EXPERIENCES OF SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAMS IN MANAGING LOW QUINTILE SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE CAPRICORN SOUTH DISTRICT

by

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DECLARATION

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SIGNATURE   30/03/2021.
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DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my dearest late mother Mamikie Annah Mehlape, my late grandmother Mohlapa Melina Mehlape, and my late grandfather Nyaokane Elias "Ramatsii" Mehlape for nurturing me from my infancy and shaped my path to the future. They really had a belief throughout their entire lives that I would make it.

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globe. To them I say "Baanaphoka ba Mammeudi-a-tšhidi-a-marumo!! Šidio tša Nkutu a boRamahlalerwa, Nkutu o se re o feta motse wa Lekilela wa feta Nkutu-a-Letsoalo, kgomo ga e fete namane ya yona!!". Mmoaphokeng wa swana ya boditsibogolo sebokela dingwe diboba. Bja go kgahla o tumule o tame o ba bokela pele o yago.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

ABET	Adult Basic Education and Training
ABM	Accountancy, Business and Management
AET	Adult Education and Training
ANA	Annual National Assessment
ASIDI	Accelerated School Infrastructure Delivery Initiative
BOR	Bill of Rights
CA	Curriculum Advisor
CAO	Chief Accounting Officer
CAPS	Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement
CCs	Coordinating Centres
CCT	Coordinating Centre Tutor
CD	Chief Director
CECIF	Comprehensive Effective Curriculum Implementation Framework
CEM	Council of Education Ministers
CET	Community Education and Training
CHED	Commission on Higher Education
CK	Content Knowledge
CM	Circuit Manager
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CPTD	Continuing Professional Teacher Development
CS	Currently Serving

DAS	Developmental Appraisal System
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DDGs	Deputy Directors General
DD	District Director
DfES	Department for Education and Skills
DG	Director General
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
DoE	Department of Education
DSG	Development Support Group
ECC	Ethical Clearance Certificate
EEA	Employment of Educators Act
EIP	Educator Improvement Programme
EIP	Educator Improvement Plan
ELAA	Education Laws Amendment Act
ELRC	Education Labour relations Council
EMD	Education Management Development
EPCI	Early Primary Collaborative Inquiry
EPRC	Education Policy Review Commission
EPWP	Expanded Public Works Programme
ERO	Education Review Office
ETDP-SETA	Education, Training and Development Practices-Sector Education and Training Authority
ETSIP	Education and Training Sector Improvement Programme

FET	Further Education and Training
FILO	First In Last Out
GET	General Education and Training
GPDE	Gauteng Province Department of Education
HEIs	Higher Education Institutions
HESA	Higher Education South Africa
HESA-EDF	Higher Education South Africa – Education Deans Forum
HIV	Human Immune Virus
HOD	Head Of Department
HRD	Human Resource Development
HRT	Human Relations Theory
HUMSS	Humanities and Social Sciences
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
INSET	In-Service Training
IQMS	Integrated Quality Management System
ISPFTED	Integrated Strategic Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development
JHS	Junior High School
KCSE	Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education
KM	Kilometre
LEAs	Local Education Authorities
LPD	Learner Performance Data
LPDE	Limpopo Province Department of Education

LRA	Labour Relations Act
MASTEC	Mathematics, Sciences and Technology Education College
MEC	Member of Executive Council
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MOV	Means of Verification
NCD	Non-Communicable Diseases
NCSL	National College for School Leadership
NDP	National Development Plan
NEASC	New England Association of Schools and Colleges
NECT	National Education Collaboration Trust
NEEDU	National Education Evaluation and Development Unit
NEPA	National education Policy Act
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
NNSSF	National Norms and Standard for School Funding
NPC	National Planning Commission
NPFTED	National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development
NPST	National Professional Standards for Teachers
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NSC	National Senior Certificate
NSFAS	National Student Financial Aid Scheme
NSNP	National School Nutrition Programme
OBE	Outcomes Based Education

OCED	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OSD	Occupation Specific Dispensation
PAM	Personnel Administrative Measures
PCK	Pedagogic Content Knowledge
PD	Professional Development
PDP	Professional development Plan
PEDs	Provincial Education Departments
PGP	Personal Growth Plan
PM	Performance Measurement/ Prime Minister
PMS	Performance Management System
PPD	Postgraduate Professional Development
PSC	Public Service Commission
PSLE	Primary School Leaving Examinations
PTCs	Primary Teachers' Colleges
PTD	Professional Teacher Development
QDA	Qualitative Data Analysis
R&R	Rationalisation and Redeployment
RCL	Representative Council of Learners
RCPDCC	Regional CPD Coordinating Committee
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
REC	Research Ethics Committee
REQV	Relative Education Qualification Value
RIC	Regional Improvement Collaborative

RNCS	Revised National Curriculum Statement
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SACE	South African Council for Educators
SAOU	Suid-Afrikaanse Onderwysers Unie
SAP	School Assessment Plan
SASA	South African Schools Act
SBA	School Based Assessment
SBCPDCC	School Based CPD Coordinating Committee
SDT	Staff Development Team
SGB	School Governing Body
SHS	Senior High School
SIP	School Improvement Plan
SIRR	South African institute of Race Relations
SMC	School Management Committee
SMT	School Management Team
SMTs	School Management Teams
STDs	Sexually Transmitted Diseases
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
SY	School Year
TALIS	Teaching and Learning International Survey
TB	Tuberculosis
TDA	Thematic Data Analysis
TDMS	Teacher Development Management Systems

TED   Teacher Education and Development

TESDA   Technical Education and Skills Development Agency

TSE   Teacher Self Evaluation

TSR   Teacher Self Reflection

TTA   Teacher training Agency

TVET   Technical and Vocational Education and Training

UK   United Kingdom

UNAM   University of Namibia

UNESCO   United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

UNISA   University of South Africa

US   United States

UNITE   Uganda National Institute for Teacher Education

VSDET   Victoria State Department of Education and Training

WSE   Whole School Evaluation

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ABSTRACT

The primary aim of this study was to determine the experiences of School Management Teams (SMTs) in managing low quintile secondary schools in order that they perform better than schools in the high quintiles in the Capricorn South District, Limpopo Province. The objectives of the study were to identify initiatives that are encompassed by SMTs in managing low quintile secondary schools, determine enabling and constraining factors that SMTs encounter in managing low quintile secondary schools, and investigate the perspectives of SMTs regarding their role in terms of managing low quintile secondary schools. The SMT is regarded as a legitimate curriculum management structure that is central to appropriate curriculum implementation and consequently, persistent improved learner outcomes in schools.

The literature reviewed focused mainly on the experiences of SMTs in doing justice to their core mandate nationally, continentally, and globally; thus assisting me in gaining a deeper comprehension of the research question under investigation in this study. Although there are a number of studies on SMTs, little is known about the experiences of SMTs in managing low quintile secondary schools in order that they perform better than schools in the high quintile. This study was anchored on the three schools of thought of the Classical Management Theory; i.e. the Scientific Theory of Management, the Administrative Theory of Management and the Bureaucratic Theory of Management, as well as the Human Relations Theory and Transformational Leadership Theory.

A qualitative case study research design was employed to elicit the experiences of SMTs in managing low quintile secondary schools in order that they perform better than schools in the high quintile in the Capricorn South District. The study was conducted at two low quintile secondary schools that have been performing consistently above 80% since the academic year 2013 in terms of the grade 12 results. For the research, data were collected from 13 participants who were serving SMT members. Data collection was effected using semi-structured interview questions with the 13 participating SMT members. The data collected were confirmed and affirmed by an analysis of various administrative documents, my observations of both the curriculum delivery activities and the physical infrastructure in the sampled schools. The transcribed data were analysed and interpreted concurrently using Thematic Data Analysis (TDA) techniques. The study findings revealed the initiatives used

by the SMTs in managing low quintile secondary schools in order that they perform better than schools in the high quintile i.e preservation of the contact time, high performance target setting, motivation, learner profiling, item analysis, Performance review sessions, differentiated programmes, curriculum enrichment activities, provision of Annual Teaching Plans (ATPs) and examination guidelines, monitoring and support, regular communication, outsourcing of competent educators, sufficient written work and utilisation of period registers. These initiatives have been elucidated in Chapter 5 of this investigation. The findings further revealed the following enabling and constraining factors that SMTs encounter in amanging low quintile secondary schools: Work overloads, infrastructural challenges, overcrowded classrooms, inadequate cooperation of educators, teamwork, sound working relations, inadequacy of technological resources, professional development and support by departmental officials. These findings are also discussed at length in chapter 05 of this investigation. The study went further to reveal the perspectives of SMTs regarding their role in terms of managing low quintile secondary schools. These perspectives were that: SMT members are managers in their own right, the principal remains the Chief Accounting Officer, SMT members are aspirant heads of schools, promotion of stakeholder relations, knowledge of curriculum management policies and that educator recruitment rests in the SMT purview.

Based on these findings, I made study recommendations by way of a developed guideline entitled "A Comprehensive Effective Curriculum Implementation Framework (CECIF)". This guideline was developed for consideration, embracement, and utilisation by all potential education authorities in order to ensure that proper curriculum implementation and improved learner outcomes become the culture in all ordinary public secondary schools under their supervision. The Circuit Managers have been identified as the most relevant and suitable Provincial Education Departmental (PED) officials who should not hesitate to spearhead the implementation of this guideline in schools under their jurisdictions.

KEY TERMS

Management, School Management Teams (SMTs), Capricorn South District, Curriculum management, Curriculum implementation, Improved learner outcomes, Quintile, Secondary schools, Low quintile secondary schools, High quintile secondary schools.

CHAPTER 1:   INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1   INTRODUCTION

The Department of Basic Education (DBE) is part of the organisational structure of the public service in the Republic of South Africa (RSA). Constitutionally, it is mandated to loyally safeguard the delivery of excellent and quality educational services to the South African public. This mandate includes the provision of education facilities that are of quality standards, purposefully built, safe, and accessible (DBE, 2017).

The new democratic dispensation of 1994 has consequentially and frankly necessitated the compartmentalisation of South African ordinary public secondary schools into low or high quintile schools. The quintile system is a governmental redistributive strategy of resources that made a clarion call to the nine Provincial Education Departments (PEDs) to categorise all schools according to their level of economic and social advantage (Khumalo, 2014). This quintile system is an endeavour by the government to close the evident disparities in the quality of education among the nine provinces and the different races. It was expected that this categorisation decision would result in an equal and fair distribution of funds between impoverished and affluent schools (Van Dyk & White, 2019). Each category of school, whether a low or a high quintile school, is managed by a legislated organisational structure that is popularly known within the educational fraternity as the 'School Management Team' (SMT).

The South African doors of learning have been opened to all and sundry, but it is public knowledge that the country still has to do more for improved learner outcomes to be achieved in schools. Irrespective of the quintile levels of schools, and as per policy, SMTs in every public secondary school are expected to work studiously to ensure that the curriculum is properly implemented and managed. Over and above, the SMTs must make it a point that schools perform in a manner that depicts improved learner outcomes. Improved learner outcomes in schools cannot just come robotically or fortuitously. Systems and mechanisms that allow schools to perform better, and beyond the Provincial and National targets, must be put in place by SMTs in schools. Johnson (2018:97) is of the opinion that SMTs in schools have the responsibility to provide more effective ways to help teachers and other stakeholders

to play their part to the best of their ability and improve student achievement and attainment.

Most writers acknowledge that there are no specific guidelines or direction as to what SMTs should do for schools to perform better (Ndoziya, 2014:4). I stand in agreement with this assertion on the basis of the fact that as a Circuit Manager, and previously having served as an SMT member and a school principal, I never came across any departmental documentary directive detailing how SMTs should go about ensuring better performance in schools and thus spiral learner outcomes upwards. It therefore becomes explicit that it always remains the responsibility and accountability of SMTs to ensure that for schools to serve their intended purpose, specific practices have to be factored in. This assertion also points to the fact that SMTs must ensure that curriculum management systems and mechanisms that are put in place are well crafted, regularly monitored, and supported by stakeholders in schools to the extent that desirable fruits in the form of improved learner performance can be yielded.

1.2   BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

It has been indicated that South African primary and secondary schools are demarcated into low and high quintile schools (Parliamentary Monitoring Group, 2020). It has also been indicated that low quintile secondary schools serve the poor, rural, under-resourced, and poverty-stricken communities (Hall & Giese, 2008 as quoted in Ogbonnaya & Awuah, 2019). Just like any other category of schools, low quintile secondary schools have a mandate to effectively implement and manage the curriculum delivery for the purposes of achieving their *raison d'être*.

Curriculum implementation and curriculum management activities in all South African schools take place under the auspices of a legitimate curriculum management structure in the form of the SMT. The SMT is a crew of curriculum managers in schools whose mandate is to ensure that the curriculum is effectively and efficiently delivered and managed in such a manner that schools are better placed to achieve improved learner outcomes. In Botswana, this crew of curriculum managers is referred to as the Senior Management Team (SMT) and is tasked with the responsibility of ensuring that there is effective teaching and learning in schools. Just like in Botswana, in Australia this crew is also referred to as the Senior Management Team.

The SMTs play an important role in the formal leadership of schools. However, the personnel composition of the SMT is often school-specific (Ehrich & Cranston, 2004:1). Within the South Africa contex and during this democratic era schools are managed by SMTs.

By working as a team, the SMT strives at all times to drive the vision of their school in the right direction for the purposes of achieving their organisational goals. Mathipa *et al.* (2014:367) point out that the SMT is a constituted structure in the current South African educational dispensation whose function it is to give leadership, guidance, direction, and assistance in the teaching and learning situation. Understandably, each SMT member in schools is allocated a group of specialised subject educators to manage. On this note, SMTs are the critical role players in managing curriculum delivery issues in the respective departments allocated to them in schools. They are also critical for ensuring improved learner outcomes on a regular basis.

The best performance indicator of the quality of the South African education system is, and has always been, the National Senior Certificate (NSC) examinations. This creates an understanding that the NSC results are used as an instrument to differentiate between good performing and underperforming schools. According to the SAOU (2015:3), the NSC is the key instrument in the measurement of progress in achieving the targets set in the Action Plan to 2019 and the National Development Plan (NDP). In this regard, the NSC examinations have become the hallmark of the South African education system (Subramoney, 2016:1). This translates into the fact that, in terms of the performance of schools, reference is at all times made to secondary schools simply because secondary schools stand in a better position to administer NSC examinations. I argue that the grade 12 performance picture of secondary schools is a demonstration of curriculum management potential and expertise on the part of SMTs.

It is a well-known fact that South Africa continues to battle the challenge of poor performance and underperformance in those schools that are predominantly characterised as low quintiles and located mostly in socio-economically challenged and unfavourable settings. This poor performance of learners in the NSC examinations has raised great concern both educationally and publically (Subramoney, 2016:1). According to the DBE (2017:2), a secondary school is deemed to be underperforming if its pass percentage in the NSC

examination falls below 65% and it has produced less than 30% bachelor and diploma passes combined. Schools that perform below 65% are in most instances reprimanded by educational authorities at Circuits, Districts, Provincial and National level of the Departmenta of Basic Education (DBE). The performance picture of this category of below 65% schools points to the manner in which SMTs execute their core mandate of curriculum management.

This investigation is all about the experiences of SMTs in managing low quintile secondary schools in the Capricorn South District. The SMT is a structure which is responsible for the day-to-day smooth running of the activities of the school and for ensuring that quality teaching and learning takes place, and consequently produces a better performance (Alberts, 2016:32). This alludes to the fact that the success of every school depends largely on the role of the SMT in terms of effective curriculum management. In my view, underperformance in schools points to the fact that SMTs do not succeed in terms of executing their core mandate. It is evidence that not much effort is put in by SMTs to try and turn the situation around for the better in their schools. Understandably, it is the duty of the SMT to ensure that the performance of schools is regularly assessed to be on an upward, rather than a downward, spiral.

I stand in contrast with the assertion that schools that are situated in socioeconomically unfavourable settings are battling the challenge of underperformance. In essence, not every school that is compartmentalised as low quintile is battling underperformance. There are low quintile secondary schools that continue to achieve far above the 65% National benchmark in terms of the NSC examinations and perform much better than schools in the high quintiles. Some of these low quintile schools go to the extent of consistently passing all their grade 12 learners with a 100% pass. Mathipa *et al.* (2014:368) mention that the SMT is a vital organ in every school and must produce a strategic plan of the school for purposes of ensuring that the school functions in an orderly fashion. Since the dawn of the democratic dispensation in South Africa, the SMT has always been declared the custodian of effective curriculum delivery and curriculum management in schools.

As a Circuit Manager, I have realised that in their day-to-day curriculum management activities in schools, some SMT members implement strategies that ensure an improved performance of schools, especially in terms of end of year examinations. In implementing these performance improvement strategies, SMTs do this with some curriculum delivery

expectations in mind. However, at times SMT members are confronted with insurmountable challenges that make it difficult for them to effectively manage curriculum delivery. It must be clearly pointed out that some of these challenges are not of the making of the schools ut systemic in nature. For schools to perform better, the SMT must at all times be there for purposes of effectively monitoring, supporting, and evaluating curriculum delivery initiatives, and providing regular feedback to education stakeholders.

This investigation unfolded in the Capricorn South District of the Limpopo Province, having been earmarked to determine the experiences of SMTs in managing low quintile secondary schools in order that they perform better than schools in the high quintiles. Increasingly, educational systems throughout the world are holding SMTs accountable for the results of students (Hallinger & Heck, 2012:57). According to Milondzo and Seema (2015:2), the most important function of the SMTs in secondary schools is to provide leadership within and outside the school environment, although doing it effectively becomes difficult for most of the SMT members. For an educational organisation like a school to achieve its meaningful goals, it must have an SMT that is effective and efficient (Owino, 2012:1). This creates an understanding that the performance of every school is indeed attributable to its SMT, and in particular, those practices that they keep on embracing and upholding in high esteem in their schools for the school to achieve improved learner outcomes on a regular basis.

1.3   RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

Since the advent of the democratic dispensation in April 1994, the DBE and the Limpopo Province Department of Education (LPDE) have been setting yearly grade 12 performance targets of schools. These performance targets were at all times below 80%. This setting of targets below 80% could be attributable to the mammoth task that was faced by the new government of creating a single, stable, and solid education department.

Since the academic year 2015, the LPDE's grade 12 performance target has been 80%. This target was unilaterally, unequivocally, and uncompromisingly dictated to all and sundry by the current Limpopo Premier, the Honourable Chupu Stanley Mathabatha on the 6th of January 2015 during the occasion of the announcement of the 2014 end of year results held at the Ranch Hotel outside the Capital City of Limpopo, Polokwane.

This dictated target was an instruction to all SMTs in schools to work studiously to strengthen their curriculum management mechanisms to pave the way for the realisation of better performance at the end of the academic year 2015 and beyond. It is clearly understandable that the premier was sick and tired, and over and above, concerned about the mediocre and abysmal grade 12 performance that the Limpopo Province had found itself in for a number of years. It is a well known fact in the RSA that in terms of the grade 12 comparative performances of the nine provinces, the Limpopo Province has always featured at the tail end. There is absolutely no year since 1994 whereby the Limpopo Province ever tasted a place in the top five bracket regarding grade 12 results. However, even when the province regularly record poor resukts comparatively, some of the learners use to outperform their counterparts from other provinces in subjects like Mathematics, Physical Sciences and Commerce. Some of the grade 12 learners from the Limpopo Province usually receive invitations from the National DBE Minister to receive some accolade during the occasion of the announcement of the grade 12 end of year examinations.

There is an assertion that low quintile schools in South Africa have the worst educational outcomes and these are the schools that the majority of black children attend (South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR), 2018:5). I disagree with this assertion on the basis that I have been in the education fraternity for the past 30 years as an educator, an SMT member, a principal, and a Circuit Manager. I am now in my 13th year as a Circuit Manager in one of the 16 education Circuits that constitute the Capricorn South District of the Limpopo Province.

During my tenure as the Circuit Manager, I realised that each time during the occasion of the publicising of the NSC examinations results by the Member of Executive Council (MEC) for Education in the Limpopo Province, and regardless of the underperformance stigma that has been attached to the Limpopo Province, some low quintile secondary schools usually feature persistently and consistently in the bracket of schools that are performing above 80%. They feature in this bracket after having performed better than some schools that are characterised as high quintile secondary schools. These low quintile secondary schools have never ever tasted a place in the bracket of schools that achieve below 80%.

Regardless and irrespective of their poor historical background, high poverty, and high illiteracy levels amongst parents, these low quintile secondary schools continue to profoundly

make South Africa and South Africans very proud in terms of the NSC examinations results. This category of schools does not perform well simply because they are governed by heavenly fortunes. In my view, there is a team of curriculum managers in the form of the SMT in these low quintile secondary schools that steers its curriculum management ship to keep it afloat towards safer waters.

Given the persistent and consistent inviting performance of these low quintile secondary schools, I then decided to conduct this research with the aim of acquiring insight from the SMTs in such schools regarding their experiences in terms of executing their core mandate such that their schools end up achieving better than some high quintile secondary schools in the affluent towns and cities. For a number of years, the Provincial and District NSC performance has been unthinkable, as tabulated below:

Table 1-1: Provincial and Capricorn South District grade 12 comparative performance from the academic year 2013

LEVEL	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Provincial	71.8%	72.9%	65.9%	62.5%	65.6%	69.2%	73.2%
District	70.1%	71.6%	66.7%	60.9%	59.7%	68.3%	75.3%

Over and above, instead of the District and the Provincial performance picture showing some signs of upward mobility, the picture has since been peripatetic, with the possible exclusion of the academic years 2018 and 2019. Understandably, the performance picture above could be ascribed largely to the quality of the management of such schools, especially the management exercised by SMTs.

A good performance in schools is a demonstration of the effective curriculum management capability on the part of the SMT. Curriculum is a guiding strength behind any educational system, and its successful implementation defines the actualization of every country's education goals. School Management Team's (SMT) success depends on their readiness to be dynamic in changing times and serving their duties as curriculum leaders (Luhalima and Mulovhedzi, 2021). However, recent changes in the South African education system have brought challenges to SMTs to improve their ways of managing schools. These challenges include lack of resources, curriculum changes, lack of discipline, and others (Milondzo & Seema, 2015:1). In my view, it is the duty and responsibility of the SMT to see to it that any

challenge that rears its ugly head to impact negatively on curriculum implementation and curriculum management is identified and obliterated in toto. There are mechanisms and best practices in schools that SMTs embrace, uphold, and abide by to the extent that these mechanisms become an organisational culture in such schools; hence this investigation.

However, it must be pointed out that there are also low quintile secondary schools that are performing poorly in terms of the grade 12 end of year examinations in the Capricorn South District. Some of these schools go to the extent of failing all their grade 12 learners and thus obtaining a 0% pass rate. In the academic year 2020 a total number of seven secondary schools obtained a 0% pass rates in the NSC examinations. Three of the seven schools are in the Sekhukhune District, two in the Waterberg District and one in the Capricorn District. Just like any education District in the Limpopo Province or the country, the Capricorn South District has low quintile secondary schools that have been performing persistently well above 80% in terms of the NSC examinations. Given their pleasing track record of a sustained good performance, I went on to determine the experiences of SMTs in managing those low quintile secondary schools in order to understand why they perform better than those secondary schools that belong to the compartment of a high quintile.

1.4   MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY

Since the dawn of democracy in South Africa, and especially upon the introduction of the South African School Act (SASA) and the Personnel Administrative Measures (PAM), the management of curriculum implementation in schools has always been entrusted to the SMTs. This creates an understanding that the SMT is a legislated curriculum management structure in schools. Since curriculum delivery activities are spearheaded by the SMTs, this translates into the fact that learner outcomes in both low and high quintile secondary schools present a clear picture of the extent of proper curriculum management by SMTs.

Every school exists for the purposes of ensuring that its meaningful organisational vision is realised and that its goals are achieved. There are low quintile secondary schools that consistently perform better than schools in the high quintile, and this is a clear indication of good curriculum management by SMTs. I conducted this study for the purposes of determining the experiences of SMTs in managing low quintile secondary schools to find out why they perform better than their high quintile counterparts. Owino (2012:1) is of the view

that for a school to achieve its meaningful goals, it must have an SMT that is effective and efficient. Botha (2013:2) mentions that the SMT is not simply a question of following ready-made management recipes. It is about the acknowledgement of the knowledge, skills, and competencies that curriculum managers need in order to offer high quality leadership that can ultimately give rise to school effectiveness. This suggests that without the SMT in schools, curriculum implementation and curriculum management would be greatly compromised, badly and/or negatively affected, and consequently bound to fail in a dismal manner.

I argue that all schools thrive on the basis of sound and good management, with good management practices and a management culture within the SMTs. Positive learner outcomes in schools are consequential to the effective manner in which the curriculum is delivered and managed. On this note, SMTs in schools are faced with a critical responsibility of ensuring that teaching and learning programmes are implemented, monitored, supported, and evaluated to achieve the best learner outcomes at the end of every academic year (LPDE 2018:8). Certain management tasks need to be performed by the SMT in order that curriculum delivery could be well managed intheir schools.

The deliberations above suggest that SMTs are at all time expected to put systems in place for quality curriculum implementation, and quality curriculum management to be a distinctive feature of such schools. Quality curriculum delivery and quality curriculum management in schools lead to the attainment of better performance, and of course, improved learner outcomes. This assertion is confirmed by Clarke (2010:3) when he mentions that SMTs in schools should go about putting in place systems and mechanisms that operate in an effective and efficient manner. It is therefore up to SMTs in schools to determine and embrace the best possible and plausible mechanisms that could pave the way for their schools to be managed for the achievement of improved learner outcomes.

Based on the above information, I became very interested in embarking on this study in order to establish the experiences of SMTs in managing low quintile secondary schools so that they perform better than schools in the high quintile. The results from this study led to the development of a guiding instrument for effective curriculum implementation that could be embraced by SMTs in low quintile secondary schools so that they could keep on positively improving learner outcomes in schools (Chapter 6). The guiding instrument could not only be used by low quintile secondary schools in the Capricorn South District, but by all ordinary

public secondary schools to ensure that their organisational goals are achieved and that learner outcomes keep on improving.

1.5   STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

It has already been indicated that in the Republic of South Africa (RSA), any NSC school performance that is less than 65% is regarded as underperformance. Contemporarily, on both a National and provincial scale, there is generally an extremely displeasing performance picture of some secondary schools in all the quintiles. However, there are instances in the LPDE and its 10 Districts where some low quintile secondary schools perform above 80% and thus are performing better than some of the secondary schools in the high quintile. In their role of facilitating effective teaching and learning in schools, SMTs manage and lead learners and educators so that schools achieve their main goal; namely, to be effective institutions of learning (Alberts, 2016:33).

Perennial good performance in low quintile secondary schools is a primary product of best SMT practices. These best practices make it possible for this category of schools to sustain their improved learner outcomes. This study seeks to establish the experiences of SMTs in managing low quintile secondary schools in the Capricorn South District in order that they perform better than secondary schools in the high quintile. However, even if the National and the provincial performance picture of some grade 12 schools is unthinkable, due to the curriculum implementation and management practices by SMTs in schools, the performance picture of some low quintile secondary schools in the Capricorn South District continues to point to the opposite; hence this investigation.

1.6   PRIMARY RESEARCH QUESTION

It has been indicated that this investigation seeks to establish the experiences of SMTs in managing low quintile secondary schools in the Capricorn South District in order that they perform better than those schools that are in the high quintile of the District. In this regard, the research question for this investigation was,

'*How do School Management Teams manage low quintile secondary schools in order that they perform better than schools in the high quintile in the Capricorn South District?"*.

1.6.1   Research sub-questions

In order to provide responses to the main or primary research question for this investigation, the following subsidiary questions were brought into the spotlight:

- What initiatives do SMTs employ in managing low quintile secondary schools in the Capricorn South District?

- What are the enabling and constraining factors that SMTs encounter in managing low quintile secondary schools?

- What are perspectives of the SMTs regarding their role in terms of managing low quintile secondary schools?

1.7   AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1.7.1   Aim of the study

Despite the significant strides that have been made over the past 20 years towards achieving equitable education provisioning, disparities between high and low achieving schools remain high (DBE, 2017 :1). The efforts of SMTs in any category of schools, whether low or high quintile secondary schools, enable such schools to achieve high or low results in terms of end of year results.

As a Circuit Manager and responsible for monitoring and supporting schools in terms of curriculum implementation and curriculum management, I strongly believe that there are an innumerable number of factors that make a great contribution towards performance in secondary schools; *inter alia* learner factors, educator factors, School Governing Body (SGB) factors, SMT factors, labour factors, political factors, and communal factors just to mention a few.

The primary aim of this research was,

'To determine the experiences of SMTs in managing low quintile secondary schools in order that they perform better than schools in the high quintile in the Capricorn South

District".

After the empirical investigation had been concluded, I then developed a framework for embracement by the DBE, its nine Provincial Education Departments (PEDs), its Education Districts, its Education Circuits, and its ordinary public low quintile secondary schools. The framework provides details as to how SMTs in low quintile secondary schools should go about managing their schools in order that they can perform better than schools in the high quintile.

1.7.2   Objectives of the study

Given the primary aim of this study as captured above, the following were the research objectives:

- To identify the initiatives embraced by SMTs in managing low quintile secondary schools in order that they perform better than high quintile schools.

- To determine enabling and constraining factors that SMTs encounter in managing low quintile secondary schools.

- To explore the perspectives of SMTs regarding their role in terms of managing low quintile secondary schools.

1.8   SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study was to determine the experiences of SMTs in managing low quintile secondary schools. South Africa spends more than 60% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) on education, placing it in the top 19% of the nations of this measure (Williams, 2018:10). Unfortunately much of this allocation has failed to meet its goals, particularly with regard to improving student learning and engagement (Timperly, 2011: 2).

As students' learning does not improve, the picture that emerges is that of poor curriculum implementation and curriculum management in schools, and this warrants an immediate intervention from the education authorities and all education stakeholders. Of the learners who wrote grade 12 school leaving examinations, one out of four achieved a university-

endorsed pass in 2017 (UNICEF, 2018: 3). This performance also presents a dismal picture of curriculum implementation and curriculum management by SMTs in schools.

Just like any other province in South Africa, the LPED is given a large allocation by the treasury on a yearly basis. This allocation must be translated into a more substantial output in the form of improved learner outcomes, which are a consequence of effective curriculum implementation and curriculum management by SMT members in schools. According to Williams (2018:10), most of the money allocated is misspent and the education system is poorly managed and collapsing.

The overriding significance of this study lies in the fact that the study could enable participating SMT members to broaden their curriculum management expertise and stand firm in terms of finding solutions regarding factors that are constraining on their part in terms of executing their duties. The participating SMT members could become even more knowledgeable about activities that centre on their core mandate.

This study is not only significant for low quintile secondary schools in the Capricorn South District, but to the entire school populace in South Africa. The study could influence education authorities at the level of the DBE, the nine Provincial Education Departments, and Education Districts and Circuits to take into consideration the recommendations that are made in the final chapter to ensure that it becomes easier for SMTs in schools to execute their duties.

This study has further culminated in the development of a guideline for effective curriculum implementation for embracement by SMTs in schools, i.e. the Comprehensive Effective Curriculum Implementation Framework (CECIF) in Chapter 6. The framework could serve as an influence on the education authorities at all levels of the DBE on how curriculum implementation activities in schools could be dealt with. Through the framework, this study could also contribute towards the amendment of existing education policies and legislation by the education authorities. These policy amendments could make provision for the empowerment of SMTs in their day-to-day activities so that learner outcomes keep on improving in schools.

1.9 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

There were a number of limitations that needed to be taken into consideration in this study. The first was that the participants were educators in subjects that were performing below other subjects and/or school targets. I was concerned that such participants would be uncomfortable or feel threatened, and therefore hold back crucial information required for this study. The second was that the participants were SMT members who at times did not contribute positively towards the vision and the mission of the school, or they were at times not behaving like proper SMT members in the school. This had the potential of causing them some discomfort in terms of making truthful responses during the interviewing process. The third study limitation was that the interviews were proceeding by way of the medium of English with Sepedi Home Language speakers. In terms of making responses during the proceedings, sentence construction and the correct use of English posed a challenge on their part. The fourth limitation was that the interviewing session was in conflict with the participant's important tasks in dealing with other commitments as the interviews were going to take place at the conclusion of the school day. This caused inconvenience on their part as their commitments were compromised by the data gathering exercise. This limitation was serious because I had to carry out observations and document analysis during lesson periods in order to pave the way for interviews to take place uninterrupted and immediately after the conclusion of the school day.

In addressing the first two study limitations as captured above, at the commencement of the interviewing session, I indicated to each participant that is was very gratifying that they were working at a school that kept on performing above 80% and that I would like to tap into their wisdom as they had been performing well for quite a number of years. I also went on to indicate that a school performs well because of the collective efforts of SMT members, and that their inclusion was key in terms of me wanting to collect very important information that could benefit other schools in their Circuit, as well as the entire District, province and the country. In terms of addressing the third limitation, I informed the participants that the purpose of the data collection mechanism was not to test their English proficiency. I went on to indicate to them that if they did not understand the interview question well, they were more than welcome to ask me to repeat it. I also assured them that since they were expected to make responses by way of the medium of English, the correctness of their language should never restrict them from telling the whole truth regarding the questions posed to them. In

addressing the fourth limitation, I first made a visit to each of the sampled schools for the purposes of introducing myself to the school authorities as well as explaining my intended data collection process. Potential participants for the study were communicated to the school authorities and appointments were then made with each of them.

1.10   DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This investigation was confined to two low quintile secondary schools that had been performing consistently above 80% since the academic year 2013 and were located in the Capricorn South District of the Limpopo Province. Other low quintile secondary schools in the same performance bracket from other districts of the Limpopo Province were excluded from this investigation and could have shed a different picture regarding the phenomena under investigation. Instead of using a mixed methods in which both quantitative and qualitative approaches apply, this study adopted a qualitative approach which enabled me to elicit rich descriptive data which allowed the participants to share their experiences. Rather than other data collection instruments such as questionnaires, the interview as an instrument to collect data also enabled the participants to freely express their experiences and this was corroborated by document analysis. There could be other factors that influenced particpants' responses or lack of responses to the topic under study which were not explored in this study (Sekhu, 2019). This study was conducted within a constructivist/interpretive paradigm to the exclusion of other existing paradigms. The choice of the constructivist paradigm was based on my belief that multiple reaities can best be interpreted by people who are experiencing the study phenomena which within the contect of this research project are SMT members.

The findings from this study may not be valid for other low quintile secondary schools in the Capricorn South District. It would therefore be inappropriate for the findings to be generalised to all low quintile secondary schools in the District where this study was conducted. The findings are confined to the two participating low quintile secondary schools.

1.11   CONCEPTS CLARIFICATION

For the purposes of avoiding ambiguity and misinterpretation of some concepts in this study, it is important that certain key concepts are clearly defined. For each key concept, the dictionary, encyclopaedic and context definitions are clarified. Below are some key concepts

and how they are defined within the context of this investigation:

- Experience

Dictionary definition: Experience comprises the knowledge and skills that someone has gained through doing something for a period of time. It is the process of gaining knowledge and skills from doing something over a period of time (Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary, 2010:514).

Encyclopaedic definition: Experience is knowledge or skill in a particular job or activity that someone has gained because he/she has done that job or activity over a specific duration or time (Merriam-Webster, 1985).

**Contextual definition*:* Within the context of this research project, experience could be referred to as a state of having gained knowledge, skill or understanding in an activity or event that one has observed, taken part in it, or having performed it. According to Phatlane (2007:3), experience refers to a 'how-to-self-help' knowledge base to answer questions on control, management and understanding the 'self'; helping one deal, learn, know and master the self, emotions through the sense or word.

- **Manage**

Dictionary definition: To manage is to be in control or be in charge of a business, team or an organisation. Management is the act of running and controlling a business or similar organisation. It is the act or skill of dealing with people or situations in a successful way (Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary, 2010:902).

Encyclopaedic definition: To manage is to direct and control a group of people or an organisation to reach a specific goal. It can also mean to succeed in doing something (Wikipedia, 2020).

Contextual definition: With reference to this study, to manage refers to working with and through other people to accomplish set goals (Owino, 2012:10).

- School Management Team (SMT)

Schools are managed by teams of experts who through planning, organising, leading and controlling, ensure that quality teaching and learning takes place (Ntsoane, 2017:12). These teams of experts are referred to as School Management Teams. The SMT is an organisational structure in schools which includes the principal, deputy principal(s) and heads of departments (Alberts, 2016:5).

- Quintile

Dictionary definition: Quintile is a noun implying one of five equal groups into which a set of things can be divided according to the distribution of a particular variable (Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary, 2010:1202).

Encyclopaedic definition*:* Many people have a deep interest in statistics about themselves, whether the information provided is about income or food production. Any such rating can be divided into fifths or *quintiles*. Quintile refers to any of the four values that divide the items of a frequency distribution into five classes with each containing one fifth of the total population (Merriam-Webster, 1985).

Contextual definition: Quintile refers to a governmental strategy to redress existent educational disparities given the transition from the apartheid era education into the new dispensation. It is a mechanism of safeguarding the equitable distribution of educational resources to ordinary public schools in all the nine provinces of the RSA. The quintiles to which reference is made in this study are schools in the lower quintiles of 1 and 2. These schools are poor and mostly found in the most impoverished areas of the Limpopo province; particularly those areas that are situated far away from towns and cities.

- Secondary schools

Dictionary definition: A secondary school is a school for young people between the ages of 11 and 16 or 18 (Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary, 2010:1332).

Encyclopaedic definition: A secondary school is a school intermediate between elementary school and college and usually offers general, technical, vocational, or college-preparatory courses (Merriam-Webster, 1985).

Contextual definition: Secondary schools are aimed at providing education to young people aged 12 to 18 years (Standeart, 2015:48). In terms of this investigation, secondary schools are normal and ordinary public schools that offer grade 8 up to grade 12. In some instances, this category of schools is referred to as high schools. Secondary schools offer education over five years, consisting of two years of the General Education and Training (GET) (grades 8 and 9) and three years of the Further Education and Training (FET) (grades 10, 11 and 12).

- Capricorn South District

Dictionary definition: A district is an area of a country or town, especially one that has particular features. It is one of the areas which a country, town or state is divided into for purposes of organisation, with official boundaries (Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary, 2010:425).

Encyclopaedic definition: A district is a division of territory, as of a country, state, or county, marked off for administrative, electoral, or other purposes (Merriam-Webster, 1985).

Contextual definition: The Limpopo Department of Education (LDE) is currently managed on the basis of 10 Education Districts. Capricorn South District is one of the 10 education Districts in the Limpopo Province. The Capricorn South District has 16 education Circuits, each with a Circuit Manager. The District offices are currently in Lebowakgomo - the parliamentary complex of the Limpopo Province. Education Districts play a vital role in continually guiding, leading, and challenging schools to raise standards (Bantwini & Moorosi, 2018:1). They are often the major, and sometimes the only, source of external assistance and support received by schools and are therefore a vehicle for initiating, testing, driving, and sustaining the education systemic reforms (DBE, 2017:1).

1.12 ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY

This study is compartmentalised into the following six chapters:

Chapter 1: Introduction to the study: This chapter captures the introduction, background to the study, the rationale for the study, motivation for the study, statement of the problem, the primary research question, research sub-questions, aims and objectives of the study,

significance of the study, study limitations, delimitation of the study, and clarification of key concepts and organisation of the study.

Chapter 2: Literature review: In this chapter the literature study is presented. Past and present studies that have a bearing on the research topic in South Africa and in other countries continentally and internationally have been explored and are presented in this chapter. The literature study assisted me in identifying gaps that exist in terms of the main research question.

Chapter 3: Theoretical framework for the study: This chapter features the theoretical framework on which this study is anchored. The literature study on the theories identified for this study are discussed. The identified theories outline what is expected of organisational management structures in terms of ensuring that desired organisational outcomes are clearly achieved. These theories assisted me in terms of understanding the experiences of SMTs in terms of managing low quintile secondary schools in order that they perform better than schools in the high quintiles.

Chapter 4: Research design and methodology: This chapter features the research design and methodology. A detailed discussion regarding the research approach, research paradigm, research assumptions, research methods, sampling procedures, research population, ethical principles, data collection process, and data trustworthiness are dealt with in this chapter.

Chapter 5: Data presentation, analysis and interpretation: In this chapter the data that were collected from the sampled sites and participants are presented for purposes of analysis and interpretation. The emergent results are then equated with conclusions and assertions from the literature study.

Chapter 6: Study recommendations and conclusion: Chapter 6 features the study recommendations in the form of a developed guideline which is meant for application by education authorities at all levels of the DBE in terms of empowering SMTs in schools.

1.13   CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this chapter an introduction of the experiences of SMTs in managing low quintile

secondary schools was made. The background to the study, the rationale for the study, statement of the problem, the primary research question, research sub-questions, aims and objectives of the study, significance of the study, study limitations, delimitation of the study, clarification of key concepts, and chapter demarcations were presented. The next chapter features a review of the literature pertaining to the primary research question for this study.

CHAPTER 2:   A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

2.1   INTRODUCTION

This chapter of the research study features the literature review pertaining to the problem investigated in this study. A literature review is a survey of scholarly sources on a specific research topic (McCombes, 2019). It refers to, but not limited to the conclusions, assertions and arguments that authors in a specific field of study have made. In this chapter I highlight the opinions of a number of local, National, and international scholars on issues regarding SMTs. Maphoto (2016:27) asserts that the purpose of the literature review is to establish a link between the existing knowledge and the research problem that is investigated, thereby enhancing its significance. I am making a presentation of the findings and assertions of different authors regarding the topic under investigation. Constitution of the RSA, Books, national, provincial and district education policy documents, journal articles, theses, dissertations, papers presented at seminars, budget speeches of Ministers for Education, Budget sepeches for Provincial Members of Executive Council (MECs) responsible for Education, ordinary speeches by the Education Ministers and Education MECs, Newspaper articles and many other documents that speak to the topic under the spotlight have been consulted.

I have conducted literature review for purposes of gaining a greater insight and knowledge into the experiences of School Management Teams in managing low quintile secondary schools. As such, the literature review serves as fertile ground for the commencement of any research project and thus paves the way for future research. This creates an understanding that a thorough review of the literature incarcerates the researcher within the scope of his/her research for purposes of producing a new body of knowledge in the field of his/her research for public consumption. The literature study is one of the first data gathering strategies that I embarked on, even before the actual empirical data collection developments began. In its simplest form, a literature study is a description of what others have published and presented in the form of a summary. It is a synthesis and analysis of the relevant published work, linked at all times to one's own research purpose and rationale (Mudavhanu, 2017:190). From the above deliberations it is clear that the literature review provides the researcher with enough ammunition to venture into the research process with more valuable information. In other words, the literature study provides every potential researcher with the 'do's and the

don'ts' during the process of research. This study unfolded in two low quintile secondary schools in the Capricorn South District of the Limpopo Province. The nature and needs of secondary schools within the context of South Africa, Africa, and the world are discussed below.

2.2 THE NATURE AND NEEDS OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Secondary schools are those schools which children attend after having successfully satisfied all the requirements for the completion of their primary school education. They are at times referred to as post-primary schools in the sense that they offer education that is preceded by primary education. Learners' wellbeing and learning is maintained as the transition from primary to secondary schools can be complicated by social, emotional and physiological changes that can negatively impact on their learning (Education Research Office, 2016). Within the South African schooling context, learners who pass matric are at liberty to enrol themselves at universities and Community Education and Training Centres (CET) in order to further their education in a field of their choice. Enrolling at a tertiary institution depends on the pass category that the learner has achieved at the level of grade 12. Currently in the RSA grade 12 learners secure a pass from the three pass categories of Bachelor, Diploma or a Higher Certificate depending on the marks that they have scored in each on the subject that they are taking.

2.2.1 South African perspective

The education system of South Africa works in a way that grants every child access to basic education (Favour, 2019). It comprises the basic education, and the higher education and training sector. The basic education sector comprises all public and private primary and secondary schools, whilst the higher education and training sector comprises all public and private tertiary institutions, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges are known as Further Education and Training (FET) colleges, and the Adult Education and Training (AET) which have been referred to as the Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) and are currently Community Education and Training (CET) centres (Macha & Kadakia, 2017).

From the age of seven up to the age of 15 years, education is compulsory. Every South

African child is expected to receive an education from grade R to nine, and moreover, based on the Bill of Rights, there is an obligation on the part of government to continuously ensure that formal learning is available and accessible through reasonable measures (Flavour, 2019).

The basic education and higher education and training sectors are independent from each other, with each having its own political and administrative heads in the form of a Minister and a Director General (DG) respectively. Prior to 2009, the Department of Basic Education (DBE) and the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) were a single department and managed by one Director General, a National Minister and a Deputy National Minister. The focus of this study is on the experiences of SMTs in managing low quintile secondary schools, which are a segment of the Department of Basic Education (DBE).

The DBE has an estimated 26 000 schools. The nine Provincial DBE offices and 86 Districts administer these schools and have considerable influence over the implementation of policy (Macha & Kadakia, 2017). According to UNESCO (2020), the learner enrolment figures for South African secondary schools stands at 4,911,133. Macha and Kadakia (2017) mention that the duration of secondary school education in South Africa is six years, divided into two categories as follows:

- Lower secondary: This category is also known as the senior phase and lasts through to grade nine and is mandatory. Learners typically begin lower secondary school at age 12 or 13. The curriculum includes the Home Language (HL), First Additional Language, Mathematics, Natural Science, Social Science, Technology, Economic and Management Sciences, Life Orientation and Arts & Culture.

- Upper secondary schools: This category is also referred to as the Further Education and Training (FET) phase and lasts through grade 12 and is not mandatory. Entry into this phase requires an official record of completion of grade nine. Just as in the intermediate and senior phases, this phase comprises 27.5 classroom hours per week.

In some circles, secondary schools in South Africa are often referred to as high schools. Some are even referred to as colleges. Before the dawn of democracy in South Africa, there were junior secondary schools and senior secondary schools. In many instances, junior secondary schools were grades 8, 9 and 10, whereas senior secondary schools accommodated

grades 8 up to 12. There are also commercial high schools that deal specifically with commerce related subjects, technical high schools that deal specifically with technical subjects, and special schools that are meant specifically for Learners with Special Educational Needs (ELSEN).

In my opinion, commercial and technical high schools are in the minority in the South African public schooling system. According to Ramaphosa (2019), several new technology subjects and specialisations will be introduced in secondary schools, including technical mathematics, technical sciences, maritime sciences, aviation studies, mining sciences and aquaponics. He goes further to indicate that to expand participation in technical streams, several ordinary public secondary schools will be transformed into technical high schools.

The basic education sector has progressed well in the implementation of the three-stream curriculum model of academic, technical-vocational, and technical-occupational schools. The National Senior Certificate class of 2018 sat for examinations in civil technology, mechanical technology, electrical technology, technical mathematics and technical sciences. According to BusinessTech (2019), Minister Motshekga is of the opinion that the government will establish a technical high school in each Circuit in South Africa. The time frame for the transformation and expansion of schools will be over a period of five years, starting in 2020-2025. These schools of skill will be established in line with the economic development zones (Motshekga, 2019).

The above deliberations lead to a conclusion that secondary schools, high schools, and colleges are those institutions falling under the basic education sector of South Africa which provides basic education from grades 8 to grade 12. The context of this study refers to low quintile ordinary public secondary schools and not technical or commercial high schools. After having gone through the secondary education, and after having passed grade 12, learners stand a better chance and opportunity of enrolling at a tertiary institutions of their choice for the purposes of furthering their studies.

2.2.2   Challenges confronting secondary schools in SA

The South African basic education system is slowly and surely reclaiming its rightful place among the countries with economies of similar size and budget. Much progress has been

made in giving children access to schooling and ensuring that more children go on to complete matric and enter post-schooling opportunities. The system is surely on the rise (Motshekga, 2019).

The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development confirms that more South African learners are attaining an upper secondary education than a decade ago (OECD, 2019). The share of young adults without an upper secondary education has dropped by over 10% from 27% in 2008 to 18% in 2018. Over half (59%) of 25-64 year olds in South Africa have attained an upper secondary education as the highest level achieved; well above the G20 average of 32% and the OECD average of 38%. Over and above, South Africa is one of the few OECD partner countries with more young women attaining an upper secondary education at 79% than men at 74% in 2018.

However, despite many positive developments in South Africa, the education system and educational outcomes face many challenges and require further improvement (Maarman & Lamont-Mbawuli, 2017). Overwhelmingly positive is the commitment to, and love of, education that so many educators show. They fully believe that with strong leadership from the department and strong management in schools, the situation can keep on improving (Maddock & Maroun, 2018:193). There are a number of challenges that the sector faces, especially at the level of secondary schools, and these are *inter alia*:

- While there is almost universal enrolment in grade R-9, drop-out rates are substantial after grade 9. Many learners do not reach grade 12 (OECD, 2020);

- Some 32% of educators in South Africa are aged 50 and above the OECD average of 34%. This means that South Africa will have to renew about one out of three members of its educator workforce over the next decade under the assumption that all other parameters remain constant (OECD, 2018);

- Some 71% of educators in South Africa work in schools with over 30% socioeconomically disadvantaged learners, which is a lot higher than the OECD average of 20%. This pattern signals high levels of poverty and/or inequality in the country (OECD, 2018). If learners who are adversely affected by socioeconomic challenges enter the classroom, a scenario is created that requires much more from teachers than they may have been trained for (Maarman, 2017).

- It is widely believed that mathematics is very important to the economic, scientific and political development of any nation. It is because of this that every nation in the world has made mathematics a compulsory subject in every aspect of the educational system (Boruah, 2018:11). However, the majority of secondary schools learners fail mathematics with only about 7% of matric candidates passing it with a mark of more than 70%. Considering the fact that about 50% of learners entering grade 1 do not even make it to grade 12, these figures become even starker - only about three out of every 100 learners entering grade 1 will leave matric with a maths mark of above 70% (SAIRR, 2018:5).

- Challenging working conditions, which include lack of facilities for teaching, overcrowded classrooms, inadequate incentives, and poor parental participation in school activities (Van Tilburg, 2019).

- There is a shortage of educators, especially in the areas of mathematics, science, engineering, and technology in a number of secondary schools. Van Tilburg (2019) confirms that a considerable number of foreign educators are normally employed to alleviate the shortages experienced, especially in scarce and critical skills subjects. Zimbabwean teachers in South Africa make a significant contribution to science, mathematics and technology achievements in township and rural schools (Jansen, 2017).

- In many instances, secondary schools are ravaged by learner bullying incidents and this creates safety issues and panic on the part of learners, parents and educators. Existing safety fears include physical violence, homophobic bullying, sexual harassment, and more recently, cyber bullying; all of which have implications for the immediate and long-term wellbeing of learners (Juan, Zuze, Hannan, Govender & Reddy, 2018:3). Learners who are bullied may suffer from low self-esteem or depression as a result of, or prior to, the bullying, or may go on to become bullies as a way of compensating for their own insecurity (SAPRA, 2016).

2.3   AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE: KENYA

From a continental perspective, Kenya is known to be one of the best-educated countries among its economic peers in sub-Saharan Africa. Its education system was inherited from Britain (Mackatiani, Imbovah, Imbovah & Gakungai, 2016:56). The education system has traditionally emphasised academic specialisation, whereas technical, vocational and other

talents, skills and aptitudes are given priority (Ministry of Education, Science & Technology, 2015:17).

Unlike South Africa with two types of secondary schools, Kenya is boasting three types of secondary schools which are public, private and harambee schools. Students with the best scores on the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) attend public schools, while lower scoring students tend to attend Provincial and District level schools. Up to 2016, the system of education in Kenya was the 8-4-4 structure, where children study for eight years of basic (primary) education, four years of secondary education, and four years of university education. This system was introduced in 1985 (Kaviti, 2018:84).

In 2008, the government of Kenya instituted free secondary education whereby the country's secondary gross enrolment ratio increased from 43% in 2003 to 67% in 2012 (Clarke, 2015). The secondary cycle lasted for four years and was organised into two, two-year stages. At the end of the fourth year, students take examinations administered by the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE). The curriculum comprises 30 subjects that are offered at public secondary schools. In the first two years of secondary education, students were taking as many as 13 subjects. This was narrowed down to eight subjects in the final two years, with three core and compulsory subjects taken by all students - English, Kiswahili and mathematics. Students must also take two science subjects, one humanities subject, and either one applied science or one technical subject. At the end of the fourth year, students take examinations that are administered by the Kenya National Examination Council (KNEC) which leads to the KCSE. The examination is also used for admission into university and training at other institutions of higher education in the technical and vocational stream (Clarke, 2015).

The number of basic and tertiary education institutions increased by 7% from 71.5% in 2008 to 78% in 2012. Secondary schools increased from 6,566 in 2008 to 8,179 in 2012, while enrolment increased by 15% from 8.6 million to 9.9 million learners during the same period. A high level of expansion was observed at secondary school education level where enrolment increased by 46% from 1.3 million to 1.9 million during the same period. Kenya has an educated youth population. In 2009, the youth literacy rate was higher compared with South Africa, Ghana, Uganda and Tanzania (Kenya Ministry of Education, Science & Technology, 2015:8).

There had been an earlier call for reform of the education system. It was sometimes argued that the content was overloaded, leaving children with no time to play. Parents were blaming the education system for the unemployment of their children (Ongeti, 2018). In January 2017 the Kenyan cabinet signalled the end of the 8-4-4 education system and announced the roll out of the new 2-6-3-3 structure. The curriculum framework vision and mission are supported by three important pillars of values, theoretical approaches, and guiding principles (Kenyayote, 2020).

The new system was categorised into three phases, namely Early Year Formation, covering education up to grade 3, middle school education covering grades 4 to 9, and senior school education covering grades 10 to 12 (Kaviti, 2018:84). The lower secondary school education exposes learners to a broad-based curriculum to enable them to explore their own abilities, personality, and potential as a basis for choosing subjects according to career paths if interested at the senior school level. Learners in the lower secondary undergo a rigorous career guidance programme and are exposed to the related subjects to enable them to make informed decisions as they transit to senior school (Kenyayote, 2020).

The 2017 paradigm shift consequently commanded the abolishment of the KCPE and the KCSE as the belief was that the system was overloaded with content geared only at passing National examinations. The new model is skills-based in orientation, and engages parents in the academic progress of the learners as previously this role was solely delegated to the teachers (Kaviti, 2018:89-91). The senior secondary school education comprises three years of education targeted at learners in the age bracket of 15 to 17 years and lays a foundation for further education and training at the tertiary level and the world of work (Kenyayote, 2020).

The 2-6-3-3 model also came with a package of free education at the secondary school level. The new curriculum promises to free learners from an examination-oriented curriculum in favour of developing their individual skills and talents. In terms of the new education system, learners will not sit for examinations but will be evaluated through Continuous Assessment Tasks (CAT) as opposed to a single National examination. This gives learners an advantage in that failing one test does not translate into the learner being a total failure (Wanjala, 2017). The new model also gives learners a chance to redeem poor scores in two ways - firstly by working hard and achieving better scores in subsequent tests, or secondly, by focusing their strengths on developing skills in areas that they are good at (Kaviti,

2018:89-91).

Kenyayote (2020) mention that the learners entering the senior secondary school education shall have had opportunities at lower secondary to explore their own potential, interests and personality and are therefore ready to begin specialisation in a career of choice. The specialisation entails choosing to pursue studies in one of the three pathways available in senior school. Wanjala (2017) confirms that learners focus on three areas of specialisation depending on their skills, talents and interests in the form of Arts & Culture, Social Sciences, or Science Technical Engineering & Mathematics (STEM). Kenyan senior secondary education schools are specialised institutions that provide opportunities for learners to focus in a field of their choice, as well as form a foundation for further education and training and gaining employable skills. Kenyan schools are also allowed to offer one or more tracks in the pathway, depending on the ability to acquire the infrastructure necessary for acquisition of the identified competencies (Kenyayote, 2019).

The deliberations above point to the fact the education system of Kenya is on the right path towards ensuring that it enables its citizens to become responsible and useful future members of the workforce. However, there are a number of challenges that the sector faces, especially at the level of secondary schools, and these are, among others:

- Much progress in educational quality and access remains to be made in Kenya. Over a quarter of young Kenyan people have less than a lower secondary education (Clarke, 2015).

- The current infrastructure in secondary schools is severely overstretched, with overcrowded classrooms and a ratio of 1:5 children on average sharing the few textbooks that have been provided by the government; and a lack of laboratories, digital equipment and facilities to nurture creative skills such as sports, music equipment and photography which are the privilege of private schools. Secondary schools have often been faced with a cash crisis that has threatened to grind operations to a halt. Principals have been unable to pay suppliers, non-teaching staff, and teachers employed by the boards of management. The suppliers of food stuffs, textbooks and essential materials also bearing the brunt of delays in government funding (Kaviti, 2018).

- Weaknesses in the management of teachers, particularly professional development,

deployment of teachers, and unaccounted teacher absenteeism. High repetition and dropout rates, and cultural practices such as circumcision, impact negatively on school attendance (Ministry of Education, Science & Technology, 2015:17).

- Despite the improvements in education, many students who pass senior secondary school education cannot construct grammatically correct sentences in English (Ongati, 2018).

2.4   INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE: PHILIPPINES

The Philippines is a unique country which is slightly larger than the state of Arizona (USA) in land mass. It is also the world's 12th most populous country with just over 103 million people as of 2016 (Macha, Mackie & Magaziner, 2018). This country takes its name from Phillip II who was King of Spain during the Spanish colonisation of the island in the 16th century. The country has also been under United States and Japanese colonisation (Borlaza, Hernandez & Cullinane, 2020).

The Philippines education system includes both formal and non-formal education. By structure, Philippine education is categorised as either basic which includes preschool, elementary and high schools, or tertiary which includes college, graduate and technical/vocational. As part of the basic education system, secondary schooling was meant for four years (Planipolis-Unesco 2015:2). For years, the Philippines education system has been lagging behind other developing countries in the ASEAN. The country was one of the remaining countries in the whole world that was still glued to the K-10 system (Bullecer, 2016). However, the Philippines education system has undergone major reforms in the past four years (Aggabao, Aggabao, Antiado & Castinello 2018: 66). As a result of the K-12 program, the basic and tertiary education systems underwent transformation (Manhit, 2018). The reforms have sought to boost enrolment levels, mean years of schooling in secondary education, and improve the quality of education (Macha *et al.*, 2018).

The K-12 program, or the Basic Education Act of 2013, was signed into law (Abulencia, 2015). This program covers kindergarten and 12 years of basic education, which is six years of primary education, four years of Junior High School (JHS), and two years of Senior High School (SHS) to provide sufficient time for mastery of concepts and skills, develop lifelong learners, and prepare graduates for tertiary education, middle-level skills development,

employment and entrepreneurship (Rogayan & Villanueva, 2019:236). The K-12 program mandated that all pupils entering grade 1 should have undergone compulsory pre-school, and the senior high school would add two more years (Abulencia, 2015). The government investment in education led to substantial advances in standard indicators of learning conditions, such as student-teacher and student-classroom ratios from 38:1 to 29:1 and from 64:1 to 47:1 respectively. Secondary school enrolment rates increased from under 60% in 2005 to 68% in 2015 (Macha, Mackie & Magaziner, 2018).

Education is an indispensible tool, not only for personal transformation but more so for societal change. Obtaining a quality education is the foundation for creating sustainable development (Rogayan & Villanueva 2019:234). Education in the Philippines is administered by three different government agencies; the Department of Education (DoE), the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), and the Commission on Higher Education (CHED). Each exercises largely exclusive jurisdiction over various aspects of the education system. The DoE oversees all aspects of elementary, secondary and informal education. It supervises all elementary and secondary schools both public and private (Macha *et al.*, 2018).

With the enactment of the K-12, secondary education in the Philippines was extended from four to six years. The secondary education was further divided into Junior High Schools (JHS) which comprise grades 7 to 10 and Senior High Schools (SHS) which comprise grades 11 and 12. In other words, from a basic 10 year education period, two senior high school levels were added. Grade 11 was introduced in School Year (SY) 2016-2017 and grade 12 in SY 2017-2018 (Manhit, 2018). According to Macha *et al.* (2018), all secondary school education is compulsory and free of charge at public schools. Students are streamed into academic specialisation tracks with distinct curricular. Before enrolling, students choose a specialisation track, being restricted in their choices only by the availability of that specialisation at the school they plan to attend. The four tracks are:

- Academic track: This track is designed to prepare students for tertiary education. It is further divided into four strands - general academic, Accountancy, Business and Management (ABM), Humanities and Social Sciences (HUMSS); and Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM).

- Technical-Vocational Livelihood: This track is intended for students seeking to enter the labour force or pursue further TVET after graduation. It is also divided into four strands - Home Economics, Agriculture/Fishery, Industrial Arts, and Information and Communication Technology (ICT).

- Sports and Arts and Design track: This track is intended to impart middle-level technical skills for careers in sports-related fields and creative industries. Enrolments in these two tracks will be comparatively small, however.

Since the inception of the public school system in 1901, the Philippines has been inundated with education challenges such as its curriculum, teachers, facilities, school supplies, language policy, and governance among others (Abulencia, 2015). The challenges that the sector faces especially at the level of secondary schools are as follows:

- A UNESCO mid-decade assessment report of Southeast Asian education systems published in 2008 found that participation and achievement rates in basic education in the Philippines had fallen dramatically, owed to chronic underfunding. Completion rates at secondary school level have declined from 75% in 2010 to 74% in 2015, after improving in the years between. Population growth in the Philippines put pressures on the education system as the government still needs to employ 43,000 teachers and build 30,000 classrooms in order to address the classroom-teacher ratios. The construction of public senior high schools still lags (Macha *et al.*, 2018).

- There are shortages of learning and teaching materials, and manuals in the Phillipines (Abulencia, 2015:233);

- Before 2019 ended, the quality of education in the country was highlighted following the results of the 2018 Programme for International Assessment which showed how poorly Philipino learners fare in reading, mathematics and science literacy (Hernando-Malipot, 2020). The Philippines has historically scored low in international maths and science high school rankings (Gatdula, 2018).

- With the newly introduced curriculum, teachers are also in need of training in order to understand it to teach it, but the training of teachers is not as comprehensive as needed (Abulencia, 2015:233).

- Philippine public schools are characterised by poor monitoring, low accountability levels, and a mediocre evaluation system. Teachers are unmotivated, and there is graft and corruption leading to unimaginative approaches to teaching and learning in schools (Benson, 2016:8).

It was mentioned that the secondary school education for the Philippines was meant for four years, meaning that the Philipinos were by no means completing an internationally required high school education. The winds of change that have characterised the country in the past years and culminated in the introduction of the K-12 curriculum have now put the country on the required standard regarding secondary school education. As the Philippines has been under three different colonies that impacted negatively on its education system, the secondary school education, as part of the basic education system of this country, is now on its right path towards creating better future citizenry. This study pertains to the experiences of SMTs in managing low quintile secondary schools. The next section discusses low quintile schools with specific reference to the South African, African, and international perspectives.

2.5   THE SCHOOL QUINTILE SYSTEM IN SOUTH AFRICA

The pre-democratic dispensation was characterised by ruthless inequalities in all sectors for the South African populace, including the education sector. The dawn of the democratic dispensation and the demise of the tricameral parliament signalled a victory for all South Africans especially in the domain of education. The democratic dispensation ushered in new hope in the education sector. This served as a source of empowerment for the Department of Education and its education authorities to ensure that all visible inequalities were identified and laid to rest for the sector to be characterised by democracy, and over and above that, equality.

It is a matter of public familiarity that the transformation of the South African education system culminated, amongst others, in the determination of schools that are poor and those that are rich. Based on their poverty levels, those schools that were poor were earmarked to benefit hugely from the allocation of funds to such schools. Those schools that were rich were earmarked to benefit less than the poor schools. The poverty score of each school assigns it a quintile rank which, based on a predetermined formula, governs the amount of funding each public school receives, and thus serves as a pro-poor mechanism used to

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determine the amount of funding received (Mestry & Ndhlovu, 2014:3).

School quintile ranking is important as it determines the amount of funding that schools receive each year from the Department of Education (Grant, 2013). Those schools that may charge schools were identified as the affluent and well to do, and over and above that, were situated in towns and cities. Those that are poor are those that are ravaged by poverty, particularly the rural and township schools of South Africa. In this category of school, the annual income in households is insufficient to meet the basic needs of the families and to afford the child's school fees.

2.5.1   Legislative framework for the quintile system

The pre-1994 era in South Africa was dominated by unequal access to quality public schooling. After the establishment of the first democratic government, the Education Ministry embarked on transforming the apartheid education system into a democratic one, aimed at achieving equitable access to quality education and improving the quality of education (Mokoena, 2013:1). The democratically constituted government offered unique opportunities and responsibilities to repair a highly fragmented and discriminatory system and to establish a unified National system underpinned by democracy, equity, redress, transparency, and participation (Mamohale, 2016:30).

Equitable funding of public schools to reduce the disparities in education inherited by the post-apartheid government started to gain momentum (Van Dyk & White, 2019:1). In response to the unequal access to quality public schooling, the South African Schools Act (SASA) was amended in 2005 (Ally & McLaren, 2016). This included the introduction of the education policy, the National Norms and Standards of School Funding (NNSSF) of 1998 for ordinary public schools in South Africa.

The South African school quintile system is a product of the NNSSF. Quintile refers to the socioeconomic status and circumstances of the communities in which the schools are situated (NECT, 2017:23). South African public ordinary schools are categorised into five quintiles. This suggests that South African schools are categorised into low and high quintiles. The categorisation is based on the socioeconomic status of a school and is determined by measures of average income, unemployment rates, and general literacy level in the school's

geographical area (Ogbonnaya & Awuah, 2019:106). The NNSSF clarifies procedures to ensure redress, as stipulated by the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 (Tigere 2016:22). According to the NNSSF policy, all schools in all quintiles should be favoured annually with financial allocations from the Department of Education. Brown (2017:7) is of the view that the financial allocation to schools is developed using the following five considerations:

- The rights of learners;

- The minimum basic package to ensure quality education;

- Prices of goods and services;

- The National distribution of income differences and poverty and

- The state budget.

He goes further to point out that each school is assigned a poverty score using data which comes from the community in which the school is situated. The three specific poverty indicators used in categorising schools into quintiles are according to (Brown, 2017:7):

- Income;

- Unemployment rates and

- The level of education in the community.

These three categories are weighted to assign a poverty score for the school and the community. It is only after this process has been completed that the school can be assigned to one of the five quintiles. The criteria for the quintile ranking of schools are identical across the nine provinces of the country (Ogbonnaya & Awuah, 2019:115). All schools in the poorest communities are classified as quintile 1, 2 and 3 and all schools in the affluent communities are classified as quintile 4 and 5. This creates an understanding that quintile refers to a group of schools situated in communities with a similar household income, level of education, and over and above, a similar livelihood.

2.5.2   Fee paying and no-fee paying schools

Given the alarming poverty levels in South Africa, the winds of change in the educational sphere started necessitating a microscopic look at the NNSSF of 1998. After thorough scrutiny of this legislation and the government's objective of wanting the doors of learning to open even wider for a greater portion of the poverty stricken communities, this legislation was amended in 2006 and made popularly known as the Amended National Norms and Standards for School Funding (ANNSSF) of 2006.

The ANNSSF was implemented to address the inequality in Provincial funding allocations, which means that learners of similar poverty levels were differently funded in different provinces (Van Dyk & White, 2019:2). The amendment of NNSSF gave birth to the categorisation of all South African schools as fee paying and no-fee paying schools. ANNSSF ensured that schools in poorer communities especially rural communities received more financial injections as compared to those that are in the affluent areas.

The quintile ranking of schools is very important in that it determines the status of the school as fee paying or no-fee paying and the allocation which the school will receive from the norms and standards budget, thus serving as a means of addressing the imbalances of the past created by the apartheid government. This is to achieve redress, access, and equity within the democratic education system in South Africa (Mokoena, 2013:42). Given the product of the quintile system of schools in South Africa, and the fact that NNSSF made the declaration that quintile 1 and 2 are no-fee paying schools, the ANNSSF broadened the scope to the inclusion of quintile 3 schools.

In South Africa, quintiles 1, 2, and 3 schools are restrained from charging mandatory fees and are often referred to as no-fee schools. The no-fee school policy was implemented in a number of provinces in 2006 and by 2007 all provinces had started implementing the policy in terms of all deserving no fee schools. In 2007 all schools that were declared no-fee paying schools were under no circumstances to collect any fees from parents. This translated into the fact that the South African schooling system became characterised by fee paying schools, which are schools that are legally and constitutionally mandated to charge school fees according to criteria that would not cause any unbearable burden to parents in such schools. On the other hand, there are no-fee paying schools where it is illegal and unconstitutional,

regardless of any curriculum delivery circumstances or challenges that they are faced with, to charge fees.

However, I have learnt that during the years that followed the placing of the Limpopo Province under the central government in November 2011 after fraud and corruption were touted as being rife, the Provincial Department of Education started cutting the norms and standard allocations to schools. This resulted in underfunding in all fee paying and no-fee paying schools. Bangani (2020:3) mentions that according to the school funding policy, the current allocation in no-fee schools is set for R1 316-00 for each of the quintile 1, 2 and 3 schools. Given the underfunding that no-fee paying schools found themselves in, it was an intensified struggle in terms of ensuring the smooth running of the majority of schools.

This resulted in a shortage of textbooks that affected the teaching and learning negatively in schools. Teachers were unable to cover the entire curriculum because most of the contact time was spent on writing notes on the chalkboard for learners to access the content in the absence of the prescribed textbook (Bangani, 2020:3). This underfunding also left the management of schools with no option but to invite parental intervention to purchase additional Learner and Teacher Support Materials (LTSM) for the purposes of augmenting their meagre resources. I have observed that schools engage in curriculum enrichment programmes like afternoon, evening, weekend and holiday lessons. Sometimes these programmes take place even if school budgets do not allow for it. Schools therefore end up asking parents to foot the bill and this has yielded fruit. That some schools have been declared no-fee paying schools does not mean that curriculum enhancement programmes must suffer, hence my argument.

This investigation unfolded in the no-fee paying schools of the Capricorn South District of the Limpopo Province. These are schools that have been negatively affected by the underfunding by the Provincial Administration, but regardless of this inconvenience, they soldiered on to keep on producing good results of an 80% pass rate and above.

The quintile system has brought a sigh of relief for families who could not afford to foot the bill to finance the education of their children. Children benefit from this quintile system in the sense that they go to school for the purposes of receiving an education, which is the most important weapon to eradicate poverty in their homes. However, according to Ally &

McLaren (2016), the quintile system effectively ignores the reality of informal settlements or townships near wealthier areas, and of learners who travel long distance from poor areas to these better-resourced schools.

2.6   NO-FEE/ FREE EDUCATION

On a global scale, a factor that results in children not completing their schooling is the demand for fees by schools. Transformation processes in global states leads to, among others things, transformation of the educational sphere and consequent to that are better educational opportunities. Among others, better educational opportunities include footing the educational bill not by parents, but by states themselves. The education budget in a myriad of global countries tops the lists of all other budgets to ensure that equal and better educational opportunities can be accessible to each child.

Given the fact that countries agree that through education a state can become prosperous, many countries are considering free education. Without any doubt, education is a powerful tool that has been used over the centuries to transform economies by being at the core of every nation's system from sports, politics, law, business and culture. Education is one of the vital endeavours in the world, and without it, there is no guarantee that the youth could have any guidance to survive in a very challenging and multifaceted world (Malejane & Diraditsile, 2019:2).

In terms of fee free education, children attend school without bearing any educational costs placed on them by schools. It is with a free education policy that schools are restrained from seeking any operational fees from parents. In terms of free education, what parents do is enrol their children in schools and thereafter start involving themselves in school matters pertaining to the educational affairs of their children. Some wealthy first world countries like Finland even go to the extent of transporting the children to schools, regardless of the distance that they must travel.

However, in other countries, schools have been categorised into fee paying and non-fee paying. In other countries there is free-schooling but not free education. In terms of free schooling, parents have to cover other expenses including books, transport to school, and food (Mashala, 2019:12). This is an indication of unequal educational opportunities that

international organisations like UNESCO reject with the contempt it deserves.

Unequal educational opportunities lead to undesirable consequences, *inter alia,* declining learner enrolment in schools, crime, drug and substance abuse, alarming levels of poverty, teenage pregnancy, and generally an ailing economy. In terms of fee free education, students do not have to pay a cent for education until they have completed their schooling (Zibi, 2018). In my opinion, free education is the kind of education that is free from tuition by parents, and rather by the state and/or any organisation that is deemed fit to bear the education costs on behalf of the parents.

Therefore, free education means free access to education, or education accessed free of charge. However, the fact that students do not pay anything does not mean the costs fall away. They are merely borne by the government, and among others, through taxpayers (Zibi, 2018). The next section features a discussion around the free education system from the South African, African and international perspectives.

2.6.1   South African perspective

South Africa is the most developed of all countries on the African continent. Understandably in comparison to the rest of the African countries South Africans are better when coming to educational resources and educational opportunities. Attending public schools is not automatically free of charge in South Africa. While many schools are no-fee paying schools, there are fewer special schools where most of the country's children with disabilities could be sent to. Hundreds of thousands of children with disabilities are still not in school. The current no-fee paying system discriminates against learners with disabilities. Not only do children who attend special schools have to pay fees when others do not, they also have to shoulder additional costs such as uniforms, food, transport, and special assistants to help them. Different governments and structures including the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child have expressed alarm at the large number of children with disabilities who are currently not attending schools. They went further to urge global governments to ensure free education for this category of children as this is their fundamental right.

Understandably, the fact that quintiles 1, 2 and 3 schools in South Africa are no-fee paying schools is indicative that the basic education of South Africa is partly a free education and a

partly a fee paying sector on the African continent. Therefore, South Africa is a partly free education country on the basis that the quintiles 4 and 5 schools are fee paying. However, even if it is partly fee free and partly fee paying, in all schools in the five quintiles parents still foot the bill when it comes to the purchasing of school uniforms and the payment of transport to ferry learners to schools that are unreachable by foot.

In some of the no fee schools, and in view of the longer distances that learners have to travel to schools, the state provides free transport for the learners, especially those who travel five kilometres or more in a single trip to and from the school. As the situation presents this type of a partly free education picture, I argue that the dream of having a complete fee free education in South Africa is yet to be realised. Ally & McLaren (2016) agree with this assertion when indicating that South Africa is one of very few countries in the world where primary and secondary education is not available free to all. Only schools that are characterised as low quintiles are receiving free education.

2.6.2   African perspective: Tanzania

Tanzania's population is equivalent to 0.75% of the total world population but still faces difficulties in education. The adult literacy rate is 77.9% and most people live in rural areas isolated from the right to education. Some 60% of Tanzanian educators are under-qualified and people take teaching as the last option (ShuleSoft, 2019).

The basic education system of Tanzania is based around two years of pre-primary school, seven years of primary school, four years of ordinary secondary school, and two years of advanced secondary school education (Education System Tanzania, 2015:6). According to Tanzanian Education Network & Action (TENA) (2017:3) the idea of free education in Tanzania can be traced as far back as the 1990s when the government abolished fees in primary education, followed by similar attempts for secondary education in 2002, thus similar to other countries globally that have taken many initiatives to ensure that every child has access to a free basic education.

The idea of scrapping fees and other compulsory contributions in the primary and secondary schools emanated from international education commitments and conventions to which the country is a signatory. For instance, the most notable 1990 World Conference on Education

For All in Jontiem, and the 2000 World Education Forum in Dakar, Switzerland (Godda, 2018:2). Fee free secondary education has already been instituted in Tanzania with the Tanzanian government paying fees that were previously borne by parents directly to secondary schools. However, this is not yet compulsory, pending the introduction of the new Education Act, and currently only children who have passed Primary School Leaving Examinations are allowed to enter secondary schools.

So far, the formal education system is now in the process of being restructured to cater for 12 years of free compulsory basic education. However, currently, four years of lower secondary education are now free and compulsory (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2017:13). Given the deliberations above, I draw the conclusion that, just like South Africa where basic education is partly free, education in Tanzania is also partly free given the fact that only education from primary to lower secondary education is free but not compulsory. However, the deliberations above have indicated that the Tanzanian government is embarking on a process to introduce free and compulsory education from primary school up to the upper secondary school level.

2.6.3   International perspective: Finland

Finland is a country located in northern Europe. It forms a symbolic northern border between Western and Eastern Europe (Weibul *et al.*, 2020). For years, Finland has been the by-word for a successful education system, perched at the top of international league tables for literacy and numeracy. Only Far Eastern countries such as Singapore and China outperformed the Nordic nation in the influential Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) rankings. Politicians and education experts from around the world, including Norway, have made pilgrimages to Helsinki in the hopes of identifying and replicating the secret of its educational success. The use of Information Communication Technology (ICT) in all schools and everyday life are converging, coming ever closer to each other (Selby, 2018:64).

Finland is known for its equal education system and for the high quality of teaching and learning. Equity and equality are promoted by providing equal access to education for everyone, encouraging and supporting every student's learning and wellbeing, as well as by ensuring high quality support systems so that everyone has an opportunity to be successful in learning. Differences between schools and municipalities are small. Education is free of

charge in Finland, even at the university level. The education system is flexible and always provides a way forward for students who want to study and move from one level to another. There are no dead ends in the system. Having good and motivated teachers is probably the most important factor influencing the quality of education (Harlinen, 2018:76).

Just like the previous systems of education in Finland, the new education system continues with free compulsory basic education. The Finnish education system is based on the assumption that all students can succeed, irrespective of their social background, and that all schools, no matter where they are located, should be of high quality. Finnish schools also no longer have to undergo school inspections.

Finland's success in education took many decades to achieve. It slowly and deliberately built itself into an education superpower through a series of reforms and in response to changing economic needs. In the late 1960s, shortly before Finland joined the OECD, there was a decision to move to a comprehensive system, making high quality education available to all students and not just a few selected schools. To improve the education quality, teacher training was transferred to the universities, making it much more rigorous (OECD, 2018).

As a result of free and compulsory basic education, the school dropout rate is lower in Finland than in other European countries. Finnish society and its education system place great importance on their schools and trust the proficiency of their school leaders, teachers, and educational staff, with no National standardised tests or high stake evaluations (OECD, 2015). Students spend less time in school than in many of the highly competitive Asian systems (OECD, 2018).

The quality versus quantity paradox manifests itself in the same way in the issue of assigning homework for Finnish students. The country leads the ranking of educational systems in OECD countries, with the lowest weekly homework workloads among 38 nations at 2.9 hours, compared with 6.1 hours in the US, 6 hours in Australia and in Hong Kong, and 5.5 hours in Canada and Belgium (Bas *et al.,* 2017:815). This translates into the fact that Finnish students spend less time on homework in comparison with students in other first world countries.

2.7 LOW AND HIGH QUINTILE SCHOOLS: COMPARATIVE ASSERTIONS

It has been indicated that schools in South Africa have been compartmentalised into low and high quintiles, given their poverty levels. The difference between the two categories of schools lies in the fact that the low quintile schools are the fee-free schools, whereas high quintile schools are fee paying. Low quintile secondary schools are the beneficiaries of the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP), whereas high quintile schools are not.

The NSNP is a poverty alleviation programme in schools. Since the dawn of the democratic dispensation in 1994, the government has been providing school meals to the learners in schools that are situated in poor socioeconomic areas. Initially, the NSNP targeted all quintile 1 to 3 primary schools, and selected special schools for learners with disabilities. The meals are served by locally appointed volunteer food handlers selected from the local community; usually mothers of the learners at the school. The food handlers receive a stipend from the programme through School Governing Bodies (SGBs).

In October 2008 the Minister of Finance announced a budget for the inclusion of secondary schools in the programme. The programme is funded through a conditional grant that is transferred to provinces on a quarterly basis. Schools are allocated funds for the procurement of equipment and utensils. The SMT is responsible for the overall management of the NSNP and ensuring its success in schools (DBE, 2009:4). Low quintile secondary schools are enjoying the benefits of this programme as learners could no longer go to school with empty stomachs. In my opinion, the engagement of local parents in preparing and serving meals to the learners is a job creation strategy by the government and alleviates poverty in some of the poor families.

By virtue of being categorised as schools that are characterised by low poverty level, high quintile schools are not covered in this area of nutrition programme. Provincially, over 92% of learners attended no fee schools in Limpopo in 2014 (Ally & McLaren, 2016). This translates into the fact that the majority of schools in Limpopo are undoubtedly the beneficiaries of the type of free education that is in place in this country.

High quintile schools are constitutionally allowed to charge school fees in order to supplement the amount that has been allocated to them by the government. However, the

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SASA allows parents to apply for a fee exemption to the SGB in case they cannot afford to pay school fees. Fee exemption is a mechanism that the government has put in place to assist parents in accessing quality education for their children, irrespective of their background or financial constraints. The parents who cannot afford to pay school fees could be considered for conditional, partial, or full exemption from paying school fees. In my opinion, charging school fees is one of the mechanisms that this category of schools use in order to secure more funds for the improvement of their schools, hence their facilities. They prioritise cleanliness at schools regarding sanitation facilities, staff rooms, offices, and infrastructure maintenance (Macupe, 2015). Charging school fees enables the SGB in high quintile schools to hire more educators and other non-teaching personnel who are paid out of the school funds. This function is absolutely absent in low quintile schools due to the directive from the DBE on how the allocated funds have to be utilised.

When coming to financial management, schools are normally characterised as Section 21 and Section 20 schools. The financial affairs of a Section 20 school are managed directly by the Provincial Education Department (PED) until its SGB applies for a Section 21 status and receives approval to manage its own finances. Schools that have been awarded Section 21 status have their funds deposited directly into the school's bank account and the SGB manages its own finances. I have realised that the majority of low and high quintile schools are given Section 21 status by the government. Macupe (2015) confirms that from June 2015 all schools in Gauteng have been given Section 21 status.

In terms of the Limpopo Province, all schools are partly Section 20 and partly Section 21 in terms of their status. I have observed that in terms of the NSNP, the funds for the payment of service providers are kept by the PEDs. Only funds for the payment of food handlers and the purchasing of firewood/gas are deposited into the school bank accounts to be managed by the SGB. Also, in terms of the purchasing of LTSM, schools only receive such from the PEDs after placing orders.

In terms of low quintile schools, some learners are the beneficiaries of the departmental scholar transport system. Those learners who travel a distance that is in excess of five kilometres in a single trip to school are provided with scholar transport. The National Learner Transport Policy was approved by the cabinet in 2015, and is currently being implemented in schools under the auspices of the SGBs and the Assistant Directors for

Governance in circuits. Quintiles 4 and 5 learners, who travel to schools with transport, do so with parents taking the whole responsibility for the payment of such transport. I argue that as all low quintile secondary schools are restrained from charging school fees, there is absolutely no way in which any low quintile secondary school could have learner hostels. Hostels are normally found in a number of high quintile schools as well as private schools.

2.8   SCHOOL MANAGEMENT PERSPECTIVE: PRE AND POST 1994

This research study aimed to determine the experiences of SMTs in managing low quintile secondary schools in the Capricorn South District. Management is one of the important dimensions in schools that must be scrupulously dealt with in a manner that schools become effective centres for quality teaching and learning as well as improved learner outcomes. It therefore becomes significant that an elaboration of the concept of school management be dealt with even before I go deeper into issues pertaining to the research topic, and the primary and secondary aims and objectives of this investigation.

2.8.1   The genesis of management

The origin of management is centuries old and developed with the civilisations of the world. The Vedas, Hindu Epics, Smritis and Puranas, the antiquated religious books such as Buddhist and Jain Texts, and the foreign travellers' accounts present us with a glimpse of management in ancient times. The Rigveda, and later Vedas such as Brahamanas, Dharmasutras, and the Buddhist texts Dipavamsa and Mahavamsa, give vivid descriptions of the managerial skills that were present in ancient times. Rajataringini of Kalhana gives a description of the modern conception of history of management. The Prime Minister of Chandragupta, Maurya Kautilya, well known as Chankya for his administrative skills, is said to have laid the foundation of what we call management today (Kumari, 2012:35).

Management in its historical form has been in existence since the beginning of human civilisation, but the modern concept can be traced to the middle of the 19th century (Tasic *et al.*, 2011:325). However, a century ago in 1911, an important moment in the history of modern management came into existence. This was during the era of the publication of 'The Principles of Scientific Management' by management guru Frederick Taylor. Soon afterwards, management concepts disseminated and diversified. Management became such a

widely used phenomenon that one could no longer imagine a world without it. Thus it could be argued that the 20th century is a special period in the history of management. It was characterised by an extraordinary dissemination and diversification of management concepts. The era comprised different phases of management (Keulen & Kroeze, 2014:321).

Studies in school management have emerged in the educational reform landscape of many developed and developing countries in recent years (Botha *et al.* 2013:99). Management is a term or skill which is as old as civilisation itself and is constantly undergoing changes. It has always been part and parcel of civilisation all around the globe. Management finds its place in ancient texts and scriptures. It is the backbone of any organisation, including schools. Management in education has its origins in India in ancient times with the development of education in that country. The traders who came to India from all around the world brought about the intermingling of cultures and this had its impact on the education system. With a system of education management, the education system of India started flourishing and continued to flourish until the year 1848 (Kumari, 2012:35).

Although management is as old as civilisation, the systematic study of management is only just more than 100 years old (Van Fleet, 2019). Prior to the industrial revolution, there was not much management in organisations. There was no one other than the owner of an enterprise handling tasks such as coordination, planning, controlling, rewarding, and resource allocation. In the church, military, and a smattering of larger trading, construction and agricultural endeavours, little existed that would be recognised today as managerial practice. With the rise of the industrial revolution, this practice changed drastically. Along with new means of production in factories, such organisations gained scale. To coordinate these large organisations, owners needed to depend on other people who could be called agents and the rest called managers. By the early 1900s, the term 'management' was in wide use (McGrath, 2014).

Cummings and Bridgman (2014:11420) point out that the origin of management is conventionally traced to Frederick Winslow Taylor, a man whose single-minded obsession with efficiency led to the original Scientific Management theory, but whose mechanistic thinking has now been superseded by a greater concern for people and the environment. He authored the book 'The Principles of Scientific Management' in 1909 (Wood, 2018). McGrath (2014) confirms that by the early 1900s other management theorists such as Frank

and Lillian Galberth, Herbert R Townes, and Henry L Gantt developed management theories that emphasised efficiency, lack of variation, consistency of production, and predictability. The goal was to optimise the outputs that could be generated from a specific set of inputs.

Wood (2018) points out that Henri Fayol went further than Taylor when he published Administration Industrielle et Generale. He created 14 principles of management. Most of these principles focused on the administrative side of management. He argued that many managers did not interact well with their subordinates and he looked at how to create an efficient organisation. Fayol believed that all employees should have only one direct manager (as cited by Wood, 2018).

2.8.2   Definition of management: School perspective

The word 'management' is a noun which originates from the verb 'manage', which refers to the act or skill of dealing with people or situations in a successful way (Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary 2010:902). It is the integrating force of the activities that are carried out within an organisation (Tovmasyan, 2017). Van Deventer and Kruger (2014:66) suggest that in defining management within the school context, the following are relevant: management work, management tasks, management activities, manager/leader, management area and learning and teaching purposes. Management is not simply a question of following ready-made management recipes, it is about the acknowledgement of the knowledge, skills and competencies that managers need in order to offer high-quality leadership that can ultimately give rise to school effectiveness (Botha, 2013:2).

Fadlallh (2015:244) is of the opinion that that everyone in an organisation is affected by management principles, processes, policies, and practices as they are either a manager or subordinate to a manager. I agree with Fadlallh (2015) because there is absolutely no way in which management can be mentioned without any mention of the people who must manage or the people who must be managed. Fadlallh's (2015) opinion is a reminder that in every organisation there is management, and principles that underlie such management. He goes further to remind all and sundry that there are also policies that must guide an organisation and be implemented by management. In conclusion, he reminds us that there are management practices that will always be there in organisations that are dictated by organisational policy or organisational cultures.

In my opinion, management and people walk side by side. For as long as humans are engaged or involved in a specific type of task, one must manage and be managed. It must be clearly known as to who must carry the top manager's tag and who must be the followers or the subordinates. However, within the context of this investigation, Fadlallh (2015:248) confirms that management is defined as a social process which is designed to ensure the cooperation, participation, intervention, and involvement of others in the effective achievement of a given or determined organisational objective. Being a social process, management lays its emphasis on the interaction of people inside and outside the formal institutions and people above and below one's operational position.

I am fully agreeable with these assertions in the sense that schools as social systems operate effectively because of the systems or mechanisms that school managers have developed and put into action. Those systems, or the combination thereof, have huge potential to work positively or negatively for the school, and the impact is demonstrated by the overall learner outcomes. Over and above, management has various powers entrusted in it to interact with people from inside and outside of the organisation, and people who are positioned well above or below it, in terms of bureaucratic favours.

Botha (2013:1) views management as the process of working with and through individuals and groups and other resources to accomplish organisational goals. All organisations thrive on the basis of sound management and good management practices. When a fish dies it rots from the head down, goes the saying, which simply implies that when an organisation or state fails, it is the organisational leader who is the root cause (Mohlala, 2012:5). Any organisation, inclusive of a school, that fails to achieve its organisational objectives, does so because of the top most person in the organisational structure, in the form of its management.

Management is not restricted to one position or person, but includes all school's role-players (Van Deventer & Kruger, 2014:67). My understanding of this assertion is that all school-based stakeholders, including educators, HODs, Senior and Master educators, are managers in their own right. They are managers at different levels of the management structure of the school. Subject educators are managers for their own subjects in the sense that they manage teaching and learning activities in the classroom. At most levels of school management, educators fulfill both classroom and management roles. Given the deliberations above regarding the concept of management, it is convincing enough that not only the principal is a

manager in the school. It is also convincing that the principal alone can never be referred to as management, but rather part of management, and of course the top-most in the management of any school and the SMT in particular.

2.8.3   Different levels of management

It has already been indicated that all members of staff, including educators, HODs, Senior and Master educators, are managers in their own right. They are managers at different levels of the management structure of the school. Van Deventer and Kruger (2014:67) go on to point out that there are four different levels of management that may be distinguished in any school:

- Self-management: This is management on an individual level whereby members of the staff manage themselves as well as their work. LaRocca (2017:1) postulates that self-management is the ability to regulate one's emotions, thoughts and behaviours effectively in different situations. It includes managing stress, delaying gratification, motivating oneself, and setting and working towards personal and academic goals.

- Micro level management: This is management at the level of the classroom. Kaseorg and Uibu (2017:171) mention that management at the micro level includes primarily the educator and her/his learning content, and the activities and decisions related to the recreational activities provided by the school. In my opinion, educators are key players in this level of management. Educators collect and analyse learner data and use this data to understand and describe student learning, diagnose their needs, assess risk and potential, predict chances of success or failure, need for institutional resources, and increasingly to prescribe personalised/individualised curricular, assessment, and learning pathways for future enrolments (Prinsloo, Slade & Khalil, 2018:331). Educators manage the entire classroom for purposes of ensuring that effective teaching and learning takes place and learner outcomes are improved.

- Meso level management: Yousuf and Zualkernan (2015) emphasise that meso level management operates at school or school cluster level to improve the school's performance. Management at this level need to employ high-quality educators who are able to cater for their learners' needs and who receive opportunities for their own professional development (Boeren, 2019:283). This creates an undertstanding that the

SMT is the key player in this category of management as it has the responsibility of ensuring that performance improves. The SMT must put systems in place for purposes of ensuring that curriculum delivery is maximised and that the school performs well.

- Macro level management: Despite the importance of the meso level management, schools need to undertake their operations in relation to a range of rules and legislation. Countries or regions have their own policies that schools must follow (Boeren, 2019:283). Macro level management is made up of senior departmental officials who often frame documents that include educational policies, strategic papers, and teaching initiatives (Gruba *et al.,* 2016:85). In my opinion, this is management at the level of the District, Province, or National level where policy development takes place. This is the top level of management, or bureaucracy, who dictates to the meso level, micro level and self-management level.

It is very important for SMTs in schools to know the level at which it operates. It is also very important to know which management levels to associate, cooperate, and collaborate with, and to be responsive to. It is even more important to know how, why, and when to associate, cooperate, and collaborate, and to be responsive.

2.8.4   Roles of management in schools

The management of a school has a role to play in ensuring that its organisational vision is scrupulously constructed, implemented, and achieved. The vision statement of each and every learning institution is an instrument that is utilised for purposes of communicating, directly or indirectly, the main rationale behind its existence or simply its *raison d être* or core mission. The management of the school is duty bound in unreservedly ensuring that all school-based stakeholders 'walk and talk' the school's vision.

Fadlallh (2015:246) maintains that managers in schools are responsible for ensuring activities are completed efficiently with and through other people, and setting and achieving the organisation's goals through the execution of the four basic management roles of planning organising, leading, and controlling. All these roles demand human, financial, and material resources. Zengele (2013:21) confirms that the list of management roles can be increased to include other functions, but these four can be defined with sufficient precision to differentiate

them, and at the same time, include others that management writers have proposed. A brief expansion of the four management roles follows.

2.8.4.1   Planning

It relates to many aspects like school vision, mission, and other precise measurable objectives (Van Zyl, 2013:144). It is an administrative process that has become increasingly prominent as a sign of good management in schools. An organisation that does not plan is thought to be reactive, short-sighted, and rudderless (Theron, 2013:112). This role has to do with arranging a strategic planning session for the staff where the vision and mission statement, scanning of the environment, and setting up of the organisational goals of the school are shaped and shared by all stakeholders (Zengele, 2013:21). It takes place at all levels of the school and its activities are interrelated since they all serve the overall purpose of the organisation (Van Zyl, 2013:144). In terms of planning effectively, there are features that the planning process should actually embrace. Mentz (2013:165) feels that the essential features of planning are:

- Reflection about the goals set.

- Consideration of alternatives.

- Utilisation of people and resources.

- Anticipation of problems that might occur.

As a Circuit Manager, I have observed that in many instances, after the distribution of end of year progress reports to learners in schools, principals normally forward applications to the Circuit Office requesting permission to attend strategic planning sessions in preparation for the next academic year, which we unreservedly grant. They normally book a lodge where they are away for not more than three days. This is a good demonstration of commitment to the dictates of this principle of management.

In support of my assertion, Theron (2013:113) remarks that planning has become a ceremony that an organisation must conduct periodically if it wants to maintain its legitimacy. The DOE (2000:6) also confirms that planning refers to a school development planning process that has to be undertaken on an annual basis by the management. This is a way of

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maintaining activities in the school and setting new ways for development and growth. Planning is probably one of the most important annual events that a school can undertake because the planning activity will set the way forward for the school. If planning is completed properly, it will ensure that there is collaboration between all the major stakeholders of a school.

2.8.4.2   Organising

Fadlallh (2015:247) defines organising as a function of management that involves developing an organisational structure and allocating human resources to ensure the accomplishment of goals and objectives. This role includes all managerial activities that translate required planned activities into a structure of tasks and authority. Van Zyl (2013:147) mentions the following characteristics of organising:

- Organising is related to the culture of a school. Although there is no direct reference to it, the organogram is nevertheless compiled around it. The first level of organisational culture is philosophy, which is certainly the optimal development of learners' potential and all activities are geared to this. The other two levels of organisational culture are norms and values, and teachers and learners.

- The structure and functions of an organisation are highlighted. The organogram reveals interlinked sub-structures.

- Provision is made for leadership in terms of various functions; for example, the school is led by a principal, who is assisted by the SMT.

- Certain obvious lines of communication are indicated.

- Organising is geared towards the execution of tasks and the clustering of tasks which belong together.

- Organising implies synergy, which means working together. Currently synergy refers to the interaction of elements that when combined produce a total effect that is greater than the sum of the individual elements. The interaction between components, as shown on the organogram, as well as the envisaged result of effective teaching and learning, indeed seem greater than the sum of its cluster of organisational components.

- Organising deals with the selection of specific people to fulfil certain functions, as well as their development and the development of other personnel who can take over their duties when they leave the organisation.

Van Deventer and Kruger (2014:109) define organising as the process of creating a structure for the school that will enable its members to work together effectively towards achieving its outcomes. In my view, it involves the delegation of specific duties to specific staff members according to the decisions taken in the plenary phase that have already been discussed and agreed at the planning stage. Organising entails the creation of an organogram of the school's hierarchical structure. On the basis of qualifications, seniority, and preparedness of staff members, the principal decides who should report to whom, and on what matters. This creates and understanding that organising as one of the roles of management involves decentralising power in a top-bottom manner in a school.

Clarke (2010:4) posits that organising means making sure that everyone in the school knows what is expected of him or her. Management becomes effective when systems and mechanisms are put in place to ensure that staff and learners are aware of what is expected of them; i.e. they know what is in the policy documents, and more importantly, that systems are put in place to ensure that schools operate according to the policies and procedures contained in the school documents. According to Van Deventer and Kruger (2014:110), organising is based on the principle that tasks should be carried out effectively by stakeholders in the school to ensure that a culture of good performance is cultivated. They go further to mention that the organising process is based on four basic principles:

- The principle of specialisation and division of work: Specialisation is the way in which a task is divided into smaller units. The advantage of specialisation is that specialised knowledge or skills will improve and maximise curriculum delivery in the school. Work distribution is necessary for the purposes of ensuring order in any school. Organising is carried out within a formal framework in which various activities are grouped. Each person's duties and responsibilities are clearly defined in terms of the aims and outcomes of the school. The result of specialisation is the division of work into manageable units.

- The principle of departmentalisation: Departmentalisation entails forming departments; i.e. grouping activities that logically belong together, such as the grouping of grades 8 and

9 as the General Education and Training (GET) phase/band, or of subjects concerned with commerce like accounting and business studies under the Commercial Department.

- The principle of organisational structures: The creation of organisational structures in schools is the process which analyses, groups, creates, divides, and controls the planned outcomes of the school.

- The principle of the establishment of relations: Establishing relations in a school is regarded as of the utmost importance. For schools to perform outstandingly, the internal and external relations must be very sound.

Van Deventer and Kruger (2014:109) argue that organising is an indispensable step in the management process of a school for the following reasons:

- It leads to an organisational structure that indicates clearly who is responsible for which tasks. It clarifies the staff's responsibilities.

- Accountability implies that the responsible staff members will be expected to account for the outcomes of the tasks that they are responsible for. Accountability links results directly to the actions of an individual or a group.

- Clear channels of communication are established. This ensures that communication is effective, and all information required by employees to perform their jobs effectively reaches them through the correct channels.

- Organising helps with the meaningful distribution of resources.

- The principle of synergy enhances the effectiveness and quality of the work performed.

- The total workload of the school is divided into activities to be performed by an individual or a group of individuals.

- Organising means systematically grouping a variety of tasks, procedures and resources, because the organising process entails an in-depth analysis of the work to be done, so that each person is aware of his or her duties.

- The related tasks and activities of employees are grouped together meaningfully in

specialised departments so that experts in various fields can deal with certain tasks.

- The school structure is responsible for creating a mechanism to coordinate the entire school.

In my opinion, the deliberations above indicate clearly that school management cannot only plan activities and forget about organising them. Organising must at all times be at the epicentre of each and every school. Organisational structures must be in place for the purposes of ensuring that each and every task in the school has a structure dealing it and dealing decisively with its cardinal points to ensure that the school performs well. The above deliberations lead to the conclusion that planning and organising are closely interrelated functions of any management system.

The planning functions result in determining the organisation's ends and means; that is, it defines the 'what' and the 'how'. The organising role results in determining the 'who' (who will do what with whom to achieve the desired end results). This information assists in a manner that SMTs would be in a better position to know that for every planning step that takes place in their schools, the principle of organising must definitely be the second step. In organising their plans, it must be clear which SMT members and which educators are responsible for which tasks.

2.8.4.3   Leading

Leading is a form of dominance where the subordinates more or less have to accept the command and control of other persons (Ntseto, 2015:154). Fadlallh (2015:247) confirms that the management of a school has the role to lead, and this directly implies that each and every member of the school management is a leader. It involves the social and informal sources of influence that managers use to inspire action taken by others.

If managers are effective leaders, their subordinates will be enthusiastic about exerting effort to attain organisational goals. On this note, the school management must at all times know that besides being managers, they are also leaders in their own right. Given the fact that managers are leaders, there is a dire need for them to be knowledgeable in the leadership area. The leading role involves the manager in close day to day contact with individuals and groups. Mentz (2013:166) mentions the following essential features of leading:

- Establishment of relationships.

- Leadership.

- Motivation.

- Communication.

According to Zengele (2013:22), leading is a management task that can be attained by motivating staff members and learners to achieve the organisational goals. The management of a school performs this function by directing the organisation towards the achievement of organisational goals. To successfully motivate staff and learners, the management must have a thorough knowledge of them. The management must know not only the strengths of their fellow colleagues and learners, but also their weaknesses, threats, and opportunities.

2.8.4.4   Controlling

According to Van Deventer and Kruger (2014:135), control is a continuous management process that is intimately linked with planning, organising and leading. It is an integral component of the management cycle; on the one hand, it is the 'final' step insofar as it evaluates effort, while on the other hand, the knowledge, experience, information, and data required in the process of controlling form the input for the next cycle of planning and strategy development.

As much as planning, organising, and leading are important, control remains an essential component for the management of the school as it has to do with the assessment and evaluation of tasks. The evaluation of tasks is conducted by means of supervising staff to ensure that the set objectives are achieved (Zengele, 2013:22). It is important in any

management structure to have a system for monitoring progress and performance to ensure that tasks are completed on time and to an acceptable standard. Van Deventer and Kruger (2014:69) indicate the following 10 management roles:
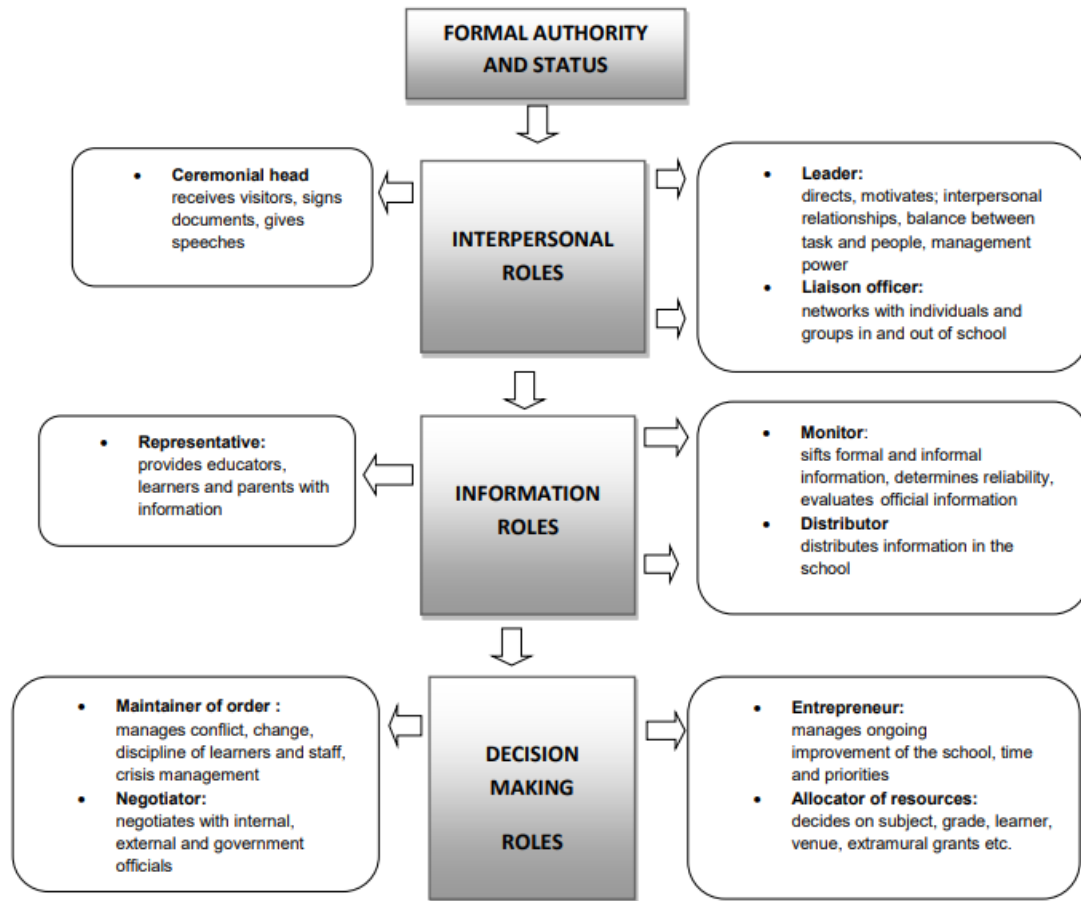
Figure 2-1:   Mintzburg's education management roles (adapted from Van Deventer & Kruger, 2014:69)

In my opinion it is vital for management structures in schools to ensure that the above roles are dealt with in a more professional manner so that all schools can be characterised as effective. Failure by SMTs to abide by these roles would render schools failing in terms of achieving their organisational goals. SMTs of low quintile secondary schools must at all times embrace planning in their execution of duties, and organise everything that they have planned in such a manner that it is clear who should do what, when, and how. Over and above, they must be in a position to provide leadership that takes the school forward to improved learner outcomes.

The roles of management have clearly indicated that in any organisation, there must also be good leadership. In my opinion, the deliberations above have revealed that management deals with planning, organising, and controlling issues; all of which require some form of leadership. The next section features management and leadership.

2.8.5 Management and leadership in education

Leadership and management are both necessary competencies that add organisational value. Neither is superior or inferior to the other (Allen, 2018). Management and leadership are important for the delivery of goods and services. Although the two terms are similar in some respects, they may include different types of outlook, skill, and behaviour. Good managers should strive to be good leaders, and good leaders need management skills to be effective (Wajdi, 2017:75).

This creates an understanding that leadership and management are complementary and supplementary organisational processes that together contribute to the achievement of organisational aims and objectives, as well as the overall organisational effectiveness. What must be borne in mind is that the two concepts have always been in existence, since the existence of organisations of antiquity, and are still current topics.

Atkinson (2013:1) is of the assertion that schools require effective leaders and managers if they are to achieve success and provide world class education for their learners. Therefore leadership and management need to be given equal prominence if schools are to operate effectively and achieve their objectives. In order to grasp an understanding of the concept of leadership and management, first there is need to know the standard management functions; i.e. planning, organising, leading and controlling. Here leading means dealing with the interrelations and interpersonal view of the responsibilities of a leader or manager. Whereas administrative duties are dealt with in the planning and controlling functions, so proficiencies of motivation, inspiration, and change management are governed by leadership (Ali, 2013:38). I argue that the presence of one of the two in an organisation also denotes the presence of the other. Where there is an organisation, there is always management and leadership to steer the organisational boat afloat towards safer waters. The two have always been the two opposite sides of a coin that make the coin valuable.

Chikoko, Naicker and Mthiyanel (2015:4) posit that leadership is an attitude of serving, and management is an attitude of doing. Leaders have a vision of what can be achieved, and then they communicate this to others and evolve strategies for realising the vision. Managers ensure that the available resources are well organised and applied to produce the best results (Wajdi, 2017:76). Van Deventer and Kruger (2010:65, as cited by Maja, 2016:20) are of the view that education management focuses on the interaction between and among educational leaders who lead and manage teaching and learning activities.

Given the above views by various scholars, it is my assertion that management is to a large extent about developing or determining those processes, mechanisms or procedures that could steer an organisation towards the attainment of its vision. Leadership is the action that is taken in an organisation to bring about those processes or procedures that have been developed or determined in a manner that leads to the attainment of the organisational vision.

I therefore conclude, with reference to this view, that management is the process whereby SMTs in schools develop or determine processes and procedures intended to ensure an effective curriculum implementation that leads to improved learner outcomes. Leadership is the process whereby the SMT brings into action those developed or determined processes and procedures intended to ensure effective curriculum implementation that leads to improved learner outcomes.

2.8.5.1 The difference between management and leadership

Organisations provide their managers with the legitimate authority to lead, but there is no assurance that they will be able to lead effectively. Organisations, including schools, need strong leadership and strong management for optimal effectiveness (Lunenburg, 2011:1). One may assume that all managers are leaders, but that is not correct since some of the managers do not exercise leadership, and some people lead without holding a management position (Wajdi, 2017:76).

There is continuing controversy about the difference between leadership and management (Lunenburg, 2011:1) and the literature has a wealth of information about these two concepts, yet the message can be quite confusing (Tobin, 2014:2). There are numerous connections in terms of relating the differences between leadership and management; however, leadership is

the essential driving force to achieving the vision and mission of any organisation, and management has to do with leading a project from its inception (Liphadzi *et al.,* 2017:479).

The difference between the two concepts are tabulated below:

Table 2-1:   Difference between management and leadership (adapted from Lunenburg, 2011)

Category	Leadership	Management
Thinking process	Focus on people Looks outward	Focus on things Looks inward
Goal setting	Articulates a vision Creates the future Sees the forest	Executes plans Improves the present Sees the trees
Employee relations	Empowers Colleagues Trusts and develops	Controls Subordinates Directs and coordinates
Operations	Does the right things Creates change Serves subordinates	Does things right Manages change Serves leadership
Governance	Uses influence Uses conflict Act decisively	Uses authority Avoids conflict Acts responsibly

With the mastery of each of these skills and behaviours, one can successfully navigate the fields of both management and leadership. It is usually just as simple as knowing what context is the most appropriate to the situation, and applying oneself to either a management or leadership capacity (Liphadzi *et al.,* 2017:480). Lunenburg *et al.* (2010) and Lunenburg (1983, as cited by Lunenburg, 2011:3) remark that there are several conclusions that can be drawn from the information presented in Table 2-1.

First, good leaders are not necessarily good managers and good managers are not necessarily good leaders. Second, good management skills transform a leader's vision into action and its successful implementation. Some scholars believe that effective implementation is the driving force of organisational success, especially in relation to stable organisations. Third, organisational success requires a combination of effective leadership and management.

Furthermore, team-based organisational structures are extending leadership functions to work groups and cross department teams in most modern organisations. Thus there is greater opportunity for more input from group members at all levels of the organisation.

2.8.6   Recommended leadership styles for SMTs

The education fraternity is overflowing with many leadership styles that can be chosen, depending on the circumstances in schools to guide curriculum implementation. The choice of leadership style is dictated by the school's circumstances. However, with the wave of transformation that has been sweeping through the South African educational landscape, schools have to move away from all the traditional leadership styles that have characterised curriculum delivery since antiquity and determine the current leadership styles that move step by step with transformation.

Various stakeholders have partnered with the DBE and schools, and it is becoming even more irrelevant to think about the antiquated leadership styles such as laissez faire, autocratic, and charismatic etc. Previously, it was instructional leadership that mainly gave the principal enough powers to do as he/she wished in schools, and the majority of schools kept on performing poorly every academic year. The current dispensation warrants that SMTs, as curriculum implementation overseers, must be in a position to ensure that they transform their areas of work and be even more transformational in their operations. On this note, this investigation puts forth the transformational leadership style as best to guide teaching and learning activities in schools. A brief discussion of the transformational leadership follows in the next chapter that features the theioretical framework that underpins this study. chapter the next paragraph.

2.8.7   Kinds of organisational managers

There are different types of managers in different organisations or workplaces. Being a manager can be a very demanding job with much responsibility (Kashyap, 2019). Just like any other organisation, schools must be well managed by various managers to ensure that their organisational vision is achieved and also that there are successful learner outcomes. Rosen (2017) mentions the following kinds of managers:

2.8.7.1   Problem-solving manager

This is the kind of manager in a school who:

- Is tasked driven and focused on achieving goals.

- Constantly put out fires and leads by chaos.

- Creates the very problems and situations that they work so hard to avoid.

- Continually provides solutions that often result in lacklustre performance that the manager works so diligently to eliminate (Rosen, 2017).

2.8.7.2   Pitchfork manager

This kind of a manager who:

- Demands progress.

- Forces accountability.

- Prods and pushes for results through the use of threats, scarcity, and fear tactics (Rosen, 2017).

This style of tough, ruthless management is painful for people who are put in a position where they are pushed to avoid consequences rather than the pulled towards a desired goal.

2.8.7.3   Pontificating manager

These managers:

- Do not follow any particular type of management strategy.

- Shoot from the hip, making it up as they go along, thus often generating sporadic, inconsistent results.

- Often find themselves in situations that they are unprepared for.

- Can talk to anyone and immediately make people feel comfortable.

- Are consistently inconsistent (Rosen, 2017).

2.8.7.4   Presumptuous manager

This manager:

- Focuses more on himself than anything or anybody else.

- Ensures that he/she receives recognition, and ensures that securing benefits takes precedence over the people they manage.

- Puts his/her personal needs and objectives above the needs of his/her team.

- Experiences more attrition, turnover, and problems relating to managing a team than any other type of a manager.

- Is typically assertive and confident.

- It typically driven by his/her ego to look good and outperform the rest of the team.

- Breeds an unhealthy competition rather than an environment of collaboration (Rosen, 2017).

2.8.7.5   Perfect manager

The perfect manager:

- Is open to change, innovation, training, and personal growth with the underlying commitment to continually improve.

- Never gets to experience the benefit of consistency.

- Relies on his/her vast amount of knowledge and experience when managing and developing his/her team members.

- Often falls short on developing interpersonal skills that would make them more human (Rosen, 2017).

2.8.7.6   Passive manager

A passive manager is:

- A parenting or pleasing manager.

- Takes the concept of developing close relationships with their team and co-workers to a new level.

- Has only one goal - making team members happy.

- Is viewed as incompetent, inconsistent, and clueless and often is lacking the respect he/she needs from his/her employees to effectively build a champion team.

- Is more timid and passive in terms of approaching issues.

- Does everything and anything to avoid confrontation and hold people accountable (Rosen, 2017).

2.8.7.7   Proactive manager

A proactive manager encompasses all of the good qualities that other types of managers possess, yet without any of their pitfalls. The proactive manager possesses the:

- Persistent, edge, and genuine authenticity of the pitchfork manager.

- Confidence of the presumptuous manager.

- Enthusiasm, passion, charm, and presence of the pontificating manager.

- Drive to support others and spearhead solutions like the problem-solving manager.

- Desire to serve, respectfulness, sensitivity, nurturing ability, and humanity of the passive manager.

- Product and industry knowledge, efficiency, focus, and passion for continued growth just like the perfect manager (Rosen, 2017).

The proactive manager is the ultimate manager and a testimonial that every manager needs to develop in order to formulate a world class team.

The management of every organisation, including a school, comprises managers. The performance of a school is a direct result of these managers. It has been indicated that the management of a school means more than the principal, who is the overall head and the CAO. Different members of the SMT fall in one or more of the indicated types of mangers. What sounds very good about all the seven types of managers is that they are concerned about the results in their organisations or schools. Each of these type of managers has systems in place in order to ensure that their school achieves their intended results. On this note, the performance of schools is largely dependent on the type of a manager. All these types of managers are situational.

2.9   THE GENESIS OF SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAMS (SMTs)

The SASA is currently the Bible of the Department of Education especially in the area of democratic school management. This legislation has paved the way for the the introduction of School Management Teams in schools. SMTs are therefore a legitimate product of the democratic dispensation in all South African schools. It is therefore a must for each and every school to have an SMT but, the size of the SMT differs from school to school, depending on the post provisioning of the school.

Sephton (2016:249) confirms that post provisioning is the name given to the process of assigning educators to schools across South Africa. The Member of the Executive Council (MEC) for Education in each province will determine the number and allocation of educator posts, referred to as post establishment or post basket. Once the whole educator post establishment is determined for the whole province, posts are then allocated to schools by the Human Resources Section of the Provincial Education Department (PED).

As a Circuit Manager, I have realised that schools with large enrolments have large SMTs, whereas small enrolment schools have small SMTs. SMTs are structured according to the post establishments of schools. Thwala (2014:19) defines post establishment as a model introduced in 1998 which is used to annually determine the number of teaching posts for each school. The criteria for this model include the weighting of individual subjects against the

number of learners in order to determine the number of teaching posts allocated (Thwala, 2014:19).

Understandably, a post establishment is a model that is used by the Human Resources Section of the (PED) to determine the number of posts that a school qualifies for, according to its learner enrolment. The model is based on the principle that available posts are distributed among schools proportionate to the number of learners (DBE, 2002:1). Sephton (2016:249) points out that in order to determine the correct post establishment for a particular school, the following factors are considered:

- The number of learners at the school.

- The number of learners with special educational needs.

- The number of grades each school caters for.

- The subjects offered by a particular school.

Schools with large learner enrolments normally receive post establishments with a sizeable number of posts, unlike small enrolment schools that receive a small number of post establishments.

2.9.1   THE CONCEPT OF SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAMS

Schools are managed by teams of experts who through planning, organising, leading and controlling ensure that quality teaching and learning take place (Ntseto, 2015:13). Quality education in schools cannot be realised without an effective management (Van Deventer & Kruger, 2014:67). Traditionally, the management of a school was vested in the principal up to 1994. One of the notable upshots of democracy in South Africa was the introduction of the SMT model in schools (Ramalepe, 2015:1). I argue that every department, as a custodian of service delivery, employs a person or persons for the purposes of delivering specific and much needed services to deserving service delivery beneficiaries. After having employed that person, the department would go further by providing him/her with a clear mandate that he/she must embark on.

On this note, in my opinion, the employment of SMTs in schools by the DBE is for the sole purpose of ensuring that schools are favoured with an educational service in the form of effective curriculum implementation and curriculum management of a high standard that translates into phenomenally improved learner outcomes. Educators in schools must be grouped together in orderly, hierarchic structures of authority in order to attain a common objective; namely, educative teaching (Theron, 2013:116). The management of institutions in the context of an education system is performed by the SMT (Malatji, 2016:52).

Given the deliberations above, and given my experience as a Circuit Manager, in my opinion, the SMT is an organisational structure established legitimately in schools comprising capable curriculum managers who must work collectively and collaboratively as a team towards the achievement of the organisational vision of the school. It is a structure that is justifiably entrusted with the powers to safeguard effective curriculum implementation and curriculum management to become characteristic features in schools so that schools achieve phenomenal learner outcomes. The acronym SMT speaks clearly for itself as it denotes specified managers who work, not as a group, but as a team, in a curriculum delivery environment.

What must be borne in mind is that members who belong to a group have different goals to pursue, and to achieve them, members of a team must have the same vision and the same goals to achieve. This translates into the fact that the basic principle on which the SMT is established or founded is nothing more than teamwork, and therefore teamwork is the 'name of the game' within the SMT circles. According to Pitsoe and Isingoma (2014:138), teamwork is an essential tool to achieve success in any organisation. It has become a critical skill in the 21st century. In the absence of teamwork, groups fail to perform to the best of their ability.

2.9.2   AN OVERVIEW OF SMT

The South African educational policy reforms have resulted in the contemporary buzzword within the circles of school management in the form of SMTs. This is a brand new name that finds its place within the democratic dispensation. During the pre-democratic era, this word was nowhere to be found in the educational terrain.

2.9.2.1   South African perspective

The 27 April 1994 democratic winds of change necessitated progressive and visible transformation in South Africa. Transformation has already dictated to every citizen that some systemic changes have been effected in various spheres of life, including the education sphere. As the education system was overflowing with antiquated, racial, oppressive, and retrogressive policies, the Department of Education was faced with the mammoth task of bringing policy reforms into effect.

Transformation of any education system brings about sustainable school improvement and a profound change in the culture and practice of schools (DBE, 2015:5). Among all these changes, it became evident that there was a need for the nation to nurture and develop all its people through education if it was to thrive in the global economy (Majova, Adu & Chikungwa-Everson, 2017:1). According to Madondo (2016:8), it was hoped that a positive change in education would be achieved.

According to the DoE (2000:1), before 1994 the government used education as a tool to create and maintain a racially divided South African society. The government designed different school curricular for different racial groups, they gave strict instructions about what had to be taught in each standard, and they kept strict control over learning and teaching. In such a context, principals and senior staff members did not provide any leadership; instead it was their job to mainly control educators and learners and check that educators did not teach more or less than the prescribed syllabi. In most instances principals, HODs and educators only discussed curriculum issues at the beginning of the year when they decided who should teach which subjects, and then again at the end of the year when they registered their learners' results.

Contemporarily, South African schools are managed by the SMTs under the leadership of the school principal (Maja, 2016:14). It is their duty to ensure that teachers teach, learners learn, and stakeholders support the curriculum delivery processes. Therefore curriculum management become the core function of the SMT (Madondo, 2016:12). The SMTs hold formal positions of leadership within the school's organisational structure. Because of this, SMTs carry the responsibility of ensuring that leadership is distributed to other colleagues, irrespective of status or authority in the hierarchy (Ntuzela, 2008:1).

The SMT is responsible for managing issues relating to the whole school curriculum. They

are curriculum implementation leaders, and that means they are responsible for translating every curriculum into practice in schools (DoE 2000:2).

I argue that the SMT is an organisational structure that is found in schools and responsible for the effective and efficient implementation and management of the curriculum. According to Stevenson (2018:161), organisational structures in schools developed from ancient times of hunters and collectors in tribal organisations, through to royal and clerical power structures, to industrial structures and today's post-industrial structures. Contemporary organisational structures determine how the organisation performs or operates. The term 'organisational structure' refers to how people in organisation are grouped and to whom they report. Stevenson (2018:169) points out that an organisational structure defines how job tasks are formally divided, grouped, and coordinated. Key elements for organisational structures are (Stevenson, 2018:169):

- Work specialisation: Refers to the degree to which tasks in the organisation are subdivided into separate jobs (division of labour).

- Departmentalisation: Refers to the basis by which jobs are grouped together. In terms of departmentalisation, activities are grouped by:

  o Function.

  o Product.

  o Geography.

  o Process.

  o Customer.

  o Authority.

- Chain of command: Refers to the unbroken line of authority that extends from the top of the organisation to the lowest echelon and clarifies who reports to whom.

- Span of control: Refers to the act of establishing the number of jobs to be included in a specific group; i.e. the volume of interpersonal relationships that a single manager can

handle. Wider spans of management increase organisational efficiency. The span of control is increased when subordinates have similar functions, are physically close, have simple tasks, need little coordination, and the manager spends little time planning.

- Interpersonal relationships: The three types of interpersonal relationships are:

  o **Direct single interpersonal relationship**: This type of relationship exists between the manager and each of his/her subordinates. Within the context of this investigation it is the relationship between the SMT member and educators falling under his/her department.

  o **Direct group interpersonal relationship**: This relationship exists between the manager and each permutation of subordinate groups. With regard to this research project it is the relationship between the SMT and the principal as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the school.

  o **Cross interpersonal relationship**: This type of relationship exists where subordinates interact with each other. The context of this investigation necessitates that this type of relationship is between staff members from different departments in the school.

- Location of decision making authority: The three types of decision making authority are:

  o **Centralisation**: This is the location of the decision making authority in the hierarchy of the organisation. It is the degree to which decision making is concentrated at a single point in the organisation.

  o **Decentralisation**: This refers to the degree to which decision making is spread throughout the organisation.

  o **Formalisation**: This is the degree to which jobs within the organisation are standardised. It is the extent to which expectations regarding the means and ends of work are specified and written down. It is effective only if are enforced.

It has already been pointed out that during the South African pre-democratic era, management in schools was the sole preserve of the school principal. The principal had the power to plan, organise, lead, control, and to take unilateral decisions in matters pertaining to the curriculum implementation and curriculum management. Everything in schools was

centralised in the office of the principal. However, the advent of the democratic dispensation necessitated the establishment of SMTs in each and every school, which according to Alberts (2015:32), is responsible for the day-to-day smooth running of the school, ensures that effective teaching and learning takes place, and plays a critical role in enhancing the process of educational service delivery to schools.

2.10   SCHOOL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES: GHANA

As the management of schools in a South African context is the responsibility of the SMT, it is the responsibility of the School Management Committee (SMC) in Ghana to deal with educational issues. The SMC is a committee designated under the Ghana Education Service Act of 1994. It is a representative of the entire school community of a particular school or cluster of schools (Attrans, 2015:26). Osei-Owusu and Sam (2012:611) confirm that the SMC is made up of nine members in each school, with various representatives from the Municipal Directorate for Education, Head of School, Unit Committee, PTA, Chief of the Town, Teaching staff, old students associations, and other co-opted members.

The major function of this committee designated by the Act includes the monitoring and supervision of head teachers and pupils, ensuring the maintenance and safety of school infrastructure, ensuring pupil and teacher discipline, assisting teachers to improve teaching and learning, resolving school-community conflict, and improving teacher-community relations.

Abreh (2017:63) agrees when stating that SMCs are the managerial hands of basic public schools in Ghana, and these are governing agencies of the school. Their role is central to the main activities and operations at the school. The SMC is supposed to work for the enhancement of the school and its community by working in the interest of the schools. By law the SMC is the governing body of basic schools in the various communities in Ghana, and they are supposed to promote the interests of the school and its learners so that the children receive the best education. Every public school in Ghana has such a committee, constituted according to the state agreed formation and operations of the SMC.

From the above deliberations it is clear that the management of schools in Ghana is inclusive as not only school-based stakeholders form the committee. This is fascinating because one

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would like to dig deeper to try and understand how such a broad spectrum of members could effectively operate in schools so that they become centres for academic excellence. However, that is the situation in Ghana. The next section captures the composition of SMTs with reference to the South African context.

2.11 COMPOSITION OF SMT: SOUTH AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE

According to the DoE (2000), departmental policy encourages the school principal to form an SMT that must work together as a team to ensure that the school becomes a dynamic environment for both learners and educators. The composition of the SMT is determined by the PED which decides how many deputy principals (if any) and HODs each schools should have (Bush & Glover, 2013).

As a Circuit Manager I have realised that in terms of the establishment of SMTs, educators who hold promotional posts as acting deputy principals and acting HODs automatically feature in the SMT. Principals and acting principals occupy post number 1 on the staff establishment of the school, deputy principal at post numbers 15, 30, 45, 60 and 75, whilst HODs occupy post numbers 6, 13, 20, 27, 34, 41, 48 and 62. There is absolutely no temporary educator who is allowed to be part of the SMT. Temporary educators are educators who occupy a post for a specific period of time due to the absence of the incumbent of the post. Temporary posts become available in schools as a result of one of the following reasons:

- Incumbent acting or serving permanently in a higher post.

- Resignation.

- Retirement.

- Secondment to other institutions.

- Short incapacity leave.

- Long incapacity leave.

- Study leave.

- Death.

Given the workload in some schools, and in particular large enrolment schools, master educators, senior educators, as well as co-opted educators, used to feature in the SMT. In co-opting CS1 educators into the SMT, the principal does this embracing the *Batho Pele* principle of consultation with the SMT. What must be borne in mind is that such senior educators, master educators, and co-opted members may or may not vote in SMT meetings (DoE, 2000:2). In most instances, for purposes of inclusion in the SMT, an attribute of competence on the part of educators is taken into cognisance. A less competent educator can never be co-opted into the SMT at the expense of the most competent and capable educator.

It is unlikely that the size of the SMT equals 50% of the staff. I have realised that in most instances the size of the SMT is 30% or less of the staff. The principal, as the head of the school, is the one who is entrusted with the responsibility of ensuring that the SMT is constituted fairly and given a mandate in the form of duty lists, duty sheets, or job descriptions. Duty lists, duty sheets or job descriptions of SMT members are normally reflective of the following duties that the SMT face:

- Curriculum management duties.

- Administrative duties.

- Extra-curricular duties.

2.11.1   Principal as SMT member

The principal is the most senior member of the SMT. He or she is the Chief Accounting Officer and the employer representative in the school. According to Van Deventer and Kruger (2014:134), in the final analysis, the principal is responsible for everything that happens in his or her school, and any SMT member should therefore not find it strange if the principal shows an interest in what he or she is doing.

As the principal cannot, however, perform all the tasks in the school on his/her own, he/she delegates some of the tasks. It must be borne in mind that the principal can only delegate tasks but not accountability, hence the name Chief Accounting Officer. Malatji (2016:52) is

of the opinion that the principal of the school must know that he/she is the chairperson of the SMT as he/she is responsible if anything goes wrong in the school.

According to Mentz (2013:158), the characteristics of the school principal include the following:

- **Driving force:** This refers to the manner in which the principal sets an example by working hard.

- **Consideration:** This refers to decent treatment of teachers by the principal.

- **Aloofness:** This refers to the degree to which the principal maintains a distance between himself/herself and the personnel.

- **Production orientation:** This is the extent to which the principal endeavours to induce teachers to work harder.

2.11.2   Deputy principal as SMT member

According to Van Deventer and Kruger (2014:134), a school may have one or more deputy principals, or none at all, depending on the size of the staff and the education department. The deputy principal is the second in command in the school. He or she is the most senior member of the SMT immediately after the school principal. His or her duty is to deputise the principal in his or her absence. However, this does not mean that if the principal is present, the deputy principal's tasks as an SMT member cease to exist. In the regular presence of the principal, the deputy principal must know that he or she has a job description designed to provide direction in terms of the SMT core mandate.

The deputy principal should have a specific interest in the staff, especially beginner or novice educators. The beginners must be introduced to the culture of the school by, amongst others, the deputy principal. As a Circuit Manager, I am fully aware that there are many secondary schools that are in full operation without a deputy principal. The absence of the deputy principal in schools might have been a direct result of death, resignation, retirement or promotion of the incumbent. The absence might also be attributable to the fact that the school is so small that the staff is limited and thus unable to secure a deputy principal. In

constituting SMTs, principals rely mostly on co-opted staff members for assistance. However, in some instances staff members do not agree to be co-opted, and usually the claim is because they will not be entitled to further payment.

2.11.3   HODs as SMT member

HODs in schools are the appointed curriculum managers for a specific group of subjects like commerce, languages, humanities, and sciences. According to Van Deventer and Kruger (2014:134), the HOD is expected to act as a professional leader. He or she should, for example, keep abreast of the latest developments and approaches, methodology, techniques, evaluation, aids etc. Because the HOD's work is linked directly to the staff in the department, the beginner educator can also expect to work very closely with him or her.

2.11.4   Educators as SMT members

It has already been indicated that the size of the school determines the nature of the SMT in that school. Currently serving Post level 1 (CS1) educators who serve in the SMT could be Senior Educators who could be utilised in schools for the purposes of beefing up the curriculum management. According to Mampshe (2015:2), 'Senior Educator' is a new concept within the education fraternity that emerged recently with the implementation of the Occupation Specific Dispensation (OSD) which categorised currently serving educators in terms of their teaching experience. I have observed a trend in schools with less than two HODs. This trend is that the school size forces the principal to have currently serving educators co-opted to serve on the SMT. This arrangement has assisted schools in ensuring that management duties are not compromised by the staff size.

2.12   SMTs AND TEAMWORK IN SCHOOLS

This study focuses on the experiences of SMTs in managing low quintile secondary schools. I argue that the term 'School Management Team' denotes that management in schools should in all instances approach planning, organising, leading and controlling as a team. Every curriculum implementation activity by the SMT must be done regularly, and as far as practically possible, dealt with by a team. This translates into the fact that SMT members must at all times approach curriculum delivery and curriculum management issues as a team.

According to Oluyinka (2020:23), schools have realised that it is only through proper teamwork and commitment that they can work towards achieving both school and individual goals. Sejanamane (2014:79) points out that teamwork has become a priority for educational managers and leaders and forms part of a shift away from an autocratic style of leadership to a more democratic, transformational, participatory, or distributive style.

Mamabolo (2016:14) asserts that through teamwork, SMT members normally become part of the decision making processes in schools. In terms of teamwork, every SMT member is given a role to play considering talents and skills, unlike in a group, and when the team members have collaborated they end up being able to achieve organisational goals. I argue that teamwork is essentially an indispensable skill in contemporary curriculum delivery and curriculum management in schools because its presence results in visible and positive learner outcomes at the end of the year. Teamwork must therefore be regarded as the foundational principle for an effective SMT and effective curriculum implementation. The SMT that is founded and grounded on teamwork is an organisational vision-inclined instrument that views organisational interests over personal interests.

Within the context of this investigation, it suffices to define teamwork as an effort in schools whereby SMT members work collaboratively and collectively for purposes of doing justice to their core mandate of curriculum implementation. Oluyinka (2020:24) asserts that teamwork is a state of working together for the purpose of accomplishing set goals in organisations, whilst Agarwal and Adjirackor (2016:40) view teamwork as the process of working collaboratively with a group of people in order to achieve a goal. In my opinion, teamwork calls for SMT members, without leaving out a single member, to collectively collaborate in curriculum implementation proceedings to ensure an effective curriculum delivery that ultimately gives rise to a high level of learner performance in schools.

According to Agarwal and Adjirackor (2016:40), collective action is widely recognised as a positive force for teamwork in any organisation or institution to succeed. I am fully agreeable with this assertion on the basis that only collective action signifies team effort. I argue that in each and every team there should be collaboration and collectivism for it to be characterised as a team, because the absence of collaboration and collectivism in any team categorises the team only as a group. The absence of collaboration and collectivism in a group is the absence of mutual support among SMT members and a devaluation of the team

to group status. SMTs in schools should always embrace collaboration and collectivism in all their curriculum implementation endeavours or else face the peril of being labelled just a group.

Teamwork breeds and promotes an organisational culture of effective curriculum implementation and effective curriculum management, and consequently leads to effective schools. Makoelle (2011:99) asserts that effective schools distinguish themselves by virtue of their effective and efficient management, governance, and quality teaching which are the products of good management and leadership. I argue that the existence of effective schools in any country is the selfless collective and collaborative efforts of SMTs as curriculum implementers in schools. Lynch (2016) advises that the following factors are associated with effective schools:

- **Quality leadership**: Learners perform better when the SMT members provide strong leadership. Quality leaders are visible, can successfully convey the school's goals and vision, collaborate with educators to enhance their skills, and are involved in the discovery of and solutions to problems.

- **High expectations:** High expectations of learners have repeatedly been shown to have a positive impact on learner performance. Learners are somewhat dependent on the expectations placed on them during this period of their lives, as they are still shaping their personal sense of ability and esteem. Educators who are expected to teach at high levels of effectiveness can reach the level of expectations when educator evaluations and professional development are geared towards improving instructional quality.

- **On-going evaluation**: On-going screening of student performance and development is crucial in schools. Schools should use assessment data to compare their learners with others from across the country. The effective use of assessment data allows schools to identify problematic areas of learning at the classroom and school levels, so that educators can generate solutions to address the problems.

- **Goals and direction:** Effective schools actively construct goals and then effectively communicate them to appropriate stakeholders. Learner performance has been shown to improve in schools where the entire school community works towards goals that are communicated and shared among all in the learning environment.

- **Secure and organised:** For maximum learning to occur, learners need to feel secure. Respect is a quality that is promoted as a fundamental aspect of an effective and safe school. Successful schools also have a number of trained staff and programmes, such as social workers, who work with difficult or troubled learners before situations get out of hand.

- **School size:** The size of a school seems to be an attribute in the school's effectiveness. Research has found that the smaller the school, the better the performance of learners. Learners in smaller learning environments feel more connected to their peers and educators, pass classes more often, and are more likely to go onto tertiary institutions.

It therefore becomes imperative that in their curriculum implementation avenues in schools, SMTs should at all times be selflessly glued to their core mandate to ensure that their schools are characterised by organisational effectiveness.

2.12.1 SMTs as transformational leaders in schools

School management is a direct product of the transformational processes that drizzled across the South African educational escarpment and it dictates that in whatever they engage in, an element of change must become a reality. The role of the SMT is to assist the principal with his or her management tasks and to share the management tasks more widely in the school. This is necessary if the management structure of schools is to become more democratic, inclusive, and participatory (DoE, 2000:2).

The SMT is responsible for the day to day running of the school and for putting the school's policies in place (DoE, 2000:2). It is the role of the SMT to work out how the school can be organised best to bring about the vision of the school community (DoE, 2000:10). The SMT is directly accountable for rendering excellent teaching and learning to enhance learner achievement (Mampshe, 2015:34).

The success and the survival of every school as an institution of learning are by and large dependent on its leadership. It is the leadership of the school that determines its vision, mission, aims and objectives, and consciously does everything in its powers to ensure that its organisational productivity is a distance away from any organisational catastrophe.

Dysfunctional leadership in many schools may be the reason for the low academic performance of South African learners (Hompashe, 2018:1). I am fully agreeable with this assertion because organisational leadership is responsible for the rise and fall of every organisation. It is the leadership that spearheads every organisational activity that serves to ensure that its mission is clearly accomplished. There is increasing recognition that schools require effective leaders and managers if they are to provide the best possible education for their learners (Bush, 2008:391). When the principal elicits a high level of commitment and professionalism from teachers, and works interactively with them in a shared leadership capacity, schools have the benefit of integrated leadership; they are organisations that learn and perform at higher levels (Hallinger, 2003:345).

Over the past decades educational researchers have begun to make progress in understanding how schools can better provide quality instruction for all the learners. Educational concepts such as leader-teacher relationships, collegiality, collaborative culture, learning organisation, teacher leadership all suggest they have the power to make decisions in order to improve teaching and learning in schools (Ng, 2019:3). Educators can no longer afford to be excluded from the curriculum management activities of schools on the basis that only those who have been favoured with bureaucratically legitimate curriculum management powers can make decisions and implement them in schools.

Traditional literature on instructional leadership stresses the importance of the principal's role in the coordination and control of instruction (Ng, 2018:7). In terms of instructional activities in schools, only the principal had those bureaucratic powers that in most instances left the entire pool of educators merely spectators of curriculum management. However, recent educational studies on the impact of the principal regarding student achievement in schools have addressed both the instructional and transformational aspects of leadership of the principal because the two constructs are difficult to separate (Vogel, 2018:1).

Transformation is about changes in structures, processes and actions. It is about adopting new technologies and embracing change without lamenting the fading 'golden old days' (Sejanamane, 2014:56). Given the process of transformation across the entire South African educational landscape, transformational leadership has overtaken instructional leadership in schools. Schools are now embracing a more inclusive approach to organisational leadership and management. No longer is the principal isolated from the SMT and the entire pool of

educators, as this would be detrimental and compromise the effective curriculum delivery and management in schools. The contemporary educational leadership buzzword is 'transformational' leadership, as organisational activities in schools warrant a joint venture comprising the principal, SMTs and educators. Contemporarily, it is no longer 'me or I' but a 'we' in terms of curriculum delivery.

2.13   RECOMMENDED FUNCTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF SMTs

In order for a school to operate effectively, the roles and functions of each member of the SMT members should be clearly defined (Malatji, 2016:276). According to South African Schools Act (SASA) 84 of 1996 (3), the professional management of a school must be undertaken by the principal under the authority of the Department of Education.

The new dispensation is very clear that at the level of the SMT, the principal does not work in isolation but with other members of the SMT in the form of the deputy principal, HODs, and educators who have been co-opted into the SMT. The Employment of Educators Act (EEA) 76 of 1998 (4):4.2-4.5, i.e. the Personnel Administraive Measures (PAM) segment, outlines the different duties and responsibilities of the SMT members based on the workload and scheduled teaching time per each of the job titles and post level as per sections 3.2 and 3.3 of the PAM. The duties for each of the SMT members follow in this manner:

2.13.1   Principal: PAM section 4 sub section 4.2

Job title: Educator-Public Schools

Rank: Principal

Post level: 1; 2; 3 or 4

CORE DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

General administration:

- Responsible for the professional management of a public school.

- Gives proper instructions and guidelines for timetabling, admission and placement of learners.

- School accounts and records properly kept to make the best use of funds for the benefit of the learners in consultation with the appropriate structures.

- Keeps a School Journal containing a record of all important events connected with the school.

- Makes regular inspections of the school to ensure that the school premises and equipment are being used properly and that good discipline is being maintained.

- Responsible for the hostel and all related activities, including the staff and learners.

- Ensures Departmental circulars and other information received which affect members of the staff are brought to their notice as soon as possible and are stored in an accessible manner.

- Handles all correspondence received at the school.

Personnel:

- Provide professional leadership within the school.

- Guides, supervises and offers professional advice on the work and performance of all staff in the school, and where necessary, discusses, writes and/or countersigns reports on teaching, support, non-teaching, and other staff.

- Ensures that workloads are equitably distributed among the staff.

- Responsible for the development of staff training programmes, school-based, school-focused and externally directed, and assists educators, particularly new and inexperienced educators, in developing and achieving educational objectives in accordance with the needs of the school.

- Participates in agreed school/educator appraisal processes to regularly review their professional practice with the aim of improving teaching, learning, and management.

- Ensures that all evaluation/forms of assessment conducted in the school are properly and efficiently organised.

Teaching:

- Engages in class teaching as per the workload of the relevant post level and the needs of the school.

- Acts as a class teacher if required.

- Assesses learners.

Extra- and co-curricular:

- Serves on recruitment, promotion, advisory and other committees as required.

- Plays an active role in promoting extra and co-curricular activities in the school, plans school functions, and encourages learners' voluntary participation in sports, educational, and cultural activities organised by community bodies.

Interaction with stakeholders:

- Serves on the governing body of the school and renders all necessary assistance in the performance of their functions in terms of the SA Schools Act, 1996.

- Participates in community activities in connection with educational matters and community building.

Communication:

- Cooperates with members of the school staff and the school governing body in maintaining an efficient and smooth running school.

- Liaises with the Circuit/ Regional Office, Supplies Section, Personnel Section, Finance Section, etc. concerning administration, staffing, accounting, purchase of equipment, research, and updating of statistics in respect of educators and learners.

- Liaises with relevant structures regarding school curricular and curriculum development.

- Meets parents concerning learners' progress report and conduct.

- Cooperates with the school governing body with regard to all aspects as specified in the SASA, 1996.

- Liaises with other relevant governmental departments, e.g. Department of Health and Welfare, Public Works, etc. as required.

- Cooperates with universities, colleges, and other agencies in relation to learners' records and performance, as well as INSET and management development programmes.

- Participates in departmental and professional committees, seminars and courses in order to contribute to and/ or update professional views/standards.

- Maintains contacts with sports, social, cultural and community organisations.

2.13.2   Deputy Principal: PAM section 4 sub section 4.3

Job title: Educator-Public Schools

Rank: Deputy Principal

Post level: 3

CORE DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

General administration:

- Assists the principal, or, if instructed to be responsible for:

  o School administration: e.g. duty roster, arrangements to cover absent staff, internal and external evaluation and assessment, school calendar, admission of new learners, class streaming, school functions ; and/ or

  o School finance and maintenance of services and buildings e.g. planning and control of

expenditure, allocation of funds/resources, the general cleanliness and state of repairs of the school and its furniture and equipment, supervising annual stock-taking exercises.

Teaching:

- Engages in class teaching as per the workload of the relevant post level and the needs of the school.

- Assesses and records the attainment of learners taught.

Extra- and co-curricular:

- Responsible for school curriculum and pedagogy; e.g. choice of textbooks, co-ordinating the work of subject committees and groups, timetabling, INSET and developmental programmes, and arranging teaching practice.

- Assists the principal in overseeing learner counselling and guidance, careers, discipline, compulsory attendance and the general welfare of all learners.

- Assists the principal to play an active role in promoting extra and co-curricular activities in the school and in the participation in sports and cultural activities organised by community bodies.

- Participates in departmental and professional committees, seminars and courses in order to contribute to and/or update professional views/standards.

Personnel:

- Guides and supervises the work and performance of staff and, where necessary, discusses, writes and/or countersigns reports.

- Participates in agreed school/educator appraisal processes in order to regularly review their professional practice with the aim of improving teaching, learning and management.

Interaction with stakeholders:

- Supervises/advises the Representative Council of Learners.

Communication:

- Meets parents concerning learners' progress report and conduct.

- Liaises on behalf of the principal with relevant government departments.

- Maintains contact with sporting, social, cultural and community organisations.

- Assists the principal in liaison work with all organisations, structures, committees, groups, etc. crucial to the school.

2.13.3   Head of Department: PAM section 4 sub section 4.4

Job title: Educator-Public School

Rank: Head of Department (subject, learning area or phase)

Post level: 2

CORE DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

Teaching:

- Engages in class teaching as per the workload of the relevant post level and the needs of the school.

- Acts as a class teacher if required.

- Assess and records the attainment of learners taught.

Extra- and co-curricular:

- In charge of a subject, learning area or phase.

- Jointly develops the policy of that department.

- Coordinates evaluation/assessment, homework, written assignments, etc. of all the subjects in that department.

- Provides and co-ordinate guidance on:

  o The latest ideas on approaches to the subject, method, techniques, evaluation, aids, etc. in their field, and effectively conveying these to the staff members concerned.

  o Syllabus, scheme of work, homework, practical work, remedial work, etc. with inexperienced staff members

  o The educational welfare of learners in the department.

- Controls:

  o The work of educators and learners in the department.

  o Reports submitted to the principal as required.

  o Mark sheets.

  o Tests and examination papers as well as memoranda.

  o The administrative responsibilities of staff members.

- Shares he responsibilities of organising and conducting extra and co-curricular activities.

Personnel:

- Advises the principal regarding the division of work among the staff in that department.

- Participates in agreed school/educator appraisal processes in order to regularly review their professional practice with the aim of improving teaching, learning and management.

General administration:

- Assists with the planning and management of:

  o School stock, text books and equipment for the department'

- The budget for the department.

- Subject work schemes.

- Performs or assists with one or more non-teaching administrative duties:

  - Secretary to general staff meeting and/or others.

  - Fire drill and first aid.

  - Timetables.

  - Collection of fees and other monies.

  - Staff welfare.

  - Accidents.

- Acts on behalf of the principal during her/his absence from school if the school does not qualify for a Deputy Principal, or in the event both of them are absent.

Communication:

- Cooperates with colleagues in order to maintain a good teaching standard and progress among the learners, and fosters administrative efficiency within the department and the school.

- Collaborates with educators of other schools in developing the department and conducting extra-curricular activities.

- Meets parents and discusses with them the progress and conduct of their children.

- Participates in departmental and professional committees, seminars and courses in order to contribute to and/or update one's professional views/ standards.

- Maintains contact with sporting, social, cultural and community organisations.

- Has contact with the public on behalf of the Principal.

In having a deeper look at these duties and responsibilities of SMTs, one realises that they are based on six areas with regard to the principal and the deputy principal. It appears as if the HOD and the educators are one area less, which is communication and personnel respectively. The area of communication appears not to feature in the duties and responsibilities for HODs. In essence, communication is there in terms of the HODs because HODs are also subject educators, and in this regard the dimension of communication is dealt with at the level of HODs being subject educators.

The dimension of personnel appears to be missing on the part of educators. What must be borne in mind is that educators are normally co-opted onto the SMT due to, among others, the insufficient permanently appointed promotional posts. On this note, the presence of educators in the SMT denotes that they are there is an acting capacity, replacing either a HOD or a deputy principal. It can be concluded that the duties and responsibilities of SMTs encapsulate six areas that call for a collective effort towards the realisation of the school's vision as well as improved learner outcomes.

2.14 RECOMMENDED MANAGEMENT SKILLS FOR SMTs

The growing pressure that is mounting on schools to provide a high standard of quality education is a clarion call to SMTs to move out of their comfort zone and work around the clock to ensure that curriculum implementation in schools improves. SMTs must possess certain skills so that they are in a position to sharpen their curriculum implementation minds to ensure that their schools do not deliver poor performance. There are a number of skills that every organisational manager needs to manager his/her organisation to steer for uncompromising productivity.

However, within the context of this investigation, and on the basis of the stated research aim and objectives, there are a number of skills that SMTs in schools must possess so that they can sail the curriculum implementation boat with ease and confidence, as captured in the following sections:

2.14.1 Analytical skills

Analytical skills refer to the ability to collect and analyse information and make decisions

(Doyle, 2019:1). The contemporary educational landscape of this country is explicit that SMTs must be analytic in terms of executing their core mandate as they are operating in an environment that is at times plagued by seemingly insurmountable challenges. In other words, they need to have analytical skills everyday in school. Analytical skills refer to the ability to collect, visualise, and analyse information to see the bigger picture or trends behind the facts (Avazov 2018:1).

Analytical skills are among the top five skills frequently sought by organisations around the world (Avazov, 2018:1). Doyle (2019:1) states clearly that every employer needs employees with the ability to investigate a problem and find the ideal solution in a timely and efficient manner. Employers need a person who uses clear logical steps and excellent judgement to understand an issue from all angles before taking action.

On this note, I argue that SMTs must manage by way of analysing every activity plan that they intend to implement to establish whether it will serve its intended purpose. They must also be in a position to analyse the impact of the activity plan to establish whether it will yield the desirable fruit. If a specific activity plan does not serve its intended purpose, SMTs must never hesitate to review it so that they can be in a better position to improve performance in schools. Analytical skills are very important and must therefore secure an educational space and place in the heart and minds of SMT members in schools.

2.14.2   Conceptual skills

Conceptual skills allow managers to visualise abstract concepts, see relations between them, and draw constructive conclusions. These skills help managers see ways in which the entire organisation works as one to achieve its goals (Duszynski, 2020:2). Conceptual skills help managers to avoid the pitfall of 'not seeing the forest for trees', as the saying goes. These are skills that help managers see how all the sections of an organisation work together to achieve the goals of the organisation. People with conceptual skills are creative and can work through abstract concepts (Doyle, 2020:4). SMT members must be in position to know all the cardinal points of their core mandate, their fellow members, colleagues, and stakeholders and go to the extent of knowing what their intentions are in the school. In other words, they must be able to provide answers to each and every situation that germinates. They must know their school like the palm of their hands. Put differently, they must have the school on their lips

and at their finger tips.

2.14.3   Communication skills

In each and every organisation there is communication, which of course is the backbone of every organisation. SMTs in schools must at all times ensure that they communicate as a way of putting every little piece of information across the length and breadth of their school. Communication remains one of the most important aspects of human existence and very important in any organisation for the achievement of its set goals and objectives (Manafa, 2018:17). Since communication takes place around people all the time, the process is often taken for granted. In every organisation, much time is spent communicating, hence there is a need to make sure that ideas and information are put in a way that everyone involved can understand (Wambui, Kibui & Gathuthi, 2012:1). Communication is the most important organisational instrument that people use to achieve a desired goal. Individuals and organisations cannot survive without good communication skills.

Communication skills are needed to move team members out of their armchairs, elevate their levels of morale, instil confidence, and lead in the achievement of their organisational goals. There is absolutely no way in which a school can survive and serve its intended purpose if communication is not effective. SMT members must at all times ensure that information that pertains to curriculum delivery and curriculum management in schools is made available to its rightful recipients. Different forms of communication must be engaged to ensure that information reaches every stakeholder. There must be communication if curriculum implementation activities are badly affected, or about to be badly affected, so that appropriate steps are taken to remedy the situation.

2.14.4   Listening skills

In my opinion, for as long as there is communication in organisations, there must be listening to what is being communicated, and this warrants some skill. According to Tyagi (2013:1), listening is a language modality. It is one of the four skills of a language; viz. listening, speaking, reading and writing. It involves the active participation of an individual. Listening involves a sender, a message, and a receiver. It is the psychological process of receiving and attending to the construction of meaning, and then responding to the spoken and/or non-

verbal message. The process of listening occurs in five stages; hearing, understanding, remembering, evaluating, and responding.

Asemota (2015:28) is of the view that there are many types of listening:

- **Active listening:** These listeners learn better and faster. They listen for ideas more than detail. Of equal importance is their ability to listen for overall meaning.

- **Partial listening:** Listeners listen with a rebellious ear. They are those who think about their next reply rather than listening to what is taking place.

- **Intermittent listening:** This refers to those who listen with a deaf ear. They are those who compulsively nod and shake their heads in agreement when in essence they are not listening at all.

- **Appreciative listening:** This is a way of listening in which someone actively goes in search of certain auditory information that this person personally appreciates or likes (Janse, 2018).

On this note, SMT members must be very good listeners, especially when curriculum-related issues are narrated to them by stakeholders.

2.14.5   Conflict resolution skills

As long as organisations continue to use work teams, conflict cannot be avoided since it is an inevitable aspect of work teams. Conflict is an outcome of behaviour and is an integral part of human life (Thakore, 2013:7). Mismanagement of conflict leads to a distribution of incorrect energy towards the workforce and incorrect communication, ultimately leading to missed opportunities. There are four types of communication:

- **Interpersonal conflict:** This is conflict between two individuals. It occurs typically due to the differences in people.

- **Intrapersonal conflict:** It occurs within an individual. The experience takes place in a person's mind. It involves the individual's thoughts, values, principles and emotions.

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- **Intra-group conflict:** This conflict occurs among individuals within a team. The incompatibilities and misunderstandings among team members lead to an inter-group conflict.

- **Inter-group conflict:** This type of conflict takes place when a misunderstanding takes place among different teams within an organisation. In addition, competition also contributes to the rise of inter-group conflict (Madalina, 2016:808).

For conflict resolution in organisational structures like the SMT, Thakore (2013:11) mentions the following ways to resolve a conflict:

- Superordinate goal.

- Reduction of interdependence between teams.

- Increase resources.

- Mutual problem solving.

- Formal authority.

- Increase interactions.

Conflict in schools is as old as schools themselves. The onus lies with the SMT in ensuring that it possesses some conflict resolution skills in order that they can be in a better position to lay to rest every activity that appears to be breeding conflict in the school.

2.14.6 Time management skills

The concept of time, and its perception and management, depends on the culture of the people (Sainz, Ferrero & Ugidos, 2015:1). Schools operate and function within the parameters of time. They start their academic proceeding at a specific time and conclude at a specific time. It is crucial for SMTs to ensure that their time is managed well for all academic activities to unfold properly. Time is a very important resource and must be well managed in schools.

According to Kapur (2018:1), time management is considered to be a skill that should be

mastered by individuals at all levels and in all walks of life. Some people keep extremely busy schedules that arise out of their educational requirements, office work, job duties, or household chores.

In order to avoid feeling stressed or pressurised due to work, it is required to effectively implement time management. Time management is a concept that deals with the effective management of time. An individual should organise all his/her tasks and duties timeously; an individual, no matter what age group, no matter what job engaged in, must implement all functions in accordance with the time that makes him/her more disciplined, well organised and efficient. SMTs must at all times plan their schedules within the context of time.

2.15   ORGANISATIONAL SKILLS FOR SMTs

The school setting is a microcosm for beliefs, norms and values comprising people across the length and breadth of South Africa and beyond. There is a strong link between a value laden SMT and school performance. Schools require an SMT that is able to stand by its values, and navigate around curriculum delivery issues by basing every segment of its operation upon the agreed values. This is so that teachers teach effectively, learners learn effectively, and stakeholders provide obligatory support for schools to become centres for academic excellence. Values reinforce conduct and are therefore it is essential for organisations to prescribe what is important, desirable, and worthy, and as a result, surpass conditions or relations (Setlhodi-Mohapi & Lebeloane, 2014:475).

The quality of the functioning of the school as an organisation is determined by the extent to which the school and its management can give expression to its values. Values describe what is important and affect what we chose to do and how (Hancock, 2016:3). Value-determination is an emanation of the reality in the South African educational dispensation and is given expression by SMTs in schools (Van der Westhuyzen & Mentz, 2013:66). Just like any other structure in an organisation in civil society, SMTs in schools exist and operate within a value laden environment.

Values are the guiding principles of everybody's life, and so it should be case with SMTs in schools. They are essential for positive human behaviour and actions in one's daily lives. They are formed on the basis of interests, choices, needs, desires, and preferences. Values

serve as markers to tell if life is heading in the right direction (Aljawamis, 2018:1). For the effective implementation of the curriculum in schools, there are core values that SMT members must inculcate, such that their core mandate of effective curriculum implementation can unfold and yield positive results.

The concept of values has long been ignored in the fields of both management and educational administration (Dogan, 2016:84). It is also my belief that even values within the SMT were ignored in schools. Beside the values appearing in the vision and mission of schools, there have to be values determined by the SMT for the SMT and not for the general school populace. On this note, SMTs have the huge task of ensuring that the school environment, as well as curriculum delivery activities, are governed by their structural values to assist each one of its members in terms of determining the speed, pace, and commitment at which they should work. Popular management literature and scholarly research across a variety of disciplines identifies the important role that values play in influencing organisational behaviour, but are silent about SMT-specific values that need to be embraced in schools.

2.15.1 The significance of organisational values for SMTS

Values play a significant role in schools, *inter alia*:

- Values influence people behaviour in all stages, intentionally or not (Bakir, 2013:802).

- Values make it easier for school leaders to be successful. They set the standards and the tone for how people behave and how the organisation operates (Yapp, 2015).

- Values drive schools and assist everyone in the school to work towards achieving organisational goals (Heinila, 2020).

- Values describe what is important and affect what we chose to do, and how (Hancock, 2016 :3).

- Values serve as markers to tell if life is heading in the right direction (Aljawamis, 2018:1).

- The embracement of values is recognised as an important organisational activity in terms

of organisational development (Dogan, 2016:83).

- Values shape the school culture and impact on strategies that the school put in place. They help to create a purpose, improve team cohesion, and create a sense of commitment in the workplace (Heinila, 2020).

- Organisational values drive the way we influence and interact with each other, and how we work together to achieve results (Towerstone Leadership Centre, 2016).

- Organisational values embody those general values that guide organisational members in their selection or evaluation of behaviour (Bourne & Jenkins 2013:4).

- Through values we can see goals which reflect the cultural or spiritual development of an individual or an organisation (Gorenak & Ferjan, 2017:67).

- Organisational values develop organisational norms, guidelines or expectations that prescribe appropriate behaviour by employees in particular situations and direct the behaviour of organisational members (Thomas, 2018:25).

This investigation is all about determining the experiences of SMTs in managing low quintile secondary schools. On this note, these values that would be relevant for the SMT to embrace to manage curriculum implementation in schools, taking cognisance of them on a regular basis, are those that should be confined to the work of the SMT. Strong organisational values create a strong culture. Strong culture drives high organisational performance, engagement, and discretionary effort (Yapp, 2015).

It has been indicated that the SMT is a team of curriculum managers in schools employed for purposes of ensuring that there is maximum curriculum delivery to yield positive learner outcomes. Positive, improved, and remarkable learner outcomes paint a picture of a school that is committed to hard work and teamwork in terms of its curriculum issues. Within the context of this investigation, the following three values are of paramount importance for SMT as they deal with issues around its core mandate in schools:

2.15.1.1   Commitment

Commitment facilitates cooperation by making individuals willing to contribute to actions to

which they would not be willing to contribute to if they, and others, were not committed (Michael, Sebanz & Knoblich, 2016). The Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary (2010) views commitment as the willingness to work hard and give energy and time to a specific job or an activity.

Learners with a high level of commitment will be more loyal to their schools, and educators with a high level of commitment will contribute effectively to the learners' achievements (Mart, 2013: 336). Learners with a high level of commitment will contribute effectively to the educators' motivational levels. A characteristic feature of commitment to the fulfilment of the organisational vision is not coercion, but a willingness that encapsulates energy and time on the part of SMT members. In other words, in executing their core duties in schools, SMT members must at all times ensure that they are energised and make more time available for curriculum implementation activities in schools.

2.15.1.2   Hard work

The Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary (2010:685) refers to hard work as putting a lot of effort into a job and doing it well. SMTs should, through thick and thin, travel the extra mile in terms of their core duties of curriculum implementation in schools and ensure that at all times the job is well done.

2.15.1.3   Teamwork

Teamwork means to partner together as colleagues, working as a team to achieve shared organisational goals (DBE, 2016:6). Over and above, for teamwork to be more visible in schools, team members must be knowledgeable about their duties. According to Ogorodova (2017), working in a team is hard, as one is at the same time responsible for other people's time. It means one cannot make decisions without considering the whole group of people. It means one is not always right, and that only sometimes one might be right.

In my view, hard work and teamwork in schools are a demonstration of the commitment of curriculum implementers to the achievement of the organisational goals of the school. On the one hand, commitment and hard work demonstrate a picture of teamwork amongst SMT members. On the other hand, teamwork and commitment in schools symbolise hard work on

the part of the SMT as curriculum implementation and management specialists.

Values are beliefs upon which individuals perform their tasks on the basis of their preference (Gorenak & Ferjan, 2017:67). It is important that the education system that aims to shape human behaviour should be programmed as value-centred (Bakir, 2013:802). When organisational values are aligned with the personal values of employees, the result will be a high performance environment with high levels of employee engagement in the pursuit of excellence for the organisation's benefit (Towerstone Leadership Centre, 2016).

There are no correct answers in defining which values a school should choose, but a suggestion would be to remember that these values represent the core of the school (NEASC, 2016:3). The above stated organisational values need to be aligned with the personal values of the SMT members in schools. According to Towerstone Leadership Centre (2016), poor alignment between the values of an organisation and the personal values of employees translates directly into poor performance. It is my view that curriculum delivery activities in schools must at all times unfold within a school environment that is dominated by the progressive organisational values of the SMTs, as captured in this section.

2.15.2   SMTs AND STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT IN SCHOOLS

The provision and management of education in the current dispensation is based on the constitutional landscape that denotes democracy at its zenith. The publication of the SASA 84 of 1996, and other applicable education legislation and policies, has been remarkable education breakthroughs for the millions of education-thirsty South Africans across the length and breadth of the country. This is a clear indication that the doors of learning are wide open for all South Africans. The call by the ruling party, the African National Congress (ANC), since its 52nd congress held in Polokwane in 2007, that education is declared a National priority and a societal issue, has indeed made some inroads. What is left is for all and sundry interested in education and prepared for it to elevate it to the highest practical levels.

Section 5(1) of the SASA (84 of 1996) notes that a public school must admit learners and serve their educational requirements without unfairly discriminating against them in any way. Sub section 3 of the same section 5 states that no learner may be refused admission to a

public school. Once more, Section 16(1) of the same Act posits that the governance of every public school is vested in its SGB, and sub section 3 points out that the professional management of a public school must be undertaken by the principal under the authority of the HOD.

The HOD is the employer for each and every public servant in any of the Provincial departments, including the LPDE. The EEA (76 of 1998), and particularly its PAM section 4 (4.2-4.4.5), confirms the duties of individual SMT members. Both the SASA (84 of 1996) and the EEA (76 of 1998) mention that parents must ensure that learners are registered in schools, educators must teach these learners, SGBs must be the governance of the school, and the DoE is the employer all of the stakeholders of schools. Stakeholders are given legal leeway to engage with the SMT in terms of curriculum implementation activities in schools. Blackburn (2019:1) notes that a stakeholder is any person who has an interest in a project or organisation. He goes on to point out that a stakeholder can influence everything and everyone in an organisation, including management, team members, and many others. He concludes by positing that stakeholders are often active in an organisation and they can have a positive or a negative influence, depending on their action (Blackburn, 2019:1).

Bahsin (2018:4) defines 'stakeholder' as any person or group that can affect or is affected by an organisation. On this note, engagement or involvement of stakeholders in education is a constitutional matter. I argue that the SMT must at all times create platforms for engagement with these stakeholders around curriculum implementation activities. Failure to create relevant platforms would render schools to a position of isolation from its stakeholders. As to how SMTs must involve stakeholders in schools, one has to take cognisance of the duties of the SMT members, as encapsulated by in PAM section 4 in association with the assertions indicated below:

2.15.2.1   SMT and learners as stakeholders

The SMT has an obligation to involve learners by embarking on the following avenues *inter alia*:

- Creating study groups that would enable learners to learn, even in the absence of educators.

- Developing and implementing mechanisms that would ensure effective teaching and learning even beyond the normal teaching and learning periods.

- Introducing and implementing online learning avenues that can take place after hours, especially in the evenings when learners are at home.

- Creating supervised teaching and learning camps, especially during school recess, on weekends, and during the writing of examinations.

- Regularly analysing learner performance and determining improvement strategies that learners must embrace.

- Implementing SMT-supervised learner study periods after the school day and also over weekend and recess.

2.15.2.2   SMT and educators as stakeholders

The SMT can engage with educators in the following manner:

- Consulting in terms of the development of educator job descriptions.

- Establishing curriculum enrichment activities that go beyond the normal school.

- Allocating curriculum delivery teams to educators to manage and lead.

- Creating a platform like a WhatsApp group to share crucial departmental information.

- Creating a platform for educator professional development and getting educators to embrace the programme in their individual departments.

- Being a very good listener in terms of educators' concerns and challenges within individual departments.

- Inviting and welcoming educator innovations and initiatives.

- Praising in public, and condemning any wayward educator behaviour in private.

2.15.2.3   SMT and SGB as stakeholders

The SMT and the SGB can engage in the following manner:

- Ensuring that policies that have been developed by the SMT for the schools are implemented in the correct manner.

- Engaging the SGB in terms of curriculum delivery programmes that warrant encroachment into the school coffers.

- Participating in the sub committees of the SGB and making positive contributions.

- Communicating with the SGB regarding governance matters that emanate within the sections they are managing.

- Attending meetings that have been convened by the SGB regarding curriculum delivery issues that affect their individual departments.

- Involving the SGB in terms of community service delivery protests that attempt to halt the proceedings in the school.

- Participating in educator recruitment drives in consultation with the SGB in case of a vacant educator post in their individual departments.

2.15.2.4   SMT and social partners as stakeholders

Social partners and the SMT should at all material times engage in this manner:

- Attending to disciplinary challenges on the part of educators.

- Curriculum enrichment programmes that would stretch far beyond the school day and also during the weekends.

- Identifying substance and drug abusing educators and providing professional support to ensure a substance and drug abuse free complement of staff.

- The SMT and the unions can organise joint sessions in schools for the purposes of motivating leaners and educators to embrace hard work in their activities, because

education is the key towards self-development.

2.15.2.5   SMT and RCL as stakeholders

Makwakwa (2017:26) points out that section 11 of the South African Schools Act (SASA) stipulates that every public school that enrols learners in grades 8 to 12 must establish an RCL. The Education Laws Amendment Act (ELAA) of 2001 provides that the RCL is an official body representing all learners who are democratically elected from each class.

The RCL and the SMT should engage in the following manner:

- In matters pertaining to disciplinary challenges on the part of the learners.

- In terms of curriculum enrichment programmes that stretch far beyond the school day and also during the weekends.

- Identify substance and drug abusers and provide support to the victims for purposes of ensuring a substance and drug abuse free school.

- Organise joint sessions in schools for purposes of motivating leaners to embrace hard work in their studies, as education is the key towards self-development.

2.15.2.6   SMT and parents as stakeholders

Parents are also important stakeholders in the school and can be engaged in this manner:

- Liaising with parents regarding the performance progress of their children.

- Making a presentation of learners' performance in joint session of parents.

- Identifying struggling learners and informing their parents to refer such learners to specialists.

- Assisting in challenging disciplinary patterns on the part of the learners.

- Liaising with curriculum enrichment programmes that stretch far beyond the school day and also during the weekends to the inclusion of the holidays and recess.

- Identifying substance and drug abuse for purposes of ensuring that support is given for them to totally refrain from such activities.

2.15.2.7 SMT and the DBE as stakeholders

The DBE and its structures can be engaged in this manner:

- Embracing every single piece of information or directive from the DBE and its structures in the form of the Circuit, District and Provincial office for purposes of implementation at the school level.

- Ensuring that the department is not brought into disrepute in any way.

- Keeping contact numbers of all relevant DBE structures in case of need.

- Participating in all departmental programmes that have been organised for individual departments or the whole school.

There are other SMT and stakeholder engagement issues that have not been discussed in this section. What is important is that the above indicated issues appear to be the most relevant. SMTs are encouraged in their day-to-day activities to ensure that whatever issue rears its ugly head warranting members' attention is given to it within an acceptable time frame.

2.16 SMT AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATORS

Education is viewed as central to the economic success of every country and this produces a corresponding concern for the effective preparation, utilisation, and development of a country's teaching force (Burstow, 2018:7). I argue that education systems are undergoing transformation worldwide, and this leaves educators with some gaps regarding the execution of their duties. In some instances educators remain irrelevantly qualified for their jobs due to systemic changes that have been brought about by transformation.

This irrelevancy in terms of qualifications disadvantages educators, learners, and the SMT mainly because curriculum delivery is badly affected. There is no way in which this pool of educators could be taken back to teacher training colleges or universities for retraining. The question of educator Continuing Professional Development (CPD) has always been an option

to address this challenge. CPD is a term used to describe all the activities in which teachers engage during the course of a career which are designed to enhance their work (Day & Sachs, 2004:3). As Badri, Alnuaimi and Mohaidat (2016:1) point out, educator CPD is necessary to keep them up to date with continuously changing practices and learner needs.

Meyer, Abel and Bruckner (2018:173) support this assertion when indicating that South Africa faces many of the same education challenges as other countries in sub-Saharan Africa, and CPD of teachers is widely seen as essential if the poor performance of the public schooling system is to be improved. Professional development has always been the cornerstone for quality education to be realised in every organisation and the teaching fraternity and schools in particular (Bernadine, 2019:1). The CPD of teachers has been a topic of academic discussion and political intervention for a number of years (Burstow, 2018:2).

I argue that it is the duty of the SMT to ensure that each and every educator under their watch is relevantly qualified and remains relevantly qualified, and thus competent to execute his/her tasks within the scope of the profession. This can only be done through the identification of the gap, working out a plan to professionally develop the educator, developing the educator, and monitoring the progress that he/she is making after development.

CPD can take place at the school level as well as at other levels outside the school, such as the Circuit, District, Province, or DBE. According to Day and Sachs (2004:3), expectations for a higher quality of teaching demands teachers who are well qualified, highly motivated, knowledgeable, and skilful; not only at the point of entry to teaching but throughout their careers. They go further to point out that CPD is no longer an option but an expectation of all educators in schools. It is through high standards in teaching that learning can be shifted in a positive direction, and this means the extent to which governments prepare teachers to support equitable and quality learning has become very crucial.

CPD of teachers is an important dimension in improving the quality of teacher knowledge and pedagogical tendencies (Sayed & Badroodien, 2018:1). However, real quality improvement in schools depends on professional development that really works. After professional development, teachers must be able to apply the acquired new knowledge and skills to their classrooms in ways that improve learning outcomes (Douglas, Carter, Smith &

Killins, 2015:3).

In order for teachers' knowledge and skills to remain current and relevant in terms of providing the best quality education in schools, it is imperative that all teachers commit themselves to CPD (Mettler, 2016:18). On this note, it is the duty of SMTs in schools to ensure that each and every educator within their departments or sections commits themselves to the terms of reference of the CPD.

2.16.1   Defining CPD for educators

Teachers engage in CPD as a way of staying up to date with their content field and with pedagogical reforms (Main & Pendergast, 2015:1). CPD is seen as a way of addressing the needs of both untrained and undertrained educators, as well as equipping educators with the knowledge and skills they need to deal with the complexity of educational issues in schools. It is often referred to as 'In-Service Education and Training' (INSET) of educators (Sayed & Badroodien, 2018:4).

Teachers possess a diversity of knowledge and skills and require sound professional development to continue to build and enhance their expertise (Main & Pendergast, 2015:3). CPD is about ensuring that professional development is not a one-off event, but rather that it focuses on gaps in teachers' professional knowledge and offers practice for improvement on an on-going basis (Akyeampong, Au-Yeboa & Yaw Kwah, 2018:77). When teachers improve their skills and competence, they also positively enhance the learning of their learners (Mettler, 2016:18).

I argue that since the introduction of CPD in South Africa, it has always been the responsibility of SMTs in schools to ensure that all educators respond positively towards this policy directive in order that they are capable of improving learner outcomes. Learners perform well because of effective teaching styles that educators employ in the classroom situation. With an education system that keeps changing, it is vital for SMTs to ensure that teaching activities are strictly monitored in schools in such a way that any educator gaps can be identified and addressed by way of CPD activities.

CPD is a mechanism that is applied by SMTs in schools to empower educators and SMTs

themselves to become more knowledgeable and competent in the area of teaching and curriculum management, such that the improvement of learner outcomes becomes unquestionable. It is an instrument that SMTs use to ensure that educators are always on par with what is expected of them regarding any curricular changes. CPD is a teaching enhancement mechanism that aims to transform educators into the best agents of curriculum implementation in schools. Through CPD all educator challenges pertaining to curriculum delivery, and particularly the teaching activities, are identified and obliterated to ensure a high standard of teachers and improved learner outcomes in schools.

2.16.2 CPD for educators: International perspective

CPD is a global instrument through which states empower the educator workforce with contemporary curriculum delivery mechanisms to ensure that they are at all times relevantly qualified. Empowering educators is the right step in ensuring that learner outcomes in schools keep spiralling upwards. The next sections detail how CPD is dealt with in a number of countries.

Globally, a number of schools suffer from unthinkable learner outcomes schools, even though large amounts of funds have been invested in education. Some states and schools do have very good education policies, and consequently do not assist in any way when it comes to improvement in terms of learners outcomes and this situation is very disturbing. According to Opfer and Pedder (2011:3), if student learning outcomes are to be improved, then one pathway for doing so is the provision of more effective professional learning activities for teachers in schools, where effective activities result in positive change for teachers and their pupils.

2.16.2.1 English perspective

England is one of the developed countries whose education system is being mirrored, given the literacy levels of its inhabitants. It is one of those countries that is embarking on the professional development of educators. The term 'professional development' is said to have been coined by Richard Gardner, who was in charge of professional development for the building profession at York University in the mid-1970s. It was chosen because it did not differentiate between learning from courses and learning 'on the job'. The term is now

common to many professions.

CPD embraces the idea that individuals aim for continuous improvement in their professional skills and knowledge, beyond the basic training initially required to carry out the job. In teaching, such development used to be called 'in-service training', or INSET, with the emphasis on delivery rather than the outcome. Arguably, the change in terminology signifies a shift in emphasis away from the provider and/or employer towards the individual. In other words, the individual is now responsible for his or her lifelong career development, under the umbrella of the school or schools that employ the teacher (Gray, 2005:5).

The main providers of CPD services in the England are local authorities and their Regional Improvement Collaborative (RIC); schools themselves, often with outside support; and universities responsible for teacher education. Some private companies also offer CPD. At the local authority level, educational advisers organise courses which teachers have the opportunity to attend. Many of these courses rely on the local authorities' own resources and personnel (Eurydice, 2019). From this deliberation it is clear that England is making provision for in-school professional development, as well as out-of-school professional development. Unlike in other countries where CPD remains the baby of the government, the situation in England warrants a pat on the back as a number of stakeholders are already involved in the educational affairs of schools.

In July 2016, the Department for Education in England published a Standard for Teachers Professional Development for all schools under its jurisdiction. The Standard sets out a clear description of what effective CPD teachers looks like. To make good practice happen, action must be taken by school leaders, teachers and external providers or experts. Only when all three stakeholders act in concert will CPD have long-term, positive impacts on students' learning (Teacher Development Trust, 2020).

The United Kingdom Department for Education (2016:3) confirms that teachers need considerable knowledge and skills, which need to be developed as their careers progress. With the Teachers' Standards, teachers make the education of their pupils their first concern, and are accountable for achieving the highest possible standards in work and conduct.

The Teachers' Standards set out a number of expectations about professional development;

namely, that teachers should:

- Keep their knowledge and skills up-to-date and are self-critical.

- Take responsibility for improving teaching through appropriate professional development, responding to advice and feedback from colleagues.

- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of how pupils learn and how this has an impact on teaching.

- Have a secure knowledge of the relevant subject(s) and curriculum areas.

- Reflect systematically on the effectiveness of lessons and approaches to teaching.

- Know and understand how to assess the relevant subject and curriculum areas.

The standard for teachers' professional development makes a distinction between direct and indirect professional development. Direct seeks specifically to improve practice and pupil outcomes, whereas indirect may improve, for example, the running of the school or offer support around particular procedural tasks. It distinguishes between programmes that involve many activities designed to sustain and embed practice, and may well have a long lasting impact on pupils (Patzer, 2020).

The first National strategy for teachers CPD was launched in 2001 and aimed to enhance capacity in schools for effective professional development, accompanied by central CPD funding direct schools (Pedder, Opfer, McCormick & Storey, 2010:367). Field (2005:61) indicates that the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) is the government ministry which provides guidance and support for CPD. Its position in relation to CPD is summarised as follows:

> *Continuing Professional Development includes any activities that increase teachers'*
> *knowledge or understanding, and their effectiveness in schools. It can help raise*
> *teaching and learning standards and improve job satisfaction. CPD is for all*
> *educators, at any stage of their career.*

In my view the CPD initiatives in England are not the responsibility of the government or the

education authorities alone. Much funding is sourced from the private sector, which is of course very powerful given the British economic landscape. Pedder *et al.* (2010:367) indicate that by 2008, when the 'Schools and Continuing Professional Development in England the State of the Nation' study started, the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA) had published a number of strategy documents through which it completed the revision of the professional standards for classroom teachers, established National priority areas for CPD supply, created guidance on effective CPD and impact evaluation, and had continued to coordinate the Postgraduate Professional Development (PPD) programmes for teachers.

However, much of the CPD undertaken in England is of a poor quality, and the significant investment involved in terms thereof could be much better spent. Estimates in TALIS suggest that England's secondary school teachers tend not to rate highly the development activities they experience. Fewer teachers report a lack of time due to family commitments than cite work schedules as a barrier. Heavy work schedules are clearly hampering teachers' professional development. However, evidence in TALIS suggests that the lack of good quality teacher development could also be worsening the impact of high workloads (Sellen, 2016).

2.16.2.2   Italian perspective

One of the possible ways that could affect the improvement of the professional competence of teachers in Italy is the CPD of teachers (Uralbaevich, 2016:80). In Italian schools the terms 'professional development', 'staff development', 'teacher development' and INSET have been used interchangeably and have been defined in a number of ways (Asghar & Ahmad, 2014:147).

In implementing Professional Teacher Development (PTD), people have to abide by the following principles; recognition of needs and the requirements of teachers. The teaching profession, school, and local community work as a team and all activities enable continuous feedback, continuous monitoring and maintenance, and ensure coherence of programmes (Jonanova-Mitkovska, 2010:2923).

The idea of teacher development is malleable because it takes many forms, has different

meanings in different contexts, operates from a variety of implicit and explicit beliefs and value bases, and manifests in different forms of action. Staff development can be conducted at individual or institutional level, where one may use it to refine one's own skills and knowledge through the following approaches:

- **Client centred approach:** Input derived from teachers is used by themselves as a source of developing their professional skills. This approach is based on learner centred programmes that attempt to incorporate classroom information by and from the learners. This approach is practiced through workshops, which could address any curriculum related issues. A client centred approach is advantageous in a number of ways, including ownership of learning, developing critical and analytical thinking, and a lessened fear of outside criticism.

- **Through class observation:** This approach may be viewed as an extension of the cooperative approach. Self development is through interaction between the teacher and the observer. The observer tries to stay within the teacher's framework of classroom experience, understands what the teacher says, and makes the teacher feels listened to. Sometimes the teacher might not accept everything the observer says. At the disclosing stage the observer has to remain within certain limits, and offer the teacher a perspective rather than a prescription.

- **Through groups in teacher development:** This approach is likely to create an interpersonal, caring environment with a shared commitment to the process of intentional development. This kind of professional development is carried out by oneself, although other people play important role in creating a psychological facilitative climate.

- **Collaborative vs. cooperative approach:** In this approach cooperative development is carried out by the speaker and the 'understander'. The roles may be exchanged later. The understander helps the speaker's formulate ideas as a speaker delivers them. It requires a relationship of trust and confidentiality in addition to showing respect, empathy, and honesty to each other.

- **Data-based teacher development approach:** This approach aims at using classroom data for learning new skills and thus developing oneself. Teachers are encouraged to comment on both the positive and negative aspects of the data. This kind of approach

makes a useful contribution to teacher development.

In this context staff are regarded as self-reflective and self-critical individuals with diverse views and approaches who can be depend upon professionalism as well as their ability for self-development. It is commonly presumed that staff development adopted on a self-reflective or self-critical base is likely to achieve its goals and leaves teachers with enthusiasm and motivation to enhance their knowledge and skills (Asghar & Ahmad, 2014:151).

Jonanova-Mitkovska (2010:2924) indicates that, according to the National Strategy for Development of Education specifically the programme for professional development of school staff, in accordance with the necessity of meeting the standards for compatibility, modernity and efficiency of educational practice, and under it, and the promotion of effective teachers as agents for the effectiveness of educational institutions, is the requirement of effective professional development of teachers. Professional development of teachers is to be realised on several levels, including:

- First, National or regional – usually through the regional offices of the Bureau for Educational Development.

- Second, schools/educational institutions active in professional groups of teachers.

- Third, professional meetings, roundtables, symposia, most current or 'basic' questions from the educational process where participation is individual or comprises school officials.

- Fourth, pedagogic and professional periodicals, newspapers, informants with professional materials, methodical items, observations, where participation is individual or at the level of the institution/school.

It appears that the situation in Italy, regarding the professional development of teachers, is not like it is the case in England where much funding is made available by the private sector. However, the education authorities seem to be hands-on in terms of the professional development of teachers.

2.16.2.3   Canadian perspective:

Canada has not one education system, but rather 13; one for each of the three territories and 10 provinces (Perlaza & Tardif, 2016:201). School education in Canada is the responsibility of the 10 provinces of Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Newfoundland, and Labrador, Nova Scotia, Ontario, Prince Edward Island, Quebec and Saskatchewan (Campbell *et al.,* 2017:17). Each province is led by a Department or Ministry of Education and is led by a Minister of Education (Waddington, 2018:2). There is no one size fits all approach to professional learning in Canada, and nor should there be.

Concerning teachers' professional development, subject and pedagogical knowledge continue to be a priority in Canada; however, specific professional development needs vary by teacher, career stage, and changing educational contexts (Campbell *et al.,* 2017:17). Alongside the need for subject-specific and curricular pedagogical knowledge, important priorities for teacher professional development in Canada include understanding teaching and supporting diverse students, as well as addressing inequities and engaging in complex learning for changing social, demographic, economic, political and technological contexts (Campbell, 2017:11).

In Canada, teachers are engaged in both professional development provided or required by their school, District, or larger education system, and also in self-directed professional learning. Canadians believe that the professional development of teachers encompasses formal and informal activities which teachers undertake to direct their own learning and to enhance their professional practice (Campbell *et al.,* 2017:33). Campbell (2017:13) mentions that Canada has a wide range of types of learning design and implementation approaches for professional learning:

- **Active and variable learning:** Available evidence suggests that Canadian teachers are actively participating in a variety of professional learning opportunities. Teachers in Alberta report one of the highest participation rates in professional development internationally at 98%, especially for courses and workshops at 85%, and education conferences or seminars at 74%.

- *Collaborative learning:* Collaboration within schools includes teams of professionals.

For example in Ontario, the Ministry of Education invited school Districts to select a team of educators from relevant grades, a principal, an early years curriculum leader or consultant, and a supervisory officer to engage in the Early Primary Collaborative Inquiry (EPCI), initially focused on kindergarten and grade 1 and then extended to grade 2. Collaborative professional learning opportunities support teachers to learn across schools. Collaboration with universities and community groups, alongside educators from Districts and schools, can support inquiry into new practices to engage with teachers' practices, students' success, and enhanced school, family and community connections.

- **Job-embedded professional learning:** Sometimes this is considered to be directly embedded within school-based professional learning. Induction and mentorship can be powerful job embedded professional learning experiences. Professional development can be embedded in someone's work without them being physically located within someone's workplace; rather, the importance is new learning and co-learning that has the potential to be embedded and can contribute to better knowledge, skills and practices.

In all the provinces of Canada, governments provide funding for the CPD of teachers; however, the levels of funding fluctuate with changing economic and political circumstances (Campbell, 2017:17). These fluctuations may be a huge disadvantage to those provinces that are ravaged by economic and political challenges, unlike in a country or state where educator professional development is centralised. In my opinion, even if Canadians embrace the professional development of educators, educators acquire different skills and different professional expertise if professional development programmes are developed at the level of individual provinces. What has been identified as a CPD need for educators in one province might not be a need in the other nine provinces of Canada.

2.16.3   Continuing professional development for educators: African perspective

Schools on the continent of Africa are not immune to CPD. As CPD is taking place in almost all schools in the world, it is at the same time taking place in all schools on the continent of Africa.

2.16.3.1   Namibian perspective

Located in the South Western corner of Africa, and bordering Zambia in the North-East,

Angola in the North, Botswana in the East, South Africa in the South, and the Atlantic ocean in the west, Namibia was one of the last colonies on the African continent to secure political independence from South Africa in 1990 (Nyambe, Kasanda & Iipinge, 2018:42). Soon after independence, Namibia witnessed a proliferation of policies that positioned teachers' CPD at the centre of the education reform landscape.

The first decade of Namibia's independence was principally concerned with increasing access to education as well as ensuring equity and democracy in educational provision, and the subsequent decade saw increased concerns over the fourth goal of education; namely the provision of quality education for all (Nyambe *et al.,* 2018:42-43). The concept of CPD came into existence in education practices, but there is no single piece of literature that makes any claims about its general origin. The CPD of teachers in schools in the Namibian context was necessitated by the adoption of the decentralised CPD model in the education system (Nakambale, 2018:51).

In the old Namibian practices, professional development needs for educators were determined on their behalf by central authorities. With the decentralised and localised model of CPD, educators are given the opportunity to have their voices heard in determining their own professional development needs (UNAM, 2014:5). This model advocates a bottom-up, participatory process of the identification of professional development needs for teachers in Namibia. It acknowledges that teachers are unique in important ways and that attempts should be made to respond to specific teacher needs (Nyambe *et al.,* 2018:48-51).

This decentralised model of CPD for teachers in Namibia was introduced in 2010 and provides for structures in the form of committees at various levels in the education system (Nyambe *et al.,* 2018:42-46). The committee is the key driver; the kingpin for professional development of teachers at the site/school level. The committee can be established at school, cluster, or Circuit level. Membership of this committee is not prescribed and schools are encouraged to compose the committee depending on the conditions on the ground. However, the following framework is suggested; principal, mentor teacher, HOD, novice/beginner teacher, and experienced teacher.

This committee is led or chaired by the school principal who by virtue of his/her position is an instructional leader and teacher developer. The school principal as a school-based teacher

developer is responsible for the professional journey that starts when a beginner teacher arrives at the school for the first time, regardless of whether or not he/she is a college or university graduate (UNAM, 2014:1).

CPD, as a programme in the Namibian education system, is conducted and administered from different levels of the education system (Nakambale, 2018:53). It requires an effective mix of employer-funded support programmes and accountability systems. Support without accountability and monitoring is likely to result in little impact and an inability to realign a poorly functioning support programme (MEAC, 2017:36). As a 15 year turnaround strategy, the Education and Training Sector improvement Programme (ETSIP) was developed in August 2005, and implemented in 2006 in order to improve the quality of teaching and learning, and to meet the demands of Vision 2030. The ETSIP was augmented by other initiatives, such as the National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST). Both the ETSIP and the NPST identified CPD for teachers as one of the key pillars of a better quality education (Nyambe *et al.,* 2018:43). UNAM (2014:1) mentions that CPD for teachers has great potential for enhancing learning as it recognises that educators learn best when:

- They have a voice in determining their own professional development needs as opposed to those that are determined for them by others.

- The learning process is locally driven, placing the responsibility of learning in the hands of educators themselves not in those of external powers.

- Learning takes place within the working milieu, as opposed to when it takes place off-site.

- They are seen as unique individuals with unique contexts and needs who, at times, require tailor made programmes as opposed to the one-size-fits-all approach.

- They collaborate with colleagues from other schools, clusters, etc. and learn from them.

It has been indicated that within the Namibian context, there is a school-based CPD Coordinating Committee (SBCPDCC). Nyambe *et al.* (2018:46) confirm that the SBCPDCC is responsible for coordinating and facilitating on-going teacher learning opportunities at the school level. UNAM (2017:2) outlines the roles of the SBCPDCC as follows:

- The school principal's role as the committee chair or CPD coordinator:

  o Ensure that a functioning SBCPDCC is established.

  o Schedule and chair SBCPDCC meetings.

  o Ensure that school-based CPD plans are available.

  o Oversee the implementation of the school based CPD plans.

  o Ensure that teachers participate actively in CPD and continue to learn.

  o Liaise with regional CPD coordinating committee (RCPDCC) and CPD unit when necessary.

- The school-based CPD coordinator's roles:

  o Coordinates the activities of CPD at the level of the school.

  o Keep records of CPD activities at school/site level.

  o Serves as secretary for the SBCPDCC.

  o Disseminates CPD information to teachers.

  o Assists in planning CPD activities at school/site level.

  o Assists in monitoring the implementation of CPD activities at school level.

  o Serves as the CPD liaison person at school level.

  o In consultation with the principal, attends meetings of CPD at cluster/ Circuit or regional level.

- Quoting UNAM (2014:5), Nyambe (2018:46), mention the roles and responsibilities of the site/school-based CPD coordinating committee as follows:

  o Identifying learning needs of teachers at the site/ school level.

  o Planning for these needs.

o Implementing learning opportunities to address these needs.

o Evaluating, either in terms of monitoring progress or evaluating impact.

Nyambe *et al.* (2018:47) go on to point out that each school is expected to draft an annual CPD plan to guide its activities throughout the year. In order to manage CPD at a school level, Namibian school principals were trained in 2014 through a programme called Instructional Leadership for School Managers. One of the learning outcomes of the programme was for principals to understand, and be able to carry out, their roles as teacher developers through the implementation of the school based CPD for teachers.

In terms of identifying professional development needs for educators at school level, UNAM (2014:5) identify the following ways:

- **Peer observation:** Peer observation involves teachers observing each other's practice and learning from one another, focusing on teachers' individual needs, and the opportunity to both learn from others' practice and offer constructive feedback to peers (VSDET, 2018:8). When observations are made for the professional development of teachers, they play roles of being part of a larger professional development effort and being the core of the professional development community (Nakambale, 2018:81).

- **Interviews:** The principal, HOD or member of the SBCPDCC conduct an interview with a colleague.

- **Questionnaire:** A questionnaire is a research instrument consisting of a series of questions for the purpose of gathering answers from the respondents (McLeod, 2018). A simple questionnaire can be drafted to solicit information from colleagues at the school.

- **Teacher self-evaluation (TSE):** In the National Standards for Schools, a TSE form has been developed. This form can be used to gather data on challenges faced by the teacher.

- **Teacher self-reflections (TSR):** Teachers can keep reflective journals where they revisit their lessons, and identify strengths and weaknesses which become part of the professional development exercise. Self-reflection can serve as a good source of data on areas where teachers might need development.

- **Learner performance data (LPD):** Just like the Standardise Achievement Tests (SATs), results provide useful data from the National level down to the school level. Other learner performance data sources include examiners' reports, tests, and examinations conducted by teachers themselves. Data from these sources can be analysed to identify those content areas where learners underperformed.

The deliberations above suggest that just like in any other country in Africa and the rest of the world where educator CPD is taking place, CPD for educators is also taking place in Namibia under the auspices of the SBCPDCC at the school level. However, there has never been any mention of a clear policy on CPD that would strengthen the CPD model so that Namibian CPD could be a subject of a specific bureaucracy. Over and above, nothing has been mentioned with regard to incentives that educators receive after having gone through the CPD processes.

In conclusion, what is pleasing is that Namibian schools are playing an important role in terms of determining educator CPD gaps/needs and consequently their work towards addressing the gaps is spot on. There has also been no mention of CPD activities that take place through the improvement of educator qualifications whereby tertiary institutions could be engaged for purposes of enrolling teachers towards a CPD programme. But, because Namibia has been a colony for a considerable amount of time, it is clear that its CPD activities will be improved in order to match the standard of other countries on the African continent.

2.16.3.2   Ugandan perspective

In Uganda, education sector reforms such as INSET were reignited in 1987 to revive the education system which had collapsed due to political turmoil. The Education Policy Review Commission (EPRC) was appointed to assess the education sector and give recommendations towards policy restoration and improvement. The acknowledgement of a failed system instigated the inception of Teacher Development Management Systems (TDMS) in 1994 to reinforce the teaching workforce (Nzarirwehi & Atuhumuze, 2019:21).

Obeiro and Ezati (2018:155) assert that CPD in Uganda is decentralised to the Primary Teachers' Colleges (PTCs); each of which is in charge of a network of Coordinating Centres

(CCs). There are currently 539 CCs, compared with the 570 planned. The CCs are managed by a Coordinating Centre Tutor (CCT). There are 23 CCs in the capital city Kampala, and 34 in Wakiso. Teacher professional development in Uganda is perceived as in-service training, aimed at the continual improvement of teaching skills, knowledge to match the ever-emerging issues, and changes in education (Malunda, 2018:3). Arinaitwe, Taylor, Broadbent and Oloya (2019:18) confirm that a teacher in-service may grow professionally either vertically or horizontally through upgrading to improve their qualifications. In my opinion this is a self-initiated teacher development programme in the sense that educators enrol at tertiary institutions for the purposes of improving their qualifications and this is one of the right steps in CPD. Improving teacher development significantly contributes to the improved quality of pedagogical practices (Malunda, 2018:15).

Obeiro and Ezati (2018:155) affirm that CPD activities in Uganda may be initiated by a number of agencies and implemented through the CCs, with each centre being responsible for supporting a cluster of approximately eight schools. The CCTs are expected to play a critical role in engaging teachers and creating a learning community, especially by engaging teachers in CPD modelled on experiential learning. Malunda (2018:3) mentions that despite the significant contribution of teacher professional development to the quality of pedagogical practices, institutionalised CPD systems in Ugandan schools are generally not inadequate.

New teachers are not formally inducted in public schools to meet their needs for security, belonging, status, and direction in both job and school community. The school's ability to organise training workshops depends on their financial capacity. According to Arinaitwe *et al.* (2019:23), programmes that are linked to specific school needs are more effective, especially activities based on demonstration and peer review. School focused CPD provides opportunities for synergies to develop among the teachers and the staff of the schools.

In my opinion it is crucial that CPD activities be initiated at the school level, as that is the immediate workplace of the educators where strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of their pedagogical expertise are regularly documented in the process of monitoring, support and evaluation by school authorities. In other words, schools must be obliged to professionally develop their educators in terms of gaps that might be identified by the educators' needs analysis.

Arinaitwe *et al.* (2019:18) mention that Ugandan education authorities have developed a new CPD framework to enable the development of a coherent long-term plan to improve teacher effectiveness, institutional leadership, and student learning. The framework outlines how CPD should be structured, monitored and evaluated. The framework also spells out teacher competency standards which were previously not emphasised in Education Ministry policies. The framework aims to achieve the following objectives:

- Strengthen teacher competencies, ethics and professionalism.

- Guide the implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of CPD for teachers.

- Guide the identification of teacher professional needs.

- Provide a basis for assessing, recognising and rewarding teachers' achievement in a variety of professional activities.

- Guide the formation of communities of practice to enhance ethical conduct, professionalism and cross-disciplinary collaboration among teachers.

The framework also recommends the establishment of the Uganda National Institute for Teacher Education (UNITE) as an autonomous institution responsible for spearheading the training of tutors and the delivery of CPD activities. Through UNITE, teacher training institutions will be linked to the CPD implementation framework. In my opinion this is a good gesture of commitment towards bettering the skills of Ugandan educators, especially regarding school-based CPD activities. A number of teacher professional development mechanisms would them be put in place by the school authorities to ensure that educators are pedagogically well equipped.

2.16.4 The need for, and importance of, CPD in South African schools

I argue that educational systems are undergoing restructuring in many parts of the African continent and the rest of the world. This is often because governments and nations are seeking to improve not the quality, but the quabtity, of learner outcomes to increase competitiveness in the global economy.

The transformation of the education sector in the South Africa has always been extremely and emphatically vociferous on the fundamental human right to quality education. The provision of quality education in schools has to take place under the watchful eye of the SMTs. This necessitates the fact that SMTs must at all material times be at the forefront of ensuring that educators embrace the changes that are brought about by this transformation. This is to ensure that effective teaching and positive learner outcomes can be realised in schools. CPD is for all educators at all levels of the school organogram, regardless of the position that they occupy in schools.

Meyer *et al.* (2018:176) point out that in the search for quality education for all, the South African school curriculum has undergone several ambitious transformations since 1994. They go further to indicate that the successive rounds of curriculum reform have engendered discontinuity and frustration for educators. Curriculum 2005 was adopted in 1997, and introduced Outcomes Based Education (OBE), a type of curriculum that had been implemented previously in the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. The intention to transform education in South Africa was to develop a world class education system that would be suitable for meeting the challenges of the 21st century and beyond (DoE, 2001:4).

I argue that this transformation of the education system has brought about challenges on the part of educators and SMTs in schools. This is because they were faced with the mammoth task of ensuring that each and every section of the new curricular was understood by every educator in order that the implementation thereof could be done as correctly as possible in schools. Over and above, the SMTs were faced with the task of ensuring that every member of the educator staff was combat-ready to deliver the curriculum as effectively as possible for the organisational goals of schools and that of the DBE to be achieved.

Quality education can help develop citizens who are capable and mindful, which in turn improves their livelihoods and those of others around them (UNESCO, 2016:11). I argue further that it is crucial for SMTs to ensure that CPD is embraced and correctly dealt with in schools because, according to Hyatt (2017:3), CPD is an important part of teacher education. It helps educators to keep their professional knowledge and skills up to date. CPD helps educators to learn new techniques in teaching the learners of the current generation. It helps the educators to grow professionally and at the same time improves their classroom skills.

Educators who have long been in the teaching fraternity are usually reluctant to change their teaching styles to accommodate the current developments in teaching.

I go further to argue that SMTs are required not only to be receptive of the changes in terms of the curriculum, but to also lead the curriculum implementation and curriculum management processes. The overall aim in this regard is to ensure that learning outcomes can ultimately point to a positive picture. Each new or revised curriculum iteration involves large-scale educator training, consisting of orientation workshops to introduce educators to the principles underlying the new curriculum, expected curriculum outcomes or assessment standards, and new approaches and teaching methods (Meyer *et al.,* 2018:177), hence the need for CPD.

Sejanamane (2014:60) is also supportive of my argument when pointing out that the SMT has to implement curriculum reforms and uphold the changes that have been introduced. At all times the SMT must remember that quality learner performance outcomes are the name of the game. It is the SMTs in schools that must spearhead, monitor, and support every educator professional development avenue to try and close any evident curriculum gaps so that the teaching and learning situation in schools is characterised by effective educators leading to improved learner outcomes.

The Department of Education (2007:6) points out that most currently serving educators received their professional education and entered teaching when education was an integral part of the apartheid project and was organised into racially and ethnically divided sub-systems. The current generation of educators were the first to experience the new non-racial, democratic transformation of the education system. Since 1994 these educators have had to cope with the rationalisation of the teaching community into one single National system, and the introduction of new curricular which emphasises greater professional autonomy and required educators to have new knowledge and applied competences, including the use of new technologies.

Further, there have been radical changes in the demographic, cultural and linguistic composition of classrooms. This assertion attests to the fact that, amongst other duties that SMTs are faced with in schools, is the issue of CPD for educators. Unless SMTs embark on CPD of educators that are placed in their departments, the dream of having effective

curriculum implementation and improved learning outcomes in schools will continue to be a nightmare for all South African schools. NEEDU (2018:1) states clearly that it is common knowledge, backed by research, that educator quality is a very important factor that has a direct and positive influence on the quality of teaching and learning in schools. Here are some of the reasons why CPD is extremely important for educators in schools:

- **CPD encourages exchange of knowledge:** It encourages educators to exchange their knowledge and ideas with other educators in school. In this way the SMT can act as a mentor to the new educators, and the new educators can provide the SMTs with up to date knowledge on the latest teaching styles and modes.

- **It improves communication with other schools:** CPD enables educators to meet colleagues from other schools. This increases knowledge sharing and they learn new teaching techniques. It improves the quality of education by sharing knowledge.

- **Its courses are flexible:** Educators can take traditional classroom courses or take online courses. Educators have the flexibility of learning from home. There is much online material available to develop teaching skills.

- **It helps educators obtain better opportunities**: The CPD courses help educators achieve promotion and have better careers. CPD courses are relevant to educators' professional works, so educators learn much that will improve their professional skills.

- **CPD is evidence of competence:** Completing CPD courses gives proof of educators' competence and educators stand out from the rest of their colleagues. Educators become more competent than others because of CPD. It also shows that an educator's knowledge is up to date.

2.16.4.1   Features of CPD for educators

There are salient features that characterise CPD for educators in schools, and SMTs must at all times ensure that they understand and embrace them for CPD activities to be correctly dealt with. Amongst many features that are identifiable by way of the literature study, the most important are those that are identified by NEEDU (2018:2):

- CPD allows teachers to learn in the day-to-day environment in which they work rather

than being pulled out to attend outside training courses.

- This exercise is collaborative, providing opportunities for teachers to interact with peers. A more collaborative approach is mutually beneficial to all educators.

- It changes teaching practices and improves student learning.

- CPD provides on-going support for teachers to implement new teaching practices or strategies.

- It provides teachers with feedback about how implementing new skills, content, and knowledge impacts on learning.

- It includes opportunities for individual and group reflection and coaching.

- It focuses squarely on improving teachers' content knowledge and pedagogy.

- It provides adequate time and follow-up support.

- It is on-going, accessible and inclusive.

- It recognises teachers as professionals and life-long learners.

2.16.5   Forms of CPD in schools

CPD in schools takes a number of forms that all have a bearing on the professional development of educators. It is the duty of SMTs to ensure that these CPD types feature in the professional developmental avenues for educators in schools.   OECD (2009:50) highlights the following forms of educator CPD in schools:

- Courses/workshops: CPD in this regard is on subject matter or methods and/or other education-related topics.

- Education conferences or seminars: This refers to areas where educators and/or researchers present their research results and discuss education problems and achievements.

- Qualification programme: This programme is offered by recognised tertiary institutions.

- Observation visits to other schools: This is for purposes of sharing of good practices.

- Participation in a network of teachers: These networks are formed specifically for the professional development of educators.

- Individual or collaborative research: This research is specifically on a topic of professional interest.

- Mentoring and/or peer observation and coaching: This can take place as part of a formal school arrangement.

2.16.6 CPD initiatives in action in schools

It has been articulated that problems related to curriculum implementation in schools have always been the lack of competence on the part of educators in the education system. The recognition of this lack of educator competence resulted in several governmental initiatives to develop and upgrade educators so that they could have Content Knowledge (CK) and Pedagogic Content Knowledge (PCK) in order to teach effectively (Carrim, 2013:50).

The unfolding of CPD initiatives in schools must be in such a way that those initiatives impact positively on educators' CK, PCK, and improved performance on the part of the general leaner population. Such initiatives include in-service training programmes; and workshops and courses conducted by departmental officials, NGOs, and tertiary institutions for the promulgation of additional educator development policies (Carrim, 2013:51).

In designing and determining CPD initiatives for educators, the designers must all times take into cognisance some basic principles to CPD initiatives of a required standard. Darling-Hammond, Chungewei, Andrea, Richardson and Orphanos (2009:9) mention the following principles:

- Professional development should be intensive, on-going and connected to practice: Professional development for educators comes in the form of occasional workshops, typically lasting less than a day; each one focusing on a discrete topic with their connections to the classroom left to educators' imaginations. This must never be the case in current CPD initiatives as educators need to be empowered.

- Professional development should focus on student learning and address the teaching of specific curriculum content: Professionalism is most effective when it addresses the concrete, everyday challenges involved in teaching and learning academic subject matter, rather than focusing on abstract educational principles or teaching methods taken out of context.

- Professional development should align with school improvement priorities and goals: Professional development tends to be more effective when it is an integral part of a larger school reform effort, rather than when activities are isolated, having little to do with other initiatives or changes underway at the school.

- Professional development should build strong working relationships among educators: Educators exhibit a strongly individualistic ethos, owing largely to the privacy and isolation of their daily work as it has been organised in most schools.

2.16.7 Legislative and policy framework for CPD in SA

The South African government continues to seek ways of improving the education system of the country. A number of education policies and plans are either being introduced or amended (Sejanamane, 2014:60). The challenges facing Teacher Education and Development (TED) in South Africa are considerable. They include a lack of access to quality TED opportunities for prospective and practicing educators, a mismatch between the provision of and demand for educators of particular types, the failure of the system to achieve dramatic improvement in the quality of teaching and learning in schools, a fragmented and uncoordinated approach to TED, the tenuous involvement of educators, their organisations and other role players in TED planning, and inefficient and poorly monitored funding mechanisms (DBE 2011:1).

CPD of school based educators, including SMT members, takes place in schools as result of a number of education policies. For the purpose of this investigation, the National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development (NPFTED), Education Labour Relations Council Resolution 8 of 2003, and Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development (ISPFTED) will be dealt with. The next sections focus on the above legislative frameworks.

2.16.7.1   NPFTED

CPD in South Africa unfolds in schools under the National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development (NPFTED). The NPFTED outlines a National collaborative strategy for teacher education and development needs, with the aim of improving the delivery of the new curriculum and teaching practice in schools, given the education needs of a growing democracy in a 21st century global environment (Meyer *et al.,* 2018:178). According to the Department of Education (2006:4), this policy framework for teacher education in South Africa is designed to develop a teaching profession ready and able to meet the needs of a democratic South Africa and the 21st century.

The overriding aim of the NPFTED is to properly equip educators to undertake their essential and demanding tasks, enable them to continually enhance their professional competence and performance, and to raise the esteem with which they are held by the people of South Africa (DBE, 2007:4). It is very important that as transformational leadership and curriculum implementers in schools, SMTs must be conversant with the cardinal points of this policy, embrace them, and implement them in a manner that educators in schools remain professionally relevant in the subjects that they are teaching. If educators are professionally knowledgeable in the areas of their responsibility, there is absolutely no way in which schools will keep on experiencing poor learner outcomes.

This policy in underpinned by the belief that educators are the essential drivers of a good quality education system, and international evidence shows that the professional education and development of educators works best when educators themselves are integrally involved in it and can reflect on their own practice when there is a strong school-based component and when activities are well coordinated (DBE, 2007:5). The SMT is at all times the agent of CPTD coordination in schools.

2.16.7.2   CPTD as an empowerment instrument for SMTs in schools

In South Africa, the CPD of every educator is currently managed through the implementation of the Continuing Professional Teacher Development (CPTD) system (Bernadine, 2019:1). CPTD was announced in the NPFTED, and published by the Minister of Education in 2007 (Sejanamane, 2014:69). It is an initiative by the DBE to enhance the knowledge and skills of

South African educators, and predominantly focuses on the professional development of individual educators with the point driven system introduced to be registered as professional in the education system.

SMTs can therefore play a key role in CPTD by identifying educators' needs, motivating and supporting their development, and working towards a collaborative school culture with shared values and norms (Steyn, 2008:27). CPTD creates the platform for learning opportunities because it enhances learning, provides exposure to new learning theories, and introduces and exposes teachers to innovative teaching technologies, classroom tools and resources. It is thus a necessity for teachers to constantly develop themselves due to the changing working environment (Mettler, 2016:13). It is a system that encourages educators to grow professionally and is currently managed by the South African Council for Educators (SACE) (Bernadine, 2019:1).

Sejanamane (2014:69) mentions that CPTD helps educators organise their professional development in order to achieve maximum benefits. It is a system for recognising all useful teacher development activities:

- By approving quality and credible professional development providers.

- By endorsing relevant and good professional development quality activities and programmes.

- By allocating Professional Development (PD) points to such activities.

- By crediting each educator's CPTD account or record with the PD points they have earned.

The purpose of the CPTD system is to ensure that all professional development programmes contribute more effectively and directly to the improvement of teaching and learning, and it provides educators with clear guidance about which PD activities will contribute to their professional growth. The vision of CPTD is to support and facilitate the process of continuing professional development, give recognition to educators who commit themselves to CPTD, and to revitalise the teaching profession.

CPTD expands the range of activities that contribute to the professional development of educators (Sejanamane, 2014:70). SMTs must at all times ensure that CPTD documents are available in schools and also that CPTD activities take place so that educators can be professionally empowered to become better educators, which leads to improved learner outcomes.

2.16.7.3 ELRC 8 of 2003

Resolution 8 of 2003 is the agreement reached after a robust debate in the Education Labour Relations Council Resolution (ELRC) as a policy on the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS). This policy on IQMS has been introduced to promote CPD of educators at school level to improve their teaching strategies with the aim of ensuring improved learning outcomes. It is widely recognised that the country's schooling system performs well below its potential and that improving basic education outcomes is a prerequisite for the country's long-range development goals (Sejanamane, 2014:61).

I argue that a precondition for improvement in basic education outcomes is an education system that is characterised by educators who are professionally knowledgeable and competent, educators who keep on engaging in professional development matters in their area of employment, and over and above, and educators who are never receptive of the status quo in schools. They must always be ready to embrace curriculum changes. Unless educators change the status quo in schools, the dream of improved basic education outcomes is an unimaginable nightmare.

Educator development is arguably the most vital strategy for education reconstruction because competent educators are key to a quality education in schools (Tshisikule, 2014:24). The quest for quality in education, especially in the secondary schooling sector, provided the impetus for the development of the IQMS (Nkonki & Mammen, 2012:329). The IQMS is a policy designed to help educators identify their shortcomings and undergo personal development, as well as improve the culture of teaching and learning in schools (Queen-Mary & Mtapuri, 2014:2). It is a quality management strategy that materialised after the ineffective implementation of Performance Management (PM), Developmental Appraisal (DAS) and Whole School Evaluation (WSE).

The DAS appraises individual educators in a transparent manner with a view to determine strengths and weaknesses and to draw up programmes for individual educator development. The PMS evaluates individual educators for salary progression, affirmation of appointments, and rewards and incentives. The WSE evaluates the overall effectiveness of a school, including the support provided by the District, school management, infrastructure and learning resources, as well as the quality of teaching and learning (Pylman, 2015:54). Following intense bargaining, agreements were reached within the ELRC on the implementation of the DAS for educators in which educator formations, Provincial departments, and the National Department of Education were involved. The demise of the DAS gave the impetus for the development of IQMS (Nkonki & Mammen, 2012:329).

IQMS emerged as a mechanism to reconcile the three quality management strategies (Hlongwane & Mestry, 2013:269). The DOE hoped that IQMS would enhance the development of the competencies of educators and help improve the quality of public education in South Africa (Nkonki & Mammen, 2012:329). According to Hlongwane and Mestry (2013:269), IQMS is underpinned by the following philosophies; determining educator competence, assessing strengths and areas for educator development, promoting accountability, and monitoring the institution's overall performance.

According to Pylman (2014:419), CPD of educators is located within the IQMS. Educator professional development remains a recurrent theme in IQMS, which is pursued by establishing a plan and culture of continuous improvement in schools. I am fully agreeable with this assertion because clearly IQMS is a combination of both the accountability and professional development purposes and goals (Nkonki & Mammen, 2012:330). IQMS is regarded as a means of assessing the quality of education at the individual and school levels against certain prescribed standards (Rabichund & Steyn, 2014:348). The SMT and the SDT are responsible for advocacy and training of educators at the level of the school, as well as to ensure that the IQMS is implemented effectively and uniformly (Pylman, 2015:54).

Improving the quality of schooling in South Africa is of the utmost importance. Implementing IQMS has been a reform initiative to address this dire need (Rabichund & Steyn, 2014:357). As a Circuit Manager, I have realised that the evaluation of educators on IQMS in schools takes place correctly under the auspices of the School Development Team (SDT), as dictated by Resolution 8 of 2003, which together with the SMT must provide

advocacy and training to educators in relation to IQMS issues. Resolution 8 of 2003 is an indication of 12 performance standards that educators in schools are evaluated against, as follows:

- Performance Standard Number 1: Creation of a positive learning environment.

- Performance Standard Number 2: Knowledge of curriculum and learning programmes.

- Performance Standard Number 3: Lesson planning, preparation and presentation.

- Performance Standard Number 4: Learner assessment/achievement.

- Performance Standard Number 5: Professional development in field of work/career and participation in professional bodies.

- Performance Standard Number 6: Human relations and contribution to school development.

- Performance Standard Number 7: Extra-curricular and co-curricular participation.

- Performance Standard Number 8: Administration of resources and records.

- Performance Standard Number 9: Personnel.

- Performance Standard Number 10: Decision making and accountability.

- Performance Standard Number 11: Leadership, communication, and servicing the governing body.

- Performance Standard Number 12: Strategic planning, financial planning, and EMD.

The evaluation of staff members depends on the post level of the educator. Currently Serving Level 1 (CS1) educators are evaluated on Performance Standard Number 1 up to Performance Number 7. CS2 educators are evaluated on Performance Standard Number 1 up to Performance Standard Number 10. CS3 and CS4 educators are evaluated on Performance Standard Number 1 up to Performance Standard Number 12. This translates into the fact that ordinary educators are evaluated on performance standard numbers 1 to 7, Departmental Heads (DHs) are evaluated on performance standard numbers 1 to 10, whilst Deputy

Principals and Principals are evaluated on performance standard numbers 1 to 12.

Performance standard numbers 1 to 4 unfold in the classroom situation in the presence of the educator's Development Support Group (DSG) which is inclusive of the evaluee's peers. In this regard the educator as the evaluee must have prepared a lesson that is presented to learners in the classroom. In terms of IQMS, each and every educator at every post level must go through the process of classroom observations, as directed and dictated by performance standard numbers 1 to 4 and the IQMS policy Resolution 8 of 2003. As the educator is making the lesson presentation, the DSG listens carefully and start allocating scores of 1 to 4; and the ratings are as follows:

- Rating of 1 indicates that what the evaluee is doing is unacceptable.

- Rating of 2 indicates that the evaluee is satisfying minimum expectations.

- Rating of 3 indicates that the evaluee is rated good as he/she meets the expectations of the policy.

- Rating of 4 indicates that the evaluee is rated outstanding as he/she is exceeding what the policy expects.

This is the area where the DSG must ensure that it does not make any mistake but rates the educator in such a manner that his/her strengths and weaknesses with regard to teaching can be identified and recorded for CPD to start unfolding according to the educator's Professional Growth Plan (PGP). The PGP for every educator is analysed by the SDT in collaboration with the SMT for purposes of building an Educator Improvement Plan (EIP) for the school and consequently the School Improvement Plan (SIP).

The SDT and the SMT also moderate the scores in a fair manner for real CDP items to be clearly identified and dealt with. Managing the performance of educators is the work of the SMT, and this is an unavoidable task that must undoubtedly be executed in schools (Muliehe, 2011:35). The implementation of IQMS implies that the professional development of educators should be placed high on the school's agenda (Queen-Mary & Mtapuri, 2014:4).

On this note, the IQMS management plan that schools craft must materialise in order for

schools to have improvement plans that can be implemented to show improvement in terms of teaching in schools as well as learner outcomes. As transformational leaders in schools, the SMT must ensure that all IQMS processes are successful for CPD activities to start unfolding in schools.

2.16.7.4 ISPFTED

This policy has been unveiled by the current DBE Minister Mrs Angie Motshekga and came into effect on 5 April 2011. It is a product of the Teacher Development Summit held in 2009 and attended by different education stakeholders, such as the South African Council for Educators (SACE), the Education, Training and Development Practices Sector Education and Training Authority (ETDP SETA), the Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC), the Department of Basic Education (DBE), and the Higher Education South Africa – Education Deans Forum (HESA-EDF).

The summit considered the challenges facing Teacher Education and Development (TED) in South Africa, and in order to meet these challenges, the 2009 summit resulted in a Declaration that called for the development of a new, strengthened, integrated, National plan for teacher development in South Africa (DBE, 2009:1). The primary reason for the plan is to improve the quality of teacher education and development in order to improve the quality of educators and teaching. The plan addresses the career of an educator through a number of phases, from recruitment through to retirement as follows:

- Recruitment of potential educators.

- Preparation of new educators.

- Induction into the world of work.

- Career long CPD.

The plan recognises that the ultimate responsibility to recruit, induct, develop, and utilise human resources must be the responsibility of the DBE and the DHET. This plan places educators firmly at the centre of all efforts to improve educator development and enables educators to take responsibility for their own development with the support of those

stakeholders that were part of the 2009 summit. This plan must also be taken into consideration by other processes, such as the IQMS, WSE, NEEDU, and SACE CPTD (DBE, 2009:1).

2.16.8   CPD ACTIVITIES AND LEANER OUTCOMES

Sejanamane (2014:17) states that a growing body of evidence confirms that educators and leaders in the form of SMTs are the two most significant school-based factors in terms of improved learner outcomes. However, professional development activities require the trust-based relationship with colleagues, or a sense of collegiality and intrinsic satisfaction (Joubert, 2016:19).

Transformational leadership in schools in the form of SMTs is undoubtedly a prerequisite for educator professional development and improved learner outcomes. The SMT's role in CPD is to manage the CPD at the level of the school (Monametsi, 2014:28). As quoted in Badri *et al.* (2016:2), Girvan *et al.* (2016), Opfer and Lavicza (2011), and Witten and Jansen (2016), the professional development of educators should provide an important tactic for improving schools, increasing educator quality, and improving learner outcomes. Professional development implies refining or improving a specific practice (Joubert, 2016:18). This assertion means that SMTs must be even more vigilant in ensuring that PDP becomes a reality in their schools. They must go the extra mile in ensuring that CPD serves its intended purpose in a manner that their schools are turned into centres for excellent academic performance.

However, it is of paramount importance that the SMTs are knowledgeable about those policies that govern CPD activities and matters in schools. The policies alluded to make a clarion call to all SMTs to page through them, attach the correct meaning, and ensure that their implementation is by no means governed in anyway by any hesitation. If SMTs can understand the CPD of educators well, there is no way in which educators can continue to be irrelevantly qualified for the correct curriculum implementation.

CPD plans must start unfolding in schools even before the DBE at the level of the District or the Province can even think of organising such in schools. SMTs must develop an educator development budget for the funding of School-Based Educator Development Initiatives as a

way of responding positively to the school policy on educator development.

2.17   CPD SUPPORT PROGRAMMES FOR SMTs

There is an imperative need to establish a clear and agreed-upon understanding of what the South African education system expects of those who are, or aspire to be, entrusted with the leadership and management of schools. Principals working with SMTs must effectively manage, support, and promote the best quality teaching and learning, the purpose of which is to enable learners to attain the highest levels of achievement for their own good, the good of the community, and the good of the country (DBE, 2015:3). Professional development is vital for the vibrancy of SMTs as transformational leaders and managers of curriculum implementation.

On this note there has to be CPD support initiatives in schools that are earmarked specifically to support SMTs so that they can be professionally developed and can become a competent team of transformational leaders that, in turn, ensures a competent team of subject educators to bring about improved learner outcomes in schools. Besides being transformational leaders in schools, SMTs are also subject educators who have the responsibility of ensuring that they employ good teaching strategies in classrooms to ensure improved learner outcomes in their subjects.

On the basis that SMTs are also subject educators in their own right, they also have to be the beneficiaries of the CPD activities in schools. SMTs can never afford to ensure that are professionally developed under their watch to their (i.e. SMT) exclusion. A measure of the successful implementation of educator development and support is in terms of learner achievement levels (Carrim, 2013:51). As educators are being professionally developed by CPD mechanisms, SMTs as transformational leaders must as well be developed in order that they can be better curriculum implementers and curriculum managers to ensure a competent workforce as well as improved learner outcomes.

Effective leadership and management in schools, supported by well conceived, needs-driven development of leadership and management, are critical to the achievement of the DBE's transformational goals (DBE, 2015:5). With regard to IQMS and as subject specialists, besides being evaluated on performance standard numbers 1 to 4, they still have a number of

performance standards that they must be evaluated against, and some of these performance standards pertain to management and leadership issues in schools.

As a Circuit Manager, I am fully aware that the PED used to organise SMT training workshops for Circuit Managers and some selected SMTs drawn from schools in each of the Circuits. After the Provincial workshop, the Circuit Manager and SMT members who attended the workshop had to host SMT workshops at the level of their Circuits whereby all SMT members from all schools in their Circuits were in attendance for purpose of being empowered with regard to SMT roles and responsibilities.

The presenters in these workshops used to be the Circuit Managers with SMT members who have already attended workshops. I have realised that such workshops do not really bear desirable fruit as their impact on curriculum management issues in schools is non-evident. In most instances this is due to the duration of the training workshop as it only lasts for a day or two, and the rest is left for the SMTs to implement. As educators grow in their careers and become more experienced, they are expected to make increasingly greater contributions to the collective expression of the roles in the school, both quantitatively in relation to the range of roles that they contribute to, and qualitatively in relation to the kind of competences they are able to display in relation to the different roles (DBE, 2009:33).

Besides the departmental workshops that SMTs attend for the purposes of being empowered, there are other programmes that are offered by universities and these should be featured. These programmes are normally funded by the PED through the Human Resources Development (HRD) section, and educators foot the bill in terms of registering for such courses. However, I have realised that if educators are registered for these CPD initiatives, they are obliged to complete the qualification or the course within an acceptable time frame. Failure to complete the qualification or the course results in the PED attempting to recover all its monies. On the other hand, educators register for these courses out of their own pockets. The DBE (2009:33) mentions the types of CPD courses that help educators advance their careers:

- Advanced Certificate.

- Advanced Diploma.

- Postgraduate Diploma.

- Bachelor of Education Honours.

- Master of Education/ Professional Master's degree.

- Doctor of Education/ Professional Doctoral degree.

These CPD programmes are offered to educators on a part-time or full-time basis by universities and universities of technology. However, most educators prefer to engage in these programmes on a part-time basis, given their day-to-day activities in schools. On the basis that SMTs are transformational leaders and managers in schools, it is advisable that they divorce themselves from their comfort zones and register for these programmes as they are a pool of educators.

Ngwenya (2017:45) is of the view that the skills, knowledge, values, and attitudes gained from these PD programmes can be cascaded downwards to their subordinates as development and capacity building initiatives.

2.18 EDUCATIONAL POLICIES FOR SMTs

Ramontsha (2019:1) remarks that the political shift from apartheid to the democratic dispensation is South Africa has changed educational policies significantly. The process of democratic policy development unfolded and culminated in the country boasting a number of democratic education policies. These democratic education policies were based on the country's democratic and constitutional values. As a Circuit Manager, I have realised that the DBE currently boasts a number of policies that SMTs must at all times work with. There are in essence five categories that SMTs must be conversant with in order to perform their day-to-day operations. The education policies of the current dispensation as are follows:

2.18.1 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa

The dawn of the new democratic dispensation on the 27 April 1994 necessitated the development of the supreme law of the country in the form of the Constitution. Obligations imposed by the Constitution must be fulfilled (LDOE, 2018:16). This law has been carefully

developed for purposes of ensuring that all laws that existed prior to 1994 contain an ingredient of non-sexism, non-racialism, and over and above, equality. The supreme law serves as a guiding instrument for the creation of a free, fair, and a just society.

Having been adopted on 8 May 1996, amended on 11 October 1996 by the National Assembly in Cape Town, and promulgated on 18 December 1996, this is the supreme law of the Republic of South Africa. In terms of Proclamation No. 26 of 26 April 2001, the administration of this Constitution has been assigned to the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996).

With regard to education, the most striking feature of the supreme law is chapter two, which is the Bill of Rights (BOR). Of particular importance to the BOR is the right of every citizen of South Africa to quality and equal education. Education must be founded on values of human dignity, equality, human rights and freedom, non-racialism, and non-sexism (LDOE, 2018:16). It is important that SMTs must at all times be knowledgeable about the dictates of the Constitution as well as the BOR. This is to ensure that no single learner is denied access to quality education, regardless of their circumstances. Each and every education law, policy or legislation has to be consistent with this act.

2.18.2   Policies on school funding

Given the funding that the DBE normally injects into schools, one could be convinced that South Africa is gradually gravitating to becoming a free education country. South African ordinary public schools are segmented into fee paying and no fee schools. What must be noted is that a large portion of the country is rural and the majority of the no fee schools are situated in these areas. The main purpose of this category of policies is to ensure that learners receive an education at no cost. The DBE (2019) confirms that the policies that pertain to funding are as follows:

- South African Schools Act 84 of 1996.

- National Norms and Standards For School Funding (NNSSF) of 1998.

2.18.3   Curriculum and assessment policies

Since the dawn of the democratic order, the curriculum of South Africa has undergone a number of changes. The DBE (2019) postulates that policies with a bearing on curriculum and assessment matters are the following:

- A resume of the subjects for the Senior Certificate, Report 550 (2017/08).

- Draft Amended Policy Pertaining to the Conduct, Administration and Management of the Senior Certificate.

- Draft Policy on Rural Education.

- Draft Policy on School Based Assessment (SBA) for grade 10-12.

- National Policy for re-issue of National certificates.

- National Policy on the conduct, administration and management of the National Senior Certificate.

- National Policy Pertaining to the Programme and Promotion requirements of the National Curriculum Statement.

- National Protocol for Assessment.

- Policy on Home Education.

- Policy on the Conduct, Administration and Management of the Annual National Assessment (ANA).

- Regulations Pertaining to the National Curriculum Statement grades R-12.

- Regulations pertaining to the conduct, administration and management of assessment for the National Senior Certificate.

- The National Senior Certificate: A qualification at Level 4 on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF).

2.18.4 Policies on access to schooling

The DBE (2019) notes that the following policies deal specifically with access to schools:

- National Education Policy Act No 27 of 1996-Admission Policy For Ordinary Public Schools.

- ASIDI Disbursement, Professional and Management Fee Policy and Procedure.

- Draft Policy on Rural Education.

- Improving Access to free and quality basic education to all.

- National Policy on an Equitable Provision of an Enabling School Physical Teaching and Learning Environment.

- Policy Document on Adult Basic Education and Training.

- Policy on Learner Attendance.

- Regulations relating to minimum uniform norms and standards for public school infrastructure.

- Rights and Responsibilities of Parents, Learners and Public Schools: Public School Policy Guide 2005.

2.18.5 School management policies

I have also realised that depending on the prevailing circumstances, these policy have always been subjected to amendments. The amendments are captured as one document entitled the Education Laws Amendment Act (ELAA). Of these policies, there are some that support schools regarding the establishment of SMTs. According to Ntuzela (2008:28), policies such as the South African School Act 84 of 1996, the Norms and Standard for Educators of 2000, and the Constitution of the Republic of 1996 state implicitly or explicitly that leadership in every organisation must be in a distributed form where all parties involved can have a say and are part of the decision making processes.

Key amongst these policies is the South African School Act (SASA) 84 of 1996. Although the SASA does not say specifically that each school must have an SMT, it assumes that the principal will be assisted by senior members of staff, whereby together they form the SMT (Department of Education, 2000:1). As a Circuit Manager I have realised that the SMTs have been established according to the Personnel Administrative Measures (PAM), a segment in the Employment of Educators Act (EEA) 76 of 1998. As constituted in the new educational dispensation, the SMT is a structure with the sole function of providing leadership guidance, direction, and assistance in the teaching and learning situation (Mathipa *et al.,* 2014:367). The DBE (2019) posits that the following policies pertain to management of schools:

- Constitution of the Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC) Resolution No. 3 of 1999.

- Constitution of the Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC) Resolution No. 6 of 2000.

- Draft Policy on Draft Regulations to Minimum Uniform Norms and Standards for PTDIS and DTDCS.

- Draft Policy: National policy for the provision and management of Learning and Teaching Support Material.

- Draft Policy: The incremental introduction of African languages in South African Schools.

- Constitution of the Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC) – policy handbook for educators.

- Integrated School Health Policy.

- Interim Policy for Early Childhood Development.

- Language in Education Policy.

- National Curriculum Statement.

- National Education Information Policy.

- National Policy for determining school calendars for public schools in South Africa.

- National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa.

- National Policy on Whole School Evaluation.

- Policy on HIV, STIs and TB for Learners, Educators, School Support Staff and Officials in all Primary and Secondary Schools in Basic Education Sector.

- Policy on the Organisation, Roles and Responsibilities of Education Districts.

- Protocol for the management and reporting of Sexual Abuse and Harassment in Schools.

- Protocol to deal with Incidences of Corporal Punishment in Schools.

SMTs must note that each and every step of their operations must be guided by these policies, as well as their school policies, including their own departmental policies. Everything that SMT members do in schools must have constitutional backup.

2.19   CONSTRAINTS ENCOUNTERED BY SMTs SCHOOLS

In executing their mandate of effective curriculum implementation in schools, SMTs of this democratic dispensation of human rights are operating in an environment that on the one hand is conducive, and while on the other is not conducive. However, regardless of the type of environment in which they perform their duties, the conditions under which they work and factors that negatively affect their curriculum implementation mechanisms and efforts are the same, and in most instances the SMTs continue to soldier on to make South Africans proud of the educational outcomes in schools.

In ensuring that their duties are performed to the best of their abilities, SMT members experience challenges that make their job more difficult than it should be. These challenges affect the SMT members' output in a negative manner. However, these challenges differ from school to school as a result of the differences in terms of the context of the school. Amongst others the challenges that are faced by SMT members in schools are the following:

2.19.1 Poor performance especially at the level of grade 12

The poor performance of learners in NSC examinations has always raised concerns (Subramoney, 2016:1). Poor performance is a surmountable challenge, and it is a well known fact that a number of schools in rural communities fare badly in terms of grade 12 examinations, especially in the Limpopo Province. This performance must be very concerning for SMTs.

2.19.2 Educator wellness in schools

Every school primarily needs an educator crew that is healthy, dedicated, and committed to the achievement of its aims and objectives. The provision of good quality education in South African public schools is intrinsically linked to the health, wellbeing and productivity of educators (DBE, 2016:1). For educators and SMTs to perform their duties with due diligence, their wellbeing be unquestionable. They must be emotionally, psychologically, financially, medically, and morally fit to carry out their duties. In other words, educators must at all times be governed by wellness in the execution of their duties. Wellness is a holistic integration of physical, mental, and spiritual health, fuelling the body, engaging the mind, and nurturing the spirit. Although it always includes striving for health, it's more about living life fully, and is

> *'... a lifestyle and a personalised approach to living life in a way that allows one to become the best kind of person that their potential, circumstance, and fate would allow'. Wellness necessitates good self-stewardship, for ourselves and for those we care about and who care about us (Stoewen, 2017).*

In my view, the un-wellness of educators leads to unexpected, undesirable and unthinkable poor curriculum delivery, absence, absconding and stress. According to the DBE (2016:1), there are various factors that influence the wellness of educators within the school environment, *inter alia* work dissatisfaction and health issues including Human Immune Virus (HIV) infection, tuberculosis (TB), Non-Communicable Diseases (NCD); and exposure to violence. For as long educator wellness in schools is questionable, providing learners with quality basic education in schools remains a pipe dream. It is better for the Department to come up with a practical plan to support these educators.

In my opinion, educator un-wellness in schools compromises curriculum delivery mechanisms that have been put in place by SMTs in the sense that unhealthy educators are not be fully responsive to and supportive of school performance improvement endeavours. The SMTs are obliged to keep on revisiting school time tables as a result of educators who regularly miss class because of their un-wellness. Over and above, educators' un-wellness leads to incomplete syllabi, which in turn leads to poor learner outcomes. Poor learner outcomes are a demonstration of poor curriculum implementation by the SMTs.

2.19.3   Educator safety and security in schools

Contemporary educators are discharging their duties in a schooling environment that is unpredictable, unsafe, and unsecured. Safety and security problems in schools have become major National issues, as reported in various National surveys on school safety and security (Makungo, 2012). The recent incidents of educator attacks in various schools in the nine provinces of South Africa bear testimony to this. In one incident a learner allegedly stabbed and killed a teacher at a school in Zeerust, North West. The stabbing incident happened in full view of a class that was in the process of writing examinations (Gous, 2018). In another incident a high school learner was suspended after he was caught on camera fondling his teacher's buttocks (Shange, 2018). In yet another incident a learner was made to face disciplinary action after he threatened his teacher with a firearm (Sobuwe, 2018).

Bipath (2017:67) posits that these incidents show how unsafe educators and fellow learners in schools are. In this situation, education becomes adversely affected by the loss of teaching and learning time due to safety-related problems in schools. Educators are frustrated by these incidents and when they are frustrated, they become unproductive and this leads to dysfunctional classroom activities. The death of an educator leaves a vacancy that SMTs must work hard to fill, given the lengthy process that it takes for an educator to be replaced. When a new recruit has been secured, the SMTs must find ways of ensuring that the novice educator is empowered and can hit the ground running so that curriculum delivery does not suffer.

2.19.4   Learner substance and drug abuse

Substance and drug abuse has become a culture in a number of schools and this poses a very

serious challenge to schools, learners, educators, and school authorities. Learners usually bring intoxicating substances and drugs to schools to consume and/or sell. Children lacking school credentials have difficulties in finding work and consequently become addicted to drugs (Smeyers, Depaepe & Keiner, 2013:13). In many instances the substances are liquor and glue. Drugs that are brought into the school premises are normally dagga and nyaope. Learners consume these substances and drugs in large numbers and forget about their future.

According to Marupeng (2019:5), most schools catch learners who are in possession of these drugs on a daily basis. Schools find it difficult to manage these types of learners because they (learners) do not stop bringing dagga, nyaope and cigarettes to schools. This continuous consumption of drugs leads to failure on the part of the learners and causes them to leave school without any credentials. Failure on the part of learners is a demonstration of poor curriculum management by SMTs. If learners fail in large numbers in schools, parents end up withdrawing their children from such schools and this tendency impacts negatively on the size of the educator staff. The SMTs in turn are forced to embark on a re-classification process that has the potential to destabilise effective teaching and learning.

2.19.5   Inadequate professional support by curriculum advisory

It has already been pointed out that the main duty of SMTs in schools is to manage curriculum implementation that leads to high levels of learner outcomes. The 21st century educators are failing to respond adequately to the current Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) in relation to subject content knowledge, selection of the relevant teaching resources, and assessment (Monametsi, 2015:vi). It was also pointed out that besides being managers in their different departments or sections, SMT members are also subject educators. The ever changing National curriculum, issues around learner promotions, and issues regarding assessment already dictate to the DBE a need for constant support to SMTs through curriculum advisory support services.

The Curriculum Advisors' (CAs) responsibility is to interpret the curriculum content and policy to the SMTs in schools (Rasebotsa, 2017:47). The DBE protocol is clear that school-based curriculum support should be the responsibility of curriculum advisory from the Circuit Offices and the District Offices. In other words, a high level support from District and Circuit curriculum advisory has a significant impact on curriculum delivery in schools

(Rasebotsa, 2017:17)

The kind of support that is required in this regard ranges from assistance with curriculum delivery to the implementation of the new curriculum to ensure improved learner achievement (Makubung, 2017:14). However, as a Circuit Manager I have realised that the majority of schools cannot secure the services of curriculum advisors given the shortage in terms of the curriculum advisory pool. This situation leaves SMTs frustrated as curriculum delivery is unfolding in their schools within uncertainty regarding certain curriculum issues that should be dealt with by the CAs.

2.19.6 Poor communication with learners' parents

One of the duties and responsibilities of the SMT, as outlined in Section 4 of the PAM document, is communication with stakeholders. Clearly the PAM states that SMT members must meet parents concerning learners' progress and conduct. Sambo (2016:1) is of the view that many schools in rural communities find it difficult to communicate with parents on issues that affect their children's education and this results in SMTs seldom communicating with them.

As a Circuit Manager I have observed that in many instances low quintile secondary schools do not succeed in terms of securing the parents' attention when they seek it. Parents tend to be visible only in cases where there are issues around educator expulsions and related matters in schools. This tendency leaves SMTs frustrated regarding learners' conduct and progress in schools.

2.19.7 Unbearable curriculum workloads

Within the context of the school environment, workload is a multifaceted term which includes different aspects of the work allocated to educators (Mophosho, 2014:1). In the South African context, SMT members are educators who have been promoted to management positions (Malatji, 2016:34). The PAM document is explicitly clear about the workload that is relevant for the SMT in schools.

In many instances SMTs do not succeed in allocating duties according to the dictates of the

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PAM. Given the size of their school and the size of their staff, SMT members must ensure that an equitable distribution of curriculum delivery duties is made without any bias. This equitable distribution of duties means that some SMTs are overloaded with work.

2.19.8   Ineffective CPD initiatives for SMTs

The unimaginable transformational changes that keep on appearing in the education fraternity warrant the implementation of professional development initiatives on the part of the education service delivery agents. The relevant structure responsible for the professional development of educators in terms of curriculum delivery issues is the SMT. Ndlovu (2017:78) posits that SMT members feel that the CPD programmes are too short. Over and above, workshops feature prominently in terms of programmes earmarked for the professional development of SMT members.

He goes further to indicate that the workshops are normally conducted in the afternoon and proceed as information sharing sessions and not CPD workshops (Ndlovu, 2017:78). In my view, this is a very serious compromise of the professional development objectives of the CPD policies. However, SMT members could still deal with these challenges, regardless of their huge workloads, by way of school-based professional development initiatives.

According to Tshisikule (2014:32), this challenge is caused by a combination of factors such as the prevailing socioeconomic and political factors, extra curriculum enhancement programmes, negative attitude towards CPD, poor planning, lack of human capacity, and insufficient preparation on the part of the facilitators.

2.19.9   Redeployment of educators

Redeployment refers to the actual transfer of excess educators from their present school to other schools where vacancies exist (Mabotja, 2016:16). The transfer of excess educators leaves the releasing schools with a contracted educator staff. In my view, the SMT in each and every school prides itself with sizeable educator staff which is not overloaded with regard to curriculum delivery and other delegated duties. Educator staff who are not overloaded are in a better position to maximise curriculum delivery in all phases of schooling and this in turn leads to effective teaching and learning, as well as effective and vibrant schools.

With a sizeable educator staff, teaching, learning, assessment and feedback must be are done on a regular basis. Not all schools are equally staffed. There are overstaffed, understaffed and well-staffed schools. Overstaffing refers to a situation whereby a school has excess educators. The size of the educator staff in every school in South Africa is determined by the learner enrolments. Where schools have larger enrolments, the staff size becomes larger. Where schools have smaller learner enrolments, there are less staff. There are instances also where one finds a large staff complement but a small number of. There are also instances where one finds small staff sizes and large learner enrolments. In my opinion, an increase or a decrease in staff size and learner enrolment is determined by a number of factors.

As a Circuit Manager, my observations have revealed that schools that are situated adjacent to squatter camps and Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) houses usually experience an increase in learner enrolment and staff size, whilst schools that are situated on the periphery are experiencing decreases in staff size and leaner enrolments.

For the purposes of ensuring that schools have staff sizes that are relevant and appropriate for the learner population, educators have a duty to embrace the departmental process of moving them from their original schools to schools that are in dire need of their services. The process of moving educators is referred to as Rationalisation and Redeployment (R&R). R&R means the actual transfer of excess educators from their present schools to other schools where a vacant post exists. Such a post needs to be filled if the system is to function optimally, effectively and efficiently (Dwangu, 2018:30).

R&R was created to redress staffing problems created by the apartheid legacy in education (Mabotja, 2016:1). It is an educator staffing model that has been crafted by the Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC). Previously, this model for transfer of educators was in the form of Collective Agreement (CA) number 2 dated 10 April 2003, and entitled 'Transfer of serving educators in terms of operational requirements'. Currently the R&R process takes cognisance of Resolution 4 of 2016, which replaced the Resolution 2 of 2003. The transfer of serving educators is dealt with in Annexure A. Section 2.4(a) of the CA points out that operational requirements for education institutions are based on, but not limited to, the following:

- Change in learner enrolments.

- Curriculum changes or a change in learners' involvement in the curriculum.

- Merging or closing of institutions.

- Financial constraints.

This resolution necessitates that SMTs in schools embark on a process of determining their staff establishments to match educators to their posts. Schools that have less educators than needed are already at an advantage of receiving educators from schools that have more educators than needed. Schools that have more educators than the number that has been dictated by their post establishment are already at a disadvantage of releasing some educators to those schools that have less educators. It must be clearly stated that educators are matched to posts in which they match exactly the curriculum requirements. Similarly, the redeployment process has in some instances failed to identify and redeploy qualified, scarce skills educators by allocating them subjects that they are not qualified to teach (Thwala, 2014:5).

According to Mabotja (2016: 1), the rationalisation and redeployment of educators have been ill conceptualised because they caused many complications and difficulties in schools. The redeployment of educators affects the educator, the staff, management, as well as the learners. It affects the educator him/herself badly in the sense that they become demotivated, and they have a huge workload. It affects SMT as it has the challenge of providing a new duty list to the remaining educators whereby some are happy and some are unhappy. It creates a lot of problems for the learners as they are faced with the task of acclimatising to the teaching style of the new educators. Given all the deliberations above, it can be concluded that R&R is a challenge for SMTs as it affect the smooth running and the performance of both the receiving and the releasing schools.

- Vacancy rate in schools

As a Circuit Manager I have observed that there are instances whereby an educator post becomes vacant as a result of attrition. It is of the utmost importance that any vacant educator post in a school is filled within an acceptable time frame so that learners always have an educator in front of them. However, the filling of any post in the Limpopo Department of Education is dependent on the nature of such a post. Some vacant educator

posts in schools are *substantive* in nature whereas others are *substitute* in nature. It is possible for a school to have either of the two types of posts. A vacant substantive post is a permanent post that has been vacated by its incumbent for a variety of reasons like death, gaining promotion to a higher post, going on retirement, resignation from the teaching fraternity, or expulsion from the profession itself. In other words, a vacant substantive post is a post that becomes available or vacant when its incumbent has left it and there is no likelihood of them returning. A vacant substantive post can be filled either by way of inviting applications from suitably qualified educators for shortlisting and interviewing. It can also be filled by way of direct or horizontal transfers of educators into such a post.

Another way to fill these posts is securing the services of graduates that are fresh out of university. These graduates are normally in the form of Fundza Lushaka, National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) beneficiaries, Human Resources Development (HRD) bursary recipients, and those graduates that have funded themselves at tertiary institutions. According to the Departmental Circular Number 95 of 2015, the NSFAS, HRD, Fundza Lushaka and self-funded graduates should just be identified and placed in a vacant post without necessarily going through the process that is dictated by ELRC Resolution 1 2008 (shortlisting and interviews).

A vacant substitute post is a permanent post that has been vacated by its incumbent by way of study leave, incapacity leave, accouchement leave, or acting in a higher post. Appointment to this this type of a post is normally made for a specific period of time, taking cognisance of ELRC Resolution 1 of 2008 (shortlisting and interviews). Within the context of the LPDE, substitute posts are normally renewed on a three month basis. According to LPDE (2017/18:7), the timeous filling of vacant posts in schools is still a challenge and strategies need to be put in place to ensure that the situation is improved.

The researcher has established that in terms of the filling of a vacant post, the process becomes unnecessarily lengthened as approvals are only granted by Head Office. The schools, Circuit offices, and District offices have never been granted permission by departmental authorities to make educator appointments. According to the Departmental Circular entitled 'Regularisation of the engagement of educators in vacant posts' dated 07/05/2013, the following must be strictly adhered to:

- No educator should be engaged in any type of a vacant post prior to the approval by the HOD or a delegated person.

- Principals must submit LPDE forms to the District office without Part 11 forms (assumption of duty). The Part 11 forms should be completed after the receipt of approval for engagement of the educator.

- The District Human Resources (HR) office shall verify the availability of the post, qualifications of the educator, and make recommendations to the HOD for approval to be granted.

- The District HR office will therefore issue an appointment letter for the engagement of such an educator after the approval has been granted by the HOD or his/her delegate. The appointment letter shall also reflect the conditions of employment in terms of EEA 76 of 1998 and other relevant departmental directives and policies.

The process leading up to the appointment of an educator is very unfair to SMTs as classes end up being without educators and this in itself puts the education of the learners at risk.

2.19.9.1   Ever-changing National curriculum

Since the dawn of the South African democratic dispensation, the National curriculum has undergone a number of changes. The dismantling of the apartheid education system led to the birth of the Curriculum 2005, which was based on the principles of Outcomes Based Education (OBE). According to Maponya (2015:23), a more recent curriculum change is the introduction of Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS). He goes further to mention that there are different policies that are related to CAPS, such as the National Protocol for Assessment grade R-12, the National Policy Pertaining to the Programme and Promotion requirements of the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) R-12, and the Government Gazette on approval of regulations pertaining to the NCS grade R-12.

Each time a new curriculum is introduced, currently serving educators become irrelevantly qualified to do justice to its delivery. They have to undergo a series of empowerment workshops regarding the dictates of the new curriculum so that they can commence with its implementation. In some instances educators are taken for in-service training at centres that

are scattered around educational Districts in the province. The mathematics, science and technology in-service training centre is MASTEC in the Seshego-Lebowakgomo District. Commercial subjects are normally dealt with at Tivumbeni in-service centre in the Mopani District. Languages are dealt with at Makhado Multipurpose Centre in the Vhembe District.

The ever-changing curriculum renders educators novices on a regular basis as they first have to be empowered in terms of its cardinal points and dictates. The time that is taken by educators in terms of acclimatising to the new curriculum is the same time that they should have been using it for purposes of effectively delivering the curriculum. This tendency of introducing a new curriculum can, in some instances, render educators as poor performers as their teaching styles and approaches might not be relevant.

However, besides attending the departmental empowerment workshops or briefings, it remains the responsibility of management in schools to ensure that the newly introduced curriculum remains on the lips and fingertips of educators. SMTs in schools must embark on professional developmental programmes financed from the 60% of the curriculum budget of the Norms and Standards to ensure that educators do find a new curriculum less challenging.

2.19.9.2   Inconsistent learner promotion requirements

There are promotion requirements that learners in all grades have to satisfy in order for them to be moved up to the next grade. What must be borne in mind is that with reference to primary schools, learners are not necessarily promoted but progress with their age cohort. Promotion requirements are only meant for grade 7-12 learners. These promotion requirements keep on changing on a yearly basis and end up causing schools to promote a learner who does not satisfy the promotion requirements or retaining learners who have satisfied the promotion requirements. According to the DBE Assessment Instruction Number 47 of 2014, for a grade 7, 8 or 9 learner to be promoted to the next grade, they must:

- Offer 9 NCS subjects and achieve at least as in (2), (3), (4), (5) and (6) below.

- Achieve Languages as follows:

  o   Home Language = 50%.

- First Additional Language = 40%.

- Obtain 40% in Mathematics.

- Obtain 40% in any 3 other required subjects.

- Obtain 30% in any 2 other required subjects.

- May fail 9th subject, provided SBA has been completed in this failed subject.

This directive (DBE Assessment Instruction Number 47 of 2014) goes further to indicate that 'condone' in grades 7, 8 and 9 is not provided for. The Assessment Instruction goes further to indicate that for a grade 10 or 11 learner to be moved to the next grade he/she must:

- Offer 7 NCS subjects and achieve at least as in (2), (3) and (4) below.

- Obtain 40% in 3 subjects as follows:

  - Home Language = 40%.

  - Any 2 other subjects = 40%.

- Obtain 30% in any 3 other subjects.

- May fail one subject, provided SBA has been completed in failed subject (DBE Assessment Instruction Number 47 of 2014).

This directive goes further to indicate that 'condone' in grades 10 and 11 is not provided for. However, this Assessment Instruction directs schools to ensure that they progress grade 10 and 11 learners provided such learners have already been retained once in a phase. This is for the purposes of preventing a learner from being retained in a phase for more than four years. This progression of learners simply translates into the fact that learners who were not supposed to be in the next grade are progressed. One finds it difficult to understand how this cohort of learners can perform as they have not yet mastered the work of their previous grade. This creates a huge problem for schools and SMTs as they must embark on enrichment programmes geared towards helping specifically this category of learners.

2.20   CONCLUDING REMARKS

The educational winds of change in the Republic of South Africa (RSA) have led to the demise of the apartheid system of education, which in turn gave rise to the birth of a democratic system of curriculum management in schools in the 1996 academic year. This chapter revealed that the antiquated oppressive system of curriculum management in schools ceased to exist when the democratic curriculum management instrument in the form of SMTs started making inroads, finally finding its rightful place in the South African education fraternity. Since its inception, curriculum implementation and management in schools started taking a different shape and speed from unilateralism on the one hand to collectivism on the other hand.

The SMT is the current democratically legal organisational curriculum management component in all ordinary South African public primary and secondary schools. It is a product of the post 1994 educational dispensation and a legitimate transformational leadership structure for every teaching and learning environment. The literature review has revealed that, given the nature of its work and the vastness of organisational management, the SMT plays a pivotal role at the meso level of management where practical curriculum delivery activities takes place with the sole aim of improving learner performance.

The planning, organising, leading and controlling powers and mandates in schools are entrusted to the SMTs as the management and leadership in and for schools. Just like SMCs in Ghana, the SMT is a very powerful curriculum management structure which, in its absence or ineffectiveness, is tantamount to an expensive car without an engine. As a product of the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 and the Employment of Educators Act 78 of 1998, its mandate has always been very clear; to ensure that high learner outcomes are made the culture in all South African public low and high quintile schools.

In managing the curriculum delivery activities in schools, the SMTs directly and indirectly work with a number of school-based and external stakeholders. The SMT in this regard is obligated to rise above all odds and establish and maintain sound, palatable, and harmonious working relations with every stakeholder. Internationally and Nationally, stakeholder involvement is cited as one of the positive contributing factors towards improved learner outcomes in schools. The South African basic education sector needs strong and vibrant

SMTs that work harmoniously with all stakeholders. It needs SMTs that face the same direction and give curriculum management zeal their undivided attention. This chapter has revealed that, in terms of the execution of their core mandate, it becomes imperative for the SMT to be the glue that keeps the school together.

Over and above, the literature has revealed in executing their duties in schools, SMTs are confronted with a number of challenges. This study aims to empower SMTs with enough ammunition to confront the challenges in such a manner that the challenges are overcome so that effective curriculum management is an inerasable culture in schools. SMTs are at all times expected to be skilful and value-oriented in the execution of their duties. This chapter also reflected on the organisational skills that the SMTs must possess, and the values that must at all times govern the SMTs. This investigation aims to develop an SMT curriculum management instrument.

In this chapter I presented the literature study which encapsulates old and recently consulted sources. Within the context of this chapter, old sources are those sources that date as far back as before 2010, and in particular, governmental legislation. These old sources are, however, in their minority given the nature of this investigation and the research title. Recent sources are those that have been written post 2010; especially those written in 2020. However, sources from 2010 to 2013 are in their minority, as the sources consulted from 2014 to 2020 are the majority. The next chapter features the theoretical framework on which this study is anchored.

CHAPTER 3:   THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1   INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the theoretical framework that underpins and strengthens this investigation. Theory is a systematic collection of related principles, or a general body of assumptions and principles. It is a systematic grouping of interdependent principles which provide a framework or tie together a significant area of knowledge (Akintayo, Yaya & Uzohue 2016:2). Phalane (2016:54) is of the opinion that theoretical framework of research relates to the philosophical basis on which the research takes place. It also forms the link between the theoretical aspects and practical components of the research undertaken. Shaw (2017:821) is of the view that a strong theoretical framework helps researchers identify what aspects of current theories are well understood, which aspects have yielded conflicting findings, and importantly, where the researcher can build, extend, and offer bold alternative thinking.   Townsend (2018:21) confirms that a theoretical framework serves as an epistemological guide or an appraisal/evaluation tool that helps to interpret the knowledge in a study. It coerces the researcher to stay within the parameters of his intended research.

In my opinion, any investigation that proceeds without a theoretical framework is bound to fail dismally in terms of achieving its primary aim. Shaw (2017:821) concurs with my assertion when mentioning that the theoretical framework is an instrument that guides and directs the researcher towards the accomplishment of the goal of the research. He goes further to advise that formulating a strong theoretical framework at the beginning of the study helps the researcher to identify and articulate where his/her key theoretical contribution lies.

This investigation is all about the experiences of SMTs in managing low quintile secondary schools, such that they perform better than schools in the high quintiles. On this note, the underlying theoretical framework has been drawn specifically from a pond of management theories that the literature study boasts. Management is the most important element of any organisation. No organisation can achieve goals without proper management (Nadrifar, Bandani & Shahryari, 2016:83).

Trohler (2014:45) highlights that before management concepts were formulated explicitly as theories, education had become recognised as a core element of social life. After having

perused the literature on different management theories, my conclusion is that the Classical Management Theory, Human Relations Theory, and the Transformational Leadership Theory are the most relevant management theories on which my investigation would be premised. The choice of these theories was on the basis that the Classical Management Theory, the Human Relations Theory, the Transformational Leadership Theory, and the main aim and objectives of the research have turned out to be birds of the same feather that fly in the same direction. A detailed discussion of the three management theories appears in the subsequent paragraphs of this chapter.

3.2 CLASSICAL MANAGEMENT THEORIES

A fragment of the philosophical ground on which this research project is based is the Classical Management Theory. Intellectual discourse featuring the postulations, principles, merits, drawbacks, and dynamism of these adored theories in organisational management and administrative effectiveness are beyond exactness (Bello, 2018:125). Archie (2018:22) indicates that Classical Management Theory is a body of management thinking based on the fact that employees have only costs and physical needs. It advocates high expertise of labour, centralised decision making processes, and revenue maximisation. Originating towards the end of the 19th century, Classical Management Theory dominated management thinking circles in the 1920s and 1930s.

These theories have been popularised, recommended, and encouraged by several management scholars and practitioners to the extent that one can hardly escape the influence of these in every organisational management (Bello, 2018:125). Given this assertion by Bello (2018:125), the Classical Management Theory assisted me in doing justice to the primary aim of this study and its three objectives. Akintayo *et al.* (2016:3) confirm that Classical Management Theory's emphasis is on organisational structure, authority, and control of production methods. In my judgement, Classical Management Theories are still visible and in action within management, especially in schools as institutions of sharpening future young minds and where proper management is at all times warranted.

3.2.1 Genesis of the Classical Management Theory

The Classical Management Theory was developed around the 19th and 20th centuries when

the factory system of manufacturing posed many challenges in managing production, people and processes which had not been encountered before. There was a rise in problems in terms of organising raw materials, tools, manufacturing units, employee selection and recruitment, scheduling the operations, and handling dissatisfied employees (Kitana, 2016:17).

Organisations that are moulded on the Classical Management theoretical perspectives have proven remarkably stable in different circumstances around the world (Nhema, 2015:165). This assertion sounds good because the stability of organisations like schools compel its gravitation towards the attainment of its organisational vision. Archie (2018:2) points out that Classical Management Theory has three institutions of thought; Scientific Management, Administrative Management, and Bureaucratic Management. Kitana (2016:21) postulates that in order to manage an organisation successfully, the three classical theories need to be merged and integrated. The three institutions are best depicted below:
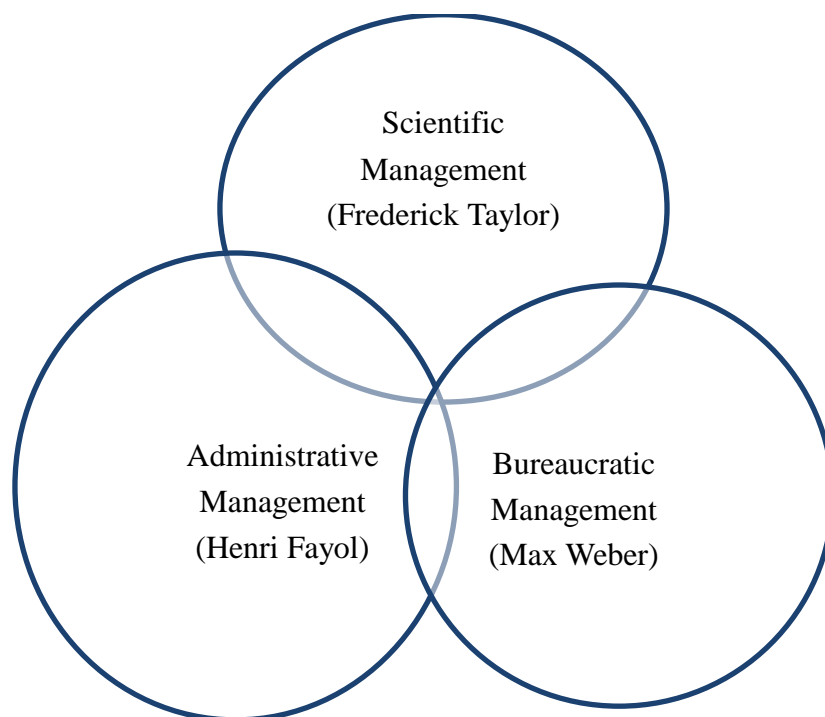
Figure 3-1:   Integrated Classical Management Theories (adapted from Ferdous, 2016:2)

Regarding the three classical schools of thought, Akintayo *et al.* (2016:4) mention that Scientific Management Theory was the first theory to feature on the management landscape. They go further to highlight that as the name implies, it was a scientific approach to managerial decision making because different scientists performed various experiments at

that time in order to find solutions to the problems of management in organisations. Managers were expected to perform the science and give instructions, while organisational employees performed duties as allocated within the organisation. This encouraged the breaking up of organisational tasks into sub-tasks and also helped to optimise the performance of the tasks. Over and above, managers were encouraged to motivate employees through financial rewards and ensure sustenance by scientifically selecting and systematically training employees in best practice to increase productivity and work performance.

According to Miksen (2019), organisations often talk about effectiveness and efficiency when brainstorming ways to improve. While effectiveness and efficiency sound similar, the two terms mean entirely different things. Carr (2016:3) mentions that the words 'effective' and 'efficient' both mean capable of producing results. She goes the extra mile to clarify that effectiveness means producing results that are wanted, whereas efficiency means capable of producing desired results without wasting materials, time and energy. The difference between the two is that when something is effective it produces results even if it takes some unnecessary resources to do so. And when something is efficient, not only does it produce result, but it does so in a quick simple way using as little, material, time, effort, or energy as possible.

As the Scientific Theory of Management is one of the theoretical frameworks that underpin this study, and as a theory that is supportive of organisational effectiveness and efficiency, it therefore assisted me in determining how SMTs go about ensuring organisational effectiveness and efficiency within their domain. The Scientific Management Theory assisted me in determining how SMTs put systems and mechanisms in place for schools to self-propel; whether the SMT is present or absent in the school.

The Bureaucratic Management Theory focuses on the organisational structure (Nadrifar *et al.,* 2016:83). Nhema (2015:170) affirms that this theory states that organisations should develop precise and comprehensive operating procedures to do predefined tasks. He goes further to indicate that with regard to this theory, a distinction is made among three types of authority. The first is *personal authority* which is enjoyed by rulers in traditional societies. The second is *charismatic authority* in which the leader derives authority from personal qualities. The third is the *legal authority* under which the followers recognise the legal

competence of the persons exercising authority. Those exercising authority are acting in accordance with their duties as established by a code of rules and regulations.

For an organisation to be successful, a manager needs to understand and apply the three theories (Kitana, 2016:21). As a theoretical framework guiding this investigation, the Bureaucratic Management Theory was very helpful in determining the operating procedures that SMTs develop in terms of managing curriculum delivery and curriculum implementation in schools. In my view, the development of such operating procedures leads to implementation to ensure that quality curriculum delivery unfolds without any significant hindrance. This theory assisted me in establishing that operational procedures developed in schools are embraced by all educators under the watch of SMT members for the organisational aims and objective to be achieved. A full discussion of these three theories features later in this chapter.

3.2.2 Characteristics/features of the Classical Management Theory

Nadrifar *et al.* (2016:84) mention the following features of the Classical Management Theory:

3.2.2.1 Chain of command

The Classical Management Theories are made up of various levels of management, namely:

- Top level management

This level is generally called administration, and it is responsible for the development of long-term strategies in line with the organisational goals. In my judgement, educational policies governing the South African Education System are developed at the level of the DBE. The National Education Policy Act (NEPA) 27 (1996) confirms that the Minister determines the National education policy in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution.

Subject to the Constitution, National policy prevails over the whole or a part of any Provincial policy on education if there is a conflict between the two policies. It further indicates that the Minister also determines National policy for the planning, provisioning,

financing, coordination, management, governance, programmes, monitoring, evaluation, and wellbeing of the education system.

In my view, the implementation of these policies remains the responsibility of schools under the watchful eyes of the nine Provincial Education Departments (PEDs). SMTs in schools are at the policy implementation level of the DBE and must ensure that all policies relevant to the functioning of the DBE are correctly implemented in their schools. Even if the policy has some loopholes, it can only be questioned at the school level. In my view, there is absolutely no way in which an education policy can be changed or discarded by a school, no matter how impractical or difficult it is to implement it.

The Classical Management Theories have assisted in determining how proactive the SMT are in terms of attaching meaning to each and every education policy even before they are tabled for dissemination at the staff level. This is done in schools in order to ensure that the education policies are unhesitantly disseminated to staff members such that each policy is embraced without any doubt regarding its terms of reference.

- Middle level management

This level of the Classical Management Theory falls between the top level and the bottom level. In my opinion, and currently within the context of the Limpopo Province, this level encapsulates the Provincial Superintendent General (SG), Deputy Director Generals (DDGs), Chief Directors, District Directors, District Sectional Heads, and Circuit Managers. This level formulates policies and plans that are consistent with the strategic plans and policies of the DBE.

According to NEPA (27 of 1996), in determining National policy for education, the Minister takes into account the competence of the Provincial legislatures in terms of section 146 of the Constitution and the relevant provisions of any Provincial law relating to education. This assertion attests to the fact that PEDs have the right and powers to develop Provincial education policies to manage educational affairs. However, those policies must stand in agreement with the National policies of the DBE. It is imperative for SMTs as education policy implementers to be extremely knowledgeable with regard to the terms of reference for this management level.

The Classical Management Theory assisted in revealing that the middle level of management is the lower level of the DBE, i.e. the Provincial level and the District level. As per policy, these levels must at all l times provide monitoring and support to SMTs in schools such that SMTs stand in a better position to operate within the parameters of relevant education policies and legislation.

- First level management

This Classical Management Theory level is also referred to as the supervisory management level. In other words, this is the school level where the National and Provincial education policy implementation is in full swing under the watchful eye of SMTs. The duty of the top and middle management level is to provide monitoring and support services for the implementation of educational policies at this level. The Minister directs that the standards of education provision, delivery, and performance throughout the Republic be monitored and evaluated by the Department at specified intervals with the objective of assessing progress in complying with the provisions of the Constitution (NEPA 27 of 1996). This is the level where SMTs are in a better position to formulate school-based policies and departmental activity plans that serve as documentary directives regarding their core mandate of effective curriculum implementation and management.

This creates an understanding that, in formulating school based policies and plans, SMTs must at all times bear in mind that such policies and plans must be consistent with the National and Provincial policies. Over and above, the policies must at no stage stand in contrast with the supreme law of the country, the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa.

3.2.2.2   Division of labour

This is the second main characteristic of Classical Management Theory. According to Nadrifar *et al.* (2016:84), in terms of division of labour, complex tasks should be divided into more simple tasks that can be easily dealt with by employees. In schools, SMTs face a number of tasks that centre on intra-curricular and extra-curricular activities. These activities form part and parcel of the school's *raison d'être* and their execution needs to be in such a manner that no single task is made to suffer. In my opinion the SMTs must act speedily in

terms of allocating duties to responsible educators for each of the intra- and extra-curricular tasks, taking into account the workload for each educator post level.

3.2.2.3 Unidirectional downward influence

Nadrifar *et al.* (2016:84) term this one-sided, top-down influence which translates into the fact that according to Classical Management Theory there is only one route for communication.

3.2.2.4 Autocratic leadership style

During the early years of the Classical Management Theories, management was influenced by the church and the autocratic style of leadership was the culture of that time. The autocratic leadership approach is the central part of classical management theories. It states that an organisation should have a single leader to make decisions, organise and direct subordinates (Russ, 2019).

Nadrifar *et al.* (2016:84) agrees with this statement when indicating that decision making was the duty of managers only. The managers made decisions and directed the entire management system. There was a belief that the workers should be treated as machines in order to increase efficiency. Cherry (2019:4) points out that autocratic leadership, also known as authoritarian leadership, is a leadership style characterised by individual control over all decisions with little input from group members. Autocratic leaders typically make choices based on their ideas and judgements and rarely accept advice from followers. This leadership approach is beneficial in instances when small organisational decisions need to be made quickly by the manager without having to consult with fellow managers (Russ, 2019).

This theory assisted me in establishing that there are instances in schools whereby SMT members could be autocratic, such as incidents where danger on the part of educators and learners is imminent; particularly during this era of bullying and criminal incidents that at times lead to deaths and serious injury.

3.2.2.5 Predictable behaviour

In Classical Management Theories, the behaviour of workers is at all times predicted (Tigere,

2016:48). If a worker works according to prediction/set standard/ target, he or she is retained and, if they do not perform accordingly, the likelihood is that he or she might be relieved of his/her duties. SMTs must be knowledgeable about contemporary processes that follow from non-performance, poor performance, or underperformance on the part of fellow employees. The Labour Relations Act (LRA) 66 of 1995 empowers school authorities to subject such employees to the DBE disciplinary processes and protocols.

3.2.3 Three institutions of the Classical Management Theory

The characteristics of the Classical Management Theory have been discussed in the preceding section. One must bear in mind that Ferdous (2016:2) confirms that Classical Management Theory is segmented into three types; the Scientific Management Theory, the Administrative Management Theory, and the Bureaucratic Management Theory. The next section of this chapter features a detailed discussion of the three types.

3.2.3.1 The Scientific Management Theory

In the early 1900s, a management theory that emphasised rationalism, efficiency and productivity through established rules and scientific principles received a great prominence. This theory owes its origins to Frederick Winson Taylor (Nhema, 2015:167). Olarewaju and George (2014:5) emphasise that the primary concern of this school of thought was to increase organisational productivity through greater efficiency. This theory recognises the importance of employees and the need for managers to manage workers. It also proposes that organisational tasks be carefully analysed and be given to employees who have been adequately trained for them in order that employees can perform well.

I stand in support of this assertion as SMTs have to be knowledgeable so that only educators who are relevantly qualified are engaged to serve in schools. For appointment as an educator, one must have at least a three year qualification (REQV 13) which must include appropriate training as a teacher (EEA 76 of 1998). In terms of this theory, Taylor wanted to train workers for better jobs. He divided the tasks between management and the workers, and implemented a scientific management style with respect to different practices and workers in action (Nadrifar *et al.,* 2016:84).

- Principles of the Scientific Management Theory

Taylor developed four rules or principles for his Scientific Management Theory for purposes of increasing organisational efficiency. According to Archie (2018:2), the four principles are as follows:

- First principle - To scientifically develop best methodology to execute each task.

- Second principle - Managers should make sure that the best person is chosen to perform the work. Over and above, managers should ensure that they provide the chosen person with the best training.

- Third principle - Professionals are in charge of guaranteeing that the best person picked for the job does it by applying the best methodology.

- Fourth principle - Total responsibility for the task method should be removed from the worker and passed on to management, and the employee should only be accountable for the real work performance (Cole, 2004; Stoner *et al.*, 1996).

3.2.3.2   The Administrative Management Theory

Henry Fayol, a French industrialist, was one of the most powerful and influential management thinkers who developed a Classical Management Theory known as the Administrative Management Theory (Archie, 2018:3). This theory was developed in the year 1916 when Henry Fayol was working as a senior manager. Administrative Management Theory focuses on the productivity of an organisation as a whole, rather than its counterpart, the Scientific Theory of Management (Kitana, 2016:18).

According to Nadrifar *et al.* (2016:85), his focus was on management as this theory encompasses business management and general management. Fayol formally investigated the managerial behaviour in an organisation. He had a belief that sound management practices could be segmented into certain identifiable and analysable patterns. Based on his earlier insights, he developed a blueprint for a cohesive doctrine of managers which is still retained to this day (Kitana, 2016:18).

He introduced six management functions and 14 management principles that lead to organisational efficiency (Nadrifar *et al.*, 2016:85).

- Functions of Administrative Management Theory

According to Nadrifar *et al.* (2016:85), Fayol's six management functions are Predicting, Planning, Organising, Commanding, Coordinating, and Monitoring. These functions are currently applicable in schools as they are part and parcel of what management in schools is all about. By adopting the Administrative Management Theory as the theoretical framework in this investigation, I understood that it would assist me in terms of establishing how the six management functions are embraced by SMTs in schools. A detailed reflection of each of these functions appears below:

- o **Predicting:** To predict is to make a forecasting or prophesy. It means to tell that something will happen even before it happens. According to the Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary (2010:1151), to predict is to say that something will happen in the future. With reference to past experience, the present situation can enable managers to tell what will happen in future. Within the context of this investigation, the SMT can juxtapose the previous and current school performance and consequently tell beforehand how the school will perform in future.

- o **Planning:** The Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary (2010:1116) defines planning as making detailed arrangements for something you want to do in future. It is the most important and the most prevalent of all management functions. This role bridges the gap between where we are and where we want to be in future (Kapur, 2018). Planning is the primary prerequisite for all other functions of management. Every action of the manager follows a planning step. It covers the period over which the commitment of resources can be clearly visualised.

  Planning activities include analysing the current situation, anticipating the future, determining organisational objectives, deciding activities to be involved in, and choosing suitable strategies (Riaz, 2016:2). Within the context of this investigation, planning is about the SMTs deciding where to take their schools and selecting mechanisms to get there. It first requires SMTs to be aware of challenges facing their

schools, and to formulate mechanisms that would assist them to reach their goals within certain deadlines (Norman, 2019).

Planning is all about ensuring that everyone knows what to do, how to do it, when to do it, and by when to complete it. It remains vital that SMTs ensure that they develop plans for their areas of responsibilities for purposes of providing direction to all and sundry in their different departments. The plans could be weekly, monthly, quarterly, per semester, or even annually. Norman (2019) affirms that planning helps allocate resources and reduce waste.

o **Organising:** According to Kapur (2018), organising involves the identification of activities required for the achievement of the organisational objectives and the implementation of plans, grouping of activities into jobs, assignment of jobs and activities into the departments of the individuals, delegation of responsibility and authority for performance, and provision of vertical and horizontal coordination of organisational activities. Managers organise by bringing together physical, human and financial resources to achieve organisational objectives (Norman, 2019).

This creates an undertstanding that, management becomes effective when systems and mechanisms are put in place to ensure that staff and learners are aware of what is expected of them; that is, they know what is in policy documents, and more importantly, that systems are put in place to ensure that schools operate according to policies and procedures that are contained in school documents. In order to ensure efficiency and increased performance in a school, the SMT organises educators and materials in appropriate proportions.   The organisation of educators falls into hierarchical order whereby superiors with authority sit at the top and each level below has less authority and sits below the hierarchy (Ojogwu, 2017:63).

o **Commanding:** The Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary (2010:286) defines commanding as telling somebody to do something. In telling somebody to do something, the commander does that with an accent of authority. Managers must supervise subordinates in their daily work activities and inspire them to achieve organisational goals. It is the responsibility of SMTs to communicate organisational policies and goals to educators.

However, the commanding of educators must always be consistent with organisational policies and every SMT member should treat educators in their departments in line with the standards necessitated by the department (Shah, 2017).

Within the context of this investigation, Tigere (2016:49) points out that the overall authority in every school rests legitimately with the principal. But other levels in the hierarchy of the school possess distributed decision making powers in areas where they are given responsibility. The SMT members have authority over educators in their departments, while educators have some authority at the level of class where they serve as class managers.

o **Coordinating:** According to the Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary (2010:232), coordinating means making parts of something or groups of people to work together in an efficient and organised manner. All managers are involved in the coordination of the activities of the various departments to ensure efficiency and stability in the organisation. To coordinate activities implies fostering cooperation between different departments in a school (Ojogwu, 2017:63).

In terms of coordination, managers harmonise the procedures and activities to be performed in their school. Every activity of each department in the school should complement and enrich the work of the others (Shah, 2017). With reference to this research project, Tigere (2016:50) points out that the SMTs in schools are responsible for the coordinating function. Their duty is to ensure that all school activities are fine-tuned and aligned for teaching and learning of a high standard to take place.

o **Monitoring:** According to the Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary (2010:956), monitoring means watching and checking something over a period of time to see how it develops so that one can make necessary changes. Monitoring in schools takes place in a top down manner. Within the context of this investigation, monitoring the work of SMT members remains the responsibility of the principal, and monitoring the work of educators is the duty of SMT members according to the departments in which they are placed. In my view, SMTs ensure that systems that are in place in schools and monitored in such a manner that they lead to the attainment of the school's organisational goals.

As a theoretical framework guiding this investigation, this theory had assisted me in determining how SMTs respond to the six functions of the Administrative Management Theory in managing curriculum delivery in schools. In my opinion, the work of SMT members has its origins in these functions. There is no way in which SMTs can succeed in terms of executing their duties without these administrative management functions in schools.

- Principles of Administrative Management Theory

Kitana (2016:18) points out that Fayol made it clear that management is a skill that can be taught by anyone to anyone. He formulated 14 management principles which are as follows:

- **Division of work:** Work should be divided among individuals and groups to ensure that effort and attention are focused on special portions of the task. Fayol presented work specialisation as the best way to use the human resources of the organisation. Uzuegbu and Nnadozie (2015:59) are supportive of this assertion when they point out that staff perform better at work when they are assigned jobs according to their specialities. On this note, the division of work into smaller elements then becomes paramount. Bhasin (2018) also supports division of work among employees by saying that work should be divided between all employees who are capable of doing it and they should not be overloaded to a concentrated few.

  Amongst many tasks that SMTs in schools are faced with is the allocation of duties to educators falling under their departments. This allocation of duties must be done in such a way that educators feature in their areas of specialisation. Featuring the educators' specialist areas leads to the effective execution of their core mandate and consequently, an improved performance in schools.

- **Authority:** The concepts of authority and responsibility are closely related. Authority was defined by Fayol as the right to give orders and the power to exact obedience. Responsibility involves being accountable, and is therefore naturally associated with authority. Whoever assumes authority also assumes responsibility. Fayol defined authority as the right to give orders and the ability to obey and do what was ordered (as cited by Nadrifar *et al.,* 2016:85). The principle of authority suggests the need for

managers to have authority in order to command subordinates to perform their jobs while being accountable for their actions. Thus Fayol believed that since a manager must be responsible for his/her duties, he/she should also have authority backing him to accomplish his/her duties. This is correct and crucial to organisational success (Uzuegbu & Nnadozie, 2015:61).

In their capacity as curriculum implementers and curriculum managers in schools, SMT members have the authority to give orders, instructions, and commands to educators reporting to them. Teachers are at all times expected to respond positively to the commands of their seniors as this leads to a conducive teaching and learning environment, and over and above that, it is the right thing to do.

o **Discipline:** It goes without saying that management is responsible for the way discipline is maintained in an organisation (Bhasin, 2018). Discipline is essential for the success of every willing organisation (Nadrifar *et al.,* 2016:85). It is the duty of SMTs in schools to ensure that there is maximum discipline among learners, educators, and everyone who enters the school environment. Discipline forms one of the tenets of the learners' and educators' code of conduct in schools. SMTs must know that failure to adhere to the code of conduct is punishable in terms of the education law and policies.

o **Unity of command:** Workers should receive orders from only one manager. According to Uzuegbu and Nnadozie (2015:62), the principle of unity of command means that employees should receive orders from, and report directly to, one manager only. This means that employees are required to be accountable to one immediate superior only. Nadrifar *et al.* (2016:85) are fully supportive of this assertion in mentioning that unity of command should be observed in organisations so that workers can be given orders by just one individual in the form of a manager.

The principal's office is the point of every entry and every exit in schools. Dissemination of information to educator staff in schools lies with the office of the manager in the form of the principal. SMTs must at all times be in constant contact with the principal's office, such that any relevant information disseminated to staff members receives the blessing of the principal's office. This is for the purposes of

ensuring that any conflict is strictly avoided, even before it rears its ugly head in schools.

o **Unity of direction:** The entire organisation should be moving towards a common objective and in a common direction. According to Bhasin (2018), unity of direction is important for the purposes of giving one vision to all employees in an organisation. It is like the famous saying, '*United we stand and divided we fall*'. Nadrifar *et al.* (2016:85) support this view when they indicate that Fayol believed that unity of direction should be observed in a successful organisation. In other words, the entire organisation needs to move towards a common goal and in a common direction.

According to Uzuegbu and Nnadozie (2015:62), unity of direction means that there should be one plan, one objective, and one head for each of the plans. What Fayol meant was that an organisation will naturally have central objectives which need to be followed, as well as departmental and unit goals which also need to be reached in order to meet the unified objective. In my opinion, SMTs must ensure that no conflicting or contrasting statements are issued as this would be confusing and frustrating to all school-based stakeholders. Confusing and contrasting statements cause disorderliness in schools and this must be totally avoided.

o **Subordination of individual interests to the general interests:** The interests of one person should not take priority over the interests of the organisation as a whole. According to Uzuegbu and Nnadozie (2015:63), the interests of the organisation supersede every other interest of staff, individuals, or groups. Imperatively, employees must sacrifice all their personal interests for the good of the organisation.

In other words, organisations should not tolerate any staff members who are not committed to the organisation's objectives, even if those are to the detriment of personal and family interests. Bhasin (2018) is supportive to this assertion when mentioning that the interests of the organisation should be placed above the interests of the individual. SMTs in schools should put aside their personal interests and ensure that they work tirelessly for the attainment of their organisational objectives as entailed in the vision statement of their schools.

o **Remuneration:** Many variables, such as cost of living, supply of qualified personnel, general business conditions, and the success of the business should be considered in determining a worker's rate of pay. According to Uzuegbu and Nnadozie (2015:64), payment of staff salaries in organisations should be as deserved. The salary should be reasonable to both ordinary staff members and management, and neither party should receive more pay than line staff.

A supervisor should receive more pay than other staff members. According to Nadrifar *et al.* (2016:85), salaries of employees should be determined based on many variables such as cost of living, supply of qualified personnel, general organisational conditions, and organisational success. It must be made clear to SMT members that salaries are determined according to salary bands. A salary band refers to a set of salary ranges applicable to educators on specific post levels and with a specific Relative Education Qualification Value (REQV). An educator is always appointed to the lowest salary position of the salary band applicable to his REQV (EEA 76 of 1998).

o **Centralisation:** Fayol defined centralisation as lowering the importance of the subordinate role. The degree to which centralisation or decentralisation should be adopted depends on the specific organisation. Centralisation is the amount of control that lies with people in an organisation (Bhasin, 2018). According to Uzuegbu and Nnadozie (2015:64), this principle suggests that decision making in organisations should be centralised. This means that decision making and the dishing out of orders should come from top management to the middle management, where the decisions are converted into strategies that are interpreted for the line staff who execute them (decentralisation). This works in many contemporary organisations.

In my opinion, curriculum management duties must be devolved from the principal's office to the offices of the SMTs in order that the right people do the right job in the right manner, at the right pace and at the right time. However, the principal centralises only duties and not accountability as he or she is at all material times the Chief Accounting Officer of his/her school.

o **Scalar chain:** Managers in hierarchies are parts of a chain like an authority scale. Each manager, from the first line supervisor to the CEO, possesses a certain amount of authority. The CEO possesses the most authority, the line supervisor the least. Lower level managers should always keep upper level managers informed of their work activities. The existence of a scalar chain and adherence to it are necessary if the organisation is to be successful. Bhasin (2018) indicates that according to the scalar chain concept, there should be a clear line of authority in the company so that when one has to escalate or elevate issues, then they know the line of authority.

Uzuegbu and Nnadozie (2015:65) are of the view that this principle is a product of the formal system of every organisation. It is also known as the hierarchy principle. It asserts that communication in every organisation should be vertical only. It is insistent that a single uninterrupted chain of authority should exist in an organisation. Horizontal communication is permissible if, and only if, it is has received the blessing of the organisational manager.

In schools, the principal is the Chief Accounting Officer and therefore possesses more authority than any other staff member. For each and every activity that must take place in the school, it must receive its blessing from the principal's office. There is absolutely no activity that can take place in schools against the authority of the principal. Any resolution that is taken in the school must be made known to the principal's office even before it is implemented. In terms of issues that warrant reference to the higher offices, it is imperative that they proceed via the principal's office as the point of every entry and exit in the school. If educators complain about the principal to the higher departmental authorities, such complaints must be forwarded to the higher offices via the principal's office.

o **Order:** For the sake of efficiency and coordination, all materials and people related to a specific kind of work should be treated as equally as possible. Nadrifar *et al.* (2015:85) are of the view that activities should be performed in an effective and efficient manner in any organisation. All personnel and executives should hold their own positions in the organisation. In other words, the individual should be at the right place at the right time. According to Bhasin (2018), this principle does not mean that someone sitting at the top is ordering people about. It is the principle of 'order versus

chaos'. If an organisation wants to work in an orderly manner, employees need the right equipment and the right procedure to ensure that order is maintained at all times. In my opinion, SMTs must ensure that each and every person does the right job, does it the right way, and does it at the right time for order to be maintained at all times. This is for purpose of ensuring that conflict is strictly avoided in the school.

o **Equity:** All employees should be treated as equally as possible. Another word for equity is fairness. Employees must be treated not only equally but properly. This shows that the basic rights, laws, and regulations should at all times be the same for all employees for the success of the organisation (Nadrifar *et al.,* 2016:85). Fayol suggests that managers should be fair to their fellow employees. However, the fairness required, probably, is such that must make staff comply with the principle of subordination of individual interests to organisational interests, which leads to the desired productivity in organisations nowadays.

Organisations that flourish in today's society are those that accommodate staff. Such organisations make staff feel at home, share a portion of the profits with staff, communicate with staff, remain open to staff, and identify with staff personal/family challenges. This is the type of organisation that succeeds currently (Uzuegbu & Nnadozie, 2015:68).

In my view, in interacting with fellow employees at the level of the school, SMT members must at all times ensure that they abide by the supreme law of the country, i.e. the Constitution, as well as other applicable and relevant legislation. This should be for the purposes of ensuring that no employee is unfairly treated in school, as well as to ensure that the schools do not bring the DBE into disrepute.

o **Stability of tenure of personnel:** Retaining productive employees should always be a high priority of management. In this principle, Fayol expresses the need to recruit the right staff and train them on the job with the hope of retaining them for a long period. The basis of this principle is the belief that staff with a secured tenure will put back into the organisation the knowledge and experience garnered in the course of working for the organisation (Uzuegbu & Nnadozie, 2015:68).

In this regard, an organisation will grow faster and stronger if its employees are stable. Naturally, if there is high attrition in the organisation, then there will be much time wasted in the training and development of employees, costs will go up, and the stability of tenure will not be observed (Bhasin, 2018). This is solely because new recruitments in organisations necessitate additional costs and cause serious problems for the organisation (Nadrifar *et al.,* 2016:85).

The more experienced the educator is, the more he/she becomes knowledgeable and productive; especially in the area of curriculum management and implementation. It sometimes happens in schools that some competent educators exit the school due to a number of issues like redeployment, death, resignation, promotion and retirement. This situation leaves schools with an uncontrollable headache, given the process that leads up to the appointment of a new educator. In many instances, schools end up securing the services of incompetent educators who fail to fill the gap that has been vacated and this situation leaves schools frustrated as the achievement of their goals remains an eternal nightmare.

o **Initiative:** Management should take steps to encourage worker initiative, which is defined as new or additional work activity undertaken through self-direction. According to Uzuegbu and Nnadozie (2015:68), a good manager must be the one who is creative and initiates new ideas and is able to implement them. The same thing applies to SMT members in schools. In my view, they must bring in new ideas and design new plans that take the school to the next level. If a specific plan does not work well for the school over a specific period of time, such a plan must be reviewed and replaced by a new one that must be strictly monitored to ensure that it yields fruit.

o **Espirit de corps:** Management should encourage harmony and general good feelings among employees. *Espirit de corps* is defined as a feeling of pride and mutual loyalty shared by the members of a group (Bhasin, 2018). According to Uzuegbu and Nnadozie (2015:69), organisations should enforce and maintain high morale and unity among their staff. This is imperative as the existence of an organisation is a result of the coming together of men and women under a collective interest.

Thus understanding, love for each other, unity, peace and determination are paramount to success. The saying that '*United we stand, divided we fall*' is currently applicable in schools. The *espirit de corps* must surely prevail in schools and SMTs must ensure that it does prevail and is taken care of and sustained; such that schools can be characterised by their feeling of pride amongst staff members. Pride among staff members encourages them to work much harder; such that the organisational objective of their schools can be achieved.

The 14 principles of the Administrative Management Theory have been discussed in this section. It is loud and clear that all of these principles have a bearing on the contemporary work of SMTs in schools. This theory has been very helpful in terms of establishing how SMTs execute their duties and work towards the achievement of their organisational aims and objectives. SMTs have to constantly take into cognisance these principles as they are still relevant to their areas of operation in schools.

3.2.3.3   The Bureaucratic Management Theory

The literature on the Bureaucratic Management Theory points out that this Classical Management Theory was developed by the German sociologist Max Weber in 1947. His contributions to this modern social thinking were based on sociology, economics and philosophy (Shaik, Islam & Jatoi, 2018:254). In terms of this theory, a set of structured procedures and guidelines for managing organisations are developed. This theory believes in procedures, rules, hierarchy, and labour division within an organisation (Kitana, 2016:19). By adopting the Bureaucratic Management Theory as a theoretical framework, I understood that it would be helpful in determining the procedures and guidelines that SMTs develop in schools in terms of executing their core mandate.

According to Nhema (2015:170), Weber belongs to the Classical Management Theory school in that he takes the position of most classical authors regarding the appropriate relationship between the politicians and the administrators. His insistence that a bureaucrat should be a neutral servant of his/her political masters is precisely the position embodied in the classical politics-administration dichotomy. Unlike Taylor and Fayol who concentrated on organisational processes, Weber's focus is on the administrative structure. He focuses on hierarchy and authority control with strict lines in structuring the organisation into a

hierarchy. He suggests that organisations develop precise and comprehensive operating procedures for predefined tasks (Nadrifar *et al.,* 2016:85). The Bureaucratic Management Theory postulates that in order to manage an organisation efficiently, it is essential to have a clear line of authority with proper rules, procedures, and regulations for the purposes of controlling organisational operations (Priya, 2019).

Weber believes that bureaucracy is the most efficient way to set up an organisation. With bureaucracy, everyone is treated equally and the division of labour is clearly described for each employee. He believes that bureaucracy is better than traditional structures. Bureaucracy is an organisational structure that is characterised by many rules, standardised processes, procedures and requirements, number of desks, meticulous division of labour and responsibility, clear hierarchies, and professional, almost impersonal, interactions between employees (Kumar, 2016: 213). Formal rules are the basic principles of this theory (Nadrifar, *et al.* 2016:85).

Bureaucrats hold the values of transparency and predictability that are integral and important values of democracy (Shaik *et al.,* 2018:255). In addition, in a bureaucracy, the selection and promotion of employees only occurs on the basis of relevant qualifications. Bureaucracy is the basis for the systematic formation of any organisation and is designed to ensure efficiency and organisational effectiveness. It is an ideal model for management and its administration to bring an organisation's power structure into focus (Kumar, 2016:213).

- The principles of Bureaucratic Management Theory

Weber laid down six principles of the Bureaucratic Management Theory for managing an organisation effectively and efficiently. Kumar (2016: 213) provides a brief discussion of each of the principles as follows:

- o **Task specialisation:** Tasks are divided into simple, routine categories on the basis of competencies and functional specialisations. Every employee knows exactly what is expected of him/her and what his/her powers are within the organisation. Going beyond one's responsibilities and taking on the tasks of colleagues is not permitted within a bureaucracy. In my view, within the context of this study, SMT members have the task of developing job descriptions for educators under their supervision and

management. The development of the job descriptions must at all times take into consideration the educators' area of speciality. Subject speciality is one of the factors that brings about organisational productivity and efficiency in schools.

o **Hierarchical authority:** Managers are organised into hierarchical layers, where each layer of management is responsible for its staff and overall performance. The bottom layers are always subject to supervision and control by the higher layers. Regarding this investigation, the SMT represents a specific layer of the hierarchy in schools as it is responsible for the supervision of educators under their watch. On this note, the SMT members must make use of this bureaucratic advantage to ensure that their core mandate is executed for productivity and efficiency in their responsible territories.

o **Formal selection:** All employees are selected on the basis of technical skills and competencies, and have been through training, education, and experience. Their contract terms are determined by organisational rules and requirements and the employee has no ownership interest in the organisation. In my opinion, SMTs must make maximum utilisation of the bureaucratic principles regarding the appointment of educators and appoint relevantly qualified educators for quality educational services to be rendered in their schools.

So far, the process of engaging suitably qualified and relevant educators for schools is dictated by the bureaucratic principle in the form of Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC) Resolution Number 1 of 2008. This resolution outlines the processes that must be followed regarding the appointment of an educator at any post level. The resolution clearly indicates that the process starts with the receipt of applications from suitably qualified applicants. These applications must be subjected to a sifting process by the DBE at the level of the District office. After the sifting has been done, the applications are then taken to Circuit offices where the SGB is expected to start the process of shortlisting as dictated by the Provincial management plan.

o **Rules and requirements:** Formal rules and requirements are required to ensure uniformity so that employees know exactly what is expected of them. All administrative processes are defined in the official rules. By enforcing strict rules, the organisation can more easily achieve uniformity and all employee efforts can be better coordinated.

- **Impersonal:** Regulations and clear requirements create distant and impersonal relationships between employees, with the additional advantage of preventing nepotism or involvement from outsiders in terms of politics. In my opinion, and within the context of this investigation, SMTs have an obligation to ensure that in terms of managing curriculum delivery issues in schools, they strictly distance themselves from the corruption mentality of nepotism.

- **Career orientation:** Employees are selected on the basis of their expertise. This helps in the deployment of the right people in the right positions, thereby optimally utilising human capital. In a bureaucracy it is possible to build a career on the basis of experience and expertise. As a result, it offers lifetime employment.

According to Luenendonk (2017:3), throughout the history of the bureaucratic system of organisations, and the different ways in which the school of thought has been defined, three core elements have always stayed at the centre. These are:

- **Officialism:** The system show a lack of flexibility and initiative.

- **Red tape:** There are high levels of adherence to rules and formalities.

- **Proliferation:** The system tends to expand rapidly.

From the deliberations above regarding the bureaucratic theory of management, it becomes explicitly clear that contemporary organisations represent a picture of bureaucracy. The successes and the failures of each and every organisation as a bureaucratic entity depend on the embracement and implementation of bureaucratic principles. Organisational success and productivity present a clear picture of bureaucratic maturity, or simply the sufficient and maximum application of the foundational bureaucratic principles.

On the other hand of the continuum, the bureaucratic misfortunes, failures and unproductivity are bureaucratic prematurity or often the consequences of insufficient and minimal application of the foundational principles of a bureaucracy. The experiences of SMTs in managing low quintile secondary schools in order that they perform better than schools in the high quintile is a clear demonstration of the

existence of bureaucratic maturity in such institutions of learning. In my opinion, the rise and fall of every school is a demonstration of the magnitude of the application of the bureaucratic principles in such schools.

3.2.3.4   The relevance of the Classical Management Theory to this investigation

It has already been highlighted that the Classical Management Theory is segmented into three schools of thought; the Scientific Management Theory of Frederick Taylor, the Administrative Management Theory of Henry Fayol, and the Bureaucratic Management Theory of Max Weber. According to the literature, since its inception, the Scientific Management Theory has contributed significantly to organisational productivity and success. It has contributed to the efficient mass production of standardised public services, public works projects undertaken according to plan, and standardised curricular activities in public schools (Nhema, 2015:169).

In my view, in executing any curriculum management task, the SMT uses the most suitable method, and the task must be performed by a competent educator and the educator must also be trained to carry out the task diligently. According to Ehiobuche and Tu (2012:310), from 1901 to 1915, Taylorism was introduced in over 181 American organisations. He goes further to articulate that Fayol's Administrative Management Theory advocated that if a manager wants to be successful, he/she needs to learn his management functions; i.e. planning, organising, commanding, coordinating, and controlling. Within the context of this investigation, even after more than 100 years, these management functions are still relevant in schools.

In my opinion, the SMT, as the curriculum management structure in a school, has a duty to perform the administrative functions of predicting, planning, organising, commanding coordinating, and monitoring curriculum implementation in schools. According to Ehiobuche and Tu (2012:311-325), Classical Management Theory was not only important in the past, but continues to be important in organisations presently in the erection of modern day edifices. These theories constitute important learning components in the formation of managers and leaders. I stand in support of this assertion simply because every publication or university course that deals with leadership and management always includes a section or chapter detailing the Classical Management Theory in the form of the Administration

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Management school of thought. With regard to Weber's Bureaucratic Management Theory, Ehiobuche and Tu (2012:311) are of the assertion that it was envisioned as a large machine for attaining organisational goals in the most efficient manner possible. They go further to posit that this school of thought was developed through the rational-legal authority concept with subordinates following the orders of superiors, but at the same time having right to appeal. I am fully supportive of this assertion on the basis that schools as bureaucratic organisations are run according to the policies of the bureaucracy. The SMT is therefore a bureaucratic structure and must at all times ensure that curriculum policies are implemented accordingly in schools. Schools as social systems are bureaucratic in nature. This means that the people in the school occupy different position and are accountable to management (Kgwete, 2014:24).

From the deliberations above, it is explicit that the three schools of thought of the Classical Management Theory are still very relevant. In my opinion, the SMTs can rely on these theories in managing low quintiles secondary schools such that they could be in a better position to achieve their organisational goals. Despite the fact that Classical Management Theories contain useful principles that are applicable to managing school organisations, there is a portion of the postulations that is not relevant today. This is because of the obvious differences between the settings for which the theories were developed, a company as opposed to a school. New trends in organisational management, the complexity of schools as organisations, the diversity of functions, and the differences in purpose render the total application of the theories in schools outmoded; hence the need for alternative principles and paradigms that suit the nature and purpose of management in the contemporary school organisation (Bello, 2018:134).

3.3 HUMAN RELATIONS THEORY

In any organisation around the globe, a sound and positive relationship among employees, employers, employee representatives, and employer representatives is of paramount importance for its vibrancy, productivity, and overall success. At all times, organisational human relations must be taken into cognisance as their impact can be felt in each of the cardinal points of every organisation. According to Petryni (2019:10), human relations is the process of empowering employees, addressing their needs, fostering a workplace culture, and resolving conflicts between different employees or between employees and the organisational

management. Employees work together on organisational tasks, communicate ideas, and provide motivation to get things done. According to Peek (2020), the human relations theory (HRT) has the following basics:

- Individual attention and recognition align with the HRT.

- Many management theorists support the motivational element which ties in the HRT.

- Empirical studies are supportive of the HRT in every organisation.

This investigation is about the experiences of SMTs in managing low quintile secondary schools. I argue that as human beings, SMTs execute their core mandate while interacting with other humans from inside and outside of their schools. In interacting with those people, the SMT is already establishing relations. This translates into the fact that schools, like any other organisation, are organisations that are characterised by a factor of human relations. The principal's, Deputy Principal's, HOD's, and educators' offices and classrooms are at all times characterised by people. On a daily basis the school needs the SMT, educators, learners and other stakeholders as they complement each other in doing justice to its *raison d'être*.

The dawn of every school day marks the beginning of interactions and engagements that depict human relations. The existence of human relations in schools necessitates that they must be well managed. If human relations are not properly managed, they have the potential of holding the school as an institution of learning to ransom, thus rendering it unimportant, unproductive, and consequently stagnant.

Human relations must be dealt with by SMTs in such a way that they contribute positively to the attainment of the organisational vision of the school. This has necessitated the encapsulation of the Human Relations Theory of Management as one of the theoretical frameworks on which this investigation was constructed. HRT, also known as the Behavioural Management Theory, focuses more on the individuals in a workplace than the rules, procedures, and processes as dictated by other theoretical frameworks (Zeiger, 2019:1). According to Thamarasseri (2016:2), the HRT helps schools in terms of achieving effective results.

Within the context of this research, I stand in agreement with this assertion as the positive relations between and amongst educators and every stakeholder in the school setting remains a contributing factor to an upward spiral in performance and the overall achievement of the organisational vision.

3.3.1 The genesis of the HRT

The HRT emerged around the 1930s in the United States of America to cope with the dehumanisation of individuals in organisations. Its emphasis was on the study of the behaviour of workers in organisations, and the effects of social relations, motivation, and employee satisfaction on productivity were examined (Thamarasseri, 2016:10).

The HRT is normally thought of as having its roots in the Hawthorne Studies. The results of the studies regarding human relations in the workplace show that relationships are the most influential factor in productivity. People want to feel a sense of belonging and significance while being treated with respect. Treating an employee with value and respect leads to an increase in their individual productivity (Peek, 2020). It was envisaged that the HRT would be helpful in this investigation in terms of establishing the kind of human relations that prevail in low quintile secondary schools so that they keep on performing better than schools in the high quintile.

It emerged during the studies of the HRT that when people are stressed and are given a chance to discuss their issues, they feel better, even if the situation does not change (Hattangadi, 2016:9). The HRT steers the managerial focus towards an emphasis on employee enthusiasm, morale, and contentment, rather than just productivity (Thamarasseri, 2016:3). This theory hypothesises that a good leader is one who is able to manage multiple, often competing, priorities at once without missing a single deadline (Peek, 2020). It hypothesises that the function of an organisational leader is to facilitate cooperation and coordination among employees while providing assistance and opportunities for their personal growth and development.

It goes further to postulate that the satisfaction of the social needs of employees is the driving force of the organisation because satisfied employees are motivated workers and therefore effective and efficient employees (Delahoo, 2011:36). I am fully agreeable with this take,

noting that Reece (2012:3) posits that human relations emphasise the analysis of human behaviour, prevention strategies, resolution of behavioural problems, and promotion of self-development.

3.3.2 Characteristics/features of the HRT

According to Tirintetaake (2017), the following are features of the HRT:

- **Individual employee:** This refers to the recognition and appreciation of employees within the workplace. Within the context of this investigation, educators must be rewarded and appreciated for the good work they do in schools. Merit awards could be made available for this category of educators to motivate them towards better performance.

- **Informal organisations:** This means that managers must encourage the formation of informal groups in schools. SMTs, as legitimate structures in schools, can go to the extent of encouraging educators in their department to form informal groups that have an interest in curriculum delivery issues. For example, they can form Assessment Committees that could be in charge of all assessment issues, and Disciplinary Committees can deal with misconduct issues on the part learners for the purposes of ensuring a disruption free school environment.

- **Participative management:** This is all about the involvement of employees in terms of decision making. In my opinion, SMTs must at all times invite input and opinions from fellow employees in terms of taking decisions that pertain to their jurisdictions. Decisions in individual departments should never be imposed on fellow employees as this imposition has the potential to invite resistance. Involving fellow employees in decision making processes leads to motivation on their part, and consequently high outputs in the form of good results in the schools.

3.3.2 Principles of the HRT

The principles of the HRT are that organisations should see and treat employees as human beings (Thamarasseri, 2016:6). According to Kayes (2015), the basic principles of the HRT are as follows:

- Human beings are not only interested in financial gain, they also need recognition and appreciation. I am fully agreeable with this principle as the current trend in the Education Department is the awarding of good performance at the level of schools, Circuits, Districts, provinces, as well as the DBE. The situation is that hardworking learners and educators are normally presented with some accolade by their SMTs. Schools that perform well are normally awarded during the occasion of the Circuits and Districts Excellence award ceremonies. As a Circuit Manager, I have realised that this tendency of rewarding hard work is really motivating and inspirational.

- Workers are human beings, so they must be treated like human beings and not machines. Among other management responsibilities in schools, managers try and understand the feelings and emotions of workers. In my view, within the context of this research, SMTs have the responsibility of treating fellow employees in such a manner that the reciprocal activity would be acceptable on their part.

- An organisation works not only through formal relations, but also through informal relations. Therefore, managers should encourage informal relations in the organisations.

- Workers need a high degree of job security and job satisfaction. Therefore, management should give job security and job satisfaction to the employees.

- Employees need good communication from management. Therefore, managers should communicate effectively without showing their ego or superiority.

- In any organisation, employees do not like conflict or misunderstandings. Therefore, managers should try to prevent conflict and misunderstandings.

- Employees want freedom, not strict supervision. Therefore managers should avoid strict supervision and control over employees. Strict supervision is in essence an emotionally abusive type of supervision as it does not give employees space to prove themselves. According to Stevenson (2018:5), abusive supervision is the extent to which a supervisor engages in a pattern than harms his/her subordinates.

- Employees would like to participate in decision making, especially in those matters affecting their interests. Therefore, management must at all times encourage worker participation in management. This will increase productivity and job satisfaction.

3.3.3 Relevance of the HRT to this investigation

It has already been articulated that this research project aims to determine the experiences of SMTs in managing low quintile secondary schools. It was also stated that the SMT is a crew of human resources in schools responsible for the correct and effective curriculum implementation and they deal with curriculum management issues. The underlying principle of the HRT has always been that employees must at all times be treated as human beings. According to Akrani (2015), human relations mostly include or revolve around:

- Interactions happening among people.

- Conflicts arising from these interactions.

- Collaborations forming if conflicts are resolved successfully.

- Groups emerging as a result of successful collaborations.

Given the deliberations above, I argue that the HRT is all about the philosophy that says '*every work is done through relationships*' and also '*do unto others as you would have them do unto you*'; i.e. the inclusion of courtesy as a Batho Pele Principle. In executing its mandate in schools, the SMT is at the same time consciously or unconsciously involved in the establishment of relations amongst themselves as well as with other people. As the SMT establishes relations with fellow employees in schools, fellow employees also establish relations with each other, consciously or unconsciously. However, the kind of human relations that are established in schools must at all times be congruent with the organisational vision of their schools. This theory has been relevant to this investigation as the achievement of the organisational vision in schools is a direct product of the human relations in schools.

In managing low quintile secondary schools, the issue of human relations is always present. On this note, the HRT has always been and will always be part and parcel of curriculum delivery issues in schools. Schools rise and fall as a result of human relations. In my view, the SMTs must at all times ensure that there are sound and positive interactions and relationships amongst the school-based stakeholders. It is a well-known fact that in terms of their interactions with their departments, conflicts may arise as Peek (2020) asserts that managing individuals with differing personality types, worldviews and goals can make

universal agreement incredibly difficult if not impossible to achieve, and therefore managers must be well versed in conflict resolution. As a situation arises, SMTs must necessitate steps and avenues towards the identification and resolution of the conflict, such that the teaching and learning situation remains a conflict-free environment. After the conflict has been resolved, SMTs, members of their different department, and the entire school must continue working towards the attainment of the organisational aims and objectives.

The HRT makes a significant contribution worldwide to management thought. It brings into the limelight human and social factors in organisations as it enables management to regard workers as human beings rather than cogs in the machinery. Furthermore, it led to the emergence of the participative or decision making management theory (Thamarasseri, 2016:9). HRT is a researched belief positing that employees desire to be part of a supportive collective that facilitates development and growth in their organisation (Peek, 2020). It stresses the significance of social and formal groups in the organisation. It humanises management, and serves to be more flexible than the bureaucratic management theory (Thamarasseri, 2016:9).

If employees receive special attention and are encouraged to work, they perceive their work as having significance and are thus motivated to be more productive and this results in high-quality work (Peek, 2020). Within the context of this investigation, the SMT must facilitate positive cooperation and coordination among colleagues and must assist them to grow and develop. Failure to coordinate educators and ensure that they are cooperative can lead to stagnation on the part of schools.

3.4   TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP THEORY

School management is a direct product of the transformational processes that drizzled across the South African educational escarpment and this means that in whatever they engage in, an element of change must become a reality. The role of the SMT is to assist the principal with his or her management tasks and to share the management tasks more widely in the school. This is necessary if the management structure of schools is to become more democratic, inclusive, and participatory (DoE, 2000:2).

The SMT is responsible for the day-to-day running of the school and for putting the school's policies in place (DoE, 2000:2). It is the role of the SMT to work out how the school can be best organised to make the vision of the school a reality (DoE, 2000:10). The SMT should make the school the best in the country in terms of providing quality education. The SMT is directly accountable for rendering excellent teaching and learning that enhances learner achievement (Mampshe, 2015:34).

The success and survival of every school as an institution of learning are by and large dependent on its leadership. It is the leadership of each and every school that determines its vision, mission, aims, and objectives and consciously does everything in its power to ensure productivity is some distance away from organisational catastrophe. Dysfunctional leadership in many schools may be the reason for low academic performance (Hompashe, 2018:1).

I agree with this assertion because organisational leadership is responsible for the rise and fall of every organisation. It is the leadership that spearheads all organisational activities that are directed at ensuring that its mission is clearly accomplished. There is increasing recognition that schools require effective leaders and managers if they are to provide the best possible education for their learners (Bush, 2007:391). When the principal elicits a high level of commitment and professionalism from teachers and works interactively with them in a shared leadership capacity, schools have the benefit of integrated leadership; they are organisations that learn and perform at high levels (Hallinger, 2003:345).

Over the past decades educational researchers have made excellent progress in understanding how schools can better provide quality instruction for all the learners. Educational concepts such as leader-teacher relationships, collegiality, collaborative culture, learning organisation, teacher leadership all suggest that the power to make decisions in order to improve teaching and learning in schools must be distributed throughout the school (Ng, 2019:3). Educators can no longer afford to be excluded from curriculum management activities on the basis that only those who have been favoured with bureaucratically legitimate curriculum management powers can make decision and implement them in schools.

Traditional literature on instructional leadership stresses the importance of the principal's role in the dimension of the coordination and control of instruction (Ng, 2018:7). In terms of

instructional activities in schools, only the principal had those bureaucratic powers that in most instances left the entire pool of educators as spectators of curriculum management. However, many recent educational studies on the impact of the principal regarding student achievement in schools have addressed both the instructional and transformational aspects of leadership in order to address the broader organisational and instructional actions of the principal because the two constructs are difficult to separate (Vogel, 2018:1).

Transformation is about change in structures, processes and actions. It is about adopting new technologies and embracing change without lamenting the fading 'golden old days' (Sejanamane, 2014:56). In my view, given the process of transformation as it blows across the entire South African educational landscape, transformational leadership has overtaken instructional leadership in schools as schools now embrace a more inclusive approach to leadership and management. No longer is the principal isolated from the SMT and the entire pool of educators as this is detrimental to effective curriculum management and delivery. The contemporary educational leadership buzzwords are 'transformational leadership' as activities in schools warrant joint ventures comprising the principal, SMTs and educators. Contemporarily, it is no longer a 'me or I' but a 'we' in terms of curriculum delivery activities.

3.4.1 The genesis of Transformational Leadership

Before 1994 South African schools and the education system were managed in a bureaucratic and dictatorial fashion, and schools were not encouraged to develop a strong sense of institutional responsibility (O'Connel, 2013:121). Different leadership styles featured in schools to the exclusion of a transformational style. Transformational leadership can be traced back to James Burns's work on political leaders in 1978 (as cited by Berkovich, 2016:2). Bass further expanded the concept to include ways of measuring the success of transformational leaders (as cited by White, 2018).

During the 1990s, education policy reforms in the USA asserted the importance of professionalising education, empowering teachers as professionals, and building staff capacity as strategies for school improvement (Hallinger, 2015:10). Schools have always been placed at the centre of these reforms and their level of accountability has risen; particularly for school leaders (Alsaeedi & Male, 2013:5). Educational researchers began to make excellent progress in terms of understanding how classrooms and schools can better

provide quality instruction to all deserving children (Ng, 2019:2). Transformational leadership therefore became an important construct that has influenced many organisational outcomes (Khasawneh, Omari & Abu-Tineh, 2012:495).

This leadership theory is associated with a behaviour which is defined as the ideal influence (charisma), and inspirational motivation; both of which are displayed when organisational leaders envision a desirable future and articulate how it can be reached (Kopperud, Martisen & Humborstad 2013:32). By adopting the Transformational Leadership Theory as one of the theoretical frameworks in this study, I envisaged that it would assist me in establishing how SMTs go about ensuring that all and sundry remain motivated in order that low quintile secondary schools perform better than schools in the high quintile. Today's schools are expected to continually improve their performance, and leaders play a key part in this regard (Berkovich, 2016:2).

In view of what has been mentioned so far, one may conclude that Transformational Leadership Theory assisted me in determining the kind of leadership that exists in low quintile secondary schools in order that they perform better than schools in the high quintile. It is my argument that in managing low quintile secondary schools, there is a dire need for SMTs to embrace the transformational leadership model, as according to (Alsaeedi & Male 2013:6), there is a need for transformational leadership behaviour to be displayed in schools since it has been found to be a suitable style in times of educational reforms and challenging educational circumstances. Over and above, transformational leadership is based on the principles of cooperation, innovation, hard work, and motivation, and this leads to the attainment of productivity and the overall organisational vision in schools.

The school environment that is characterised by transformational leadership is conducive to effective teaching, learning, and curriculum management and this has huge potential in presenting the schools as centres for academic excellence. Followers of transformational leadership have always reported themselves to be more satisfied with their leaders, and by extension, with their jobs as a whole (Koperud, Martisen & Humborstad 2013:31). Job satisfaction leads to the achievement of the aims and objective in schools.

While this theory dates back to the '70s, it is still an effective leadership theory that is practiced to date. Transformational leadership is a leadership style that can inspire positive

change in those who follow. Transformational leaders are generally energetic, enthusiastic, and passionate. Not only are these leaders concerned and involved in the process, they are also focused on helping every member of the group succeed (Cherry, 2020). Any school that fails to achieve its organisational vision must unhesitantly revisit its *raison d'être*.

3.4.2   Defining Transformational Leadership

In educational settings, transformational leadership works by inspiring the school workforce to build a sense of efficiency which leads to improved students outcomes (Alsaeedi & Male, 2013:8). I am fully agreeable with this point because inspiration brings about encouragement and zeal on the part of team members to work even harder for the attainment of the organisational vision.

Transformational leadership is a critical approach in terms of organisational innovation in education (Aydin, Sarier & Uysal, 2013:807). It is sad that the problem of poor performance, particularly in secondary schools, still haunts the majority of South African schools, even during this post-apartheid era (Madondo, 2016:8). This picture dictates that SMTs need to make some drastic, non-negotiable, and positive reforms in schools in an attempt to turn the situation around for the better.

In order to turn the situation around in schools, it becomes significant that the transformational leadership approach to organisational reforms is the point of departure. This has to be the responsibility of the SMTs to ensure that all stakeholders are voluntarily working hard, beyond anybody's expectations. Transformational leadership is the type of leadership whereby leaders and team members work with one another to achieve higher levels of motivation and team morale. Instead of dictating change to team members, transformational leaders inspire team members to change their perceptions and expectations to work towards a common mission or goal (Gaille, 2018:1). Transformational leaders focus on influencing the attitudes and assumptions of staff. They build commitment to the mission and always work towards the achievement of the organisational objectives (Sejanamane, 2014:55).

Transformational leadership is different from other leadership styles in the sense that it attracts educationalists and invites them to extract its concepts and apply them practically,

especially in schools that seek reform (Alsaeedi & Male, 2013:8). A chief element of transformational leadership is the leader's ability to cultivate the needs of the followers in a follower-centred manner (Crawford, 2005:3). Transformational leaders inspire their followers to exert more than their normal share of effort and demonstrate unflinching loyalty towards the organisational goals (Pradhan & Pradhan, 2015: 173).

According to Dartey-Baah (2015:102), the transformational leadership style is a style that creates positive change in followers whereby they take care of each other's interests and of the group as a whole. It is leadership that adopts an effective combination of a holistic and individualistic approach to meeting the collective goal and ambitions of the group. Transformational leadership is an ethical style of leadership that involves a leader's capability to promote intellectual stimulation through inspiration (Choudhary & Zaheer, 2013:434). As quoted in Berkovich (2016:1), Bass and Riggio (2006) point out that transformational leaders focus on inspiring followers to commit to the shared vision and goals of an organisation by challenging them to be innovative problem solvers and developing followers' leadership capacity via mentoring, coaching, monitoring, and support.

I argue that as institutions of learning, and where the bright futures of the adults in the making are being created, schools need transformational leadership teams that ensure that curriculum delivery, curriculum management, and consequently good results, could be achieved. Transformational leadership emphasises a more collaborative and less patriarchal view of leadership (Stempel *et al.,* 2015:275).

A transformational leader uses his connections to serve as a mentor or developer, demonstrating to the subordinate a focus on them (Vito, Higgins & Denney, 2014:810). The extent to which a leader is transformational is measured first in terms of his/her influence of followers. The followers of such a leader feel trust, admiration, loyalty, and respect for the leader, and because of the qualities of the transformational leader, they are willing to work harder than originally expected. These outcomes occur because the transformational leader offers followers more than just working for self-gain; they provide followers with an inspiring mission and vision which gives them an identity. The leader transforms and motivates followers to develop new and unique ways to challenge the status quo and to alter the environment to support being successful (Ndoziya, 2014:25).

3.4.3   Transformational leadership role of SMTs

The success of the education sector and that of schools in particular, depend upon the involvement, effort, contribution, and professional expertise of the staff (Jyoti & Bhau, 2016:1124). I argue that the excellence of secondary schools, especially with regard to the grade 12 performance, depends largely on the selfless efforts of a team in schools that comprises SMTs. There is increasing recognition that schools require effective leaders and managers if they are to provide the best possible education for their learners (Bush, 2007:391).

I argue that with the application, engagement, and involvement of transformational leadership, as opposed to transactional leadership in schools, the SMTs stand a better chance of igniting everyone's attention to involve themselves in effective curriculum implementation and management because, as Tengi, Mansor and Hashim (2017:792) point out, transformational leadership influences the development and success of a school. They go further to point out that successful leaders are in a better position to ensure excellent outcomes in their schools.

Over and above, transformational leaders constantly articulate the organisational vision to motivate team members, they exhibit high confidence and passion in their beliefs, and they give importance to ethics and values whilst setting accountable standards in schools. They are often charismatic and able to have an exceptional influence on their fellow team members, compelling them to share the leader's vision and to take action beyond their specified responsibilities (Suresh & Rajini, 2013:156). I argue that in terms of transformational leadership, for as long as the academic year is in progress, all school-based stakeholders should never stop thinking about their school and its vision. They regularly keep in mind that they have an organisational mission to accomplish, as well as organisational goals to achieve. In other words, transformational leadership inculcates into every educator and everyone they come into contact with in schools, a culture of hard work before anything else.

According to Eres and Turkey (2011:1), modern management in schools considers the school organisation as the focus of transformation. SMT members are the ones who have been employed by the DBE to ensure that the curriculum is implemented satisfactorily in schools

(Maja, 2016:23).

Within the context of South Africa, the SMT is a legitimate structure in schools with the responsibility of ensuring maximum curriculum implementation and curriculum management. Over and above, and as per education policy, the SMT must develop plans that can be implemented in schools for the purposes of ensuring that their schools are turned into centres of functionality, maximum curriculum delivery, and consequently the achievement of the organisational vision.

In other words, the SMT must at all times be in the forefront of any curriculum delivery transformation or reformation processes or activities. This puts the SMT in a position to be examples of transformational leadership in each and every school. Transformational leadership is a process in which leaders and followers help each other to advance to higher levels of motivation (Luenendonk, 2020). Transformational leaders have a clear collective vision, and most importantly, they manage to communicate it effectively to colleagues and team members (Salem & Kattara, 2015:3).

3.4.4 The 4 I's of transformational leadership

As quoted in Norton (2007), Aydin *et al.* (2013:806) are of the view that transformational leadership encompasses the following sub-dimensions, which Atkinson and Pilgreen (2011:44) refer to as the 4 I's i.e Idealised influence, Inspirational motivation, Itellectual stimulation and Individualised consideration. The 4 I's are discussed briefly below:

3.4.4.1 Idealised influence (formerly charisma)

The organisational leader is a role model for his/her followers who idealise his/her behaviour. Transformational leaders must inspire subordinates by connecting with them emotionally as this provides the opportunity to share a vision (Vito *et al.,* 2014:810). Idealised leaders are admired, respected and trusted (Jyoti & Bhau, 2016:1126). According to Jiang *et al.* (2017:3), idealised influence refers to the extent to which a leader engages in promoting the follower to generate trust. As a transformational leadership team, the SMT must understand that the curriculum gospel they preach in schools must filter down to every staff member such that their influence can be felt in each and every corner of their schools.

3.4.4.2   Inspirational motivation

Transformational leaders identify high goals, create team spirit, are enthusiastic, and constantly motivate their followers. They produce original ideas and encourage innovation and change in the organisation. Inspirational motivation is the degree to which a leader's vision is attractive and encouraging to the followers (Jyoti & Bhau, 2016:1126). According to Vito *et al.* (2014:810), a transformational leader serves as a mentor or developer, demonstrating to the subordinate a focus on them. According to Jiang *et al.* (2017:3), inspirational motivation refers to the extent to which a leader presents a vision to motivate followers. In my opinion, as a transformational team of curriculum management, the SMT must at all times set high and achievable targets, and motivate all and sundry to work hard for their schools to be centres of academic excellence.

3.4.4.3   Intellectual stimulation

Transformational leaders motivate their followers to be innovative, analytic and creative. It refers to the degree to which the leaders stimulate their followers' endeavours to be innovative and creative (Jyoti & Bhau, 2016:1126). Intellectual stimulation characterises the extent to which a leader encourages followers to innovate and challenge themselves (Jiang *et al.,* 2017:3). These leaders always encourage their followers to discover new ideas and produce creative solutions to problems encountered. In my view, in every aspect of service delivery in schools, fellow educators must ensure that each time they are confronted with problems, there is no need to refer those problems to the SMT. Educators must quickly find solutions to problems and solve them. SMTs could just be informed as to how the problem was attended to.

3.4.4.4   Individualised consideration

A transformational leader, acting as the team coach takes into consideration the desires and needs of the followers and helps them to be successful and thrive. Individualised consideration characterises the extent to which the leader cares about the followers' individual needs (Jiang *et al.,* 2017:3). Good relationships between the leader and followers help followers to interact freely with the leader. Leaders solve old problems with a new perspective. Leaders provide support, encouragement, and coaching to followers. They

listen carefully to the individual needs of their followers and delegate certain responsibilities to help followers grow through personal challenges (Jyoti & Bhau, 2016:1127). With the application of transformational leadership, not only do the transformational leaders thrive, but all and sundry in the school because of the intimate manner in which leaders in the form of the SMT and subordinates always work.

3.4.5 Advantages of transformational leadership

Depending on the organisational circumstances, there are instances where transformational leadership works well and instances where it does not. However, I have realised that its advantages by far outweigh its disadvantages.

3.4.5.1 Advantages of transformational leadership

According to Gaille (2018:1), as with any other form of leadership, transformational leadership comes with advantages and disadvantages. He goes further to point out that the advantages of transformational leadership are as follows:

- **Potential to lower costs**: Team members with this type of leadership are retained for a lengthier time. The SMT does not spend a lot of time and resources embarking on educator recruitment as team members are always glued to the school and this saves the school the costs of advertising a post and embarking on the processes of shortlisting, interviews, and recommendations for appointment to the Superintendent General (SG) of the PED. Transformational leadership enables the SMT to keep on constantly monitoring the curriculum without even thinking about the learners who are without an educator in the classroom.

- **Engages the full person:** Transformational leaders seek to meet the demands of personal motives. These leaders excel at recognising existing needs or demands, especially in their followers.

- **Create and manage change:** When new initiatives are in place, this type of leadership is the best to bring fellow team members on board to the vision being introduced. Team members are all able to sell the changes, improvements, or expansion required because they already believe in the process.

- **New organisational vision can be quickly formulated**: Transformational leaders are able to incorporate a new vision. They are also good at recognising gaps or problems in a vision which allows them to make adjustments or recommendations to correct the situation immediately.

- **Creates enthusiasm:** If team members see their leader being successful in the pursuit of a new vision or goal, then they need to experience that as well. Transformational leaders are able to create enthusiasm within their ranks because of their own enthusiasm.

- **Encourages on-going learning and development**: This type of leader works to stimulate the intellect of their employees, build a positive culture, and provide individualised learning support.

- **Excellent communicators:** This category of leaders communicates regularly so as to keep team members glued to the vision.

- **Low morale situations are quickly changed:** When schools are struggling to achieve their goals, transformational leaders stand in a position to boost morale and change the environment.

- **Understands relationships:** Transformational leaders want to build a strong community within their base of team members at all times.

- **Focus on ethics:** They are ethically driven, keeping a tight focus on values, and it comes from an authentic perspective. It is almost impossible to 'fake it to make it' as a transformational leader.

- **Asks important questions:** The most common question they ask is 'Why?', and the second question is 'Why not?' This leadership style is more than creative; it is also strategic.

- **Takes pride in the outcomes achieved:** They are able to transcend their own interests for the betterment and growth of their organisation. They are motivated to continue working hard because they take ownership of the process which achieves outcomes.

- **Avoids coercion:** Transformational leaders do not use their position to control others. They do not use fear or influence to coerce compliance. Inspiration is used as a motivator

for change.

- **People are treated as individuals:** Transformational leaders believe in the power of perspective. They treat each team member as an individual with their own unique needs and capabilities. This approach keeps the team environment informal and friendly because followers are treated as equals.

Leadership is one of the significant driving forces that can radically improve organisational performance (Pradhan & Pradhan, 2015:1). I argue that the current educational situation in the RSA makes a clarion call to all managers and leaders in the public school sector to shift away from any antiquated transactional styles of leadership in schools and embrace a transformational approach. It is high time that curriculum delivery and curriculum management receive the immediate attention it so deserves.

It is now the responsibility of every manager in a school to put aside self-interests and embrace the transformational leadership as Jonanovic and Ciris (2016:100) point out that transformational leadership improves schools, changes teachers' classroom practices, enhances the quality of teaching, student learning, achievement, engagement and outcomes, and puts the interests of the schools before anything else. School leadership, and transformational leadership in particular, is a critical component for strong performance and student achievement (Anderson, 2017).

Hoch, Bommer, Dulebohn and Wu (2015:4) emphasise that transformational leadership is an on-going process whereby leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of morality and motivation beyond self-interest to serve collective interests. Berkovich (2016:14) affirms that transformational leadership is currently an inseparable part of how educational administration scholars consider ideal school leadership. Schools that need to change and restructure themselves in order to continue their existence in a constantly changing and dynamic framework are in need of leaders who can lead the way for such changes (Eres & Turkey, 2011:2). Transformational leadership serves as a starting point for understanding various elements such as the role demands, values, and goals that motivate leaders (Berkovich, 2016:12).

Through the transformational leadership style, SMTs are already sure that they are working

with a willing, self-motivated, inspired, and highly prepared workforce that can bring about better and improved performance in schools. As Tabassi *et al.* (2017:26) point out, transformational leaders aim to transform organisational members to exceed beyond the status quo with the purpose of improving their ability to innovate and adapt in a team environment.

3.5   CONCLUDING REMARKS

The embracement of a theoretical framework in a research study presents a guarantee that the envisaged study gravitates towards the achievement of its primary and secondary aims. Popkewitz (2014:13) supports my assertion when he mentions that the social and education sciences have never operated without a theory. In any type of research project, a theoretical framework is indispensable for the conceptualisation of the phenomenon that one wishes to investigate (Biesta *et al.*, 2014:6).

This empirical investigation is built on the three institutions of the Classical Management Theory (i.e. the Scientific, Administrative and Bureaucratic Theories), the Human Relations Theory, as well as the Transformational Leadership Theory. These theories are relevant in the sense that they strike the nail on the head when it comes to the research topic, and its aim and its objectives.

From the deliberations around these theories, it becomes clear that organisations that embrace these theories experience productivity and efficiency. It can therefore be assumed that 'Experiences of SMTs in managing low quintile secondary schools' has found solace in these theories. These theories, in combination with the literature study, played a pivotal role in terms of the formulation of the themes developed during the data analysis stage. The next chapter of this investigation details the data analysis and interpretation.

CHAPTER 4:   RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1   INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter presented the theoretical framework on which this study was built. This chapter features the research design and methodology for this investigation; i.e. the research approach, research assumptions, paradigmatic perspective, population and sampling, data collection strategies, research ethics, chapter summary, and conclusion. The research design and methodology for this investigation is was to obtain responses to the primary research question and the sub-questions outlined in the first chapter of this study. This chapter also clarifies the research aspects of data trustworthiness and indicates how this was maintained throughout the investigation.

4.2   RESEARCH APPROACH

Empirical research embraces different approaches such as qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods to respond to the research aims and objectives. Conventional wisdom dictates that each of the research approaches has its own advantages and disadvantages, strengths and weaknesses. Teherani, Martimianakis and Stenfors-Hayes (2015:669) advise that before engaging in any qualitative study, researchers should consider how their views about what is possible to study will affect their research approach. Then they should select an appropriate approach within which to work. Depending on the nature of the research, researchers can use one or two of the approaches, or even the three of them in a single study.

The qualitative research approach allows for multiple individuals (participants) who experience similar events to tell their stories without any distortion and/or prosecution (Alase, 2017:11). Jameel *et al.* (2018:1) state that the qualitative approach generates the narratives of individuals and groups by interacting with them, observing their behaviour, and considering how the nuances of a context influence their perspectives and experiences.

The quantitative approach differs from the qualitative in the sense that it aims to measure numerical variables and create statistical representations of these variables to test theory. The mixed methods approach attempts to integrate and coalesce the components of both quantitative and qualitative approaches into a form of research approach where both

quantitative and qualitative data complement and substantiate each other. Rahman (2017:102) agrees with the notion that qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches are frequently found in various disciplines of education such as sociology, psychology, history, and so forth. Daniel (2016:91) confirms that these approaches entail different research strategies and differ in their theoretical, epistemological, and ontological issues.

Given the deliberations above, the approach to this study was purely and primarily qualitative in the sense that its primary aim was to determine the experiences of SMTs in managing low quintile secondary schools, and it therefore warranted face-to-face engagement with the participants. One reason for conducting this investigation via a qualitative approach was to present a detailed view of the research topic from the perspectives of the principals and SMT members as the managers responsible for the day-to-day curriculum delivery activities in schools (Khan, 2014:301). Therefore, the nature of this study dictated that I should avail myself physically in the sampled schools and come face-to-face with the research participants (SMT members) in their natural settings in order to have a clear comprehension of their experiences in terms of executing their core mandate of curriculum management.

I engaged in what Aspers and Corte (2019) refer to as an iterative process, in which an understanding is achieved by getting close to the phenomenon that is being studied. The collection of first-hand, rich information from the participating SMT members was a technique to provide responses for the primary aim of this study. Throughout the data collection process, I was always the only data collection instrument or mechanism. Data collection, presentation, analysis and interpretation have all been filtered through my own lens, hence my conclusion that the approach to this study was purely qualitative. Hereunder follows a brief discussion of what the qualitative research approach is all about.

4.2.1 Qualitative research approach

Broadly defined, qualitative research means any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification. This research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that makes the world visible, and these practices transform the world and turn it into a series of representations including field notes, interviews, conversations,

photographs, recordings, and memos. Qualitative researchers study phenomena in their natural settings, attempting to make a sense of, or interpret, them in terms of the meanings people bring to them (Walia, 2015:2).

Wellman *et al.* (2010:188) are of the view that qualitative research is an approach, rather than a particular design or set of techniques. It is an umbrella phrase covering an array of interpretive techniques or methods which seek to describe, decode, translate, and otherwise come to terms with the meaning of naturally occurring phenomena in the social world. Mohajan (2018:24) concurs with the view that qualitative research is a form of social action that stresses the way in which people interpret and make sense of their experiences in order for the researcher to understand the social reality of individuals.

Jacobs and Walker (2014:24) confirm that in terms of the qualitative research approach, the researcher uses different forms of enquiry that focus on understanding social phenomena from the perspective of human participants in natural settings. According to Ary *et al.* (2006:32), the goal of qualitative research is a holistic picture and a depth of understanding, rather than a numeric analysis of data. They go further to indicate the major characteristics of qualitative research approach as follows:

4.2.1.1   Concern for context and meaning

Qualitative research shows concern for context and meaning. It assumes that human behaviour is context bound, that human experience takes its meaning from context, and therefore it is inseparable from social, historical, political and cultural influences. Qualitative researchers focus on how people make sense of their experience (Ary *et al*., 2006:32).

4.2.1.2   Natural setting

Qualitative research studies real-world behaviour as it occurs naturally in a classroom, an entire school, a playground, or in an organisation. It takes place in the field, in natural settings as they are found. It is not contrived or artificial, and there is no attempt to manipulate behaviour. The researcher physically goes to the people; i.e. the setting of the institution to observe the participants' behaviour (Ary *et al*., 2006:32).

4.2.1.3   Human instrument

In qualitative research, the human investigator is the primary instrument for gathering and analysing the data. Because qualitative research studies human experiences and situations, researchers need an instrument flexible enough to capture the complexity of the human experience; an instrument capable of adapting and responding to the environment. Only a human instrument is capable of this task. The human being talks with people in their setting, observes their activities, reads their documents and written records, and records this information in field notes and journals. Qualitative enquiry relies on fieldwork methods as the principal means of collecting data, avoiding the use of paper and pencil tests, mechanical instruments, and a highly structured observational protocol (Ary *et al*., 2006:32).

4.2.1.4   Descriptive data

The qualitative researcher deals with data that are in the form of words or pictures, rather than numbers and statistics. Data in the form of quotes from documents, field notes, and interviews or excerpts from videotapes, audiotapes or electronic communications are used to present the findings of the study. Qualitative researchers also typically keep a personal or reflective log or journal in which they record their thoughts, feelings, assumptions, motives and rationale for decisions made (Ary *et al*., 2006:32).

4.2.1.5   Emergent design

While qualitative researchers broadly specify aspects of a design before beginning a study, the design continues to emerge as the study unfolds; hence the name 'emergent design'. They adjust their methods and manner of proceeding with the subject matter at hand. This is necessary because the qualitative researcher is never quite sure just what will be learned in a particular setting, because what can be learned in a particular setting depends on the nature and types of interactions between the researcher and the people and setting. Furthermore, those interactions are not fully predictable, and important features in need of investigation cannot always be known until they are actually witnessed by the researcher (Ary *et al*., 2006:32)..

4.2.1.6   Inductive analysis

In most qualitative studies, data collection and data analysis take place simultaneously. From the outset of the first interview or observation, the qualitative researcher is reflecting on the meaning of what he or she has heard and seen, developing hunches about what it means, and seeking to confirm or disconfirm those hunches in subsequent interviews or observations. It is a process of inductive data analysis; it proceeds from data to hypothesis to theory. As the researcher reduces and reconstructs the data through the process of coding and categorisation, he or she aims at the development of theory about the phenomena being observed that is directly tied to, or grounded, in the data about those phenomena (Ary *et al*., 2006:32).

4.2.2   Steps in conducting qualitative research

In quoting Slavin (2007:124), Mothapo (2014:109) outlines the six steps that are generally followed when conducting qualitative research:

- **Identifying what is to be studied:** In the process, decisions are made about the nature of the interaction, the role of the researcher, and ethical considerations.

- **Identifying whom to study:** Decisions are made about participants or sites to be studied, the length of time for data collection, and the possible variables to be considered.

- **Collection of data:** The duration that the data collection process would take, and the mechanisms to make them known.

- **Analysis of data**: Thematic data analysis and its six phases of analysis were considered to be the best analysis strategy used for this study.

- **Generation of the findings as data collection process proceeds:** Data are collected to produce the findings that are discussed in Chapter 5.

- **Data interpretations and conclusions:** Lebied (2018) refers to data interpretation as the implementation of processes through which data are reviewed to arrive at an informed conclusion. The interpretation of data means assigning meaning to the information analysed to determine its significance and implications. Sharma (2019) confirms that data interpretation is a process of filtering valuable information from large amounts of

data sets. The findings can be represented in various forms, such as bar graphs, line charts, and tabular forms etc., and require some interpretation to represent such forms (Ary *et al*., 2006:32). After having assigned meaning to the information that I analysed, I used tables to interpret it to determine whether the study had achieved its goal.

4.3   RESEARCH ASSUMPTIONS

Galasinski (2017) mentions that as we describe research, and particularly its methodology, we often make a series of assumptions. Simon (2011) is of the view that research assumptions are those things that are somewhat out of one's control, but if they disappear the study becomes irrelevant. The Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary (2010:76) confirms that an assumption is a belief or feeling that something is true, or that something will happen although there is no proof that it will happen. Creswell (2007:19) agrees that assumptions reflect a particular stance that researchers make when they choose qualitative research.

The main research question for this study was, 'How do School Management Teams manage low quintile secondary schools in order that they perform better than schools in the high quintile?'. The subsidiary research questions were:

- What initiatives do SMTs employ in managing low quintile secondary schools in the Capricorn South District?

- What are the enabling and constraining factors that SMTs encounter in managing low quintile secondary schools?

- What are the perspectives of the SMTs regarding their role in terms of managing low quintile secondary schools?

My assumptions in this study were located within the subsidiary research questions, and therefore my first assumption was that there are initiatives that SMTs should employ in terms of managing low quintile secondary so that they can perform better than schools in the high quintiles. Secondly, in managing low quintile secondary schools, there are enabling and constraining factors that SMTs encounter; and the third and last assumption was that in terms of managing low quintile secondary schools, there are perspectives that the SMT hold.

Creswell (2007:19) mentions the following four belief systems or assumptions in qualitative research:

- **Post-positivism:** Researchers who use a belief system grounded in post-positivism will take a scientific approach to research. They will use multiple levels of data analysis for rigour, employ computer programs to assist in their analysis, encourage the use of validity approaches, and write their qualitative studies in the form of scientific reports with a structure resembling quantitative approaches.

- **Social constructivism:** This belief system is often combined with interpretivism. Thanh *et al.* (2015:24) is of the view that interpretivism allows researchers to view the world through the perceptions and experiences of the participants. Dean (2018:2) agrees with the statement that interpretivism can often be found conflated with terms such as qualitative inquiry, naturalistic paradigm, qualitative research, and constuctivism. Therefore social constructivism can also be referred to as 'interpretivism' in qualitative research.

- **Advocacy/participatory:** Researchers might use this as an alternative belief system because post-positivists impose structural laws and theories that do not go far enough in advocating for action to help individuals. The basic tenet of this belief system is that research should contain an action agenda for reform that may change the lives of the participants, the institutions in which they live and work, or even the researchers' lives. The issues facing these marginalised groups are of paramount importance; issues such as oppression, domination, suppression, alienation, and hegemony. As these issues are studied and exposed, the researchers provide a voice for these participants, raising their consciousness and improving their lives.

- **Pragmatism:** Researchers using this belief system use multiple methods of data collection to best answer the research question, employ both quantitative and qualitative sources of data collection, focus on the practical implications of the research, and emphasise the importance of conducting research that best addresses the research problem.

Given the nature of the research question for this study, and a description of each of the belief systems above, the research assumption adopted for this study was purely interpretivism as it

is clearly located within the interpretivist belief system.

4.3.1   Interpretivism

Interpretivism as a belief system allows and directs researchers in a qualitative study to make their own interpretation of the world through the understanding, assertions, knowledge, perceptions and experiences of the research participants. I preferred a qualitative approach in terms of gathering data for this investigation and therefore interpretivism stands firm as an underlying assumption.

Within the context of this study, I regarded interpretivism to be a useful and powerful assumption that would be helpful in terms of determining the experiences of SMTs in managing low quintile secondary schools in the Capricorn South District of the Limpopo Province. As Tshabangu (2017:40) comments, in terms of interpretivism, the researcher seeks to understand the participants through accessing the meanings they attach to the social world. Interpretivism concerns itself not with whether facts exist in a given context, but how facts are interpreted.

In seeking answers to the research question, I followed the interpretive assumption to construct and interpret my understanding of the data gathered (Thanh & Thanh, 2015:24). The deliberations of the principals and SMT members during the semi-structured interviews, the analysis of important school documents, and my field notes from the observations were interpreted in a manner that undoubtedly gave rise to the achievement of the goals of this research. Interpretivists do not seek answers for their studies in a rigid way. They do not use research methods that offer objective or precise information; instead, they approach the reality from the subjects, typically from people who own their experiences and are of a particular group (Thanh & Thanh, 2015:25).

4.4   PARADIGMATIC PERSPECTIVE UNDERPINNING THE STUDY

Prior to embarking on the study it was vital to decide on the paradigm within which the study would be located (Mngomezulu, 2015:39). Burke Johnson and Christensen (2014:672) comment that a research paradigm is a worldview or a perspective held by researchers based on a set of shared assumptions, concepts, values, and practices. Rehman and Alharthi

(2016:50) mention that a paradigm is a basic belief system with assumptions about ontology, epistemology, methodology and methods.

Moyo *et al.* (2017:59) affirm that a paradigm establishes particular ways of engaging in research as it provides what can be called 'lenses' through which an investigation is carried out and its findings presented. Investigations commence, and data are gathered, organised, analysed, and interpreted within the context of a specific paradigmatic perspective. The paradigmatic perspective for this research has been defined, not in terms of all the four paradigmatic perspective as indicated above, but in terms of epistemological and ontological assumptions. Jaca (2018:57) agrees that the literature is explicit in that it is crucial for researchers to have an understanding of the epistemologies and ontologies that guide the research they want to conduct.

Epistemology and ontology are the requirements for investigating any phenomenon in any given field of research (Van Wyk, 2017:7). Pandor (2019:50) is of the opinion that ontology and epistemology are both important elements of the philosophy of knowledge. Each of the two philosophical stances has profound implications for research in classrooms and schools. On this note, Cohen *et al.* (2011:6) agree that the choice of problem, the formulation of questions to be answered, the characterisation of participants, methodological concerns, the kind of data sought, and their mode of treatment are all influenced by the philosophical assumptions held.

4.4.1   Epistemology of the study

Epistemology is the study of the nature and scope of knowledge production in the real world (Van Wyk, 2017:3). Bakkabulindi (2017:23) views epistemology as relating to how the researcher comes to know and what constitutes that knowledge. She goes on to clarify that it is the science of truth; that is, the reliability of claims about knowledge. Duarte and Zhang (2017:259) feel that epistemology is concerned with what knowledge is, how we can acquire it, and the relationship between the knower's beliefs and the world.

Pandor (2019:50) highlights that epistemology is a branch of philosophy concerned with the theory of knowledge, both as a thing in itself and as a function of intellectual reasoning and the careful study of the nature of knowledge and the activity of knowing the subject. Plato is

said to be the real originator of epistemology as he attempted to deal with the basic question, what is knowledge? Where is knowledge generally found, and how much of what we ordinarily think we know is really knowledge? Do the senses provide knowledge? (Sam, 2019:3).

Within the context of this investigation, epistemology meant that I had to come closer to the research participants in order to obtain first-hand information regarding the main research aim. This investigation aimed to determine the experiences of SMTs in managing low quintile secondary schools in order that they perform better than schools in the high quintile. Epistemologically, in order to do justice to the main aim of this study as indicated above, it became obligatory for me to get closer to the sampled research participants in order to gain a deeper understanding of their perspectives regarding the main research aim. As a way of generating data, epistemology in this research project entailed a visit to some low quintile secondary schools, engaging in semi-structured interviews with SMT members, analysing school documents, make observations, and taking field notes. Jaca (2018:58) is of the view that in any research, epistemological assumptions go hand-in-hand with ontological assumptions. The next section discusses the ontology of this investigation.

4.4.2   Ontology of the study

Whereas epistemology is about the way we know things, ontology is about what things are (Pandor, 2019:50). The ontological assumptions of a study concern the very nature or essence of the social phenomena being studied (Cohen *et al.,* 2011:5). Ontology is a focus on the nature of being, of becoming, existence, or reality in the real world (Van Wyk, 2017:3). It questions the form and nature of reality and what can be known about it. In terms of ontology, a researcher needs to know what is, or what exists, in order to research it (Aliyu *et al.*, 2015:15). The ontological assumptions or beliefs refer to what the researcher perceives as reality (Jaca, 2018:58).

In keeping with the above ideas about ontology, the present investigation observed the phenomenon of management of low quintile secondary schools from the SMTs and principals' own experiences and understandings (Khan, 2014:300). Within the context of this study, ontology presented the reality that the SMT is a curriculum management structure in low quintile secondary schools and has its own experiences and understandings in terms of

managing curriculum implementation activities in order that performance in this category of schools could be better than that of high quintile schools.

The research questions for this investigation have been stated above, and therefore ontologically, the initiatives that SMTs employ in managing low quintile secondary schools, the enabling and constraining factors they encounter in managing low quintile secondary schools, and their perspectives in managing low quintile secondary schools have been determined epistemologically. In this investigation, the ontology of management was explored in order to gain a balanced view of its meaning and also to optimise the functioning of SMTs within the low quintile secondary schools sector (Mothapo, 2019:112).

4.5   POPULATION AND SAMPLING

4.5.1   Population

The larger group to which one hopes to apply the results is called the study population (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2010:90). Population specification is a requirement in the documentation of both qualitative and quantitative studies (Asiamah, Mensah & Oteng-Abanyie, 2017:1608). In terms of the study population, a distinction is drawn between a target population and an accessible population (Jacobs & Walker, 2014:171). At no stage can the target population and accessible population be used interchangeably as they denote two dissimilar objects. Invariably a context and scenario provide a basis for population specification and enable the researcher to clearly identify his general target and accessible population, and the appropriate sampling procedure and sample (Asiamah *et al.,* 2017:1610). The next paragraph is a discussion of each of the two types of populations.

4.5.1.1   Target population

A target population refers to a large group of potential subjects from which the researcher can draw a manageable sample for a research project. It is the total group of subjects to whom the researcher wants to apply the conclusions from the findings (Ary *et al.,* 2006:315). Welman *et al.* (2010:126) mention that the target population is the population to which the researcher ideally would like to generalise his or her results. Regarding this research project, the target population was all low quintile secondary schools in the Capricorn South District of

the Limpopo Province.

4.5.1.2   Accessible population

Accessible population is that population of subjects which is accessible to the researcher for his or her study (Jacobs & Walker, 2014:162). According to Ary *et al.* (2006:315), an accessible population is sometimes referred to as an experimentally accessible population. This type of a population is a cost effective mechanism in the sense that the ingredient of accessibility enables the researcher to arrive at the sampled sites at the correct time and collect data within an acceptable time frame, without having to bear much financial burden, particularly those researchers who haven't secured any financial sponsorship for their investigation. The accessible population for this study was confined to SMTs of two low quintile secondary schools that have been performing above 80% for the past seven years; i.e. since the academic year 2013.

4.5.2   Sampling

One of the most important steps in the research process is the selection of a sample for the investigation. In research, sampling refers to the process of selecting individuals in order that they can participate in the research process. Upon the commencement of the research process, those selected individuals divorce from their names and titles and begin to be referred to as research participants.

Asiamah *et al.* (2017:1610) is of the opinion that a study's population can be acceptably specified and linked to sampling. Sampling relies heavily on rich in-depth descriptions of a phenomenon given by the research participants. In this regard a smaller sample works better (Kallie, 2015:60). There are quite a number of sampling methods in qualitative research; *inter alia* quota samples, purposive samples, snowball samples, convenience samples etc. However, the selection of the sampling method depends on the goal that the researcher intends to achieve. For the purposes of this research investigation, the purposive sampling method was used to determine the size of the sample. Purposive sampling is different from other samplings in the sense that I did not simply study whoever was available but rather used my judgement to select a sample that I believed, based on prior information, would provide the necessary data to answer the research questions (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2010: 99).

Purposive sampling, or judgemental sampling, is the most important type of non-probability sampling. Researchers rely on their experience, ingenuity, and/or previous research findings to deliberately obtain units of analysis in such a manner that the sample they obtain may be regarded as being representative of the relevant population (Welman *et al.,* 2010:69).

4.5.2.1   Size of the sample

Qualitative researchers face the need to draw a relatively small sample from a large study population entirely made up of eligible members. Assuming that all members of such a population are willing to provide access to information at their convenience in harmony with the schedule and interests of the researcher, it may become necessary for the researcher to draw the most appropriate sample to maximise the credibility of the results (Asiamah *et al.,* 2017:1609).

Within the context of this study, a sample size refers to the number of individuals that I selected to partake in my research project. A sample size does not need to be a certain percentage of the population (Ary *et al.,* 2006:420). The most important characteristic of a sample is its representativeness, and not necessarily its size (Jacobs & Walker, 2014:171). However, sample size alone does not guarantee a representative sample, and the sampling procedure is more important in determining whether the sample is representative of the population (Ary *et al.*, 2006:420).

There are a number of low quintile secondary schools in the Capricorn South District. In this regard, not all low quintile secondary schools were targeted for this investigation because some of them were not accessible to me, even by way of the road transport network. Taking into cognisance logistical factors such as time and financial resources, the sample for this study comprised two low quintile secondary schools. From the two sampled schools, 13 research participants were identified. The 13 research participants were two schools principals, five SMT members from the first sampled school, and six SMT members from the other sampled school. These participants were purposefully sampled, taking cognisance of the main research problem of this investigation. Both purposefully sampled low quintile secondary schools had been performing above 80% for the past seven years since 2013.

As alluded to above, in each and every identified research site, members of the SMT and the principal were invited to partake for the purposes of providing sufficient information pertaining to the main research question. The research participants were chosen on the basis that the principal is the Chief Accounting Officer of the school and the SMT is a curriculum implementation and management structure, and as such, they would be in a position to respond to the semi-structured interview questions, and over and above, to do justice to the main research question. Even if this sample was small, it was sufficient to provide gratifying responses to the main research question and ensure that the aim of the study was clearly accomplished.

The two sampled schools and the 13 potential participants were expected to satisfy the following criteria in order for them to be allowed to form part of this investigation:

- The two principals were permanently appointed or on an acting basis.

- Each of the 11 SMT members; i.e. five from the first sampled school and six from the other sampled school, were permanently appointed or co-opted.

- Each of the two sampled schools had to have been performing above 80% since the academic year 2013 in terms of grade 12 results.

- Each of the sampled schools had to be a low quintile secondary school; i.e. quintile 1, 2, or both quintiles 1 and 2.

- The sampled schools had to be situated in the rural areas and not in townships, suburban or urban areas of the Capricorn South District.

- The participants had to have been attached to the same school for a period over five years.

After having satisfied all of the above predetermined qualifications, the schools were then included in the sample for this investigation. These criteria were laid down to ensure that only relevant, useful, and helpful research sites and potential participants were targeted for this investigation. It was indicated earlier that I had been the Circuit Manager in one of the 32 Circuits of the Capricorn South District for the past 12 years. On this premise I am fully aware that some secondary schools would be in a better position to satisfy all of the above stated criteria.

4.6 RESEARCH DESIGN

A research design is a mechanism, plan, outline, layout, or strategy that researchers employ in order to provide answers to the main research question, research aims and objectives, and the research problem. Even before the research process could commence, the researcher has the responsibility to craft a mental map for the envisaged study. The designed mental map must communicate a clear message about the journey that the researcher will undertake and the road that he or she will be utilising. Through the research design, researchers demarcate the area, or parameters, for their intended research; determining what to include and what to exclude during the research process. Therefore, a research design entails those research processes that the researcher follows in terms of data collection, data analysis, data interpretation, and presentation of the research findings.

Akhtar (2016:68) is of the view that a research design is the 'glue' that holds all the elements in a research project together. In short, it is a plan of the intended research. Welman *et al.* (2010:53) posit that a research design is the strategy or mechanism according to which the researcher obtains research participants and collects information from them. This study is essentially qualitative and therefore entails a qualitative research design. Astalin (2013:119) indicates that a qualitative research design is probably the most flexible of the various designs and encompasses a variety of accepted methods and structures. Four major types of qualitative research designs are the most commonly used; phenomenology, ethnography, grounded theory, and the case study.

4.6.1 Phenomenology

Phenomenology is both a philosophical movement and a family of qualitative research methodologies (Gill, 2020). It is an approach to research that seeks to describe the essence of a phenomenon by exploring it from the perspective of those who have experienced it. The goal of phenomenology is to describe the meaning of this experience in terms of what was experienced and how it was experienced (Neubauer, Witkop & Varpio, 2019:91). Phenomenology as a philosophical method of inquiry is not limited to an approach of knowing. It is rather an intellectual engagement in interpretations and meaning-making that is used to understand the lived world of human beings at a conscious level (Qutoshi, 2018:215).

4.6.2 Ethnography

Sharma and Sarkar (2019:1) point out that the disciplinary origin of ethnography is anthropology. They go further to indicate that ethnography deals with the discovery and description of culture of a group. In ethnography, the researcher observes or interacts with a target population to obtain useful cultural information and that is why ethnography is also referred to as cultural ethnography or cultural anthropology.

4.6.3 Grounded theory

Grounded theory is a type of qualitative research that looks to provide an explanation or theory behind events. Interviews and existing documents are used to build a theory based on the data (Sauro, 2015).

4.6.4 Case study

Harrison, Birks, Franklin and Mill (2017) point out that case study research is an effective methodology to investigate and understand complex issues in real world settings. They go further to mention that case study designs have been used across a number of disciplines, particularly the social sciences, education, business, law, and health to address a wide range of research questions. A case study is also described as an intensive, systematic investigation of a single individual, group, community or some other unit which the researcher examines by obtaining in-depth data relating to several variables (Heale & Twycross, 2017:7).

A case study involves a deep understanding through multiple types of data sources. Case studies can be explanatory, exploratory, or describe an event (Sauro, 2015). Quoting Cohen *et al.* (2007), Kgwete (2014:103) is of the opinion that a case study:

- Is a study of an instant action.

- Is a specific instance that is designed to illustrate a more general principle.

- Provides a unique example of real people in real situations, enabling readers to understand ideas more clearly than by simply presenting them with abstract theories or principles.

- Can enable readers to understand how ideas and abstract principles fit together.

- Can penetrate situations in ways that are not always susceptible to numerical analysis.

For this study I employed a case study design to understand the experiences of SMTs in managing low quintile secondary schools. Further, I used a case study research design simply because I did not intend to generalise the main findings of this study but to confine them to the two sampled schools. The case study focused specifically on principals and SMT members that are attached to the two sampled low quintile secondary schools in the Capricorn South District in their different workstations.

4.7 DATA COLLECTION METHODS

The choice of suitable data collection methods for any research study is determined by the research paradigm and the nature of the research question (Opoku *et al,* 2016:32). The research question for this study is 'How do School management Teams manage low quintile secondary schools in order that they perform better than schools in the high quintile?' This research is a case study of the experiences of SMTs in managing low quintile secondary schools located within the ontological and epistemological paradigms. Members of the SMTs and principals of the sampled schools shared their knowledge of their experiences in managing and implementing the curriculum.

In order to make an accurate response to the research question, Burke Johnson and Christensen (2014:225) advise that the researcher should make a choice from the following six common methods of data collection; tests, questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, observations, and constructed or existing data. The data collection for this investigation took the form of semi-structured interviews with principals of the sampled schools and their SMT members as participants. Observations were made by me, as well as document analysis with the principals in each of the sampled schools.

4.7.1 Semi-structured interviews

An interview is one of the most widely used methods of obtaining qualitative data (Ary *et al.,* 2006:480). In research, the following three types of interviews are used; structured, semi-structured and unstructured (Welman *et al.,* 2010:165). Interviews range from one-on-one to

focus groups, telephone, written and online interviews, from unstructured to semi-structured and structured interviews, from empathetic to critical, and from informal to in-depth. Managing an interview involves preparation and access, establishing rapport, question making, communication and listening skills, closing the interview, following up, recording and transcribing (Punch & Ouncea, 2014:213).

Baumfield *et al.* (2013:149) are of the opinion that interviews are at times the hardest and the most pleasurable things to analyse because they are so rich and contain so much for any researcher to engage with. Welman *et al.* (2010:166) affirm that in semi-structured interviews the researcher has a list of themes and questions to be covered, although these may vary from one interview to the next. With interviews it is possible to bring out subjective opinions and views on the significance of issues (Idowu, 2016:184).

The data gathering technique for this thesis was by way of semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews were used in order to obtain deep information about the participants' thoughts, beliefs, knowledge, reasoning, motivations, and feelings about the phenomenon under investigation (Maponya, 2020: 185). According to DeJonckheere and Vaughan (2019:3), the following are the key characteristics of the semi-structured interview:

- They are iterative.

- They are scheduled in advance.

- They consist of groups or individual participants.

- Information is gathered from key informants who can inform the topic.

- It is often the sole data source for a qualitative study.

- Semi-structured interviews a have a loose and flexible structure.

- They provide insight into participants' perspectives.

- They can probe deeply for participants' thoughts and experiences.

As a qualitative research method, the semi-structured interview has several advantages (Ary *et al.,* 2006:480):

- The researcher asks questions as the opportunity arises and then listens closely and uses the subjects' responses to decide on the next question.

- The subjects in their natural setting may not even realise that they are being interviewed.

- Questions are open-ended and designed to reveal what is important about the phenomenon under investigation.

- Interviews have the potential of supplying large volumes of in-depth data rather quickly.

- Interviews provide insight to participants' perspectives, the meaning of events for people involved, information about the site, and perhaps information on unanticipated issues.

- In interviews, the researcher gains insight into how participants are thinking and why they are thinking as they do.

- Interviews are helpful when the researcher is studying a topic that is new, or one for which little information is available.

- In interviews the respondents are free to answer in their own words and can answer either briefly or at length.

Although the interview has more important advantages than a number of other qualitative research methods, there are also disadvantages. Marshall (2016) mentions the following disadvantages of interviews:

- Interviews are time consuming to recruit and conduct.

- As a result of timing and travelling, interviews can be very expensive.

- Interviews can deliver biased responses.

However, there are steps that I took in terms of ensuring that successful semi-structured interviews took place so that the goal of the research was clearly achieved. DeJonckheere and Vaughan (2019:1) mention the following steps that must be followed in designing and conducting semi-structured interviews:

- **Step 1: Determine the purpose and scope of the study:** The purpose of the study is the primary objective of a research project. The primary aim of this investigation was 'To determine the experiences of SMTs in managing low quintile secondary schools in order that they perform better than schools in the high quintile'.

- **Step 2: Identify research participants:** After having decided on the purpose of the study, the next step was to determine who would provide the best information to answer the research question. The participants for this study were identified as principals and SMT members in low quintile secondary schools.

- **Step 3: Consider ethical issues:** An ethical attitude was present from the very beginning of the research project, even before the identification of research participants. The ethical attitude incorporated respect, sensitivity, and tact towards the research participants throughout the research process. Research ethics for this investigation are discussed later in this chapter.

- **Step 4: Planning logistical aspects:** During this phase, I planned and made decisions about the best ways to contact potential interviewees, obtain informed consent, arrange interview times and locations convenient for both the participant and the researcher, and test the recording equipment. I telephoned the Circuit Manager (CM) for each of the Circuits in which the two schools were situated to provide me with contact numbers for the principals in order that I could start the process of telephonic conversations regarding the intended semi-structured interviews.

- **Step 5: Develop the interview guide:** Semi-structured interviews include a short list of guiding questions that are supplemented by follow-up and probing questions which are dependent on the interviewee's responses. All interview questions were open-ended, neutral, and free from any leading language. After developing the guiding questions, I conducted a pilot study with the two principals and two SMT members from each of the sampled school. After the pilot study, their recommendations were effected on the interview guide.

- **Step 6: Establish trust and rapport:** Interviews are a special form of relationship, where the interviewer and the interviewee converse about important and often personal topics. During the interviews I was always relaxed and this allowed me to probe for more

information from the participants, who in turn became more relaxed and provided more valid responses to the questions asked (Sekhu, 2019:41). I built rapport quickly by listening attentively and respectfully to the information shared by each of the interviewees. As the interview progressed, I continued to demonstrate respect, encourage the interviewee to share their perspectives, and acknowledged the sensitive nature of the conversation.

- **Step 7: Conduct the interview:** Location and set-up: The interview was scheduled at a convenient time and location for the interviewee. The location was private, ideally with a closed door rather than a public place.

  o **Begin the interview:** I began the interview with a brief explanation of the research study, consent/assent procedures, rationale for talking to that particular interviewee, and gave a description of the interview format and agenda.

  o **Interviewer stance:** During the interview, I adopted a friendly and non-judgemental attitude. I maintained a warm and conversational tone, rather than a rote question-answer approach.

  o **Active listening:** Listening is the key to successful interviewing. Listening was attentive, empathetic, non-judgemental; i.e. listening in order to invite and engender conversation.

  o **Continuing the interview:** As the interview progresses, I made repetition of the words that were used by the interviewee, and used planned and unplanned follow-up questions that invited further clarification, exploration or elaboration.

- **Step 8: Memo and reflect:** After an interview session, I began to reflect on both the process and the content of the interview. Thereafter, I always promptly recorded notes about what I had learnt from the interviewees' deliberations.

- **Step 9: Analyse the data:** The data analysis strategy was developed during the planning stages because analysis occurs concurrently with data collection. The data analysis strategy depends on the research question and research design.

- **Step 10: Demonstrate the trustworthiness of the research:** Similar to validity and reliability, I assessed the trustworthiness of the research. There are several criteria used

to establish trustworthiness, such as credibility, transferability, conformability and dependability.

- **Step 11: Present the findings in a paper or report:** When presenting the results of the interview analysis, I often reported themes or narratives that described the broad range of experiences evidenced in the data. In presenting the findings in a report, I integrated quotes into a more traditional written format.

4.7.1.1   Interview protocol for this investigation

Data gathering by way of semi-structured interview warrants the development of an interview guide or interview protocol. Knight (2013:1) comments that an interview guide can be helpful to researchers who are conducting semi-structured, in-depth interviews. Angus (2013) confirms that an interview protocol is a list of questions that the researcher asks the participants during the interviews. The order of the questions and the level or degree to which the researcher diverges from the defined list of questions varies based on the type of interviews one can choose to conduct.

Regarding semi-structured interviews, there is an additional opportunity for the researcher to go 'off-script' and ask additional questions to gain greater detail of the participants' responses. The interview protocol for this study was developed to comprise two sets of questions; one for the principals (Appendix E1) and one for the SMT members (Appendix E2). In interviewing all the participants, a tape recorder was used. The interviews were conducted on the school premises in an area provided by the principal of the school.

4.7.2   Observation

Another means of generating data is through observations of social phenomena. Observation is the simple but powerful process of paying careful attention and documenting what you find when you do so. It is hard to imagine any sort of qualitative research that does not have some form of observational component (Shank *et al.,* 2014:21). Observational data can be highly structured without necessarily being turned into numbers. Observation notes should preferably be made while the group activities are taking place. If notes cannot be taken during the events, they should be written immediately thereafter so that much of the observations are preserved (Welman *et al*., 2010:197).

Baumfield *et al.* (2013:144) affirm that when a researcher makes an observation, he/she is analysing from the moment he/she begins. Before he/she even picks up a pencil, he/she has decided what to record and what to ignore. The inherent slant in observation makes the counting part of the analysis all the more important. Qualitative researchers argue that it is important to get close to their objects of study through participant observation. Observation as a data collection method is very good as it enables the researcher to gather first-hand information on what is unfolding in the school in order to do justice to the main research aim which is; '*To determine the experiences of School Management Teams in managing low quintile secondary schools in the Capricorn South District*'.

With regard to this investigation and with special reference to the observation schedule (see Appendix G), I made observations of the following activities in the purposefully sampled low quintile secondary schools:

- Learner, educator and SMT punctuality in the morning.

- Learner, educator and SMT movements during lesson periods.

- The school climate during the teaching and learning proceedings.

- SMT visibility during teaching and learning.

- Educator and learner conduct during lesson periods.

- Educator responses to period intervals.

4.7.3   Document analysis

Another data collection strategy that I embraced in this study was the analysis of administrative documents of the two sampled schools. Ary *et al.* (2006:482) are of the opinion that the term 'document' refers to a wide range of written, physical and visual materials, including what other authors may term 'artefacts'. Documents may be personal such as autobiographies, diaries, and letters; official, such as files, reports, memoranda, or minutes; or documents of popular culture, such as books, films and videos.

Logan (2014:37) concurs that schools maintain a variety of documents which serve as available data types and sources for research. Qualitative researchers can also use written documents to gain an understanding of the phenomenon under study.

Historical and contemporary documents are a rich source of data for educational research. A distinguishing feature of our society may well be the vast array of documentary evidence that is routinely compiled and retained, yet much of this is neglected by researchers, perhaps because the collection of other sorts of research data like experiments, surveys, interviews and observations has become more fashionable (Punch & Ouncea, 2014:201). Document analysis can be of written or text-based artefacts, or non-written records like photographs, audiotapes, videotapes or computer files (Ary *et al.,* 2006:482).

This investigation took place at research sites in the form of low quintile secondary schools that have been in existence for a period of 10 years or more. For a school to be more than 10 years old, it is indicative of the point that there are an uncountable number of things that have happened since its existence. An existence of 10 years or more also means that that there are countless school records that are sufficient to construct a photograph of the road that the school has travelled in terms of educational services delivery.

Primary school records are those records that have been authored by members of the school community in the form of the principals, SMTs, educators, SGBs, and other school-based stakeholders. Secondary records include all records that have been received by the school from outside the school premises. In other words, these are records that have been authored by stakeholders that are based outside the school, like departmental legislations, circulars and directives, Collective Agreements (CAs), Resolutions, circulars from social partners, communiqués from parents etc.

Primary documents that were scrupulously analysed were the SMT Minutes Book, SMT meeting plans, CAPS documents, Diagnostic Reports, Learners' Code of Conduct, Educators' Code of Conduct, policies on learner discipline, School Assessment Policy, Misdemeanour Register, SMT Communication Register, and job descriptions for SMT members and educators.

The following departmental legislation documents were also analysed and verified; South African Schools Act (SASA) 84 of 1996, Employment of Educators Act (EEA) 76 of 1998, Labour Relations Act (LRA) 66 of 1995, Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC) Resolution 8 of 2003, Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC) Resolution 1 of 2008, Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development (ISPFTED), National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development (NPFTED), and National Policy Pertaining to the Programme and Promotion requirements of the National Curriculum Statement. The document analysis was guided by the document verification instrument that I developed (see Appendix F).

4.8   DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

At the end of the data collection process, research methods for this investigation generated a huge volume of empirical data. My next obligation was a systematic analysis to construct meaning from it, and formulate themes and sub-themes for this study. Punch and Ouncea (2014:218) comment that the term 'data analysis' has different meanings among qualitative researchers and these interpretations lead to different methods of analysis. They go further to indicate that data analysis methods need to be systematic, disciplined, and able to be seen and described. Fraenkel and Wallen (2010:426) agree that data analysis essentially involves synthesising the information the researcher obtained from various sources into a coherent description of what he or she has observed or otherwise discovered.

Data analysis is essentially the central step in qualitative research. It is the analysis that in a decisive way forms the outcome of the research. Data analysis is the classification and interpretation of linguistic or visual material to make statements about implicit and explicit dimensions and structures of meaning-making. Meaning-making can refer to subjective or social meanings. Qualitative Data Analysis (QDA) is also applied to discover and describe issues in the field or structures and processes in routines and practices. Often QDA combines approaches of a rough analysis of the material using condensation, overviews, and summaries and a detailed analysis comprises an elaboration of categories, hermeneutic interpretations, or identified structures. The final aim is often to arrive at generalisable statements by comparing various texts or several cases (Flick, 2013:3). It has been indicated that the data collection for this investigation was by means of semi-structured interviews, document analysis, and observations.

The data were analysed through a thematic data analysis. Thematic data analysis is a method of analysing qualitative data. It is usually applied to a set of texts, such as interview scripts. I closely examined the data to identify common themes, topics, ideas, and patterns of meaning that came up repeatedly (Caulfield, 2019). Braun and Clarke (2006:35) comment that thematic data analysis is a more flexible form of data analysis. It is the first qualitative method of analysis that researchers should learn as it provides core skills that are useful for conducting many other forms of qualitative analysis. They go further to point out that thematic analysis is a method used to identify, analyse, and report patterns within collected data. This form of analysis entails the following six phases:

- Phase 01: Familiarising yourself with your data.

- Phase 02: Generating initial codes.

- Phase 03: Searching for themes.

- Phase 04: Reviewing the themes.

- Phase 05: Defining and naming the themes.

- Phase 06: Producing the report (Braun & Clarke, 2006:35).

Data gathered electronically from the semi-structured interviews were first transcribed to create a text version of the audio data. The transcribed data from the semi-structured interviews, the field notes, and data from the document analysis were then organised for the phases of thematic data analysis to commence. The first phase of thematic analysis was dealt with by way of reading and rereading the organised data in order to become completely familiar with it.

In terms of generating initial codes, which is the second phase of thematic analysis, I coded the data whereby similar codes were then grouped together. The codes, themes and possible sub-themes, were examined in phase three of the thematic data analysis. The identified themes were then reviewed. The transcriptions were then read a few times to discover common themes. The themes were then defined and named, taking cognisance of the research question. The themes were then finalised and regarded as a true reflection of the experiences of the SMTs in managing low quintile secondary schools in the Capricorn South

District. The final phase of data analysis was the production of this research report.

4.9   DATA TRUSTWORTHINESS

Qualitative research as a whole has been constantly critiqued, if not disparaged, for its lack of quality and robustness (Leung, 2015:324). Reliability and validity are fundamental concerns for quantitative researchers. For qualitative research however, the role of these dimensions is blurred. Some researchers argue that these dimensions are not applicable to qualitative research and a qualitative researcher's tool chest should rather be geared towards trustworthiness (Sinkovics, Penz & Ghauri 2008:698).

Trustworthiness is described in different ways by researchers. It refers to quality, authenticity, and truthfulness of the findings of qualitative research. It relates to the degree of trust, or confidence, readers have in the results (Cypress, 2017:254). A study is trustworthy if, and only if, the reader of the research report judges it to be so (Gunawan, 2015:10). In my opinion, the research findings must be a true reflection of what has been deliberated upon by the research participants. Trustworthiness simply poses the question, 'Can the research findings be trusted?' (Korstjens & Moser, 2018:121). Moon *et al.* (2016:17) advise that researchers must provide sufficient information on the trustworthiness constructs of credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability to determine the quality of the research product.

To achieve trustworthiness of the data in this investigation, the interview schedule was subjected to a pilot study. Cadete (2017) comments that pilot studies are small-scale, preliminary studies which aim to investigate whether crucial components of the main study will be feasible. Historically, pilot studies were not usually conducted and nor were they a topic of discussion in the research literature. However, pilot studies have recently become the focus of extensive debate in education (Fraser *et al.*, 2018:260).

Pilot studies are commonly associated with a quantitative approach for testing a particular research instrument. Apparently, the importance of a pilot study has been expanded to qualitative approaches where it is carried out in preparation for a major study. Piloting for interviews is an integral aspect and is useful in the process of conducting qualitative research as it highlights any improvisations to the major study (Majid *et al.*, 2017). The interview

schedule was made available to four SMT members to check its relevance to the research topic. Upon receiving feedback from the four SMT members, their comments and remarks were then taken into considerations. Refinements to the interview schedule were then made accordingly. This put me in a better position to conclude that the interview schedule was releavant for the attainment of the main aim of this investigation. I used a number of data collection mechanisms in the form of semi-structured interviews, document analysis, and observations. Trustworthiness in this study was improved by way of conducting face-to-face semi-structured interviews with SMT members in the sampled schools.

The interview proceedings were audio recorded and promptly transcribed at the end of the interview session in order to avoid any information distortion. Prompt transcription of the data enabled me to note down observed body language and non-verbal cues (observations) while they were still fresh in my mind (Sekhu, 2019:44). I also assured the participants that they would remain anonymous and that the information gleaned from them would be kept confidential.

Adherence to the dictates of the ethical clearance by the Research Ethics Committee of the University of South Africa (UNISA) had also been taken into consideration. The interviews were conducted in a venue that was convenient and accessible to the research participants and included the principals' offices as well as my office.

4.9.1 Credibility

Credibility means that the research findings are plausible and trustworthy. Credibility of the research demands that the chosen methodology is be well explicated and justified (Stenfors, Kajaman & Bennett, 2020). It is the equivalent of internal validity in quantitative research and is concerned with the aspects of truth and value (Korstjens & Moser, 2018:122). In ensuring credibility, the question a reader might ask is, 'Was the study conducted using standard procedures typically used in the indicated qualitative approach, or was an adequate justification provided for any variations?' (Connelly, 2016).

4.9.2 Member checking

Member checking is a technique for exploring the credibility of the results. It is often

mentioned as one in a list of data validation techniques (Birt, Cavers, Campell & Walters, 2016:1802). Member checking occurs when researchers ask participants to review the data collected by interviewers and the researchers' interpretations in terms thereof. Participants generally appreciate the member check process because it gives them a chance to verify their statements and fill in any gaps from earlier interviews.

Trust is an important aspect of the member check process (Devout, 2019). Alternatively known as respondent validation, member checking is often described as the single most important method to ensure a study's credibility, and refers to the respondents checking the study findings and conclusions (Hadi & Closs, 2015). Candela (2019:619) is of the view that member checking is commonly used in qualitative research as a means to maintain validity. Harper and Cole (2012:1) agree with this statement, and member checking continues to be an important quality control process in qualitative research as during the course of conducting a study, participants receive the opportunity from the interviewer to review their statements.

As a way of improving the credibility of the data, the results were returned to the participants to check for accuracy and agreement with their stated answers (Birt *et al.,* 2016:1802). I took the interview transcripts back to the research participants so that they could confirm that there were no omissions or misrepresentations of the answers they provided. I also did this to check whether the data were realistic and complete, whether the themes were accurate, and whether the data interpretation had been conducted in a manner that could be regarded as fair and representative. The participants confirmed that the transcripts matched what they had articulated and that their answers had been captured correctly.

4.9.3   Prolonged engagement

Prolonged engagement refers to a lasting presence during interviews or a long-lasting engagement in the field with participants; i.e. investing sufficient time to become familiar with the setting and context, testing for misinformation, building trust, and obtaining rich data (Korstjens & Moser, 2018:122). Prolonged engagement helps the researcher gain an insight into the context of the study, which minimises the distortions of information that might arise due to the presence of the researcher in the field (Anney, 2014:276).

With study participants and communities, prolonged engagement is recommended in order to

gain their trust and establish rapport. This enables the researcher to obtain more in-depth information and identify pertinent characters in the research concerning the issue being studied. This enables the researcher to focus on them in more detail and ensure that the research topic is explored comprehensively. Prolonged engagement has the ability to promote the credibility of a qualitative study (Hadi & Closs, 2015).

Prolonged engagement in the fieldwork helps to understand the core issues that might affect the quality of the data because it helps to develop trust with the study participants (Anney, 2014:276). In order to promote data trustworthiness in this study, I explained to each research participant how the research findings would be used in order to cultivate and instil trust between myself and them. I ensured that enough time was given to each research participant to answer the interview questions. Participants were encouraged to support their statements with examples, and I asked follow-up questions where necessary (Korstjens & Moser, 2018:122).

4.9.4   Triangulation

Triangulation is a method used to increase the credibility and validity of research findings. Combining data collection methods in a research study can help to ensure that fundamental biases arising from the use of a single method or a single observer are overcome. Triangulation is an effort to help explore and explain complex human behaviour using a variety of methods to offer a more balanced explanation to readers. It is a procedure that enables validation of data, and it can be used in both quantitative and qualitative studies. It can enrich research if a variety of datasets explain aspects of a phenomenon of interest (Noble & Heale, 2019:67).

The term 'triangulation' originates in the field of navigation where a location is determined by using the angles from two known points. In research, triangulation is the use of more than one method in researching a question. The objective of triangulation is to increase confidence in the findings using two or more independent measures. The combination of findings from two or more rigorous methods provides a more comprehensive picture of the results than either method could do alone (Heale & Forbes, 2013:98).

Triangulation is a powerful technique that facilitates validation of data through cross

verification from two or more sources. In particular, it refers to the application and combination of several research methods in the study of the same phenomenon. It involves using multiple data sources to produce understanding (Honorene, 2017:91). Triangulation helped me to reduce bias as I cross-examined the integrity of the participants' responses (Anney, 2014:276).

In this study triangulation took place using three data collection strategies; semi-structured interviews, documents analysis, and observation. The three data collection strategies complemented and supplemented each other in terms of doing justice to the primary aim of this investigation. Unbiased and in-depth as they are, the research findings pertaining to this investigation are delivered after embracing the three data collection methods.

4.9.5   Transferability

Transferability refers to the generalisability of the research findings (Nowell, Norris, White & Moules, 2017:3). Transferability generalises the study findings and attempts to apply them to other situations or contexts (Devault, 2019). Korstjens and Moser (2018:122) comment that transferability concerns the aspect of applicability. They go on to highlight that the researcher's responsibility is to provide a 'thick description' of the participants and the research process to enable the reader to assess whether the research findings are transferable to their own setting.

According to Anney (2014:278), thick description involves the researcher elucidating all the research processes, from data collection and context of the study to the production of the final report. Thick description helps other researchers to replicate the study with similar conditions in other settings. This implies that the reader, and not the researcher, makes the transferability judgment because the researcher does not know the reader's specific settings (Korstjens & Moser, 2018:122). Thick description also promotes credibility. It requires the researcher to give sufficient details about settings, inclusion/exclusion criteria, sample characteristics, and data collection and analysis methods, so that the reader can evaluate the extent to which the conclusions made by the authors are transferable to other settings, situations, and populations (Hadi & Closs, 2015).

Transferability is most often discussed as a collaborative enterprise. The researcher's job is

to provide detailed descriptions that allow readers to make inferences about extrapolating the findings to other settings. The main work of transferability, however, is done by readers and consumers of research. Their job is to evaluate the extent to which the findings apply to new situations. It is the readers and users of research who 'transfer' the results (Polit & Beck, 2010:1453). To ensure transferability of the research findings in this investigation as suggested by Nowell, Norris, White and Moules (2017:3), Devault (2019), Korstjens and Moser (2018:122), Anney (2014:278), Hadi and Closs (2015), and Polit and Beck (2010:1453), I have provided sufficient information of the context of the study for the reader to make a decision regarding the transferability of the research findings to other settings.

4.9.6   Dependability

Dependability of the findings means ensuring that the study findings are repeatable if the study occurred with the same cohort of participants, codes and context (Forero *et al.,* 2018:3). Choudhury (2015:150) states that the dependability of study findings refers to the employment of overlapping methods and in-depth methodological description to allow the study to be repeated.

Korstjens and Moser (2018:122) are of the opinion that dependability includes the aspect of consistency. They go on to postulate that the researcher must check whether the data analysis process is in line with the accepted standards for a particular design. Devoult (2019) points out that many qualitative researchers believe that if credibility has been demonstrated, it is not necessary to separately demonstrate dependability. However, if the researcher permits a parsing of the terms, then credibility seems more related to validity and dependability seems more related to reliability.

In addressing the issue of reliability, researchers employ techniques to show that if the work was repeated, in the same context, with the same methods, and with the same participants, similar results would be obtained (Pandey & Patnaik 2014:5750). Mboweni (2019:69) cautions that although it is difficult to meet dependability criteria in a qualitative study, dependability as a construct enables future researchers to repeat the study.

Lemon and Hayes (2020:605) confirm that dependability substitutes for reliability and asserts that findings are distinctive to a specific time and place if the consistency of explanations is

present across the data. As suggested by Forero *et al.* (2018:3), Choudhury (2015:150), Korstjens and Moser (2018:122), Devoult (2019), Pandey and Patnaik (2014:5750), Mboweni (2019:69), and Lemon and Hayes (2020:605), dependability of the findings was attained and accentuated by the use of multiple data collection mechanisms during the data collection process.

A number of pieces of education legislation in the Republic of South Africa have changed since the 1994 democratic breakthrough. This study took place in low quintile secondary schools that obtain their core mandate from the DoE, which is governed by specific legislation. I have already pointed out that given the history of this country, these pieces of legislation can change over time. Changes in education legislation during the research process would have been extremely detrimental to the dependability of the research findings and that fortunately did not occur.

4.9.7   Conformability

Conformability refers to the degree to which the research results can be confirmed or corroborated by other researchers (Trochim, 2019). The concept of conformability in the qualitative paradigm is comparable to the concern of objectivity in quantitative research. I took steps to ensure that, as far as possible, the findings are the result of the experiences and ideas of the informants and the participants, rather than my characteristics and preferences (Pandey & Patnaik, 2014:5751).

In improving the conformability of this study, the findings were impartially and objectively reported. My subjective attachment of meaning to the research findings was reserved as a way of ensuring that no personal bias crept into the findings. The findings were confirmed by the audit trail. Hadi and Closs (2015) hypothesise that an audit trail is a detailed description of sources and techniques of data collection and analysis, interpretations made, decision taken, and influences on the researcher; all with the aim of demonstrating the truthfulness of the research findings. In ensuring conformability, the interview proceedings were audio recorded and transliterated immediately after the conclusion of the session. Both electronic and hard copies have been kept safely for purposes of future reference.

4.10   RESEARCH ETHICS

Research ethics is a branch of applied ethics focused on the specific contexts of planning, conducting, communicating, and following up research (Punch & Ouncea, 2014:59). Akaranga and Makau (2016:1) mention that researchers are professionals; hence research ethics, as branch of applied ethics, has well established rules and guidelines that define the researcher's conduct.   Parveen and Showkat (2017) emphasise that ethics are the moral principles that govern a person's behaviour.

Research ethics may be referred to as, 'doing what is morally and legally right' in research. They are actually norms of conduct that distinguish between right and wrong, and acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.   Dooley *et al.* (2017:351) confirm that qualitative research, especially studies in educational contexts, often brings up questions of ethics because the study design involves human subjects, some of whom are underage.   It is not always easy for researchers to anticipate where ethical issues might emerge while designing their research project, yet researchers have to take sole responsibility for the ethical conduct of their own research.

In simple terms, we can say ethics are a researcher's responsibility.   Parveen and Showkat (2017) advise that the first and foremost responsibility of a researcher is to take care of the safety, dignity, rights, and wellbeing of the participants.   On the basis of these assertions, this study was grounded in a framework of research ethics.   Few aspects of research ethics have been set out in legislation and moral values mostly govern the conduct of research (Parveen & Showkat, 2017).   In this research project I was entering the private lives of the research participants and the principles of ethics were taken into cognisance.   The fundamental ethical principles that were adhered to in this study are the following:

4.10.1   Permission to conduct research

For research that involves human participants, it is fundamentally important that ethics approval has been obtained before the commencement of data gathering (Fleming & Zegwaard, 2015:210).   Creswell (2014) advises that before the researcher embarks on actual research, he/she should seek permission from the ethics board of the university, participants, and the governing authorities of employees.

Acting on the advice of Fleming and Zegwaard (2015:210) and Creswell (2014), I applied for ethical clearance to the Research Ethics Committee (REC) of the Faculty of Education at the University of South Africa (UNISA) and was favoured with an Ethical Clearance Certificate (see the attached ECC). Permission to conduct the research in the sampled schools was requested in writing from the governing authority in the form of the Superintendent General (SG) for the LDOE (see Appendix A) and the school principals (see Appendix D).

4.10.2   Informed consent

When conducting research, researchers are obliged to obtain informed consent from the participants. The term consists of two important elements, with each requiring careful consideration; that is, 'informed' and 'consent'. Participants must be fully informed of what will be asked of them, how the data will be used, and what (if any) consequences there could be. The informed consent process can be seen as the contract between researcher and the participants (Fleming & Zegwaard 2015:210).

Informed consent is a procedure through which a potential research subject, after having understood all the research-related information, can voluntarily provide his or her willingness to participate in the research (Manti & Licari, 2018). Nijhawan *et al.* (2013:1) state that informed consent is an ethical and legal requirement for research involving human participants. It is the process whereby a participant is informed about all aspects of the intended research which are important for the participant to make a decision, and after studying all aspects, the participant voluntarily confirms his/her willingness to participate in the research.

Informed consent is a procedure in which all research participants are told about research procedures and informed of any potential risks (Cherry, 2020). Ineffective communication of risks to potential research participants jeopardises obtaining ethically appropriate informed consent, which in turn compromises reaching an informed decision about joining the research study (Nusbaum, Douglas, Damus, Paasche-Orlow & Estrella-Luna 2017:2). Ochieng (2012) cautions that many times the process of informed consent is abused to the benefit of researchers while exploitation and harm of research participants may occur. Consent is not just a form, a signature or mark, but a process of information exchange between the researcher and the research participants on the whole research process. Information provided

should be adequate, clearly understood by the research participant with decision making capacity, and the research participant should voluntarily decide to participate.

In my view, embracing research ethics has the potential, ability, and capability of dismantling any form of uncertainty, mistrust, or discomfort that may germinate on the part of the participants before, during, and after the research process. According to Welman *et al.* (2010:195), once the researcher has decided to investigate a specific group, organisation or process, he or she has to obtain the permission of the group members.

Given this assertion and the deliberations above, the informed consent form was given to each participant to carefully go through in my presence. After having read the consent form, I asked if they had any questions that warranted clarity from me. Once they were satisfied that all concerns had been addressed, they were requested to sign the consent form (see Appendix C). The interviewing process commenced immediately after the signing of the consent form by each of the research participants. The original consent forms were retained by me and a copy was handed over to the participant for their records.

4.10.3   Confidentiality and anonymity

It was important that the identity of participants was kept confidential and the assurances extended beyond protecting their names to include avoiding identifying statements or information (Fleming & Zegwaard, 2015:211). Confidentiality and anonymity are ethical practices designed to protect the privacy of human subjects while collecting, analysing, and reporting data. Confidentiality refers to separating or modifying any personal, identifying information provided by the participants in the data. By contrast, anonymity refers to collecting data without obtaining any personal, identifying information (Coffelt, 2017:228).

Gibson *et al.* (2012:2) are of the opinion that while qualitative research does not pose the risk of physical harm, such as that associated with medical research, but it would be a mistake to think that it is risk-free. Being interviewed, for example, often at length, in depth, and on a sensitive topic, can be experienced as intrusive and distressing. Wiles *et al.* (2008:2) advise that the anonymity and confidentiality of participants are central to ethical research practice.

Researchers should assure participants that every effort will be made to ensure that the data

they provide cannot be traced back to them in reports, presentations, and other forms of dissemination. Typically, anonymity is the procedure followed in quantitative studies, and confidentiality is maintained in qualitative studies. In both cases, the researcher gathers information from participants, and it is this information that becomes the data to be analysed. Researchers are expected to respect their participants, but are not as interested in reporting the actions of a named person (Coffelt, 2017:228).

Wiles *et al.* (2006:1) indicate that to assure some form of confidentiality means that what has been discussed will not be repeated, or at least, not without permission. Wiles *et al.* (2007:417) affirm that the concept of confidentiality is closely connected with anonymity in that anonymity is one way in which confidentiality is operationalised. However, anonymity of data does not cover all the issues raised by concerns about confidentiality; confidentiality also means not disclosing any information gained from an interviewee deliberately or accidentally in ways that might identify an individual.

In research, confidentiality means not discussing information provided by an individual with others, and presenting findings in ways that ensure individuals cannot be identified. Torrance (2010:185) agrees with this statement when saying that that confidential and anonymous information is information that is private and secret. Wise *et al.* (2006:2) maintain that the notion of confidentiality and anonymity should invariably be raised and discussed with research participants prior to their participation in research. Wiles *et al.* (2006:4) are of the opinion that confidentiality and anonymity of data can be seen to include the following:

- Maintaining confidentiality of data/records: ensuring the separation of data from identifiable individuals and storing the code linking data to individuals securely.

- Ensuring those who have access to the data maintain confidentiality (e.g. the search team, and the person who transcribes the data).

- Not discussing the issues arising from an individual interview with others in ways that might identify an individual.

- Not disclosing what an individual has said in an interview.

- Making individuals and/or places anonymous in the dissemination of the study to protect

their identity.

In order to ensure that the ethical principles of confidentiality and anonymity were maintained, I removed any characteristic that had the potential to identify any participant. The participants were encouraged to indicate to the researcher if the research proceedings were harming, stressing, or threatening them at all. Participants were not addressed by their names but were given pseudonyms. The Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary (2010:1182) defines a pseudonym as a name used by somebody, especially a writer, instead of a real name. Over and above, during the research process, I made sure that all the participants were accorded the necessary respect during the entire research process.

4.11   CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this chapter a road map for the data collection for this study was presented. A discussion of the research design and the research approach for this investigation was discussed. The focus was on the research methods I used to gather data for this study. This study is qualitative in nature and a qualitative research approach was adopted. A case study design was used to determine the experiences of SMTs in managing low quintile secondary schools in the Capricorn South District. The study took place within an interpretive research paradigm.

Purposive sampling was employed to synergise the research sample with the epistemological and ontological aspects of this research. Semi-structured interviews, observation, and document analysis were used as the data collection strategies. The data analysis strategy was also outlined in this chapter. The ethical principles that ensure the rights of the participants were discussed, as were the many aspects of data trustworthiness. The next chapter features the presentation, analysis, and interpretation of the research findings.

CHAPTER 5: DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, a discussion of the research design and research methodology for this investigation was given. In this chapter I present the findings, analysis, and interpretation of the research data. The data are presented carefully to protect the identity of the participants and their schools (Mekonnen, 2017:130). This study sheds light on the experiences of SMTs in managing low quintile secondary schools in order that they perform better than schools in the high quintiles in the Capricorn South District. These schools are rural and poverty stricken, and situated in places where most of the community members are uneducated and provide little support for their children's education (Zulu, 2016:3).

The research revolved around the experiences of SMTs in managing low quintile secondary schools and was delimited to SMT members from two low quintile secondary schools in the Capricorn South District of the Limpopo Province. Data were gathered by means of semi-structured face-to-face interviews with the participants in each of the two sampled schools, personal observation of activities in the two schools, and by analysing the administrative documents. I studied the data intensively and then interpreted it. Only quotes demonstrating common visions, rather than individual responses, are used (Mekonnen, 2017:13).

5.2 DATA COLLECTION

Data were collected from a total of 13 participants by way of one-on-one semi-structured interviews. The participants comprised two principals and 11 SMT members from selected low quintile secondary schools in the Capricorn South District. Two interview schedules (Appendix E1 and E2) were developed to guide the interviews. One interview schedule (Appendix E2) was meant for the principals, and the other (Appendix E1) for SMT members. The interview schedules comprised questions that were developed for the purpose of obtaining responses to the secondary research questions for this study. Interviews were conducted with each principal and participating SMT members in a separate location that I secured with the school's highest office.

All participants were interviewed after the conclusion of the day's academic activities at their schools. The duration of the interviews fluctuated from the shortest of 32 minutes to the lengthiest at 75 minutes. I expected every potential interviewee to make detailed responses verbally and by way of any of the South African languages that they were content with. Of the 13 respondents, only one made use of the medium of Sepedi, mixing it with English, and translations were made immediately after the session was concluded. The rest of the respondents were content with the medium of English.

5.3   DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURE

There are four key steps that most qualitative data analysis approaches have in common; data collection, data reduction, data display, and drawing conclusions (Graue, 2015:11). After the data collection, and due to the enormous volume of the assembled data, it became necessary for me to reduce it. This data reduction occurred constantly during the data analysis stage. The main aim was to reduce the large volume of data without losing any of the information provided by the participants (Mayer, 2015:58).

Data collected in this investigation were analysed by way of the thematic coding approach, with responses compartmentalised in accordance with the emerged themes using an inductive approach. According to Scharp and Sanders (2018:1), thematic analysis is a qualitative method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns within a data corpus. The goal of thematic data analysis is to identify themes or patterns that are important or interesting, and use these themes to address the research or say something about an issue (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017:3353).

The theoretical framework that underpinned this study and the literature review were juxtaposed with the research findings. The thematic analysis allowed me much flexibility in interpreting the data, and enabled me to approach the large data sets more easily by sorting them into broader themes (Caulfield, 2019).

The data analysis process for this research project unfolded in this manner:

- It all started with playing the tape recorder and transcribing the recordings into a written form so that I could study them in detail, and link them with analytical notes. Each word in the content of the interviews was transcribed with correct spelling as this phase is one

of the most significant in interpretative qualitative studies (Javadi & Zarea, 2016:36). In this step, I became familiar with the data by reading and re-reading the interview transcripts (Crowe *et al.,* 2015:618). After having gone through the exercise of transcribing, reading and re-reading the data, I was completely familiar with it and I proceeded to the next step in thematic analysis; ensuring that codes were generated.

- The data were collated, and following the close reading and re-reading of the interview transcripts, I then generated initial codes. This involved examining the data and at the same time keeping the research question at the forefront (Crowe *et al.,* 2015:618). Codes with common points of reference, a high degree of transferability, and through which ideas could be united throughout the study, were transformed into themes (Vaismoradi & Snelgrove, 2019:3).

- After having generated the codes, I clustered them into ideas that were related (Crowe *et al.,* 2015:618). In this way, and with reference to the similar codes, I then went on to generate themes. Vaismoradi and Snelgrove (2019:2) are of the view that a theme is the subjective meaning and cultural-contextual message of the data. A theme contains codes that have a common point of reference and has a high degree of generality that unifies ideas regarding the research question. Each generated theme may have some sub-themes as subdivisions to obtain a comprehensive view of the data and uncover a pattern (Vaismoradi *et l.,* 2016:101).

- I then had a closer look at the generated themes. I read and re-read the generated themes to make sure that they represented the views of the SMT members. At this stage, some themes were collapsed into other themes as a way of ensuring that the data formed a coherent pattern. These were predetermined themes that emanated from the three subsidiary research questions in this study.

- I continually revised the themes until I was able to define each theme in the form of sentences. After I established that the generated themes were indeed representative of the views of the research participants, I finally named and defined them.

I have already outlined that the data collection mechanisms for this study entailed observations of curriculum delivery activities in the sampled schools, the analysis of administrative documents, and the data collected by way of the semi structured interviews.

Data presentation is the stage that immediately follows the data collection proceedings. This phase entails the arrangement of raw data as generated and transcribed verbatim immediately at the conclusion of the semi-structured interviews. This chapter of the study features the presentation, analysis, and interpretation of the data from the three identified data collection methods; observation, document analysis, and semi-structured interviews.

5.4 CONTEXT OF THE SAMPLED SCHOOLS

In order to ensure anonymity and confidentiality of the sampled schools, as per the ethics of research, I used pseudonyms SH and TH respectively. As captured in Table 5.1, their real names could not be used. The same thing is also applied in Table 5.2 where for the SMTs I followed a chronological order of letters of the alphabet in referring to participants in this study.

Table 5-1:   Profile of the sampled schools

School	Year founded	Location	No. Of learners	No of educators	Distance to nearest town
SH	1976	Rural	930	34	53 KM
TH	1994	Rural	815	23	76 KM

School SH was established in 1976 by the former Lebowa Bantustan; hence the condition of the buildings, and was meant to cater for learners from the nearby dusty rural community. At the time of conducting this research, school SH was already in its 44th years of existence. This school was situated on a dusty rural area and had a total learner enrolment of 930 and an educator staff of 34. The school was situated about 53 kilometres from the eastern side of the capital city of the Limpopo Province, which is Polokwane.

School TH was established in 1994 and was situated about 78 kilometres north of the city of Polokwane in a dusty village. The school boasted a total learner enrolment of 815 and 23 educator staff members.

5.4.1 Biographical information of participants

Table 5-2: Biographical information of participants

Participant	Gender	Designation	Age	School	Highest qualification	Teaching experience	Department responsible for
SMT A	Male	Principal (Acting)	44	SH	BEd Hons	22	Overall school management
SMT B	Female	Deputy Principal Number 01	48	SH	BEd Hons	27	Overall school management
SMT C	Female	Deputy Principal Number 02 (Acting)	52	SH	BA degree	26	Overall school management
SMT D	Female	Departmental Head	56	SH	BCom Hons	33	Commercial Subjects
SMT E	Male	Departmental Head	54	SH	BEd Hons	22	Maths and Science
SMT F	Female	Departmental Head (Acting)	52	SH	BEd Hons	27	Languages Department
SMT G	Female	Departmental Head	42	SH	BEd Hons	25	Social Sciences Department
SMT H	Male	Principal	55	TH	BEd Hons	31	Overall school management
SMT I	Male	Deputy Principal	48	TH	BA degree	26	Overall school management
SMT J	Male	Departmental Head	55	TH	BA degree	30	Mathematics and Natural Sciences Department
SMT K	Female	Departmental Head	50	TH	BEd Hons	16	Languages Department
SMT L	Male	Departmental Head	47	TH	BEd Hons	24	Commerce Department
SMT M	Female	Departmental Head (Acting)	48	TH	BA Hons	23	Social Sciences Department

The respondents in this study comprised both males (50%) and females (50%). SMT A in school SH was on an acting basis given the recent appointment of the principal to the post of Circuit Manager by the LDOE. SMT C in the same school was the acting deputy principal

and a permanently appointed HOD. She had been elevated to the position of deputy principal after the elevation of the deputy principal to acting principal. SMT F was the acting HOD after SMT C was elevated to the position of the acting second deputy principal. She was a permanently appointed master educator for the school. SMT M in school TH was an acting HOD and a permanently appointed senior educator of the school. She had been elevated to this position after the departure of its incumbent in 2018 to assume duties in the curriculum section of the Capricorn South District.

A senior educator is an educator who has gained much expertise and experience. They are focused on certain areas of specialisation. The ultimate teaching standards in school rest with the senior educator's performance. A senior educator has extensive knowledge and mastery of the subject that s/he teaches and retains her/his teaching responsibilities despite the fact they s/he also have to manage (Maniago, 2020). The vacant posts would normally be filled by way of public advertisement by the LDOE or by way of the R and R process. What is evident from Table 5.2 above is that more females (3) than men (1) are in an acting capacity in the SMT. This could be attributed to the fact that women empowerment is gaining momentum in school management, especially in low quintile secondary schools in the Capricorn South District of the Limpopo Province. The fact that these SMT members are on an acting basis already raised their aspirations of becoming permanently appointed SMT members; hence the courage they displayed throughout the data gathering proceedings.

All SMT members in both schools were well qualified as they were all in possession of university qualifications in the form of junior and/or senior degrees. Their qualifications ranged from BA degree to Honours degree, but none indicated any attempt towards a Masters' degree. The majority (84.6%) were over 45 years of age, while 25.4% were below 45 years of age. The SMT members above 45 years of age were 48 and 44 years old, and this meant there was a good chance of being SMT members for a long time. They had more than 10 years of service left in the education fraternity. In my opinion, this meant that they could pass curriculum management knowledge to any incoming SMT members by the time they went on retirement or gained promotions to a higher post.

A number of SMT members (50%) were well above 50 years of age which indicated that they were left with less than 10 years of service in terms of curriculum management. Some 23 wre well above 55, and therefore could leave at any time by way of early or normal

retirement. This could leave gaps in the SMT. This is in line with Phalane (2016:129) who argues that the majority of SMT members in schools are in the prime of their careers; i.e. 41+ years.

There are SMT members few years left to serve before they retired. This is resonant with the Centre for Development and Enterprise (2015:18) which advises that by 2025 the smallest number of educators will be 40-44 years old and the greater number will be 50 to 59 years, with many opting for retirement at 55. The Centre for Development and Enterprise (2015:18) cautions that the smallest age group will be at the age at which educators typically have sufficient experience to be eligible for senior management positions such as principal, deputy principal, or HOD. The very small pool from which they can be drawn means that less experienced educators may have to be promoted to those positions. Arrieta and Ancho (2020:2020) caution that the transition from classroom teaching to school management is usually not an easy process. They go on to lament that as SMT members it is doubtful if they will be prepared for management roles. Experienced managers confer benefits on their colleagues, learners, and the school as a whole (Kini & Podolsky, 2016). This situation poses potential cavities in the curriculum management of schools and thus curriculum delivery and improved learner outcomes could just be negatively affected.

The table above also captures the sort of curriculum followed in the two schools. They both had Natural Sciences, Social Sciences and Commercial subject streams. There was no indication of a technical subjects stream in the two sampled schools. The curriculum in schools has been categorised into designated and non-designated subjects. This categorisation of school subjects has often caused confusion with learners and parents, especially when making career choices and in positioning learners for university studies. An unintended outcome of this system is that non-designated subjects are often regarded as being of lesser value, particularly regarding university studies (Nel, 2017:1). According to the DBE (2018), designated subjects are those subjects, if achieved at 50% and above, qualify a learner for admission to the Bachelor degree programme of study at a Higher Education Institution (HEI).

The two schools did not have any non-designated subjects within their curriculum, even two years after the revocation of this category of subjects by the DBE. This information sounds a clarion call to the DBE to issue a documentary directive urging all public secondary schools

to immediately ensure that their curriculum comprises a mixture of both designated and non-designated subjects. A curriculum that comprises designated and non-designated subjects enables learners to exercise a wider subject choice, enabling them to venture into future careers of their choice.

On this note, this information suggests that SMTs in schools should also be given a chance to experience managing low quintile secondary schools that offer technical subjects in their curriculum. According to the National Planning Commission (2011:296), different parts of the education system should work together to allow learners to take various pathways that offer high quality learning opportunities.

5.5 DEVELOPMENT OF THEMES, SUB-THEMES AND SUB SUB-THEMES

In responding to the main research question, this study had three subsidiary questions which have been summarised as the main findings. The subsidiary questions have been tied to the theoretical framework on which the study was built, and so are the main research findings. In other words, the findings are connected to the Scientific Management Theory, the Bureaucratic Management Theory, the Administrative Management Theory, the Human Relations Theory, and the Transformational Leadership theory.

Raw data from the semi-structured interviews, observational notes, and document analysis were processed by way of thematic data analysis, as alluded to above. In developing themes for this study, the literature review, and the theoretical framework on which this study was based, were at all times borne in mind. The main research aim formed the framework of the themes and sub-themes which I used to manage and order the raw data accordingly (Mboweni, 2019:73).

The primary research aim further gave rise to the secondary research questions that necessitated the development of the research themes to represent the empirical findings for this investigation. The findings are compartmentalised into the following main themes:

- Theme 1: Initiatives that SMTs employ in managing low quintile secondary schools in the Capricorn South District.

- Theme 2: Enabling and constraining factors that SMTs encounter in managing low

quintile secondary schools in the Capricorn South District.

- Theme 3: The perspectives of SMTs regarding their role in terms of managing low quintile secondary schools

The above themes are based on the three secondary questions for this investigation namely:

- Research question 1: What initiatives do SMTs employ in managing low quintile secondary schools in the Capricorn South District in order that they perform better than schools in the high quintile?

- Research question 2: What are the enabling and constraining factors that SMTs encounter in managing low quintile secondary schools in the Capricorn South District?

- Research question 3: What are the perspectives of the SMTs in managing low quintile secondary schools?

Under each main theme a number of sub-themes, and in some instances some sub sub-themes emerged. Each of the themes, sub-themes and sub sub-themes were informed by the theoretical framework on which this study was built, as captured in Table 5.3 below:

Table 5-3:   Research questions, main themes, repeatedly emerging themes, and the theoretical framework

RESEARCH QUESTION	MAIN THEME	EMERGING SUB- THEMES	THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK
What initiatives do SMTs employ in managing low quintile secondary schools?	Initiatives that SMTs employ in managing low quintile secondary schools	Preservation of the contact time. High performance target setting. Motivation. Learner profiling. Item analysis. Performance review sessions. Differentiated programmes. Curriculum enrichment activities Provision of Annual Teaching Plans (ATPs) and Examination guidelines. Monitoring and support. Regular communication. Outsourcing of competent educators. Sufficient written work. Utilisation of period registers	Classical Management Theory, Human Relations Theory and Transformational Leadership Theory
What are the enabling and constraining factors that SMTs encounter in managing low quintile secondary schools?	Enabling and constraining factors that SMTs encounter in managing low quintile secondary schools.	Work overloads. Infrastructural challenges. Overcrowded classrooms. Inadequate cooperation of educators. Teamwork. Sound working relations. Inadequacy of technological resources. Professional development. Support by departmental officials.	Classical Management Theory, Human Relations Theory and Transformational Leadership Theory
What are the perspectives of the SMTs regarding their role in managing low quintile secondary schools?	The perspectives of the SMTs regarding their role in terms of managing low quintile secondary schools	SMT members are managers in their own right. The principal remains the Chief Accounting Officer. SMT members are aspirant heads of schools. Promotion of stakeholder relations. Knowledge of curriculum management policies. Educator recruitment rests in the SMT purview.	Classical Management Theory, Human Relations Theory and Transformational Leadership Theory

5.6 THEME 1: INITIATIVES THAT SMTS EMPLOY IN MANAGING LOW QUINTILE SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE CAPRICORN SOUTH DISTRICT

Research question number 1: What initiatives do SMTs employ in managing low quintile secondary schools in the Capricorn South District in order that they perform better than schools in the high quintile?

I used phenomenological semi-structured interviews with SMT members to investigate initiatives that they employ in managing low quintile secondary schools in order that they perform better than schools in the high quintile. The question 'Which mechanisms do you use to improve learner performance?' was posed to SMT members.

This question was asked on the basis of an assertion by the DoE (2000:1) that it is up to SMTs in schools to determine and embrace the best possible mechanisms that pave the way for their schools to be managed for the achievement of their intended goals. The question was meant to establish the avenues that SMTs use in an attempt to improve learner performance from within their schools, given the advice by Subramoney (2016:9) in Chapter 2 that the SMT is ultimately accountable for improving learner academic performance in schools.

The sub-themes identified from the divergent assertions of the study participants are preservation of contact time, high performance target setting, motivation, learner profiling, item analysis, performance review sessions, differentiated programmes, curriculum enrichment activities, provision of Annual Teaching Plans (ATPs) and examination guidelines, monitoring and support, regular communication, outsourcing of competent educators, sufficient written work, and utilisation of period registers. These sub-themes are discussed as follows:

5.6.1 Preservation of contact time

I identified the sub-theme of 'preservation of contact time' from the responses of SMTs when answering the question on mechanisms they used in terms of improving learner performance in their schools. The findings of this sub-theme included regular educator class attendance,

punctuality, and thorough lesson preparation.

5.6.1.1   Regular educator class attendance

The responses of the participants indicated that they made sure educators under their supervision go to class according to the timetable. They did not want to see any time being wasted by educators and educators need to respond positively to their personal timetables, the departmental timetable, and the general timetable of the school. It was not the participants' culture to be complacent with any class that sat without an educator during the course of the day. In supporting this finding, SMT J had this comment to make:

> *We are guarding against educators who don't go to class or take time to go to class. We are making sure that these educators go to class in time and give learners [the] work that they are supposed to give (SMT J).*

This finding is resonant with Fengu (2017) who laments that learners lose about 40% of their learning time every year in South African schools due to educators who habitually skip classes. In support of Fengu's (2017) lamentation, Phakathi (2019) confirms that the 2017 school survey published on the 8 April 2019 flagged educator and learner absenteeism as major areas of concern as it stood at approximately 10% per day. However, as a strategy to ensure that this failure did not take root, the participants dealt severely with those educators who absented themselves from classrooms or those who compromised the starting time of the lesson period. This created an understanding in the school that learners' learning time should be sacrosanct.

The quote above suggests that bunking lesson periods was totally unacceptable. McGuire (2018) also notes that teacher attendance is directly related to the academic outcomes of their students. Not only does it affect the academic achievement of students, but it also affects the overall running of the school. If teachers are absent, it affects many in the school and causes disruption. I agree with this assertion because classes without educators are in most instances characterised by uncontrollable noise that distracts both learners and educators in adjacent classes and the whole school. The noise normally means that educators in adjacent classes have to halt their classrooms activities until the noise subsides.

Guerrero, Leon, Zapata, Sugimaru and Cueto (2012) posit that teacher absence is a common and serious problem in developing countries, thus limiting the opportunities for students to learn. The quotation above further indicates that participants were determined to ensure that syllabi completion and their assessment policies were not compromised and that educators bunking classes was totally unacceptable.

5.6.1.2   Punctuality

The participants indicated that they reported punctually at school so that they could monitor the time that learners arrived and to make sure that whenever they were in class there was an educator in front of them. The participants discouraged time wasting as they believed it impacted negatively on the teaching and learning activities as well as the overall syllabi coverage. The participants believed that if educators were not in class on time, the minutes that they lost would accumulate into much wasted time. In attesting to this finding, SMT L remarked as follows:

> *We ensure that all of us are here on time, monitoring learners on their arrival and making sure that whenever they're here, they are attended to, teachers are in class on time to do whatever they have to do in that particular class. If they are not in time in class, obviously, the minutes that they lose daily will accumulate into a lot of hours whereby the curriculum will never be covered and that will be detrimental to the benefit of the learners (SMT L).*

The quotation above is in agreement with the National Education Evaluation and Development Unit (NEEDU, 2018) which postulates that strict time in schools emerges consistently as one of the key elements that has the greatest impact on learning outcomes. This finding coincides with Mngomezulu (2015:52) who asserts that the attendance and punctuality of educators and learners at school is obviously one of the starting points for effective teaching and learning.

The extract above points to the fact that the participants were leading from the front in terms of ensuring that contact time was at all times protected as they ensured that all educators were at school before the learners arrived. This set the pace and tone of the academic day. According to Wade (2020), studies have confirmed that schools that give importance to 'time

on task' have a high number of learners who excel academically. In class is the time in which the subject content is being imparted to the learners by the educators. Contact time is important and a scarce resource in education.

The responses of the participants indicated that it was their culture to see to it that at the beginning of every lesson a subject educator was present. If the period started and there was no educator in the classroom, they checked the time table, traced the educator and urged him/her to honour their obligations. In support of this finding, SMT C made this comment:

> *So for every period I check if all educators are in class and if there is any period that or any class that does not have educator at that time, it is my duty to go and check on the time table, then if the educator is present at school I go to the educator and tell him/her to go to class (SMT C)*

Within the circles of education what SMT C did is called monitoring the teaching and learning activities. Monitoring is an activity that involves continuous and systematic checking and observing of a program or a project. It is done in the education sector to monitor the quality of teaching and learning (Ndungu, Allan & Emily, 2015:10). This led me to understand that SMTs need not remain in their offices but can walk around the school to see what is going on. Educators must observe their personal time tables. SMT members must move out of their armchairs and keep on monitoring the educators to ensure they adhere to the school time tables and effective teaching and learning takes place.

5.6.1.3   Thorough lesson preparation

The participants indicated that they made sure there was thorough lesson preparation to set an example for the other educators. SMTs were leading educators and learners by example as they were the first to report in schools, thoroughly prepared for lessons, and expected other educators to follow suit. In supporting this finding, SMT I had this assertion to make:

> *We go to classes on time, we prepare thoroughly and educators follow suit. If it happens that one can miss a class because we are always wondering around just to check if learning and teaching is continuing, we check the timetable and ask if maybe he has reported absence to the responsible. If he has not reported we remind him*

politely to say this is your class, you were supposed to be in the class and they normally comply (SMT I).

What SMT I said is resonant with to Ali Bin-Hady and Abdulsafi (2018:276) who assert that a thorough lesson preparation tells the educator what to do in a specific time to a specific group of learners about a specific lesson. This finding is confirmed by Dorovolomo, Phan and Maebuta (2010:453) who opine that thorough and correct lesson preparation based on learners' needs, rather than mere content transmission, helps in ensuring effective teaching and learning. However, Pachina (2019) cautions that lesson preparation can never guarantee success but it certainly helps a lot. Just because one preparation did not quite work out, it does not mean that other preparations are useless or that lesson preparation is a futile exercise.

This finding coincides with Witten (2018) who indicates that the first factor in terms of improving school functionality and academic performance is to have competent educators in classrooms who have prepared thoroughly and are engaged with learners in a caring relationship; those who deliver rigorous, stimulating lessons that are relevant to the life experiences of the learners. This creates an understanding that an educator who does not prepare his/her lesson thoroughly is bound to fail in terms of ensuring effective teaching and learning.

However, what this study did not reveal is the issue of learner discipline in schools, which is one of the pre-conditions for effective teaching and learning and consequently improved learner outcomes. My assertion is supported by Simba, Agak, and Kabuka (2016:169) who are of the opinion that academic performance in schools increases among learners with an increase in the level of discipline. Learner discipline refers to the practice whereby learners obey rules or codes of behaviour in the short- and long-term. My assertion is backed by Lumadi (2019:2) who confirms that learner discipline results in good teaching and learning and therefore promotes learner performance. Disciplined learners have self-control and confidence and they focus on what they are capable of learning. They understand their own behaviour, take the initiative, are responsible for their choices, and respect themselves and others (DBE, 2012:3).

5.6.2 High performance target setting

The participants indicated that target setting plays a pivotal role in their schools as it enabled them to know where they were going in terms of achieving their mission. Target setting is a crucial part of making learners reflect on their work and develop their potential (Tes, 2020). The participants indicated high performance target were set in all the subjects in the school curriculum. This high performance target setting was influenced by subjects that continued to achieve 100% and this gave them the assurance that it was not impossible for other subjects to also achieve 100%. In substantiation of this research finding, SMT I made the following remark:

> *From time to time we normally talk targets in our departments and in our SMT meetings as a way to say that is the core function of teaching. Our target is hundred percentage in all subjects, because once an educator is able to get hundred percentage in his or her subject and we combine all the subjects, its hundred percentage pass for the school (SMT I).*

This finding is in line with NEEDU (2018) that posits that targets should be set and owned at the department level, and then incorporated as school targets. This finding resonates well with Gartenstein (2019) who urges schools to set targets as target setting is an important instrument not only for clarifying organisational direction but also for assessing organisational progress.

The quote above indicates that the participants spoke abut targets in the departments they led and the educators they supervised. What emerged from this finding is that SMTs regarded setting targets as part of their core mandate. They also spoke about targets during their SMT meetings where curriculum delivery deliberations unfolded. Speaking regularly about the targets enabled the participants and their subordinates to always bear in mind that it was the intention of the SMTs to see a persistent improvement in terms of learner outcomes.

Obviously, when targets are communicated regularly to educators by SMT members, the same applies to educators to ensure that they in turn communicate the targets to their learners. Of course, it is also advisable for subject educators to ensure that individual learners also indicate their personal targets. What sounds good about this finding is that the SMTs

believed that all their learners could pass well in all subjects, and some were able to achieve a 100% pass rate.

It emerged from the responses that the participants set these targets at the beginning of the academic year when classes commenced. Therefore there was an understanding that when teaching and learning activities commenced at the beginning of the year, all and sundry were informed about the direction that the school would be taking in terms of improving learner performance. It is therefore imperative that educators, learners and the SMT embrace the targets sets in their schools for learner outcomes to improve. In support of this assertion, SMT G had this strategy to share:

> *We usually have targets in our departments. So, we set the target at the beginning of the year saying this subject is hundred percent and so on. We also track the learner performance saying ok these ones in level six must be moved to level seven. The ones in level one must move to level two (SMT G).*

However, some participants did not emphasise targets in terms of percentage passes, but rather targets in terms of higher levels that learners could achieve by the end of the year. When the results were made public, the participants needed to see learners having achieved level seven, and if they had failed to achieve level seven, they had to do better on level six. In terms of a level seven achievement, learners should have obtained a percentage pass mark of 80-100%. In terms of a level six achievement, learners should have obtained a percentage pass mark of 70-79%. So, some participants expected their learners to achieve between 80 and 100%, and if they did not achieve above 80%, they better be between 70 and 79%. In attesting to this assertion, the following participants had these responses to make:

> *We set high targets……. that is why when I teach I always emphasise that please I need level sevens. If it is the lowest mark it should be level six. So they will always try to work harder and even those who are struggling that also help them a lot. Because I know what I want. I always make sure that I set the target to say this is what I want and I don't want anyone to derail this class because of my subject (SMT C).*

> *We encourage each other that in all subjects there must be level sevens, and if not level sevens you must make sure that they go to level six (SMT K).*

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The participants view the setting of targets at less than 100% an insult to their learners. It appears from the responses that if they set a target of less than 100%, they felt that they had already written off some of the learners. In supporting this viewpoint, SMT A had this view to articulate:

> *It all starts with targets. We normally target hundred percent because we do have capable educators. If we target ninety percent who are the ten percent we are saying already we have written you off from the start? Educators who are currently teaching these subjects are the ones who got the hundred percent some years back. We do have subjects such as Economics, Business Studies, English and Sepedi which are common in terms of hundred percent pass, they've been doing well. Educators have developed some programmes that would assist us in attaining the hundred percent targets (SMT A).*

According to SMT A, the setting of high targets by SMTs in schools is supplemented by the development of programmes to ensure that the high targets are actually achieved. What SMT A alluded to resonates well with NEEDU (2018) that cautions that schools should understand that targets alone do not bring about improvement in learner outcomes. Target setting goes hand-in-hand with an action plan of how the targets will be met. This assertion is also supported by Pupilasset (2019) who posits that once targets are set, SMTs should regularly compare learners' actual subject attainment with their projected performance, analysing whether they are performing above, below, or in line with the set targets.

If the performance is below the target, then the SMT has to ensure that some turnaround mechanisms are brought into the picture to arrest the performance decline. If the performance is almost similar to the target, then the SMT must devise strategies of ensuring that the performance is even better than the set target. However, my informal observations as a Circuit Manager have established that some schools set targets for compliance purposes because in these schools there have never been instances where the targets have been met. I have also observed informally that there are some schools that set targets and consistently meet those targets.

What this study did not reveal, and which I think is very necessary, is school target setting in terms of the three pass categories at grade 12 level; i.e. Bachelor pass, Diploma pass and

Higher Certificate pass. In my opinion this is important because schools cannot continue to boast of having performed above 80% whereas in essence only a small percentage of their candidates feature in the bachelor and the diploma categories while the majority drown in the Higher Certificate pass category. However, this did not in any way have an impact on the primary aim of this study.

A bachelor's pass means a candidate may apply for a degree course at a university to study for a higher certificate, diploma, or bachelor's degree (BusinessTech, 2020). However, the Bachelor's mark does not automatically qualify a candidate for university, but a good Bachelor pass with distinctions can better their chances (Dano, 2020). A Diploma pass gains a candidate provisional entrance into any TVET college or University of Technology for a diploma course, and Higher Certificate gains a candidate provisional entrance into any TVET college for a certificate course (Erasmus, 2020).

In my view it is necessary for the participants to demarcate their targets into Bachelor, Diploma or Higher certificate categories in order to determine the contribution made in terms of tertiary institution enrolments. This finding resonates well with the assertion by NEEDU (2018:1) that without targets, a school lacks focus and direction. Target setting not only allows schools to take control of the direction they must take, it also provides a benchmark for determining whether a school is actually succeeding.

5.6.3   Motivation

The responses pointed to the fact that motivation plays an important role in their teaching and learning situations. They motivate each other, learners, and educators in their different departments as it is a way of energising them in order that they can work harder. Their principals and Circuit Manager also played a role in terms of providing motivation in their schools.

However, some participants believed that their motivation did not yield desirable results. They indicated that there were educators who did not go beyond seven hours in terms of teaching. In this regard they invited external stakeholders to come and provide motivation for all and sundry to embrace hard work. The participants organised parent meetings whereby learners were also invited to be in attendance. On the day of the parents' meetings,

external motivational speakers, including former learners, were invited to come and motivate the learners. This had been the culture in these schools as it was done on a quarterly basis. Some participants indicated that in motivating the learners, they did that for individual learners by calling them to their offices to motivate them. I understand that there were participants who devoted much of their time and attention to learners. In my opinion this practice is extremely time-consuming. However, in promoting this culture of motivating learners individually, the SMT members tended to get to know them very well. In attesting to this finding, the following participants made these remarks:

Our department is the main one. If learners fail languages, it means they won't go to the next class. So, we motivate them. We are one department that binds the school. We try by all means to motivate each other and work harder to give learners the best results. Sometimes our Circuit Manager will come and encourage us, our principal will come and applaud us and say you are doing a good job, you are doing a great job, carry on (SMT K).

We are always motivating teachers to give more work, more of informal tasks because they are a guideline that will help kids in terms of preparing for a test. In fact we motivate them on daily basis (SMT F).

We are motivating them but I think if we can motivate them more and get some outside motivation to instil that love for hard work because we don't get good levels. Most of the educators cannot go an extra mile and work for only seven hours. If somebody can motivate us as the SMT and also motivate them to go an extra mile, we'll take our school to better heights (SMT D).

On the day of meeting parents, we find that we have even invited a motivational speaker to come and motivate the learners. Every quarter we do not rest on our laurels, we invite guests to come and motivate our learners. Also, some of our teachers are very good in motivating, so we also call them during assemblies and parents' meetings (SMT E).

Normally I also call the learners individually to my office to talk to them about their performance and even encourage them on how to improve and also motivate them that if they fail a test it is not the end of the world, then they need to up the game to

improve the pass. I also motivate educators and when we have an educator who has just joined the system, I also motivate them (SMT M).

These above extracts are congruent with Filgona, Sakiyp, Gwany and Okoronka (2020:16) who posit that motivation is an influential factor in the teaching-learning situations. The success of learning depends on whether or not the learners are motivated. Motivation drives learners in reaching their learning goals. It is good to recognise the fact that motivated learning is a central element of good teaching. Learning is inherently hard work; it is pushing the brain to the limits, and thus can only happen with motivation. The quotes are also consistent with Arar and Abo-Nasrah (2020:16) who assert that teachers' motivation is enhanced when the organisation learns to support these three needs; allowing educators to sense that they are capable of coping with their professional and social tasks in schools; giving educators control by allowing them to participate in determining and achieving school goals; and enabling educators to devote time to learners and demonstrate affection, empathy and concern, thus lessening competition amongst them.

This finding is confirmed by Ali, Dahie and Ali (2016:36) who opine that motivating teachers generates job satisfaction which also leads to the effective and efficient performance of the whole organisation. Therefore, it is recommended that for the education system to be improved, it definitely requires building possible mechanisms or employing techniques to motivate the teachers. Since teacher motivation is important for the improvement of school performance, it is advisable that the government imposes the minimum wage law for school teachers' pay, which possibly also caters for teacher performance when given some due care and attention.

If teachers use motivation when interacting with the learners, the learners will be driven to learn; hence superior performance will be gained (Ngiri, 2014:4). I argue that in most instances when motivation is being spoken of in schools, only learner motivation occupies the centre stage. Educator motivation receives little attention or no attention at all. What this study has established is that both educators and learners in these schools were motivated on a regular basis, which is commendable. Educator motivation energises them to pump up their performance in schools, increases their job satisfaction, and reduces the stress level that many educators suffer. Learner and educator motivation lead to increased levels of hard work and consequentially, improved learner outcomes in schools.

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5.6.4   Learner profiling

The responses indicated learner profiling whereby learners are demarcated into high fliers, average, and those that are struggling. This means that the participants know their learners well, so that they can be accorded sufficient attention in terms of teaching activities. Educators who did not have a normal class at that time normally went to the class with struggling learners and commenced teaching and learning activities. Learners who were quick in terms of understanding the subject matter were given a chance to teach those learners who were struggling. Therefore the participants embraced peer teaching from within their ranks. Peer teaching is a strategy that is used in schools where some struggling learners have the opportunity to learn from their betters. This strategy culminates in both the more able and the less able learners benefiting from each other. The responses of the participants were articulated as follows:

> *We also profile our learners, the performing learners, the middle learners and also the risk learners. In terms of the performing learners we take each learner and put them in the group of middle learners and also the risk learners so that we can help them because when learners are teaching each other, it goes well, especially in times of revision. Profiling is the first thing we do. We teach them and after teaching them we take the able learners to be the group leaders for the middle learners and also the risk learners (SMT K).*

> *These learners are different. We do profile them and check on those who don't perform, group them together, and drill them with simple questions or low order questions and medium order questions. And those who perform better, we give them some challenging questions. So we are profiling them according to their merit (SMT D).*

> *We classify our learners regarding how they are performing. I have the low performing group which I'll give specific tasks, the average group which I'll also give them their tasks, and the high performing or the high flyers which I'll give demanding work for them to improve on (SMT M).*

> *We do have learners at risk, very few of them. Ja, they are very few, we are having one-on-one session with each of them (SMT A).*

This finding is alluded to by Park, Ji and Lim (2015) who postulate that learner profiling is an important source of information that not only contains basic information such as the name, age and gender of learners, but also reveals their learning ability, characteristics, and conditions. According to Lynch (2018), a learner profile is a document, project, or even conversation that helps educators learn more about their learners and may include the following information regarding learners:

- Skills, strengths and interests.

- Aspirations and passions.

- Likes and dislikes.

- Life experiences.

- How the learner likes to learn.

- Struggles or potential barriers to learning.

- Anything else the learner or educator deems important.

Educators can use learner profiles to build effective relationships, develop inclusivity, and understand what classroom, differentiations, or adaptations may be needed for individual learners.

After having profiled the learners and after having identified learners who are regarded as high flyers, participants embarked on peer teaching where high fliers were tasked with the responsibility of teaching those learners who were less capable. The participants embarked on peer teaching because they believed that learners understood the subject matter better if they were taught by their peers. In attesting to this assertion, the participants had this to say:

> *We have three separate classes. The first one which is centre A is meant for high flyers, B is for the average, and in centre C we know these ones are struggling. So whenever we go to that class, is like you know, you are going to work much of your time there. Whenever you are free it is like we know where to go and that is centre C because they are the ones who are struggling. Even in the evening when learners are*

studying, we use the high flyers to come and teach because they sometimes understand each other better when they are a group of equals (SMT F).

The first initiative is about profiling of learners, yes, if you know your learners it is quite easy to make sure that you know what they are struggling with. Learners who are quick to understand, we normally request them to assist the other learners and it has been happening for many years now (SMT I).

In some cases I usually say, let's give these learners a chance to do peer teaching because I've realised that sometimes learners are afraid to ask the teacher per se maybe they are afraid that the teacher may swear at them or beat them or whatever. You find that the teacher is busy teaching, I usually tell the teachers that sometimes you must move from teaching and give these learners a chance by just giving them sections, give them sections to prepare and come and present. Give them a chance to do peer teaching because if they are taught by their peers they understand well instead of being taught for the whole hour being the teacher not involving the learners. Learners should be actively involved, ask them questions in class (SMT G).

SMT F, SMT I and SMT G resonate well with Sukrajh (2018:20) who posits that peer teaching fosters self confidence in learners when they teach others. Learners have the opportunity to confront their own communication and interpersonal skills, which are clearly uncovered in their interactions during peer teaching. Behlol, Akbar and Hukamdad (2019:51) caution those schools that do not embrace peer teaching should know that that the lack of peer teaching not only affects the academic performance of the students, but also becomes the cause of student rivalries and groupings. It may also provide opportunities to be engaged in certain negative activities that have serious repercussions for their moral development. It is also inferred that such a school climate does not provide them with opportunities for working in cooperative and collaborative ways.

However, Oloo, Mutsotso and Masibo (2019:12-22) confirm that peer teaching has been researched as an effective strategy to engage learners and promote academic success. It builds confidence in the learners and allows them to interact and share ideas. This finding also coincides with Lim (2014:36) who argues that because peer teaching actively engages learners in the learning process, learners gain a sense of purpose with regard to the lesson

taught.

5.6.5 Item analysis

The participants' responses indicated they conducted item analysis and found it helpful. Item analysis helped the participants in identifying question paper areas where learners had performed well or had performed poorly. The importance of item analysis lies in the fact that even if it appeared that learner performance in a particular assessment task showed drastic improvements, item analysis could assist in picking up questions where learners fared badly. Item analysis assisted the participants in identifying areas or questions that needed to be revisited to improve learner performance. It also assisted the participants in terms of attending to revision issues as they were in a better position to know which points of the curriculum to focus on.

However, some participants pointed out that even though they conducted item analysis, it depended to a large extent on the length of the question paper. This assertion created an understanding that to conduct item analysis on their part is optional because it appeared that when the question paper as too long, the likelihood is that item analysis was not conducted. After having conducted an item analysis, the participants consolidated their findings in a document that was presented at a formal sitting. This made me think that after the challenges were picked up, the participants devised a strategy to ensure that they were addressed. In substantiating my view, the participants articulated their responses in this manner:

> *Every educator in my department conducts item analysis as it helps a lot. It enables you to check as to which area learners are not performing very well. Let me say for example, during the trial examinations and in grade 12 English, when I was checking marking, I realised that there is a great improvement and when I completed the item analysis I was able to pick up that there was a question where in out of ten only one got it right. Then I started to check as to what was really happening here. So item analysis give me that ability to know where we have to go back for revision. Then I know where to focus (SMT C).*

> *We also conduct item analysis. It is very important because after writing each and every test we need to know which questions were difficult for these learners. For*

example, in my case question number five is always giving problems in terms of adjectives and adverbs, direct and indirect speech, passive and active voices, so this is where I know whenever I go to do remedial work, and in all centres, I must also revise these sections after having been guided by the item analysis (SMT F).

We do check to see what the problematic questions are when we are assessing, or what is the question in which all learners struggled, and then we assist them. We do this after we have marked the work. That is after we have analysed the results to check how our learners are performing and what are the challenges and how to assist them (SMT M).

Departments conduct Item Analysis so that they identify the topics which might have caused learners not to perform. However, item analysis depends on the length of the paper. Sometimes you find that we don't have much time to do item analysis with informal tasks. The HODs consolidate challenges identified into one document and they are going to present to the SMT meeting (SMT A).

The participants' extracts above are in agreement with NEEDU (2018) which asserts that item analysis is important in schools because it identifies test items which are too difficult or too easy. It also identifies test items that are not able to differentiate between those learners who have learned the content and those who have not. The finding is also in agreement with the University of Washington (2020) when they posit that item analysis is especially valuable in improving test items which will be used again in later tests, but it can also be used to eliminate ambiguous or misleading items in a single test administration.

Item analysis can also indicate how effective each question is in a multiple choice question test item. Quaigrain and Arhin (2017), in their study on using reliability and item analysis to evaluate a teacher-developed test in educational measurement and evaluation, mention that item analysis provides valuable information for further test item modification and future test development. They go further to advise that as a quality control measure, it is important for educators to perform item analysis or seek assistance where they feel inadequate.

5.6.6   Performance review sessions

The responses of the participants indicated that there were instances where they came

together with educators in a session in order to make a presentation on performance. These sessions were specifically earmarked for reflection on the performance in the school. The performance was presented, taking into account the targets that had been set at the beginning of the year. These sessions could be regarded as performance review sessions or accountability sessions.

Accountability sessions are sessions where accountability conversations are held at all levels of the DBE, from school to District and finally to Provincial level (DBE, 2018:10). These sessions ensure that every SMT member and every educator accounts for performance in terms of the tasks that they had agreed to execute. When the performance is good, educators are applauded for their sterling work. When the performance is bad, educators are supported and encouraged to work studiously in order to turn the situation around.

However, some participants frankly indicated that there were instances in their schools where during accountability sessions, some HODs had nothing to present as educators had not given in any written work. SMTs have to ensure that teaching and learning takes place in their schools, and part of that work is to provide monitoring. However, the failure of some SMT members to have written work to report on is a clear indication that some SMT members did not provide enough monitoring of the activities in their department. Had the HOD provided sufficient monitoring, the failure to provide a single piece of written work could have been detected in its infancy and hence the situation amended. In attesting to this finding regarding performance review sessions in schools, the participants made the following remarks:

> *As the SMT we normally go to the laboratory with computers and the overhead projector and present the performance in each and every subject. After that, all departments will go and determine how to improve their performance. Departments will go and check how to improve, especially on the issue of progressed learners as well as those who are doing well (SMT M).*

> *We usually have discussions about the results every term and check the performance of every subject. If there is a subject that's not performing, the teacher must be supported (SMT J).*

> *We create time in our departmental meetings where every educator presents the performance of the learners against the targets that they have set. When the*

performance is good, I praise them, and when the performance is bad, they must state the intervention strategies to improve (SMT B).

We usually invite subject educators to a session to report about curriculum delivery. If the work is pleasing I applaud the educator and encourage him/her. I also talk to other educators in the department, encourage them, and say this is what educator so and so is doing, let's try and see if it's going to work for all of us. And in situations where the performance is not pleasing, this gives the educators a duty to go back and determine strategies to improve (SMT C).

We don't come to school and just relax. We work! We account for our work! Educators account to the HODs and the HODs account to a formal meeting of the SMT. Each time we reflect on our work we take into cognisance our target. If the performance is good, we appreciate it. If the performance is not good, we go back and pull up our socks (SMT E).

We sit in one-on-one engagements with educators to check on performance in their subjects. When the performance is bad, I ask the teacher to prepare the leaners for a rewrite. When it is good, I will appreciate that teacher (SMT K).

HODs also are expected to report and account on their departmental activities every Tuesday. The core of our reports is about curriculum coverage, written work output. They report about the attendance of educators in their department and also the attendance of learners. So, our report is basically about classroom activities. However, you may find that some educators did not do anything because the HODs won't be having anything to report on (SMT A).

The participants' assertions above are validated by NEEDU (2018:3) which indicates that after every formal assessment, SMTs must identify gaps between a desired learning goal and the learners' present status, and thereafter hold everybody accountable for learner performance. This finding on performance review sessions in schools is supported by Singh (2020) who mentions that the liability of educators in the education sector matters a great deal and the educators' accountability has become an essential addition to the public education sector. The responsibility of an educator towards the students' learning process is significant.

Singh (2020) goes on to point out that schools should use accountability sessions frequently. Efforts to introduce accountability in schools and classrooms have flourished and flowed throughout the history of the USA public education system (Kraft, Brunner, Dougherty & Schwegman, 2018:6).

Tayler (2016:10) postulates that managers in schools should meet regularly in small groups or one-on-one situations with educators to discuss learners' progress regarding their set goals. Scheduling the time to do this exercise during school hours should be a priority. Mudzanani and Makgato (2016:100) also note that SMTs should improve the supervision and monitoring of teachers by having compulsory accountability meetings with them. Given my observations and experience as a Circuit Manager in the DBE, I argue that accountability sessions in schools have many benefits, *inter alia*:

- They enable educators to remain focused and committed to their curriculum delivery mandates.

- They motivate educators to know more about the subjects that they offer.

- They lead to a culture of accountability by school-based stakeholders.

- They lead to a culture of sharing good practices, especially in cases where they are conducted in the form of a group.

- They enable educators and SMTs to be conversant with the curriculum delivery picture of the school.

- They assist educators and SMT members in developing the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT analysis) in their school.

- Gaps and successes relating to the overall curriculum delivery activities are normally identified during accountability sessions. After these sessions, gaps are normally addressed, and successes are sustained.

- They boost educator morale, commitment, focus and confidence; especially when they are conducted in a caring and supportive environment by caring and supportive school authorities.

- They lead to an overall performance improvement in the sense that educators and SMT members need to record a performance improvement each time an accountability session is held.

- They lead to the completion of syllabi by educators in schools. This ensures that learners sit for examinations having covered all curriculum items.

It is important for schools to hold regular accountability sessions because the Wits School of Governance (2016:15) notes that accountability enables school stakeholders to develop realistic goals, monitor progress, and provide support for learning improvement. Compulsory accountability sessions should take place at all levels, starting from school level up to the top senior education officials (Mudzanani & Makgato, 2016:109).

5.6.7   Differentiated programmes

The responses revealed that the respondents applied differentiated teaching programmes in their institutions in order to ensure that every learner had the opportunity to learn effectively. A differentiated programme is a framework or philosophy for effective teaching that involves providing different students with different avenues to learning in terms of acquiring content, processing, constructing, or making sense of ideas, and developing teaching materials and assessment measures so that all students within a classroom can learn effectively, regardless of the differences in ability (Layton, 2016).

This diversity determines the amount of additional support that individual learners may need (Westwood, 2016). The participants revealed that they take into cognisance the learning abilities of their learners to make sure that all learn properly and consequently succeed. In this regard they were not hesitant in pointing that those learners who were lagging behind in terms of grasping the content were given special attention by means of extra lessons. Therefore the participants did not approach the teaching and learning activities by way of a 'one size fits all' approach.

In other words, every single learner mattered in their schools and they did everything in their power to ensure that all learners, regardless of learning challenges, were assisted so that they could ultimately succeed. In motivating their approach, the participants had the following responses to articulate:

I have three learners who are lagging behind. I usually call them and give them special attention and special lessons so that they can be on board with other learners (SMT G).

I normally teach them, and after teaching them I'll take the quick learners to be the group leaders for the middle learners and risk learners. One size one fits all doesn't work because I won't get what I want. I won't get the level seven, the distinctions. I sometimes put them around my table and do remedial work with them (SMT K).

Sometimes you teach them as a group, but even if they are together, as a teacher you'll have to know that these particular sections of my teaching in this topic are basically challenging for this particular group. It means you must single them out and teach them alone during that period, but at certain times it might be possible to take a certain group alone and teach them topics that are suitable for them. However, the educator will have to make sure that this strategy is not clearly visible to learners to say that they are being differentiated because some of them might be demotivated, and that they are not being treated like the others. But as a teacher I know that certain task and certain topics that I'm teaching will be well understood by this group and not so well understood by that group, but I still have to teach them differently because it part of their syllabus; they have to do all of it (SMT L).

The above excerpts are resonant with Weselby (2020) who postulates that just as everyone has a unique fingerprint, every learner has an individual learning style. The chances are, not all learners grasp a subject in the same way or share the same level of ability. This means the same learning material should be taught to all learners using a variety of teaching strategies, or it may require the educator to deliver lessons at varying levels of difficulty based on the ability of each learner.

When a differentiated programme is correctly implemented in a classroom, everyone benefits. It allows educators to identify and assist learners who need more help in certain areas (Dean, 2019). This finding coincides with Shareefa, Hj, Zin, Zaiham and Abdullah (2019:322) who agree that given the expansion of learner diversity in schools, the use of differentiated instruction is more important than ever before. It is an effective strategy which many experts recommend for educators. This study finds solace in Weselby (2020) who

confirms that educators who practice differentiation in the classroom:

- Design lessons based on students' learning styles.

- Group students by shared interests, topic, or ability for assignments.

- Assess students' learning using formative assessments.

- Manage the classroom to create a safe and supportive environment.

- Continually assess and adjust the lesson content to meet the students' needs.

Epitropoulos (2019) mentions the following advantages of differentiated programmes in schools that educators could abide by. These are the characteristics of differentiated instruction:

- **Proactive:** The educator does not wait for learners to fall behind before employing new learning strategies. The educator is proactive and takes a motivational and positive approach.

- **Qualitative:** Each learner completes the same amount of work. However, the quality of the work required may vary according to ability, interest, or previous content knowledge.

- **Rooted in assessment:** Educators begin the class with assessment. The results of assessment determine the educator's approach. Throughout the lesson, the educator continues to assess learners' learning through one-on-one conversations, classroom observations, and formal assessments. Educators then iteratively design course content and instructional strategies based on the results of assessment.

- **Takes multiple approaches:** With differentiation in the classroom, educators manage what learners learn, how learners learn, and how learners are assessed. With its flexibility, differentiated instruction allows educators to maximise individual growth in the course content.

- **Student/learner centred:** Differentiated instruction presupposes that learners learn in different ways and at different paces. Educators using differentiated instruction allows leaners to maximise their individual growth in the course content.

- **Blending individual, small group, and whole group strategies:** The advantages of differentiated instruction extend to a larger group of learners.

- **Dynamic and organic:** Educators and learners learn together. Learners focus on learning the course content, while educators tailor their instructional strategies to learners' learning styles (Epitropoulos, 2019).

5.6.8 Curriculum enrichment activities

The findings of this sub-theme included school-initiated enrichment activities and departmental-initiated enrichments. Depending on who initiated the extra classes, these enrichment classes take place within the school premises, or within the premises of an identified central school in terms of the departmental-initiated extra classes. They are at all times planned for, and monitored for consistency and value by the SMTs (Green, 2019). The findings are discussed as follows:

5.6.8.1 School-initiated enrichment activities

These enrichment activities are initiated by SMTs in schools and are hosted at the level of such schools and funded by the schools themselves. South African schools are allocated their norms and standards funds by the PED for operations in schools. The management of these school finances has its origins in the documentary directive, 'Prescripts for the management of school funds in public schools', dated 3 May 2011. Section 6.4.2 points out that the minimum standard requirement for all low quintile schools should entail the following:

- 60% of the total allocation must be spent on curriculum needs.

- Supplementary LTSM address curriculum needs, e.g. teaching aids, educational toys, charts, science kits, etc.

- Schools are permitted to use funds for local sporting activities/equipment but this should not exceed 10%.

Schools make use of part of the 60% curriculum delivery budget to fund their own curriculum enrichment activities.

The responses of the participants indicated that the normal day-to-day teaching and learning activities in schools are insufficient to prepare learners to achieve better at the end of the year. They indicated the insufficiency of normal teaching time, and the mechanism of engaging in enrichment activities, support classes, and/or extra classes. Enrichment activities in schools are mainly in the form of morning lessons, afternoon lessons, weekend lessons, holiday lessons, longer lessons, and camps. Morning lessons are conducted before the commencement of the formal school day. Afternoon lessons are conducted immediately after the conclusion of the school day activities. Weekend lessons take place on Saturdays and Sundays, and holiday lessons take place during National holidays as well as during the normal school recess.

These extra classes are conducted throughout the year and it appears as if this is not a once-off event but a prevailing culture in these schools. A time table is normally drawn up for these enrichment classes. This led me to understand that the attendance of these enrichment sessions in schools is embraced by a number of educators, hence the crafting of the extra classes timetable. Funding these enrichment classes is normally sorted out with the parents. School also subsidise them from their own coffers to ensure that the enrichment activities last for a lengthier period, so that much of the syllabi can be dealt with. These enrichment activities supplement and complement the normal teaching and learning activities. In support of this finding, the study participants made the following responses:

> *We conduct Saturday classes, and the department is not funding but funded by the parents of learners who are doing grade 12. We agree with parents on how they'll compensate for petrol when teachers would be coming on Saturdays and they normally agree. We are now around R500 per learner for the Saturday lessons for the whole year, though the money does not cover expenses for the whole year. There is a limited number of Saturday classes, which we run but we run them the whole year. We don't run them for a certain period and then stop. We run them throughout the year and our learners benefit a lot from these classes (SMT A).*

> *We have a timetable decided on by the educators to see when they can stay with the learners after school and teach for two to three hours (SMT H).*

> *We normally have the morning lessons that start at seven o'clock and afternoon*

lessons from three to five where we teach them, and even on Saturdays we also have classes (SMT K).

We give these learners a chance for extra classes. We have realised that the normal allocated time is not enough in high [school so] we have to create a time for our self and extra time for our self. We came to a point where we have said and requested the teachers that at least once per week every class must have an extra lesson. Teachers can choose according to their preference whether they will come in the morning or they'll prefer to remain in the afternoon. We then developed a timetable according to their preference wherever possible but wherever it is not possible, we negotiate with them that this cannot make for you we will give you this one (SMT L).

However, some participants normally embark on extra classes only after having realised that there is displeasing performance in their departments. It then becomes the responsibility of the individual educator to engage in extra lessons. However, in order to ensure that other educators from other departments feature during the extra lessons, these educators are given only morning lessons that commence in the early hours of the academic day. In motivating this assertion, SMT J had this comment to make:

In my department, if I see that the learners didn't perform well in a particular subject, I call the teacher and discuss to provide extra lessons, and usually morning lessons. Seven o' clock we are all here (SMT J).

The above participants' quotes resonate well with Saini (2020) who indicates that the DoE has been making efforts to encourage educators and to achieve good results. It has requested educators and learners to take extra classes after school hours. These responses coincide with Du Toit (2018), who confirms that many schools promote the value of extra classes in all subjects after school or over weekends. A few decades ago curriculum enrichment classes were not common, but today they are the norm.

5.6.8.2 Departmental initiated enrichment classes

The participants indicated that there is a point where the PED through the District and Circuits offices organises enrichment lessons. These extra classes take place during school holidays as well as over some selected weekends. Funding for these extra classes is normally

borne by the PED. Educators who offer lessons during these support classes are those from the host schools, as well as those who have been appointed from other schools. Other enrichment classes that the PED organise are selected radio and television slots. In attesting to this finding, participants had these remarks to make:

> *We are taking part in Saturday lessons and the holiday lessons organised by the department and we also have the radio and the television programmes organised by the department (SMT G).*

> *We have extra lessons like the enrichment classes organised by the department and our learners do attend these enrichment classes. The educators of the enrichment classes are not entirely the educators of our school. So, the enrichment classes organised by the department help a lot (SMT D).*

What the participants pinpointed is congruent with UNESCO (2020) which asserts that the radio and television lessons are a powerful way to assist the most marginalised learners. This finding coincides with Farbman (2015) who asserts that extra lessons in schools translate into more raw learning time, or as it are known in the literature, as 'time on task'. A substantial body of research has long identified extra contact time as a key determinant for learner performance in schools.

5.6.9 Annual Teaching Plans and examinations guidelines

The participants' responses indicated that at the beginning of the academic year they provided learners with annual teaching plans (ATP) and examination guidelines. This exercise was carried out to ensure that learners could adjust their pace of work throughout the year. However, only some of the learners make use of these ATPs and examination guidelines, and some do not bother. Those who make use of these the ATPs and examination guidelines are generally ahead as pace setters as they normally work on their own during their spare time.

In making these ATPs and examination guidelines available to learners, some participants viewed it as being transparent with the learners. However, some participants differed slightly as it is their culture not to provide learners with ATPs. What they normally did was to ensure that the ATPs were displayed on the notice board in the classrooms. When learners needed to

see how far they were, they went to the notice board to establish their progress. However, even if the ATPs were displayed on the notice board in the classrooms, it was still optional to consult it. In my view, these participants wanted learners to shoulder the responsibility and wanted the learners to conducts their own research regarding progress rather than educators just spoon-feeding them. In supporting this finding, the participants had these comments to make:

At the beginning of the year the learners are given the annual teaching plans and examination guidelines to show them what is expected of them and what they will be doing. (SMT H).

Another strategy is the ATPs and examinations guidelines. We photocopy ATPs and exam guidelines and give them to these learners. ATPs and exam guidelines assist us a lot. Our learners are not the same; there are those who are eager to learn at their own and the pacesetters assist them. When they know what is expected of them, you find that they are already ahead with their work. They do not always wait for the educator; they must continue working such that when the educator comes to class they are already ahead with what is expected of them (SMT C).

We usually make copies of exam guidelines and ATPs available for the learners so that they can know that this week, this is what is supposed to be done in Geography or Life Sciences or whatever, so that they can also check the pace of the work (SMT G).

HODs have CAPS documents that show things that are to be taught at a particular time. They also have the ATPs and the guidelines. The HOD must have the ATP and exam guidelines for all the teachers of her/his department. You know this time there is transparency. Teachers must give the ATPs and the guides to learners to know that during this quarter these are the topics that are to be dealt with, these are the books that we must treat during this this quarter. They must know, and even when they are at home they mustn't just wait for the teacher, they already have the ATP, and they know that in this quarter we must look at this and that. However, the teacher must explain the ATP to the learners indicating how they are going to work during the course of this year (SMT K).

What we normally do is to display the ATP on the notice board in the classroom. It assists the learners to check whether what is supposed to be done at a particular time is done. The ATPs also help learners who are able to be proactive to prepare themselves before the teacher comes to class so that when the teacher comes, he/she finds that they have prepared and they know those parts that are giving them problems so that they can relate them to the teacher (SMT L).

The assertions above are in agreement with Bower (2019) who posits that each learner should be provided with an ATP and examination guidelines for each and every subject. ATPs are a schedule for each subject that outlines exactly what topics need to be taught on specific days throughout the school year. The dates on which specific subject topics will be dealt with assist learners in determining whether they on par, ahead, or behind with the syllabus. The examination guidelines are meant to articulate the assessment aspirations espoused in the CAPS documents. They are therefore not a substitute for the CAPS that educators should teach (DBE, 2020). According to the DBE (2019), the purpose of examination guidelines is to:

- Provide clarity on the depth and scope of the content to be assessed in the grade 12 National Senior Certificate examination.

- Assist educators to adequately prepare learners for the examinations.

This finding is confirmed by the Western Cape Education Department (2017) which posits that the DBE has developed examination guidelines in an effort to assist educators and learners in the preparation for the examinations. They go further to advise that these examination guidelines are available on the departmental website in all subjects except for Electrical Technology and Civil Technology where examination guidelines are not necessary. Principals and SMTs are requested to give this information on examination guidelines to all educators and learners.

The participants' responses create the understanding that it is crucially important for schools to give out the ATPs and examinations guidelines upon the reopening of the schools. This ensures learners can adjust their pace of work and work harder if needed in case they are left behind.

5.6.10 Monitoring and support

The participants' responses indicated that they provided monitoring and support for curriculum delivery activities, although I realised that their efforts were not as effective as they should be. It appeared as if they were doubtful in their responses. The findings of this sub-theme included educator class attendance, instructional activities, and written work or learner assessment.

5.6.10.1 Educator class attendance

The study participants indicated that they normally conducted subject educator monitoring and support in terms of class. They did this in order to ensure that no lesson period went by without the presence of a subject educator in class. If they heard a noise coming from the classrooms, they checked what was happening and intervened by summoning the subject educator. It emerged from this study that some SMT members believe that the exercise of monitoring and support is the baby of the principal and thus ignore classes that are without subject educators during specific periods. My finding is motivated by the following remarks made by the respondents:

> *Our SMT do visit classes to check the attendance. If there is any noise in class they'll just go and check whose period it is and then make follow ups. However, some think it is the responsibility of the principal to tell the educators that they must go to class. However, some do take action themselves to tell the teacher to go to class (SMT A).*

This sentiment resonates with Mudzanani and Makgato (2016:102) who assert that teachers must be monitored regarding attendance on a daily basis because if they do not come to work, teaching will be affected and hence the learner performance. The finding is also consistent with the study by Biwott, Egesah and Ngeywo (2017:49) who conclude that when monitoring and support are carried out correctly, and at the right time and place, the success of many projects becomes a reality. Educator energies are directed towards producing high quality teaching and learning through monitoring and support (Mngomezulu, 2015:18).

5.6.10.2 Monitoring of instructional activities

The participants pointed out that they monitor and support the teaching and learning proceedings by physically making themselves available in classrooms during the lesson periods. There were times where they conducted class visits to establish the pedagogical practices of subject educators. Class visits were either formal or informal depending on what the visitor needed to accomplish.

Tingley (2017) notes that class visit are a great way to get to know teachers and learners and to see what is happening in the classroom. However, one should be aware of some basic guidelines so that teachers welcome the class visit and do not see them as an intrusion. After such visits have been made, SMTs should provide recommendations on how the educator's practices could be improved. It appeared from the participants' deliberations that after a class visit had been made, educators were provided with recommendations. Other participants were bold enough to indicate that most of those educators that they observed in class really knew how to teach. In attesting to this finding, the following participants had these comments to make:

> *We normally conduct class visits. Now, whenever you visit them in class, it is like they know, my manager is not here to crucify me, he always give me support (SMT F).*

> *When I came to this school I realised that the people I'm going to work with they are very simple, simple educators, educators who are always prepared to go to class. They don't need anybody to remind them to go to class. I also visit them in class. Each and every one knows his or her own responsibilities (SMT J).*

These quotes by SMT F and SMT J are in line with Garba, Waweru and Kaugi (2019:192) who opine that a classroom visit is the actual supervisory activity of watching the teacher give instruction. This comes after the arrangements have been concluded between the supervisor (principal) and the supervisee (teacher). The principal sits in the classroom, watching the teacher deliver the lesson. Class visits provide support and reinforcement for teachers' pedagogical effectiveness. They are done for the sole purpose of improving teaching and learning in schools.

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Different strategies should be adopted during classroom visits and observation of educators. However, SMTs should be skilled in interpersonal relationships and must have competent skills in instructional supervision for these visits to be successful. This finding coincides with Strauss (2014) who opines that time spent coaching teachers is associated with better learner outcomes, and so is time spent evaluating teachers on their knowledge of the curriculum.

5.6.10.3   Written work/learner assessment

The participants indicated that in their schools there was a culture of monitoring learner assessment in the form of classwork, homework, tests, examinations, assignments and examinations. On specific weekdays educators collected books for written work and handed them over to SMT members to check whether learner assessment was taking place. Checking up on written work assisted the participants as they stood a better chance of establishing whether or not the ATPs and pacesetters were being followed. They then were better positioned to establish whether the educators were assessing learners on their preferred syllabi topics at the expense of the whole syllabi. When the educator claimed to have given a test to learners, the participants requested the learner scripts and record sheets to establish the performance. In supporting this finding, the following participants had these responses to make:

> *If there is no work for a particular section which is supposed to be in the learners' classwork books, I normally call the teacher and most of them do the afternoon lessons to cover whatever they did not cover, especially in grade 12. So, even those who are behind, with the ATP I do call them, they do it in writing so that they tell us how to close the gap and thereafter I have to manage to check if what he has said is actually implemented. So even if it is in the afternoon, even though sometimes I might not remain with them, I make it a point that I check the class even before I leave (SMT D).*

> *Every Friday they must bring their classwork books so that I check whether the work has have given, and every month I check whether a test has been written. The scripts and also the mark sheets must be submitted so that I can see which learners are going to let us down. I then call that particular learner and give him or her hope (SMT K).*

If teachers are behind in terms of pacesetters, we notice that. And then we do devise a recovery plan. We talk to those teachers so that they can also tell us when they can make some sort of extra time to cover the work that is left behind (SMT L).

Data would not lie, as HODs or as the SMTs we check the work of the educators because sometimes what you'll find is if an educator loves a certain chapter, he or she will give five class works on one chapter. So, if you are not careful they might have done a lot of work but only repeating one thing and at the end the learners will fail. So, as the SMT we make it a point that we scrutinise what is written and whether it is in line with the ATP. From there data is being collected on the class works which they have written and even some questions which might be giving learners problems (SMT I).

These above sentiments are echoed by Tosuncuoglu (2018) who opines that assessment has an important role in education, and it has a critical role in the teaching process. Through appropriate assessment, teachers can classify and grade their students, give feedback, and structure their teaching accordingly. Recently, educators have been more interested in the requirements of assessment procedures in the teaching and the learning process as forms of assessment have changed. The assessment procedures relate to authenticity, practicality, reliability, validity and wash back, and are considered the basic principles of assessment.

The main value of these aforementioned principles is to distinguish the effects of assessment and review any classroom-based issues between the teacher and the student. As the assessment process affects both teachers and students, significance and consideration should be given to assessment procedures. This finding is confirmed by Stancescu and Draghicescu (2017:754) who state that assessment is not a final point in the educational process, but it has to become an integral part of the learning process, able to provide to teachers and students with the necessary feedback to improve their activities. In this way assessment has special importance for modern lessons.

Considering what the participants in this study alluded to, I understand that they monitor and support educators in their day-to day-pedagogical activities. NEEDU (2018:3) advises that monitoring and support in schools are essential steps in the improvement process, as evidence gathered in this respect helps schools to:

- Determine whether their improvement plans/strategies are effective.

- Review their goals and improvement targets when necessary.

- Refine goals and targets for the future.

From the deliberations above, it becomes clear that the more management conducts monitoring and support in schools, the greater the improvement in terms of subject and overall school performance.

5.6.11   Regular communication

The participants' responses indicated that there was regular communication among the various staff members in their departments. By communication, the participants meant that there was an information flow from their offices to the educators and learners, as well as from the classrooms and subject educators to the SMTs offices. The findings of this sub-theme were identified as communication with fellow SMT members, communication with departmental staff members, communication with curriculum advisors, and communication with learners. The three sub-themes are discussed below:

5.6.11.1   Communication with fellow SMT members

This finding shows that there was regular communication between SMT members in terms of ensuring that vital information reached every SMT member on curriculum delivery issues in their schools. An information book had been created whereby information circulated among the SMT members. Once a week the participants held meetings in order to thoroughly reflect on the activities around their core mandate.

In such meetings they also had slots to voice the challenges encountered in the day-to-day execution of their duties.   They normally emerged from the meetings assured that all challenges that had impacted negatively on curriculum delivery had been resolved.   In supporting this finding, the participants had the following responses to make:

> *We created a WhatsApp group for the SMT where we share with them all the*
> *documents that we receive from the department, those relevant for their department,*

and those which are general for all SMT members. Secondly, we have an SMT information book where we write messages, especially those that are urgent so that it is distributed among the SMT members as soon as possible. And we also have meetings; we have SMT meetings regularly. Once a week there is a space so that we can address matters that arise from our daily activities (SMT A).

Usually we have SMT meetings. The principal invites us to these meetings. In these meetings we are asked if we have anything to say. We raise problems that we get from different departments in these meetings and make sure that they are addressed (SMT J).

What has been asserted by the participants is supported by Rawat (2015:3058) who posits that communication plays a vital role in all spheres of life. The essence of any society, communication helps people to share and understand. It plays a vital role in creating understandings and establishing relationships. Communication has the powers of alteration and negotiation, as well as the power to leave a lasting impact on one's mind. Thus, it needs to be handled carefully to avoid confusion and controversy. It plays a major role in all walks of life, and it has a significant place in the teaching and learning processes. This finding is confirmed by Phalane (2016:142) who asserts that communication keeps team members from aborting a project due to a lack of understanding of its overall purpose.

5.6.11.2   Communication with educators

The responses indicated that if issues unfolded in their departments, nor matter how small or large, they made information available to their educators in their departmental meetings. This brought an understanding that things do not just happen in various departments in schools without the knowledge of the educators in those departments. It emerged from this finding that timeframes were not imposed on educators but rather communicated to all and sundry, as and when the time was right.

When educators were successful in terms of meeting deadlines, they did not remain silent in their different working areas. They communicated the issue to staff members in the department. The participants indicated that they had departmental policies that governed their departments and curriculum delivery, and these policies were regularly communicated

to the educators so that their operations were in line with the legal educational directives. In attesting to this finding, SMT G, SMT B and SMT C had the following responses to make:

Even if there are some small issues we use to gather and inform each other. If there is something that is going to take place the following day or whatever day, then we usually sit down, communicate it, and inform one another (SMT G).

We communicate when we want to do things and we normally agree on how we are going to do it. We also determine the timeframe. If you find that we are unable to do it at that time, we always communicate (SMT B).

I communicate with educators and have to make sure that in my department I know what they are doing with regard to all the subjects, especially new educators. I'm the one who must ensure that the educators are taken on board. They must know what is expected and I have to make sure that the policies are there, yes, either subject policies or eh the departmental policies. I must show them or inform them what is required of them (SMT C).

This finding is confirmed by Akinnubi, Gbadeyau and Fashiku (2012:105) who advise that regular communication in schools remains a unique instrument that integrates all functions. It is an important ingredient and a vital instrument in any organisation, and management should bear in mind that the success of a school is determined by its effectiveness in terms of communication. Communication is the key to all aspects of organisational life, like planning, controlling, problem solving, decision making, motivating, interviewing and other management activities.

This finding is further supported by Raptou, Stamatis and Raptis (2017:1) who postulate that human life is full of 'communicative acts'. People collaborate, negotiate, persuade, speak, influence, or argue with each other. They go further to indicate that the ability of problem solving, the development of critical thinking, professional morality, flexible mobility, and collective and collaborative behaviour, are all elements of communication which is a prime social skill. This is confirmed by Duta, Panisoara and Panisoara (2015:1008) who postulate that how effective educators are has great deal to do with how they communicate. They go on to assert that educators communicate ideas, information, and expectations in a variety of ways, speaking and through the written word.

5.6.11.3   Communication with curriculum advisory

The participants indicated that they normally had regular communication with curriculum advisory units in matters pertaining to their subjects. This is in light of the developments that are sweeping through the curriculum landscape presently that means educators have to hit the ground running. Platforms like WhatsApp were created in order to ensure that curriculum delivery issues were attended to, in light of their urgency. However, the participants were concerned that the schools did not buy smartphones, airtime or data bundles for them to access the WhatsApp groups to communicate with the curriculum advisors. In attesting to this assertion, the following remarks were made:

> *We have made a "WhatsApp" group concerning our subjects. If there is something difficult, I "WhatsApp" our curriculum advisor. We sacrifice, we use our own data to do the school work, to receive the information from our curriculum advisors, and even when we want to send a certain task, we send it through my phone, then I use my phone to print out (SMT K).*

The quotation above resonates with Rasebotsa (2017:1-6) who posits that effective communication increases the quality of any relationship and facilitates the implementation of curriculum changes. Curriculum issues should be communicated to educators timeously in order to implement those changes. This finding is confirmed by Chigona (2017:444) who postulates that curriculum advisors have the responsibility of providing guidance and mentorship to in-service teachers within their fields of specialisation. In-service teachers tend to look to subject advisors for guidance on how to teach effectively with new technologies. Subject advisors need to be prepared adequately because their advice is needed more now than was the case a decade ago.

5.6.11.4   Communication with learners

Of interest in this study is the fact that participants had methods of communicating with learners, especially with regard to learning matters, even outside of the normal school hours. They pointed out that they had created a platform for engagement about school work in the form of a WhatsApp group with learners to have discussions, even after school hours. WhatsApp is an American freeware, cross-platform messaging application which allows

users to send text and voice messages, make voice and video calls, and share images, documents, user locations and other media (Wikipedia, 2020). Through this WhatsApp platform, the participants, educators and learners held discussions regarding subject matters. Learners were also free to ask subject related questions on this platform, and an educator would immediately respond. In supporting this assertion, SMT D had this to comment:

> *I told my educators the only means of technology we know is the smartphones, hence we have created a WhatsApp group with the learners. We discuss questions with learners when they are at home and they can ask questions (SMT D).*

The excerpt above is in line with Scott (2019) who asserts that teaching is not just about student supervision and inventing complex multiple-choice tests. It expands its reach far beyond that. The key idea behind educating students is to grow an intelligent and healthy community. To attain this goal, an educator needs to set priorities and develop teaching methods and approaches based on them. As this era is the digital era, the value of teacher and student communication is more intense than ever before.

5.6.12   Outsourcing of competent educators

The participants' responses indicated that they engaged in the activity of outsourcing competent educators from nearby schools to assist in terms of curriculum delivery. Participants were disappointed by the outsourced educators as they were at all times available to be outsourced. This outsourcing is an indication that the participants were not 'jacks of all trades' in terms of the subjects they managed.

Of interest here, in terms of this outsourcing, is that participants outsourced educators so that the outsourced educator could come and share with them good practices. In this regard they make sure that they outsourced only those educators who achieved excellent results. The participants outsourced for a number of reasons like unavailability of educators during extra classes, and content knowledge gaps experienced by subject educators. Educators who were outsourced ended up becoming friends with the educators of the schools where they were outsourced.

In motivating this finding, the following participants had these remarks to make:

We outsource educators from our neighbouring schools. They are very much positive and they are friends with most of our educators and it is not difficult to get educators, even for Saturday classes (SMT A).

Then we also outsource where there is a problem concerning a certain topic. We go an extra mile to look for someone who can help us so that our results mustn't be low (SMT K).

We have opted to outsource because some of our teachers due to some reasons they could not take part in extra lessons, and so we outsource. We have reliable teachers who are not in our school whom we use every year from grade 10 up to grade 12 (SMT B).

My department is composed of three subjects; Accounting, Economics and Business Management. Where there are challenges, especially in terms of the subject matter and where I cannot meet the educators' needs, I normally outsource because I specialised in Accounting. Although I did both Economics and Accounting but I did not teach them so my knowledge sometimes is limited, so I use outsourcing (SMT D).

The SMT outsources educators from other schools. We are outsourcing educators who are doing very well in other schools to come and share whatever they are doing (SMT H).

In a study that was undertaken by Makgakga and Sepeng (2014:158), they conclude that the outsourced educators use approaches that meet learners' needs, and the host educators also appreciate the intervention in their schools. Over and above, the host educators show satisfaction in terms of the way in which outsourced educators teach. This finding also resonates well with Aravind (2018) who confirms that schools are now opening up to the advantages of outsourcing educators. The outsourcing needs are dependent on its vision and mission.

While educators concentrate on their core competency which is teaching, outsourcing brings fresh energy and ideas from outside, thus expanding the horizons of each learner and enhancing their performance and the reputation of their schools.

5.6.13   Sufficient written work

The participants indicated that they give learners written work that goes beyond the dictates of their policy and the School Assessment Policy. This written work is in the form of informal tasks that are set at and moderated by SMTs, and formal tasks that are set at the level of the District and the Province and moderated at these levels. The participants indicated that they see positive improvements in the departments that they lead. The responses indicated that participants regarded written work as preparation for tests. They gave out written work as poor performance was regarded as an indication that learners did not write enough on a regular basis.

This written work was normally used by HODs to determine the extent of syllabi coverage in various subjects. Class work, homework, and tests given to the learners were sometimes taken from previous question papers. One advantage of previous question papers is that they are standardised and some of the questions can be repeated in subsequent tests and examinations. The responses indicated that in some departments there was a culture of weekly tests. In emphasising the importance of regular written work in schools, some participants indicated that learners normally fared better in tests and examinations if they did not encounter questions for the first time. In motivating this assertion, the following participants had these responses to make:

> *They submit on time, and then they give sufficient tasks, according to the number of tasks given per term which is class work, also assignments and so forth. The commerce is doing very well……. that assist us in identifying problem areas. HODs use this for syllabus coverage because if learners do not perform, for question number eight all of them, it shows that maybe the number of task that were given for that section, were not enough. In schools learners do not perform because the only way learners could perform is when they write [tests] on a regular basis (SMT A).*

> *We are always encouraging teachers to give more work, more of informal tasks, and class work because they are a guideline now. We'll help kids in terms of attracting a test and also encourage them to say if you give more work, is like we will always be ready to write the test (SMT F).*

> *With us, learners must be taught and they must write and it assists them (SMT I).*

We have got class work which is run on a daily basis, for example in our department it is a minimum of three per week on the FET, and then on the GET we have two tasks per week. We also have other assessments which are from the District where we have to assess learners. With the grade 12 we encourage weekly tests to assess how learners are doing (SMT M).

We encourage educators to give more written work. They should give more written work based on the previous question papers (SMT G).

Learners normally do much better when they write what they have written first. Then meaning that we have to give them more of informal tasks that are of good quality so that when they are going to meet them in a formal task it must not come as a surprise (SMT L).

Considering the excerpts above, it is evident that the participants regarded written work as a mechanism that assists them in improving learner outcomes. The quotes above are in agreement with Songsirisak and Jitpranee (2019:1) who posit that written work provides learners with opportunities to improve their learning habits and performance, and aims to increase their academic achievement.

In a study that was commissioned by Olaniyi (2018:2066), learners reveal that they prefer homework over classwork, but they did not retain more from homework than classwork. The learners also reveal that classwork does not help them to do as well as homework does. This finding is confirmed by NEEDU (2018:1) as they confirm that frequent written work in schools has several benefits:

- Increases instructional effectiveness.

- Encourages learners to study and review their work more often.

- Provides opportunities for educators to correct learner errors, reward good performance, and to give an indication of what they are expected to learn.

5.6.14   Utilisation of period registers

The responses indicated that they used tools to account for learner and educator attendance in

the form of period registers. The utilisation of these tools is a way of ensuring that teaching and learning takes place in different departments and in the whole school. A period register means an official document used by a school to monitor the attendance or absence of educators and learners (DBE, 2010:5). Using period registers, the participants could establish whether the educator attended the period, whether teaching took place, the time that the educator came to class, the time that he/she left the class, and whether written work had been given to the learners.

These subject period registers were signed regularly by learners and subject educators at the end of every lesson period. The learners signed the period register as a way of attesting to the fact that they were in attendance. Educators signed the period register as a way of indicating to the SMT that they were indeed present in the class and executing their core mandate.

These period registers assisted in establishing the rate of absenteeism in the teaching and learning situation. Thus period registers were a Means of Verification (MOV) of the attendance in the teaching and learning situation. At the end of the lesson period, the subject educator handed over the period register to the relevant SMT member. In motivating this finding, participants had this to say:

> We have period registers, one is for learner attendance and one is for educator attendance. Learner attendance is managed by the educator and teacher attendance is where a learner captures the attendance of educators on that day. Period registers for educators have among others the following [benefits]: Did the teacher come to class? Was there any teaching? Were you taught? What time did the teacher leave the class? and is there any activity that was given? These are the items that the period register captures (SMT A).

> I use period registers and in this case I give them to learners. In fact, with period registers we remind teachers each time they come to class to append their signatures. They also indicate learners who are absent during their periods. If the teacher did not attend class, then they write a dash on the register (SMT F).

> We use period registers in each and every subject in my department to check attendance in terms thereof. The period registers are kept by class representatives in each and every class. Each time the subject educator goes to class, he or she appends

the signature and indicates the topic they have done with the learners and whether learners have been given any informal assessment tasks (SMT E).

We use period registers whereby when the teacher goes to class, the class representative has that register then the teacher must sign it to show that during that period there was someone in the class (SMT K).

Giving these responses, it became evident that period registers were utilised as a mechanism of ensuring that each and every lesson period secured physical attendance on the part of educators and learners. This is resonant with the DBE (2010:21) that postulates that quarterly attendance picture enable District offices to track attendance at schools and respond appropriately.

- An educator should maintain a period register in order to monitor learner attendance and in particular to check on learners who abscond.

- An educator maintains a period register for every class taught by the educator during the school day (DBE, 2010:21).

This finding is confirmed by Mngomezulu (2015:18) who posits that a period register is one of the monitoring instruments used in schools to monitor teaching and learning during the allocated times. This tool must be well utilised by management in schools and report to parents on the situation on a regular basis. Mudzanani and Makgato (2016:100) also confirm that SMTs should use period attendance registers to monitor and encourage lesson attendance if they want to improve the academic performance of learners.

In view of the literature study, the understanding of the education authorities in the RSA is that the maintenance of period registers is the responsibility of subject educators in schools. What I drew from this study it is that period registers are also being kept by learner leaders in classrooms. The learner leaders regularly ensured that subject educators attended to these documents each time they came to class. Regardless of this administrative document being kept by educators in some schools and by some learners, what remains is that period registers were used to track whether learners had learnt and educators had taught and assessed what they had taught.

Period registers must be maintained in schools because a record of subject period attendance enables the authorities to monitor learners' and educators' absence and take appropriate follow up action with the relevant stakeholders. A quarterly attendance picture enables the District offices to track attendance at schools and respond appropriately (DBE, 2010:9). It is very important for educators and learners to be in school regularly as this has an impact on learner performance.

5.7   THEME 2: ENABLING AND CONSTRAINING FACTORS THAT SMTS ENCOUNTER IN MANAGING LOW QUINTILE SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE CAPRICORN SOUTH DISTRICT

Research question 2: What are the enabling and constraining factors that SMTs encounter in managing low quintile secondary schools in the Capricorn South District?

In terms of this theme, I wanted to establish the factors that enable SMTs in executing their core mandate and factors that constrain them in their day-to-day activities. The following sub-themes were developed from the responses of the participants: Work overload, infrastructural challenges, overcrowded classrooms, inadequate cooperation, teamwork, sound working relations, inadequacy of technological resources, professional development and support by departmental officials.

5.7.1   Work overload

The responses of the participants indicated that they were constrained by work overload as they had to engage with learners in the teaching learning situation and at the same time provide management services. They also complained that they had a number of periods to attend to, and they were not in their offices most of the time as they were physically monitoring the teaching and learning activities in the classrooms.

In attesting to this finding, the following participants had this to say:

> *SMT members are overloaded because you may find that as the deputy principal you have around 16 periods per week to attend although you have a lot of work on the side of administration and management and also in the case of the SMT, you find that*

they have around 25 periods per week although they have to do other management duties (SMT B).

We have to ensure that we go to class. We are also overloaded. Even if you can check our timetables, we are not always in the office, we just run around doing the main core which is teaching (SMT M).

The participants' assertions are confirmed by Tacinco (2016:46) who posits that SMTs throughout the world are preoccupied and overloaded with curricular and administrative duties and responsibilities. He goes further to postulate that they are burdened because too many tasks have to be borne on their shoulders. Resonating with Tacinco (2016:46) is Mpisane (2015), who confirms that in their role as outlined by the Department of Education, SMTs supervise teaching and learning, ensure that class activities are undertaken, check on marking papers, and give feedback on time. They also conduct departmental meetings and assess teacher performance. In addition, they also have their own teaching allocation, as well as extra- and co-curricular activities.

When educators are appointed to SMT positions they are expected to perform dual roles; they continue to be subject teachers while at the same time they are responsible for the management and leadership of other teachers (Jaca, 2018:51). Tondi (2015:50) also opines that work overload in schools is a factor leading to fatigue among teachers, thus reducing their efficiency and effectiveness. The quotations above suggest that the participants were unable to cope with the workload that they were faced with. This was likely to impact negatively on their productivity, especially in the area of curriculum management.

5.7.2 Infrastructural challenges

The responses indicated that they had challenges that relate to infrastructure. Some participants did not have office space of their own and had to share with colleagues. This lack of office space meant they had to seek alternative places where daily activities could be dealt with. Some participants operated from localities that were meant for other educational services, like laboratories, and they could not interact with subordinates freely.

The challenges around facilities in schools also meant that some learners matriculated without ever having seen facilities like libraries, laboratories, and computer rooms. In

attesting to this view, the participants had these comments to make:

> *The two deputy principals stay in the same office. The five HODs also stay in two separate offices with three occupying one office and two occupying another office. So, in a way we work together in addressing shortage of offices (SMT A).*

> *I have an instruction book in my office and when I issue an instruction about meetings, because my educators stay with me in the laboratory, it's easy for them to append their signature (SMT J).*

> *We don't have a computer room. We have a laboratory but it is not well equipped. We don't have a library. We only have a classroom where we put books (SMT H).*

Considering the comments by the above participants, it is evident that they were constrained when it came to infrastructure in their schools. This is resonant with Yates (2018) who opines that the infrastructure in rural South African schools is dismal. Students have died due to the neglected conditions of the buildings, and activists have sued the DBE on multiple occasions for failing to do its job. This finding is confirmed by Phakathi (2019) who asserts that the findings of the 2017 school monitoring survey published on the 08 April 2019 show that Nationally, only 59% of South African schools complied with the minimum infrastructure standards. This means that 41% of schools are substandard and a number of these are found in rural communities where the schools are characterised as low quintile.

It is crucial for schools to be provided with proper infrastructure that communicates a clear message that goes hand-in-hand with the vision of the schools. Teixeira, Amoroso and Gresham (2017) opine that there is strong evidence that high quality infrastructure facilitates better instruction, improves student outcomes, and reduces dropout rates; among other benefits. This finding is confirmed by Barett *et al.* (2019) who opine that the following factors positively contribute to pupils' progress in learning:

- Good 'natural' conditions such as lighting, air quality, temperature control, acoustics, and links to nature.

- Age-appropriate infrastructure that offers flexible learning opportunities that pupils can adapt and personalise.

- Connections between learning spaces that are easy to navigate and that provide additional learning opportunities.

- A level of ambient stimulation using colour and visual complexity.

- Schools that are designed from the inside out (classroom to school) so that each space meets the needs of its occupants.

- Designs that take into account local climatic and cultural conditions.

5.7.3   Overcrowded classrooms

The participants indicated that they had overcrowded classrooms which impacted negatively on teaching and learning activities. Their classrooms accommodated an average of 50 learners. According to Phakathi (2019), ideally, each classroom should accommodate 40 learners, and Nationally, only 67% of schools have sufficient standardised classrooms. A classroom is said to be overcrowded where the number of learners exceeds the optimum level, such that it causes a hindrance in the teaching-learning process (Akech, 2016).

Participants had complained to the education authorities for the construction of additional classrooms and but with no luck. They were provided with mobile classrooms but these were uncomfortably hot in summer. The mobile classrooms had been there for a long time and were now dilapidated. However, the participants did not sit around complaining, and just got on with executing their core mandate.

Some participants indicated that at the beginning of every year they were faced with many learners seeking admission at their schools and this was one of the factors contributing to overcrowding in their schools. The participants indicated that given the infrastructural constraints that they were faced with, in most cases they had to reject learners seeking admission due to the infrastructure constraints. In motivating this, the participants made these comments:

> *There are many learners and not enough accommodation for all of them (SMT H).*

> *We have been crying for classes. We are forced to have more learners in class and there is nothing that we can do apart from requesting from the authority that we need*

classrooms here, because if you check now in an average class you might find that we have more than 50 (SMT L).

The infrastructure is not good, especially the mobiles classes. During summer time they are very hot, and they are not in a good condition. We are waiting for the department to build some classes. We hope they will come because they were supposed to have started (SMT K).

One of the main things, as a performing school you know it's sad to say to parents that we cannot take your kid because we have limited space. The infrastructure itself is a challenge. Our wish is to have many more classes so that we can assist many more learners (SMT I).

Considering the excerpts above, it is clearly evident that the participants were constrained due to overcrowding in their schools. This finding is in agreement with the assertion by Marais (2016) who warns that overcrowded classrooms are unfortunately part of the South African education system and will remain so for the immediate future, and perhaps even for the long-term future. These overcrowded classrooms undermine the learners' right to basic education as enshrined in section 29 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Jordaan, 2018). This finding is also confirmed by Muthusamy (2015:37) who asserts the following cause and effects of overcrowding in schools:

- **Inadequate classroom space:** Insufficient space in schools is a major challenge because learners and educators cannot move freely in the classroom.

- **Health and safety issues:** Due to the classroom being crammed and desks tightly packed, it becomes extremely uncomfortable in summer and educators experience unpleasant smells due to the overcrowding.

- **Minimal learner and educator interaction:** Educators do most of the talking and stand in front of the class and teach. It becomes difficult to know the situation of every single learner.

- **Disruptive behaviour:** Some of the discipline problems that educators encounter are violence, theft, sexual behaviour, sexual harassment, disruption, and noisiness during lessons.

- **Psychological and emotional issues:** Educators are stressed due to the increased workload.

- **Teaching time:** Teaching time is affected and most of the marking and planning are usually done at home which takes away family time and this has impacted negatively on educators' personal lives.

Overcrowded classrooms create a number of adverse effects that schools must grapple with. These effects are detrimental to the aspirations of schools in working towards ensuring maximum curriculum delivery, and consequently consistently improving learner outcomes. Meador (2019) assertively opines the following disadvantages of over-subscribed or overcrowded schools:

- **There is not enough of the teacher to go around:** Learners perform better when the teacher is able to give one-on-one or small group instruction on a regular basis. As classroom sizes increase, this becomes increasingly difficult to do.

- **Overcrowding increases classroom discipline issues:** Large classes packed with learners provide more opportunities for personality conflicts, tension, and general disruptive behaviour. Even the best teachers find it difficult to manage an overcrowded classroom successfully and find themselves spending more time dealing with disciplinary issues that they do teaching. With an increase in learner numbers comes the increase of risk factors such as tension, conflicts, and disruptive behaviour. Even the best educators in the school find it difficult to successfully manage an overcrowded classroom. As a result, educators are forced to shift their focus from teaching to trying to manage their classrooms and controlling all learners (Hachem & Mayor, 2019).

- **Struggling learners fall further behind:** Average and below average learners struggle to advance in an overcrowded classroom. These learners need more direct instruction, one-on-one instructional time, and minimal distractions to maximise their learning potential.

- **Standardised test scores suffer:** The chance of successfully improving proficiency on a standardised test decreases as the number of learners in the classroom increases.

- **The overall noise level is increased:** This is an expected result when learner numbers increase in classrooms. According to Hachem and Mayor (2019), with all learners

present in the classroom, the noise level increases naturally. It also becomes harder for the educators to teach and for learners to concentrate. While the educators are fighting hard to control the noise in order to teach, much time is wasted, and many lessons will be missed.

- **Educator stress is increased, often leading to burnout:** More learners translate to more stress. Many excellent educators are opting to leave the profession because it is not worth the stress they deal with on a daily basis.

- **Overcrowding leads to less access to equipment and technology:** Space is already at a premium for many schools and there is often not enough room to accommodate specialities such as a science or computer laboratory.

5.7.4   Inadequate cooperation from educators

The participants indicated that they were faced with inadequate cooperation from some of their subordinates in various situations in their schools. Some participants were challenged when educator files were needed by either the participants or visiting curriculum advisors. This inadequate cooperation appears to be stressful and it makes it difficult for them to execute their daily activities as required.

In some instances this inadequate cooperation surfaced during tests and examination sessions. Participants were faced with educators who failed to mark learners' scripts and make mark sheets available to them. This failure posed a huge challenge to the participants as they were then not in a position to verify the marking, or moderate the scripts to determine the difficulty of the questions. The participants were in some instances faced with difficulties in checking the written work output in the learners' books. This was because some educators deliberately indicated that the learners did not bring their books to school simply because the lesson for that subject had not been given.

Some participants were extremely worried about some educators who always questioned the instructions issued to them. Some subordinates went to the extent of threatening not to carry out the instructions issued to them. This was very disturbing and the participants wished that something could be done. Some educators also left classes before the period ended. This was normally during the last period of the day when educators simply left to drive home. In

my view, those were the educators who worked for a maximum of seven hours per day.

The participants also found it disturbing that some educators in the same department did not want to assist each other, especially if an educator was absent. They also found it disturbing that some educators did not embrace the initiative of giving extra lessons. This inadequate cooperation meant that the participants were at times confronted with resistance from educators. In attesting to this finding, the following participants had these remarks to make:

> *The challenge that I have is this one of telling educators to prepare files. You know immediately you talk to these educators about a file, they are not going to agree with you. You know sometimes it may happen that a curriculum advisor can visit our school and request a file from a particular educator. When you go to the educator to collect the file, the educator would just simply say, I don't have it (SMT J).*

> *You'll find that there are those who always want to challenge you. They know what you want but they don't want to do it. Then sometimes when you go to them to establish how far they are with marking, then your name becomes how far are you? They know the policy on marking, they must submit scripts after three days but they will drag and expect you to come back and remind them (SMT F).*

> *Most of these things come during invigilation time, they come during compilation of schedules, then people would start being reluctant thus giving you a challenge simply because you are an SMT member and you are looking at the deadlines for submission. But somebody will be dragging their feet and saying, no I have been invigilating and need to relax for one break then after break I start marking. For a fact that somebody has invigilated it means that he/she is tired and therefore will be working again the following day. So some of the challenges that I do encounter are educators who do not complete work on time, waiting for people for me to come and push them (SMT C).*

> *Challenges that we usually have is where we have SMT meetings and take a resolution. After having taken the resolution, and when we meet the educators, one of the SMT would withdraw from being part of the resolution. Another thing is the submission of marks where you find that the schedules are needed and the educators are marking and when you say submit they don't submit. They normally submit on the*

last and they submit the scripts without entering the marks on the mark sheet. They expect the SMT to moderate the scripts, and enter the marks on their behalf. You find that the SMT have to remain at school even during weekends entering marks (SMT G).

When you say I want to check written work, some educators just say that learners didn't bring their books along or today I don't have a period. It becomes a challenge because people just see that sometimes you are after them, whereas you want to know where they are with the work (SMT K).

For this leadership post, people that I'm leading are of different characters. Some will always question your instructions and threaten not to adhere to them saying I just want to teach learners and it ends there (SMT J).

You may find that some educators are leaving a period some few minutes before it ends. That one is a challenge especially towards the end of the school day. So, when the bells ring, they start their cars. I normally wonder where they were in the past three minutes before the knock off time. It means they left the class earlier because we expect that if they start their cars it could not be half-past two but around twenty-five to three. So exactly half-past two they are at the gate. So, that's a challenge (SMT A).

One challenge which I've realised at the school is non-cooperation of educators. So you'll find that you are in the same department but you don't work collaboratively or cooperatively. Like this morning we had an HOD who was not there in the school. He was supposed to administer a task. So, some other teachers were reluctant to administer the task although they are doing the same subjects in the same department and the same grade. So it becomes difficult. Cooperation with the educators in some cases is very difficult. For the afternoon classes, some of them are not responding and afternoon lessons ended up becoming our own baby as the SMT of the school. So, we just rotate as SMTs in monitoring (SMT B).

The excerpts above indicate that the participants did not secure full cooperation from the educators in their departments. This finding is consistent with Drossel, Eickelmann, Ophuysen and Bos (2018) who laments inadequate cooperation in schools by indicating that

cooperation among educators is considered an important indicator of school quality. It leads to improvements in educators' professionalisation by reducing stress, while others show positive effects with regard to learners' academic performance. This finding is consistent with the study commissioned by Goksoy and Argon (2016:204) who caution that poor cooperation in schools generates negative emotions in educators and decreases performance. Negative emotions include disappointment, flatness, unwillingness, insensitivity, stress, sorrow, tension, and uneasiness.

5.7.5   Teamwork

The participants' responses revealed that they took strength in the form of teamwork in their schools. They had a positive team teaching, whereby one subject in a grade was taught by a number of educators; especially those subjects that comprised more than one paper. There were instances where educators shared classes and taught the same subject, or instances whereby educators shared papers on the subject.

This teamwork assisted schools in the sense that the absence of one staff member did not signify that there was no curriculum management because the participants worked together as a team on a regular basis. This arrangement was good because in the absence of one educator, the other educators took responsibility. Some departments had improved in terms of performance and the participants attributed it to teamwork. In substantiating the above findings, the participants had the following positive remarks to make:

> *We do have a positive team teaching where for example in grade 12 physical sciences I'm the educator of physical sciences. I'm teaching paper two and the other educator who is an HOD is teaching paper one grade 12. In grade 11 also we are doing the same. Life Science is also taught by two educators who are sharing classes, they are not sharing the papers. One educator is teaching one class and teaching all the papers, and the other educator does the same thing. Economics is well taught by two educators. So we are trying to make sure that should any teacher be absent, there is someone who can fill the gap (SMT A).*

> *Our department has improved because there is teamwork. We work together, if someone does not understand a certain topic, we come together, make a circle and*

then discuss that particular topic. We also encourage one another to share in case there something that can help the department to grow (SMT K).

In case one HOD is not present, I am able to take over because we are always doing things together and we know what to do, we know what is expected of us (SMT F).

As SMT, we are talking about teamwork. So we are a team and its role is to manage the school. When we talk about a school, we are not really talking about buildings. There are teachers, there are learners in the school, there are infrastructural resources, so, all of them are the responsibility of this team that we are referring to as SMT to make sure that all these things are managed so that they are sustainable, they can still be there even in the future. Only through teamwork, and performance in schools will be sustained (SMT C).

As the SMT, we are a team that through teamwork helps the principal in managing the school and even in developing and supporting the subject teachers in specific departments (SMT B).

The above quotes suggest that the participants were aware that their core mandate warranted working as a team. This finding is resonant with Pavlic (2020) who shares the following advantages of teamwork in every organisation, including schools as institutions of learning:

- **Working as a team facilitates idea generation and creativity:** One important benefit of teamwork is that thinking in a group influences creativity. By involving multiple people, a number of different perspectives can give birth to a combination of ideas.

- **Teamwork improves productivity and brings better business results:** Working in a team inspires people to work harder. Team members actually motivate each other to be more productive. Surrounded by others, people feel societal pressure to perform and deliver. Teamwork serves as a roadmap for understanding team members' roles in a team and their psychological characteristics, strengths, and weaknesses during a project.

- **Working in teams boosts morale and motivation:** The benefits of teamwork are a more rewarding work environment which as a result improves organisational loyalty, employee retention, and lowers turnover; all positive things for organisations including schools.

- **Teamwork encourages taking healthy risks:** One of the main prerequisites for teamwork is a shared belief held by members of a team that the team is safe for interpersonal risk-taking. Team members are not afraid to voice suggestions, work independently, and take chances – and all that is much easier than when one is alone. There is strength in teamwork and it is much easier to make risky decisions if there is a group of people who provide support them.

- **Working together leads to learning faster:** A team of people consists of people of different ages, backgrounds, skills and experience. While there are certain gaps between these differences, the richness of shared knowledge far surpasses it. This means continuous opportunities for people to learn from each other professionally and personally.

- **Team work relieves work-related stress:** Educators who work together in the long run experience reduced levels of stress because they share the workload. An educator tackling a heavy workload all by him/her can easily become overworked which could lead to burn out.

- **Teamwork improves service delivery**: A team that is in sync will be more welcoming and positive towards clients. Teams that have mastered collaboration and managed differences in handling the workplace silos, utilise customer requests better (Pavlic, 2020).

These findings are confirmed by Sanyal and Hisam (2018:21) where teamwork is found to be the most significant independent variable with the most significant impact on learner performance. According to Wikipedia (2020), a team has the following characteristics:

- Composed of members who are dependent on each other.

- Works towards interchangeable achievements and shares common attainments.

- Works together to achieve certain things.

- Located in the same setting where the members are connected to an organisation, company or community.

- Meets in person (directly face-to-face) or virtually when practicing their values and activities or duties.

- Commitment is important to their relationship.

- Communication is frequent and persistent and as well as is team meetings.

- Strong organisational structured platforms and responds quickly and efficiently to challenges as they have the skills and the capability to do so.

- Leads to greater productivity, more effective implementation of resources, better decision making and problem-solving, better quality products/service, and greater innovation and originality.

5.7.6 Sound working relations

The responses indicated that they worked and related professionally with each other in the SMT. There were sound working relations amongst themselves and also among educators in their departments because even when the performance in another department was not gratifying, the participants simply alerted each other and cooperated in terms of turning the situation around for the better.

The participants assisted each other in terms of tackling the teaching and learning challenges that they encountered in their departments. When things were not going in the right direction, the participants did not hesitate to alert each other. They made sure that every resolution taken was implemented, even if the timeframe for it had long elapsed. In motivating the above viewpoints, participants SMT L, SMT B, SMT J, SMT H and SMT K had the following responses to make:

> *The working relationship is professionally okay among us as SMT because from time to time we talk to each other. Even in our engagement you find that we do have common challenges and we are helping each other to tackle those challenges. If you find that my department is contributing to poor performance in the school in a particular subject, other colleagues alert it me (SMT L).*

We have a good relationship with other SMT members. When we agree on something we do it although it might not be done at that the time because of maybe the workload. So, at the end of the day when we agree on something, we do it (SMT B).

As the SMT we are working well with other SMT members. We always meet to discuss teaching and learning issues. I didn't see any problems with other SMT members (SMT J)

We are professional people and our behaviour is at all times professional. From the management, SMT and educators, we are having very good and sound working relations (SMT H).

What I can say is that the working relations with other SMT members is good. When I am having a problem I go to other SMT members for help. Our working relations are very good in fact. We help each other in improving our results (SMT K).

The above quotations are resonant with Bethune (2019) who opines that the success of every school is based solely on the quality of its working relations. Without good relations in schools, inadequate teaching and learning would be the culture. He goes on to point out the following as ingredients for building sound, and ultimately successful, relations in schools:

- **Keep it largely positive:** Even when someone has difficulties, they must make sure that their tone is always positive.

- **Be assertive:** Assertiveness is not all about aggressiveness; it is about communicating clearly and explaining what one is happy doing or not doing. When relations in schools are clear and direct, teaching and learning become extremely effective.

- **Find common ground:** It really does not matter what you have in common, but find that common ground and build from there.

- **Show some compassion:** Only when we try and put ourselves in another's shoes and then offer some support, can we truly understand one another and move the relations forward (Bethune, 2019).

This finding is also confirmed by Smith (2015:43) who postulates that sound and collegial relationships between educators are very important within the school environment. They allow for educators to develop and grow more effectively and offer outstanding support programmes. They are essential to ensuring that the school operates smoothly and within a positive atmosphere. Sound relationships between educators benefit both learners and educators.

5.7.7   Inadequacy of technological resources

The participants pointed out a scarcity in terms of technological resources in their schools and this has the potential of impacting negatively on teaching and learning, especially in this era of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR). The 4IR builds on the digital revolution that has been taking place since the middle of the previous century, and it is characterised by a fusion of technologies that blur the lines between the physical, digital, and biological spheres (Schwab, 2016). Schwab (2016) advises that the technological revolution fundamentally alters the way people live, work, and relate to one another.

This technological revolution has an impact on the way in which SMTs should execute their core mandate. The participants' responses indicated that they did not have enough overhead projectors and believed that the availability of these resources would improve their teaching and ultimately learner outcomes. These devices have entered the classroom and altered the face of teaching and learning (Alhumaid, 2019:10).

The responses indicated that the participants did not have smartphones other than their personal ones. Over and above, for cell phones to operate in terms of teaching and learning affairs, they need data. Unfortunately the data that they used to download the teaching and learning activities was bought from their own pockets as the schools did not buy it for them citing financial constraints. However, the participants stated that should they be provided with these technological resources, especially WiFi, data for WhatsApp and smartphones, they would be in a better position to go on with teaching and learning, whether learners were in school or at home.

The responses revealed that some participants had been promised these gadgets for some time, but they were still waiting impatiently. Some participants did have WiFi in their

schools but they were unable to access it as it was mainly provided in the office of the administration where they struggled to access the signal due to the distance between the administrative office and their working areas. Thus it was difficult to download previous and current question papers, as well as to be in constant touch with the curriculum advisory. In attesting to this finding, the participants had the following comments to make:

We have only one projector for the whole school. If we can have enough projectors so that we could use them in classes for teaching, I think the results will improve. We have not been given Wi-Fi or smartphones. We use our own smartphones and buy data out of our own pockets. We are sacrificing because the school has limited funds. We have to download from WhatsApp and then print (SMT J).

Recently when we were on lockdown I had to depend on my kids to do online teaching through WhatsApp. I didn't know how to manage that, but I later got it right and I realised that this thing is very helpful. So if we could have WiFi we will be having something very good and we would be able to perform much better than we are doing. WiFi is indeed essential(SMT L).

We do have some gadgets such as laptops but they are not for all educators. They are for the departments, two per department. But then we also have only one projector as a way of supporting some, but not all educators (SMT A).

We have six laptops for the HODs, the principal is having one and I'm having one which the whole school is using. I think this can be based on the issue of insufficient money that we get from the department. But anyhow, we try to do our best, our intention is for each educator to have his or her own laptop. We also have one overhead projector which we share as the whole school where learners are able to view some of the lessons. We are also struggling with data because for now, educators still have to buy data for themselves but where they encounter challenges they'll normally come to the office for assistance (SMT I).

In our department we have a laptop and WiFi is still a problem. We were promised that they will come and erect something and is long that we have been waiting. WiFi for school doesn't reach all of us. When we want it we must go to the administrative officer and request to use it. We want the WiFi to be expanded. We don't have the

overhead projector, and the smartphones that we have are our own. I receive the memoranda on my smartphone, I speak with my curriculum advisor using my smartphone, I also speak with teachers from various schools with my smartphone (SMT K).

The remarks of the participants above resonate with Simsek and Arat (2015:2465) who find that education without technology affects success negatively. It is accepted that education without technological devices is not going to be effective and permanent. They go on to point out that although a computer is the most popular device for education, teachers and SMTs should be encouraged to learn and use technological devices in their teaching and learning activities.

This finding is consistent with Jantjies (2019) who points out that schools need technical infrastructure to support both online and offline access to digital resources. Data costs are another major concern for schools. Software-related applications and learning content need to be available offline so that learners can keep working beyond the school premises. Pena (2019) also indicates that technology in education has brought both new methods and new technology that facilitate education in a modern way. New scientific methods include using e-learning software or showing videos to the students helps them understand the topics because of the use of animation and interactive content. This makes the students concentrate on the subject because of the engaging and attractive videos or slides.

This finding is confirmed by Stocic (2015:112) who maintains that with the application of technology in teaching in schools, students can independently progress in mastering teaching and learning material, choose the pace of work, repeat the material that is not sufficiently clear, and test immediately to obtain the results and track their progress. Interactive multimedia content is the great advantage of modern learning over traditional learning. With the application of technology in education, feedback between the teacher and the students is on-going.

5.7.8   Professional development

The participants indicated that they needed to be professionally developed in the area of management. They pointed to the fact they put this task is solely on the shoulders of their

department. They needed to be knowledgeable in the area of management and therefore needed to attend professional development courses because, according to them, such courses were previously offered but had been withdrawn.

They were of the opinion that the department should support them in terms of awarding them bursaries so they could register with universities to empower themselves and become lifelong learners. They wanted to be skilful in the area of curriculum management, especially given the history of the changing South African curriculum landscape. Some of them were very precise, loud and clear, and said it was important that they were professionally developed in the area of conflict management. This creates an understanding that they were at times confronted by conflict situations and needed to know how to deal with them so that they did not impact negatively on teaching and learning. In attesting to this finding, the participants had these comments to articulate:

> *One will never be satisfied with who he is because we learn every day. When I started working there was a refresher course which was held from time to time for the HODs, principals themselves, and deputy principals. So, I think that kind of course will be proper just to keep us well developed in our management work. The department can assist in awarding bursaries for educators and even the SMTs just to make sure that they are quite aware of the current changes and to be lifelong learners. If you are a lifelong learner you are able to produce lifelong students (SMT I).*

> *We need to know how to manage conflict. We need to be developed in the area of conflict management because in schools we have many disagreements, especially between two teachers. The District and the Provincial office must empower us in conflict management. It is very important (SMT B).*

> *Since we are still in this profession it would mean that we should not rest on our laurels. We must keep on looking to become better educators. So, we need to be developed in line with our work. I remember when I was going to enrol for my BEd Honours. It was a long time since my last HED that I've never been learning. In one meeting our principal highlighted that learning should be an on-going thing and so, I understood that the implication was that he knows that some of us are resting on our laurels. That was the time that I went back to class to empower myself. The*

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department is more than welcome to finance us in terms of studying further (SMT L).

To become the best SMT member I need support from all stakeholders. The department must support me and other SMT members to become knowledgeable in management issues (SMT G).

The narratives above resonate with Jaca (2018:2) who posits that when educators are appointed to SMT positions, their responsibilities change because management and leadership responsibilities are added to their teaching duties. It is only through professional development and practical experience, together with the application of appropriate skills, informed knowledge, values and attitudes, that successful management in schools will emerge (Naidu 2019:12).

This finding is confirmed by Burstow (2018:7) who mentions that education is viewed as central to economic success and this produces a corresponding concern for the effective preparation, utilisation, and development of the country's teaching force. Glynne (2015:7) asserts that although professional development is delivered to educators, the real beneficiaries are the learners. The more they could be professionally developed, the more they would become knowledgeable in the area of curriculum management. Better knowledge in the area of curriculum management leads to better curriculum management which is necessary for improved learner outcomes.

What the participants alluded to was the idea of improving their qualifications. Examining Table 5.2, one can see that a number of them boasted junior degrees and none of them had a Masters' degree. In our deliberations, none of them indicated that they were furthering their studies with a tertiary institution. Currently, the skill development section of the LPDE awards bursaries to educators to further their studies in some identified field. The finding from this investigation suggests that the participants were not knowledgeable in this regard and therefore need to be taken aboard by the authorities.

What I also expected the participants to allude to, which is also necessary, is the issue of their professional development as SMT members; especially in terms of curriculum management empowerment. The literature study established that all educators, including SMT members, have the right to be professionally developed so that they are better equipped in their area of operation. I expected the participants to indicate that they had the right to be professionally

developed, as encapsulated in ISPFTED, which is the only legal framework supportive of the professional development of educators in schools.

5.7.9   Support by departmental officials

The participants' responses indicated that they normally received support from a number of District and Circuit officials of the DBE and that they appreciated this. If a new curriculum was introduced, the curriculum advisory ensured that educators were empowered by taking them on board in workshops. However, some participants were worried because, according to them, these visits focused only on grade 10 to 12 curriculum issues. Therefore I can conclude that the support by curriculum advisors is inadequate given the fact that it does not cut across all the entire secondary school grades. Beside curriculum advisors, the participants received support from the Circuit Manager and the District Director which they appreciated.

Some participants were worried because some visiting top management education officials only stayed in the principal's office and did not speak to them. The participants needed support from all officials charged with this responsibility. This is a plea to the education fraternity that they should also visit the SMT. In emphasising this finding, the participants made these remarks:

> *Curriculum advisors normally come and visit the subject teachers. They also call meetings to outline new curriculum-related issues. When teachers in my department are having curriculum-related problems, the curriculum advisors should avail themselves and assist (SMT I).*

> *Curriculum advisors normally visit us for support concerning our subject matters. In the beginning when the CAPS was introduced, we were taken to places for about three days where they would explain how to approach activities. Even when there is something new concerning our subjects like mark sheets, they used to call us to Circuit meetings or workshops and explain everything they need us to do (SMT K).*

> *We are visited by the Circuit Manager, the curriculum advisors but they are mostly for grades 10 to 12. On the side of management usually is the Circuit manager. The District Director also visited us for support. She came during the enrichment classes for support (SMT B).*

> *The support we get is mostly from the curriculum advisors. Those are the ones that come and support us as subject educators and as HODs. Otherwise other top management officials come and meet the principal and the deputy principal (SMT D).*

The articulations above are resonant with Chuta (2020) who posits that most schools' academic performance is closely linked to the level of support of different DBE offices under which they fall. Thus schools produce better results if given support by well-functioning DBE officials. The DBE (2005:9) maintains that support for SMTs from the education officials should be the following:

5.7.9.1   Classroom-based support

Classroom-based support includes:

- Direct learning support to learners.

- Training and on-going support of educators to respond to learner needs.

- Curriculum development to ensure that all aspects of the curriculum are responsive to different learners.

- Provision of teaching and learning materials and equipment to facilitate learning.

5.7.9.2   Organisational support

Organisational support includes:

- Staff development for educators.

- Training and support for parents so that they are able to participate in governance structures and support their children.

- Training and on-going support for governance, management, and leadership structures.

- Organisational development support for schools, e.g. assisting them in vision building, policy formulation and implementation, and providing conflict resolution skills for various members of the school community.

5.7.9.3   Administrative support

Administrative support includes:

- Training in and support for financial management, in particular in relation to taking over financial responsibilities as outlined in the South African Schools Act.

- Information technology support.

- Administrative training.

- Personnel management and training.

This finding is confirmed by Nkambule and Amsterdam (2018:1) who posit that systemic changes bring with them a myriad of challenges which educators cannot face without support. In terms of the support visits, departmental officials evaluate the actual implementation of attainment targets and examine whether other legislative obligations, such as applying a timetable based on the core curriculum, are respected. The visit gears towards supporting the operation of the whole school (Standeart, 2015:55). Support for SMTs by departmental officials could be in different forms, such as the following:

5.7.9.4   School visits

One of the most important mechanisms to support schools is school visits. In terms of school visits, the DBE officials from Circuits, Districts, Provincial and National offices pay visits to schools. These offices are a critical component of the country's National education system as they serve as support hubs of the DBE to provide quality support to schools across the country (Chuta, 2020). This kind of support needs to be relevant, such as support given to SMTs in order for them to accurately implement the curricular provisions (Elena, 2015:518).

School visits could be announced or unannounced. Announced visits to schools take place when an education official informs the school well in advance of the intended visit. In other words, the education official makes his/her intended visit known to the school authorities. The terms of reference for the visits are normally communicated well in advance to SMTs in order that they can prepare themselves thoroughly, as well as to devise means of academic

activities to be monitored upon the arrival of the visitors. Announced visits are good because they place a school in a better position to rearrange the daily curriculum delivery to accommodate the visits. With announced school visits, members of the staff and the SMT are informed so they are not surprised to see unfamiliar faces.

The Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary (2010:1615) explains unannounced as happening without anyone being told or warned in advance. Merriam-Webster (2020) defines unannounced as occurring without any prior announcement or warning. Given these dictionary explanations, unannounced school visits take place when an education official does not inform the school authorities of his/her intended visit but just arrives at the school without anybody's knowledge. In my opinion, unannounced visits are normally greeted with an impromptu welcome by the school authorities, although the engagements and deliberations tend to be unpalatable, and in most instances unprofessional, given the manner in which the visit was made. Unannounced visits are a great inconvenience to schools as they might not be in a position to accommodate the official because of competing programmes.

Most schools' academic performance is closely linked to the level of support received from the various DBE offices. According to Van der Voort and Wood (2016:1), visits to schools and interaction with school managers on school development issues by District/Circuit officials are not happening in many areas. This is particularly true of rural and historically disadvantaged areas (DBE, 2005:8).

5.7.9.5   Meetings

Another avenue that DBE officials could use to support schools is by way of convening meetings for SMTs. Meetings between teachers and departmental officials are an important way of enriching their experiences, enhancing their abilities, and developing their performance (Abu-Shreah & Al-Sharif, 2017:13). Meetings enhance communication and are a venue for voicing opinions, discussing the latest policies and procedures, increasing the effectiveness of decision making, addressing problems and concerns, and setting goals.

Well planned and facilitated meetings sustain the participants' energy and allow them to contribute their best thinking to the planning endeavours (Godara, 2017:2). In most cases, deliberations in meetings result in improved performance in a number of school success

indicators such as learner pass rates (Mafa, 2016: 61). The meetings could be in the form of a cluster whereby a number of SMTs in a Circuit are brought together by the education officials, or the meetings could be in the form of a Circuit meeting whereby all SMTs gather in a specific location. As opposed to Circuit meetings that draw a large number of SMT members, cluster meetings would work better for SMTs as a manageable number would be in attendance.

5.7.9.6 Workshops

Departmental officials could support the SMTs by way of empowerment or training workshops, especially within the context of the ever changing nature of curriculum in the RSA. Every curriculum change comes with its 'do's and don'ts', and therefore SMTs must be knowledgeable about them. Since educators are the first decision makers in classrooms, the absence of training in important curriculum issues means they face the challenge of having poor subject content knowledge and poor professional and pedagogical skills to teach a given subject, deliver the lesson, assess learning, and provide the learner with the appropriate knowledge and learning experience (Boudersa, 2016:10).

Workshops are designed to bring in top talent in a given field to provide a hands-on learning experience. The interaction of participants makes workshops dynamic and less tedious, and they offer an excellent opportunity for networking with like-minded participants (Ferreira, 2018).

This study took place during the era of the Corona Virus that bedevilled this country and the whole world in 2020/21. The closure of schools due to the virus coerced the DBE not to collapse the academic year but instead to trim the 2020 curriculum. This curriculum trimming and curriculum re-organising was applied in the case of Grade R to Grade 11 and Year 4. This ensured that the curriculum was reduced such that the core concepts and content areas could be covered in the period remaining (DBE, 2020:15).

In order to keep schools abreast of these changes, the District offices held workshops in order to empower SMTs and educators in terms of how to approach the trimmed curriculum. These workshops in turn complemented the training provided by the DBE and enabled SMTs to implement departmental policies more effectively (Witten, 2018). SMTs are not only

expected to attend and absorb much knowledge from these workshops, but also to use the knowledge they had absorbed in their schools and classes (Fernandes, 2017). In a normal situation, curriculum workshops are held at the beginning of the year for the purposes of setting the tone and pace of the academic year. In these workshops, SMTs are empowered with regard to what is expected in terms of effective curriculum delivery and the overall curriculum management in schools.

In these workshops Annual Teaching Plans, assessment programmes, assessment guidelines, examinations guidelines, and related documents are distributed to schools in these workshops. After having attended these sessions, SMTs return to their schools to report as to how the curriculum delivery should unfold. In analysing administrative documents, I established from the SMT minute book that after workshops had been held, a report was normally presented by the attendee to a formal sitting of the SMT. This was done for the purposes of ensuring that staff members in schools were held accountable for the curriculum delivery tasks that had been given to them. The attendance of workshops costs are financed from the school coffers, and particularly from the curriculum budget, and reporting back is also for the purposes of ensuring that every cent used is accounted for.

5.8   THEME 03: THE PERSPECTIVES OF SMTS REGARDING THEIR ROLE IN TERMS OF MANAGING LOW QUINTILE SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Research question 3: What are the perspectives of the SMTs regarding their role in managing low quintile secondary schools?

In this theme I wanted to establish the perspectives of the participants regarding their role in managing low quintile secondary schools in order that they perform better than schools in the high quintile. The following sub-themes were developed from the responses of the participants: SMT members are managers in their own right, the principal remains the Chief Accounting Officer, SMT members are aspirant heads of schools, promotion of internal stakeholder relations is an SMT role, knowledge of curriculum management policies is vital, and educator recruitment rests in the SMT purview.

5.8.1   SMT members are managers in their own right.

The responses of the participants indicated that SMT members are managers and therefore played a leading role in terms of the management in schools. They perceived themselves as entrusted with the professional management of their schools and therefore had a duty to plan, organise, lead and control. They viewed themselves as having a duty to provide motivation to the educators in their departments so that their organisational objectives could be achieved.

Some participants viewed the SMT as the 'engine' of the school. They regarded themselves as an important structure responsible for ensuring that the school ran smoothly and attained its aims. Given the nature of their schools, some participants perceived themselves as managers of resources like infrastructure and finance. Some participants viewed the SMT as the principals of the schools because in the absence of a principal, an SMT member was in charge of the school. In support of this finding, the participants had these responses to articulate:

> *Eh, SMT is a selected team of teachers that is entrusted with the professional management of the school. These teachers are basically responsible for the proper management of the school and they are responsible for planning, leading, organising and controlling issues. They guide and motivate their subordinates towards the achievement of the objectives of their schools (SMT L).*

> *SMT is about the managers of the school which goes a long way not only managing, also those people responsible for supporting subordinates or educators in the curriculum section and also to ensure that the school is properly managed in terms of general management, administration, together with the curriculum support and so forth. This is basically all about SMT managing the daily activities of the school (SMT A).*

> *School Management Team is the engine the engine of the school. It focuses on the running of the school, the daily running of the school. And also deals with the curriculum management, curriculum planning, implementation, assessment, moderation, accountability and reporting. It also manages the resources of the school, maintains infrastructure, manages the finances, and also relates with other stakeholders (SMT G).*

By SMT we refer to principals of schools because each member of the SMT is capable to become a principal it being for one day or for a week. These are educators who are spearheading management in schools. The school is like a horse and trailer where you put the horse in front of the trailer so, it is letting the trailer to move. So without the SMT, any institution cannot stand on its own. The SMT needs to be proactive because they are the custodians of effective teaching and learning (SMT I).

The quotes above are in agreement with Kapur (2018) who asserts that in order to manage any task, function, or activity within the organisation, it is essential for the SMT to understand the managerial functions of planning, organising, directing, staffing, coordinating, and controlling. They have an obligation to ensure that these management functions are effectively and efficiently carried out in their different departments or phases. This finding is confirmed by the literature study in Chapter 2 by Ntsoane (2017:12), who mentions that schools are managed by teams of experts who through planning, organising, leading and controlling, ensure that quality teaching and learning takes place. SMT members are managers in their own right, and this means they have the powers to do what every organisational management is supposed to do. However, their management operations are confined within the borders of their department.

What I expected the participants would indicate and they did not allude to, was the legislation that governed their operation in order that they could execute their duties without any fear in schools. In terms of legislation they have the power to execute their roles but must act within the parameters of the legal prescripts. I expected them to mention the PAM and the SASA, which are the two pieces of legislation that guarantee them the power to remain vigilant in terms of their operation as they have been legally constituted.

The literature review in Chapter 2 revealed that SASA (1996) section 16 (3) bestows the professional management of the school in the hands of the principal, and PAM, which prescribes the provision of professional leadership and management of the school, as residing in the domain of the principal. The PAM also highlights the duties of the members of the SMT and therefore gives the members their legality in terms of exercising their duties. Therefore I expected the participants, given the legal prescripts that govern their operations, to unhesitantly indicate that they are a legislated structure and have a legal mandate to carry out their duties. Unfortunately, the respondents just dwelt on their duties and what they

understood by the SMT structure.

5.8.2   The principal remains the Chief Accounting Officer

The participants' responses indicated that they held the principal in high esteem as everything that they did had to be communicated to the office of the principal. If they encountered problems in their department they made sure that those problems were solved and thereafter they communicated the solution to the principal. The participants communicated all their curriculum management plans to the office of the principal so that the principal was in a position to know what was happening in the individual departments.

They also reported to the principal's office on improvement plans they were effecting after the analysis of every performance. Some participants viewed themselves as people who helped the principal to do his/her work and also communicated school matters on his/her behalf to the educator staff. The participants perceived the principal as the person who provided them with a basket of support on a regular basis. For educators who were not doing their work properly, they referred them to the principal to address their predicament. In motivating this assertion, the participants had these comments to articulate:

> *We must identify the challenges in the departments. And secondly, SMTs should enrich educators for a collective approach towards solving the challenges in the department. Then they should report that to the principal on what to do in order to improve their departments and the operations in the departments (SMT A).*

> *The SMT are the people at the core centre of curriculum delivery in schools. Part of their responsibility is to help the principal with his/her work. The SMT members are curriculum specialists. Curriculum delivery lies in their respective departments…… They are able to do their own work with their educators, and the principal becomes the overall manager of the school…. The deputy principal is accountable to the principal. The HODs are accountable to the deputy principal (SMT H).*

> *As the SMT, at this school we are very privileged because we have support from our principal and this gives us hope that there is quite a positive climate for teaching and learning. We are not struggling when coming to that as we are all supported by the principal. The principal helps us a lot on the issue of absenteeism as he makes sure*

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that our learners are always present in the school (SMT M).

The School Management Team helps the principal in managing the school, developing and supporting the teachers in specific departments. So, as I'm the deputy principal, I am supervising the two departments; that is the department of Social Sciences and also the department of languages. So, I'm supervising two HODs and I'm also responsible for the timetable. I'm also deputising in helping the principal while he is not there, and even when he is here. I'm helping him in managing the school (SMT B).

As an SMT member, apart from managing the curriculum, I also liaise or communicate with the educator staff on behalf of the principal. If the principal is unable to communicate I have to pass information to the staff members (SMT C).

I don't remember having a problem with an educator to an extent where I referred the educator or took the matter to the deputy principal or the principal. In most cases we resolve our issues. We never normally go to the deputy principal or the principal when issues are beyond us (SMT D).

What has been alluded to in the above quotes is congruent with the assertion by Mestry (2004:127) who opines that the principal is the Chief Accounting Officer (CAO) of the school and that he/she is accountable to the DoE. This finding is also in line with Wagithunu, Muthee and Thinguri (2014:103) as they assert that principals are CAOs who execute all school development plans and implement and control the school budget.

The principal is the employer representative in schools and therefore represents the Superintendent General for Education in each and every province. This creates an understanding that the principal's office is the point of every entry and exit in every school. There is nothing that can take place in a school without the knowledge of the principal, hence the participants in this this study ensured that the principal was knowledgeable about activities as they unfolded in their different departments. According to Mestry (2006:31), the principal is the CAO in schools and he/she should be solely responsible for the affairs of the school. As CAOs, their role is to ensure sound financial management in schools, sound curriculum management, and sound human resources management.

Within the context of this investigation, their role is to ensure that there are mechanisms in place that enable curriculum delivery to unfold without major disturbances, and in such a manner that it improves learner outcomes. It is the responsibility of the principal as the CAO of every school to account to the Provincial education authorities when the curriculum delivery is not yielding desirable results in the form of improved learner outcomes.

5.8.3   SMT members are aspirant heads of schools

The responses of the participants indicated that they had aspirations towards becoming principals in future. Some of them indicated that they had already tasted this role during their teaching careers and this had motivated them to want to become principals. The participants believed they had the capability to lead and manage, even though they were still learning. This suggests that the participants were working effectively in their institutions and believed that the time had come for them to occupy higher posts.

They found their working relations enjoyable and motivating, and had not encountered problems to put them off being promoted. In aspiring to become principals, these participants needed to take cognisance of their age, as the majority of them were already their 50s. This means that there is every possibility that none of them would end up being promoted, given the departmental modus operandi in terms of filing vacant promotional posts, especially principal posts. In motivating this finding, the following participants had these remarks to express:

> *Eh, I just hope that one day I'll be the principal of a school as I've tasted it once. I think I have the capability to lead and manage others. So I'm still learning from other principals how they do it, but I just hope one day before I retire I should be the principal of a school (SMT B).*

> *As a person you need to grow. You need to move from one level to another. A baby can't crawl forever. At some stage the baby need to walk around. I was once in level one, now I'm in level two and therefore I must go to level three and if possible be the Circuit Manager (SMT F).*

> *Eh in future, I want to see myself growing within the same, path graduating from being just an HOD to having a school and my own SMT that I'll have to manage.*

This is my aspiration (SMT L).

I aspire to become one of the best, eh, to do something that I love which is teaching, or to have an influence in teaching. I'll go through the deputy principal and if things go well, I'm looking forward for one day to be the principal (SMT I).

The extracts above are congruent with Wong and Wong (2005) who mention that teacher promotion is an important issue in schools. In the education system, pay levels and structures are relatively fixed and it is difficult for principals to use the compensation system as a tool to motivate teachers. Promotion is therefore the most important reward and satisfaction factor for teachers. This finding resonates with White (2018) who asserts that in order to retain good educators, schools, Districts and Provinces should provide advancement opportunities for educators. Educators can also take steps on their own to open doors to advancement in their careers. Some educators who exhibit good leadership qualities and a strong command of their subjects may become heads of their departments and principals.

Archibong, Effiom, Omoike and Edet (2010:25) also opine that promotion from a lower rank to a higher is an indication that the educator has shown evidence of effective performance in all the criteria for promotion as stipulated in the policy. They go on to opine that regardless of the procedure for promotion, the incentives and reward system operating in institutions have often been associated with motivation and performance on the job.

Currently the criteria for one to gain promotion in the education fraternity, in indicated in Chapter 2 of the literature study, are in terms of ELRC Resolution 1 of 2008. The resolution requires educators to be applicants for particular advertised posts and their applications should be forwarded to the District offices where the post has been advertised. The District offices then sift the applications and forward them to Circuit offices for further processing in terms of ELRC Resolution 1 of 2008.

What has emerged from this investigation is that all participants were eligible for promotion as they were all in possession of a Matric plus a three year (M+3) teacher qualification. The participants also boasted teaching experience in excess of six years which is a precondition for consideration for the appointment as a school principal.

5.8.3.1   Promotion of stakeholder relations is an SMT role

Generally the participants indicated that the involvement of different stakeholders in their school was very good and they welcomed them as partners. The participants indicated that amongst the stakeholders in their schools was the municipality. They had secured the involvement of the municipality in their educational affairs as the ward councillor visited their school frequently. The municipality had even donated some trees to the schools.

The responses of the participants further indicated that they perceived the involvement of parents in the educational affairs of their children as being of paramount importance. When issuing grade 11 results, they handed over the report cards to parents in a formal meeting at their schools. In this meeting the participants took parents through the 'do's and don'ts' for the next academic year. These parents meeting were convened every term whereby term performance was presented.

Learner absence was communicated by the parent who had to visit the principal's office to report the reasons. However, some participants were worried about the involvement of parents because when they expected parents to be physically present in schools, the children came along with guardians who were not related to the children. However, they had good relations with the traditional leadership of the area, and the headman was also involved in the educational affairs of the schools. In support of these findings the following participants had these articulations to make:

> *When issuing grade 11 results, we also inform parents of the progressed learners, what to expect, and to also inform them that it is within their rights to decide if their child should go to the next level or remain in the same grade (SMT H).*

> *We do meet parents sometimes where we discuss issues regarding their kids' performance, each and every term, and on how to assist them. We are also communicating with the headman who normally comes here every year, especially after the results have been released. When we have functions as a school, the headman attends as a way of supporting us as a school. If there are other issues around the community, we are also involved. On the part of the municipality the councillor is always around. We are working very well and we are also having a*

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good relationship with stakeholders……. With the grade 12s there is a norm at this school that when they are sick, or if they are absent, the parent should come and alert the office. So, on that one, we are able to curb learner absenteeism and parents are not giving us any problems (SMT M).

We had a competition on disaster management looking basically at our school environment on lack of running water or taps that are leaking and we managed to win R30 000. The municipality called us and they gave us trees for our school to grow as a way of encouraging us to keep the environment safe and clean (SMT K).

If you look at the stakeholders, especially the parent side, most of the parents are not staying with their children. We struggle to get parents if we really need to talk to the biological parents of our learners. If a learner has challenges that emanate from home you might find that you are talking to a person who is not staying with the learner as a guardian, but the person who has assumed the guardian role for that day only. Some parents do support us as a school. We usually differ here and there but we end up resolving whatever differences we might be having and come to an agreement (SMT L).

With regard to my educators, my seniors, the SGB, and the community, we work together. Even when some parents have problems with their children they do phone me and I talk to the learners at schools. I have taught most of these parents and that is why they are free to phone me if they have problems with these learners so that I talk to them (SMT D).

The narratives above are congruent with Mashau, Kone and Mutshaeni (2014:559) who caution that the DBE encourages different stakeholders to participate in education. The South African Schools Act of 1996 stipulates the roles and functions of parents, through School Governing Bodies, in the education of their children, as one of the most important stakeholders. However, it is not only parents who should get involved in education. All people who are interested in education should be involved. The extracts are further confirmed by Gichohi (2015:13) who posits that the results of academic performance depend on stakeholder involvement in schools and the ability of the leaders to influence the stakeholders.

High performance in schools may also depend on their ability to utilise both the human and material resources available. Saxena (2014) opines that stakeholder involvement is considered vital to the success and improvement of a school. The involvement of the broader community of the school can improve communication and public understanding, and allows for the incorporation of the perspectives, experiences, and expertise of participating community members to improve reform proposals, strategies, or processes.

The ruling party, the African National Congress (ANC), has asserted that education in the RSA has to be a societal matter. Put differently, this assertion indicates that educational issues in communities should be the baby of every single member of the society. This should include learners as the main and important stakeholders in the education fraternity, educators, departmental officials, government departments and their officials, the private sector, and other interest groups that normally have the potential to lend a helping hand in educational issues.

Stakeholders in education are not limited to parents or parental involvement in schools. However, parental involvement is still of the utmost importance for improvement of learning outcomes in schools and therefore can never be underestimated. The participants had communicated a clear message to the education stakeholder community that the doors of involvement were wide open in schools so that they can enter and start involving themselves in the educational affairs of schools. The extracts further allude to the fact that the participants could not provide educational opportunities to the learners on their own, but rather through a concerted collaboration with all stakeholders.

5.8.3.2   Knowledge of curriculum management policies is vital

Considering the responses given by the participants, it was evident that they were not knowledgeable about the policies that guide curriculum management practices in schools. The participants knew about a number of policies that served as guiding tools for the management of schools in general, but were not specific about the policies on which the curriculum delivery, curriculum implementation, and curriculum management were based. Some participants thought that SASA was the top most policy that provides guidance to schools on curriculum management issues, whereas it only has a bearing on the professional management and governance of schools.

Some perceived their school-developed policies as the most relevant in terms of curriculum management, whilst participants viewed the ELRC as the rightful policy. Some were knowledgeable about the Bill of Rights, Employment of Educators Act (EEA), Employment Equity Act (EEA), South African Council of Educators (SACE), and the Labour Relations Act (LRA). In support of this finding, when the question 'Which education policies guide you in managing curriculum?', the following responses were made:

> *Eh, we have got the NCS, and the other one is the CAPS document and the SASA, we normally have this as combined. Without them there will be no learning and teaching because they are the guidelines (SMT I).*

> *When it comes to policies I think SASA is the most relevant as it indicates what is expected of us. I have realised that besides SASA, as a department, we need to have a departmental policy. Apart from the departmental policy we need to have the subject. Whatever we agree upon in these policies must be taken as a guideline in curriculum management (SMT C).*

> *Policies that guide us in curriculum management are the SASA, the ELRC, and also the policy document in our languages. These documents guide us in terms of what must be done in both content subjects (SMT K).*

> *We have these education policies like EEA, SASA which is South African Schools Act, SACE, NEPA and also CAPS (SMT G).*

> *We use the South African Schools Act, and we also draw the departmental policies where we agree when to bring the work output and also agree on when to bring the preparations as a department so it helped us a lot when we do that (SMT D).*

> *First of all, it is about the Constitution of the country especially the Bill of Rights, SASA, Employment Equity Act, Employment of Educators Act, SACE and Labour Relations Act (SMT F).*

The above finding is resonant with Sarbu, Dimitresu and Lacroix (2015:205) who caution that not knowing the professional legislation can generate errors in the exercise of duties, or even foster corruption. The finding is confirmed by Pillay (2014) who also cautions that

insufficient knowledge of education legislation is impacting negatively on the culture of teaching and learning in our school system which results in the school system being unsuccessful and not fulfilling its obligations. She goes further to opine that this may result in the DBE being held accountable for not empowering teachers to develop our young citizens to fulfil their place in our democracy.

In relation to the question that was asked, the quotes above indicate that there is gap in terms of knowledge of applicable legislation pertaining to curriculum delivery in schools. This lack of knowledge of which education policies have a bearing on curriculum management creates uncertainty in terms of the curriculum implementation processes in schools.

5.8.3.3   Educator recruitment rests in the SMT purview

The responses of the participants indicated that part of their role is to recruit educators each time they had a vacancy in schools. Some participants had served in interviewing panels as chairpersons. Some made sure that for every vacancy, a newly recruited educator was appointed. As members of the interviewing panels, some participants made sure that some of the questions asked were about activities that the newly appointed educator was going to face in class. In motivating this finding, participants had these assertions to make:

> *Since I came here in 2015, I've been chairing the interview committees for filling of the posts that were advertised. I've been the chairperson of the panel for shortlisting. Whoever has been appointed since I came here, I was responsible for that. I have been responsible for recruitment of educators but now since I've been acting as the principal, the task resides with the deputy principal. I am happy that our employed fundza lushaka educators are not like those we hear about. We sometimes hear that they do not go to class and they do not do their jobs diligently. We have managed to get good educators (SMT A).*

> *The department takes a long time to employ educators and every post that is vacant; we make sure that it's going to add extra value to the school. Upon the deliberation in various departments, we come together as the SMT to see which department is in dire shortage and how we can assist (SMT I).*

> *Best teachers have to be obtained for effective curriculum delivery in schools.*

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However, we happen to find that on paper someone is a good teacher, but when it comes to delivery in the classroom, it is not what is appearing on the paper. Normally when we do have a vacancy and have to conduct interviews, we include questions that could be class-related and that is where our focus lies. We do not just have an interview where teachers would be interviewed without being engaged in answering questions relating to the subject. In interviews we ensure that teachers answer questions on activities that they are going to face in class. In many interviews we include a question where a teacher has to demonstrate to the panel how a certain topic can be approached (SMT L).

The above sentiments are consistent with the assertion by Powerschool (2020) that recruiting educators during a nationwide shortage is not easy and meeting the demands for educators becomes more difficult each year. Schools and District can not wait for educators to apply. Therefore, providing learners with highly effective educators calls for a combination of proven recruitment strategies. To hire the best educators in schools, SMTs should focus on two key processes in the recruitment process and the selection process. The objective of the recruitment process is to attract an adequate number of quality applicants, and the objective of the selection process is to choose the best person for the particular post from a pool of applicants and offer employment.

The quality of educators is a major factor in driving educational improvement. When appropriated educators are attracted and recruited, schools are able to build progressively and provide the best possible teaching and learning opportunities (Owen, 2018). This finding is confirmed by NEEDU (2015:13) which posits that the educator recruitment process is very delicate because it requires the collection of reliable data in order to establish a diagnosis. It is therefore a comprehensive and demanding exercise that needs to be carried out annually in schools.

The above quotes suggest that SMT members did not fold arms when it came to issues of staffing in their departments. No matter how good the curriculum material is on paper, and whatever the theory or rationale that led to its development, the educator makes the difference and plays a critical role in making the curriculum come alive in the classroom (Raja & Mythily, 2018). Every educator who is attached to a school and is part of a specific department has to be relevantly qualified in order to be able to ensure that classroom

activities lead to improved learner outcomes. This calls for SMTs to ensure that their educator recruitment process is as correct as possible.

The purpose of educator recruitment is to attract a good set of educators for schools. This process is designed in schools to attract the right candidates and deter unsuitable graduates (Livingstone, 2020). SMTs recruit qualified and quality educators as a solution to fill educator vacancies in schools (Stiel, Willis, Culliney, Robinson, Coldwell & Hobson, 2018:7). Within the context of this study, educator recruitment is the process of ensuring that quality educators that can lead to improved learners outcomes are appointed in schools. On a global scale, educator recruitment differs from country to country and region to region. Educator recruitment in the RSA is the responsibility of schools that have vacant posts. This process is spearheaded by the SMT in collaboration with the SGB, under the guidance of the documentary directive in the form of Resolution 1 of 2008.

Educator recruitment plays a key role in planning upstream, at the start of every school year, of an adequate number of qualified educators in line with the school needs to enable schools to fulfil their mission effectively (UNESCO, 2015:13). If the post is vacant, the SMT sits together and deliberates as to how the vacant post could be utilised for the purposes of addressing the curriculum needs of the school. A formal meeting of the SMT is normally convened whereby every SMT member must acknowledge receipt of the invite by way of signing the Communication Register of the school. The SMT minutes book of the sampled schools captured the minutes of their deliberations around the filling of posts, which is part of the educator recruitment plan of their schools. Not every educator could teach in these sampled schools unless he/she was responsive to the curriculum needs of the post and had the correct academic and professional qualifications. UNESCO (2015:19) suggests the following four stages of educator recruitment in schools:

- **Identification of needs:** This stage requires reliable data collection.

- **Determining educator profiles:** This stage features academic level, skills, experience, knowledge, command of the language of instructions, qualifications etc.

- **Selection:** This is by way of a competitive examination to ascertain the level of knowledge, and through individual interviews to evaluate motivation, social skills, and attitudes through a written test etc.

5.9   DATA FROM OBSERVATION AND DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

Observation and document analysis were used in this study as secondary data collection mechanisms. Data from the two mechanisms were used for the purposes of augmenting data from the semi-structured interviews.

5.9.1   Observational data

I used observations as my secondary data collection instrument by observing some operations in schools as well as observing the infrastructure and resources of the two sampled schools. Data by way of this strategy are presented, taking cognisance of the developed observation schedule (Appendix H).

In terms of school SH, the area in which the school is situated was very dry. Houses around the school were of a poor quality and this already depicted the kind of poverty that the school found itself in. The roads leading to the school were gravel, except for an Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP) tarred road that was already full of countless potholes. The school was situated more than 50 kilometres away from the nearest city of Polokwane.

Approximately 500 metres away from the school was a tavern, but none of the learners was ever seen moving towards the direction of the tavern during intervals or at the conclusion of the academic day. This led me to the conclusion that learners in school SH were disciplined and knew they could not afford to lose a single minute of their school day. This is also resonant to the first finding highlighted in this study, viz. about the preservation of the contact time, where SMTs ensure that time in schools was respected and used for its intended purpose.

The school had its own borehole as a source of water and for the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP) issues. Only the administrative building was electrified and no classroom had electricity due to rampant burglaries that used to bedevil the school because of the lack of security features. Electricity access enables the use of modern information and communication technology in schools. It allows teaching to take place in the early morning and late at night, thus extending classroom hours (Welland 2017:13). Programmes like evening classes make it possible for learners to enhance their knowledge. They enable

learners to study with fewer disruptions. Over and above, many people find evenings a more productive time of the day since knowledge learned during the evening can be absorbed without any distractions (Dam, 2019).

This finding resonates well with the finding that schools engage in extra classes in the form of afternoon lessons, Saturday lessons, and holiday lessons. None of the participants indicated evening lessons as a mechanism normally embraced in the sampled schools due to the safety issues. In my opinion, the absence of electricity in schools impacts negatively on curriculum delivery activities as effective teaching and learning activities need, amongst others, the availability of electricity. In school SH, the authorities had bought a long electric extension cable and used it to draw electricity from the school's administrative building to the classrooms.

My observations revealed that the school has never had any new buildings since the dawn of the new democratic era in 1994, except for the 28 toilet sets that are well cared for by the school authorities. However, the school journal (formerly logbook) indicates that at the beginning of the 2020 academic year, the Capricorn South District Infrastructure division visited the school and promised renovations to the buildings. According to my observations, the renovation of the school would just be a total waste of state financial resources as the buildings are so dilapidated and of such an antiquated nature that they warrant complete demolition and replacement with state-of-the-art facilities. This observation resonates well with the findings in section 2.2 on infrastructural challenges in schools. However, at the time of the data collection and visits to the school, no renovations had taken place. The school authorities seem hopeless as one three classroom block had been blown down by the winter storms that had engulfed the area.

The school commenced its teaching and learning activities at 07h45 in the lower grades and 07h00 in grade 12 and sometimes in grades 10 and 11. Once the teaching and learning activities had started, it was difficult for visitors to gain entry to the school premises. They were normally stuck at the school gate in the hands of an SGB-hired security officer whose duty was to prevent any disturbing movements into the school. This action resonates well with the finding in section 1.1 on the protection of the contact time in schools.

Just like school SH, the area in which school TH was situated was also rural and dusty. It catered for learners from the local community as well as learners from a number of adjacent villages who were transported by taxis and bakkies to the school. Some of the transport that the learners used appeared not to be roadworthy, and some were overloaded. Learners' exposure to external factors such as hijackings, rape, violence, and other life threatening incidents cannot be underestimated (Department of Transport, 2015:20). The learners transport costs are borne by parents out of their own pockets. Surprisingly, the learners from adjacent villages left other schools close to their homes to receive an education at this school, although it was not within walking distance.

This school was established in 1994 and received its first learner intake the same year. Initially the school was made up of three blocks of three classrooms, so that there were nine classrooms built by the local community from their own pockets, hence its uninviting physical appearance. The importance of the physical appearance of a public school should not be minimised. A public school building that is attractive and responds to, and is consistent with, the design and context of the neighbourhood builds a sense of pride and ownership among learners, educators, and the community. The exterior should complement the neighbourhood and reflect the community's values, and the interior should enhance the learning process (Vaughan, 2017).

Upon arrival at the school at 06h30, I witnessed learners and educators who were already in the classrooms engaging in effective teaching and learning, and responding to the morning lessons' programme. Morning lessons prepare learners for life after matric. If learners can avail themselves of all their morning classes, they become used to it, even after they have graduated from university and taken up a career (Corbin, 2019). At 07h00 the remaining learners and educators were walking energetically to their different localities without being coerced by anyone. Because of its inviting performance, in 2017 the school was favoured with a donation from Lonmin mine in the form of a building that comprised three classrooms, a laboratory, a principal's office, a deputy principal's office, a kitchen, a sick bay and the administrative officer's workplace. The building was opened officially in 2018 by the former Limpopo Education MEC, Mr Maaria Ishmael Kgetjepe.

Further than that, except for the 12 ablution facilities provided by the current democratic government, just like school SH, school TH has never received any infrastructural facilities

or classrooms. Generally learners do not want to be pushed to go to class. The school commenced with its daily activities at 07h00. My observations revealed that during the process of teaching in the classrooms, SMT members who are not in class and the principal managed the curriculum delivery activities by way of walking around in such a manner that they did not distract the learners in the classrooms. This activity ensured that all learners were in classrooms, and they went out if it was necessary. Even learners who requested to visit the restrooms did so by running there and back.

There is a new tendency now in schools of educators working from their cars, citing various reasons as to why they cannot stay in their classrooms or any locality earmarked for them to carry out their duties. I never observed such activity in the sampled schools. When educators were not in class, they were in the staffroom. In these schools, the culture is to have the educator in the staffroom or in the classroom, and not anywhere else.

In the sampled schools, morning lessons started at 07h00 for grade 12. All other classes commence with their academic activities an hour after the grade 12s had already started. I observed that when morning lessons commenced, there was an SMT member monitoring the attendance and related matters. Any visitor who came to the school during the morning lessons was attended to by an SMT member. In coming to school early for morning lessons, learners in these schools did not see this as a form of punishment but as an opportunity aimed at assisting them to ensure that they passed at the end of the year. Learners just arrived and went straight to their classrooms, and upon arrival in the classrooms they just sat at their desks and started their day's work. This continued with the afternoon lesson.

What I realised in these schools is that there was a grade 12 culture of First In Last Out (FILO), meaning that these learners were the first to enter the school premises before the other learners, and the same with leaving the premises. This culture is very good in the sense that it inculcates into the learners the saying, 'the earliest bird catches the fattest worm'. It is clear that these schools gave their undivided attention to teaching and learning in grade 12 as the other grades were only taught during normal teaching and learning periods.

I came to the conclusion that there is actually over-teaching in the grade 12 year in these schools. The attention given to grade 12 was not the same attention given to other grades in the schools. The SMTs are, in this regard, faced with the task of ensuring that morning and

afternoon lessons should be introduced in the lower grades so that curriculum enrichment activities cut across all the grades of the schools, not just grade 12.

I stated that the communities in which the schools were situated were very supportive of the educational activities of the school in the sense that they did not cause any disturbances or disruptions to the teaching and learning activities. Even the tavern that was situated 500m from one of the schools did not cause any disturbance to the activities of the school. The communities have never engaged in service delivery protests, like is the case in other areas where roads to schools are blockaded as a way of forcing the government to provide basic services in such communities. Regardless of the burglaries that take place in some of these schools, one can argue that the communities in which the schools were situated were education loving communities who agreed that education is an instrument through which poverty can be defeated.

My observations also revealed that these schools did not have sufficient infrastructure, and none has been provided since the dawn of the democratic order in South Africa. In fact the current democratic government only provided one of the sampled schools with mobile classrooms, and eradicated the pit toilets and replaced them with new modern structures. However, the other school still had pit latrines for the learners. My conversation with the principal revealed that the high learner enrolment figures of the school mean the school authorities continue with these toilets. If ventilated improved toilets were used, learners would spend more than two hours queuing to enter these toilets. In other words, irrespective of the abundant availability of water in the schools, the schools have not yet arrived at a point where they had sophisticated flushing toilets as they were situated in rural communities without any sewage system or septic tanks. However, it is still advisable for the SGBs to think about the procurement of septic tanks to improve the sanitation systems of these schools.

My observations generally revealed that even though the schools were in a poor state, curriculum implementation did not suffer. The SMTs, principals, educators, learners, and the SGBs worked as a united collective. This collectivism is an advantage that SMTs must capitalise on and ensure that they become more creative to ensure learner outcomes continue to be on an upward trajectory.

5.9.2 Document analysis

5.9.2.1 Proper record keeping leads to proper curriculum management

The analysis of the administrative documents was cited as one of my secondary data collection strategies. School documents are at times referred to as the encyclopaedia of school activities. The education law of the country requires that they must be safely kept in schools (Alabi, 2017:66). The analysis of these documents revealed that schools had SMT-related documents from the DBE, policies that were developed by the SGB, and records generated by the school management for administration purposes.

The original documents were kept in the office of the principal and copies were available to every SMT member. Lockable steel cabinets and some nicely crafted wooden cupboards had been secured for the safekeeping of these vital documents. Record keeping and management of these records is one of the most important responsibilities of the school managers (Osagie, 2017). The sampled schools were able to present these documents to me without difficulty. This implies that the schools knew exactly where the documents were safely placed. However, the condition of some of the documents revealed that they were not perused or utilised regularly because they appeared to be new from the boxes.

My document analysis revealed that there was regular communication on the part of the SMT, as indicated in their communication register. In some schools the communication register is called the information register or information book. For example in school A, this register was referred to as the information register/book according to its cover page, and in school B it was referred to as the communication register as indicated on its cover page. Written communiqués are an effective method of disseminating information on administrative and management-related issues that do not require elaboration, explanation, or discussion (Tyler, 2016:2).

Each time there was a curriculum delivery issue that warranted the SMT or an educators' attention, information to that effect was written in a communication register and circulated amongst the recipients. Each recipient of this information was expected to sign the communication register as a way of acknowledging receipt thereof and also to indicate the date of receipt.

Within the context of this study, communication is the process of disseminating crucial curriculum-related information in schools by school authorities in the form of School Management Teams. The success of every organisation is to a large extent dependent on its communication, and so are its failures. In other words, for an organisation to succeed in terms of achieving its mission, its communication landscape has to be unquestionably unequivocal. This finding is resonant with the sub-theme regarding regular communication by the study participants.

A lever arch file labelled 'Grade 12 results' in school SH had information on the performance of the school, and only information from the academic year 2013 was analysed and the findings are as tabulated below:

Table 5-4: Performance of school SH since 2013

Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
% Pass	89.5	88.3	92.5	88.5	88.4	80.5	82.3

Having a deeper look at the performance of this school, one can realise that it has never performed below 80% since 2013. This translates into the fact that the school has always performed above the National and the Provincial targets. Since 2013, the highest percentage pass that the school achieved was 92.5% in 2015, and the lowest was 80.5% in 2018. This performance communicates a clear message of how the SMT is doing in terms of curriculum implementation and curriculum management issues.

Just like in school SH, a neatly covered lever arch file labelled 'Grade 12 results' in school TH had information on the performance of the school. However, only performance information from academic years 2013 to 2019 was extracted as tabulated below

Table 5-5: Performance of school TH since 2013

Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
% Pass	100	100	100	100	98	93	86

This study targeted low quintile secondary schools that had been performing above 80% in terms of grade 12 since the academic year 2013. The table above indicates that this school

had been performing well above 80% since 2013. What is so fascinating is that it passed all its learners in years 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016 by securing a 100% pass.

A school is one of the very most important establishments in society. The purpose for which a school is established can only be achieved through effective administration (Alabi, 2017:66). Schools are flooded with a large amount of information from various sources and in multiple formats (Hyland, 2020). One of the most important aspects of school administration is proper record keeping (Alabi, 2017:67). This large amount of information is normally stored or kept in the form of administrative records of the school either manually or digitally. These records can be perused each time some reference pertaining to a specific event is made. According to Osagie (2017), proper record keeping is one of the responsibilities of the school management. To effectively manage issues in schools and their day-to-day running, the school management relies on information from school records.

School records can be classified in two categories; statutory and non-statutory records (Amanchukwu & Ololube, 2015: 14). Statutory records are those records that are mandatory or compulsory under the law to be kept by each school. Non-statutory records are those records that are not mandatory but are nevertheless equally important and useful for record purposes. Statutory records help the management of the school in the day-to-day running of the school affairs (Alabi, 2017:68).

My findings revealed that these schools have a number of statutory and non-statutory records that are utilised for administrative purposes. Over and above, these records are well maintained by the School Management Teams. These records date as far back as the year in which the school was established. It has been possible for me to trace the year in which the school was established by merely perusing the school journals. One of the journals was archived in the principal's office as it was full and no page was available for further events to be recorded. In another school, as it was established in 1994, the school journal was still being used and it was easy for me to trace the events of the school since its establishment. These records are kept safely by the school authorities and housed in the office of the principal.

In my opinion, school documents are departmental documents that are very important and therefore must be kept safely and well maintained. Amanchukwu and Olube (2015:12)

indicate that these documents contain information on what goes on in schools as well as other relevant information pertaining to the growth and development of the school. I argue that the availability of these SMT documents shows that the schools are functional and are the primary sources of information in the school; hence they must be kept safely. From analysing these documents I revealed that the SMTs have a plan of their meetings meant for curriculum delivery review and reflection. This plan is very important as some schools usually reflect on their curriculum delivery issues during breakfast or at staff meetings. This practice is not advisable for schools to embrace as a number of curriculum delivery issues could be compromised, especially given the duration and the nature of the breakfast meetings and staff meetings in schools.

Godara (2017:86) maintains that meetings are a venue for voicing opinions, discussing the latest organisational policies and procedures, increasing the effectiveness of decision making, addressing problems and concerns, and setting the goals. She goes on to point out the following as the reasons for holding planned meetings in schools:

- Solving specific problems.

- Brainstorming new ideas.

- Keeping staff members informed.

- Making decisions.

- Presenting a proposal for discussion.

- Discussing areas of change.

- Seeking feedback.

- Promoting team spirit.

- Planning future services.

- Providing direction.

- Giving support.

- Professional development.

Curriculum delivery issues need to be dealt with on their own, in order that reflections and reviews are effected for the purposes of working towards improved learner outcomes. I have established that in both schools SH and TH, haphazard meetings did not take place, there were only planned meetings.

The SMT minute book indicated the attendance of the SMT members, as reflected in the minute book. In more than 95% of the meetings, attendance was at 100%, and in the case of absence by an SMT member, I established that a formal apology was normally given. Minutes are a record of those that were at the meeting and they are an important source of information for those who were not there (Godara, 2017:90). Typically minutes of meetings are a record of what was done or talked about in a meeting, including any decision made or action taken (Veerman, 2017).

The SMT minute book further revealed that the majority (98%) of discussions centred around curriculum delivery issues. In school TH for example, in a meeting that was held on the 09/01/2020 even before schools could reopen for the academic year 2020, the SMT minutes reflect a resolution taken:

> *Each department must start immediately to profile its learners in order to pave a way for differentiated instructional programmes upon the commencement of teaching and learning activities come the reopening of schools on the 15/01/2020.*

In the same meeting, the SMT minutes reflect that,

> *Each department must strengthen and fortify the strategy of item analysis in each and every task (both formal and informal) that has been given in order to establish exactly where effective learning gets compromised.*

The SMT further resolved that,

> *A full report to that effect must be ready for presentation by SMT members in its formal meeting on the 17/01/2020.*

In one meeting at school SH, held on the 15/09/2019, the main aim of the SMT meeting was captured as 'Departmental Progress Reports'. I also established that in this meeting, all SMT members gave a curriculum delivery picture of their departments. In another SMT meeting, the programme/plan for SMT meetings was deliberated by the SMT members and agreed upon. This programme of meetings captured the dates on which SMT meeting would be held, as well as the time and venue.

In the same meeting, SMT members were mandated to develop programmes of meetings for their different departments/sections with their educators. A date for the presentation of the departmental reports by different SMT members was also set. Every curriculum implementation resolution was followed up in the next meeting for the purposes of establishing progress. Over and above, some sections of the SMT minutes in both school SH and school TH captured the issue of declaring imminent vacant posts due to a potential retiree, a resignee, and long incapacity leave respectively. In ensuring that the potential vacant posts did not remain vacant, the SMT resolved that is had to kick start the process to ensure that the posts were filled within an acceptable time frame. This is a revelation that the SMT is at the forefront of recruiting educators for purposes of ensuring that curriculum delivery is not compromised in anyway.

Also, in analysing the SMT minute books for the two schools, I was interested in the fact that in some meetings they focused on written work output. For example in school SH there was a resolution taken indicating that as a way of ensuring regular learner assessment, colleagues were reminded to conduct written work audits in their departments as per policy on assessment. This was in preparation for the next joint written work audit assembly of the school. Educators had to be regularly reminded about that.

In school TH, the SMT minute book captured the following:

> *'Written work output cannot be over-emphasised. HODs must compile their departmental written work output and make an analysis in terms thereof for presentation during our parents meeting on the 15 March 2020. By the way this is what parents normally get presented with'.*

This finding is resonant with the sub-themes of learner profiling, item analysis, differentiated programmes, regular communication, sufficient written work, promotion of stakeholder relations, and educator recruitment.

A number of pieces of departmental legislation that have a bearing on the work of the SMT were found. The legislative documents that were not found in these schools were the Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development (ISPFTED) and the National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development (NPFTED). However, I advised the SMTs to visit the DBE website and download the two documents and other related documents so that the schools could boast a full complement of policies. The absence of these documents resonates with the sub-theme on departmental policies regarding curriculum management.

The availability of curriculum management policies in schools is a clear demonstration of the functionality of the school with regard to curriculum delivery. Over and above, proper recording of these documents ensures that crucial information pertaining to the school is always available to access and use. There were lockable steel cabinets in the principals' offices for keeping these administrative records.

Record keeping is also known as storage of information, and is an important function of both the administration and educator staff in schools (Amanchukwu & Ololube, 2015:13). In these records information pertaining to the development of the school are captured. These schools were able to provide me with their grade 12 performance for 2013 up to 2019 without any difficulty. A record of performance for these schools was kept safely in the office of the principal, and the SMT members had the records of the performance as well as performance records of their departmental subjects. Osagie (2020) mentions that proper record keeping in schools facilitates the future retrieval of information by management. In my opinion, good record keeping enables schools to trace events that have unfolded previously, as well as to make reference regarding specific events.

5.10   STUDY CONTRIBUTION

The purpose of this study was to determine the experiences of SMTs in managing low quintile secondary schools. While there have been several studies that have investigated the

role of SMTs and the challenges faced by SMTs in schools, the focus of this study is unique on the basis that it made a determination of the experiences of SMTs in managing low quintile secondary schools such that they perform better than schools in the high quintiles. The findings from this investigation, combined with the suggestions that have been made, represent a body of knowledge on how SMTs should go about managing low quintile secondary schools in order that they perform better than schools in the high quintile.

The findings led me to develop a curriculum management guideline for School Management Teams for the entire education fraternity, the Comprehensive Effective Curriculum Implementation Framework (CECIF) (see Chapter 6). Phalane (2016:54) advises that SMT members are the most important members of every school and under the appropriate conditions, and with the appropriate strategies, they are able to ensure high learner outcomes in schools. It has been indicated more than once that the SMT is a very important organisational structure in schools that should at all times ensure maximum implementation of the curriculum. This necessitates that the SMT should be given enough ammunition in the form of a guideline in order to do its work as scrupulously and professionally as possible, and in a manner that high learner outcomes would always be non-negotiable in schools.

This guideline, the CECIF, provides the 'do's and the don'ts' of the SMT members, particularly regarding their core mandate of effective curriculum management and improved learner outcomes. It is open for public utilisation or application by schools, Circuits, Districts, provinces, as well as the DBE to empower SMTs to do even more in terms of curriculum implementation issues so that learner outcomes keep improving for the goal of an educated citizenry to be achieved. This guideline is presented to the entire education fraternity as "A Comprehensive Effective Curriculum Implementation Framework' (CECIF).

5.11   CONCLUDING REMARKS

Chapter 5 presented, analysed, and interpreted the findings provided by the study participants. The findings emanated from the data collected through interviews, document analysis, and observation. This study asked a question; How do School Management Teams (SMTs) manage low quintile secondary schools in order that they perform better than schools in the high quintile?

The findings were discussed taking into consideration the research questions for this investigation. The research findings revealed the initiatives that SMTs employ in managing low quintile secondary schools, enabling and constraining factors that are encountered by SMTs in managing low quintile secondary schools, and the perceptions of SMTs of their role in managing low quintile secondary schools. The findings have necessitated the development of a guideline entitled: 'A Comprehensive Effective Curriculum Implementation Framework (CECIF)'.

This guideline could be adopted by education authorities in South Africa for purposes of serving as a guiding instrument or tool towards effective curriculum management in all South African public schools. The CECIF features in the next chapter as part of the recommendations that emanate from the study. The next chapter of this study also features the summary of the investigation, concluding remarks, and recommendations.

CHAPTER 6:   STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1   INTRODUCTION

The primary objective of this study was to determine the experiences of SMTs in managing low quintile secondary schools in order that they perform better than schools in the high quintile. In the previous chapter of this study I presented an analysis and interpretation of the research findings. In this chapter I elaborate on the recommendations that emanated from this empirical investigation.

The findings arrived at in this research project were informed by the three secondary research questions, as indicated in in the first chapter. The experiences of SMTs in managing low quintile secondary schools in the Capricorn South District were elaborated on in the preceding chapter. This empirical investigation made provision for a deeper understanding of the initiatives taken by SMTs in managing low quintile secondary schools in order that they perform better than high quintile schools, the enabling and constraining factors that SMTs encounter in managing low quintile secondary schools, and the perspectives of SMTs regarding their role in terms of managing low quintile secondary schools. This study served as an opportunity for participating SMT members to make a deeper expression of their experiences in managing low quintile secondary schools in the Capricorn South District.

Since this investigation proved that there are mechanisms that SMTs employ in managing low quintile secondary schools in order that they perform better than schools in the high quintile, and that there are enabling and constraining factors that SMTs encounter, and also that there are perceptions that SMTs uphold, guidelines that are meant to assist SMTs in managing curriculum implementation in schools should be developed and implemented in order that improved learner outcomes could be achieved.

Based on the main aim of this study which was to determine the experiences of SMTs in managing low quintile secondary schools in order that they perform better than schools in the high quintile, the research findings as they appeared in the previous chapter and lessons that I have learnt from the review of the literature pertaining to this investigation in Chapter 2, it became imperative for me to develop recommendations in the form of a guideline.

This chapter details the developed guideline, particularly its purpose, advocacy, background, role players, implementation; processes, funding, roll out plan, strengths and conclusion. The guideline outlines processes that may be taken by education authorities to capacitate SMTs in executing their mandate in order that they can bring about improved learner outcomes in public secondary schools. My view is that if SMTs are capacitated in terms of executing their core mandate, ordinary public secondary schools could boast regular improved learner outcomes that every South African citizen would be proud to be associated with. The implementation of this guideline is the responsibility of Circuit Managers as heads of Circuits under the auspices of the District Director or his/her delegated component, especially the District Educator Development and the District Human Resources Development, the Provincial leadership, and its Management Development components.

6.2   THE GUIDELINE

The main research aim for this investigation was, 'To determine the experiences of School Management Teams in managing low quintile secondary schools in order that they perform better than schools in the high quintile'. This main aim had three secondary research questions; 'What mechanisms do School Management Teams employ in managing low quintiles secondary schools in order that they perform better than schools in the high quintile?', 'What are the enabling and constraining factors that School Management Teams encounter in managing low quintile secondary schools in order that they perform better than schools in the high quintile', and 'What are the perspectives of School Management Teams regarding their role in terms of managing low quintile secondary schools in order that they perform better than schools in the high quintile?'.

The guideline that I developed has taken into consideration the main research aim and the three subsidiary questions. The guideline has its roots in the findings on the experiences of SMTs in managing low quintile secondary schools in order that they perform better than schools in the high quintile. The guideline captures improved learner outcomes as its ultimate product. This guideline appears below as Figure 6.1
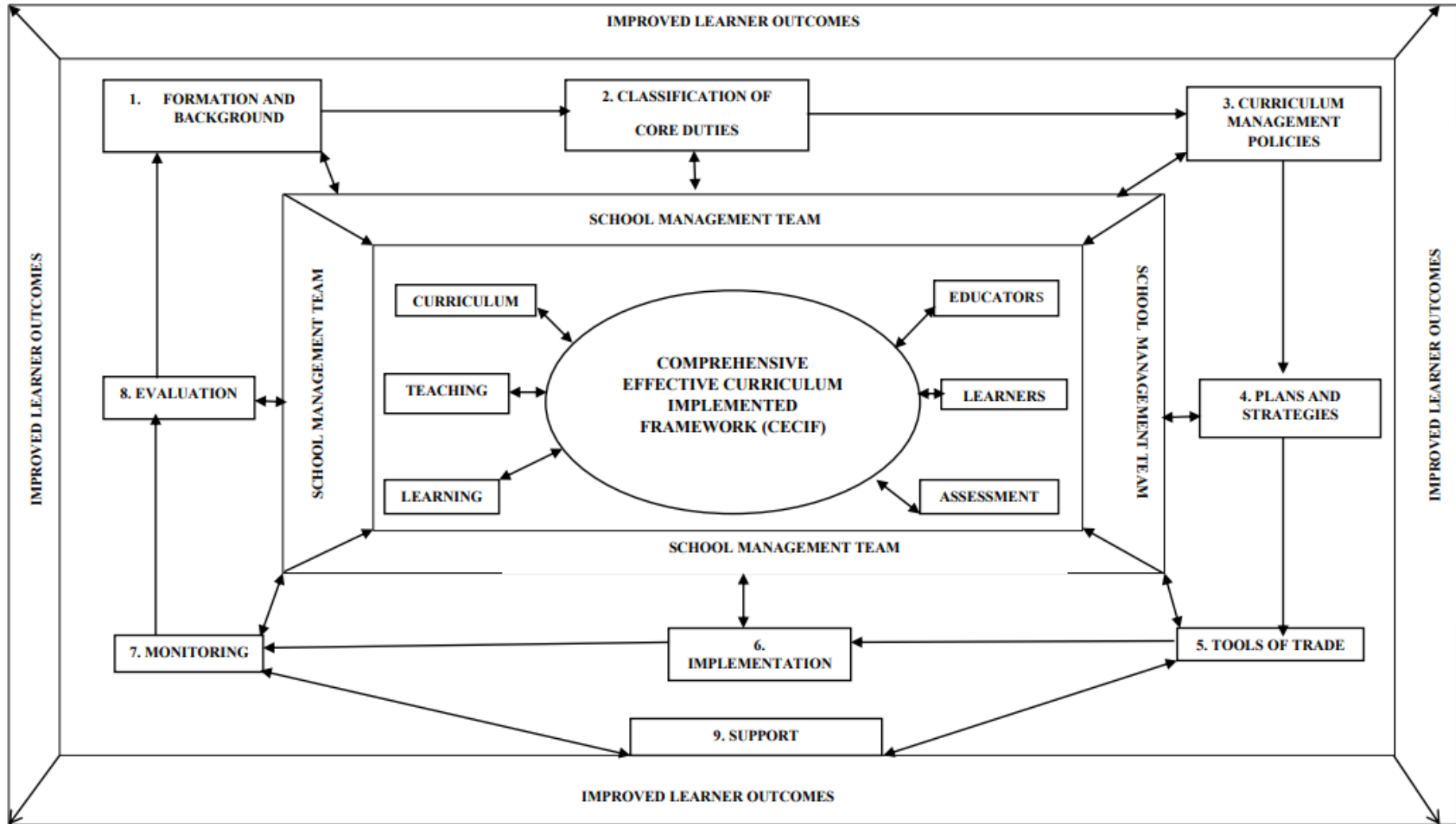
Figure 6-1:   A Comprehensive Effective Curriculum Implementation Framework (CECIF)

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6.2.1   The guideline title

The title of the guideline is A Comprehensive Effective Curriculum Implementation Framework (CECIF). The CECIF is a guideline to assist School Management Teams in maximising proper curriculum implementation and consequentially improved learner outcomes in all public secondary schools in all the nine provinces of the RSA.

6.2.2   Purpose of the guideline

The National Planning Commission (2011:302) postulates that the priorities in basic education are human capacity, school management, District support, infrastructure, and results-oriented mutual accountability between schools and communities. The interests of all stakeholders in the basic education sector should be aligned to support the common goal of achieving good educational outcomes.

The commission goes further to assert that educational institutions should be provided with the capacity to implement policy. Where capacity is lacking, this should be addressed as an urgent priority. This guideline serves to respond to the NPC's call to capacitate schools so that they could be better placed to achieve good educational outcomes. The guideline is also a response to the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) number 4.1 which directs that by 2030 all boys and girls should be able to complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes. This MDG creates an understanding that by 2030 all schools should be in position to boast improved learning outcomes that would enable learners to participate fully in the economic activities of their communities. I argue that effective learning outcomes will only be visible if SMTs are capacitated with ammunition in the form of this developed guideline to assist them to execute their core duties with professionalism and zeal in schools.

The purpose of this guideline is to assist SMTs in all ordinary public secondary schools to improve their curriculum management practices in order that learner outomes are on an upward spiral. Assisting SMTs is in a way a response to the NPC and the MDG number 04 as alluded to above. The performance of South Africa's educational system in National and international tests indicates that a large proportion of its public schools are underperforming. Ineffective leadership has been put forward as one reason for the underperformance (Kirori &

Dickinson 2020:1). Understandably, this creates an impression that the curriculum management practices of SMTs do not bear desirable fruit, hence the development of the CECIF.

My experience as a Circuit Manager has revealed that the School Management Team is an important curriculum management structure, and unfortunately, a highly neglected and abandoned component in the education system. This is the structure that operates with minimal, or no, support at all; hence this guideline. It is a structure whose successes are invisible but its failures explicitly visible. Most of the time SMTs are left to fend for themselves in terms of executing their core mandate of ensuring smooth and appropriate curriculum implementation that yields improved learner outcomes in schools.

The guideline is also a clarion call to all education stakeholders to actively play a support role in schools and ensure that the curriculum management activities of the SMTs lead to an improved and commendable performance in schools. The NDP's vision for education is to ensure that all children have the benefit of a high quality education, especially with regards to languages, maths and science, with the ultimate aim of ensuring that 90% of learners pass these subjects with at least 50% by 2030 (NECT, 2019).

This guideline serves as a stepping stone towards responding to the NDP's wish of ensuring high quality education in schools, and in all subjects are listed in the curriculum. My perception is that this guideline could assist education authorities in ensuring that SMTs are not left to fend for themselves when it comes to curriculum management in schools, but assists and consistently supports them in order to ensure improved learner outcomes on a regular basis.

6.2.3   Advocacy of the guideline

Since the prerogative of implementing this guideline resides in the domain of the Circuit Managers, the advocacy in terms thereof would be conducted in their formal sitting. Advocacy is essential and relevant in development programmes. The main functions of advocacy are influence, information/sensitisation, strategic partnerships, marketing of ideas, and speaking up on social issues. The main thrust of advocacy is influence, at various levels and across sectors and social structures (Fayoyin, 2013:183).

As advocacy is about influencing people and processes, it is by nature a dynamic process (Iversen, 2014). Casey (2014) views advocacy as a constitutionally protected activity that involves the active espousing of a point of view or a course of action. In the advocacy process one can choose to work with many different methods including, for example, lobbying, campaigning, and research (Iversen, 2014).

The purpose of advocating this guideline is to urge and influence Circuit Managers to take a bold step in ensuring that effective curriculum implementation, curriculum management, and the achievement of improved learner outcomes becomes the culture in ordinary public secondary schools. This is done with the confidence that Circuit Managers can communicate this guideline to school principals, noting its aims and the impact that it could have on the work of the SMTs in terms of executing their core mandate in schools.

The Circuit Managers would also be expected to ensure that the guideline is communicated to the District Director, especially the District sections of Institutional Governance, Educator Development, and Human Resources Development. The guideline could further be advocated to the Provincial office, especially the Leadership and Management Development section. After all relevant departmental sections that are mandated to attend to needs analysis or content gaps in schools have been taken on board regarding the guidelines, the same sections could then be expected to ensure that the guideline is communicated to all its rightful beneficiaries, i.e. the SMTs in different Circuits.

6.2.4 Background to the guideline

This guideline is a sequel to the findings from the three themes that formed the basis of this study and includes:

- The mechanisms that SMTs employ in managing low quintile secondary schools in order that they perform better than schools in the high quintile.

- Enabling and constraining factors that SMTs encounter in managing low quintiles secondary schools in order that they perform better than schools in the high quintile.

- The perceptions of SMTs regarding their role in managing low quintile secondary schools in order that they perform better than schools in the high quintile.

The study findings that emerged from the mechanisms that SMTs employ in managing low quintile secondary schools in order that they perform better than schools in the high quintile are; preservation of the contact time, high performance target setting, motivation, learner profiling, item analysis, performance review sessions, differentiated programmes, curriculum enrichment activities, provision of annual teaching plans (ATPs) and examination guidelines, monitoring and support, regular communication, outsourcing of competent educators, sufficient written work, and utilisation of period registers.

Findings that emerged from the enabling and constraining factors that SMTs encounter in managing low quintile secondary schools in order that the perform better than schools in the high quintile are; work overload, infrastructural challenges, overcrowded classrooms, inadequate cooperation, teamwork, sound working relations, inadequacy of technological resources, and professional development and support by departmental officials.

The findings regarding the perceptions of SMTs regarding their role in terms of managing low quintile secondary schools in order that they perform better than schools in the high quintile are; SMT members are managers in their own right, the principal remains the Chief Accounting Officer, SMT members are aspirant heads of schools, promotion of internal stakeholder relations is an SMT role, knowledge of curriculum management policies is vital, and educator recruitment rests with the SMT. Given these findings from the three subsidiary research questions, it becomes clear that the CECIF is both a response to and the end product of these findings.

6.2.5   The role players and their roles in the guideline

This study is all about the experiences of SMTs in managing quintile secondary schools. The recommendations always centre on the core mandate of the SMTs in order that they can be better positioned to persistently achieve improved learner outcomes. SMTs need to assist educators in imparting the knowledge they have to the learners. This will happen only if SMTs are trained and inducted in their roles and functioning (Molefe, 2013). This creates an understanding that capacitation of SMTs is central to the achievement of the schools' aims and objectives.

For this guideline to be successfully implemented and ultimately serve its intended purpose in schools, a number of stakeholders would be expected to play their specific roles in order for the SMT to fastidiously execute their core mandate. The role of stakeholders would be similar, although the degree of similarity could be slightly different given the nature of the offices occupied by such stakeholders. To this effect, stakeholders that are relevant in this guideline are the DBE officials in the form of principals, SMTs, Circuit, District, Provincial and National officials.

Having a clear look at the guideline as it appears in Figure 6.1, one realises that with the possible exclusion of the SMT, none of the stakeholders are detailed. However, all these mentioned stakeholders, given the nature of this guideline, have a crucial role to play in supporting the SMT to execute its core mandate. The stakeholders and their roles are discussed below:

6.2.5.1   Principals

Principals are the Chief Accounting Officers in schools and therefore have to ensure that the SMT is legitimately constituted as per the applicable education legislation. The principal should ensure that SMT members are empowered and that they are accorded all the necessary support in terms of executing their core mandate. They should regularly evaluate the effectiveness of the SMT and provide immediate guidance in order that their practices lead to the attainment of the school aims and objectives and also that learner outcomes persistently improve.

Maponya (2015) asserts that the principal is at the centre of any change that must occur at schools. The implementation of this guideline in schools will bring about some changes that principals, given the office they occupy, should embrace as a matter of urgency. Through the intervention of the SGB as the custodians of the finances in every school, principals should, in determining the budget posts for their schools, also create a SMT Development Budget that could be utilised to develop the SMT according to their core mandate. This development would ensure that SMTs become more competent in terms of the execution of their core duties.

6.2.5.2   SMT members

SMT members are the beneficiaries in this guideline. For every activity undertaken by any of the stakeholders that are encapsulated in this guideline, it is taken in order to ensure that the SMTs do not find it difficult to effectively execute their core mandate of effectively managing the curriculum. The role of the SMT is to embrace every bit of support from the various stakeholders in terms of executing their crucial mandate of curriculum management. In other words, as beneficiaries of the guideline, SMT members should regularly avail themselves as and when the guideline activities are dealt with.

6.2.5.3   Circuit officials

Circuit officials in the form of curriculum advisors and the Assistant Director for governance also have a role to play in terms of ensuring that SMTs do not experience difficulty in terms of executing their core mandate. Curriculum advisors are a new innovation by the democratic government as the mechanism to support effective curriculum delivery in schools (Rasebotsa, 2017). They are strategically placed by the DBE to contribute to the provision of curriculum support to schools with the intention of delivering progressively high quality education to learners (Mbanjwa, 2014).

This suggest that the role of curriculum advisors is to ensure that curriculum-related information is disseminated to schools, especially the offices of SMT members, on a regular basis in order that such information is communicated to every educator in the relevant departments. The SMT should be assisted in terms of crafting relevant monitoring instruments and ways to ensure standardised formal and informal assessments and related information. The Assistant Director, in a governance role, should assist schools in crafting the budget and making sure that schools make provision for a SMT Development Budget, and to ensure that the budget is used for the intended purpose of developing the SMT in line with its core function.

6.2.5.4   District officials

District offices are the local hubs of the PEDs and provide the vital lines of communication between the Provincial head office and the education institutions (DBE, 2019). District

offices are the management and administrative units that operate between schools and the provinces in South Africa. They play an important role in the monitoring and administrative procedures that translate central policy into strategies at local and school levels (Plowright & Plowright, 2011).

Every District office in the RSA has a component of Human Resources Development, Educator Development, Institutional Governance, and Curriculum Advisory. District officials in the form of curriculum advisors stationed in the District offices, officials in the curriculum section of the District Educator Development Section, an Human Resources Development officials and other managers in different sections of the District should ensure that their visits to schools do not only start and end in the principal's office as the interview participants in this study have claimed. The visit should also be extended to SMT members in order that they can also feel supported in terms of executing their core mandate.

Even though the point of every entry into the school premises is the office of the principal, District officials should go through the office of the principal and pay a visit to individual SMT members for support. The visit should start and end in the SMT members' offices. The District official's role is to ensure that curriculum materials, curriculum issues, and every piece of curriculum-related information are made available to schools through the office of the SMT members. This study has established that there is regular communication among stakeholders in schools. Communication between SMTs and the District officials should be strengthened in order that curriculum management issues and activities could be made known to all deserving recipients.

6.2.5.5   Provincial officials

Just like the District officials, Provincial officials also must visit schools and ensure that their visit is also extended to the SMT members.

6.2.5.6   National officials

Just like the Provincial officials of the DBE, the National officials' role is to visit schools and should ensure that their visit is also extended to the SMT members.

6.3   GUIDELINE IMPLEMENTATION

It has already been articulated that this guideline is envisaged for implementation by Circuit Managers in all low ordinary public secondary schools. The role played by Circuit Managers and their offices is fundamental in ensuring good quality basic education in schools (Bantwini & Moorosi, 2018). In terms of educational management and development issues, Circuit Managers work in collaboration with the District Educator Development and the Human Resources Development sections under the District Director and the Provincial Leadership and Management Development component under the Provincial SG. This translates into the fact that it is the Circuit Manager who must make sure that all processes of the CECIF take place in his/her Circuit.

Some processes could take place in schools being facilitated by the principal as the head of the school, and other processes could take place outside the school with the Circuit Manager or his/her delegated component being charged with the facilitation proceedings. In terms of processes that could take place at the level of the Circuit, Circuit Managers could, at times, given the size of their Circuits in terms of School Management Teams, group their schools into clusters for a more effective and interactive processes during the implementation of the CECIF. The size of the cluster would determine the number of clusters to be merged in order that the sessions could be kept limited, so as not to overstretch the presenters or facilitators during empowerment sessions.

Any leadership and management development activity that is meant to take place in schools should be communicated to the District Educator Development, the Human Resources Development, and the Provincial Leadership Development and Management sections. The three segments should then engage the Circuit Managers about the possibility of the activity taking place and the logistical arrangements that it would entail. Even before the CECIF processes commence in schools, the Circuit Manager should issue a directive to the school principals directing them to ensure that processes unfold within a stipulated time frame. This should be done as a way of ensuring that processes to take place outside the school at a cluster or Circuit level have not been dealt with already. In ensuring that the CECIF is effectively implemented, Circuit Managers should take into cognisance this management plan:

Table 6-1:   Management plan for Circuit Managers

Nr	Activity	Purpose	Responsible person	Time Frame	Performance Indicator
1	Establishment and appointment of the CECIF facilitation team	To ensure that there is a team to facilitate the implementation of CECIF	Circuit Manager in collaboration with school principals	October to December	Facilitation Team established and served with appointment letters
2	Classification of core duties of the Facilitation Team	To ensure that each facilitation team member is conversant with their roles	Circuit Manager in collaboration with school principals	October to December	Each Facilitation Team member fully understand their envisaged roles
3	Identification of potential participants in CECIF sessions	To ensure that SMT members are matched to empowerment/development sessions	Circuit Manager in collaboration with school principals	October to December	A list of potential participants in empowerment workshops/sessions compiled and available
4	Acquiring funding for rolling out of CECIF	To ensure that the rollout plan for the CECIF is budgeted for	Circuit Manager in collaboration with school principals	October to December	Funds for the empowerment workshops/ sessions secured and ready for utilization
5	Logistical matters	To ensure that all the necessary preparations are made and the facilitation team is ready to commence with its work	Circuit Manager and the Facilitation Team	October to December	Preparations concluded and the Facilitation Team ready to commence with its duties
6	Empowerment workshops/sessions	To ensure that SMTs are empowered/developed with regard to the CECIF processes	Circuit Manager and the Facilitation Team	January to February	Empowerment workshops/sessions held, attendance registers signed and SMT members empowered and ready for the implementation of what transpired in the workshops/empowerment sessions
7	Implementation of the CECIF processes	To ensure that the CECIF is implemented in schools	Principals and School Management Teams	January to October	Practical implementation of the CECIF processes taking place in schools and yielding some results
8	Reflective practices	To ensure that regular reflections are made regarding the implementation processes	Principals and School Management Teams	January to October	The impact of the CECIF in schools determined against the set targets and learner outcomes. Intervention or turnaround strategies determined for implementation

The activities that characterise the core mandate of the SMTs in schools take place throughout the entire academic year. However, activities that are encapsulated in the above management plan would take place according to the indicated time frames. The only activities that would take place throughout the year are activities 7 and 8. Because the South African education system is in most instances bedevilled by changes that warrant changes to activities, the activities of this management plan are not solid but are open for evaluations that could make the CECIF a force to be reckoned with in the education fraternity.

6.3.1 Processes of the guideline

The guideline comprises nine interdependent processes that must be embarked on as a way of working towards the achievement of the organisational aims of objective in schools. These processes are interdependent in the sense that one process could impact negatively on the other processes. It is my aspiration that these processes embarked upon sequentially as they are in order of the capacitation flow that could yield desirable outcomes. These are nine processes that I believe, after they have been exhausted, would ensure better curriculum implementation activities and curriculum management, which would consequently create improved learner outcomes in schools. The nine processes pertain to the different areas of the core mandate of the SMT. The processes are shown below and then discussed in subsequent sections.

Figure 6-2:   The processes of the Comprehensive Effective Curriculum Implementation Framework (CECIF)

No	Process	Description	Implementation agent/s	Funding
1	Formation of the SMT	Identify competent staff members who should form the School Management Team	Principal	Funding by SGB: 20%. Funding by the district and province relevant sections: 80%.
2	Classification	Assign equitable curriculum management duties according to the size of the SMT and workload	Principal	
3	Curriculum management policies	Appraise SMT of all curriculum management policies, especially legislation	The Provincial Department of Education, especially the Leadership and Management Development segment, the District Educators	

No	Process	Description	Implementation agent/s	Funding
			Development, and the Human Resources Development segments	
4	Plans and strategies	Development the Annual Performance Improvement Plan (APIP), Subject Improvement Plans (SIPs), School Assessment Plans (AAPs), Subject Assessment Plans (SAPs) and other mechanisms	SMTs under the guidance of DBE, Provincial, District and Circuit curriculum sections	
5	Tools of the trade	Curriculum implementation resources, including technological resources	DBE and Provincial officials	
6	Implementation	Plans that were developed in Process 4 of this guideline should now be put into place	DBE, as a major stakeholder in this regard, should be engaged by the circuit, district and the provincial offices	
7	Monitoring	For every activity monitored, a monitoring instrument must be devised	Curriculum advisory section of DBE	
8	Evaluation	Determine the effectiveness of the implemented plans and strategies	Curriculum section of the DBE, Province, Districts and Circuits as well as SMTs	
9	Support	All processes must be supported 100% by all the stakeholders for them to be successful	All structures of the DBE, such as the circuit office, curriculum advisory, district offices, provincial offices Other education stakeholders, such as parents, SGBs, and community structures	

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6.3.1.1   Process 1: Formation and background

The concept of an SMT is not only compatible with democratic principles, but provides opportunities for school principals to redistribute power and responsibilities to others, and hence ease pressure on themselves thus improving their administrative efficiency (Ramalepe, 2015:633).

In terms of the amended provision of section 16 of SASA, the SMT must be formed to assume responsibility for the day-to-day professional management of the school and for the implementation of its policies (Van Wyk & Marumoloa, 2012:102). Process 1 of the CECIF should be carried out by the principal by identifying competent staff members who should form part of the SMT. In constituting the SMT, the principal should take cognisance of the relevant and applicable education legislation and also the curriculum management needs of the school.

Besides determining which staff members should be included in the SMT, the size of the SMT should also to be taken into consideration.   All educators who are permanent incumbents in promotional posts, senior educators, master educators, and co-opted level one educators could be considered for appointment to the SMT.

According to Ruiz (2017), while the SMT is being formed, the role of the principal is to give clear direction, set goals and objectives, and help the members to understand exactly what is expected of them.   This creates an understanding that the principal should provide the background on the formation of the SMT, taking cognisance of the PAM and the SASA. This training should not be a once off activity, but should be a continuous process as continuous training assists SMTs to have up-to-date knowledge since the professional world changes rapidly (Sijako, 2017:16).

This process pertains to the newly appointed SMT and the currently serving SMT, and must be conducted during the first week of the reopening of schools, as in all instances educators and SMTs reopen schools for the new academic year two to three days before the learners arrive. In terms of the currently serving SMT members, it is necessary that they be reminded about their roles by way of the background of the formation of the SMT and the role of the SMT in its first formal sitting of the year, especially on the reopening of schools. This is a

way in which SMTs could be energised and ultimately pump up their performance as the teaching and learning activities commence in schools.

6.3.1.2   Process 2: Classification

In this process, each and every member in the SMT is assigned equitable curriculum management duties according to the size and workload of the SMT as an organisational structure. It has been established by this study that SMTs complain about work overload. According to Mngomezulu (2015), amongst other duties, SMTs devote more of their time to attending meetings and performing administrative matters such as general policy implementation, than they do monitoring the actual teaching and learning.

In terms of the classification of core duties, principals must do this taking into consideration the lamentations by SMTs. They should take cognisance of the fact that overloading SMTs could result in poor curriculum management and consequently poor learner outcomes in schools. However, as a Circuit Manager in one of the Circuits in the Limpopo Province, what I have observed is that even if the school dictates a smaller staff size, every school is expected to have an SMT that must execute its duties to the fullest. To address the problem of work overload on the part of SMTs, the Provincial Department of Education must review the current post allocation model and determine the proper workload for all SMT members in its employment, taking into consideration the huge administrative responsibilities attached to their posts.

The curriculum management competence of SMT members should be taken into consideration by the head of the school in this process of classification in order that members are compatible not with failure, but with success. In this process the principal should have the factors of SMT productivity and efficiency in mind. The academic and professional expertise of SMT members feature prominently in this process. The allocated duties should be spelt out to ensure accountability and proper decision making in this structure.

A duty list of individual SMT members must be clearly crafted by the principal with provision for the signature of the SMT member, the SMT's witness, and the principal. The duty list must be date stamped, and the original duty list retained by the SMT member and a copy kept safely by the principal for record purposes. The findings of this study revealed that

SMTs normally hold performance review sessions in schools. This duty list would assist them in reviewing their performance, taking cognisance of the targets set.

6.3.1.3 Process 3: Curriculum management policies

School Management Teams are responsible for the daily management of activities in the school, and therefore they should understand departmental policies and Acts to enable them to perform their duties with confidence (Molefe, 2013). This study revealed that SMT members are not well conversant with the curriculum management policies that should guide them in their day-to-day operations, and positive steps must be taken to remedy the situation. Not knowing the appropriate legislation can generate errors in the exercise of duties, or even foster corruption (Sarbu, Dimitresu & Lacroix, 2015:205).

The Provincial Department of Education, especially the Leadership and Management Development segment, the District Educators Development, and the Human Resources Development segments must regularly organise empowerment workshops and meetings to take SMT members on board regarding all educational policies that have a bearing on their core mandate. This would enable SMT members to have a clear understanding of the policies and the correct implementation in terms thereof. This would also address some areas of professional development on the part of the SMTs. In Process 3 of the guideline, SMT members should be taken on board about policies that guide them in terms of their core mandate of curriculum management.

This study uncovered inadequate cooperation from some of the educators. In addition to curriculum management policies, SMT members should be developed in the area of labour relations so that they could be in better position to correct any form of poor cooperation from their colleagues. However, orientation with regard to curriculum management policies features prominently in this phase so that SMT members could be well conversant with their 'do's and don'ts'. These policies guide SMTs in terms of timetabling, assessment, promotion, retention of learners, and the overall curriculum implementation in schools. The inability of SMTs to understand them correctly is likely to create problems in terms of their curriculum implementation practices in schools. This is the phase that must be undertaken by the principal in collaboration with the Circuit, District, and Provincial curriculum advisory sections.

6.3.1.4 Process 4: Plans and strategies

The curriculum can never be implemented without a plan that has been developed either at the departmental levels of the SMTs or the school level. The plans can never be implemented without strategies to ensure that those developed plans bear fruit in the form of improved learner outcomes. This is the process whereby mechanisms or avenues are determined for maximum curriculum implementation, curriculum delivery, and the overall curriculum management processes for increased learner outputs in schools.

The development of the Annual Performance Improvement Plan (APIP), Subject Improvement Plans (SIPs), School Assessment Plans (AAPs), Subject Assessment Plans (SAPs) and other mechanisms should be communicated to the SMT members in order that they remain focused on the aims and objectives of the school. After the plans have been developed, strategies to ensure that the plans serve their intended purpose should be developed for implementation.

This study found that there are several mechanisms that SMTs employ in improving performance in their schools. The identified strategies appear in section 5.5 of the previous chapter. These are strategies that the SMTs indicated they embark on to ensure that the plans developed are implemented so that learner outcomes keep spiralling upwards.

This Process 4 of the CECIF should unfold in such a way that it strengthens the strategies identified by this study and captured in section 5.5, well as the enabling factors that SMTs encounter in terms of executing their duties. These enabling factors appear in section 5.7. Process 4 is to strengthen the findings regarding the perceptions of SMTs in their role of managing low quintile secondary schools.

6.3.1.5 Process 5: Tools of trade

After the SMTs have been constituted, provided with their core duties, empowered on education policies that guide their curriculum implementation, and have developed curriculum implementation plans and strategies to bring the plans in practice, the next step is to go for the tools of trade.

In this process, the much needed curriculum implementation resources should be determined, secured, and made available to SMT members. The tools of trade are curriculum implementation resources, including technological resources. Providing high quality education includes the expectation that schools use educational technologies effectively in their classrooms (Davies, 2013). This study established that there are inadequate technological resources in ordinary public secondary schools due to the financial constraints that bedevil such schools.

This inadequacy compromises learners being part of the 4IR that is already part and parcel of the instructional practices in schools. This predicament has even forced SMT to make use of their own resources so that their curriculum management activities are not impeded. The absence of such tools in schools is detrimental to effective curriculum management and improved learner outcomes. Given the nature of the work of SMT members, where they need to be away from the teaching and learning situation in some instances, technological resources could be utilised whereby learners can be taught in and outside their schools. Technological resources are helpful in terms of online instructional activities in schools that extend beyond the normal school day.

6.3.1.6   Process 6: Implementation

Implementation, as the sixth process of the CECIF, entails mobilising employees to put into action the formulated plans and strategies. However, the implementation of plans relies heavily on stakeholder participation (Van Wyk & Moeng, 2014:140). In terms of this process, plans that were developed in Process 4 of this guideline should now be put into place using mechanisms or strategies that were determined in this process.

The implementation of these plans would, however, depend on securing the tools of trade that the SMT members need to ensure the correct implementation of the plans by educators in their various departments. This is the stage where the various education stakeholders' maximum involvement is required. However, this process would be difficult, given the findings of this study regarding infrastructural challenges and overcrowded classrooms. The DBE, as a major stakeholder in this regard, should be engaged by the Circuit, District and the Provincial office to ensure that these identified challenges are negated as far as possible as they pose insurmountable risks to the successful implementation of the CECIF.

6.3.1.7   Process 7: Monitoring

This is the process whereby a watchful eye is put on the SMT, with support from curriculum advisory, on the curriculum implementation processes to ensure that the desired outcomes and targets are realised. Monitoring instruments feature prominently in this phase. For every activity monitored, a monitoring instrument must be devised. If the monitoring is conducted by an external service provider, the original of the monitoring instrument should be retained by the school for record purposes and the copy must be given to the external monitor. The monitoring instruments serve as MOVs in terms of the monitoring specific curriculum implementation activities.

6.3.1.8   Process 8: Evaluation

This process entails determining the effectiveness of the implemented plans and strategies to ensure improved learner outcomes in schools. Turnaround and improvement mechanisms feature prominently in this phase, especially in cases where improved learner outcomes are not immediately visible.

6.3.1.9   Process 9: Support

This process entails the support given to the SMT regarding curriculum delivery processes by all structures of the education department, such as the Circuit office, curriculum advisory, District offices, Provincial offices, and DBE offices. Besides the education department structures, this process also entails the support of all the other education stakeholders, such as parents, SGBs, and community structures.

The study findings revealed that curriculum advisors, Circuit managers and District directors provide support by making visits to schools. This support must be strengthened in a manner that makes a positive impact on the work of the SMT, and consequently improved learner outcomes in schools. Some participants pointed out that the support they get from parents is good, whereas others lamented poor support. This finding is a clarion call to every stakeholder to play their part in terms of ensuring that curriculum delivery activities in schools unfold unhindered.

This study also revealed that SMT members aspire to become heads of schools and must therefore be supported by being shortlisted if they apply for the post of principal. This Process 9 regarding support also includes professional development support for SMTs. The reality is that SMTs are professional teachers and they need continuous professional development (Ndlovu, 2017). SMTs need to be professionally developed simply because they think they are lacking in a number of areas that fall under their core mandate. In the implementation of the CECIF, the SMT should be supported by every potential stakeholder materially, pedagogically, and in any relevant and appropriate manner.

This guideline serves as a curriculum implementation empowerment tool for SMTs and must therefore be embraced in the daily curriculum management activities of the SMTs in each and every school.

6.3.2 Funding of the guideline processes

All the processes that constitute the CECIF warrant funding in order for them to be materialised and successful. From the nine processes of this guideline, certain processes can take place within the school premises whilst others could be held outside. For those processes that take place outside the school premises, it is clear that funds would have to be sourced and utilised, such as for transport, catering, materials, other logistical issues etc.

In terms of the processes of the CECIF, a considerable amount of time must be put aside for the processes to unfold properly. This means hosting authorities must make arrangements for overnight accommodation for the participating SMT members. Even some of the processes that take place within the school premises warrant funding as they may be of a lengthy duration, even extending into the evening. It would be advisable for participants to be provided with food and beverages at such times. Processes that are conducted inside the school premises may need minimal funding, whereas those that are held outside warrant a sizeable budget.

6.3.2.1 Potential funders for the CECIF

The potential funders of certain processes of this guideline are the SGBs, and DBE structures in the form of Circuits, Districts, Provinces, and National offices.

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- SGBs as funders of the CECIF

As custodians of the finances of the school, in crafting the annual budget of the school the SGB should make an SMT development budget available. This budget could be sourced from the 60% curriculum delivery budget dictated by the Provincial Departmental Prescripts for the management of school funds in public schools, dated 3 May 2011. This directive on the utilisation of the norms and standard injections in schools expects that 60% of the allocated funds should be utilised for curriculum delivery purposes. However, given the vastness of curriculum activities in schools, this 60% needs to be supplemented. This warrants schools embarking on fundraising avenues to augment the budget.

Fundraising has taken place in public schools for a long time and may have actually increased in recent years. The majority of schools use fundraising activities to raise money from external sources to fund and support co-curricular activities and other school functions (Tan, 2017:1).

As a Circuit Manager in the Limpopo Department of Education, I have observed that a number of low quintile secondary schools raise funds by way of a 'casual day' whereby on specific days of the week, especially Fridays, learners do not have to wear their school uniform. On those days learners wear ordinary clothing and must to pay R2 for the privilege. This money is normally collected by class managers and handed over to the Finance Officers of schools for further processing.

- DBE structures as funders of the CECIF

Circuit offices have Institutional Governance sections, District offices have Human Resources Development and Educator Development sections, and the Provincial office has a Leadership and Management Development section. Given their mandates, these sections complement and supplement each other and can contribute effectively to the successful implementation of the CECIF.

Part of the mandate of the Institutional Governance section is to see to it that funds are injected into the school coffers and to ensure that those funds are utilised according to their budgets. The Human Resources Development section is entrusted with the mandate to ensure

that all human resources are developed in terms of their work place needs. The Educator Development section's mandate is to ensure that all educators are developed in terms of their identified needs. The Leadership and Management Development section of the Provincial office is mandated to organise leadership and management programmes for schools and other structures of the Provincial Education Department.

Regular meetings should be convened with these sections by Circuit Managers in order to urge them to utilise a segment of their development budget for funding CECIF activities in Circuits. Such meetings should also address issues like workshop agenda, materials, venues, facilitators, and other logistical issues.

Certain processes of the CECIF could be organised and funded by schools themselves, whereas some might need to be organised and funded by the DBE structures. Some processes could be organised jointly by schools and the DBE structures, and funded by the DBE structures. For example, the SMT empowerment workshop could be organised by the DBE structures where only workshop material is given to Circuits and Districts to run the workshop and catering services are borne by the schools themselves.

The empowerment workshop could be organised by the DBE structures, with workshop material, accommodation, and catering being the domain of the DBE structures. Given my experience as a Circuit Manager, I realise that in most cases empowerment workshops for SMTs are normally not conducted, either in Circuits or Districts or at the level of the province. If they are conducted, they are ad hoc and that does not guarantee success.

My experience as a Circuit Manager has established that the CECIF processes requiring a substantial budget are Processes 3, 4, 6 and 7. The reason for substantial funding of Process 3 is that every single aspect of the curriculum management policies must be communicated to the participants. Over and above, scenario planning regarding the implementation of the policies would have to be dealt with and then evaluated by the participants to determine how the scenario could be dealt should they encounter it in school. This would definitely require a substantial amount of money for the compilation of materials and related issues.

The reason for substantial funding of Process 4 of the CECIF is mainly on the basis that schools must have strategic planning sessions where they could even invite outside school

management experts to take them through their plans and strategies to ensure that their organisational aims and objectives and improved learner outcomes will be achieved. This definitely needs a substantial amount of money.

The reason for funding Process 6 is to ensure that the strategies that SMTs agree to employ are not compromised as some would unfold after the conclusion of the normal academic daily activities and during days that are not meant for normal schooling, like weekends and holidays. SMTs would have to be compensated for their travelling and related matters. During the process of implementation, some educators might need to be outsourced to assist in terms of teaching and learning, and this also warrants that funds must be made available.

The monitoring process also needs a substantial amount of money as SMTs could rotate in terms monitoring the implementation of plans, especially during days that do not form part of the normal school day. As the SMTs rotate in terms of monitoring the processes of the implementation of the school plans and strategies, they would need to be compensated for their travel and this can only be done if a budget is in place for the exercise. On this note, it is necessary for the CECIF processes to be funded in order for SMTs to execute their core mandate with ease, thereby ensuring improved learner outcomes on a regular basis.

As potential funders of the guideline, the SGBs, Circuit Managers and DBE structures, and in particular the Institutional Governance section of the Circuits, the Human Resources Development section, the Educator Development section of the District, and the Leadership and Management Development section of the Province should agree on how certain processes would be funded for the successful implementation of the CECIF.

I recommend that the funding of the CECIF be segmented into the funding by SGBs which should amount to 20% of the overall expenditure. This percentage has been arrived at given the size of secondary schools, especially the low quintiles ones where their enrolments are declining year by year. This decline in learner enrolment leads to meagre allocations by the PED, and small enrolment schools could be hardest hit in terms of the funding for the CECIF. I further recommend that funding by the District and Provincial sections is 80% as they are the main sections responsible for school activities like the proposed CECIF.

- Total funding of the CECIF: 100%.

- Funding by SGB: 20%.

- Funding by the District and Province relevant sections: 80%.

Given the shrinking nature of school budgets and the larger budgets of the Provincial component of the Leadership and Management Development section, I think schools would be able to ensure that processes 1, 2, 5, 7 and 8 should be covered by the SMT development budget, given my observation as the Circuit Manager that they would need a minimal budget in comparison to the other processes.

Processes 3, 4, 6 and 9 would need a sizeable budget, hence the indication that they should be borne by the Leadership and Management Development segment of the Provincial office. Over and above, other structures such as the Education Training and Development Practices-Sector Education and Training Authority (ETDP-SETA) should, from their skills development fund, assist schools and the Provincial office in ensuring that the CECIF becomes a success. Skills development should be along the line of processes identified in the CECIF and they could adjust their skills development programmes to cater for the CECIF processes. The office of the Executive Mayors for local and District municipalities should also be engaged to make a portion of their Discretionary Budget available for the funding of the CECIF.

6.3.3   Rolling out the guideline

This guideline is a product of the research study, 'Experiences of School Management Teams in managing low quintile secondary schools in order that they perform better than schools in the high quintile'. It is a brand new guideline whose implementation might be received with mixed feelings by the recipients. The first year of its implementation might be riddled with countless challenges, but the CECIF should be taken in good faith and evaluated to determine the impact it could have on SMTs. SMTs who demonstrate improved learner outcomes in their schools because of its implementation would be expected to become part of the facilitation team to strengthen the guidelines as curriculum management continues in schools.

6.3.4   Strengthening the guideline

It has been pointed out that the implementation of the guideline might receive mixed feelings on the part its potential recipients. In ensuring that this guideline is at all times relevant and serves its intended purpose, its implementation in schools should always be followed up in order to determine its successes and its challenges. The successes could always be taken as stepping stones towards intensifying the implementation, whereas the challenges could be used for the development of turnaround strategies to ensure that the guideline remains relevant and useful at all times.

Circuit Managers and the facilitating team members would be expected to ensure that they embark on an 'Adopt a school campaign' in their Circuits. District officials from the participating sections of Educator Development, Institutional Governance, and Human Resources Development sections would be expected to embark on an 'Adopt a Circuit campaign' in their Districts, and finally, the Provincial Leadership and Management Development sections would be expected to engage in an 'Adopt a District campaign' in the province. Each level would be expected to engage in the adoption of a specific component of the guideline. After these campaigns have been started, all sections should engage in reflection of its embracement, intended purpose, and impact at the various levels.

6.4   CONCLUDING REMARKS

This chapter has reflected on the recommendations that were formulated from the findings of this study. The recommendations were in the form of a guideline; a Comprehensive Effective Curriculum Implementation Framework (CECIF).   This guideline aims to make improvements in terms of curriculum implementation and curriculum management in ordinary public secondary schools in the nine provinces of the RSA. It is envisaged that improvements in curriculum management in schools would yield improved learner outcomes, which is what is expected of every school by the South African public. The participants in this study were SMTs who are the rightful beneficiaries of this developed guideline, given their core mandate in schools.

The custodians of this guideline are Circuit Managers who should at all times ensure that schools are supported in their journey of maximising teaching and learning that leads to the

results expected.

The funders of this guideline are School Governing Bodies as custodians of the finances in schools, and the District and Provincial sections that are mandated with the eradication of gaps on the part of departmental employees, especially in the areas of employee development.

The success of this guideline would always depend on the preparedness, willingness, and determination of all stakeholders affected by its implementation. The stakeholders' input would at all times be embraced in order that this guideline could be made to serve its intended purpose; improved learner outcomes.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Letter of request for permission to conduct research from Education authorities in the Limpopo Province

Enquires : Mehlape MJ   P O Box 2187

Contact No: 0828178699   Segopje

             0722008094   0744

Email:mehlapemj@gmail.com   15 March 2020

Request for permission to conduct research at secondary schools in the Capricorn South District

Title of my research: Experiences of School Management Teams in managing low quintile secondary schools in the Capricorn South District.

Contact Person: Dr LL Toolo

Department: Educational Management and Leadership

Contact details: 0822024350/0124296961/ and Email address toololl@unisa.ac.za

Dear Ms KO Dederen

I, Mehlape MJ, am doing a doctoral research on Experiences of School Management Teams in managing low quintile secondary schools in the Capricorn South District under the supervision of Dr LL Toolo from the Department of Education Management and Leadership at the University of South Africa.

I am requesting for permission to conduct research at schools in the Capricorn South District for my thesis. I will invite principals and School Management Team (SMT) members for participation in this study.

The purpose of my study is to determine the experiences of School Management Teams in managing low quintiles secondary schools in order that they perform better than schools in the high quintiles in the Capricorn South District. Ethical considerations will at all times be embraced to ensure that no participant is harmed for participating in this study. The information that participants provide will be strictly confidential and used for purposes of this study only.

Yours sincerely

_____

Signature of researcher

_____

Main Researcher

Appendix B: Participant information sheet-school SH

B1:   Participant information sheet

![UNISA college of education logo]

Enquires : Mehlape MJ   Date : 20 March 2020

Contact No: 0828178699/0722008094

Date : 20 March 2020

Title : Experiences of School Management Teams in managing low quintile secondary schools in the Capricorn South District.

DEAR PROSPECTIVE PARTICIPANT

My name is MEHLAPE MJ and I am doing research under supervision of Dr Toolo L, a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Education towards a PhD degree at the University of South Africa. We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled: Experiences of School Management Teams in managing low quintile secondary schools in the Capricorn South District.

THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study is expected to collect important information that could contribute towards more knowledge and a better comprehension of the experiences of School Management Teams in managing low quintile secondary schools in the Capricorn South District.

You are invited because you are the School Management Team (SMT) member of a low quintile secondary school that perform better than some secondary schools in the high quintile in the in the Capricorn South District for the past 05 years and therefore regarded as being very knowledgeable in terms of the topic under investigation.

I obtained your contact details from the Circuit Manager _____ of the _____ Circuit which encapsulates your school. The number of participants from your school is seven (07) and includes you, the principal and six (06) other SMT members.

Your actual role in the study would be to give responses to questions that would be pertaining to the research topic as indicated above and to provide me with school administrative records for purposes of doing justice to document analysis as one of the identified research techniques.

The study involves semi-structured interviews. The following questions will be asked:

- Briefly tell me about your life history as an educator.

- What do you understand by SMT?

- What are your duties as an SMT member of this school?

- Which mechanisms do you use to improve learner performance?

- Which education policies guide you in managing curriculum?

- Which support programmes does the Department of Basic Education offer you?

- What changes did you bring in your department?

- What can you say about your working relation with other SMT members?

- What kind of support do you need to become the best SMT member?

- What do you aspire to become in future?

- How is your working relation with your stakeholders?

- For this school to become one of the best what should the SMT do?

- How often do you reflect on your SMT work?

- Which SMT duties are too challenging for you?

- What are the challenges that you encounter as an SMT member?

The expected duration of participation and the time needed to complete interviews is a maximum of 60 minutes per each of the participants. The time allocated to conduct document analysis would be a maximum of 180 minutes.

WITHDRAWAL FROM THIS STUDY EVEN AFTER HAVING AGREED TO PARTICIPATE

Participating 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. You are free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason from the data gathering exercise.

THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY

The potential benefits for partaking in this study are the following:

- You will be in a better position to broaden your knowledge of the experiences of School Management Teams (SMTs) in managing low quintile secondary schools in order that they perform better than schools in the high quintile.

- Participating in this study would bring about confidence, courage and motivation on your part given the nature of the topic for this investigation.

- This study has got a huge potential of empowering you and the SMT in your school to be extremely very well conversant with what to consistently embrace for purposes of ensuring a persistent good performance.

- This investigation will also provide you with guidance on how to keep a huge watchful eye on effective curriculum management and curriculum enhancement issues in your school.

NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES FOR YOU IF YOU PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH PROJECT

- For a fact that I am a Circuit Manager in one of the Circuits of the Capricorn South District, you might to a certain extent during the interviewing session, be governed by nervousness particularly with regard to deliberations or responses.

- The interviews would be proceeding by way of the medium of English. On this note, some of the interview questions might be difficult to understand on your part.

- Sentence construction and the correct use of English during the process of responses might be a challenge on your part.

- It might be correct that as a participant in the data collection proceedings you might be inconsistent in terms of contributing positively towards the creation of sound relations in your work station. On this note, questions that might be having a bearing on relations in the school might cause some discomfort on your part.

- As a participant you might be a subject educator whose subject is regarded as underperformed according to the school target and this may cause some discomfort on your part.

- You might also be governed by uncertainty with regard to the correctness of your responses.

MEASURES THAT WOULD BE TAKEN IF ANY HARM ATTRIBUTABLE TO THIS STUDY CAN OCCUR

You are assured that all information gleaned from you would be kept confidential and would never be divulged to any other person including your colleagues and seniors both in and outside of your school.

Throughout the interviewing session you would be referred to as a respondent. No name would ever be attached to any of your responses.

I am also employed in the Department of Education and very impressed by the performance of your school. May you kindly assist me to tap on your wisdom as to what actually makes your school perform like it is performing!

This study is all about experiences of School Management Teams in managing low quintile secondary schools like yours. At all material times reference should be made of you within the context of an SMT as a management structure of the school and not as an isolated individual.

As you are from a low quintile secondary school that performs better than some schools in the high quintile, I really appreciate the inviting performance of your school hence this investigation. I also embolden you to ensure that the good work is at all material times kept up.

You are made aware that the interviews would be unfolding through the medium of English. However, all questions are straight-forward, unambiguous and constructed by way of a Standard English.

Although you have to make responses by way of the medium of English, your responses would not be judged on the basis of the correctness of your English usage. Just relate to me how you know or find the situation as it is necessitated by the interview question and also how it unfolds in your school.

For any question that is not understandable or clearly captured, you are encouraged to request for it to be repeated and I will gladly make a repetition in terms thereof.

THE CONFIDENTIALITY OF THE INFORMATION YOU CONVEY

Your name will not be recorded anywhere on the hard copies or electronic information that you have conveyed and no one, apart from the researcher, will know about your involvement in this research project. The answers you provide will be given a code number and you will be referred to in this way in the data, any publications, or other research reporting methods such as conference proceedings.

It is brought to your undivided attention that your data may be used for other purposes, such as generating a research report, journal articles or conference proceedings. A report of this investigation will be submitted for publication by the University of South Africa (UNISA), but you will at all times remain anonymous in such a report.

HOW I WILL PROTECT THE SECURITY OF DATA

Hard copies of your responses/answers will be stored by the researcher for a period of five years in a lockable steel cupboard in the office of the Circuit Manager (Office Number 01), Lebopo Circuit Office, 612 Rasefate Street, Mankweng Township for future research or academic purposes. The electronic information will be stored on a password protected desktop computer in the same office (Office number 01) of the Circuit Manager. Future use of the stored data will be subjected to further Research Ethics Review and approval if applicable. Hard copies will automatically be shredded and electronic copies will be permanently deleted from the hard drive of the desktop computer through the use of a relevant software programme.

PAYMENT OR ANY INCENTIVES FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY

You will not be offered any payment, reward or financial incentive for participating in this study. Participation is voluntary.

ETHICAL APPROVAL OF THE STUDY

This study has received written approval from the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee, Unisa. A copy of the approval letter can be obtained from the researcher if you so wish.

INFORMATION ON THE FINDINGS/RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH

If you would like to be informed of the final research findings, please contact the researcher Mr MJ Mehlape on 0828178699/0722008094 or email mehlapemj@gmail.com. The findings are accessible for a period of 05 years. Should you require any further information or want to contact the researcher about any aspect of this study, please contact Dr Toolo, L, Telephone Number, 0124296961, Cell Number 0822024350 or Email toololl@unisa.ac.za.

Should you also have concerns about the way in which this research has been conducted, you may contact Dr Toolo, L, Telephone Number 0124296961, Cell Number 0822024350, Email toololl@unisa.ac.za.

Thank you for taking time to read this information sheet and for participating in this study.

Thank you.

_____

Mehlape M.J

Main Researcher

B2:   Participant information sheet-school TH

Enquires : Mehlape MJ   Date : 20 March 2020

Contact No: 0828178699/0722008094

Date : 20 March 2020

Title : Experiences of School Management Teams in managing low quintile secondary schools in the Capricorn South District.

DEAR PROSPECTIVE PARTICIPANT

My name is **MEHLAPE MJ** and I am doing research under supervision of Dr Toolo L, a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Education towards a PhD degree at the University of South Africa. We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled: **Experiences of School Management Teams in managing low quintile secondary schools in the Capricorn South** District.

THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study is expected to collect important information that could contribute towards more knowledge and a better comprehension of the experiences of School Management Teams in managing low quintile secondary schools in the Capricorn South District.

You are invited because you are the School Management Team (SMT) member of a low quintile secondary school that perform better than some secondary schools in the high quintile in the Capricorn South District for the past 05 years and therefore regarded as being very knowledgeable in terms of the topic under investigation.

I obtained your contact details from the Circuit Manager _____ of the

_____ Circuit which encapsulates your school. The number of participants from your school is six (06) and includes you, the principal and five (05) other SMT members.

Your actual role in the study would be to give responses to questions that would be pertaining to the research topic as indicated above.

The study involves semi-structured interviews. The following questions will be asked:

- Briefly tell me about your life history as an educator.
- What do you understand by SMT?
- What are your duties as an SMT member of this school?
- Which mechanisms do you use to improve learner performance?
- Which education policies guide you in managing curriculum?
- Which support programmes does the Department of Basic Education offer you?
- What changes did you bring in your department?
- What can you say about your working relation with other SMT members?
- What kind of support do you need to become the best SMT member?
- What do you aspire to become in future?
- How is your working relation with your stakeholders?
- For this school to become one of the best what should the SMT do?
- How often do you reflect on your SMT work?
- Which SMT duties are too challenging for you?
- What are the challenges that you encounter as an SMT member?

The expected duration of participation and the time needed to complete interviews is a maximum of 60 minutes per each of the participants. The time allocated to conduct document analysis would be a maximum of 180 minutes.

WITHDRAWAL FROM THIS STUDY EVEN AFTER HAVING AGREED TO PARTICIPATE

Participating 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. You are free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason from the data gathering exercise.

THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY

The potential benefits for partaking in this study are the following:

- You will be in a better position to broaden your knowledge of the experiences of School Management Teams (SMTs) in managing low quintile secondary schools in order that they perform better than schools in the high quintile.

- Participating in this study would bring about confidence, courage and motivation on your part given the nature of the topic for this investigation.

- This study has got a huge potential of empowering you and the SMT in your school to be extremely very well conversant with what to consistently embrace for purposes of ensuring a persistent good performance.

- This investigation will also provide you with guidance on how to keep a huge watchful eye on effective curriculum management and curriculum enhancement issues in your school.

NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES FOR YOU IF YOU PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH PROJECT

- For a fact that I am a Circuit Manager in one of the Circuits of the Capricorn South District, you might to a certain extent during the interviewing session, be governed by nervousness particularly with regard to deliberations or responses.

- The interviews would be proceeding by way of the medium of English. On this note, some of the interview questions might be difficult to understand on your part.

- Sentence construction and the correct use of English during the process of responses might be a challenge on your part.

- It might be correct that as a participant in the data collection proceedings you might be inconsistent in terms of contributing positively towards the creation of sound relations in your work station. On this note, questions that might be having a bearing on relations in the school might cause some discomfort on your part.

- As a participant you might be a subject educator whose subject is regarded as underperformed according to the school target and this may cause some discomfort on your part.

- You might also be governed by uncertainty with regard to the correctness of your responses.

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MEASURES THAT WOULD BE TAKEN IF ANY HARM ATTRIBUTABLE TO THIS STUDY CAN OCCUR

- You are assured that all information gleaned from you would be kept confidential and would never be divulged to any other person including your colleagues and seniors both in and outside of your school.

- Throughout the interviewing session you would be referred to as a respondent. No name would ever be attached to any of your responses.

- I am also employed in the Department of Education and very impressed by the persistent good performance of your school. May you kindly assist me to tap on your wisdom as to what actually makes your low quintile secondary school to perform better than some secondary schools in the high quintile!

- This study is all about experiences of School Management Teams in managing low quintile secondary schools like yours. At all material times reference should be made of you within the context of an SMT as a management structure of the school and not as an isolated individual.

- As you are a School Management Team (SMT) member from a low quintile secondary school that performs better some schools in the high quintile, I really appreciate the inviting performance of your school hence this investigation. I also embolden you to ensure that the good work is at all material times kept up.

- You are made aware that the interviews would be unfolding through the medium of English. However, all questions are straight-forward, unambiguous and constructed by way of a Standard English.

- Although you have to make responses by way of the medium of English, your responses would not be judged on the basis of the correctness of your English usage. Just relate to me how you know or find the situation as it is necessitated by the interview question and also how it unfolds in your school.

- For any question that is not understandable or clearly captured, you are encouraged to request for it to be repeated and I will gladly make a repetition in terms thereof.

THE CONFIDENTIALITY OF THE INFORMATION YOU CONVEY

Your name will not be recorded anywhere on the hard copies or electronic information that you have conveyed and no one, apart from the researcher, will know about your involvement

in this research project. The answers you provide will be given a code number and you will be referred to in this way in the data, any publications, or other research reporting methods such as conference proceedings.

It is brought to your undivided attention that your data may be used for other purposes, such as generating a research report, journal articles or conference proceedings. A report of this investigation will be submitted for publication by the University of South Africa, but you will at all times remain anonymous in such a report.

HOW I WILL PROTECT THE SECURITY OF DATA

Hard copies of your responses/answers will be stored by the researcher for a period of five years in a lockable steel cupboard in the office of the Circuit Manager (Office Number 01), Lebopo Circuit Office, 612 Rasefate Street, Mankweng Township for future research or academic purposes. The electronic information will be stored on a password protected desktop computer in the same office (Office number 01) of the Circuit Manager. Future use of the stored data will be subjected to further Research Ethics Review and approval if applicable. Hard copies will automatically be shredded and electronic copies will be permanently deleted from the hard drive of the desktop computer through the use of a relevant software programme.

PAYMENT OR ANY INCENTIVES FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY

You will not be offered any payment, reward or financial incentive for participating in this study. Participation is voluntary.

ETHICAL APPROVAL OF THE STUDY

This study has received written approval from the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee, Unisa. A copy of the approval letter can be obtained from the researcher if you so wish.

INFORMATION ON THE FINDINGS/RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH

If you would like to be informed of the final research findings, please contact the researcher

Mr MJ Mehlape on 0828178699/0722008094 or email mehlapemj@gmail.com. The findings are accessible for a period of 05 years. Should you require any further information or want to contact the researcher about any aspect of this study, please contact Dr Toolo, L, Telephone Number, 0124296961, Cell Number 0822024350 or Email toololl@unisa.ac.za.

Should you also have concerns about the way in which this research has been conducted, you may contact Dr Toolo, L, Telephone Number 0124296961, Cell Number 0822024350, Email toololl@unisa.ac.za.

Thank you for taking time to read this information sheet and for participating in this study.

Thank you.

_____

Mehlape M.J

Main Researcher

Appendix C: Participant consent

CONSENT/ASSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY (Return slip)

Enquires : Mehlape MJ   Date : 20 March 2020

Contact No: 0828178699/0722008094

I, _____ (participant 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 (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet.

I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable).

I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings, but that my participation will be kept confidential unless otherwise specified.

I agree to the recording of the interviews.

I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Participant Name & Surname (please print)   _____

_____   _____

Participant Signature   Date

Researcher's Name & Surname (please print)   _____

_____   _____

Researcher's signature   Date

REQUEST TO SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

Enquires   : Mehlape MJ

Date : 20 March 2020

Contact No: 0828178699/0722008094

Request for permission to conduct research at low quintile secondary schools in the Capricorn South District.

Title of the title of my research : Experiences of School Management Teams in managing low quintile secondary schools in the Capricorn South District.

Date : 20 March 2020

The Principal

_____ High School

Contact:_____

Dear Mr/Ms_____

I, MEHLAPE MJ am doing research under supervision of Dr Toolo L, a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Education towards a PhD at the University of South Africa. We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled *Experiences of School Management Teams in managing low quintile secondary schools in the Capricorn South District*.

The aim of the study is to determine the experiences of School Management Teams (SMTs) in managing this category of schools such that they perform better than schools in the high quintile in the Capricorn South District

Your school has been selected because it has been performing better than some schools in the high quintile in the Capricorn South District since the year 2013 in terms of grade 12 results.

The study will entail interviews with the principal and a maximum of _____ SMT members, observation in terms of the organizational culture and climate of the school, analysis of school documents and administrative records.

The benefits of this study are contributing towards knowledge and a better comprehension of how School Management Teams (SMTs) manage low quintile secondary schools such that they end up performing better than high quintile schools.

Potential risks are risk of discomfort, risk of inconvenience and risk of correct usage of English language.

There will be no reimbursement or any incentives for participation in the research.

Feedback procedure will entail making the final research report available to every willing participant. However, I will make appointments with each and every one of them through the point of every entry into the school premises, the office of the principal.

Yours sincerely

_____

Mehlape MJ

Main Researcher

Appendix E: Interview schedules

E1:   Interview for SMT members

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

UNISA | college of education

Enquires : Mehlape MJ   Date : 20 March 2020

Contact No: 0828178699/0722008094

Date : 20 March 2020

Title : Experiences of School Management Teams in managing low quintile secondary schools in the Capricorn South District.

DEAR PROSPECTIVE PARTICIPANT

My name is MEHLAPE MJ and I am doing research under supervision of Dr Toolo L, a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Education towards a Phd degree at the University of South Africa. We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled: Experiences of School Management Teams in managing low quintile secondary schools in the Capricorn South District.

THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study is expected to collect important information that could contribute towards more knowledge and a better comprehension of the experiences of School Management Teams in managing low quintile secondary schools in the Capricorn South District.

You are invited because you are the SMT member of a low quintile secondary school that has been performing better than some secondary schools in the high quintile in the Capricorn South District for the past 07 years and therefore regarded as being very knowledgeable in terms of the topic under investigation.

I obtained your contact details from the Circuit Manager Mr/Ms＿＿＿＿＿of the ＿＿＿＿ Circuit which encapsulates your school. The total number of participants from your school is ＿＿＿＿ and includes you, the principal and ＿＿＿＿other SMT members.

Your actual role in the study would be to give responses to questions that would be pertaining to the research topic as indicated above and to provide me with school administrative records for purposes of doing justice to document analysis as one of the identified research techniques.

The study involves semi-structured interviews. The following questions will be asked:

1.   Briefly tell me about your life history as an educator.

2.   What do you understand by SMT?

3.   What are your duties as an SMT member of this school?

4.   Which mechanisms do you use to improve learner performance?

5.   Which education policies guide you in managing curriculum?

6.   Which support programmes does the Department of Basic Education offer you?

7.   What changes did you bring in your department?

8.   What can you say about your working relation with other SMT members?

9.   What kind of support do you need to become the best SMT member?

10.   What do you aspire to become in future?

11.   How is your working relation with your stakeholders?

12.   For this school to become one of the best what should the SMT do?

13.   How often do you reflect on your SMT work?

14.   Which SMT duties are too challenging for you?

15.   What are the challenges that you encounter as an SMT member?

The expected duration of participation and the time needed to complete interviews is a maximum of 60 minutes per each of the participants. The time allocated to conduct document analysis would be a maximum of 180 minutes.

WITHDRAWAL FROM THIS STUDY EVEN AFTER HAVING AGREED TO PARTICIPATE

Participating 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. You are free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason from the data gathering exercise.

THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY

- The potential benefits for partaking in this study are the following:

- You will be in a better position to broaden your knowledge of the experiences of School Management Teams (SMTs) in managing low quintile secondary schools in order that they perform better than schools in the high quintile.

- Participating in this study would bring about confidence, courage and motivation on your part given the nature of the topic for this investigation.

- This study has got a huge potential of empowering you and the SMT in your school to be extremely very well conversant with what to consistently embrace for purposes of ensuring a persistent good performance.

- This investigation will also provide you with guidance on how to keep a huge watchful eye on effective curriculum management and curriculum enhancement issues in your school.

NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES FOR YOU IF YOU PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH PROJECT

- For a fact that I am a Circuit Manager in one of the Circuits of the Capricorn South District, you might to a certain extent during the interviewing session, be governed by nervousness particularly with regard to deliberations or responses.

- The interviews would be proceeding by way of the medium of English. On this note, some of the interview questions might be difficult to understand on your part.

- Sentence construction and the correct use of English during the process of responses might be a challenge on your part.

- It might be correct that as a participant in the data collection proceedings you might be inconsistent in terms of contributing positively towards the creation of sound relations in your work station. On this note, questions that might be having a bearing on relations in the school might cause some discomfort on your part.

- As a participant you might be a subject educator whose subject is regarded as underperformed according to the school target and this may cause some discomfort on your part.

You might also be governed by uncertainty with regard to the correctness of your responses.

MEASURES THAT WOULD BE TAKEN IF ANY HARM ATTRIBUTABLE TO THIS STUDY CAN OCCUR

- You are assured that all information gleaned from you would be kept confidential and would never be divulged to any other person including your colleagues and seniors both in and outside of your school.

- Throughout the interviewing session you would be referred to as a respondent. No name would ever be attached to any of your responses.

- I am also employed in the Department of Education and very impressed by the performance of your school. May you kindly assist me to tap on your wisdom as to what actually makes your school perform like it is performing!

- This study is all about experiences of School Management Teams in managing low quintile secondary schools like yours. At all material times reference should be made of you within the context of an SMT as a management structure of the school and not as an isolated individual.

- As you are from a low quintile secondary school that performs better than some schools in the high quintile, I really appreciate the inviting performance of your school hence this

investigation. I also embolden you to ensure that the good work is at all material times kept up.

- You are made aware that the interviews would be unfolding through the medium of English. However, all questions are straight-forward, unambiguous and constructed by way of a Standard English.

- Although you have to make responses by way of the medium of English, your responses would not be judged on the basis of the correctness of your English usage. Just relate to me how you know or find the situation as it is necessitated by the interview question and also how it unfolds in your school.

- For any question that is not understandable or clearly captured, you are encouraged to request for it to be repeated and I will gladly make a repetition in terms thereof.

THE CONFIDENTIALITY OF THE INFORMATION YOU CONVEY

Your name will not be recorded anywhere on the hard copies or electronic information that you have conveyed and no one, apart from the researcher, will know about your involvement in this research project. The answers you provide will be given a code number and you will be referred to in this way in the data, any publications, or other research reporting methods such as conference proceedings.

It is brought to your undivided attention that your data may be used for other purposes, such as generating a research report, journal articles or conference proceedings. A report of this investigation will be submitted for publication by the University of South Africa (UNISA), but you will at all times remain anonymous in such a report.

HOW I WILL PROTECT THE SECURITY OF DATA

Hard copies of your responses/answers will be stored by the researcher for a period of five years in a lockable steel cupboard in the office of the Circuit Manager (Office Number 01), Lebopo Circuit Office, 612 Rasefate Street, Mankweng Township for future research or academic purposes. The electronic information will be stored on a password protected desktop computer in the same office (Office number 01) of the Circuit Manager. Future use of the stored data will be subjected to further Research Ethics Review and approval if

applicable. Hard copies will automatically be shredded and electronic copies will be permanently deleted from the hard drive of the desktop computer through the use of a relevant software programme.

PAYMENT OR ANY INCENTIVES FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY

You will not be offered any payment, reward or financial incentive for participating in this study. Participation is voluntary.

ETHICAL APPROVAL OF THE STUDY

This study has received written approval from the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee, Unisa. A copy of the approval letter can be obtained from the researcher if you so wish.

INFORMATION ON THE FINDINGS/RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH

If you would like to be informed of the final research findings, please contact the researcher Mr MJ Mehlape on 0828178699/0722008094 or email mehlapemj@gmail.com. The findings are accessible for a period of 05 years. Should you require any further information or want to contact the researcher about any aspect of this study, please contact Dr Toolo, L, Telephone Number, 0124296961, Cell Number 0822024350 or Email toololl@unisa.ac.za.

Should you also have concerns about the way in which this research has been conducted, you may contact Dr Toolo, L, Telephone Number 0124296961, Cell Number 0822024350, Email toololl@unisa.ac.za.

Thank you for taking time to read this information sheet and for participating in this study.

Thank you.

_____

Mehlape M.J

Main Researcher

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Enquires : Mehlape MJ   Date : 20 March 2020

Contact No: 0828178699/0722008094

Date : 20 March 2020

Title : Experiences of School Management Teams in managing low quintile secondary schools in the Capricorn South District.

DEAR PROSPECTIVE PARTICIPANT

My name is **MEHLAPE MJ** and I am doing research under supervision of Dr Toolo L, a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Education towards a PhD degree at the University of South Africa. We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled: **Experiences of School Management Teams in managing low quintile secondary schools in the Capricorn South District.**

THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study is expected to collect important information that could contribute towards more knowledge and a better comprehension of the experiences of School Management Teams in managing low quintile secondary schools in the Capricorn South District.

You are invited because you are the principal of a low quintile secondary school that perform better than some secondary schools in the high quintile in the in the Capricorn South District for the past 07 years and therefore regarded as being very knowledgeable in terms of the topic under investigation.

I obtained your contact details from the Circuit Manager Mr/Ms_____of the _____ Circuit which encapsulates your school. The total number of participants from your school is _____ and includes you as the principal and _____ SMT members.

Your actual role in the study would be to give responses to questions that would be pertaining to the research topic as indicated above and to provide me with school administrative records for purposes of doing justice to document analysis as one of the identified research techniques.

The study involves semi-structured interviews. The following questions will be asked:

1 Briefly tell me about your life history as an educator.
2 What do you understand by SMT?
3 How does the SMT assist in managing curriculum in this school?
4 Does the assistance yield positive outcomes?
5 Which strategies does the SMT use to improve learner performance?
6 Do you see any changes in curriculum delivery under the current SMT?
7 Does your SMT outsource subject educators from other schools?
8 How does the SMT relate with stakeholders?
9 How does SMT members relate with each other?
10 What should the SMT do to make this school one of the best?
11 Do you think the SMT can work hard to make this school one of the best?
12 What challenges are encountered by the SMT in this school?
13 How does the SMT overcome those challenges?
14 What more can you say about the SMT of this school?

The expected duration of participation and the time needed to complete interviews is a maximum of 60 minutes per each of the participants. The time allocated to conduct document analysis would be a maximum of 180 minutes.

WITHDRAWAL FROM THIS STUDY EVEN AFTER HAVING AGREED TO PARTICIPATE

Participating 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. You are free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason from the data gathering exercise.

THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY

The potential benefits for partaking in this study are the following:

- You will be in a better position to broaden your knowledge of the experiences of School Management Teams (SMTs) in managing low quintile secondary schools in order that they perform better than schools in the high quintile.
- Participating in this study would bring about confidence, courage and motivation on your part given the nature of the topic for this investigation.
- This study has got a huge potential of empowering you and the SMT in your school to be extremely very well conversant with what to consistently embrace for purposes of ensuring a persistent good performance.
- This investigation will also provide you with guidance on how to keep a huge watchful eye on effective curriculum management and curriculum enhancement issues in your school.

NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES FOR YOU IF YOU PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH PROJECT

- For a fact that I am a Circuit Manager in one of the Circuits of the Capricorn South District, you might to a certain extent during the interviewing session, be governed by nervousness particularly with regard to deliberations or responses.
- The interviews would be proceeding by way of the medium of English. On this note, some of the interview questions might be difficult to understand on your part.
- Sentence construction and the correct use of English during the process of responses might be a challenge on your part.
- It might be correct that as a participant in the data collection proceedings you might be inconsistent in terms of contributing positively towards the creation of sound relations in your work station. On this note, questions that might be having a bearing on relations in the school might cause some discomfort on your part.

- As a participant you might be a subject educator whose subject is regarded as underperformed according to the school target and this may cause some discomfort on your part.

- You might also be governed by uncertainty with regard to the correctness of your responses.

MEASURES THAT WOULD BE TAKEN IF ANY HARM ATTRIBUTABLE TO THIS STUDY CAN OCCUR

- You are assured that all information gleaned from you would be kept confidential and would never be divulged to any other person including your colleagues and seniors both in and outside of your school.

- Throughout the interviewing session you would be referred to as a respondent. No name would ever be attached to any of your responses.

- I am also employed in the Department of Education and very impressed by the performance of your school. May you kindly assist me to tap on your wisdom as to what actually makes your school perform like it is performing!

- This study is all about experiences of School Management Teams in managing low quintile secondary schools like yours. At all material times reference should be made of you within the context of an SMT as a management structure of the school and not as an isolated individual.

- As you are from a low quintile secondary school that performs better than some schools in the high quintile, I really appreciate the inviting performance of your school hence this investigation. I also embolden you to ensure that the good work is at all material times kept up.

- You are made aware that the interviews would be unfolding through the medium of English. However, all questions are straight-forward, unambiguous and constructed by way of a Standard English.

- Although you have to make responses by way of the medium of English, your responses would not be judged on the basis of the correctness of your English usage. Just relate to me how you know or find the situation as it is necessitated by the interview question and also how it unfolds in your school.

- For any question that is not understandable or clearly captured, you are encouraged to request for it to be repeated and I will gladly make a repetition in terms thereof.

THE CONFIDENTIALITY OF THE INFORMATION YOU CONVEY

Your name will not be recorded anywhere on the hard copies or electronic information that you have conveyed and no one, apart from the researcher, will know about your involvement in this research project. The answers you provide will be given a code number and you will be referred to in this way in the data, any publications, or other research reporting methods such as conference proceedings.

It is brought to your undivided attention that your data may be used for other purposes, such as generating a research report, journal articles or conference proceedings. A report of this investigation will be submitted for publication by the University of South Africa (UNISA), but you will at all times remain anonymous in such a report.

HOW I WILL PROTECT THE SECURITY OF DATA

Hard copies of your responses/answers will be stored by the researcher for a period of five years in a lockable steel cupboard in the office of the Circuit Manager (Office Number 01), Lebopo Circuit Office, 612 Rasefate Street, Mankweng Township for future research or academic purposes. The electronic information will be stored on a password protected desktop computer in the same office (Office number 01) of the Circuit Manager. Future use of the stored data will be subjected to further Research Ethics Review and approval if applicable. Hard copies will automatically be shredded and electronic copies will be permanently deleted from the hard drive of the desktop computer through the use of a relevant software programme.

PAYMENT OR ANY INCENTIVES FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY

You will not be offered any payment, reward or financial incentive for participating in this study. Participation is voluntary.

ETHICAL APPROVAL OF THE STUDY

This study has received written approval from the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee, Unisa. A copy of the approval letter can be obtained from the researcher if you so wish.

INFORMATION ON THE FINDINGS/RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH

If you would like to be informed of the final research findings, please contact the researcher Mr MJ Mehlape on 0828178699/0722008094 or email mehlapemj@gmail.com. The findings are accessible for a period of 05 years. Should you require any further information or want to contact the researcher about any aspect of this study, please contact Dr Toolo, L, Telephone Number, 0124296961, Cell Number 0822024350 or Email toololl@unisa.ac.za.

Should you also have concerns about the way in which this research has been conducted, you may contact Dr Toolo, L, Telephone Number 0124296961, Cell Number 0822024350, Email toololl@unisa.ac.za.

Thank you for taking time to read this information sheet and for participating in this study.

Thank you.

_____

Mehlape M.J

Main Researcher

Appendix F: Document verification instruments

DOCUMENT ANALYSIS GUIDE

Enquires : Mehlape MJ   **Date : 20 March 2020**

Contact No: 0828178699/0722008094

SMT DOCUMENTS ANALYSIS INSTRUMENT

SRN	SMT DOCUMENT	AVAILABILITY	
		YES	NO
1	SMT Minutes Book		
2	SMT meetings Plan		
3	CAPS document		
4	Diagnostic Report		
5	Learners' Code of Conduct		
6	Educators' Code of Conduct		
7	Policy on learner discipline		
8	School Assessment Policy		
9	School Assessment Plan		
10	Misdemeanor Register		
11	SMT Communication Register		
12	Job descriptions for SMT members		
13	Job descriptions for educators		
DEPARTMENTAL LEGISLATIONS			
14	South African Schools Act (SASA) 84 of 1996		
15	Employment of Educators Act (EEA) 76 of 1998		

16	Labour Relations Act (LRA) 66 of 1995		
17	Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC) resolution 08 of 2003		
18	Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC) resolution 01 of 2008		
19	Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development (ISPFTED)		
20	National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development (NPFTED)		
21	National Policy Pertaining to the Programme and Promotion requirements of the National Curriculum Statement.		

_____

Mehlape MJ

Main Researcher

Appendix G: Observation schedule

OBSERVATION SCHEDULE

Enquires : Mehlape MJ   **Date : 20 March 2020**

Contact No: 0828178699/0722008094

OBSERVATION ASPECT	SCALE		
	Poor	Fair	Good
Observance of the starting time by learners			
Observance of the starting time by educators			
Observance of the starting time by management			
Morning lessons attendance by learners			
Morning lessons attendance by educators			
Morning lessons attendance by management			
Commencement of the first lesson period for the day by learners			
Commencement of the first lesson period for the day by educators			
Commencement of the first lesson period for the day by management			
Commencement of the first lesson period after break by learners			
Commencement of the first lesson period after break by educators			
Commencement of the first lesson period after break by management			
Afternoon lessons attendance by learners			
Afternoon lessons attendance by educators			
Afternoon lessons attendance by SMT			
Learner movement during lesson periods			

Educator movement during lesson periods			
Visibility of the SMT during lesson periods			
Teaching and learning environment			
Teaching and learning atmosphere			
Staffroom atmosphere during lesson periods			
Staffroom atmosphere during breaks			
Staffroom atmosphere after breaks			
Visibility of the school vision statement wall			
Visibility of the school organisational values			
Condition of the school fencing			
Condition of the school buildings			

_____

Mehlape MJ

Main Researcher

Appendix H: Letter granting permission to conduct research from education authorities in Limpopo Province

DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

CONFIDENTIAL

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

Mehlape MJ
Box 2187
SEGOPJE
0744

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

1. The above bears reference.

2. The Department wishes to inform you that your request to conduct research has been approved. Topic of the research proposal: **"EXPERIENCE OF SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAMS IN MANAGING LOW QUINTILE SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE CAPRICORN SOUTH DISTRICT"**

3. The following conditions should be considered:

3.1 The research should not have any financial implications for Limpopo Department of Education.

3.2 Arrangements should be made with the Circuit Office and the School concerned.

3.3 The conduct of research should not in anyhow disrupt the academic programs at the schools.

3.4 The research should not be conducted during the time of Examinations especially the fourth term.

3.5 During the study, applicable research ethics should be adhered to; in particular the principle of voluntary participation (the people involved should be respected).

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH: MEHLAPE MJ
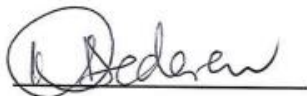
3.6 Upon completion of research study, the researcher shall share the final product of the research with the Department.

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

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

Best wishes.

26/08/2020

Mrs Dederen KO
Acting Head of Department

Date

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH: MEHLAPE MJ

Appendix I: Ethics clearance certificate

UNISA COLLEGE OF EDUCATION ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Date: 2019/11/13

Ref: **2019/11/13/8629196/26/AM**

Name: Mr MJ Mehlape

Student No.: 8629196

Dear Mr MJ Mehlape

Decision: Ethics Approval from
2019/11/13 to 2024/11/13

Researcher(s): Name: Mr MJ Mehlape
E-mail address: 8629196@mylife.unisa.ac.za
Telephone: 0828178688

Supervisor(s): Name: Dr LL Toolo
E-mail address: toololl@unisa.ac.za
Telephone: 012 429 6961

Title of research:

EXPERIENCES OF SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAMS IN MANAGING LOW QUINTILE SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE CAPRICORN SOUTH DISTRICT

Qualification: PhD Education Management

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee for the above mentioned research. Ethics approval is granted for the period 2019/11/13 to 2024/11/13.

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

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

1. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.
2. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee.

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.

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 requires additional ethics clearance.

7. No field work activities may continue after the expiry date **2024/11/13**. Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

Note:

The reference number **2019/11/13/8629196/26/AM** should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.

Kind regards,

Prof AT Motlhabane
CHAIRPERSON: CEDU RERC
motlhat@unisa.ac.za

Prof PM Sebate
EXECUTIVE DEAN
Sebatpm@unisa.ac.za

Approved - decision template – updated 16 Feb 2017

Appendix J: Language editing certificate

Melody Edwards

Editing • Formatting •Writing •Research •Document preparation
----

March 2021

To whom it may concern:

This is to certify that I have professionally edited and formatted the following thesis:

EXPERIENCES OF SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAMS IN MANAGING LOW QUINTILE SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE CAPRICORN SOUTH DISTRICT
by
MALEKUTU JOHANNES MEHLAPE

Melody Edwards

Editing, Writing, Research, Document preparation
BA Hons (Communications & Industrial Psychology)

Member: The English Academy
Member: Professional Editor's Group
Member: Society for Industrial & Organizational Psychology SA
Member: Academic & Non-fiction Authors' Association of SA
Associate: Consortium for Language Dynamics

Tel: 012-348-1676
Cell: 082-496-8156

Appendix K: Turnitin report

Experiences of School Management Teams in managing low quintile secondary schools in the Capricorn South District

ORIGINALITY REPORT

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