT FRERE</b>	249	Engcobo	221	King Williams Town	434
<b>QUMBU</b>	252	Sterkspruit	167	Uitenhage	168
		Queenstown	181	Port Elizabeth	262
<b>TOTAL SUMMARY: 3 DISTRICT CLUSTERS WITH 23 SCHOOL DISTRICT OFFICES &amp; 5715 PUBLIC SCHOOLS</b>					

**Source:** Extracted from the Annual Report Public ECDofE (2014)

Cluster A and Cluster B lie at the eastern side of the province where 99% of schools are in villages and in small towns, which belonged to the former Transkei homeland. Several schools in the Cluster A and B are found in poor rural and urban working-class communities. Some schools still suffer the legacy of large classes, disgraceful physical conditions and the absence of learning resources (Mestry & Ndhlovu, 2014). The schools under Cluster C are a combination of rural, farm and urban schools, whereas EL and Port Elizabeth are the most developed towns with (seaports, railway stations and airports) (Ncanywa, 2014).

### 3.4.2 Categorisation of Schools

In South Africa, the DoE has provincial offices located in the nine provinces and has a high-cost, low-performance education system that does not compare favourably with education systems in other African countries, or in similar developing economies (DoE, 2009). According to the report on Education Statistics in South Africa, DBE (2015), in 2013, there were approximately 30 027 established public and registered independent education institutions. Of these, 25 720 were ordinary schools and other education institutions, ECD centres and special schools. Since 1994, the government's efforts to redress historical imbalances and achieve equity were fundamental policy mechanisms to restructure South African education within the context of existing schools (Mestry & Ndhlovu, 2014). Provincial Head Office decided to divide public schools into two main categories for funding

purposes, section 21 also known as quintile 4 and 5; and section 20 also known as quintile 1,2 and 3 schools among the different kinds of school.

- ***Section 21 Schools (Quintile 4 and 5):*** The DoE decided to allocate Section 21 status to schools in order to devolve more authority and economic responsibility to the local level (Simayi, 2008). Under this arrangement, the School Governing Body (SGB) of a school had more power as extra functions were allocated such as controlling its own finances, maintaining and improving their school property and buildings, purchasing textbooks, educational materials or equipment for the school as well as paying for services rendered to the school (Nyambi, 2005; Thenga, 2012). The section 21 schools could procure their own goods because the money was deposited into the school's account. The mechanisms of getting the money to schools were determined based on Section 21 of the South African School Act (SASA), which provides for the SGB to apply to the head of department to be allocated certain functions (Nyanda, 2014). The invitation went out requesting all public schools with financial expertise to apply for Section 21 status (Phakathi, 2015). However, this had serious financial and educational implications for the department as SGBs had to manage large sums of money deposited into these schools' accounts and to perform many other important functions, which required expertise that the school might not necessarily have had (Nyambi, 2005). The advantage of being a Section 21 school was that the school received their transfers as cash payments and could communicate directly with the suppliers to ensure that books were delivered on time (Phakathi, 2015).
- ***Section 20 Schools (Quintile 1, 2 and 3):*** Instances where a school had not been allocated the functions in the case of section 20 schools, the Department would procure and pay the expenses on behalf of the school (Nyanda, 2014). A section 20 or a non-section 21 school was a school in which the SGB has not been granted section 21 powers and therefore the school procured goods according to the existing departmental arrangements because the money was not deposited into the school's account since the fund allocation was kept by the department (Nyambi, 2005). The disadvantages for section 20 schools was that schools depended on district officials to assist them during the requisitioning of textbooks, could not choose suppliers they preferred and get direct supplier discounts. The lack of capacity in the district office to timeously process requisitions might mean that schools lose their allocated budget at the end of the year since there is no rollover on unspent budgeted amounts (Phakathi, 2015). While the



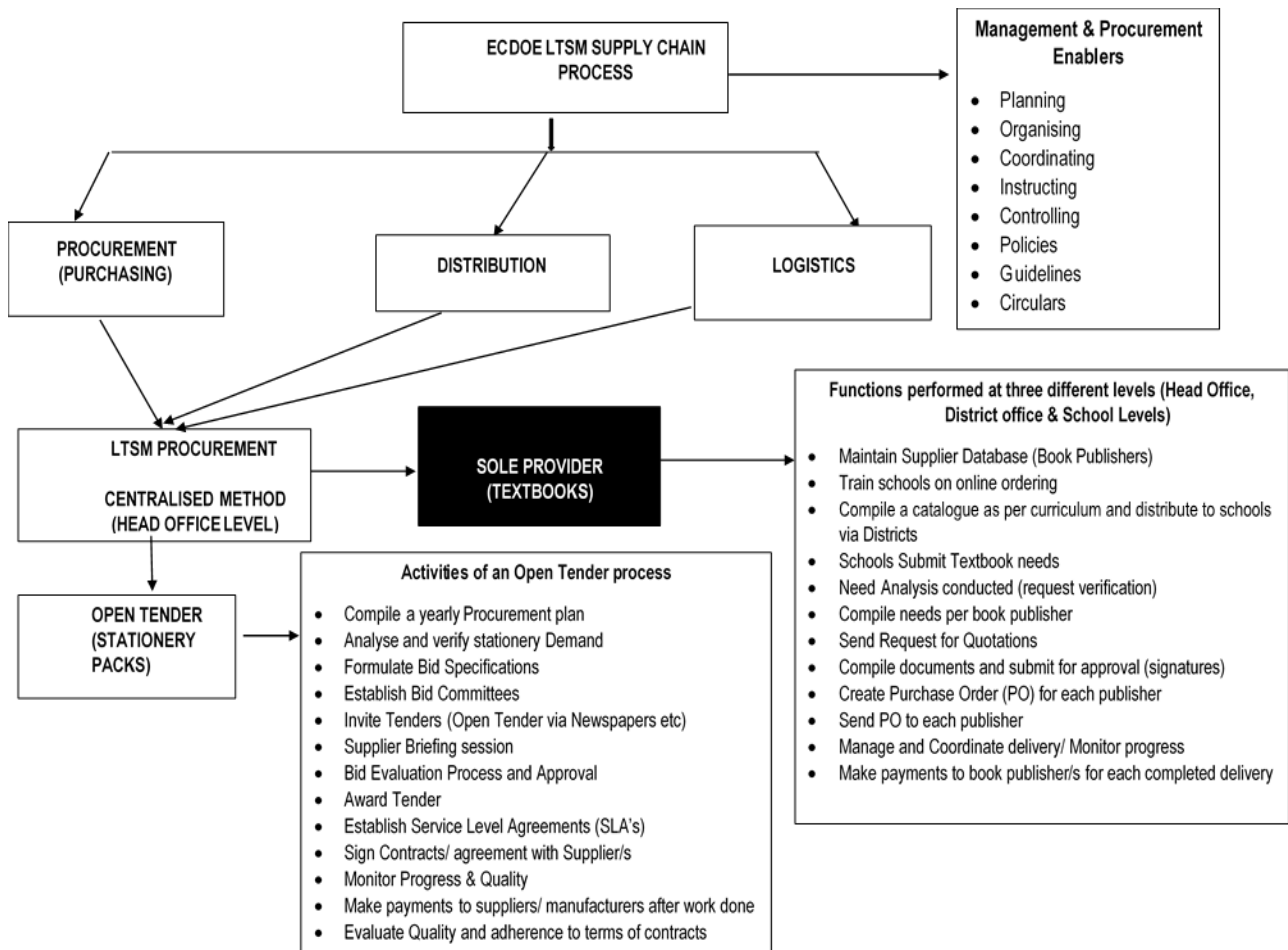
differentiation of schools (section 21 and section 20) is often seen as a mere administrative arrangement, it presents problems in a key area, namely in the procurement and delivery of LTSM (Nyanda, 2014). This is so because the costs of schools individually purchasing materials and the extent to which the department can monitor the availability of LTSM during the school year is mismanaged.

### **3.4.3 The management of procurement process of LTSM at the ECDoE**

The procurement process is set out in specific acts, policies, circulars and procedure manuals, which are disseminated to all the relevant offices and or personnel within the department (de Villiers *et al.*, 2017). Within the DoE, as part of internal processes; there are three levels in which the procurement of LTSM occurs. Figure 3.2 depicts the three levels namely; the Head office level, the District level and the School level all entrusted with different roles, different accountability and responsibilities (Quinot & Arrowsmith, 2013). This process is centralised at the Head office level to ensure accountability and central monitoring of various activities. The functions performed as part of the procurement process relate to those of basic management such as; Planning, Organising, Coordinating, Instructing and Controlling (Essig *et al.*, 2010). These functions are vital as they play an important role during the implementation of procurement policies, procedures, processes, guidelines and circulars (Badenhorst-Weiss, van Biljon & Ambe, 2017).

In the internal process of the procurement and supply chain of LTSM, there are policies used in conjunction with the management functions performed differently at all the three levels (Head office, District office and School level). The procurement process starts with the provincial department compiling the national catalogue and distributing it to various schools through the District offices. The school principals place orders for the required LTSM-textbooks for the forthcoming year using the requisition forms and via an electronic system. The Procurement specialists located in the at Head Office level of the PDoE's are involved in placing LTSM orders with various publishers and booksellers. This is done through a quotation system only to the book publishers who publish and sell the relevant and required textbooks targeting various and different grades and school subjects. Since the number of book publishers is limited, book publishers operate within the publisher's rights that force them to only publish and sell the books published under their specific name. The different books can only be found from the specific book publishers; for this reason, the department has adopted the Sole Provider as the procurement method. When the POs are created and sent to the relevant book publishers; the publishers in turn deliver the required quantities of LTSM

to the Provincial Warehouse managed by an Agent on behalf of the department. The Managing Agent further appoints local contractors to perform the Last Mile or final delivery of LTSM from the warehouse to the school level by the service providers.



**Figure 3.2:** Eastern Cape Provincial Department of Education- LTSM Procurement Process

**Source:** Researcher

From figure 3.2, it is clear that the need for LTSM starts at the school level where learners and teachers need LTSM for teaching and learning. When the schools communicate their needs to District office level, their needs trigger the initiation of the procurement process. The delays and inconsistencies in the whole procurement process indicate that the monitoring and evaluation of the process is lacking (Quinot & Arrowsmith, 2013). The lack of monitoring and evaluation negatively contributes to the limited supply of LTSM; as there limited corrective measures taken when the process is not running smoothly.

#### **3.4.4 Defining LTSM**

LTSM is a broad term that includes a variety of educational resources, which are necessary to enhance teaching and the understanding of the subject content while aiding teaching and learning (Modisaotsile, 2012). SASA created two LTSM categories: LTSM referring to textbooks, stationery and workbooks that assist learners to make maximum use of teaching and learning time (Themane & Mabasa, 2002) and non-LTSM, referring to items such as furniture, learner desks and chairs, paper and copier machines, telephones, fax machine, intercoms (Phakathi, 2015). The focus of this study is on the effective management of the procurement process of textbooks and the inefficiencies that hinder this procurement process. Phakathi (2015) asserts that to improve learner performance at school, government should provide quality textbooks.

#### **3.4.5 Types of LTSM**

The definition of LTSM includes amongst other things, electronic/digitised materials (e-LTSM) that facilitate learning including computers, learning programmes on DVDs/CDs and materials for special schools which the department procures as and when the need arises (DoE, 2009). These and other LTSMs should be available on time to schools for the effective facilitation of meaningful teaching and learning. The definition of LTSM by Themane and Mabasa (2002) specifies three important groups which need further clarity in this study. The department procures all three types for the schools with the first being stationery which refers to learner's exercise books, drawing books, examination books, map books, glue, crayons, pencils, pens, fibre pens, marking pens, newsprint, and duplication paper. The second one is learner's workbooks, which refers to supplementary materials that help learners to understand the subject in question better. The last one is textbooks, which play an important role in teaching and learning by helping learners to understand and grasp the curriculum. Textbooks provide teachers with a basis for assessing students and are therefore important in the facilitation of teaching and learning (DoE, 2009). As previously mentioned, this study will only focus on the importance of the availability of textbooks and the effective management of the textbook procurement and distribution process.

### **3.5 INSTRUMENTS FOR THE PROCUREMENT OF LTSM**

In this section, the instruments used for procurement and delivery of LTSM are outlined covering the following: (i) understanding of the procurement process (ii) distribution of LTSM (iii) understanding the procurement policies (iv) problems encountered in the procurement process.

### **3.5.1 Understanding procurement process**

In this subsection, the procurement process, procedures, practices and systems as part of the enablers of the LSTM procurement are discussed. Then the various methods deployed by the DoE during the distribution of the teaching and learning materials are given.

#### **3.5.1.1 Procurement process**

The DoE is aligned to and employs government procurement procedures and practices when procuring the LTSM for public schools. The textbook orders for each year can be divided into three categories namely new materials, orders which are either whole grade or subject replacements, top-up orders which refer to the orders that are to fill the difference between stock in hand and the current learner numbers; and mop up orders, orders that ensure a better distribution of textbook supply by ensuring that orders are placed for schools that did not submit order requests (Simayi, 2008). At any given time one, or a combination of any of the categories of materials, is adopted by the department to successfully procure the required resources. Schools should conduct their needs analysis for every subject and ensure that relevant LTSM and other materials are requested for curriculum delivery (GDoE, 2011).

At the head office of the DoE, an evaluation process is conducted of the array of available book offerings on the market, a catalogue is compiled of approved titles and the schools make their choices between the available options as seen on the national electronic catalogue (Simayi, 2008). Some schools capture their requirements manually and offline while some use electronic connectivity to select and submit their needs using the Electronic Procurement Management System (EPMS). The district officials help schools by ensuring that all the schools have placed their orders in time with publishers (GDoE, 2011). This is done through a requisition system which requires schools to fill in orders on requisition forms and send these to the provincial education departments who in turn verify the information given and approve all requisitions on the database (Simayi, 2008).

#### **3.5.1.2 Procurement thresholds in South African public sector**

The previously mentioned pillars, if followed diligently will assist an organisation to practice procurement within the correct set prescripts as part of compliance. This brings us to the next point about different procurement thresholds accepted for each procurement range. The NT (2015) sets the limit and guards against the use of incorrect procurement processes in relation to different threshold range values attached to petty cash, one written quotation, three written price quotations and the competitive bidding. They all have generic threshold values

illustrated in Table 3.3 below. These are used by government departments in the provincial, district and local sphere to procure different product categories as part of service delivery.

**Table 3.3:** Public Procurement Threshold Values

<b>RANGE OF PROCUREMENT</b>	<b>THRESHOLD VALUE (EXCLUDING VAT)</b>
<b>PETTY CASH</b>	Up to value of R2 000
<b>ONE WRITTEN QUOTATIONS</b>	Above the value of R2 000 but not exceeding R10 000
<b>THREE WRITTEN PRICE QUOTATIONS</b>	Above the value of R10 000 but not exceeding R500 000
<b>COMPETITIVE BIDS / OPEN BID PROCESS</b>	Above the value of R500 000

**Source:** SASRIA, Procurement Policy V9 (2018)

The R2 000 value is utilised in the office as the petty cash where money is used, and the receipts are returned for reconciliation purposes. One written quotation works when the value of the goods and or services with values above the petty cash but not exceeding R10 000.00. For any value above R10 000.00 but not exceeding R500 000.00, three written quotations are required. The competitive bids or open bid process is for all the values above R500 000.00 (South African Special Risks Insurance Association (SASRIA), 2018).

### **3.5.1.3 Procurement procedures**

In this section, the discussion will focus on and outline the types of procurement methods that are relevant to LTSM. To be able to carry out their functions, departments need goods and services, which may be acquired through one of the following methods depending on the nature of goods or products being procured: open tendering, negotiated tendering, restricted tendering, request for proposals (RFPs), two stage tendering, request for quotations (RFQs), single-source or sole provider, and petty cash (Quinot & Arrowsmith, 2013). Because of the outflow of large amounts of public money, it is important to put in place proper measures to regulate the acquiring of goods and services by the public sector (Smit, 2015).

For the procurement of LTSM (textbooks), the DoE uses the sole provider also known as single sourcing method; however, for the procurement of LTSM (stationery), the department makes use of open tender also known as competitive bidding. It is advised that departments should adopt open tendering for the invitation of tenders. Under special circumstances and where approval from the relevant authorities has been obtained, departments may invite tenders using an alternative method listed above (Smit, 2015). The brief discussion below only focuses on the two procurement methods used for textbooks and stationery because these are some of the LTSM procurement methods used in the department.

- **Single-Source / Sole provider:** The 1994 Model Law provides that this is the relevant method in a variety of situations such as those involving suppliers with exclusive rights, urgent needs, requirement for standardisation, and research (Quinot & Arrowsmith, 2013). For the procurement of textbooks, the department uses the sole provider method because textbooks for specific subjects and different grades are published by different and specific publishers and these are not available from all book publishers. The procuring entity must engage in negotiations with the supplier and obtain a proposal or price quotation for all the textbooks published by the same publisher for specific grades and subjects (United Nations, 2014). This is the result of strict publishing rights and the quotation value depends on the total quantity of the textbooks needed by schools in the province. This cannot be procured using a tender process because each book publisher only has a certain range of books limited to specific school subjects. The procurement process starts when each book publisher receives a request for a quotation for books that they provide. Once the publisher responds with a quotation, the LTSM department collates the necessary documents that form an important step in the procurement process namely the PO which is briefly discussed below.
- **Purchase Order:** The PO is the contractual agreement with a supplier of goods or services that specifies payment terms, delivery dates, item identification, quantities, freight terms, and all other obligations and conditions (Boateng, 2016). POs are the most commonly used form of procurement contractual documents containing all the information outlined in the requirements section, along with the organisation's standard terms of payment and conditions (Sollish & Semanik 2012). In the case of the DoE, all suppliers are paid 30 days after submitting their final invoice. Handfield *et al.*, (2009) caution that the purchasing department must take great care when wording a purchase agreement because it is a legally binding document containing the standard legal conditions to which the order is subject. Book publishers, after submitting the requested quotation, wait until they receive the official PO before they start delivering the required textbooks, because the PO establishes a contractual relationship between the organisation and the supplier (Musanzikwa, 2013). The amount on the PO that each book publisher will receive will be equivalent to that on the quotation.

- ***Open Tendering / Competitive bidding:*** When procuring stationery, the DoE uses the open tender method because many suppliers can manufacture stationery items and there are no limiting publishing rights as in the case of textbooks. Government states that all national departments should invite competitive bids for all procurements above R500 000.00, inclusive of VAT (Ngobeni, 2012). The length of a contract should be considered when calculating the contract value to ensure it is applicable to the correct spend threshold. The limit that guides different threshold range values used during the procurement process is set and disseminated to various departments (National Treasury, 2015). This procedure allows practically any contractor to submit a tender for the work and provides for the greatest degree of transparency and competition in all procurement procedures (Thwala & Mathonsi, 2012; Quinot & Arrowsmith, 2013). The generic tender process in South Africa consists of the following stages, namely, preparing the request for invitation to tender; the calling for tenders by advertising for a minimum period of twenty-one days; submission and receiving of tenders from the interested service providers; opening and assessment of tenders by the Bid Evaluation Committee and awarding of tenders to the successful bidders through a letter and a contract agreement to be signed by both parties (Ngobeni, 2012; Smit, 2015).

#### **3.5.1.4 Role played by Key Stakeholders involved in the procurement of LTSM**

Each stakeholder plays a relevant and distinct role in the procurement and distribution of LTSM in public secondary schools. The actions of each stakeholder have an impact, positive or negative on each other, because procurement is a process. The Provincial Treasuries issue complimentary guidelines within the parameters set by the National Treasury. PDoE has a responsibility to support and oversee district offices and schools to manage and improve their human and financial resources (DBE, 2013). Procurement specialists are responsible for contracting service providers, collating data from the requisition forms, processing of LTSM procurement orders and therefore process invoices for payment of suppliers. They receive management authority from PEDs and in turn are accountable to PEDs for carrying out key functions and are usually responsible for dealing directly with schools, both in an administrative and management sense (DBE, 2013).

School district officials can ensure that orders placed are within the LTSM budget allocation (Phakathi, 2015). They receive management authority from the PEDs and in turn, district offices are accountable to PEDs for carrying out key functions and are usually responsible for

dealing directly with schools, both in an administrative and management sense (DBE, 2013). Service providers are responsible for the last mile delivery of LTSM from the provincial warehouse to the schools. The PDoE are responsible for close monitoring of the supplier progress to ensure that the desired textbook orders are delivered on time (Livhuwani, 2012). School principals are the accounting officers by accepting all the deliveries and managing all LTSM resources at school level (WCED, 2013). The school principals are responsible for ensuring that the school manages all available resources and where necessary acquires new resources (Phakathi, 2015). Teachers are entrusted with textbooks and guidelines and then make use of the available resources for teaching and learning.

The roles played by key stakeholders during the procurement process are crucial and each is dependent on the other for the execution of their key activities to fulfil the procurement process. The following stakeholders benefit directly from the effective management and timely procurement of the important teaching and learning resources.

- ***The School:*** The school exists to serve the needs of the learners within the community. When a school has all the necessary resources that allow the facilitation of teaching and learning to take place, the school becomes valuable in the community (DBE, 2013).
- ***The Teachers:*** When teachers have enough, and relevant teaching resources they tend to better facilitate teaching and learning at the school (WCED, 2013).
- ***The Learners:*** Learners who attend a well-resourced school tend to perform better academically than those who lack resources. Learners are the chief beneficiary in the effective management timely procurement and delivery of LTSM in the school (Mestry, 2014).

Because the effective procurement of LTSM and its management is the means to an end; the school, the teachers and the learners all benefit from the timely procurement and delivery of the teaching and learning resources. The LTSM has a critical role to play in supporting the implementation of the transformed curriculum (Themane & Mabasa, 2002).

#### **3.5.1.5 Reliability and Centralisation of LTSM procurement processes**

Following the outcry about non-delivery and textbook shortages at schools in different provinces including Limpopo and Eastern Cape (Chisholm, 2013), a decision was taken in Mangaung that all provincial departments must be responsible for the centralised procurement process of the LTSM resources required by all the schools. This also creates an



expansion of the capacity of the sector to be able to print text books and workbooks while owning their intellectual property (DBE, 2016). A centralised procurement model allows a province or the DBE to procure core and other essential LTSM., whereas in a decentralised procurement model schools individually purchase supplementary materials (Attwell, 2014). The provincial office resolved to form LTSM committees and structures to be followed during the procurement and delivery of textbooks within the province - a centralised model had been adopted (Veriava, 2013).

The following were responses and actions pledged by the DBE for the areas of concern in relation to the LTSM and were aimed at restoring the reliability levels of the schools in different and affected provinces (DBE, 2016:25).

- To conduct research, develop and monitor the provisioning of textbooks for selected subjects and selected grades;
- To gradually develop textbooks for selected subjects and selected grades;
- To ensure that the sector provides core textbooks per learner, per subject and per grade;
- To centralise procurement of LTSM to gain from economies of scale for provinces;
- To develop and strengthen Norms and Standards for retrieval of textbooks at school level;
- To limit titles and price caps to improve value for money and efficiency.

The PEDs had to assume more responsibility and accountability functions for the successful planning, implementation and management of the procurement process.

### **3.5.2 Distribution of LTSM**

In this section the processes and methods used during the distribution of LTSM to public schools is discussed. The end goal is that all the relevant LTSM should reach the end users, the learners, in schools on time and in a useable state. However, frequently books do not reach their destination because of constraints at the school, district, regional or national levels (Crabbe, et al., 2014). By placing the required goods in the hands of the end customer exactly when and where they are required, the distribution task is fulfilled (Saremi & Zadeh, 2014; Segetlija et al., 2011). Unless textbooks are not delivered to schools, schools as end customers will likely complain of lack of resources (Fredriksen *et al.*, 2015). The books have no value if they are not successfully delivered to different schools on time.

### 3.5.2.1 Delivery of LTSM

The procurement of LTSM is dependent on the contribution of different stakeholders who need to be managed effectively for a successful distribution of LTSM to schools. As part of this study different distribution methods used by the DoE are important and will be discussed below.

- ***Distribution or Delivery through Warehouses:*** When the book publishers are ready to deliver the ordered books, they do so by sending a delivery order to the central warehouse. As part of the distribution function goods are stored in a central warehouse, also known as a distribution centre, which is normally close to the end customer (Bowersox *et al.*, 2013). In a supply chain, the warehousing function is critical as it acts as a hub in linking the material flow between the supplier and customer (Ramaa, Subramanya & Rangaswamy, 2012). The Human Rights Commission report (2012) commented that the following provinces, the Eastern Cape, Free State, Gauteng, Limpopo, Mpumalanga and Northern Cape, use warehouses/depots to store textbooks in the interim period between procurement and delivery to schools. These distribution centres serve to provide a local presence which is helpful in cases where there is an urgent need, when they are applauded for their transport cost effectiveness (Bowersox *et al.*, 2013). However, the distance between warehouses and some of the DoE districts where schools are located is vast and there is an increasing need for efficient delivery.
- ***Distribution by Book Publishers:*** Ordinarily, publishers deliver textbooks to a central warehouse, and the relevant PDE ensures that the textbooks are delivered to each school. On some occasions, publishers will negotiate with PDEs to deliver textbooks directly to schools. In these circumstances, it takes an additional one to two weeks for the textbooks to be delivered to the schools (Veriava, 2013). This arrangement has a negative impact, especially for those schools who place orders late in the previous year, and so the DoE rather arranges with the warehouse managing agent to distribute textbooks to schools as a final (last mile) delivery.
- ***Distribution by Service Providers (Last Mile Delivery):*** Sabarwal *et al* (2013) state that the use of service providers to deliver books happens when the managing agent resolves on entering into a contract on a competitive basis with a local service provider with the aim of providing transportation services of these books from the central warehouses to schools. In the EC, the department requires that the managing agent enter into contracts with local delivery contractors to deliver books to schools as part of facilitating local

empowerment. Therefore, the DoE relies on an entity external to itself to render a transport service. An external supplier provides a public entity with the goods or services it needs (Quinot & Arrowsmith, 2013). During the LTSM delivery, both the service provider and the school verify deliveries against the orders placed to ensure that the ordered materials are received and signed for; however, orders are frequently short delivered (DoE, 2011).

- ***Distribution by Provincial DOE fleet/ trucks:*** In some instances, government performs the distribution of textbooks to schools using the government fleet. This occurs when the department has not managed to secure contracts with the service providers to perform the last mile delivery of textbooks to schools (Crabbe *et al.*, 2012). Also, when school principals attend meetings at the provincial office, and they are short of a few books, they can arrange for the collection of the outstanding order from the warehouse and deliver it to the school. These outstanding orders are normally made up of fewer items than in the original, so they can use sedan cars to transport them.
- ***Delivery by School Principals:*** In some instances, the textbooks are readily available in provincial warehouses, but the provincial office does not have valid contracts with service providers, last mile delivery trucks. In such cases, some school principals would arrange to collect the textbooks from the warehouses using their personal cars with no expectation of reimbursement by the government (Sabarwal *et al.*, 2013). This arrangement is only possible for those schools located close to the warehouse and is not practical in the case of schools located say 400 kilometres away from the central warehouse. District officials have raised concerns that some of the schools in the KwaZulu-Natal and EC provinces delayed submitting their textbook requisitions, which resulted in potential late deliveries to schools. In such cases, school principals would resolve on using their private vehicles to collect the textbooks and materials ordered from the warehouse and deliver them to their respective schools (PSC, 2016). For both afore-mentioned provinces, there were reports of incorrect material deliveries, deliveries that took place outside of school operating hours without prior arrangements with the school and some deliveries were incorrect (PSC, 2016). Often the distributed material was insufficient for all the learners and they were forced to share textbooks.

### 3.5.2.2 Delivery Timeframes

The DBE (2015) stated the importance for all stakeholders to understand the process of LTSM delivery as outlined on Table 3.4 below:

**Table 3.4:** Timeframes for procurement and Delivery of LTSM

ACTION	TIMELINE
SCHOOLS PLACE ORDERS BASED ON PROJECTED NUMBERS	June - July
PEDS PLACE ORDERS WITH PUBLISHERS	July - August
PUBLISHERS DELIVER TO PEDS WAREHOUSES	Sept - Oct
MANAGING AGENTS DELIVER TO SCHOOLS	Oct - Nov
SCHOOLS DECLARE SHORTAGES	Jan - Feb
TOP UP ORDERS PLACED BY PEDS	Jan - Feb
TOP UP DELIVERIES	Feb - March

Source: DBE, 2015

PDEs that order books by September receive their stock before schools close in December of the same year. However, where PDEs order textbooks as late as December or January, those schools usually receive their books early in the academic year (Veriava, 2013).

### 3.5.2.3 Improving the delivery of LTSM

As part of improving the LTSM procurement process, communication and sharing of information about procurement processes in Head Office, District Office and School level (also known as three levels of the provincial department of education) has benefits. Other factors that may be associated with government's performance include supplier trust, synergy and information sharing (Pooe *et al.*, 2015). Below are the important tools that can be used to improve the procurement of LTSM and they are communication and Technology.

- Information Technology:** The sharing of information contributes largely to improved relationships between suppliers by facilitating efficient coordination and responsiveness as well as integration of partners' information systems (Pooe *et al.*, 2015). With information, technology organisations are afforded provision of timely, accurate and relevant information by making previously hidden or unavailable information available for use by all for organisational decision makers (Chakraborty, Bhattacharya, & Dobrzykowski, 2014). The adoption of technological solutions involves organisational changes and reengineering of processes relevant for the improvement of current procurement processes (Centobelli, Roberto, Giuseppe, & Teresa, 2014). Therefore, Chinomona (2013) stated that information technology has a vast potential to facilitate collaborative planning among supply chain partners by sharing information on demand forecasts and production schedules that dictate supply chain activities.

- **Communication and Collaboration:** With information technology, organisations can communicate better, and vital information can be shared much faster using the latest business management systems such as Enterprise Resource Planning systems (ERP) (Fawcet, Ellram & Ogden, 2014), but the government departments' systems are not integrated enough to perform at this level. Ménager (2013) asserts that communication between bidders is one of the most important targets of competition authorities; however, industrial organisations claim that communication between bidders in public procurement would discourage competition, increase public spending, and decrease efficiency. Achieving effective collaboration is not easy, but entities that have been successful in its implementation find it worthwhile (Crandall *et al.*, 2015).

### **3.5.3 Understanding of LTSM procurement policies**

In this section, the guidelines, acts and regulations governing procurement are outlined and the importance of using them during the acquisition of LTSM for public schools in South Africa. The subsections summarise the policies, followed by a description of reforms to the policy and how these are associated with procurement of LTSM and the efficient management of the process. To enhance accountability and transparency during public procurement of goods and services, several countries including South Africa legislated on procurement reforms (Eyaa & Oluka, 2011; Huka *et al.*, 2014). According to Ambe (2016), South African procurement reforms were instigated to drive the principles of good governance and to introduce better procurement ways meant to solve social and economic problems. With reference to Section 217 (11) of the Constitution of South African, all government departments should, prior to procuring products and services, enter into unbiased and equitable contractual agreements, which are cost-effective. This formed the basis of the Policy Paper on Public Sector Procurement Reforms endorsed in April 1997 (Arendse, 2010; Quinot & Arrowsmith, 2013).

#### **3.5.3.1 Policies and Regulations guiding procuring of LTSM**

After 1994 numerous policies were promulgated by the tripartite coalition of the African National Congress (ANC), the South African Communist party (SACP) and the Labour Unions, intended to reform the education sector which had been instituted by the supremacist and separationist policies of Apartheid. The policies which were to reform education were in general well-intended and exhibited ethical considerations, but they have been abused in the management and implementation over the last 25 years (Mle, 2012; Serfontein & de Waal, 2015). In addition, there is a miscommunication, which leads to procurement inefficiencies

and LTSM inadequacies amongst the key stakeholders such as policy makers, curriculum specialists and procurement officials. The policies that are relevant for the procurement process of LTSM are briefly discussed below.

- ***Preferential Procurement Policy Framework Act 5 of 2000 (PPPFA)***: The Preferential Procurement Policy Framework Act (PPPFA), 2000, was formally initiated in 1998 as an umbrella strategy for public sector procurement reform in South Africa, to establish procurement norms and standards (Smallwood, Ncunzana & Emuze, 2011; Livhuwani, 2012). The PPPFA necessitates that all government departments conform and implement this preferential procurement framework. This framework aims at putting procurement practical measures in place and the procurement-planning document gives threshold values that departments are required to have as part of the PPPFA. Public schools are governed by the PPPFA when procuring the LTSM for learners. This procurement plan if used appropriately becomes the important planning document for schools, district and provincial offices (Zitha *et al.*, 2016).
- ***Public Finance Management Act 29 of 1999 (PFMA)***: The main aim of the PFMA is to give guidelines and procedures to public sector officials on how to properly manage public finances, be accountable for daily financial decisions and ensure efficient and effective use of budgetary resources (Livhuwani, 2012; NT, 2012). However, to improve the public economic feasibility and expenditure, government departments ought to be transparent and responsible during procurement activities (Makabira & Waiganjo, 2014). Public schools form part of government entities and therefore function within the rules of the PFMA. Ndolo and Njagi (2014) assert that there is a minimal level of compliance with procurement procedures by government departments because of ineffective enforcement and implementation of these procedures.
- ***South African Schools Act 35 of 1996 (SASA)***: This act ensures that there is a uniform system governing schools by setting out laws for governance and funding of schools, Public Service Commission (PSC, 2016). The SASA (1996) specifies that the government should fund public schools from public resources on an equitable basis and ensure that all learners have equal access to education (Phakathi, 2015). This act aims at managing government funds in relation to Section 20 and Section 21 schools. The Section 20 public schools as defined by SASA, are allocated a list of functions which includes the requirement that a School Governing Body (SGB) of a certain public school take responsibility to raise funds in order to supplement government resources and improve

the quality of education. Section 21 schools are assigned responsibilities such as receiving funds for procuring the required textbooks at the school (PSC, 2016; Phakathi, 2015).

- ***National Norms and Standards for School Funding (NNSF)***: Norms and Standards were formulated in terms of Section 35 of the SASA with the principal goal of ensuring uniformity of systems and functions in schools are maintained to promote good governance and management of school funding (Phakathi, 2015). The NNSF policy was promulgated to regulate and guide monetary allocations by provinces to individual schools, the utilisation of funding as well as the monitoring of this school funding (Mestry & Ndlovu, 2014). Through this policy the no fees schools are to receive state funding. The lower income or unemployed parents, regardless of race, who find it difficult to pay school fees for their children should be granted school fee exemptions (Phakathi, 2015). Adequate school funding as prescribed in the norms and standards should secure essential resources for the delivery of valuable education and procurement of relevant LTSM for the school (Mestry, 2014).
- ***LTSM Retrieval policy***: The policy aims at ensuring that all schools are cognisant of their functions in relation to resource management, utilisation, and maintenance thereof, which add value to teaching and learning (Ndolo & Njagi, 2014). School principals need to apply the strict rules and guidelines set out in the policy when giving out textbooks to learners to maintain effective management in this area. The policy regulates and sets constraints relating to the effective use of teaching and learning resources at school level (KZN-DoE, 2013). Essentially, when the necessary textbooks are delivered to the school, each school adopts a system that is affordable and suitable for circulating the resources amongst the learners as guided by the retrieval policy (DoE, 2013). Government has systems, policies and management procedures in place, but the actual implementation is flawed.

### **3.5.3.2 Leveraging policies towards efficient procurement of LTSM**

In this subsection, the ways by which policies could be applied effectively during the procurement process of LTSM are briefly discussed. The aims of the public sector procurement reforms were to minimise the inconsistencies seen prior to 1994 in the policy application, and to redesign the fragmented country's socio-economic state (Ambe, 2016; Arendse, 2010). Within the public sector in South Africa, procurement is utilised as a mechanism to enable government departments to implement procurement plans which drive both social and economic development (Turley & Perera, 2014). Unfortunately, the current

public sector reforms are hindered by organisational, technological and political problems, which affect the implementation, management and performance of procurement procedures (Huka *et al.*, 2010).

According to Quinot and Arrowsmith (2013), public procurement is not achieving its main aims which relates to the achievement of value for money, honesty in public spending practices, and responsibility and efficiency. There is a need for policies to be aligned with the actual practice during the procurement process. Application of sanctions to individuals who are acting outside of the policy prescripts should be enforced to avoid the same happening in the future (Bolton, 2016). Any mismanagement of the procurement systems and processes may lead to poor progress and subsequently impoverished citizens suffering from socio-economic ills (Makabira & Waiganjo, 2014). Managers should be able to control and monitor the necessary processes and guidelines on how provincial governments should use the funds for the procurement of LTSM (Veriava, 2013). Suggested remedies include a vibrant implementation of a centralised procurement system for LTSM to create greater cost and delivery efficiencies; controlled and enhanced implementation of the policies on retrieval of textbooks at schools and the improved monitoring and reporting on the use of LTSM (ECDoE, 2014).

#### **3.5.4 Problems encountered in the procurement of LTSM**

In this section, problems relating to the DoE's management of the procurement process are discussed. These ranges from an existing misunderstanding of the importance of the procurement process, the disintegration in the organisational structures and systems, lack of skills and capacity, ineffective execution of strategies and regulations within the procurement environment and lack of supplier relationship management. According to researchers such as Dzuke and Naude (2015); Eyaa and Oluka (2011) and Huka *et al.* (2014) central to public service delivery and performance is public procurement, it is therefore no wonder that the procurement specialists encounter various challenges that go beyond procurement procedures, structures and human resources. Although South Africa has been involved in reforming processes in public procurement and supply chain management, there remain many problems. These can be summarised as (i) non-compliance with legislation and tender irregularities (Ambe & Badenhorst-Weiss, 2012) (ii) public sector procurement is an operational function (iii) procurement officers are not accountable and lack transparency as a result of inadequate knowledge and skill (iv) endemic corruption exists which leads to fraud (v) reform process is inadequate and delayed because of procurement officers



Dzuke and Naude (2017) found in their research that key problems are inherent in the public procurement process - sometimes procurement policies and processes are weak and outdated, public sector procurement usually functions as an operational activity rather than a strategic activity, there is sometimes a lack of accountability and transparency from the stakeholders and a lack of procurement knowledge and skill, fraud and corruption are too embedded in the practice and there is a lack of appropriate reform. In the EC the problems relating to LTSM include difficulties in achieving widespread LTSM deliveries at the schools. They are:

- ***The Strategic importance of procurement:*** The management of all the interlinking LTSM procurement activities is relevant for the departments' survival. However, there are misunderstandings within the procurement process and the strategic role of those working in the system makes it necessary for them to understand how the social economic power that the purchasing decisions they engage in impacts on the overall business environment (NT, 2015; Naude, Ambe & Kling, 2013). Despite the reform processes in public procurement and the employment of procurement as a strategic tool, the DoE continues to face enormous problems in its public procurement practices (Ambe, 2016). Most people in procurement are expected to meet traditional, overarching expectations by undertaking purchasing activities with probity, transparency and accountability to achieve value-for-money (Knight, Harland, Telgen, Thai, Callender & McKen, 2007).

The procurement function forms a strategic part in the procurement processes, but without clearly defined mechanisms for managing and measuring performance, procurement struggles to ensure compliance and to achieve its overall strategic goals of effective procurement and delivery of LTSM to schools (Houston & Hutchens, 2009; Musanzikwa, 2013). The procurement policies and practice notes are very good but what is lacking is the daily effective monitoring of the implementation process to ensure that these policies are interpreted and applied correctly. There is a need to set, and enforce a procurement code of ethics among the staff to nurture a culture of integrity as they execute the strategic role of SCM (Ndolo & Njagi, 2014). Having government departments understand the strategic importance of LTSM procurement and delivery will ensure better service delivery to schools.

- ***The Organisational Structures and Systems:*** The organisational structure and systemic problems in the provisioning of LTSM remain a cause for concern, with

many schools still experiencing textbook shortages, which affect learners' education (PSC, 2016). There is a need for effective utilisation of existing systems and processes to ensure that the necessary human resources are in place because procurement processes are only as good as the systems and tools that support them (Houston & Hutchens, 2009; Kota, Hendricks, Matambo & Naidoo, 2017). At the ECDoE, the LTSM office and the procurement section operating at the head office level are located apart, about 60km away from each other. This could cause uncertainties and delays in the approval of documents during the textbook procurement season if they were not connected by technology.

Therefore, there is a need for improved business processes, rules and infrastructure to make it easier for the officials and the department to execute their daily responsibilities (NT, 2015). Although the department has centralised the procurement of LTSM, there is still a need to decentralise some of the procurement functions and related LTSM procurement approvals so that decisions can be made on time (Musanzikwa, 2013). It is reported that the lack of standardized processes, insufficient data and inadequate technologies are the main barriers for effective management (Özlen & Hasanspahic, 2013). Some schools lacked suitable equipment, such as computers with dependable internet connections, which made it difficult for them to order using the online system.

- ***Skills and Capacity:*** There is a lack in the training of procurement officers to ensure that a purchasing practitioner is someone who can make sound decisions which can add value to the organisation, and organisations should be prepared to spend money on training their procurement personnel to equip them with necessary technical skills and knowledge (Musanzikwa, 2013; Tukuta & Saruchera, 2015). However, the ECDoE (2018) reported that the capacity constraints, lack of skills and expertise worsens the delays in the procurement process. The main role of procurement professionals is strategically to fulfil the firm's procurement objectives and to facilitate overall success of the procurement process, but there is a lack of skills and capacity in the implementation of procurement functions, which hinders the LTSM procurement process (Phakathi 2015; Tukuta & Saruchera, 2015). The appointment of inexperienced and unqualified officials and contractors, lack of technical expertise in the respective bid committees, lack of understanding of the relevant regulatory framework and noncompliance with policy framework, add to the existing

procurement anomalies (Munzhedzi, 2016). Some district offices do not have the necessary capacity to handle their current administrative, management and professional responsibilities related to the execution of LTSM procurement functions (DBE, 2013). The procurement section in Limpopo experienced the same problems of poor service delivery because of insufficient training, lack of experience and inadequate qualifications, which resulted in the dismantling of the procurement section and the department being placed under administration (Livhuwani, 2012).

Thus, the lack of capacity in the district office to process requisitions timeously could mean that schools lose their allocation at the end of the year since there is no rollover on unspent budgeted amounts (Phakathi, 2015). Certain employees were willing to wholeheartedly embrace the implementation of an effective management procurement system, whereas other employees remain neutral or even hostile (Curry, 2016). The result is that schools do not have the vital materials for the facilitation of teaching and learning. In the absence of the procurement professional having a sound knowledge of procurement procedures, there is a likelihood of non-compliance with procurement regulations (Zitha *et al.*, 2016). The skills and knowledge of the process and the way in which things must be executed is vital. It was reported that at the district level the electronic catalogues were not distributed to all the schools at the same time, thus causing delays in the procurement of textbooks. The challenges with the CDs that could not be opened because of lack of training in schools raised questions regarding support provided by District Offices (PSC, 2016). As a result, the ECDoE (2018) reported that the department is embarking on a new organisational structure, which will employ individuals with a completely new range of skills, mind-set and ethical conduct.

- ***Procurement Policies and Regulations:*** There is a lack of alignment between policies and the implementation. The procurement policies and regulations are often confusing and cumbersome; officials must fill out numerous forms and attach many documents for each transaction (National Treasury, 2015). The problem of the shortage of textbooks persists in the South African education system because the public sector is still characterised by poor implementation of procurement practices and ineffective management of the processes (Phakathi, 2015). The public institutions are charged with ensuring that the procurement officials and the public service in its entirety conducts themselves in line with the values and principles of good governance as set

out in the Constitution (Zitha *et al.*, 2016). The public sector is inundated with unethical and corrupt leaders, who exploit the loopholes in the systems and processes and seek to fulfil their personal desires at the expense of their departments (Naidoo, 2012). There is a need that all staff in charge of sourcing, supplier selection and related activities are sensitised to the code of ethics and made aware of the implications of unethical dealings (Tukuta & Saruchera, 2015).

There are clearly measures in place, but the involvement in unethical dealings by officials with authority and power has caused great damage to the departments. By holding employees accountable for their actions, leaders can do a lot to promote good governance in the public sector (Naidoo, 2012). The laudable procurement policy framework and all other good policies and regulations are often grossly undermined by incidents of lack of accountability and political interference, which leads to non-implementation and non-monitoring (Munzhedzi, 2016). The procurement personnel fail to interpret policies, acts, rules and regulations that govern supply chain management, which leads to them awarding contracts to unqualified service providers who bribe public officials with monetary rewards (Dzuke & Naude, 2017). This presents a major obstacle to achieving accepted goals of effective public procurement management (De La Harpe, 2015).

- ***Supplier Relationship Management (SRM)***: The absence of trust in teams, contractors and suppliers in an organisation breeds inefficiency. During the procurement of LTSM, engagements take place with suppliers or publishers which forms part of the key role players in the process and this demands that stakeholders trust each other. Although the public sector utilises various suppliers for goods and services and has in turn become the main customer for many suppliers, the public sectors in less developed nations use a traditional procurement system, based on adversarial relationships with many suppliers, (Naude *et al.*, 2013; Mandiyambira 2012). Traditionally, firms did not accept a supplier or customer as their partner, they even competed with their suppliers because they were afraid of being taken advantage of by them (Chin, Tat, Sulaiman, Long & Yi, 2017). Currently firms enter into collaborations with suitable partners to maintain supply chain efficiency amid ever changing supply markets (Chakraborty *et al.*, 2014). To support this initiative, procurement managers are beginning to realise that building sound relationships with suppliers fosters loyalty and secures valuable support that goes beyond the terms and

conditions of an order or the contents of a contract (Tukuta & Saruchera, 2015). More and improved relationships with suppliers could realize benefits such as increased flexibility, improved visibility in the procurement process and contract compliance because frequent meetings with suppliers could clarify any vagueness of responsibilities and tasks at hand (Crandall *et al.*, 2015). For better and effective dealings in their supply chains, suppliers need to be exposed to supplier relationship management (SRM) programmes that develop suppliers to look beyond transactional relationships so that departments may realise better and effective dealings in their supply chains (Tukuta & Saruchera, 2015), however; this is still lacking. This behaviour frequently undermines the importance of supplier management in the public sector (Naude *et al.*, 2013). Many supply chain relationships involving partners have been unsuccessful because of lack of trust (Chakraborty *et al.*, 2014).

- ***Lack of Communication:*** There appears to be a lack of communication between all the three levels of procurement management; or at least, minimal communication that is not effective. Together with poor communication go prejudices, mistrust and expectations that cannot be met (Livhuwani, 2012). One can postulate that communication from the DoE might be delayed or it hardly happens, which affects the actions needed, especially when it comes to procurement of LTSM. A report by ECDoE (2018) stated that the department is in the process of implementing a communication system that will be used to integrate district, schools teachers and School Governing Body's (SGB). The reason is that some schools do not receive the guidelines on how to order, they are forced to do this activity at the last moment and therefore the integrated and effective communication system would assist these levels to speed up the flow of information.

This has the potential to create a situation where some schools take matters into their own hands and start the procurement process out of desperation. Long-term partnerships can be created whereby communication, risks and rewards are openly shared between supply chain partners (D'amato *et al.*, 2015). Because of incorrect or lack of communication small suppliers often accuse the purchasers of false promises relating to contracts (Livhuwani, 2012). The end-result is a quest for better communication between the various supply chain partners to create a more integrated and collaborated supply value chain. With lack of communication, schools become the casualties, as they do not receive the necessary LTSM materials.

### 3.5.5 Summary of the instrument of procurement and delivery of LTSM

The constant changes in the environment reveal a need to continuously improve procurement in the public sector (Musanzikwa, 2013). The DBE centralised ordering of the LTSM, especially textbooks, would enhance universal textbook coverage in schools (PSC, 2016). In the table 3.5 a summary of the instrument of the procurement and delivery of LSTM is given.

**Table 3.5:** Summary of the instrument of procurement and delivery of LTSM

<b>PRACTICE</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>SOURCE</b>
<b>UNDERSTANDING PROCUREMENT PROCESS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Process processes</li> <li>• Procurement Thresholds in SA public sector</li> <li>• Procurement procedures</li> <li>• Role played by key stakeholders</li> <li>• Reliability and centralisation of LTSM procurement process</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Simayi, 2008; Chisolm, 2013; DBE, 2016; Veriava, 2014; Quinot &amp; Arrowsmith, 2013; DBE, 2013; Phakathi, 2015; Mestry, 2014;</li> </ul>
<b>DISTRIBUTION OF LEARNER TEACHER SUPPORT MATERIALS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivery process</li> <li>• Delivery time frames</li> <li>• Improving the delivery of LTSM</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bowersox, et al., 2013; Ramaa, et al., 2012; Veriava, 2013; Sabarwal &amp; Marshak, 2013; DBE, 2012; Crabbe &amp; Abadzi, 2013; Poee, et al., 2015; Centobelli, et al., 2014</li> </ul>
<b>POLICIES AND REGULATIONS GUIDING PROCURING OF LTSM</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PPFA, 5 of 2000</li> <li>• PFMA, 29 of 1999</li> <li>• SASA,</li> <li>• National Norms and Standards for School Funding</li> <li>• LTSM Retrieval policy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Makabira &amp; Wanganjo, 2014; Ndolo &amp; Njago, 2014; PSC, 2016; Phakathi, 2015; (Eyaa &amp; Oluka, 2011; Huka, Mchopa &amp; Kimambo, 2014).</li> </ul>
<b>PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED IN THE PROCUREMENT OF LTSM</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Organisational Structures and Systems</li> <li>• Skills and Capacity</li> <li>• Procurement Policies and Regulations</li> <li>• Supplier Relationship Management (SRM)</li> <li>• Lack of Communication</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dzuke &amp; Naude 2015; Eyaa &amp; Oluka, 2011; Huka, et al, 2014; Ambe &amp; Badenhorst-Weiss 2012; National Treasury, 2015; Naude, Ambe &amp; Kling, 2013;</li> </ul>

**Source:** Compiled by Researcher

Musanzikwa (2013) recommended that procurement practitioners; need to guard against and mitigate risks in order to improve the procurement process. The study also recommended that procurement practitioners should ensure that they deliver timeously and constantly monitor performance to improve their services. PSC (2016) asserts that the provincial DoE's incorporate regular monitoring of textbook retrieval systems in schools by ensuring an effective performance and spot checks at the school level via the District Managers. In addition, the computerised guidelines and procedures done through e-procurement technology permits businesses to accomplish a reduction in costs of total purchases (Centobelli, Roberto, Giuseppe, & Teresa, 2014).

A cohesive approach to service delivery will undoubtedly contribute to the timeous and efficient delivery (Musanzikwa, 2013). For procurement managers in any organisation to provide a continuous flow of goods and services they should review their communication efficiencies and in turn request the suppliers do the same (Nyamasege & Biraori, 2015). By so doing, the departments would ensure that there are both control and monitoring systems in place to support the current treasury regulations, which requires that payment of invoice, occur within 30 days (PSC, 2016).

### **3.6 CONCLUSION**

The review of the literature on the budget of the DoE and how the procurement process operates clearly shows that there are gaps that need to be filled. It is quite clear that the challenge is not the lack of funds or the limitations thereof, but it is the management of the procurement process. There is a need to have an efficient monitoring and evaluation system that will help in reducing these challenges, and also help in policy making for future implementations.

## **CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

The chapter deals with the research design and methodology used in this study. This includes the research philosophy, the research design, research environment, study population, sampling procedures, data collection tools, the data collection method and steps, the data management and its analysis. Further, the issues of trustworthiness that include credibility and dependability of the study, as well as the ethical considerations applicable to the study are discussed. Finally, the limitations of the study and how those were overcome are presented.

### **4.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM**

The researcher's understanding of the world based on a philosophical perspective determine her opinions and expectations of the study (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2012). For this study, the paradigm or world view of the researcher is that of the social constructionists (Berger & Luckman, 1967; Given, 2008). This worldview is described as interpretive. "Interpretivist researchers seek methods that enable them to understand in depth the relationship of human beings to their environment and the part those people play in creating the social fabric of which they are a part" (Thanh & Thanh, 2015:26). People make sense of their world in discussion and in sharing information, and by this means they construct meaning as they experience their version of reality. The interpretivist philosophy was believed to help the understanding of effective management of the procurement process of LTSM.

### **4.3 RESEARCH DESIGN**

The design of research is the strategy used by the researcher which is believed will best suit the types of questions she wants answered. Because of the researcher's expectations and knowledge, the choice of a research design could impact the way in which the data is collected (Nieuwenhuis, 2013). The research design as a strategy is not a random choice but takes into account the approaches and measures to use when gathering and examining the required information-based evidence (Zikmund, Babin, Carr & Griffin, 2013). There are three basic purposes of research namely; exploratory, descriptive and/or explanatory research (Saunders *et al.*, 2012). Research is conducted because of the three basic purposes namely: for exploratory, for descriptive and/or explanatory research purposes (Saunders *et al.*, 2012).



- ***Exploratory research:*** Exploratory research helps the researcher to explore a chosen problem and in turn expand their understanding on the topic, which is useful in instances where there is less evidence of previous research conducted in that area. The literature review, interviews and open-ended questions are used as the means to gather more insight into the problem (Creswell, 2007). This leads to a new awareness and comprehensive understanding of the subject, instead of collecting all-inclusive but duplicating data (Babbie, Mouton, Voster & Prozesky 2012).
- ***Descriptive research:*** In descriptive research, the researcher commonly tries to understand the regularity of events by using *what* and *how* questions (Jansen 2013). Researchers endeavour to describe the order of events with an effort to discover answers to the existing problems (Leedy & Ormrod, 2014).
- ***Explanatory research:*** Explanatory research usually goes more deeply into a question than the more generic way of describing what happened in an attempt to explicate how and why events occurred in a particular manner (Jansen 2013).

This study employed an exploratory research design, because limited research exists on the management and procurement practices employed in the procurement process of LTSM in public secondary schools in the EC in the East London area.

#### **4.3.1 Research strategy**

According to Saunders *et al* (2012) in responding to the research questions, a research strategy is required. The research strategy is concerned with what the researcher hopes to accomplish in a research study (Gravetter & Forzano, 2016:162). There are well-known qualitative strategies used in researching problems such as case studies, ethnography, action research, phenomenology, and grounded theories (Creswell, 2015; Myers, 2009). The case study is the most suitable strategy for this research study, because the researcher could investigate and describe the essential parts of the problem (Nieuwenhuis, 2013). Case studies are valuable in providing responses to enquiries such as “why” “what” and “how” events occurred (Saunders *et al.*, 2012). Scholars such as Hofstee (2006); Saunders *et al.* (2012) maintain that a case study allows a researcher to investigate a subject in its actual setting and in turn reveals the obscured information which in this study could be the possible management inefficiencies leading to non-delivery of LTSM to schools.

### 4.3.2 Research approach

Research approaches provide a systematic and efficient way to investigate problems (Creswell, 2014). Two major types of research approaches are the deductive and inductive ones. As suggested by Eriksson and Kovalainen (2008) the deductive approach is useful when the researcher seeks to advance a research idea through the development of questions. The inductive approach requires the researcher to firstly collect data to determine a phenomenon (Saunders *et al.*, 2012). An inductive approach was applied for this study because there was a need to understand primary data in order to determine what was happening and how it was happening in the procurement process of LTSM in public secondary school in the EC. An inductive research approach is recommended for qualitative research, because these studies are by nature inductive and subjective (Quinlan, 2011).

### 4.3.3 Methodological choices

In this section of the study, the methodology used in the study is discussed. The three available research methods are briefly explained and the reasons for the chosen methods to conduct this research are given.

- **Qualitative method:** Qualitative research is characterised by meanings, conceptions, explanations, metaphors, signs and an interpretation of things (Berg & Howard, 2012). Qualitative research permits the researcher to construct theories and meanings grounded in the generated data (Daniel, 2016). This is accomplished by interpreting the participants' understanding, beliefs and ideas and analysing the way people experience different phenomena in their natural settings (Creswell, 2007; Bazeley, 2013; Denzin & Lincoln, 2013; Gravetter & Forzano, 2016). Although the qualitative method is known for being subjective, it is highly recommended by Denzin and Lincoln (2013) for its Potential for the researcher to triangulate data, which tends to bring out rigour, richness and complexity to an enquiry.
- **Quantitative method:** A quantitative method is a data collection method that uses certain kinds of numerical tools, which measure quantities, and occurrences to acquire indices matching the features of the subject being investigated (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). This method focuses on scrutinising the existing causal relationships by placing more emphasis on the analysis of variables than the processes (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013).
- **Mixed method:** Mixed method research can be described as a data collection method that integrates both qualitative and quantitative methods and then combines both features of data to have more knowledge of the research problem (Creswell, 2007). This method is

suitable when the characteristics of qualitative or quantitative methods are not adequate to respond entirely to the research problem, thus the restrictions by one method are supplemented by the strengths of other (Creswell, 2009). Therefore, mixed method can balance the requirements of both the quantitative and the qualitative approach to produce meaningful results.

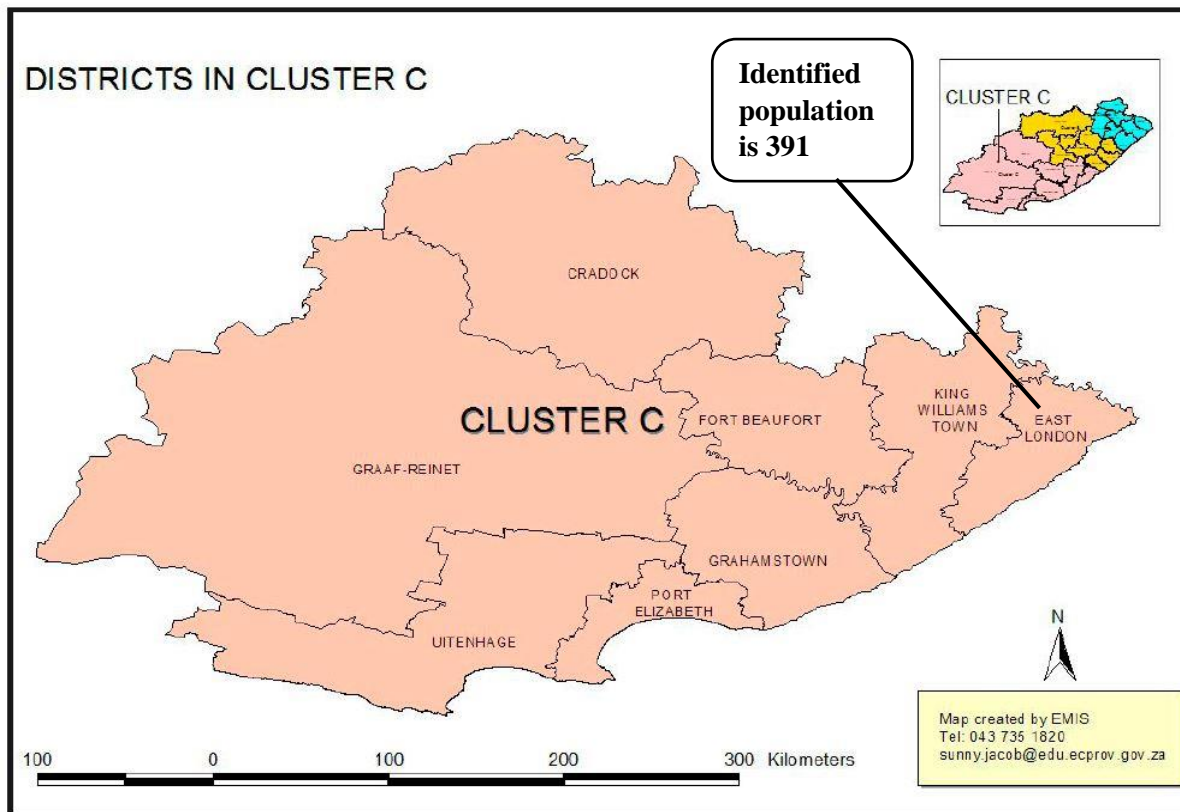
In this study, a qualitative research design was used. This enabled the researcher to interview individuals involved in three tiers of procurement, School level, District level and Head office level about the management of their procurement practices.

#### **4.4 POPULATION AND SAMPLE**

In this section, the targeted population and sampling used for this study are briefly discussed.

##### **4.4.1 Population of the study**

Population refers to the “whole group of available subjects or individuals possessing the relevant features that can be used to investigate a problem” (Cooper & Schindler, 2014:338). The target population for the study was the ECDoE under cluster C (Figure 4.1). The ECDoE services about 5715 schools spread over 23 district offices, procures the relevant LTSM amongst other things, coordinates, and manages this strategic task with the assistance of school’s districts offices, procurement specialists, procurement heads and the school principals from the public secondary schools in East London. The study targeted the East London district, which had a population size of 391 comprising of 317 Schools; 35 District office procurement specialists; and 39 Provincial DoE procurement heads plus procurement practitioners. Scholars like Hair, Celsi, Money, Samouel (2011:163) and Quinlan (2011:206) state that researchers would love to include the total relevant population for an enquiry, this is not realistic.



**Figure 4.1:** Population for the Study

**Source:** Map with ECDoE Districts in Cluster C (ECDoE, 2014)

- Sampling:** Sampling refers to “a portion of the population or universe” (Etikan *et al.*, 2015:1). A sample is a set of persons or entities selected from and envisioned to characterise the whole population in a research study (Gravetter & Forzan, 2016). Out of the larger targeted population, a manageable sample of about 24 participants was chosen as participants in this study. However, the researcher managed to meet and interview only 19 participants in the field. All these participants were chosen within the government DoE in East London district, which is based in the EC. The respondents comprised of senior officials and practitioners, relevant LTSM district officials and the school principals or representatives involved in the procurement of LTSM.

Ideally, the population for this research would have been all the stakeholders closely involved in the LTSM procurement process, but the participants who were selected were from the three levels who manage the procurement of LTSM namely; Provincial head office, District officials and the school principals. The procurement practitioners were selected as they would be able to explain the process and steps involved. The district officials were believed to be able to share their experience and role in the whole process

and the school principals to share their role, involvement and problems they faced during the procurement of LTSM.

The table 4.1 below shows a summary of the population, sample and the participants who participated in this study.

**Table 4.1:** Summary of Population and sample size from East London

<b>PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOL (KEY STAKEHOLDERS)</b>	<b>POPULATION</b>	<b>SAMPLE</b>	<b>INTERVIEWED</b>
<b>SCHOOLS</b>	317	11	7
<b>DISTRICT PROCUREMENT SPECIALIST</b>	35	5	5
<b>PDOE SENIOR PROCUREMENT HEADS &amp; PDOE PROCUREMENT SPECIALIST</b>	39	8	7
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>391</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>19</b>

**Source:** Researcher

The participants chosen for this study were those closely involved in the procurement of LTSM for public schools so that senior officials could share their understanding of the policies and the overall management of the process.

#### **4.4.2 Sampling Technique**

The sampling techniques used were of two main types; namely, probability and non-probability sampling (Quinlan, 2011; Saunders *et al.*, 2012). Probability sampling is used together with quantitative research and is objective because of its haphazard process (Hair *et al.*, 2011: 163). Non-probability sampling is associated with qualitative enquiry which is subjective in nature and generally makes use of purposive sampling (Nieuwenhuis, 2013). Purposive or judgemental sampling is subjective as are snowball sampling, quota sampling, and convenience sampling (Quinlan, 2011). For this study, a purposive sampling technique was selected and is briefly discussed below.

- **Sampling rationale:** Purposive sampling was applied to select a sample of 24 ECDoE key stakeholders involved in the procurement and distribution of LTSM. The researcher wished to elicit views from different stakeholders in the three levels of the organisational structure; this would provide an in-depth understanding of how LTSM procurement is managed, as well as a clear understanding of the practices and strategies used in the process. This needed people who were working in the environment and who understood and participated in parts of the process so that they could explain (Etkan *et al.*, 2015). The

participants were chosen deliberately using purposive sampling because of the qualities that the participants possessed (Babbie *et al.*, 2012; MacMillan & Schumacher, 2014).

## **4.5 DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS**

In this section, data collection sources, interview schedules and analysis are outlined.

### **4.5.1 Data collection**

Data collection refers to two general ways of collecting empirical data namely; primary and secondary data (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2011). Collecting data in its original form using interviews for example is a way of getting primary data; while secondary data involves the data collection process using the existing data sources such as textbooks and journal articles, both sources are used in solving a research problem (Salkind, 2014). To collect primary data, the participants were interviewed one by one at their offices and schools, which was a place familiar to them, and these primary data interviews were tape-recorded. The participants were asked, and they gave consent that they could be recorded except one participant from the school level who asked not to be recorded. The audio recorded interviews by all participants were transcribed using Microsoft Word.

### **4.5.2 Entry to the research site**

The head office, ECDoE (Superintendent's office) was contacted to request permission to conduct research via telephone with details found on the department's website. During the telephone call, the aim of the study and the length of each interview was explained in detail. The process of gaining entry after several and lengthy discussions indicated that the site gatekeepers had permitted the request (Polit & Beck, 2012). To cultivate rapport between the researcher and gatekeepers the purpose of the study was clarified over the telephone and in writing. When the gatekeepers were satisfied about the aim of the study, they wrote a permission letter for the researcher to continue with data collection through individual interviews. (Appendix B: Request letter; Appendix C: Permission letter). When the permission letter was obtained from the gatekeepers, the researcher contacted all the participants individually using emails and telephone calls explaining the research objective and requesting them to willingly participate in the study. All the participants who agreed to participate were provided with both the participant information sheet and the consent form to sign as an indication of their willingness to participate. The participants were also made aware of the ethical clearance certificate obtained from the university which served as a permission for this data collection process.

### 4.5.3 Schedule of interviews

The interviews allowed the participants to tell their narratives, involvements, perceptions, viewpoints and decisions about the management of the LTSM procurement process (see Table 4.2). The interviews were scheduled for different dates and times for the earmarked sample of population and each participant was given an alias name for confidentiality.

**Table: 4.2.** Interview Schedule

	<i>Participant</i>	<i>Code</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Place</i>
1.	Admin Officer 1	HOP1	05 Nov 18	14H00	East London
2.	Circuit Manager 1	DOP1	08 Nov 18	08H00	East London
3.	LTSM Coordinator 1	DOP2	08 Nov18	09H15	East London
4.	<i>Acting</i> District Manager	DOP3	19 Nov 18	07H30	East London
5.	LTSM Coordinator 2	DOP4	19Nov 18	09H10	King William’s Town
6.	Circuit Manager 2	DOP5	19 Nov 18	10H15	King William’s Town
7.	Education Specialist 1	HOP2	19 Nov 18	12H00	East London
8.	Education Specialist 2	HOP3	19 Nov 18	13H00	East London
9.	Admin Officer 2	HOP4	19 Nov 18	15H00	East London
10.	<i>Acting</i> Chief Director: SCM	HOP5	20 Nov 18	08H30	King William’s Town
11.	Deputy Director: Contracts	HOP6	20 Nov 18	10H15	King William’s Town
12.	School Principal/ Rep	SPP1	22 Nov 18	09H15	King William’s Town
13.	Director: SCM	HOP7	22 Nov 18	14H30	King William’s Town
14.	School Principal/ Rep	SPP2	23 Nov 18	10H00	East London
15.	School Principal/ Rep	SPP3	23 Nov 18	13H00	East London
16.	School Principal/ Rep	SPP4	27 Nov 18	08H00	King William’s Town
17.	School Principal/ Rep	SPP5	27 Nov 18	09H10	King William’s Town
18.	School Principal/ Rep	SPP6	27 Nov 18	13H00	King William’s Town
19.	School Principal/ Rep	SPP7	28 Nov 18	10H00	East London

**Source:** Researcher

The participants’ codes were categorised according to the office they were located and the number at the end of each code name stood for the chronological order of how interviews took place. For example, the HOP1 described the first interviewed Head Office Participant. The DOP1 meant that the official is a District Office Participant and was interviewed first. The SPP1 stood for the first interviewed School Principal Participant or a Representative. The original (HOP3) who held a Deputy Director General position participant agreed to be interviewed but later decided to ask somebody else to stand in on their behalf during the interviews. Another participant on a Director level, whom the researcher made an appointment with, was later suspended from the department and could not be seen.

#### 4.5.4 Interview questions

The interviews were the key instruments of data collection in this research (Schmidt & Brown, 2012). There was a total of 11 open and closed ended questions (Figure: 4.2).

Some questions were developed for the sake of gaining clarity; others were for probing and cross-checking during the interviews.

#### *Procurement of Learner Teacher Support Material (LTSM) in the East London District Public Secondary Schools*

##### **Background Information**

1.1 What is your Position?

1.2 How many years of service in the current position?

1.3 Which category does your school fall under? (*Where Applicable*)

##### **QUESTIONS**

1. What are the current procurement methods employed in the acquisition of LTSM at public secondary schools in East London District?
2. Kindly explain the various procurement threshold used during procurement?
3. What procurement procedures used from the start to finish during the procurement of LTSM?
4. Who are the key stakeholders involved in the procurement?
5. Explain the current delivery process from start to finish when preparing for the following year of study?
6. What is the time frame applicable in the current delivery of LTSM to schools when preparing for the following year of study?
7. What can you recommend as part of improving the current delivery process?
8. What are the key Policies and Regulations that guides the Procurement of LTSM?
9. What can you recommend as part of improving the current understanding of the policies, acts and regulations?
10. What challenges are faced during the procurement and delivery of LTSM
11. What possible solutions can you recommend for these challenges?

This is the end of the questions. Thank you for taking and allowing this interview to take place. We value the information you have provided. Your answers will contribute to the analysis of the texts and suggest new or better ways of method.

**Figure 4.2:** Research interview Questions

The closed-ended questions had a clear and apparent focus and call for an answer, while the unstructured or open-ended questions allowed the researcher to elaborate on responses (Salkind, 2014). The researcher used a voice recorder for audio recording the interviews. These recorded interviews were written up with Microsoft Word.



#### 4.5.5 Field Diary

To triangulate the data for the sake of validity, the researcher kept a field diary. For the qualitative research, field notes were used to improve data and offer rich background during the analysis process (Given, 2008; Phillippi, & Lauderdale, 2018). Some notes from the field diary are attached (Figures 4.3 & 4.4).

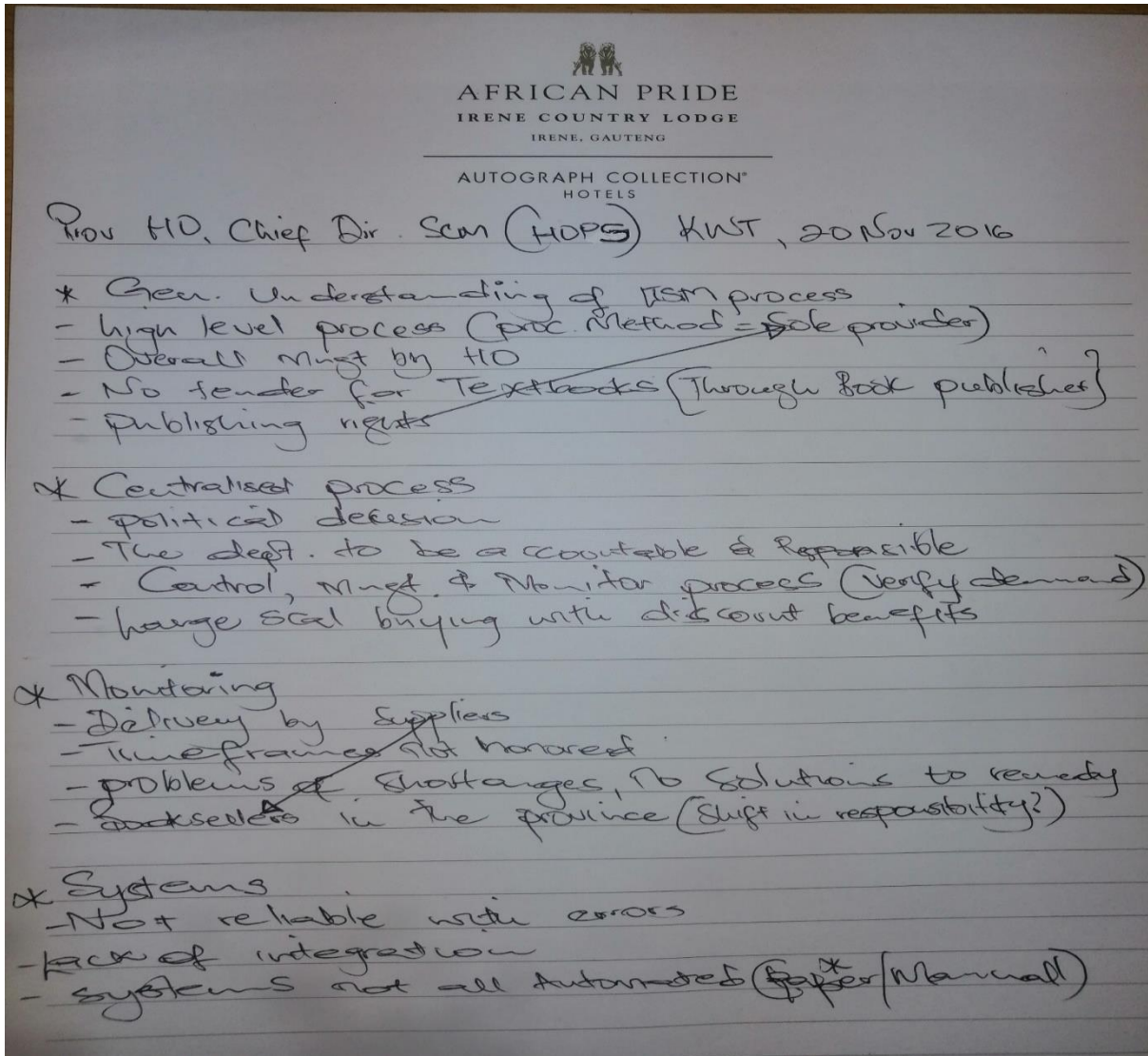
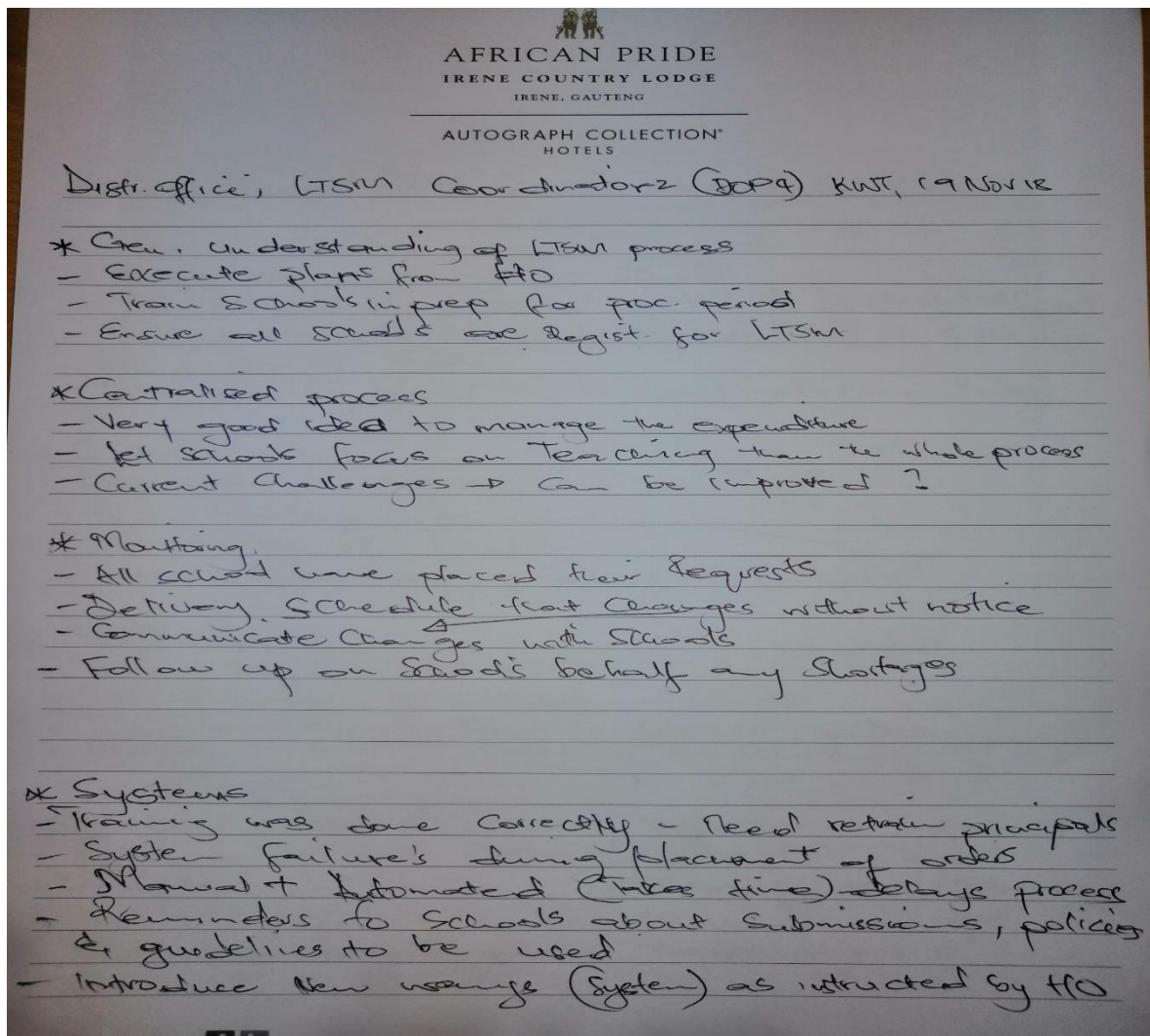


Figure 4.3: Examples of Field Notes #1

Source: Researcher



**Figure 4.4:** Examples of Field Notes #2  
**Source:** Researcher

#### 4.5.6 Data Analysis

The data analysis process helps the researcher to engage with the raw data. By grouping related themes and ideas and subsequently drawing inferences from the interpreted data the researcher has a way of handling a large amount of data (Quinlan, 2011). The data analysis process involved familiarization with and organising of the initial data, reflecting on and synthesizing the raw data which resulted in the process of concept grouping, code generation, searching for and reviewing themes, defining and naming themes (Leedy & Ormrod, 2014). Based on the data interpretation process and an understanding of the literature review which had highlighted some of the findings by other researchers, conclusions were drawn (Quinlan, 2011). From the data analysis and findings, recommendations were made pertaining to the three levels. Detailed discussions of the data analysis and recommendations are presented in Chapters Five and Six, respectively.

## **4.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

As research's ethics concerns the responsibility of researchers to act honestly and respectfully when engaging with participants or their reports of the studies' results the researcher must provide evidence that she adhered to ethical guidelines (Gravetter & Forzano, 2016; MacMillan & Schumacher, 2014). This included matters of confidentiality, voluntary consent, credibility, dependability, confirmability, transferability and authenticity (to be discussed in the subsection to follow). Research ethics are focused on what is ethically correct and incorrect when participants are engaged or when data archives are being accessed (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). Gravetter and Forzano (2016) suggest two fundamental groups of ethical responsibility namely; the responsibility of the participating individuals and the duty to the science discipline to act with accuracy and honesty when reporting research activities.

### **4.6.1 Confidentiality**

As part of the confidentiality clause to protect the participants from being identified in the research; the participants were given code names and the information obtained from each participant was kept strictly secret and private and is known only to the researcher (Gravetter & Forzano, 2016; McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). The interview transcripts, recorded voice data and field diary notes were kept in a lockable filing cabinet in the researcher's office except in instances when they were given to the supervisor for authentication purposes. The right to privacy of participants was maintained since this study is by no means of a personal nature, but rather investigates processes involved in the procurement of LTSM. This research study was not intended to cause any embarrassment to the participants. However, as part of academic writing for this study, the findings will also appear in some accredited journal articles for possible publication or for presentation in seminars and conferences.

### **4.6.2 Acknowledgement of sources**

Appropriate referencing of all the authors quoted in this study were made. All sources cited were duly acknowledged to ensure that no plagiarism was committed, and the researcher acknowledged the literature by including a comprehensive list of references at the end of the study.

### **4.6.3 Right to privacy**

The right to privacy of participants was maintained since this study is not of a personal nature, but rather investigates processes involved in the procurement of LTSM. Leedy and Ormrod (2015) stated that participants should not participate in research, which could cause

them embarrassment. This research study should not cause any embarrassment to the participants.

#### **4.6.4 Consent from participants**

For this study a request letter was written informing the respondents about the intention to conduct research, explaining that the participation was voluntary, and the participants were requested to sign a consent form as a way of agreeing to be part of the interviewees (Salkind, 2014), (Appendix E: Consent form). Before the data were collected, the researcher created a rapport with the participants to encourage willingness and trust.

### **4.7 ENSURING CREDIBILITY AND TRUSTWORTHINESS**

In this section, the credibility and trustworthiness are briefly discussed. According to Eriksson and Kovalainen (2011) credibility and trustworthiness can be considered the most fundamental aspects of gaining trust in a research community.

#### **4.7.1 Trustworthiness**

Trustworthiness in qualitative research is the key indicator of a good study. Babbie *et al.*, (2012) assert that one of the key aspects of trustworthiness in research is about neutrality of the results, thus convincing the audience that these findings are worth considering. However, it is not only about the neutrality of the findings but the rigour and the processes under which the study was conducted, despite Liamputtong (2013) arguing that trustworthiness is too subjective and lacking in rigour.

#### **4.7.2 Credibility**

The credibility of the study was established by purposefully selecting participants who had knowledge on the subject being investigated.. Credibility of the research has to do with the assurance that can be placed in the truth of the research findings (Anney, 2014). The researcher used the verbatim responses presented by participants in order to ensure originality of evidence and to validate findings. Furthermore, to improve credibility the researcher kept personal field notes as seen in Figure 4.3 above to maintain and describe observations of the participants' behaviour. In addition, the researcher was fully aware of the demands for dependability, confirmability, transferability and authenticity to ensure credibility and trustworthiness.

- **Dependability:** Dependability refers to the truthfulness of data when measured over a certain period and under different conditions for stability purposes in studies which are using qualitative methods (Polit & Beck, 2012). To ensure dependability and maintain

data trustworthiness, the researcher used a well thought out research design process, comprehensive transcriptions and a detailed data analysis process.

- **Confirmability:** In terms of confirmability, the researcher, maintained objectivity, by using the same questions for all participants to avoid potential bias and maintaining data accuracy, relevance and/ or meaning as provided by other independent respondents. Subsequently, the data served as an accurate and a true representation of the information as shared by each participant and was not the researcher's invention (Elo, Kääriäinen., Kanste., Pölkki., Utriainen & Kyngäs, 2014).
- **Transferability:** A degree of transferability can only be realised when the outcomes of the same qualitative research can be transferred and applied to different backgrounds and respondents (Anney, 2014). For this research, transferability could not be guaranteed as the findings are confined to the DoE in the EC and could not be generalized or rather applied to other schools in other provinces. This study also involved few participants in the EC and that makes it difficult to generalize the results as being the true reflection and representation of the bigger population.
- **Authenticity:** Authenticity is the degree to which researchers are acting with honesty and loyalty by showing ranges of real authenticity (Elo *et al.*,2014). The authenticity of the research was maintained as the outcomes and recommendations of the study were shared with the participants to review their practices.

#### **4.8 LIMITATIONS TO THE STUDY**

In this section, the limitations of the study are briefly explained. The study only included a total of 19 participants which cannot be considered the general representative of the EC Provincial education districts. The fact that two participants holding higher positions could not be seen during the interviews formed part of the limitations to the study. The financial resources and time required to conduct the study became a limiting factor for the study. There is limited literature available as far as the transportation and delivery which forms part of the process of getting materials to schools (Browne, 2015) and no literature that focuses on the management process of the procurement of LTSM in the EC.

#### 4.9 THE RESEARCH PROCESS FOLLOWED IN THE STUDY

The research process followed in this study is summarised in Table 4.3 below.

**Table 4.3:** Summary of the research process for this study

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION OF PROCESS
AIM OR PURPOSE OF THE STUDY	To determine the management and effective procurement of LTSM in the Eastern Cape district public secondary schools
RESEARCH DESIGN	Case study
RESEARCH APPROACH	Inductive (conclusions drawn from practical findings); use of qualitative research approach (qualitative approach) for a comprehensive understanding of the problem)
RESEARCH STRATEGY	Case study of the Eastern Cape department of education public secondary schools in the East London district
POPULATION	School principals, East London school District officials, Provincial department of education senior procurement officials and senior procurement heads
SAMPLING	Purposive sampling
DATA SOURCE	Primary and Secondary sources
DATA COLLECTION METHOD	Face-to-face interviews (open-ended interview questions)
DATA ANALYSIS	Case study to be analysed using thematic analysis
QUALITY OF THE RESEARCH	Attained through validity and reliability
ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS	Realized through acknowledgment of sources, right to privacy, informed consent, and confidentiality

**Source:** Compiled by Researcher

This summary section represents the step-by-step process adopted to gather data for the purposes of the study by highlighting research methodology steps such as the purpose of the study, design, population, data collection, data analysis and ethical considerations to be followed for this study.

#### 4.10 CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter, the focus was on the discussion of the research design and methodologies used to ensure that the study employed a qualitative approach. This chapter further provided a transitory overview of how data were collected and analysed. The study used qualitative face-to-face interviews with open ended and closed questions as well as observations in field notes. The use of purposive sampling as the chosen technique was an added advantage for this study.

In this chapter, the ethical elements of the research (trustworthiness, credibility, confirmability, transferability and authenticity) were discussed. Chapter Five to follow continues to present the research results found during the study which relates to the practical processes and approaches employed by the ECDoE during the procurement of LTSM for public secondary schools in the East London district office.

## **CHAPTER 5: ANALYSIS OF THE FINDINGS**

### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter contains the findings and analysis of the study through a thematic analysis procedure which focused on a close examination for patterns of meaning in data. The findings were derived from the data collection process which was made possible by the chosen participants through interviews and diary recordings. The literature reviewed in Chapter Two provided the context in which the data could be analysed in line with current research on the procurement process in education in South Africa. The overarching consideration was the main research question, namely, "How can the procurement process of LTSM be more effectively managed in the East London district public secondary schools?" From the varying answers given by participants at the three different levels at which procurement was conducted, the researcher applied the research technique of content analysis, firstly to deduce valid inferences through the interpretation of codes/categories extracted from the textual material. Subsequently themes were seen to emerge from the categories. The six prominent themes are presented in this chapter supported with evidence from the transcripts. Tables at the opening of the chapter summarise the background of the participants. These contextualise the participants but have no bearing on the thematic analysis of the data. Thematic analysis is presented as a means to understand what the participants' answers could mean. The section relating to the actual analysis of the data findings relating to the theme and subthemes is outlined. Finally, the actual analysis of the findings follows.

### **5.2 DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OF THE PARTICIPANTS**

In this section of the chapter, the demographic profile of the participants found in the three levels of participants in the procurement process is discussed. The procurement process of LTSM in the East London District public schools in the Eastern Cape Province occurs on three different levels namely at school, district and head office level. The management functions at each level are limited to and are informed by certain duties and responsibilities, which are expected to be performed to fulfil the procurement requirements and processes. Management at each level has unique responsibilities and is accountable for reporting and monitoring purposes. At head office level, the chief director is responsible for compliance issues relating to policies, the strategic planning of the annual procurement plans and dissemination of such information to district and school levels (HOP4, 20 Nov 18). Management at district and school levels has limited understanding of some processes that

take place at head office (DOP3, 19 Nov 18). The district level manager acts as intermediary between head office and schools, relaying requests from the head office to schools and giving feedback. He/she oversees operations at this level and is accountable for effective management of the office. The schools respond to the requirements from district and head office levels regarding the procurement process of LTSM. At school level, the principals' responsibilities relate to the smooth running of the school, including timeously providing accurate numbers of textbooks required for the facilitation of teaching and success in textbook recovery (DOP3, 19 Nov 18).

The interviews were conducted amongst the participants from the three levels, head office, district office and schools, because they all play important roles in the management and procurement process of LTSM. The first three questions related to background, to clarify the demography of the sample. Some were not relevant to the participants' position. The questions asked the position, years of experience in the position and the category of the school. In all the researcher interviewed 19 participants, 8 females and 11 males. This information from the participants made no substantial difference to their understanding of the procurement process and is merely presented here as background.

### **5.2.1 Profiles of procurement actors in Head office and District offices**

In this section, the profiles of the procurement participants at head and district office levels are presented. Table 5.1 illustrates the position and years of experience in the position held by each respondent.



**Table 5.1:** Profiles of Head Office and District Offices

POSITION	YEARS OF EXPERIENCE IN THE POSITION HELD
<i>ACTING</i> CHIEF DIRECTOR: SCM	5
DIRECTOR: SCM	5
DEPUTY DIRECTOR: CONTRACTS	2
<i>ACTING</i> DISTRICT MANAGER	4 months
CIRCUIT MANAGER 1	3
CIRCUIT MANAGER 2	4
LTSM COORDINATOR 1	4
LTSM COORDINATOR 2	4
EDUCATION SPECIALIST 1	3
EDUCATION SPECIALIST 2	3
ADMIN OFFICER 1	5
ADMIN OFFICER 2	3

The information from Table 5.1 revealed that the participants interviewed included all the relevant LTSM procurement role players at head office and district office levels, as explained below:

- **Position:** The participants in different positions understood their roles in the LTSM procurement process. As seen above, two participants holding higher positions were appointed on an acting basis. Acting administrators make it difficult for organisations to maintain a continuous flow of management processes especially if the acting period is short. The implementation and monitoring processes of management decisions might not be followed through because the acting term could be curtailed prematurely.
- **Years of experience:** Most of the participants had more than two years' experience in their current positions and understood the process of procurement and their role in the bigger procurement process. There was only one participant who had been acting in a position for a period of four months. Another one had two years' experience in their current position.

There is a strong likelihood of instability and inconsistency when positions are not occupied permanently especially at senior level, the acting positions can delay the much-needed progress in the procurement of LTSM.

### 5.2.2 Profiles of School principals/representatives

In this section the profiles of the procurement officers at school level, their position, years of experience and the school category, are presented. The Table 5.2 provides a summary of the participants who are responsible for the limited duties of textbook procurement at school level.

**Table 5.2:** Profiles of School Principals

POSITION	SCHOOL CATEGORY	YEARS OF EXPERIENCE IN THE POSITION
SCHOOL PRINCIPAL/ REP	Quintile 5	4
SCHOOL PRINCIPAL/ REP	Quintile 4	4
SCHOOL PRINCIPAL/ REP	Quintile 3	3
SCHOOL PRINCIPAL/ REP	Quintile 3	4
SCHOOL PRINCIPAL/ REP	Quintile 3	8
SCHOOL PRINCIPAL/ REP	Quintile3	4
SCHOOL PRINCIPAL/ REP	Quintile 5	15

The participants interviewed included all the relevant LTSM procurement role players found in the school level. The school participants were from diverse categories of schools which resulted in differences as briefly explained below:

- **Position:** The participants were either the principals or someone given the responsibility of ordering textbooks and monitoring their retrieval and retention.
- **Years of experience:** Participants had 4 years of experience and above except one who had 3 years. The years of experience in one position enabled the principals to understand and make a distinction between the current centralised process and the former decentralised process. The process of procurement is now centralised at head office after the decision that took place in 2014 in Mangaung (HOP5, 20 Nov 18).
- **Category of school:** Quintile 4 and 5 are fee paying schools (former Model C) and quintile 3 is a no fee school. There might have been differences in the procurement process prior to centralisation decision; however, currently with centralisation the procedures are supposed to be identical. There were three participants from the quintile 4 and 5 schools; and there were four participants from quintile 3 schools.

At the school level, all participants, from all categories of schools, had limited understanding of the LTSM procurement process because of repeated changes in the procurement process,

despite their years of experience. They all experienced the same problems when it came to shortages and late deliveries of textbooks to schools. Experience in the position of the participants in each level, especially in the district and school level, made little difference to the skills needed to perform the current job.

### **5.3 THEMATIC ANALYSIS OF THE DATA COLLECTED**

In this section, the process of how the data were analysed is provided. The collected data were analysed using the thematic analysis approach. Thematic analysis is a holistic, metacognitive analytical methodology. Although the interview questions are matched to the research questions and the themes are roughly matched, this type of analysis is qualitative not quantitative. Kumar (2011) suggests that when data is analysed using a qualitative research method, researchers identify themes and describe the findings as presented during the interview process instead of using numerals to derive these findings.

The process the researcher used was to assign preliminary codes to the data (content analysis) to describe the content and then review the data to define and name the themes which emerged (Blandford, Furniss & Makri, 2016). The thematic analysis approach allowed the researcher to group and make sense of the qualitative data using concepts which were categorised as recurring (Given, 2008; Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). After an iterative engagement with the data and informed by the literature review, themes emerged. The findings showed which recurring concepts could be named as important in the understanding of the management of the procurement process for the participants.

All participants were asked the same questions, in English and IsiXhosa. Table 5.3 illustrates the alignment of the interview questions to the research questions used during the interviews.

**Table 5.3:** Alignment of Research questions to Interview questions

<b>RESEARCH QUESTION (RQ)</b>	<b>INTERVIEW QUESTION (IQ)</b>
<b><i>RQ1: WHAT ARE THE CURRENT PROCUREMENT PRACTICES EMPLOYED IN THE ACQUISITION OF LTSM AT PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN EAST LONDON DISTRICT?</i></b>	<p><b><i>IQ1:</i></b> What are the current procurement methods employed in the acquisition of LTSM at public secondary schools in East London?</p> <p><b><i>IQ2:</i></b> Kindly explain the various procurement thresholds used during procurement?</p> <p><b><i>IQ3:</i></b> What are the procurement procedures used from the start to finish during the procurement of LTSM?</p> <p><b><i>IQ4:</i></b> Who are key stakeholders involved in the procurement?</p>
<b><i>RQ2: HOW LTSM IS DISTRIBUTED TO PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN EAST LONDON DISTRICT?</i></b>	<p><b><i>IQ5:</i></b> Explain the current delivery process from start to finish when preparing for the following year of study?</p> <p><b><i>IQ6:</i></b> What is the time frame applicable in the current delivery of LTSM to schools when preparing for the following year of study?</p> <p><b><i>IQ7:</i></b> What can you recommend as part of improving the current delivery process?</p>
<b><i>RQ3: DO PROCUREMENT PRACTITIONERS IN THE EAST LONDON DISTRICT COMPLY WITH POLICIES AND REGULATIONS GUIDING THE PROCUREMENT OF LTSM AT PUBLIC SCHOOLS?</i></b>	<p><b><i>IQ8:</i></b> What are the key policies and regulations that guides the procurement of LTSM?</p> <p><b><i>IQ9:</i></b> What can you recommend as part of improving the current understanding of the policies, acts and regulations?</p>
<b><i>RQ4: WHAT ARE THE PROBLEMS FACED WITH THE PROCUREMENT OF LTSM IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN EAST LONDON DISTRICT?</i></b>	<p><b><i>IQ10:</i></b> What problems are faced during the procurement and delivery of LTSM?</p> <p><b><i>IQ11:</i></b> What possible solutions can you recommend for these problems?</p>

The themes are not given in order of importance. They are, Theme 1: Understanding of the LTSM procurement practices; Theme 2: Distribution process of LTSM; Theme 3: Policy and regulations guiding procurement of LTSM; Theme 4: Problems encountered during LTSM procurement process. As this is a qualitative study which sought to identify the participants' responses to the management of the procurement process of LTSM, the answers to the interview questions were highly subjective. The possible solutions shared by participants cuts across the interview questions.

## **5.4 PROCUREMENT PROCESS OF LTSM**

In this section, the responses provided by the participants from the three levels were outlined and analysed to show the differences and similarities in the responses given.

### **5.4.1 Theme 1: Understanding of the LTSM procurement practices**

The subsection presents the findings in relation to procurement practices employed in procurement of LTSM. The differing understandings of the processes and practices as seen at each level are explained. The research question (RQ1) “*What are the current procurement practices employed in the acquisition of LTSM at public secondary schools in East London District?*” was substantiated by the following interview questions *IQ1, IQ2, IQ3* and *IQ4* (see Table 5.3). The participants from the three levels understood the procurement of LTSM differently because they perform unique duties as part of a bigger whole. When asked about their understanding of the process of procuring LTSM for schools, participants responded by providing the steps and information relating only to their level of office, which is a part of the bigger centralised procurement process. In the subsection below, the procurement process is briefly outlined as part of the analysis of the different stages of the procurement process.

#### **5.4.1.1 Procurement process**

This subtheme helped to present the participant’s responses about the procurement process as it operates on each level. The participants were either the procurement practitioners, the accounting officers and the overseers of the whole process on all levels from all three levels.

The responses below indicate that the participants are accountable for only parts of the process that makes up the whole:

The response from the head office level participants was:

*“I’m dealing with compilation of various documents that relate to the procurement of LTSM for schools” (HOP1, 5 Nov18).*

*“When it comes to LTSM, I am mostly involved in sending emails out to the publishers requesting quotations. We get the quantities of how many books are required from the DDG” (HOP2, 19 Nov 20).*

The district level participants illuminated their level of understanding of their responsibility in the bigger process:

*“District offices make sure that all public schools register for the requisition of stationery and textbooks” (DOP2, 8 Nov 18).*

*“The schools get to put all their needs on the requisition forms, and they submit the needs to the district coordinators” (DOP3, 19 Nov 18).*

The Circuit Manager’s response was distant and displayed a hands-off approach to this process.

*“As a Circuit Manager, LTSM is not one of my key performance areas; however, because LTSM is part and parcel of teaching and learning at the school, I am forced to monitor it as it helps schools to facilitate and offer quality teaching” (DOP1, 8 Nov 18).*

At the school level responses provided reflected the limited understanding of the procurement process:

*“Several months ago, we received an electronic catalogue of all the books available and we indicated on that computerised list what we wanted which was mainly top-ups of the books we already have and not the entire set” (SPP1, 22 Nov 18).*

The above responses indicate that the understanding of the procurement process by the participants is limited to their level.

The responsibility of the participants SPP1, HOP1 and HOP2 respectively was to provide the required number of books for procurement purposes, request quotations from publishers and eventually compile each batch of documents required as part of the requisition and creation of a PO.

#### **5.4.1.2 Procurement threshold**

The following were the views of participants on procurement thresholds. As some suppliers, like book publishers are sole providers with strict publishing rights a quotation is requested but there are no set threshold values applicable. The head office participants' responses showed an understanding of the applicability of thresholds for both stationery and textbooks.

*“Our process states that below R500 000 threshold you can use quotations; above this value it must be a competitive bidding process for stationery” (HOP7,22 Nov 18).*

*“...if you have a centralised model then the department can procure up to R20Mil and above this amount the procurement will be facilitated and approved at the Provincial Treasury” (HOP5, 20 Nov 18).*

The procedure for the procurement of textbooks is based on the sole provider principle; the available suppliers are the only ones who can provide the required books, each supplier providing unique books that cannot be obtained from another supplier.

*“For the previous financial year in 2017, the total spent was about R350mil for textbooks only, we are not sure how much will it be for this year” (HOP3, 19 No 18).*

*“Textbooks don’t follow the traditional procurement process because of publishing rights, they follow sole provider procedure” (HOP7, 22 Nov 18).*

Because of restrictive publishing rights, the textbooks are procured using the sole provider procedure which requires that all the books published by one publisher are bought from that publisher. This arrangement makes it difficult for the department to set a threshold for each publisher because the textbook numbers depend on the total of the same textbooks required by various schools in the province. The various publishers share the money spent on the procurement of LTSM by providing quotes on request. Each publisher only provides a quote and supplies books that they have published. The publishers have an understanding with the department about the process.

#### **5.4.1.3 Procurement procedures**

The response from head office showed a high-level of understanding of the procedures guiding the procurement of textbooks for LTSM. A distinction was made between the ‘traditional procurement’, the tendering procedure used for stationery, and the sole provider procurement currently used for textbooks. A sole provider procurement procedure is used, as said above, because publishers have the sole publishing rights for their published books, and books from one publisher cannot be found at another publisher.

*“Textbooks don’t follow the traditional procurement process because of publishing rights, they follow sole provider procedure” (HOP7, 22 Nov 18).*

The national catalogue has all the textbooks used at the various schools and it allows schools to choose according to their needs for the following year.

*“When the needs have been ascertained, I give them the catalogue with different textbooks by various publishers and the order book from the district office” (SPP3, 23 Nov 18).*

The participants showed an understanding of their role in the process.

*“My duties are basically administrative in the sense that I report to the Director; what I do is to get in the orders that come from schools” (HOP3, 19 Nov 18).*

Previously, when this process was decentralised to the school level, principals were more involved, had various activities to perform which required time, decision making and management acumen. However, with the current centralised process some participants felt that their freedom to make decisions had been taken away. The schools now only respond to the day to day requests.

*“We as schools no longer have much of a role to play when it comes to procurement of LTSM as it is now centralised in the provincial head office” (SPP5, 27 Nov 18).*

Two important things came out of the interview responses. Firstly, the procurement process is centralised at head office and therefore the participants at either district or school level could make only a limited contribution towards this process. Secondly, the sole provider procurement procedure is followed for the procurement of textbooks due to the restricted book publishers and copyright.

#### **5.4.1.4 Stakeholders involved in the procurement process**

When asked about the stakeholders involved in the procurement process, the responses showed that within the three levels there are various stakeholders important for the completion of the procurement process. The stakeholders are all important in the process, but they are valued differently depending on their level of office; different levels communicate with different stakeholders at different times.

*“I communicate more with the people at the institute than the district office” (SPP7, 27 Nov 18).*

*“We do communicate a lot with LTSM Coordinator at the district office” (SPP1, 22 Nov 18).*



*“The stakeholders such as the LTSM agency a company appointed to oversee the whole procurement process, Provincial Treasury, Publishers and Booksellers are few of the stakeholders including the district and schools” (HOP5, 20 Nov 18).*

*“The key stakeholders involved in the procurement of LTSM are publishers and schools” (DOP3, 19 Nov 18).*

An understanding of the procurement process and practices and the impact this has on the whole process is very important and needs to be communicated to all the stakeholders involved. The managers at head office control, monitor and oversee the overall centralised procurement process. At all three levels there is a unique understanding of operating procedure although in each case the process of procurement is managed very differently. The responses at school level showed that the participants had a practical but basic operational understanding of the activities involved, such as the completion of textbook requisition forms which starts the procurement process.

At head office, responses from the practitioners were clear about how they carried out duties such as requesting quotations from various book publishers and compiling the required documents in preparation for creating purchase orders. These practitioners had to comply with policy when compiling these documents. They also had to follow up with publishers to get the quotations met on time. The district level responses indicated that they understood their role in coordinating the day to day operations pertaining to procurement such as reminding schools to register for LTSM requisitions timeously.

#### **5.4.1.5 Centralisation of the procurement process**

This subsection presents the findings relating to the procurement practices employed in the procurement of LTSM. Changes made in the process of procurement from a decentralised to a centralised procurement process resulted in differing understandings of the processes and practices as seen at each level.

Participants from all three levels had different views about the decision that led to the centralisation of the procurement process of LTSM. Centralisation refers to the decision taken by DoE that the LTSM procurement process be performed by head office rather than at various schools. Prior to this centralised procurement decision, individual schools could engage and negotiate with textbook suppliers as part of the procurement process.

The responses below showed that some participants understood the value of a centralised process, particularly the head office:

*“In 2014 the decision was taken in Mangaung that the procurement of textbooks must be centralised in order to obtain value for money...but schools are not happy with the centralised procurement process”* (HOP5, 20 Nov 18).

*“They buy through the centralised process and they reap the benefits of large scale buying which makes the books cheaper compared to each school buying for themselves at a higher retail price... most schools are actually happy with this process”* (HOP3,19 Nov 18).

The participant from the district office level gave reasons why the department opted for the centralised procurement process. However, some participants were not happy with the process.

*“The decision for centralisation was that schools were not utilising the LTSM funds properly”* (DOP4, 19 Nov 18).

*“The process of compiling the requests and finally getting the order number is done at the provincial level (centralised)”* (DOP5, 19 Nov 18).

*“The schools were not happy and are still not happy with the decision of ordering in bulk. I was previously a principal of the school; it was relatively easy for us to order all our LTSM needs individually”* (DOP1, 18 Nov 18).

One participant from the district office was unequivocal about the problems that came with the centralised process such as the lack of communication of the value of centralisation and the discount benefits at the school level.

*“If for example discounts of 10% are given due to buying in bulk, where does the 10% go? Schools do not benefit from the discount and they are not given back the money which forms part of the 10% discount. Where does the discount go?”* (DOP1, 18 Nov 18).

The responses below from the school level indicated that participants were not necessarily opposed to the centralised procurement process, but rather to the problems or uncertainties resulting from this process. The participants shared different views about the process.

*“Since the department started buying for schools (centralised) we do receive the orders especially stationery, but the shortages are always on textbooks. We would receive textbooks but there will be shortages always” (SPP3, 23 Nov 18).*

The decision to centralise has changed the way procurement is done in each level, especially the school level which used to have more responsibility when it comes to procurement.

*“... the centralised procurement is the way to go for schools, because now the money which was meant for LTSM textbooks does really buy textbooks (SPP6, 27 Nov 18).*

*“As a quintile 5 school we have opted in to the centralised departmental procurement system and we are quite happy about it” (SPP2, 23 Nov 18).*

In terms of SCM practices, centralisation of one or more strategic functions in an organisation is supported when it is believed to bring about management efficiencies, value for money and timely delivery of the needed services to the end customer. Head office level had the responsibility of implementing the centralisation decision and they were also aware of the economic benefits of buying in bulk. This is the understanding at head office but the participants at this level were not aware of the complaints from schools about the new process.

The participants from the district level complained that the schools were not getting the discount benefit from buying in bulk. Since some or all employees in an organisation tend to resist change, the departmental managers, in implementing change in supply chain management, should have ensured that all the levels involved in the procurement of LTSM were fully informed and aware of the benefits of centralisation. It seems that this change was introduced but not properly 'sold' to all the affected parties. While some of the school level participants were optimistic about the changes, the centralised process has not proven to be a success ostensibly because of textbook shortages. When the introduced system or process does not perform as expected, the users become despondent and wish that things could have remained the way they were. If there were no shortages in textbook delivery, the school level management would have trusted the process.

#### **5.4.1.6 System’s reliability to aid the procurement process**

This subsection presents the findings in relation to procurement practices employed in the procurement of LTSM. The systems in place are meant to support the process and help the users to carry on with their responsibilities by providing reliable information. Systems are

available to store and retrieve data at all three levels and these systems are necessary during the procurement process. To understand this better, the views of participants about system's reliability are presented.

The systems used are necessary in the effective management of the whole procurement process within the three levels. In view of the above, the responses from the head office level participants indicated the following.

*“South African School Administration and Management System (SA-SAMS) at the school level is the system where schools capture their enrolments each year”* (HOP3, 19 Nov 18).

The system at the school level is used to keep and update the school's information, and it is the interface| at head and district offices for verification and decision-making purposes.

*“We also have a database called SA-SAMS which teachers use to capture the learner's particulars when admitted to the school”* (HOP7, 22 Nov 18).

*“There are problems associated with the system; it could say the school has 34 learners only to find out that the school has actually 4 learners”* (HOP4, 19 Nov 18).

Head office uses Education Management Information System (EMIS) for reporting and statistical purposes. The system helps to provide a report on the number of learners and books required per school.

*“We are working with the number of learners in the previous year. This information is provided by the EMIS (System) section which gives the number of learners per class per school”* (HOP2, 19 Nov 18).

The participant revealed that during the procurement process, systems are used to generate the POs and eventually process the payment for the service providers.

*“We have a system called Logistical Information System (LOGIS) which is where you generate the PO's. The documentation is done manually and then the order is generated on the system”* (HOP7, 22 Nov 2018).

Participants indicated that they were trained on how to use the online ordering system as part of the process of instigating the procurement of LTSM especially at district and school level. The LTSM coordinators at the district level were trained so that they could in turn train the school principals.

*“There is training that takes place as part of preparing schools for the LTSM procurement process; this training, done by the LTSM coordinator, pertains to completing requisition forms” (DOP5, 19 Nov 18).*

*“Training was given to Districts LTSM coordinators but even after this training, coordinators were not sure of what needed to be done (DOP4, 19 Nov 18).*

After the training of LTSM coordinators, all the school principals in the district were invited to a one-day training session that had to be held over several days to accommodate all the principals. The participants indicated the following:

*“...all coordinators after their training were expected to go and train principals on the system of ordering online” (DOP4, 19 Nov 18).*

Although school principals were given some training on the new online ordering system, it seems that a day’s training was not enough, especially because this process was new to all the participants and was done using an unfamiliar technological system. Some participants were not confident using computer technology. When the participants were asked about their experience in using the new system, they responded with the following;

*“The training was done for about an hour in which we were taken through the process of ordering (SPP3, 23 Nov 18).*

*“This was a new system for which we had to be trained, in about May. The training was on how to use the new online ordering method” (SPP2, 23 Nov 18).*

School principals were supposed to use the online system to place book orders and submit their needs, but the responses showed that the process had some glitches.

*“Some teachers are not technologically literate to submit online. So, we ended up using the old system for ordering” (SPP6, 27 Nov 18).*

Because of several system failures experienced during the ordering process, the participants were asked to use the old system.

*“There was a problem with this system because it could not be opened and so we had to print the spreadsheet and submit it manually. (SPP6, 27 Nov 18).*

*“This year we could not access the site, even after being given the usernames and passwords, so we had to print the document and submit it manually” (SPP4, 27 Nov 18).*

The district coordinator was not pleased that during the training sessions the passwords were not given to school principals or did not work. It appears the LTSM management responsible for organising and setting up these passwords was not capable.

Despite problems with the system some school participants, when asked if they managed to place orders online, responded positively.

*“Yes, I was able to, at least what I thought was the right way and I submitted the order, but I did not get any order receipt notification” (SPP6, 27 Nov 18).*

*“The ordering was a bit challenging, so I had to use trial and error to work out how to do it but eventually I got it right and submitted the order within a week of having been trained” (SPP2, 23 Nov 18).*

Head office prescribed the systems to be used by schools to instigate the procurement process and create reports necessary to make decisions. There are system problems in SA-SAMS resulting in unreliability of the information produced especially in the number of learners registered at each school. Participants made no reference to human incompetence or error. The head office staff need to resolve this problem because it is they that mostly use the system to extract data for demand analysis and procurement decision making. At the district level, the newly introduced system that was meant to assist principals in the submission of procurement requests by schools could often not be used because of system errors.

The LTSM coordinator, specifically, was not happy since training of principals was dependent on this system but the login details frequently did not work. At school level instruction was given for only one day which was not enough for training of this nature. Many school participants were frustrated that they could not get on to the system to order though some, through patience, managed to place their orders. The main idea of training principals on the new system was to curtail the time it takes to order manually compared to electronically. As pointed out in the literature review, the organisational structure relating to the three levels, and particularly the skills and capabilities of the employees and the suppliers involved, are important in the successful management of the procurement process.

In the Table 5.4 below the responses of participants, indicating their understanding of the processes, practices and activities of the procurement of LTSM, is given. Inevitably they answered in different ways.

**Table 5.4:** Understanding of the procurement practices

SUB-THEME	DESCRIPTION
<b>PROCUREMENT PROCESS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Different understanding of the procurement process from each level</li> <li>• Happens in all three levels, wherein each level fulfils their responsibility</li> <li>• Various activities that leads to the whole process are completed at each level</li> </ul>
<b>PROCUREMENT THRESHOLD</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not applicable due to the nature of products being procured.</li> <li>• Various suppliers provide only the textbooks they publish due to restrictions imposed by publishing rights</li> <li>• Booksellers or publishers only provide the required quantities of textbooks published under their name</li> </ul>
<b>PROCUREMENT PROCEDURES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Sole Provider procedure is followed</li> <li>• Each supplier could only supply textbooks under their care</li> <li>• Sending of the request for a Quotation to each publisher initiates the procurement process</li> <li>• An official Purchase Order (PO) serves as the contract agreement between the department and the publisher</li> </ul>
<b>STAKEHOLDERS INVOLVED</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Each stakeholder involved has a direct or indirect interest in the procurement process</li> <li>• Some stakeholders are interested in monetary gains, while others are moved by the daily operations at the school level</li> </ul>
<b>CENTRALISED PROCESS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The impact that the centralised LTSM procurement process has had on the three levels</li> <li>• Participants highlighted their concerns about the centralisation decision</li> <li>• Participants shared their experience emanating from the decision</li> </ul>
<b>SYSTEMS RELIABILITY IN THE PROCUREMENT PROCESS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School principals uses the online system to place book orders and submit their needs, but system did not work</li> <li>• The systems used are necessary in the effective management of the whole procurement process within the three levels</li> <li>• Participants made no reference to human incompetence or error</li> <li>• Some participants were not as confident in the use of computer technology</li> </ul>

The above table shows that the procurement process of LTSM is understood differently at the three levels. The procurement threshold does not apply because of the nature of the product being procured as the booksellers or publishers only provide the quotations relating to the books that they specifically publish. The traditional procurement procedure does not apply as textbook procurement uses a sole provider. The stakeholders involved have a direct or indirect interest in the procurement process. The impact that the centralised LTSM procurement process has on the overall process creates difficulties at all three levels, especially in schools, preventing them reaching their teaching and learning goals because of shortages of textbooks. The centralised process is not a bad idea; however, the shortages and late or non-delivery of books is a problem. School principals are meant to use the online

system to place book orders and submit their needs, but the system often does not work. The systems that are supposed to assist are not always reliable.

#### **5.4.2 Theme 2: Distribution process of Learner Teacher Support Material**

This subsection presents the findings relating to the LTSM deliveries employed as part of the procurement process. In response to the research sub question (RQ2), “*How is LTSM distributed to public secondary schools in the East London District?*”, the sub themes about the monitoring and delivery processes were apparent in the answers to the interview questions (IQ5, IQ6 & IQ7, see Table 5.3). The researcher noted that, after reviewing the textbooks' availability, schools submit their requirements and wait for the delivery of the orders. The following subsection outline the issues pertaining to LTSM delivery.

##### **5.4.2.1 Current delivery process**

The views from the head office level and their understanding of the delivery process was somewhat different to that of the other levels because they are more involved in this process.

*“If the books are in stock, the delivery happens within 3 working days but if it still needs to be printed, it could take up to 6 weeks”* (HOP3, 19 Nov 18).

*“The book publishers deliver textbooks to the warehouse which does the packing then arranges delivery to the schools”* (HOP2, 19Nov 18).

*“The bookseller’s association in the province can deliver books to schools,...they have the capacity to deliver since they have trucks and are well established in the business”* (HOP5, 20 Nov 18).

The textbooks can be delivered to schools within 3 days if they are available. The procured items need to be delivered to the various schools in order to finalise the procurement process.

##### **5.4.2.2 Time frames for delivery**

Although the district office had sent out the delivery schedules to schools, some participants commented that these dates were not honoured and as a result, their delivery dates had passed. Because of this, the district office advised these schools to expect deliveries anytime.

*“We were given a date for LTSM which was, the 15<sup>th</sup> of November but the delivery did not arrive on this date although we eventually received them in November still”* (SPP4, 27 Nov 18).



*“No, we have not received the textbooks for the following year; the delivery date was 20 November 2018, but we have not received the delivery and the District Coordinator said the delivery might be done any time” (SPP6, 27 Nov).*

Some participants responded that the delivery schedule was not given to them and therefore they were not aware of their delivery dates and when they asked the LTSM Coordinator, they were told to expect delivery any time before the school closed for the December holidays.

*“No time frame given; we expect orders anytime from November of the current year” (SPP5, 27 Nov 18).*

*“We are in the dark when it comes to delivery dates; we just hope that we will eventually receive what we ordered this year” (SPP2, 23 Nov 18).*

*“... then the next step is the delivery of the books by the department through the service providers; department of education does not do this function of delivery itself” (DOP2, 8 Nov 18).*

The schools view delivery differently from other levels because for them delivery or non-delivery, and the implementation of available monitoring tools, has an impact on the quality of teaching and learning.

*“The time taken for books to be delivered is worrying because we are expected to start teaching on the first day of school and if there are no textbooks it is difficult” (SPP3, 23 Nov 18).*

Participants from the school level shared their understanding of the ordering and delivery dates which forms part of the process. These dates are important and need to be honoured at all three levels, since the delay at one level may lead to the delay in the entire procurement and delivery process. When the participants in each level were asked about the procurement and delivery time frames, they responded by providing the dates and activities relevant to their levels. They also shared the reasons and the benefits for the time frames.

*“The ordering by the school was done on the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter (July/ August). (SPP3, 23 Nov 18).*

*“Textbook samples get delivered to the school around April/May. Around July the catalogue is normally out and that is when we start ordering; but the closing date for orders can be around end of September.” (SPP4, 27 Nov 18).*

*“... in the past we used to order textbooks around this time (Oct/Nov) for the upcoming year or just earlier than this, but books were delivered only in the following year of study (i.e. 2019) which would be very chaotic, with these dates schools would re-open and start their schooling calendar without the necessary textbooks required. But this year (2018), things have been done differently for the upcoming year, now schools have placed their orders in July” (DOP4, 19 Nov 18).*

The time frames in the procurement process are crucial because if one is not met then the whole process is affected. To ensure that all the participants adhere to the set dates, they need to understand the impact they have on the whole process.

#### **5.4.2.3 Improving the current delivery process**

The participants complained about shortages of textbooks because of late and or non-delivery of these books. Although some participants were aware that delivery dates had been given, the textbooks were not delivered as promised.

*“If we can be provided with a schedule for delivery and they can stick to it, this will assist the school” (SPP5, 27 Nov 18).*

The District office level is aware of the monitoring, quality guidelines and procedures in schools about receiving orders, but some schools sign the incorrect orders.

*“On the day of delivery, the principal is supposed to check all the boxes thoroughly, checking the contents on each box. If the boxes are correct the POD is signed and if not, the service provider takes it back” (DOP5, 19 Nov 18).*

The district office has its own monitoring tool pertaining to the delivery process. They understand that head office is not directly responsible for the delivery function but is rather responsible for management of the various stakeholders.

*“After each delivery to a school, a POD is signed by the principal and sent back to the district office as proof that the books were delivered. We are busy coordinating and monitoring the delivery done by service providers in preparation for 2019” (DOP1, 8 Nov 18).*

The district participants confirmed that there are more shortages of books than surpluses at schools and the office had to assist by making follow ups on behalf of the affected schools.

“... in a total number of 20 schools only 2 to 5 schools would have a surplus of books. In most cases, the office deals with shortages rather than surpluses” (DOP2, 8 Nov 18).

There has been some improvement in the management and monitoring of the set time frames relating to the procurement and delivery process. If the set time frames are followed meticulously then schools should be able to get their deliveries before the start of the following school year. According to the time frames provided by the different participants, the process of procurement culminating in delivery to the schools is seven months. This is the time it takes from the start to the finish. The process starts in May and ends in November of the same year as the department prepares for the following school year of study. Delivery should take place in November of each year but if there are delays textbooks can still be delivered during the first week of December ensuring that all schools have the necessary resources for teaching and learning.

Table 5.5 below gives an outline of the LTSM delivery process; it indicates the timeframe for each activity; and this helps in the effective monitoring of the set service delivery standard time frames.

**Table 5.5:** An outline of the LTSM delivery process and improvement recommendations

SUB-THEME	DESCRIPTION
<b>CURRENT DELIVERY PROCESS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivery schedules not honoured</li> <li>• Schools not given tentative delivery dates</li> <li>• Some materials not delivered due to shortage</li> </ul>
<b>DELIVERY TIME FRAMES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivery takes a month for the whole province</li> <li>• Planned activities with due dates are not attained</li> <li>• To increase the overall due dates to allow for uncertainties in the process</li> </ul>
<b>IMPROVING CURRENT DELIVERY PROCESS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stick to the delivery schedules and alert clients when there is a change</li> <li>• Minimise shortages</li> <li>• Vigorous monitoring of implemented plans</li> </ul>

The delivery schedules are not honoured by service providers; they do not always deliver books at the specified dates on the delivery schedules. Deliveries should take a month, ensuring that the whole province receives the books in advance, but this does not always happen. Deliveries might eventually arrive at the school during the following year of study. As part of improvement, deliveries could start a month earlier and continue for two months to be able to cover all the schools in the province.

### **5.4.3 Theme 3: Policy and Regulations guiding procurement of LTSM**

The subsection presents the findings in relation to LTSM procurement policies in place to guide the procurement process of LTSM. In response to the research sub question (RQ3), *“Do procurement practitioners in the East London District comply with policies and regulations guiding the procurement of LTSM at public schools?”* The interview questions IQ8 and IQ9 (see Table 5.3) were asked and from these questions, subthemes emerged. The department has policies in place that guide the procurement process extending from head office down to district offices and schools. Policy guidelines monitor the procurement process at all levels, including the issuing of textbooks at the school level.

*“The first one, constitution section 217, concerns competitive and fair procurement processes. The second one is the guide for accounting officers regarding the procurement of LTSM. The third is Public Finance Management Act (PFMA), Supply Chain Management (SCM) practice notes from National Treasury, Treasury delegations as well”* (HOP5, 20 Nov 18).

Participants understood the implementation of these policies both as a procurement process and as a guiding and monitoring tool, but more in theory than in practice. In the following subsection, the impact of policy implementation and or non-implementation during the LTSM procurement process is discussed.

#### **5.4.3.1 Understanding of the procurement policies**

There is a need for uniformity in the implementation of policies at the school level, but participants did not always show evidence of the successful implementation of the policies.

*“SCM policy is giving the accounting officers a space to think and a leeway to decide and that space is too open for different interpretations. I believe that policies were meant for implementation by departments and not for oversight purposes”* (HOP5, 20 Nov 18).

*“One person would think that it says something, and another would interpret it differently”* (HOP7, 22 Nov 18).

*“The SCM overall challenge is the individual perception of the application of the rules and regulations”* (HOP5, 20 Nov 18).

For example, not all schools apply the penalties of holding back the stationery packs of learners who could not return textbooks as required by the LTSM policy; instead, they retain the learner's report at the end of the year.

*"...the school is doing well on this by withholding learners' reports until they bring back the books. After each exam, learners return the textbook relating to that subject (SPP2, 22 Nov 18).*

*"If they do lose and not return the books, they are charged for them by adding the amount to their school fees" (SPP1, 22 Nov 18).*

The policies in general are acknowledged at all three levels, but the understanding of each policy differs from one individual to the other. The responses from the participants at head office showed that the interpretation of various SCM related policies is wide and this is a problem. The policy also requires that documents are approved by various signatories before POs can be generated, a slow process, which leads to delays in the procurement. At the school level, the principals are responsible for managing the retrieval of the books and the practical application of the policy guidelines. The following policies, which cross cut through the three levels, are used during the LTSM procurement, and include the delivery process as well as the maintenance of existing textbooks. They are the Preferential Procurement Policy Framework Act, (PPPFA, Act 5 of 2000), the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA, Act 29 of 1999 and the South African Schools Act (SASA, Act 84 of 1996.) The National Norms and Standards for School Funding (NNSSF) and the LTSM Retention and Retrieval policy are also two of the policies mentioned by the participants as relevant at the three levels.

#### **5.4.3.2 Improving procurement of LTSM by Leveraging policies**

Because of ambiguity and the loose interpretation of the policies one participant from head office level suggested that:

*"If we could have one policy that talks to SCM across the board as opposed to practice notes concerning this and that because these practice notes come one by one and there are a lot of them, and as a result you find that the interpretation is not the same" (HOP7, 22 Nov 18).*

If the SCM practice notes could be contained in one document and the same rules applied for a reasonable time, SCM practitioners and managers could be confident and this could assist in timely decision making and quicker procurement processes.

*“Our policy always says refer to section this and that of the practice notes, so it gets tiring because it adds up to the delays. But we try to do this because at the end of the day we must comply” (HOP7, 22 Nov 18).*

Schools implement policies according to the instructions of the head and district offices. The responsibility of the school principal is to monitor how LTSM is used and to apply the consequences for non-implementation of LTSM at the school level.

*“We have a strict retrieval system which is happening right now; when the learners have written their exams, we get the books back from them” (SPP1, 22 Nov 18).*

*“... we do have losses but about 90% of books do come back from learners. If not, I email the parents to inform them that they owe the school R150 for the book that was not returned or was destroyed by the learner” (SPP7, 28 Nov 18).*

*“Class teachers also have their own template registers in which they record books issued to each learner in a classroom. (SPP5, 27 Nov 18).*

*“When the book is not returned it then remains the responsibility of the learner; and the school has adopted a standard amount that a learner will be requested to pay so that the school can replace the missing book” (SPP3, 23 Nov 18).*

In addition to the above, participants pronounced their views about the quality of the newly procured textbooks and the condition of the books after they had been issued to learners for a year or two.

*“The quality of textbooks is mostly fine but sometimes they have mistakes as though they were printed in a hurry” (SPP4, 27 Nov 2018).*

*“There has been poor quality of some books. Even when they are brand new, the pages would fall out. It has to do with the binding of the books” (SPP2, 23 Nov 18).*

These participants highlighted the poor quality of some of the brand-new books received by the school, which affected the expected useful lifecycle of each book after being issued to different learners for a year or two. This results in an increase in the number of top up orders done each year at the school level.

*“The quality of the book looks good when it still new but after a year of it being used and put in to a school bag, the soft cover and binding breaks” (SPP1, 22 Nov 18).*

*“We also look at the quality of books as they are returned by learners, because a book can be in such a bad condition that it cannot be reissued to another learner” (SPP5, 27 Nov 18).*

*“We urge parents to work with us in making sure that the learners cover the books with plastic. If not, parents can be requested to replace the books in cases of loss or damage” (SPP5, 27 Nov 18).*

It was noted that schools often implement different procedures in response to the requirements of the retrieval policy. It is the role of the district office to implement the LTSM policy in schools including dissemination of books to schools and enforcement of the guidelines relating to textbook retrieval. Tools are available for monitoring at all levels. Although there is a quality assurance team that checks and verifies the quality of samples, it seems that samples are of higher quality than the final stock that is delivered to the schools.

The successes and concerns about the policy efficiencies and inconsistencies were shared by participants at all three levels. While the department is trying to ensure that policies are implemented and monitored to achieve successful procurement, the interpretation of these policies is always different for each of the three levels. There is a difference between the application of the policies in theory and in practice. Policies are in place, but their implementation and monitoring are lacking. The following Table 5.6 summarises the policy implementation.

**Table 5.6:** Policy implementation and monitoring within the three levels

SUBTHEME	DESCRIPTION
<b>UNDERSTANDING OF PROCUREMENT POLICIES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policies are far from reality</li> <li>• Lack of policy compliance and monitoring on three levels</li> <li>• Openness to various interpretations for individual gains</li> <li>• Policies are in place but are not followed</li> <li>• Implementation is different from all the levels</li> <li>• Individuals interpret these differently to suit their circumstances</li> <li>• Policies can be confusing and cause delays to the overall procurement process</li> <li>• Use policies to manage resources at the school level</li> <li>• Policies relevant to LTSM monitoring and retrieval</li> </ul>
<b>IMPROVING PROCUREMENT OF LTSM BY LEVERAGING OF POLICIES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Align policies to the demographic and socioeconomic factors found at the school level</li> <li>• A dedicated team of monitoring champions could be put in place</li> <li>• Compile best policy practices to be used as examples</li> <li>• Strive for a uniform interpretation of policies</li> <li>• Uniform implementation of policies at the school level</li> </ul>

As indicated on the above table, policies are available to govern the procurement and delivery process, but they are not implemented accordingly in real life practice. The implementation and monitoring of such policies is lacking. Policies should be uniformly interpreted by all the stakeholders at all levels.

#### **5.4.4 Theme 4: Problems encountered during LTSM procurement process**

This subsection presents the findings relating to problems encountered during the LTSM procurement process. To answer the research question (RQ4) “*What are the problems faced with the procurement of LTSM in public secondary schools in East London District?*” the following interview questions *IQ10* and *IQ11* (see Table 5.3) were asked to ascertain the participant' experiences in the process and the experiences are shared in the subsection below.

##### **5.4.4.1 Procurement and delivery problems**

In this section problems encountered during the procurement and delivery of LTSM to various schools are related. All schools have some monitoring tools in place for retrieval of books, but the implementation of these tools is not always a success because learners, and parents to a certain extent, are not always willing to cooperate because of varying socioeconomic and attitudinal conditions.



*“Late learner enrolment at the school means there will be shortages in textbooks because these are not normally catered for on the current order” (SPP5,27 Nov 18).*

*“As a school we try our best to get back the books from learners and we have systems in place to do this” (SPP1, 22 Nov 18).*

A school participant stated that even when the delivery schedule was not properly followed, eventually they received the books. However, the chances were there would be shortages with each delivery and the follow up process was lengthy and onerous.

*“It is not the delivery that is problematic, but the shortages of books delivered. The thing is all our follow up efforts takes a long time while the child suffers” (SPP6, 27 Nov 18).*

*“Usually when there are outstanding textbooks, deliveries of these would be done in January one by one” (SPP3, 23 Nov 18).*

The participants explained that before the procurement process was centralised, schools were responsible for procuring their own books. However, schools did not always buy textbooks but used the funds to buy totally different items. This response indicated that there was a breach in the national school policy that governed the way funds were allocated at schools. Now schools no longer have control of the allocation of funds, including textbook funding. Many were not happy with the centralisation decision because the training meant to introduce the process was not properly done.

*“When the training was to occur at district level, the usernames and passwords that schools were supposed to receive was not organised and not all schools received these in order for them to be properly trained” (DOP4, 19 Nov 18).*

Some participants commented that although the LTSM coordinators assisted them during the training they could not help when errors arose in the system.

*“... the system had problems that could not be attended to by the district office. The system was challenging even on the day of the workshop” (SPP6, 27 Nov 18).*

Some participants commented that the LTSM Coordinator was not fully aware of the process and therefore could not give adequate training.

*“Sometimes the LTSM coordinator was not familiar with the process and therefore could not assist us fully” (SPP4, 19 Nov 18).*

Participants were given contact numbers to call for troubleshooting when errors occurred in the online system.

*“... we had to call people to assist us because the password was not working, and they had to reset the password” (SPP3, 23 Nov 18).*

For the efficient procurement of LTSM, the department centralised a new system that would integrate all the functions and automate some through the Provincial Treasury. However, the participants from the head office level were not happy with the Provincial Treasury’s pace in attending to requests, which hindered the whole procurement process and turnaround times.

*“We are still waiting for National Treasury to approve an invoice tracking system, but this is taking time” (HOP5, 20 Nov 18).*

*“Before they pay, the invoice gets captured on the LOGIS system first and then on Basic Accounting System (BAS) using the order number. Those are the two systems, but there is no system that integrates all the functional stages, so everything is done manually first which is very unsatisfactory to me” (HOP7, 22 Nov 2018).*

One participant from the district office was unequivocal about the problems that came with the centralised process such as the lack of communication of the value of centralisation and the discount benefits at the school level.

*“If for example discounts of 10% are given due to buying in bulk, where does the 10% go? Schools do not benefit from the discount and they are not given back the money which forms part of the 10% discount. Where does the discount go?” (DOP1, 8 Nov 18).*

The participants were not happy that the discounts promised for using the centralised procurement process were not directly shared with schools and schools could not see the discounts.

Also, the school participant commented that during the decentralised process schools would not always use the LTSM funding to procure the required LTSM, but rather redirect the funding to buying items other than LTSM. This would still lead to problems such as book shortages at the school.

*“Sometimes when schools needed money to buy other items at schools rather than LTSM, they would redirect the LTSM money to those items rather than to LTSM and learners would still not have textbooks” (SPP6, 27 Nov 18).*

Other problems encountered during the procurement and delivery of LTSM emanated from the late enrolments of learners at the schools. The sudden increase in numbers after the learner registration period had passed caused textbook shortages. The schools were not allowed to turn away learners. This had a real impact on book shortages and if the management does not solve this problem, schools will continue to have textbooks shortages.

#### **5.4.4.2 Suggested improvements on the overall procurement process**

A directive on how to fill in the proof of delivery (POD) and other documents required for submission to district office could assist schools in avoiding errors. District level tends to send forms back to the school because they are not correctly completed, but schools do not have a written manual or guideline on how these should be completed. Taking care of this would decrease the turnaround time of submitting the required documents.

*“There must be clear delivery guidelines given to us in advance, so we know what forms we need to complete” (SPP1, 22 Nov 18).*

To verify whether the delivery was correct some participants indicated that they checked the content of each box before signing for it. This is an acceptable and ideal practice but is not done at all schools.

*“A person in charge of books will tear open each box and count what has been delivered as stated on the delivery note. We have never received the wrong orders and we check and count orders as we receive them” (SPP1, 22 Nov 18).*

*“Being dependent on the department for deliveries at some point you adopt an attitude of being grateful for what has been delivered rather than receiving nothing at all” (SPP3, 23 Nov 18).*

The current system problems that were experienced in placement of orders made it impossible for the principals to get proper training on how to complete online requests. One participant from the district office suggested that:

*“... training should be done early in 2019 in preparation for 2020 ordering and there is also a need to retrain school principals, which should be done earlier in the year”*  
(DOP4, 19 Nov 18).

As a result of the management processes and problems presented above, the DoE has been put under the spotlight for non-delivery of LTSM to various schools in the EC. The policies in place are susceptible to misinterpretation by many and there are no consequences applicable because of noncompliance. With reference to the literature, these problems derive from functions at management levels, and include unclear business processes, lack of process monitoring and performance measurement tools. Lack of communication with various stakeholders causes distrust between members and this impacts on service delivery.

These are the problems that form part of the findings of the study. Various participants' responses indicated that there was inefficiency in the implementation and monitoring of the practical processes set out in each level. Monitoring the implementation of policies and processes in the three levels of DoE is vital to the success of an effective LTSM procurement process. The problems faced by each level tend to affect the performance of the other levels. The problems experienced during the training of principals had tremendous impact on overall procurement turnaround times.

Many of the participants identified setbacks, delays and lack of efficiency relating to the whole process of procurement and delivery. Table 5.7 below highlights the various setbacks emanating from various activities entrusted to different levels relevant to the effective management of the procurement and delivery process.

**Table 5.7:** Problems encountered during LTSM procurement process

SUB THEME	DESCRIPTION
<b>PROCUREMENT AND DELIVERY PROBLEMS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lack of continuity due to acting positions at the top management</li><li>• Difficulty in following up due to long processes relating to centralised process</li><li>• Unreliability of data generated</li><li>• Lack of process automation</li><li>• Delays due to various required signatories</li><li>• Planned activities with due dates are not attained</li></ul>
<b>SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS ON THE OVERALL PROCUREMENT PROCESS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Acting positions could be permanently filled</li><li>• Introduce system automation</li><li>• Reduce the steps in the process for faster turnaround times</li><li>• Stick to the delivery schedules and alert clients when there is a change</li><li>• Minimise shortages so that centralised process could be trusted</li><li>• Vigorous monitoring of implemented plans</li><li>• Develop clear and step-by-step guide on following up with Stakeholders</li><li>• Maintain data integrity systems</li><li>• Make all systems to be more understandable</li><li>• Invest on a single system with different modules</li><li>• The process to start early to meet the deadlines and accommodate any interruptions</li></ul>

The table above highlights the problems encountered in the overall process of procurement and delivery of textbooks such as the difficulty in following up with various stakeholders who form part of the centralised process, and the lack of process automation. Some of the potential improvements suggested by participants during the interviews were that new systems must be user-friendly. The department could invest in a single system with different modules. This system could be used to manage the procurement process and could be linked with other systems important to the procurement process. Another suggestion was to have the procurement process starting early to accommodate any interruptions.

## **5.5 SUMMARY OF THE OUTCOME OF THE CURRENT STUDY**

The study aimed at determining whether the East London District public secondary schools effectively manage the procurement process of the LTSM. Out of four main themes that emerged from the data, sub-themes were produced. The study findings are summarised in the following Table 5.8.

**Table 5.8:** Summary of the outcome of the current study

THEME	STORYLINE
<b>UNDERSTANDING OF THE PROCUREMENT PRACTICES OF LTSM</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a different understanding of the procurement process from each of the three levels (District, Head offices and School level)</li> <li>• Each stakeholder involved has an important role to play which includes different activities necessary in the procurement process</li> <li>• The systems used to place orders are not reliable and employees lack the necessary training on these systems</li> <li>• Procurement thresholds are not applicable in the procurement of textbooks due to the nature of products being procured.</li> <li>• Each book publisher provides only the textbooks they publish due to restrictions imposed by publishing rights</li> <li>• The Sole provider procurement procedure is followed for the supply of text books where each book publisher only supply textbooks under their care</li> <li>• Participants shared their experience emanating from the centralised decision adopted in the procurement of LTSM</li> </ul>
<b>DISTRIBUTION PROCESS OF LTSM</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The delivery schedules are not honoured by service providers, schools were not aware of the change of dates and the tentative delivery dates</li> <li>• Some of the successful deliveries has more textbook shortages and wrong orders which impact on the value of having teaching and learning materials</li> <li>• The procurement implemented plans are not monitored by management teams and this create delays in the procurement process</li> </ul>
<b>POLICY AND REGULATIONS GUIDING PROCUREMENT OF LTSM</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policies are far from reality and the implementation thereof in the procurement process is always lagging due to misinterpretations</li> <li>• There is a lack of policy compliance and monitoring from three levels</li> <li>• Policies could be interpreted differently to suit circumstances, this makes it too open and at risk</li> <li>• Implementation and monitoring of policies is lagging</li> <li>• The disjuncture between policies and the implementation makes it difficult for the procurement process to unfold ethically</li> </ul>
<b>PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED DURING LTSM PROCUREMENT PROCESS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Textbooks do not reach schools as per the agreed upon due dates and no communication is shared on the alternative delivery dates</li> <li>• Lack of process automation when it comes to the systems used due to unavailability of system of reliable procurement systems</li> <li>• There are more manual papers used in the process that are risky procurement process</li> <li>• The procurement process starts late, and deadlines are not met by one of the three levels which delays the whole procurement process</li> <li>• The actions by each level has a negative impact on the entire procurement process</li> <li>• There is a lack of continuity by management teams due to acting positions by the top management. The procurement plans are never carried through by the same Manager and the volatile nature of change in these positions affects the behaviour and performance of procurement professionals.</li> </ul>

Between procurement and distribution of these vital materials to schools, there are problems faced at each level of the procurement process. These problems hinder the progress and lead to non-delivery, shortages and/ or wrong LTSM deliveries. The policies that are supposed to guide the process are not fully implemented and are open to individual interpretation. Lastly,

there is a gap between the policies and implementation and that is a consequence of ineffective management practices.

## **5.6 CONCLUSION**

This chapter contained the findings of the study analysed from a constructivist point of view. The researcher interpreted the findings through a process of iterative reading and an attempt was made to reduce the number of categories which emerged into four themes. The interview questions were based on the close analysis of the literature pertaining to procurement in South Africa. Previously there was a lack of adequate monitoring of the LTSM procurement process. The decision to centralise the process was introduced to remedy the situation but has proved to be ineffective because monitoring is still lacking. The centralised process meant that Head Office would be more involved and responsible for monitoring and management of the entire process. However, with the lack of a culture of service and accountability, Head Office and the District Office do not serve their client, “the schools”, adequately. Even mature and experienced participants have difficulty in making the procurement process successful.

## CHAPTER 6: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the summary, conclusion and recommendations of the study are provided. In Chapter Four the data analysis was provided from discussions based on the findings drawn from the interviews. These were informed by the policy environment and the actual implementation process which were outlined in Chapter Two. This chapter is structured according to revised research objectives, discussion of the research findings, summary and conclusion. The research findings reflect the three levels at which procurement is managed. The limitations of the study are presented and finally suggestions are made for future research.

### 6.2 REVISITING THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND OBJECTIVES

In Chapter One, questions and the objectives were presented as follows:

The **main research question** was: *“How can the procurement process of LTSM be more effectively managed in East London district public Secondary Schools?”*.

**The secondary research questions were:**

- What are the current procurement practices employed in the acquisition of LTSM at public secondary schools in East London District?
- How is LTSM distributed to public secondary schools in East London District?
- Do procurement practitioners in the East London District comply with policies and regulations guiding the procurement of LTSM at public schools?
- What are the challenges faced with the procurement of LTSM in public secondary schools in the East London District?

The aim of the secondary questions was to expand the scope of the main research question; this was aimed at collecting information to support the first question.

The **primary objective** of this study was to determine how LTSM is procured in East London District public secondary schools. To address the primary objective, the **secondary objectives** were formulated as follows:

- To investigate the current procurement practices used in the acquisition of LTSM at public secondary schools in East London District.
- To determine how LTSM is distributed at public secondary schools in East London District.



- To understand to what extent the procurement practitioners comply with policies and regulations that guide the procurement of LTSM at public secondary schools in East London District.
- To determine the challenges faced in the procurement of LTSM at public secondary schools in East London District.

### **6.3 DISCUSSION OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS**

The findings described in Chapter Four are discussed in this section. The discussion is guided by the main research questions, and in order to answer this, the secondary research questions were addressed first. The answers to each research question, asked in the interviews, led to conclusions relating to the various areas that are important to the study. These pertinent areas are detailed below under each research question.

#### **6.3.1 Research question 1:**

- *“What are the current procurement practices employed in the acquisition of LTSM at public secondary schools in East London District?”*

The objective of this research question was to determine the current procurement practices employed in the acquisition of LTSM at secondary schools in East London. The participants answered this research question through the interview questions by talking about (i) current LTSM procurement process; (ii) procurement threshold and (iii) the procurement procedures applicable in the procurement of LTSM in public secondary schools.

##### **6.3.1.1 Current LTSM procurement process**

The findings revealed that the procurement process of LTSM is both understood and performed differently at each level. The procurement process is instigated when the school submits their textbook needs to the district office. The district office verifies this and compiles a list of requirements which it submits to head office. At head office, verification and quality assurance of the request is undertaken as part of the analysis of the provincial textbook needs. Subsequently head office requests quotations from the various relevant book sellers. The quotations and other documents are used to generate a purchase order. The understanding of the procurement process is dependent on whether the participant is at the school level, district office or head office level. At each level there is someone who takes responsibility or is accountable. For example, at the head office level there is a need for an understanding of policies that inform the procurement process and consequently the chief director takes on that responsibility. She/he must ensure compliance with policies and

disseminate them to the lower levels. At the district office level there is a district manager who oversees the operations, acting as the go-between for schools and head office. At the school level, the principal is responsible for ensuring that the school receives and retrieves books.

From the findings it was clear that the understanding of the term “LTSM” was different at different levels depending on the degree of engagement in the procurement process. Understanding at the school level was least because of the limited responsibility in the procurement process. LTSM is a broad term which encapsulates all the materials and equipment used to facilitate teaching and learning including textbooks, workbooks, stationery packs, school desks and computers. The procurement process of LTSM could be for stationery only or it could be for both stationery and textbooks. These two types of LTSM are procured differently although both are used at the school level to facilitate teaching and learning.

Previously, when the procurement process was decentralised, schools had more responsibility in the procurement process, liaising with booksellers and negotiating price and delivery terms. The decision to centralise this process has left the schools feeling powerless because they are no longer expected to follow up with suppliers, but only to provide the required quantities of textbooks they need. Some of the school principals interviewed were unhappy about the decision to adopt a centralised process reporting that they were not getting the expected textbooks, specifically not the correct quantities ordered.

The researcher observed that schools were not widely consulted prior to the implementation of the centralised system, so that they did not understand the benefits and reasons for the decision. A lack of proper consultation during the change process meant this change was not supported by all the stakeholders involved. The benefits of the change needed to be shared with all the stakeholders. The centralised procurement model has the potential for success but at present it is poorly implemented, managed and controlled on all three levels.

#### **6.3.1.2 Various procurement thresholds**

Generally, each procurement procedure has an applicable threshold value with an amount above R500 000 applicable to an open tender. For the procurement of LTSM (textbooks), threshold values are not applicable, because the book publishers are sole providers, responsible for publishing and selling limited, specific books so quotations must be sought directly from the specific bookseller.

The findings revealed a lack of understanding at all three levels of what is meant by a threshold. The school level had no understanding of the term because textbook procurement does not require this. The district level had a limited understanding of what threshold is also because they do not procure books but rather assist in ensuring that schools submit their textbook needs on time to be procured by the head office level. At head office there was both basic and comprehensive understanding of the applicability of the procurement thresholds depending on the level of seniority of the participant. The understanding of the various thresholds by personnel was limited to their scope of work. However, the senior managers had a better understanding since this forms part of the compliance issues dealt with at management level.

### **6.3.1.3 Procurement procedures**

The findings revealed that textbooks are procured from sole providers as book publishers publish and sell books that they alone print. This makes the textbooks procurement procedure very different from that of the stationary procurement procedure which uses tenders. There are not many book publishers, and the available ones concentrate and specialise in specific and selected book titles. The sole provider, therefore, is the relevant procedure used for the procurement of textbooks for schools. While the sole provider procedure used to procure textbooks has advantages, the many steps required in this process, involving different people, cause delays. As one of the effective measures, the reduction of steps in the process for faster turnaround times would assist DoE in the reduction of delay incidences.

The findings confirmed that an open tender and negotiated procedures are used to procure commodities such as stationery and school desks. However, the sole provider is used for the procurement of textbooks for LTSM. A sole provider is a practice of having one supplier providing a service because that service cannot be provided by any other supplier (Quinot & Arrowsmith, 2013). Book publishers specialise in a certain genre of textbooks relevant to specific grades and they then become sole providers of that genre of books without having to compete with other book publishers.

Based on answers to Research Question 1; *“What are the current procurement practices employed in the acquisition of LTSM at public secondary schools in East London District?”*

The current procurement practices and processes employed in the procurement of LTSM are as follows:

- The procurement process is understood and performed differently depending on the level of operation.
- The sole provider procurement procedure is used for the procurement of LTSM.
- Books are obtained from specific book publishers who are controlled by strict publishing rights and have exclusive rights to publish limited textbooks. There are no procurement threshold values applicable to the procurement of textbooks.
- Textbooks are treated as a strategic product which can only be obtained from limited suppliers, different suppliers publishing different textbooks.
- The DoE uses a centralised method whereby the head office level compiles, verifies and centrally procures all the textbooks required by various schools in the province.
- The department receives a quotation from each book supplier then creates a PO which serves as a promise to pay the quoted amount after the goods are delivered to the customer.
- Open tender is used to procure stationery packs for school learners, and this follows the normal tender procedures.

### **6.3.2 Research question 2:**

- *“How is LTSM distributed to public secondary schools in East London District?”*

To answer this question, participants gave responses to the following: (i) delivery process, (ii) applicable delivery timeframes and (iii) the recommendations to improve the delivery process.

#### **6.3.2.1 Current delivery process**

The findings revealed that the book publishers deliver textbooks to the provincial warehouse managed by an agent. The delivery of LTSM to schools is done by the agent through outsourced local contractors or logistics service providers. The local contractors have a delivery schedule. The success of the procurement process depends on the effective delivery of the final product to the schools, the end customer. However, the current delivery process is marred by no deliveries, late deliveries or shortages on deliveries. Problems in delivery prevent the textbooks getting to the schools, the aim of the procurement process. This process has left the schools frustrated and helpless because delivery schedules are not honoured and there are frequent book shortages when deliveries are made. Out of the seven schools interviewed, only one school reported receiving their correct textbook order timeously.

### **6.3.2.2 Timeframes applicable in the delivery of LTSM**

The findings indicated that the delivery dates for local service providers contracted to deliver textbooks from the agent's provincial warehouse to the various schools in 2018 was between the 1<sup>st</sup> of October and the 30<sup>th</sup> of November. A delivery schedule was issued prior to these dates. Deliveries not made within the expected timeframe have an impact on the entire LTSM procurement process. The failure to meet the expected deadlines by one of the stakeholders causes problems that affect the other levels since they are all dependent on each other. At the school level, delivery dates were provided but those dates passed without the textbooks being delivered, and no communication with an alternative date was sent to the school. Consequently, schools had to wait patiently; they could receive the books any time after the initial date was not honoured. The following were highlighted as part of the findings:

- Delivery expected to take a month for the whole province
- Planned activities with due dates not attained
- Delivery schedules not honoured
- Wrong orders delivered

Late deliveries could mean that schools would get books only during the following year of study. Participants voiced their concerns about this, stating that non- or late delivery had a negative impact on the ultimate teaching and learning goal. Seemingly, the delivery timeframes are too short to accommodate all the schools in the district and certainly the whole EC province. There is a great need to review the LTSM procurement process to allow more time for deliveries.

### **6.3.2.3 Measures to improve the delivery process**

Because of delays, some schools might close for the fourth school term before deliveries arrive at the school. This brought uncertainty and frustration to schools as they could not properly plan and be ready for the following school year. Some of the measures to alleviate the poor delivery of LTSM could be that:

- The delivery process starts earlier so that it could be finalised before the end of the fourth school term. This way, the outstanding orders could still be delivered and completed on time;
- Delivery schedules be adhered to or clients alerted to alternative delivery dates;
- Shortages be minimised so that the centralised procurement process could be trusted by the end customer, the school.

These measures will not be possible without a plan. Plans are a productive way to map out what needs to happen and when plans are effectively implemented and monitored, they can be efficacious.

To answer to the Research Question 2 “*How is LTSM distributed to public secondary schools in East London District?*” the LTSM distribution process is managed by an agent and is done as follows:

- The textbooks are delivered to the provincial warehouse from various book sellers;
- Each school receives a schedule with a delivery date;
- The delivery schedule has a start and end date each year. In 2018 this was between 1st October and 30<sup>th</sup> of November;
- Some schools get their orders on schedule, but for some schools the delivery schedules are not met and therefore, distribution schedules do not comply with policies and regulations.

If the procurement process could begin early, the deliveries could start earlier than October and that could give more delivery time to cover all the schools in the same year.

### **6.3.3 Research question 3:**

- “*Do procurement practitioners in the East London District comply with policies and regulations guiding the procurement of LTSM at public schools?*”

This research question aimed to understand the extent to which the procurement practitioners comply with policies and regulations that guide the procurement of LTSM at public secondary schools in East London District. To answer this question, participants were asked to provide responses about (i) the stakeholders involved during the procurement (ii) available policies and regulations guiding the procurement of LTSM and (iii) the participant’s understanding of the policies and regulations guiding the procurement of LTSM.

#### **6.3.3.1 Key stakeholders involved**

It was noted that there are various stakeholders involved in the procurement process. Stakeholders involved ranged from suppliers, service providers or contractors, book publishers, warehouse managing agents, the Treasury and the DoE. Each stakeholder has a direct or indirect interest in the procurement of LTSM. Unfortunately, some stakeholders are interested in monetary gains and are unmoved by the daily operations at the school level. Those that are concerned about daily school operations do not have efficient systems in place

to execute the daily tasks. A well developed, clear and step-by-step guide on how to follow up with stakeholders could assist in making the process more efficient. Without this plan, the end customer, the school, becomes frustrated and helpless when they need to follow up on non-deliveries or delivery shortages.

### **6.3.3.2 Key policies and regulations guiding the procurement of LTSM**

From the findings, it was noted that there are various policies and acts relevant to procurement management in place. Although policies such as PFMA, 29 of 1999; PPPFA, 5 of 2000 National School Funding Act and the Retention and Retrieval policy are in place, implementation is inadequate. These policies need to be used during the procurement process. They underpin the LTSM procurement process because they guide the participants in all the procurement activities.

Although these policies are in place to guide the LTSM procurement process, actual implementation is flawed because individuals interpret these policies differently to suit their current circumstances. This malpractice has its perpetrators tending to consider the policies as ideal pieces of legislation which do not address realities in the education system. The school level has policies for the monitoring, retrieval and retention of textbooks; however, it was clear that some schools were not implementing these policies. For example, when books could not be retrieved, this resulted in an endless need for schools to order books to replace the lost textbooks or those not returned by the learners. However, some schools were successfully implementing the policy guidelines on retention and retrieval of textbooks. It was also clear that schools used different monitoring tools for LTSM and while some schools reported a high rate of retrieval, others were struggling, often because of socio-economic difficulties in the community they served. Because of these difficulties, the policies and guidelines for the retrieval and monitoring of textbooks could not be implemented successfully by all schools.

### **6.3.3.3 Understanding of the policies and regulations**

From the findings it was clear that the schools, districts and head office were familiar with different policies depending on their level of involvement in the procurement process. At the school level, participants had a clear understanding of the importance of the retention and retrieval policy used to issue, control and monitor textbooks to and from the learners. At head office, participants were conversant with only the LTSM policies relevant to the requirements of the position they held. The participants in management positions were able to link the

relevant policies to the procurement process, explain the importance of the policy within the process and highlight the problems arising from non-compliance. The participants at the district level were aware of the importance of policies in the procurement process. They were concerned about guidelines and procedures necessary to implement the policy at the school level.

Although it may seem that there is a great deal of understanding of the policies and regulations relevant to the procurement process of LTSM, the problems encountered during this process suggested the following:

- Lack of policy compliance and monitoring occurs on all three levels;
- Policies are open to various interpretations to suit individual purposes;
- Policies are in place but the use of policies to manage resources at school level is not followed.

Thus, to answer Research Question 3: “*Do procurement practitioners in the East London District comply with policies and regulations guiding the procurement of LTSM at public schools?*”, although procurement practitioners understand various policies and regulations, they frequently do not comply with the policies and regulations relevant to the procurement of LTSM. This is because of the following reasons:

- Individuals interpret policies differently to suit their circumstances;
- Policies can be confusing and cause delays to the overall procurement process;
- Implementation and monitoring of these policies is lacking.

#### **6.3.4 Research question 4:**

- “*What are the problems faced with the procurement of LTSM in public secondary schools in East London District?*”

The aim of this research question was to understand the problems faced in the procurement of LTSM at public secondary schools in East London District. To answer this question, the participants were asked (i) about the problems faced during the procurement process and (ii) to recommend workable solutions that could be used to remedy the current problems.

##### **6.3.4.1 Problems faced during procurement**

From the findings, it was clear that there are problems faced during the procurement of LTSM in the three different levels, head office, district office and the school level. The procurement process of LTSM is complicated because the three levels perform several and



different activities that contribute to the overall procurement process. The management at the school level is strongly influenced by the community in which each school is located. The no fee schools categorised as quintile 1, 2 and 3 are mostly located in informal settlements whereas the former Model C schools, also known as quintile 4 and 5 schools, are mostly found in urban areas. Neither category of school could set limits for learner enrolments resulting in unexpected learner influx. Both categories of school submit to their district office the estimated number of learners which translates to the estimated required number of textbooks. However, when there are order delays or book shortages, the quintile 4 and 5 schools can afford to buy books using the school funds, but the quintile 1, 2 and 3 schools do not have the money to buy their own textbooks but are solely dependent on state funding.

Complaints were also made about the inadequacy of training in the online ordering system and the technical anomalies that arose. Training for new skills specifically was not adequate and the time allocated for training was not enough. The inadequate training contributed to the delays in the procurement process because users were uncertain about the use of the online ordering system. Training is crucial when there are newly introduced systems and individuals need to be conversant with the new process before implementation. This was not the case at the DoE. The way the training was handled and the technical errors in the system, made the users lose confidence in the new system of ordering books. In the end, only a few school principals managed to successfully use the new ordering system, while others had to use the old way of ordering in order to meet the deadlines.

There was no dedicated technical support system to assist the users in implementing the new system. This points to poor management at district and head office levels. The monitoring and quality assurance measures in place are inadequate, or do not serve the existing processes, according to comments made by head office staff members and by district officials. There are three major management problems encountered within the Supply Chain Management (SCM): firstly, the misinterpretation of policies and non-compliance; secondly, an interrupted flow of information within the three levels; lastly, incompetence in the use of technology which cuts across the three levels.

The problems and uncertainties relevant to the LTSM procurement process are summarised below:

- Lack of continuity because of top management containing only acting positions;

- Difficulty in following up because of long processes relating to the current centralised process;
- Unreliability of data generated on the systems and lack of process automation;
- Delays arising from the number of required signatories;
- Planned activities on due dates not attained;
- Training on the new systems not comprehensive.

The fact that the process is dependent on different levels is a problem because the failure to meet deadlines by one level has an impact on the entire process. When this happens, deadlines are missed, and this affects the overall procurement planning.

#### **6.3.4.2 Measures to alleviate problems**

In this section, measures to alleviate the problems affecting the whole procurement process serve as part of the findings. With the procurement process being centralised at head office, more responsibilities and functions were expected to be performed at the head office level, but head office did not seem to have clear systems and organisational structures. The literature review revealed that one of the problems which leads to non-delivery of LTSM pertains to unclear organisational structures and non-reliability of systems. Head office has retained the physical structures from the previous dispensation for the delivery of LTSM. It was noted that there was a lack of continuity in terms of people in management positions with some positions occupied by the management at the head office being only “acting”. A person only acting in a position of authority where decisions need to be made can be counterproductive since the incumbent might have the responsibility but not the authority that goes with the position. This practice makes it difficult for the acting person to make decisions without consulting and getting authorisation from senior persons. This need to get authorisation for any decision can be disadvantageous to the effective management of the LTSM procurement process. The following are measures that could be implemented to alleviate the recurring problems:

- Acting positions could be permanently filled to maintain continuity;
- Understandable systems automation could be introduced;
- Vigorous monitoring of implemented plans is valuable;
- Maintaining of data integrity systems;
- Investment in a single system with different modules;

- The procurement process could start early to meet the deadlines and accommodate any delays.

Although there are policies in place used to guide the LTSM procurement process, the actual implementation is flawed, and individuals interpret these policies very differently to suit their current circumstances. This malpractice tends to render policies as theoretical pieces of legislation which do not address realities in the education system. Therefore, although policies are in place, they are not consistently implemented. The school level also has policies meant for the monitoring, retrieval and retention of textbooks; however, it became clear that some schools were not implementing these policies that are meant to help them. When the number of books could not be retained at the school level, there was an endless need for schools to order books to top up and replace the lost textbooks not returned by the learners. Some schools were implementing the guidelines in the policies and these schools showed a very successful retention and retrieval rate. It was also clear that schools had different monitoring tools used for LTSM; some schools reported a high rate of retrieval, while others were struggling to retrieve books because of demographic and/or socio-economic difficulties. Because of these inherent difficulties, the policies' guidelines for the retrieval and monitoring of textbooks could not be implemented successfully by all schools.

Government services are funded by taxpayers' money and the poor management of the LTSM procurement processes leads to an increase in departmental expenditure. Management at the three levels is flawed by lack of accountability, issues of incompetence and the incapacity to take on responsibility. The researcher noted that the procurement process could easily be corrupted; there is a gap between policy guidelines and the actual implementation of these policies. Although there are people responsible for the monitoring of the implementation of policies pertaining to procurement of LTSM, this monitoring function remains the biggest problem. Within the three levels, the people responsible for overseeing the procurement process are automatically responsible for the implementation of the monitoring measures. The monitoring measures should aid in the management of the procurement process. This does not happen. Until the active implementation and monitoring of the policies and guidelines pertaining to the procurement of LTSM is done, there will always be a gap between what should be done and what is done.

The answers to Research Question 4: “*What are the problems faced with the procurement of LTSM in public secondary schools in East London District?*” discussed above revealed that problems are encountered during the procurement process of LTSM. These problems are

detrimental to the whole procurement process and cause delays in the delivery of LTSM to the schools, which in turn disrupts the process of teaching and learning at the school level.

- There are no clear systems and organisational structures in place;
- Policies in place are not implemented correctly;
- There are no dedicated monitoring teams to ensure that the deadlines are met.

### **6.3.5 Main research question**

The main research question, *How can the procurement process of LTSM be more effectively managed in East London district public Secondary Schools?* that was discussed above revealed that problems are encountered during the procurement process of LTSM. These problems are detrimental to the whole procurement process and cause delays in the delivery of LTSM to the schools, which in turn disrupts the process of teaching and learning at the school level.

From answers to this question it could be concluded that the current procurement practices and processes applied during the procurement of the various LTSMs are not effectively managed within the DoE's three levels by the relevant stakeholders:

- Within the department the current procurement practice involves requesting a quotation from various book publishers who are the sole providers for specific textbooks. The department does not use threshold values for the procurement of textbook LTSM because book publishers are sole providers. For control, monitoring and overall accountability purposes the department maintains a centralised procurement process which is done at the head office level.
- The current delivery of LTSM takes place when the book publishers deliver textbooks to the provincial warehouse managed by an agent. The final delivery of LTSM to schools is outsourced by the agent to local delivery contractors who deliver to the end customer. The delivery schedules are used to monitor the delivery progress and these schedules are communicated to the schools by the district office. The department has a designated period for the delivery of textbooks between beginning of October to the last day of November each year; however, this timeframe does not seem to cover all the schools.
- There are procurement policies in place, but the implementation and interpretation of such policies is lacking, and this is where all the problems emanate from. It is not enough that the head office, district office and the school level all understand the

various and relevant policies relating to procurement and maintenance of LTSM at the school level.

- The process results in non-deliveries, delivery shortages and late deliveries which compromise the quality of teaching and learning at the school level. There is great concern about the inefficiencies pertaining to LTSM deliveries to various schools.
- The procurement process can be better managed by ensuring that all three levels within the department understand their important part in the activities that lead to the seamless completion of the whole process.
- The procurement and delivery process could be initiated earlier each year to cater for system disruptions. A dedicated management task team to drive the procurement process by adhering to the relevant deadlines and timeframes could assist.
- The lack of proper consultation about the changes from decentralised to a centralised procurement process at the school level left schools unhappy because of the various incidents exhibited of poor management of the implementation, monitoring and control measures.

To improve the current situation, the DoE could more effectively manage the procurement and delivery processes by ensuring that the current procedures and practices are adhered to by all those who are involved, thereby promoting a uniform understanding of the policies and regulations guiding the procurement processes within the three levels. All the process changes could be implemented and monitored by a dedicated management team. The current distribution of textbooks by contractors could be closely monitored between the DoE's LTSM management team and the managing agents. An electronic distribution system with geographical positioning functionality (GPS) could be used to monitor and track the progress of the trucks delivering to various schools. The current and the proposed processes and systems should be in line with the National Treasury's provision on policies and regulations. Doing this could manage the problems faced in the schools. In addition, the department could develop the competencies and capabilities of the procurement staff, because some officials lack the skills and competencies especially in relation to technology.

#### **6.4 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

In this section the research objectives are used to present the summary of the study and the conclusion reached.

### 6.4.1 Summary of the study

The study aimed at determining whether the procurement process of the learner teacher support material (LTSM) is effectively managed by East London District public secondary schools. The focus of the study was to understand the management processes undertaken by the three levels during the procurement of LTSM. No comparison was made of the duties performed by each of the three level participants because they performed different tasks necessary to the overall procurement.

- **Chapter One:** This chapter contained the background to the study which included a brief background review of the area being studied. The problem statement, research question, objectives and a summary discussion of the research methodology and ethical considerations was presented.
- **Chapter Two:** The theoretical review that formed the basis for the study was explained. This included the definition of terms, the discussion of generic procurement issues in the procurement sector.
- **Chapter Three:** This chapter outlined the literature review concerning the procurement of LTSM in the DoE.
- **Chapter Four:** This chapter contained the discussion of the methodology used to conduct the research such as getting permission to the sites, requesting permission to interview a certain number of selected people for the collection of data and how the data analysis was done.
- **Chapter Five:** This chapter outlined the data analysis of the information received from participants through the interviews.
- **Chapter Six:** In this chapter the findings, the summary and the research conclusions were discussed. It concluded with discussing and highlighting the issues that became limitations during the study. Lastly, the researcher made suggestions that could be used for further research.

### 6.4.2 Conclusions about the research objectives

To respond to the main research objectives, the following four secondary objectives were discussed.

#### 6.4.2.1 Secondary research objectives

**Objective 1:** *To investigate the current procurement practices used in the acquisition of LTSM at public secondary schools in East London District.*

The current procurement practices applicable in the procurement of LTSM are centralised in the head office level for control and accountability. Unlike other items, the textbooks are procured from sole providers which allows the department to buy specific books upon receipt of a quotation. The procurement threshold values are not applicable in this process. Each of the three levels play an important role in the procurement process.

**Objective 2:** *To determine how LTSM is distributed at public secondary schools in East London District.*

The logistics of LTSM delivery process is that it is outsourced to third party service providers. The managing agent contracts various local service providers for the delivery of textbooks to the schools in the province. However, there are complaints of non-deliveries, late deliveries and shortages. Textbook deliveries should have been finalised by the 30<sup>th</sup> of November, but the agreed delivery timeframes were not met in most schools. The poorly managed procurement process leaves schools with unmet needs which has a bad impact on the overall teaching and learning.

**Objective 3:** *To what extent are the procurement practitioners compliant with policies and regulations that guide the procurement of LTSM at public secondary schools in East London District.*

There was no agreement on what the policies entailed and what is happening on the three different levels. The department seemed to be falling behind in the implementation and monitoring of policies relevant to the procurement of LTSM.

**Objective 4:** *To determine the problems faced in the procurement of LTSM at public secondary schools in East London District*

There were problems faced during the procurement process which were the result of misinterpretation of the current policies and mismanagement of the resources relevant to the effective management of the procurement process and this proved to be the biggest cause of the current problems. The problems were identifiable in the overall procurement processes which takes place in three levels. The systems used do not support the current needs and the people are not familiar with technology in such a way that the new ordering system that was introduced could not be used by school principals because of system error.

The senior management could investigate new ways of managing and controlling the relationships between the three levels and the overall stakeholders involved. The

centralisation of the procurement process has a potential for success, but its benefits needed to be shared to the affected offices within the three levels.

#### **6.4.2.2 Main research objective**

The main research objective was to determine how the East London District public secondary schools could effectively manage the procurement process of the LTSM. The overall procurement process of LTSM in East London public secondary schools starts when the school level determines their textbook needs according to learner enrolments. The whole process is centralised at the head office level for control and accountability. The procurement process employs a sole provider, using a quotation from each book publisher. The books are delivered to warehouses from where they are distributed by local service providers to various schools. The whole procurement process is guided by the policies and regulations as set out by National Treasury. However, there are problems associated with procurement and delivery to schools, namely non-delivery, late delivery and shortages. These management and operational problems make the centralised procurement process ineffective and non-compliant with set policies and regulations. The delivery timeframes set for October and November seem to be unrealistic because of the vastness of the province. It may have been intended for the delivery to be made during those times so the materials could be used from January of the following year; however, the department should consider moving it to earlier months to account for possible delays during the procurement process.

### **6.5. RESEARCH CONTRIBUTION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

In this subsection, the research contributions and recommendations of the study are presented.

#### **6.5.1 Research contribution**

This research makes a small contribution to a prevailing problem in areas where LTSM shortages are experienced. No evidence of similar studies being conducted in the Eastern Cape Province were found so this research could contribute to the efficacy of the procurement process. The close examination of the procurement process in the EC could benefit researchers in the same field and open a dialogue for further discussions.

#### **6.5.2 Recommendations**

The study revealed that the personnel on all three levels do not have the same duties and each needs to be trained to perform effectively. The following is recommended:



**i) More coherence between three different levels**

Some of the existing problems result from the disparate processes carried out at the three levels. There is a need for more coherence in the way daily operations are handled and managed. The systems used are important for the integration process. Effective communication between these levels and an adequate monitoring and evaluation programme may help in this regard.

**i) Clarity on the roles performed at three levels in different time frames**

The management at the head office level could provide timeous information to all the stakeholders about the steps and timeframes in the process necessary to attain the overall procurement goal. The different timeframes need to be honoured by all. The three levels need to be coordinated to attain the ultimate goal which is the timely delivery of textbooks to schools.

**ii) Further changes to the process need broader consultation**

A rigorous engagement of people through consultation is necessary. Although the decision for centralisation is believed by head office to be beneficial and to aid principals who are overwhelmed with administration, the technological expertise needed to initiate the ordering is lacking in many cases. Resistance to the centralised process is based on the lack of consultation and incompetence in some cases. Longer workshops with in-depth training are needed urgently.

**iii) Dedicated permanent managing team rather than several acting positions**

The lack of continuity in people holding management positions has a negative impact on the organisational performance, because temporary acting positions do not allow opportunities for long-term decision-making. Given enough time, a dedicated team of managers could help in setting up the necessary implementation and monitoring tools. The management does not get the opportunity to evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of the decisions and the tools put in place because their time is always curtailed.

**iv) Rural schools need to retain and retrieve textbooks**

There is a need for all school principals to have efficient systems to implement and monitor the retention and retrieval of textbooks at the schools. While there are monitoring and control measures in place the implementation rate differs because of varying current demographic complexities.

### **6.5.3 Functional guide for the procurement and management process of LTSM**

This study revealed that there are ostensible problems in the management and procurement process of the LTSM in East London district public secondary schools. Despite the available procurement policies, there are no effective systems in place to support and drive effective and efficient procurement. The practical management of the resources required to operate and further the education socio-economic agenda does not relate to the ideal policies. There is a need for integration in the three levels where the procurement process is managed to gain trust and to understand the overall impact of each role player. The actions by one level might make or break the successful procurement and delivery of LTSM to public secondary schools in East London. Therefore, the roles played by each level need to be understood by all so that all may put more effort and attention into the execution of their specific duties.

Figure 6.1 below is a reference guide depicting the different roles performed in the three levels. This shows how the actions at one level affect the actions of the other levels. The three main role players such as three functional levels, the institutional drivers, and management and procurement enablers are crucial in an effective management of the procurement process. Should this guide be shared amongst the role players, they would understand the importance of their actions in achieving an effective procurement process of LTSM in East London public secondary schools.

- **ECDoE Three Functional Levels**

In the ECDoE there are three functional levels that are strategic in the procurement and delivery of LTSM; namely, the Head Office level, the District Office level and the School level. For a successful LTSM procurement process each level has its own activities, however, the activities from each level are interdependent in such a way that if there is a delay or miscommunication on one level the other levels are affected. For these levels to be more efficient, the value of each must be known and shared with all. This could assist the three levels to be more responsible and accountable for their actions.

- **Institutional Drivers**

The DoE is one of the government departments expected to improve the quality of education in South Africa. To achieve this national goal, the department should cultivate a culture of ethical values by ensuring that there are policies that promote ethical behaviour and persons are expected to comply. The policies should be vigorously disseminated to all the affected stakeholders within the three levels, and those external to

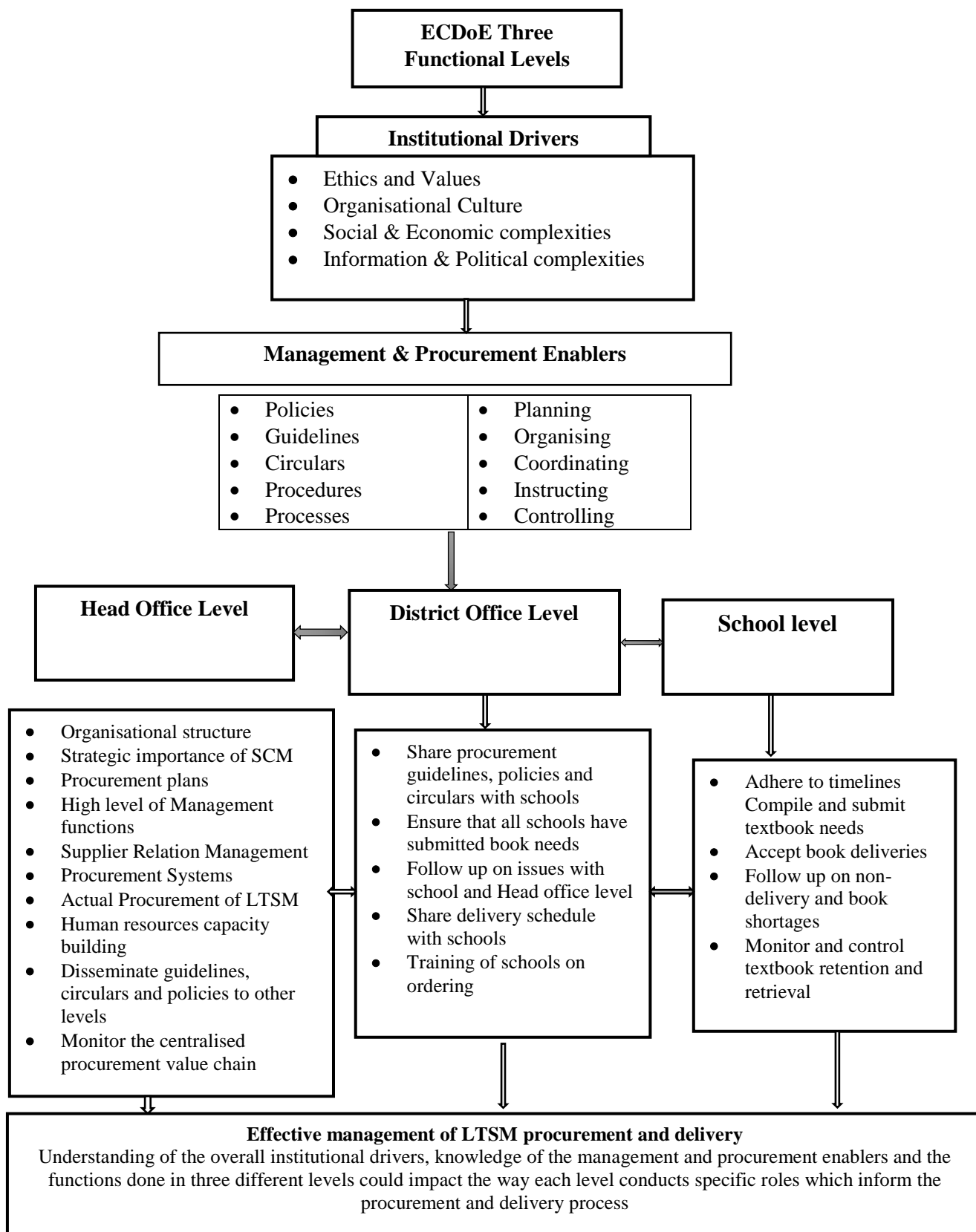
the department. The three levels and the key role players ought to have and understand an organisational culture which promotes authenticity, backed by quality and hard work. An awareness of the social, economic, informational and political complexities should never dictate the organisation's performance. Only managers who understand the above issues should lead, bring coherence and deliver a high performing supply chain which will add value to the end customer.

- **Management and Procurement Enablers**

The procurement environment is guided by policies and regulations, which normally are not fully implemented during the procurement process. Managers and the project teams could make use of the management functions to plan, organise, implement, control and closely monitor the procurement process as a project. Using both the policies and functions of management as the procurement enablers could yield better results that could lead to an effective management of the LTSM procurement process.

- **Effective management of LTSM procurement and delivery**

An understanding of the overall institutional drivers, knowledge of the management and procurement enablers, and the functions performed in three different levels, could impact on the way each level achieves the procurement and delivery process. A coordinated effort, awareness and clear organisation, strong values and ethics could lead to a more effectively managed procurement process, which could add value and quality to schools' teaching and learning.



**Figure 6.1:** Functional guide for the procurement of LTSM in three levels

Source: Compiled by Researcher

This shows how the actions from each level extensively affect the actions of the other levels. When the guide is shared amongst the role players, they would understand the importance of their actions to achieve an effective procurement process of LTSM in East London public secondary schools.

## **6.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

This section of the study presents the limitations of this study and the possible future research suggestions.

### **6.6.1 Limitations of the study**

The researcher only interviewed representatives from seven schools in one district. Although this included schools from all five quintiles, the sample was too small to make generalisations.

The study focused on the procurement management process and the learners were not interviewed about the impact that textbook shortages and non-delivery had on the teaching and learning at the school.

The book publishers, one of the important stakeholders in the process, were not interviewed, so the researcher does not know their experiences of dealing with the DoE during the procurement process.

### **6.6.2 Suggestions for future research**

Based on the findings of the study there is a need for the LTSM procurement and management process to be comprehensively examined in the EC. The following studies could be undertaken in the future:

- Investigation of the management and procurement process of LTSM in more than one education district in the EC;
- Other researchers examine the management and monitoring of the LTSM procurement process in the EC;
- As a comparison, a study could be undertaken to find out how the LTSM procurement process is managed in other provinces;

Ascertainment of how effective and reliable information systems can benefit the successful LTSM procurement.

## **6.7 CONCLUSION**

The research study focused on the research question: *"How can the procurement of the LTSM process be more effectively managed in East London district public Secondary Schools?"*. The findings of the study indicated that the head office, district office and schools, the three levels, perform different tasks in the management and procurement process of LTSM. Procurement is both understood and performed differently at each level although the policies remain the same for all participants in the process. As a result of these differences, the process becomes complex and compounded problems lead to either late, non-deliveries or textbook shortages. The implementation and monitoring of the policies and guidelines relating to the LTSM procurement is not done with any success. There is a gap between the procurement policies and how the procurement process is conducted. This gap could be bridged through a vigorous implementation of a monitoring process led by a dedicated LTSM management team of stakeholders.

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## APPENDIX A: LETTER FOR ETHICS CLEARANCE



### UNISA DESTTL ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Date: 26 September 2018

Dear Bongeka Mbuqe

ERC Reference #:  
2018\_CEMS\_ESTTL\_009  
Name: Ms Bongeka Mbuqe  
Student #: 44972350

**Decision: Ethics Approval from  
09/2018 to 09/2021**

**Researcher(s):** Ms Bongeka Mbuqe  
Bongymb@gmail.com  
073153 9132

**Supervisor (s):** Prof Marcus I Ambe  
[ambeim@unisa.ac.za](mailto:ambeim@unisa.ac.za)  
073 728 2467

**Working title of research:**

**Procurement of Learner Teacher Support Material in East London District Public  
Secondary Schools**

**Qualification:** MCom Logistics

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the Unisa DESTTL Ethics Review Committee for the above mentioned research. Ethics approval is granted for three years

*The **low risk application** was **reviewed** by the DESTTL Ethics Review Committee in September 2018 in compliance with the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment. The decision was approved on the 26<sup>th</sup> of September 2018.*

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

1. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.



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

Open Rubric

2. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the XXX Committee.
3. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.
4. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing, accompanied by a progress report.
5. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.
6. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data require additional ethics clearance.
7. No field work activities may continue after the expiry date **(09/21)**. Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

Add any other conditions if relevant.

*Note:*

*The reference number **2018\_CEMS\_ESTTL\_009** should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.*

Yours sincerely,



Signature  
Acting Chair of DESTTL ERC  
**E-mail: mmakonm@unisa.ac.za**  
**Tel: (012) 429-4298**



Signature  
Executive Dean: CEMS  
**E-mail: mogalmt@unisa.ac.za**  
**Tel: (012) 429-4419**

## APPENDIX B: LETTER REQUESTING FOR PERMISSION FROM DOE



### LETTER TO THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION REQUESTING PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

**Ms PA Vinjevold**  
**Deputy Director General**  
Provincial Department of Education  
Steve Vukile Tshwete Complex,  
Zone 6, Zwelitsha  
Eastern Cape  
Tel: 040 608 4353

04 July 2018

Dear Ms Vinjevold

**RE: Request for permission to conduct research in the Eastern Cape Department of Education**

My name is Bongeka Mbuqe, a Master Student in the Department of Entrepreneurship, Supply Chain, Transport, Tourism and Logistics management, University of South Africa under the supervision of Professor Marcus Ambe. The title of my study is: *Procurement of Learner Teacher Support Material (LTSM) in the East London District Public Secondary Schools: Problems and Solutions*. The study aims to determine the extent to which learner teacher support material in East London District public secondary schools is procured and distributed in line with the supply chain management policy. The study will entail the collection of primary data based on a semi-structured questionnaire through face-to-face interviews. The key participants are principals, district office officials, DoE procurement specialists and the DoE Senior heads. The participants are selected based on their involvement in the process of schools LTSM.

A consent form will be provided to all the participants to solicit their consent to participate in the study. They will be also advised to withdraw at any time without giving reasons if they are not comfortable with the study. There are no risks or rewards involved in this research. The findings of the study will provide executive insights on the state of procurement and distribution of LTSM in the province. A copy of the findings will be provided to the department. Also, the findings will be provided to the participants upon request.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Bongeka Mbuqe", written in a cursive style.

Bongeka Mbuqe  
Researcher

## APPENDIX C: PERMISSION LETTER FROM DOE



STRATEGIC PLANNING POLICY RESEARCH AND SECRETARIAT SERVICES  
Steve Vukile Tshwete Complex • Zone 6 • Zwelitsha • Eastern Cape  
Private Bag X0032 • Bhisho • 5605 • REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA  
Tel: +27 (0)40 608 4537/4773 • Fax: +27 (0)40 608 4574 • Website: [www.ecdoe.gov.za](http://www.ecdoe.gov.za)

Enquiries: B Pamla

Email: [babalwa.pamla@ecdoe.gov.za](mailto:babalwa.pamla@ecdoe.gov.za)

Date: 20 September 2018

Miss. B Mbuqe

34 Park Gardens Flat

513 Van Der Walt Street

**Pretoria**

**0002**

Dear Miss. Mbuqe

### **PERMISSION TO UNDERTAKE A MASTERS THESIS: PROCUREMENT OF LEARNER TEACHER SUPPORT MATERIAL AT HEAD OFFICE OF THE EASTERN CAPE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

1. Thank you for your application to conduct research.
2. Your application to conduct the above-mentioned research at the Head Office of the Eastern Cape Department of Education (ECDoE) is hereby approved based on the following conditions:
  - a. there will be no financial implications for the Department;
  - b. institutions and respondents must not be identifiable in any way from the results of the investigation;
  - c. you present a copy of the written approval letter of the Eastern Cape Department of Education (ECDoE) to the Cluster and District Directors before any research is undertaken at any institutions within that particular district;
  - d. you will make all the arrangements concerning your research;
  - e. the research may not be conducted during official contact time;
  - f. should you wish to extend the period of research after approval has been granted, an application to do this must be directed to Chief Director: Strategic Management Monitoring and Evaluation;



- g. your research will be limited to those institutions for which approval has been granted, should changes be effected written permission must be obtained from the Chief Director: Strategic Management Monitoring and Evaluation;
  - h. you present the Department with a copy of your final paper/report/dissertation/thesis free of charge in hard copy and electronic format. This must be accompanied by a separate synopsis (maximum 2 – 3 typed pages) of the most important findings and recommendations if it does not already contain a synopsis.
  - i. you present the findings to the Research Committee and/or Senior Management of the Department when and/or where necessary.
  - j. you are requested to provide the above to the Chief Director: Strategic Management Monitoring and Evaluation upon completion of your research.
  - k. you comply with all the requirements as completed in the Terms and Conditions to conduct Research in the ECDoE document duly completed by you.
  - l. you comply with your ethical undertaking (commitment form).
  - m. You submit on a six monthly basis, from the date of permission of the research, concise reports to the Chief Director: Strategic Management Monitoring and Evaluation
3. The Department reserves a right to withdraw the permission should there not be compliance to the approval letter and contract signed in the Terms and Conditions to conduct Research in the ECDoE.
  4. The Department will publish the completed Research on its website.
  5. The Department wishes you well in your undertaking. You can contact the Director, Ms. NY Kanjana on the numbers indicated in the letterhead or email [nelisa.kanjana@ecdoe.gov.za](mailto:nelisa.kanjana@ecdoe.gov.za) should you need any assistance.



**NY KANJANA**  
**DIRECTOR: STRATEGIC PLANNING POLICY RESEARCH & SECRETARIAT SERVICES**  
**FOR SUPERINTENDENT-GENERAL: EDUCATION**



## **APPENDIX D: PARTICIPANTS INFORMATION SHEET**

### **LETTER TO A PROSPECTIVE PARTICIPANT**

Dear Prospective Participant

My name is Bongeka Mbuqe, a MCom student in the Department of Entrepreneurship, Supply Chain, Transport, Tourism and Logistics management, University of South Africa under the supervision of Professor Marcus Ambe. The title of my study is: *Procurement of Learner Teacher Support Material (LTSM) in East London District Public Secondary Schools: Problems and Solutions.*

**What is the aim or purpose of the study?**

I am conducting this research to determine how learner teacher support material in East London District public secondary schools is procured.

**How long will the study last?**

Individual interviews will last about 45-60 minutes. The entire study will last almost 3 months.

**Why am I being invited to participate?**

You have been selected to participate in the research because you are directly and indirectly involved in the procurement and use of learner Teacher Support Materials(LTSM). Your knowledge of and experience in the procurement and delivery of LTSM in the East London public schools will be valuable. There will be 24 participants comprises of principals, district office officials, DoE procurement specialists and the DoE Senior heads who will be chosen to participate in the study, purposively selected due to their close involvement in the process of schools LTSM procurement and delivery.

**What is the nature of my participation in this study and what does the research involve?**

Your role in the study as a participant will be to respond to recorded face-to-face interviews. The study involves open-ended questions and will take approximately about 45-60 minutes.

**Can I withdraw from this study?**

Participation is voluntary and there is no penalty or loss of benefit for non-participation.

Your taking part in this study is voluntary and you are under no obligation to consent to participation. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a

written consent form. You are free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. However, it will not be possible to withdraw once data have been collected and recorded.

**What are the potential benefits of taking part in this study?**

Taking part in this project does not involve any rewards except that it is hoped that the findings of the study will raise important insights as to the challenges encountered on a day-to-day procurement of LTSM. The information collected will be used entirely for academic purposes.

**What is the anticipated inconvenience of taking part in this study?**

The questions are formulated with great care and sensitivity towards personal information. A list of the research questions will be provided to participants to assist in making an informed choice as to whether they would like to participate in the study or not. However, this study will or might use part of your office working hours but it does not involve any risks.

**Will what I say be kept confidential?**

Your name will not be recorded anywhere and no-one will be able to connect you to the answers you give. Your answers will be given a fictitious code number or a pseudonym and you will be referred to in this way in the data, any publications, or other research reporting methods such as conference proceedings.

Your answers may be reviewed by people responsible for making sure that research is done properly, including the transcriber, external coder and members of the Research Ethics Committee. Otherwise, records that identify you will be available only to people working on the study, unless you give permission for other people to see the records. A report of the study may be submitted for publication, but individual participants will not be identifiable in such a report.

**How will information be stored and ultimately destroyed?**

The interviews will be held in private and all information gathered during the course of the study will be kept confidential. Hard copies of your answers will be stored by the researcher for a period of five years in a locked cupboard or filing cabinet for future research or academic purposes; electronic information will be stored on a password-protected computer. Future use of the stored data will be subject to further Research Ethics Review and approval if applicable. At the end of five years' information stored as hard copies will be burnt and that stored as soft copies will be erased.



**Will I receive payment or any incentives for participating in this study?**

There will be no rewards offered and also there are no costs that you are going to incur.

**Has the study received ethics approval?**

This study has received written approval from the Research Ethics Committee of the College of Economic and Management Sciences, UNISA. A copy of the approval letter can be obtained from the researcher if you so wish.

**How will I be informed of the findings or results?**

If you would like to be informed of the final research findings, please contact me on 073 153 9132 or email [bongymb@gmail.com](mailto:bongymb@gmail.com). The findings are accessible for a period of three months.

Should you have concerns about the way in which the research has been conducted, you may contact Prof IM. Ambe at 012 429 4500 or email [ambeim@unisa.ac.za](mailto:ambeim@unisa.ac.za). Alternatively, contact the research ethics chairperson, Ms Carmen Poole, at [loedoc@unisa.ac.za](mailto:loedoc@unisa.ac.za)

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

Yours sincerely



Ms Bongeka Mbuqe  
Researcher

## APPENDIX E: CONSENT FORM

### CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY

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

I have read and understood the study as explained in the information sheet.

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

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

I am aware that the findings of this study will be anonymously processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings.

I agree to the recording of the one-on-one interviews.

I have been assured that I will receive a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Name & Surname of participant (please print)

Name & Surname of Researcher

.....

.....

Signature of Participant

Signature of Researcher

.....

.....

Date: .....

Date: .....

Witness Name & Surname (please print) .....

Witness's Signature: .....

Date: .....

## APPENDIX F: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

### RESEARCH INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

*Research Topic: Procurement of Learner Teacher Support Material (LTSM) in the East London District Public Secondary Schools*

#### Background Information

- 1.1 What is your Position?
- 1.2 How many years of service in the current position?
- 1.3 Which category does your school fall under? (*Where Applicable*)

#### QUESTIONS

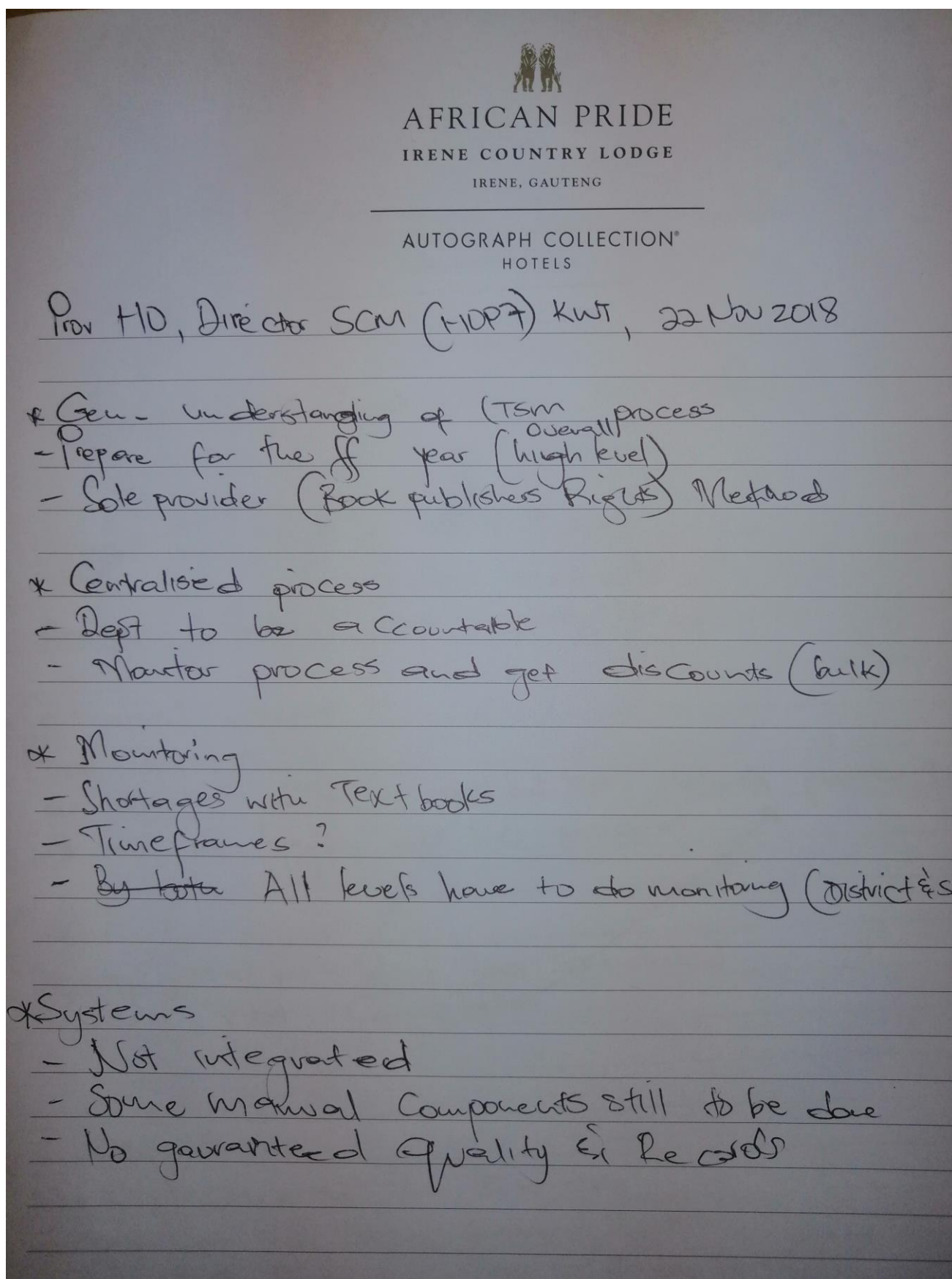
1. What are the current procurement methods employed in the acquisition of LTSM at public secondary schools in East London District?
2. Kindly explain the various procurement threshold used during procurement?
3. What procurement procedures used from the start to finish during the procurement of LTSM?
4. Who are the key stakeholders involved in the procurement?
5. Explain the current delivery process from start to finish when preparing for the following year of study?
6. What is the time frame applicable in the current delivery of LTSM to schools when preparing for the following year of study?
7. What can you recommend as part of improving the current delivery process?
8. What are the key Policies and Regulations that guides the Procurement of LTSM?
9. What can you recommend as part of improving the current understanding of the policies, acts and regulations?
10. What challenges are faced during the procurement and delivery of LTSM
11. What possible solutions can you recommend for these challenges?

---

This is the end of the questions. Thank you for taking and allowing this interview to take place. We truly value the information you have provided. Your responses will contribute to our analyses of the texts and suggest new or better ways of approach.

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## APPENDIX G: FIELD DIARY EXAMPLES





## AFRICAN PRIDE

IRENE COUNTRY LODGE

IRENE, GAUTENG

AUTOGRAPH COLLECTION®  
HOTELS

School Rep (SPP7, Quintile 5 School) EL, 27 Nov 2018

- Understanding the process (General)
- Understanding restricted to school operations
- Submit Books requests to District for proc. initiation process

### \* Centralised process

- It is huge task for H/O
- Process is complicated

### \* Monitoring

- Submit and wait for delivery
- No much communication from District & H/O

### \* Systems

- Ordering was the worst
- System is not friendly
- Still to maintain paper based as proof



AFRICAN PRIDE  
IRENE COUNTRY LODGE  
IRENE, GAUTENG

AUTOGRAPH COLLECTION®  
HOTELS

School Principal (SPP4, Quintile 3 School), KWT, 27 Nov 2018

\* Good Understanding of Process:

- Different from that of HO & District
- Deals with day to day activities of the school
- Compile & Submit book requests for procurement process

\* Centralised process

- Book Shortages
- Centralisation <sup>might</sup> be good but has delivery problems
- Schools not happy abt the process

Monitoring

- Deliveries are not done as scheduled
- Orders not complete

\* Systems

- Not reflecting all the learners
- Errors on the New Ordering System
- Retrieval & Retention (not so easy to do)

## APPENDIX H: DECLARATION BY EDITOR

**Dr Glynn Meter**

*19 Little Lodge, 275 von Willigh Str, Centurion 0157  
glynn.c.meter@gmail.com, tel 012 667 1770, cell 082 498 7861*

---

23 January 2020

Ms Bongeka Mbuqe  
UNISA

### TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the master's dissertation titled **Procurement of Learner Teacher Support Materials in East London District public secondary schools** by Bongeka Mbuqe has been edited for grammar and language errors.

After the 23<sup>rd</sup> of January 2020, any errors intruded in the document are the responsibility of the student.

Many thanks



**Dr Glynn Meter**

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*Glynn Meter BA Hons (Wits) MA (UNISA) D Litt et Phil (UNISA) LTCL (Trinity College London) Member SAFREA (SA) Associate APPA (New York) Member English Academy Southern Africa*