EXPLORING CHALLENGES OF IMPLEMENTING SCHOOL-BASED ASSESSMENT IN HIGH SCHOOLS OF MOPANI WEST DISTRICT

by

TSAKANE SYLVIA HLATSHWAYO

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DECLARATION

I, Ms Tsakane Sylvia Hlatshwayo, student number 7275471, declare that *EXPLORING CHALLENGES OF IMPLEMENTING SCHOOL-BASED ASSESSMENT IN HIGH SCHOOLS OF MOPANI WEST DISTRICT*, is my own work, and that all sources used or quoted has been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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

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

……………………………………   ……………………………….

SIGNATURE

(Ms Tsakane Sylvia Hlatshwayo)   DATE

DEDICATION

I am forever indebted to my children, Pruddy, my first-born son, Amukelani Nhlamulo, my only daughter, and to my last-born son, Lunghile Ntshembo, for their prayers.

They believe in my abilities and tirelessly supported me in every step of the way.

I dedicate this thesis to my late second son, Evans "Evvy"., who passed on before he could witness the fruits of the work he fully supported.

I hope this work serves as inspiration to my grandchildren and future generations to come.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

ABSTRACT

School-based assessment, one of the tools used to assess competence, skills, values and attitudes, is an important step in the learning process and determines whether the learner has met the course objectives. The fact that school-based assessment serves as a component of the final promotional mark for all the registered candidates in South Africa, its importance cannot be undermined. This means that the school-based assessment mark is a compulsory component of the final promotion mark for all candidates registered for the National Senior Certificate. School-based assessment is an allocated 25% of the final promotion mark in Grades 10 to 12. The absence of school-based assessment mark in the candidate will result in learners receiving incomplete results, which means repeating the subject or the year to re-do school-based assessment tasks.

There is a shift towards increased accountability and assessment in schools with regard to school-based assessment implementation. It is for this reason that the study explored challenges that educators Heads of Department and deputy principals face in the implementation of school-based assessment.

The research methods comprised semi-structured interviews and participant observations. A sample of twenty-five (25) participants was purposively selected consisting of ten educators (five males and five females) with two educators from each school, ten Heads of Department (five males and five females) with two Heads of Department from each school and five deputy principals (two females and three males) with one deputy principal from each school was used.

Data were analysed and interpreted in this study. Findings of this study confirms challenges during the implementation of school-based assessment. The challenges are influenced by many factors for example, training content gap and attitudes. The study indicates that for school-based assessment to be successful, teachers and

Heads of Department needs to be dedicated in displaying creativity by using variety of strategies during their implementation of school-based assessment. Further study on school-based assessment implementation is inevitable to ensure the success of school-based assessment.

XIANAKANYIWA

Ku kamberiwa loku simekiweke exikolweni ku tshama ku ri ku kandziyisa ka nkoka pholisi ya kharikhulamu ya Afrika-Dzonga hambileswi ku nga na ku cinca loku xiyekaka na nhluvukiso eka sisiteme ya Dyondzo. Mhaka ya leswaku timaraka to kambela leti simekiweke exikolweni ti tirha tanihi xiphemu xa mpimo xa mfungho wo hetelela wa ku tlakusiwa eka vahlawuriwa hinkwavo lava tsarisiweke eAfrika-Dzonga, nkoka wa yona a wu nge tekeriwi ehansi.

Hi ku ya hi milawu leyi fambelanaka na mafambiselo, vufambisi na vufambisi bya xikambelo xa Xitifikheti xa le Henhla xa Rixaka (Xitiviso xa Nawu xa Nomboro ya 371 eka Gazete ya Mfumo No. 37651 ya siku ra 16 Mawuwani 2014) ehansi ka ndzima ya vumbirhi, ya ndzawulo ya dyondzo ya masungulo eAfrika-Dzonga, xikolo- mfungho wo kambela lowu simekiweke i xiphemu lexi bohaka xa mfungho wo hetelela wa ku tlakusiwa eka vahlawuriwa hinkwavo lava tsarisiweke eka Xitifikheti xa Rixaka xa le Henhla.

Nkambelo lowu simekiweke exikolweni wu fanele ku hlayela 25% wa 75% wa mfungho wo hetelela wa ku tlakusiwa eka giredi ya 10 ku ya eka 12. Ku pfumaleka ka mfungho wa xikambelo lowu simekiweke exikolweni eka muhlawuriwa swi ta endla leswaku a kuma mbuyelo lowu nga helelangiki. Mukamberiwa wo tano a nge vi na mbuyelo naswona u fanele ku phindha dyondzo kumbe lembe ku endla nakambe mintirho yo kambela leyi simekiweke exikolweni.

Ku na ku cinca ku ya eka ku engeteleriwa ka vutihlamuleri na ku kambela eswikolweni mayelana na ku tirhisiwa ka nkambisiso lowu simekiweke eswikolweni. Hi xivangelo lexi ndzavisiso lowu a wu kunguhate ku lavisisa ku twisisa ka ku tirhisiwa ka nkambisiso lowu simekiweke exikolweni exikarhi ka vadyondzisi, Tinhloko ta Tindzawulo na Vaseketeri va tinhloko ta swikolo.

Maendlelo ya ndzavisiso ya katsa swibumabumelo swa vatekaxiave na mimbulavurisano. Xikombiso xa makume mbirhi ntlhanu (25) wa vatekaxiave lava vumbiwaka hi khume ra vadyondzisi (ntlhanu wa vavanuna na ntlhanu wa vavasati) na vadyondzisi vambirhi ku suka exikolweni xin'wana na xin'wana, khume ra Tinhloko

ta ndzawulo (ntlhanu wa vavanuna na ntlhanu wa vavasati) na Tinhloko timbirhi ta tindzawulo ku suka eka xikolo xin'wana na xin'wana na ntlhanu wa Vaseketeri va tinhloko (vaxisati vambirhi na vanharhu va xinuna) na xandla xin'we xa nhloko ya xikolo ku suka exikolweni xin'wana na xin'wana ku tirhisiwile.

Data yi xopaxopiwile no hlamuseriwa eka ndzavisiso lowu. Swikumiwa swa ndzavisiso lowu swi tiyisisa mintlhontlho hi nkarhi wa ku tirhisiwa ka nkambisiso lowu simekiweke exikolweni. Mintlhontlho yi kuceteriwa hi swilo swo tala xikombiso, ku hambana ka nhundzu ya ndzetelo na mavonelo. Dyondzo yi vula leswaku leswaku ku kamberiwa loku simekiweke exikolweni ku humelela, vadyondzisi na ti-HOD's va fanele ku tinyiketela eku kombiseni ka vutumbuluxi hi ku tirhisa tindlela to hambana hi nkarhi wa ku tirhisiwa ka vona ka nkambisiso lowu simekiweke exikolweni. Dyondzo yo ya emahlweni eka ku tirhisiwa ka nkambisiso lowu simekiweke exikolweni a yi papalateki ku tiyisisa ku humelela ka nkambisiso lowu simekiweke exikolweni.

OPSOMMING

Skoolgebaseerde assessering bly 'n seminale onderstreep van Suid-Afrikaanse kurrikulumbeleid ten spyte van die noemenswaardige veranderinge en ontwikkelings in die onderwysstelsel. Die feit dat skoolgebaseerde assesseringspunte dien as 'n maatstafkomponent van die finale promosiepunt vir al die geregistreerde kandidate in Suid-Afrika, die belangrikheid daarvan kan nie ondermyn word nie.

Volgens regulasies met betrekking tot die uitvoering, administrasie en bestuur van die Nasionale Senior Sertifikaat-eksamen (Regulasiekennisgewing No. 371 in Staatskoerant No. 37651 gedateer 16 Mei 2014) onder hoofstuk twee, van die departement van basiese onderwys in Suid-Afrika, is 'n skool- gebaseerde assesseringspunt is 'n verpligte komponent van die finale bevorderingspunt vir alle kandidate wat vir die Nasionale Senior Sertifikaat geregistreer is.

Die skoolgebaseerde assessering moet 25% van die 75% finale bevorderingspunt in graad 10 tot 12 tel. Die afwesigheid van skoolgebaseerde assesseringspunt by die kandidaat sal daartoe lei dat hy of haar onvolledige uitslae ontvang. So 'n kandidaat sal nie gekeur word nie en hy of sy moet die vak of die jaar herhaal om skoolgebaseerde assesseringstake weer te doen.

Daar is 'n verskuiwing na verhoogde aanspreeklikheid en assessering in skole met betrekking tot skoolgebaseerde assesseringsimplementering. Dit is om hierdie rede dat die studie bedoel was om die begrip van implementering van skoolgebaseerde assessering onder onderwysers, departementshoofde en adjunkhoofde te ondersoek.

Die navorsingsmetodes bestaan uit deelnemers se waarnemings en onderhoude. 'n Steekproef van vyf-en-twintig (25) deelnemers bestaande uit tien onderwysers (vyf mans en vyf vroue) met twee opvoeders van elke skool, tien departementshoofde (vyf mans en vyf vroue) met twee departementshoofde van elke skool en vyf adjunkhoofde (twee vroue en drie mans) met een adjunkhoof van elke skool is gebruik.

Data is in hierdie studie ontleed en geïnterpreteer. Bevindinge van hierdie studie bevestig uitdagings tydens die implementering van skoolgebaseerde assessering. Die uitdagings word deur baie faktore beïnvloed, byvoorbeeld opleidingsinhoudgaping en

houdings. Die studie impliseer dat vir skoolgebaseerde assessering om suksesvol te wees, onderwysers en HOD's toegewyd moet wees om kreatiwiteit aan die dag te lê deur verskeie strategieë te gebruik tydens hul implementering van skoolgebaseerde assessering. Verdere studie oor die implementering van skoolgebaseerde assessering is onvermydelik om die sukses van skoolgebaseerde assessering te verseker.

PRAISE SONG

Ayeye, hi teto wena Mashishimana Robert Phakula, ntirho wa nthombhi ya wena Sylvia hi lowu, wu amukele hi mandla mambirhi wena Rhiga Msomi. Ku vula ka wena u nga si hundza emisaveni awu n'wi vitana "Via" n'wana wo tlhariha, loyi anga ta dyondzeka, kunene swi hetisekile. I mativula ya wena na Magret Somisa.

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Hi va ka matamba hi ku xurha hi ku ku nya swa karhata. Re do Re ke dibitsi mo Re bone mabala, re se re bone mabala re ka se re ke dibitsi. Ngwana kgoshi re loba ka moka a re dzibe go ba tlo biya mani bokgoshi. Re ba makgana go boswa. Re ba molwa ka mphaka ka gore molomu wa labisa. Hi va ka ncimba wukulu, va Risimati. Ke vadokwa va manchaka mayimele yoyee, feteee.

x

ACRONYMS

BGCSE	Botswana General Certificate for Secondary Education
CAP	Curriculum and Assessment Policy
CAPS	Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement
CASS	Continuous Assessment
CAT	Common Assessment Task
CES	Centre for Effective Services
CIE	Cambridge International General Examination
CMEC	Council of Ministers of Education, Canada
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
DoE	Department of Education
ESSA	Every Student Succeeds Act
FET	Further Education and Training
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
GET	General Education and Training
GETF	Ghana Education Trust Fund
GDE	Gauteng Department of Education
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HoD	Head of Department
HRDSSA	Human Resource Development Strategy for South Africa
JCE	Junior Certificate Examination
KCPE	Kenya Certificate of Primary Education
LDoE	Limpopo Department of Education
LoLT	Language of Learning and Teaching
LTSM	Learner/Teacher Support Material
MEC	Member of Executive Council

NSC	National Senior Certificate
NNSSF	National Norms and Standards for School Funding
NUSAS	National Union of South African Students
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
PAM	Personnel Administrative Measures
RNPE	Revised National Policy on Education
SAG	Subject Assessment Guidelines
SADTU	South African Democratic Teachers' Union
SAHRC	South African Human Rights Commission
SAQA	South African Qualification Authority
SASA	South African Schools Act 84 of 1996
SBA	School-Based Assessment
SMT	School Management Team
SRL	Self-Regulated Learning
STD	Secondary Teachers' Diploma
STR	Student-Teacher Ratio
TRS	Teachers' Retirement System
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WACE	Western Australian Certificate of Education
WCED	Western Cape Education Department
WENR	World Education News + Reviews.
ZIMSEC	Zimbabwe Schools Examination Council

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CHAPTER 1

STUDY ORIENTATION

1.1   INTRODUCTION

The Department of Basic Education (DBE) and the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) respectively share the responsibility for providing formal education in South Africa's public formal schools and institutions of higher learning such as universities (www.education.gov.za). The Department of Basic Education's mandate is to focus on providing formal education which includes teaching, learning and assessment to all public schools from Grade R to Grade 12, and adult literacy programmes. On the other hand, the Department of Higher Education and Training provides formal education which includes teaching, learning and assessment to all public institutions of higher education and training such as universities, and other post-school education and training, as well as coordinating the Human Resource Development Strategy for South Africa (HRDSSA) (www.education.gov.za). It is however, important to note that the focus of this study is on school-based assessment in public schools which fall under the Department of Basic Education (DBE). It does not include institutions which fall under the DHET.

Assessment remains an essential component in the teaching and learning process. When the Department of Basic Education (DBE) in South Africa introduced the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) (DBE, 2011a) in 2012, each school subject had its own Subject Assessment Guidelines (SAG) (National Protocol for Assessment Grades R-12, 2011). The above-mentioned documents guided South African schools during the implementation of school-based assessment (SBA) as part of teaching and learning process (www.education.gov.za). School-based assessment (SBA), a form of assessment integral to the teaching and learning process, collects, analyses and interprets evidence to assist stakeholders in deciding about the progress of learners in their learning, according to the National Protocol for Assessment Grades R-12 (DBE, 2011b:3).

Regardless of the availability of the above-mentioned documents provided by the Department, educators have been experiencing difficulties with the implementation of school-based assessment. Lubisi & Murphy (2010:5) reported that despite of the different types of assessment policies available for assisting teachers, the implementation of SBA remains a challenge in schools. This study therefore focuses on exploring the difficulties experienced during the process of implementation of school-based assessment in high schools of the Mopani West District in Limpopo Province.

This chapter presents the background of the study, its rationale and the problem statement. Research questions, sub-questions, the aim and objectives of the study as well as the theoretical framework are also presented. A preliminary review of literature is conducted and an overview of the research methodology, the research approach and design, as well as the methods which include the population, and sampling of the study is given. The latter will lead to the procedure of collecting data and analysing it. Validity and reliability as well as trustworthiness of the study are presented and ethical considerations are briefly outlined. The limitations that could occur during the study will be presented. The final sections of the chapter relate to defining key concepts or terms used in the study with the final section being the outline of the full thesis.

1.2   THE BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

There is evident improvement in education systems regarding the development of different perspectives to learner assessment. The most extensive one being the introduction of school-based continuous assessment, which offers continuous, ongoing and interactive feedback to the students about their learning achievement (Brown, 2016:14) and informs future learning (Brown, 2008:iii). SBA learning is a solid indicator of student learning and involves various forms such as visual, written and oral assessments (Kouritzin & Visard, 1999:41) which involves multiple sources. However, teachers as implementers of school-based assessment policy tend to experience challenges during the process.

As a subject advisor based in the Mopani West District (Limpopo), I have observed a slight improvement. Teachers and learners are now aware that school-based assessment assists in gathering evidence of learner performance throughout the year

before they sit for their once-off final examination at the end of the year. In addition, learners themselves understand that school-based assessment carries 25% of the 100 marks of the final mark in the further education and training band (FET) which is Grades10-12.

In some African countries such as Swaziland, Tanzania and Uganda, the use of school-based assessment has been implemented in schools, but with varying degrees of success. In Swaziland, school-based assessment, referred to as continuous assessment, has been implemented to enhance both teaching and learning processes (Faremi, Thwala & Maziya, 2023:32). Learners in Swaziland schools acknowledge that continuous assessment has a positive impact on their learning. The recommendations of the study is that teachers need to consider the administering continuous assessment regularly, as this practice will serve the purpose of preparing the learners for examinations at the end of the academic year (Faremi et al., 2023:32).

Masuku, Oleyele and Kelly (2019:11-13) reported that continuous assessment approach was used to close the identified gaps in learning in contrast to traditional summative assessment where learners were assessed formerly at the end of the year. Tools used during continuous assessment (school-based assessment) in Swaziland include tests, quizzes, oral presentations and assignments. The authors concluded that though teachers implemented informal formative assessment as per its standard practice, the results were not credible and reliable because teachers sometimes resorted to giving learners answers to demanding questions. It was further recommended by the authors that in-service training workshops for the teachers should be conducted as this could improve the success of school-based assessment (Masuku et al., 2019:11-13).

In Tanzania, continuous assessment (school-based assessment) was implemented for the first time after the Musoma Resolution (Njabili,1987:1). The Resolution stressed the importance of doing away with the writing of a single examination at the end of the academic year. According to the results of the study that was conducted by Byabato and Kisamo (2014:55), the implementation of continuous assessment (school-based assessment) in Tanzanian schools was not a success due to challenges such as lack of integrity by teachers, who displayed favouritism to some learners. Such learners

who tend to be favoured would receive marks that were inflated and therefore not be credible. Another factor which prevailed was the lack of a uniform, standardised implementation procedure. Generally, teachers displayed little or no in-depth knowledge of continuous assessment (school-based assessment) practices (Byabato & Kisamo, 2014:55). The GESCI Report (2022:68) cited the example that teachers were challenged in implementing continuous assessment (school-based assessment) because of lack of knowledge.

Regardless of the challenges experienced in the implementation of continuous assessment in Uganda, there is recognition of its importance during the teaching and learning process. The value of continuous assessment in Uganda is supported by Mugenyi (2014:5) who reported that the advantages of continuous assessment (school-based assessment) provide guidance in assisting individual learners, encourages teacher participation in overall assessment of learners, sustains the impact on teaching and learning and improves the quality of learner achievements and places the teacher at the centre of all performance activities.

A study conducted by Ritah and Nduhura (2022:44) revealed that teachers in Mukono District in Uganda uses various assessment tasks such as orals and written tests, projects and recap exercises as their monitoring and evaluation yardstick for curriculum implementation. The authors further perceive continuous assessment as the systematic evaluation approach that evaluates learners' academic performance with no psychological strains and stress of one final examination at the end of the academic year. The assessment approach offers multiple opportunities for strengthening learner achievement with less anxiety, confusion or errors (Ritah & Nduhura, 2022:44). Continuous assessment (school-based assessment) assists the teacher in regulating the readiness level of learners; however, during the authors however recommended that parents become involved in the process of teaching and learning of their children.

In South Africa, school-based assessment, was officially implemented in all grades in 2010. Learners are expected to write formal tasks throughout the year to accumulate school-based assessment which carries 25% of their final year marks. However there has been uncertainty and negative attitude amongst implementers. School-based

assessment in schools of the Mopani West district which falls under the Limpopo Department of Education (LPDE), seems to be a challenge when it comes to its implementation as expected by policy. Being a subject advisor in the district, I noticed with concern that there have been several factors that work against the successful implementation of school-based assessment in high schools of the Mopani West District with regard to approach, methods, attitude and proper knowledge. Barriers to successful school-based assessment in schools of the Mopani West District include overcrowded classes, teacher's workload, developmental feedback to both teachers and learners, insufficient or lack of Learner/Teacher Support Material (LTSM), learners' absenteeism, monitoring and support. This matter is aggravated by the slow process of training and coaching workshops for Heads of Department and educators (Ramalepe, 2014:16).

This study therefore explored the contextual factors that hinder the effective implementation of school-based assessment within the high schools of the Mopani West District, Limpopo.

1.3   RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

According to the National Protocol for Assessment Grades R-12 (DBE, 2011b:5) school-based assessment is a compulsory component with regard to progressing and promoting learners in all the different phases of schooling (2011b:5). The protocol assists in addressing competency of the content, the skills, the values and attitudes of the subject. It further provides learners, parents and teachers with outcomes that are give evidence of the knowledge that learners have and therefore indicates their competency in applying the knowledge thereof. It is imperative that assessment tasks and final examinations be designed to give the intended outcome during assessment (DBE, 2011b:5).

With my experience as a curriculum advisor in the Mopani West District, I have realised that implementing a school-based assessment policy within high schools is affected by contextual factors experienced by the various stakeholders such as the heads of department, educators and learners, hence this study.

As indicated by the Department of Basic Education, the role of high school Heads of Department as leaders of learning includes supervising teaching and learning of which assessment is an integral part (Mpisane, 2015:2). They are also tasked with conducting departmental meetings, supporting teachers and assessing their performance. However, Heads of Department based in high schools in the Mopani West District have indicated to me that they are not aware of the roles they are supposed to play in some of the subjects they are heading and as a result, they are not confident in supporting and monitoring educators during the process of implementing school-based assessment.

When one focuses on the above current situation, the implementation of school-based assessment seems to be compromised, hence the rationale for conducting this study is to identify challenges that stakeholders experience during the process of school-based assessment implementation in high schools in the Mopani West District. Different stake holders who are directly involved while implementing will be engaged at exploring the challenges working against the effective implementation of this policy in high schools located in the Mopani West district.

The focus of this study was on the roles that the Heads of Department and the educators should play at school level for the effective implementation of the school-based assessment policy.

1.4   THE PROBLEM STATEMENT

Prior to 1994, the apartheid South African education system used tests, exams, and marks obtained by learners during the year for progression; however, the year marks seemed to be collected in different ways in schools (Sayed, Kanjee & Nkomo, 2013:4). Generally, the year marks were in the form of summative tests or examinations which were written once off to assess learners without multiple opportunities given. The mark that the learner obtained for the test or examination was used to determine the progression to the following grade, a practice that disadvantaged many learners.

Since education reform in South Africa, assessment of the various subjects has been indicated in the curriculum documents such as the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) (DBE, 2011a). Section 4 of the document outlines the types and

number of assessment tasks to be given to learners during the year. However, it is silent on how marks should be allocated on the various forms of assessment, further to this, this section does not provide clear guidelines. The latter is thus open to various interpretations and implementations with regard to allocation of marks on assessments. Educators in the Mopani West District have been trying to improve the quality of formal tasks by administering Common Assessment Tasks (CAT). Common Assessment Tasks have emanated as the strategy of the Limpopo Department of Education in trying to improve the quality of school-based assessment. The challenge with regard to common assessment tasks arises with the value that it carries and whether it is credible, reliable or valid. This is caused by the fact that the individual subject teacher decides the content, skills and knowledge to be assessed (Motsamai, 2016:4-5).

Implementing the school-based assessment policy in high schools in Limpopo seems to be a problem as indicating by teachers not following Subject Assessment Guidelines (SAG), as indicated in the National Protocol for Assessment Grades R-12, (DBE, 2011b) and a lack of evidence of school-based assessment tasks. The researcher, as subject adviser, has observed how implementers of school-based assessment in Mopani West District, violate or ignore the subject assessment guidelines (SAG) when planning and implementing activities for school-based assessment. This practice has an effect on how assessment should be implemented and managed. Not following the guidelines influences the development of valid and reliable assessment tasks. The National Protocol for Assessment Grades R-12, (DBE, 2011b:7), stipulates that teachers need to produce files containing formal assessment tasks and those who fail to do so can be accused of misconduct and may face disciplinary measures, as per paragraph 5(3) of the policy. The formal assessment, which constitutes 25% of the year mark and consists of a range of task, tests and a mid-year examination in any subject in the further education and training band phase is noted as the school-based assessment. The absence of evidence of school-based assessment, with no valid reason, results in the candidate registered for that specific subject receiving incomplete results (DBE, 2011b:7).

Of concern in the Mopani West District, is that in 2018, 1.3 percent of Limpopo's school-based assessment marks for Grade 12's were rejected by Umalusi, the Council

for Quality Assurance in General and Further Education and Training. This practice seems to be happening every year including the current year (2023). The latter could mean that implementers of school-based assessment do it for compliance only without giving fair, valid, credible or reliable attention. This is a serious problem as it affects the end-of-year results.

Based on the problems highlighted, regarding implementation of the school-based assessment policy, it seems that school-based assessment is not properly conducted in high schools located in the Mopani West District. This practice results in ineffective implementation of school-based assessment, hence the need to explore challenges regarding the implementation of school-based assessment in high schools of the Mopani West District.

1.5   THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The main research question guiding this study is: *What are the challenges of implementing School-Based Assessment (SBA) in high schools of the Mopani West District?*

The following questions constitute the sub-questions of the study:

1. Why is school-based assessment not successfully implemented in high schools in the Mopani West District?
2. What challenges do high school educators face in implementing school-based assessment?
3. What challenges do high school heads of departments face in implementing school-based assessment?
4. What challenges do high school deputy principals face in implementing school-based assessment?
5. How can the challenges of implementing school-based assessment at Mopani West District high schools be overcome?

1.6   AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study was to explore challenges of implementing school-based assessment at high schools in the Mopani West District.

The objectives of the study include the following:

1. To identify the reason for school-based assessment not being successfully implemented in high schools in the Mopani West District?
2. To explore the challenges of implementing school-based assessment at high schools by educators of the Mopani West District.
3. To explore the challenges of implementing school-based assessment at high school by Heads of Department.
4. To explore the challenges of implementing school-based assessment at high school by deputy principals.
5. To ascertain how challenges of implementing school-based assessment at Mopani West District high schools could be overcome.

1.7   THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A theoretical framework could be described as a well-developed, coherent explanation for an event (Vithal, Jansen & Jansen, 2010:17). Sitwala (2014:5) states that a theoretical framework refers to the theory that a researcher chooses to guide the research, the act of applying the theory, or a set of concepts drawn from one and the same theory, to offer clarification about an occurrence or a research problem. Varpio, Pardise, Uijtdehaan and Young (2020:07) summarise the definition of a theoretical framework as a reflection of the work that the researcher engages in for using a theory in a study.

In formulating a theoretical framework for this study of exploring challenges in the implementation of school-based assessment in high schools of the Mopani West District, the researcher adopted the explanation by Sitwala. The working definition of this study is that a theoretical framework is a set of concepts (implementation, school-based assessment, high schools and Mopani West District) which offers clarification of the occurrences of a particular event/phenomenon. The phenomenon of this study is school-based assessment, and the problem thereof is its ineffective implementation in high schools of the Mopani West District.

In order to explain and master the phenomena of the study, constructivist grounded theory was adopted in this research. Constructivist grounded theory (sometimes called

constructivist theory) does not see individuals constructing meanings of events alone; it sees them as being part of the community of learning, for example, a school (Cottone, 2007:3; Prochaska & Norcross, 2007:2). Vygotsky, 1978:6) is regarded as the father of social constructivist theory. Vygotsky rejected the assumption made by Piaget who stated that it was possible to separate learning from social context. Vygotsky,1978:6) believes that the basic tenet of constructivism is that students learn by doing rather than observing (www.ucdoer.i.e>index.php>const). Social constructivism originated as a concept to address the nature of reality. It emerged 35 years ago, and had origins in sociology, and is associated with the post-modern era in qualitative research (Walker, 2015:37). It is the way in which people or groups socially construct the world of experience and make the meaning out of it. To take it further, constructivism concerns themselves with what is known about the human world of social experience, not the objective realities of the natural world (Stefano, 2013:2). Constructivist Grounded Theory is a theory of knowledge in sociology and communication that examines the knowledge and understanding of the world that are developed jointly by individuals.

This study views the nature of school-based assessment implementation as the result of various problems emerging from research (Motsamai, 2016:6). These problems include overcrowded classes, insufficient briefing workshops for educators, limited availability of learning/teaching support materials (LTSM), undisciplined learners towards implementation of school-based assessment and workload of teachers.

This study argues that one's knowledge is vital as it is the crucial yardstick to change build educator and head of department perception of school-based assessment policy, building their confidence to engage with process of assessment and create a conducive atmosphere for implementation of school-based assessment.

1.8   PRELIMINARY LITERATURE REVIEW

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2014:108), a review of literature in qualitative research is used to document value ability of the topic because a qualitative researcher is able to refer to the literature when collecting and analysing data. Since the research focuses on exploring challenges of implementing school-based assessment in high schools of the Mopani West District, the review of literature explored issues globally,

regionally and locally. A detailed review of literature is discussed in Chapter 4 with main topics focussing on implementation of school-based assessment in international countries such as Britain, China and Australia, and regional African countries such as Nigeria, Kenya and Zimbabwe.

School-based assessment is a form of assessment that is integrated in the teaching and learning process. It is a continuous process that is planned to identify, gather and interpret information with regard to learners' performance using different forms of assessment. There are four steps to school-based assessment (1) generate and collect evidence of achievement, (2) evaluate evidence, (3) recording of the findings and (4) to use the information to understand how to help the learners so that they are developed in order to see positive changes during the process, as indicated in the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement FET phase Grades 10-12 (DBE, 2011a:25).

School-based assessment is a process during teaching and learning that guides the teachers to collect, analyse and interpret the information for assisting different stakeholders in deciding about progression of learners in their learning, as per the National Protocol for Assessment grades R-12 (DBE, 2011b:3). It is characterised by various number of significant issues distinguishing it from the other assessment criteria such as providing immediate and constructive feedback to learners (http://www.hkeaa.edu.hk/en/sba/sba_hkdse).

School-based assessment is an assessment perspective where a range of assessment instruments and strategies are used to assess learning holistically, this means the knowledge learning process, as well as behaviour, personality trait and manual skills. School-based assessment in assessing the learner holistically, is continuous through the year, for example, it begins with what is determined on the first day of school and concludes with the determinations made by teachers and administrators regarding final-year grading and progression.

The following characteristics distinguish school-based assessment from many other forms of assessment:

- It involves the teacher from the start to the end, this means that from drawing the annual programme of assessment plan, development/setting of the assessment tasks, and until there are outcomes.

- Various samples of the learner performances are collected as SBA is not done as a once-off exercise.

- Modification together with adaptation for suiting the teaching and learning outcomes for a specific class can be easily done by the teacher.

- This type of assessment can be conducted in a normal classroom.

- It gives the teacher the freedom to manage the assessment.

- Students become participants in the assessment process, for example, individual and/or peer assessment is used together with teacher assessment.

- Developmental feedback can be given immediately to students.

- It prompts continuous evaluation and adjustment of teaching and learning programmes.

- It complements various forms of assessment which includes external examinations (Oduloju, Adikwu & Agi, 2016:4).

Assessment is integral to the teaching and learning process and as a result, school-based assessment has been introduced in schools around the globe with varying degrees of success. The introduction of school-based assessment in the Asian school system yielded no straight-forward results. The escalating teacher and student workload, lack of community confidence in school-based processes and even lack of confidence by teachers themselves emerged to be key problems during implementation. Thus, the conditions of school-based assessment are not always conducive, hence the outcomes are negative not because it is a poor form of assessment but the conditions thereof (Kennedy, 2013:1).

To cite an example from Asian countries, school-based assessment became a new policy venture in the highly centralised education system of Malaysia. The Ministry of Education in Malaysia officially introduced school-based assessment to evaluate students' academic progress. Its implementation, done in stages with effect from 2011 as a means of developing the Malaysian education system, was in line with the standards-based primary school curriculum (Mansor et al., 2013:101). However, any

change in policy requires intensive training for parties. For effectively implementing school-based assessment (SBA), training should be continued in the form of briefings, sessions or workshops (Talib et al., 2014).

Australia specifies a variety of assessments for use in its education system such as school-based testing and assessment which is part of the National Assessment Programme (Klenowski, 2013: 1). School-based assessment in the Western Australian certificate of Education (WACE) requires teachers to gather, describe and quantify information regarding student achievement. Assessment may be in the form of tests, examinations, essays, report writing, investigations, exhibitions, production, performance and presentation. However, teachers report that there is a greater workload.

Regionally, Zambia began its preparations for implementing school-based assessment in November 2004. They focused on using different assessment processes, for example, formative and summative, as an ongoing process. However, the major challenge in implementing school-based assessment is the large-class sizes where a class could consist of 60 and above learners (Kapambwe, 2010:99, 101).

After independence in 1990, the Namibian government invited the Cambridge International General Examination (CIE) to assist in developing its senior secondary education phase. The reformed education system specified school-based assessment or course work to be mandatory in chosen subjects and be an option for others. Due to the shortage of resources and specialists of implementers of school-based assessment, the Minister of Education directed that it be implemented in subjects which are mandatory only (Lipinge & Likando, 2012:6)

School-based assessment previously referred as continuous assessment in the Ghanaian school system, has unfortunately not made the expected contribution to school performance due to a variety of reasons, the most important being the large number of assignments that the teacher has to be administering, mark and record (mingycomputersgh.files.wordpress.com/2016:1).

Examples cited internationally and regionally indicate that school-based assessment has pros and cons. It is therefore of vital importance for implementers to be well

equipped with knowledge of their roles during the process of implementation. In 1998, the South African government started to initiate the changes in assessment and put it into operation the first National Assessment Policy and thereby practising systematic evaluation. The policy focused on assessing the success of achieving the outcomes in the South African education system. Part of this change was the introduction of school-based assessment, also known as continuous assessment (CASS), which marked a period of success and trust in the South African education system. It attempted to improve reliability and fairness with regard to the assessment system as reported in the Report on Quality Assurance: 2002 Senior Certificate and ABET assessment (Umalusi, 2002:7).

Regardless of the importance of school-based assessment in South Africa, it is it is on the periphery and common challenges have been experienced:

- Little knowledge regarding school-based assessment in high schools (DoE, 2011a:3).
- Negative attitude displayed by educators (Nemadzivhanani, 2007:21).
- Non-adherence to stipulated time frames on FET band (DoE, 2011b:2).

In my opinion, it is evident from most studies done by most researchers regarding school-based assessment have identified pros and cons. It is therefore of vital importance that the current study focused on exploring challenges of implementing school-based assessment in high schools of the Mopani West District as addressing the challenges could ensure that the implementers are well equipped with knowledge and skill to take on their roles during the process of implementation.

1.9   RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

McMillan and Schumacher (2014:6) defines research as a systematic process where data is being collected and analysed logically for a specific reason. Research is a recurrent procedure of steps starting by the identification of a research problem or an issue of the study (Creswell, 2012:627). Research methodology relates to design strategies and traditions of enquiry or research approaches used to study an issue (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:314). This section is a brief outline and greater elaboration is presented in Chapter 5.

1.9.1 Research Paradigm

A paradigm is described as "set of beliefs that guides an action" which is embedded in all educational research (Brooke, 2013:7). Paradigms represent the researcher's beliefs and values about the world (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017:26). The three different paradigms support educational research and include positivism, interpretivism/constructivism and pragmatism (Kivunja & Kuyini,2017:26). This study was underpinned by the interpretivist paradigm that is sought to explore challenges that hindered the effective implementation of school-based assessment in high schools of the Mopani West District. Constructivist grounded theory is the paradigm that supported the research through direct interaction with the participants in their natural setting at their respective schools.

1.9.2 Research Approach

Three types of research approaches are identified as qualitative, quantitative and the mixed-methods research. The difference between a qualitative research approach and a quantitative research approach is that qualitative research uses non-numerical data whereas quantitative approach uses numerical data which can be converted into numbers (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014:6). The mixed methods approach is when both methods are used in a single study (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014:6).

In this study, the qualitative research approach was used as it assisted in exploring the phenomenon of school-based assessment implementation in high schools of the Mopani West District.

1.9.3 Research Design

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2014:28), a research design describes the process for conducting the study, including when, from whom and under what conditions the data are to be obtained. They further clarify that the research design indicates the general 'how' the research is set up, what happens to the subjects, and what methods of data collection are used.

One can also define it as a plan to enable the researcher to manage research (Creswell, 2009:5). Since the aim of this study was to explore the implementation of

school-based assessment in high schools of the Mopani West District, a descriptive and exploratory case study within a bounded system was used to guide the research. This was a bounded system where participants were selected because of their uniqueness and the fact that its context is real life in its physical and historical setting (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014:28). Research questions were not biased as per interest of the researcher because this case study was guided by constructivist grounded theory.

1.9.4 Research Methods

Research methods are the processes employed in collecting and analysis of data (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014:6) and refer to the population and sample, data collection and data analysis.

1.9.4.1 Population

Population is described as a group of individuals or events from which a sample is drawn (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014:5). In other words, it is the whole group from which the researcher wants to collect information in order to answer the research questions (Bhandari, 2023:1). The target population in this study refers to the teachers, Heads of Department, Deputy Principals and Principals in high schools located in the Mopani West District of Limpopo.

1.9.4.2 Sampling

When researchers sample, they select a sub-group of the target population that the researcher plans to study for the purpose of making generalisations about the target population (Creswell, 2012:627). Purposive sampling selects participants That can offer the in-depth rich information required to answer the research questions.

Five high schools in the Mopani West District were purposively selected as these schools have implemented school-based assessment, in alignment with the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS). The participants sampled for this study comprised ten (10) teachers, five (5) Heads of Department, representing the School Management Team (SMT) and five (5) deputy principals. The total number of sampled participants in this study was 25.

1.9.4.3 Data collection

This is the procedure where one gathers and analyses the information in an established systematic fashion that allows the researcher to respond to stated research questions and evaluate results (https://ori.hhs.gov>dctopic). There are two basic ways in which data were collected in this study, firstly by conducting interviews with the sampled participant considered rich in information on the topic (Creswell, 2009:5) and secondly, through participant observation.

- **Semi-structured Interviews**

Interviews are regarded as the most authentic, rich and mostly informative as compared to other methods used for data collection (Mpofu, 2014:87). Face to face meetings encouraged participants to help the researcher by probing deeply into the problem. The researcher obtained knowledge of the motivation, vision, feelings, attitudes and perceptions of participants through the interviews. The interviewee provided personal and confidential information to the researcher with great ease and still maintain privacy (Maree, 2007; Mpofu, 2014:95).

While conducting semi-structured interviews, similar questions were posed to all interviewees using the same tone and manner. For probing the interviewees on their responses and gaining clarity, follow up questions were asked.

- **Participant Observation**

Participant observation is the systematic process of recording the behavioural patterns of participants, objects and occurrences without necessarily questioning or communicating with them (Ahmad, 2021; Maree, 2007:84). In this study, the researcher's role as the observer was to witness and record the behaviour displayed through non-verbal communication of the deputy principals, HoDs and educators regarding the implementation of school-based assessment

1.9.4.4 Analysis of data

Qualitative data analysis is primarily an inductive approach where data are coded and organised into categories which assists in identifying relationships amongst the classifications (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014:395). The objective of data analysis is

to explain the data plainly, identifying what is typical and untypical of the data, showing the contrasts, similarities, and other existing designs in the data, and ultimately answer research questions or test hypotheses (Creswell, 2002:95).

Content analysis, which is a systematic approach to qualitative data analysis, could be used to analyse data. McMillan and Schumacher (2014:395) state that qualitative analysis is relatively a systematic process where the researcher commences by reading and ensuring they understand data. Thereafter they organise data, transcribe it, code data, form categories, discover patterns, and determine the plausibility of patterns before it is interpreted.

In this study, thematic data analysis was used as an inductive approach. This was deemed appropriate because it assisted in synthesising the data and thereby making meaning (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014:395). Thematic data analysis is discussed fully in Chapter 4.

1.10 TRUSTWORTHINESS

Newman (2006:462) defines validity as 'truth' and reliability as 'consistency'. Reliability and validity are two important psychometric characteristics of measuring instruments (Punch & Oancea, 2014:298). Validity and reliability in research are well defined; however, they are related concepts. Reliability and validity are both about how well a method measures something (Carrol & Goodfriend, 2023:1).

Trustworthiness refers to the degree of confidence in data, interpretation and methods used to ensure the quality of a study (Pilot & Bek, 2014:2). Trustworthiness is what makes it rational for people to accept research findings (https://journals.jupi.edu). The objective of trustworthiness is governed by four key dimensions which are credibility, dependability, confirmability and transferability.

1.10.1 Credibility

COPE (2014:15) describes credibility as the truth of the collected data or the views of the participants. Lietz and Zayas (2010:8) see credibility as the degree in which the study findings illustrate the meanings of the research participants. The study can be considered to be credible when its findings signify the meaning of what the participants have alluded during the collection of data (Loh, 2013:8).

1.10.2 Transferability

Loh (2013:11) asserts that transferability can be referred as the degree to which findings are applicable or useful to theory, practice and future research. Cope, (2014:18) explains that transferability in qualitative research can relate to the findings that may apply to other settings or groups.

1.10.3 Dependability

Cope (2014:1) defines dependability as the consistency of the collected data on the similar conditions. Boru (2018:4) alludes that dependability is the researcher's provision of the rich descriptions of research procedures and the using of instruments that enable and allows other researchers to collect data in the same way. In this study, the aspects that will serve as insuring dependability are the profiles of the participants to be interviewed (teachers, heads of departments and deputy principals). The interview questions for the collection of data will also serve for ensuring dependability in this study.

1.10.4 Confirmability

Confirmability is seen as the ability of the researcher to display that the data incorporates the participants' responses and not their own viewpoints. On the other hand, Lietz and Zayas (2010:17) define confirmability as the researchers' ability to authenticate the findings. These methodological norms are discussed fully in Chapter 4.

1.11   ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This section briefly explains how ethical measures were observed during the study. More details have been presented in Chapter 5. Ethical considerations are important in conducting research because they ensure that the research is conducted with respect to persons, animals and the environment, respect for knowledge and respect for justice and compliance with law (HPRC, 2012:4).

In this study, the researcher secured the ethical clearance certificate from the Ethics Committee from the University of South Africa (UNISA) before engaging in gathering of data. An approval letter from the Mopani West District Director was given to the researcher after the request. Schools were then approached to participate in the research through written letters and a positive response was granted. The attached consent forms were sent to prospective participants. This research was guided by the Policy on Research Ethics for UNISA 2016 and all guidelines outlined for research.

1.12   CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS

The following concepts were identified as key for the study, namely, implementation, school-based assessment and high schools.

1.12.1 Implementation

Implementation is defined as a change-oriented process for endorsing an action plan (Koichu, Aguilar & Misfeldt, 2019:1). the procedure of initiating something to being live or effective, for example, implementing a new policy or law (http://www.meriam-webster.com) or plans, methods or any designed ideas, models, specifications, standards or policies (Lutkevich, 2022:1). Implementation can therefore be regarded as the action that must follow any preliminary thinking for something to happen.

The Department of Basic Education (DBE, 2020:1) defines implementation as the process where educators identify, incorporate monitoring and continuously refine professional learning. The implementation process assists educators in intensifying their practice while encouraging and inspiring learners with their academic and non-academic growth. This definition aligns with the National Centre on Safe Supportive Learning Environments (2023:1) that describes implementation as putting a plan into

effect, while at the same time monitoring progress, making adjustments and evaluating the impact. Implementation is the executing of planned intentional activities that aims at turning evidence and ideas into policies and practices that works for people and the real world. It is about putting a plan into action, basically, it is the 'how' and the 'what' (CES, 2022:1). In this study, implementation is the process of putting the policy of school-based assessment into effect in high schools of the Mopani West District.

1.12.2 School-Based Assessment

School-based assessment is regarded as the yardstick of effective quality of teaching and learning. It is from the information gathered through quality assessment that the teacher will plan and improve learning outcomes (DBE, 2011a). School-based assessment is a collection of learner work which reflects learners' efforts, progress or achievements. School-based assessment consists of all formal assessments that includes examinations (Half-yearly, trial and practical assessment tasks) as indicated by Department of Basic Education's National Curriculum Statements document for Grades R-12 SBA Exemplar Booklet (2021:I). These assessments are continuously conducted by teachers in their respective schools throughout the academic year, according to the National Protocol for Assessment grades R-12, Government Gazette no. 34600 of 12 September 2011. School-based assessment should be designed to address the content competencies, skills, values and attitudes of the subject that will provide learners, parents and teachers with meaningful results that indicate what learners know, understand at the time of assessment. School-based assessment also prepares learners for final examinations while using various forms of evaluation such as assignments, projects, tests and in addition, it motivates and gives learners multiple opportunities for being assessed. School-based assessment is a compulsory component for progression and promotion; therefore, it should be moderated in different levels: School, District, Province, Department of Basic Education and the accredited assessment body Umalusi.

According to the National Assessment Circular no.2 of 2012, which is signed by the director general of Basic Education dated the 8th of November 2021, school-based assessment remains focused on utilising strategies which are aligned to assessment for learning approach. School-based assessment therefore assists learners in achieving the learning outcomes of the academic year.

School-based assessment is the procedure conducted by the teacher used to measure learner achievements against the defined outcomes (Maile, 2013:6). It can also assist in identifying the strength and weaknesses, identify training and education needs or diagnose issues (Foxcroft & Roodt, 2010:10). According to Poliah (2014:5), school-based assessment remains a crucial measure; however, when it is used as a measurement for the national educational benchmarking, there should be intensive monitoring and quality assurance of the activity. In this study, the definitions alluded to with regard to school-based assessment are accepted as working definitions.

1.12.3 High School

A school is an institution for educating children. Merriam-Webster describes a school as an organisation that provides instruction such as teaching the child (www.merriam-webster.com). Maffea (2020:1) describes a school as a place where children spend hours a day in various classroom settings while learning new ideas and topics. Teachers are expected to teach, and learners are expected to learn in the process. This practice assists learners to decide what they want to do when they get older.

The South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 defines high school as a public school, enrolling learners from Grade 8 to Grade 12. It is within this level where learners start their specialisation in their process of learning and become aware of their talented potentials and therefore prepare themselves for future ventures (DoE, 2005:42).

1.13   RESEARCH OUTLINE

This thesis consists of seven chapters. Chapter 1 presented the orientation of the study. Chapter 2 provides the theoretical framework of the study. Chapter 3 gives the theoretical perspective on school-based assessment. Literature on implementing school-based assessment is reviewed in Chapter 4. The research methodology and the design of the research is outlined in Chapter 5. The analysis of collected data and interpretations of the findings are provided in Chapter 6. Chapter 7 presents the summary, recommendations and conclusion of the study.

1.14   SUMMARY

Chapter 1 presented the background of this study which highlighted challenges which the researcher as the curriculum advisor has observed with regard to the

implementation of school-based assessment in high schools of the Mopani West District, Limpopo. This observation gave rise to the presentation of the problem statement and rationale of the study. The research questions and aim and objectives which guided the study, were outlined. The research methodology which is used in the study was briefly outlined. The research methodology which comprises the paradigm, approach, design, population and sample, and data collection and analysis is fully described in Chapter 5. Issues of trustworthiness were noted as well as ethical considerations. The chapter defined terms used in this study and finally outlined the division of the chapters. The following chapter, which is Chapter 2, presents a review of the literature which is relevant to the study.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE OF SCHOOL-BASED ASSESSMENT

2.1   INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the theoretical perspective on school-based assessment. The definition of school-based assessment is presented, with its aim and characteristics. The nature of school-based assessment is described in this chapter, which is followed by the cycle of school-based assessment. The study discusses school-based assessment from a conservative and liberal view respectively.

2.2   ASSESSMENT IN SCHOOLS

Assessment is integral to the teaching and learning process. To lay a foundation for the research which focuses on exploring challenges of implementing school-based assessment, a view of schools particularly in the South African context is given, then a general view of assessment before introducing school-based assessment which is a vital component of assessment.

2.2.1   School

The term school has its roots in the Greek scholē (σχολή). The word originally had a sense of 'leisure' which evolved into 'place for discussion' (https://www.vocabulary.com). Orubu (2013:37-44) submits that a school is essentially a social system consisting of well-defined boundaries within which individuals interrelate in the performance of activities for attaining educational goals. To determine the effectiveness of those goals, learners must be assessed. The assessment must be in the form of informal tasks or formal tasks given to learners by their teachers (https://www.scholastic.com). According to Nyatuka (2020:1), a school is an institution where formal learning or education of both basic and higher teaching is conducted.

A school is an institution designed for the teaching of learners under the directives of teachers. Most countries have a system of formal education, which is commonly compulsory. In these systems, student progress through a series of schools. The names of these schools vary by country, but generally includes primary school for

young children and secondary school for teenagers who have completed primary education (https://www.definations.net). A school is the physical and psychological space in which learning takes place (Movchan, 2023:1). This is supported by Williams and Clint (2023:1), when defining school as a learning environment where pupils learn. The school includes physical spaces such as classrooms, LTSM, teachers etc. The school environment should provide learners with a safe and conducive space for learning.

In the South African education system, there are government and non-governmental schools. In this study, the focus was on government schools which are called public schools. Since the dawn of democracy in 1994, the government has tried to bridge the disparity in the quality of education among various races with education reform, offering education to all through its various Acts and policies.

Public schools are categorised into quintiles (Ogbonnaya & Awuah, 2019:106). Classifying schools into quintiles system started in 1996 in South Africa by the-then Minister of Education Sibusiso Bhengu (1994 to 1999). The classification, which is based on the richness and poorness of the community where the school is located, ranges from Quintile 1 (which serve the poorest communities) to Quintile 5 (more affluent communities) where the schools have the most resources and parents who are working and earning good salaries. Funding of schools by the South African Department of Education is based on the quintile system which means that schools classified as Quintile 1 receive high allocated funds/money as opposed to Quintile 5 receiving the least funding. The majority of Quintile 1 public schools are no-fee schools (Isaacs, 2020:3).

A school is an institution for educating children and according to section 2 of the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996, a school is defined as a public school or an independent school which enrols learners in one or more grades from Grade R to Grade 12. In this study, the school is referred to an institution as defined by the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 because Mopani West District is governed by this act the focus is on public high schools in the Mopani West District.

2.2.2 Assessment

Brainard (1997:164, as cited by Jacobs, Vakalisa & Gawe, 2011:16) states that the root of the word assessment comes from the Latin verb *assidere*, which means to sit next to, watch closely and help along. To assess, the assessor must 'sit beside' or be very close to that which is to be assessed. Ifeanyieze and Aneke (2013:32) refer to assessment as an evaluation that is used to collect data to estimate the quality of a programme. Assessment is used in all institutions. For example, the National Teacher Institute, a known distance learning institution in Nigeria focusing on teacher education, regards assessment as the process of developing and organising data obtained from assessment tasks such as observation, examinations, test or questionnaires. The tasks are interpretable on several factors to determine achievement in the cognitive, psycho-motor and affective domains (Ifeanyieze & Aneke, 2013:33).

Assessment is the process used to identify, gather and interpret information and evidence against the required competencies. Judgement attained during assessment informs and shape teaching and learning still to be done (SAQA National Policy for Assessment, 2008:15). Assessment is always integrated with the purpose of providing evidence that the outcomes of teaching and learning have been achieved, hence the use of multiple formative and summative assessment methods to enable the learner to demonstrate applied competence (Sethusha, 2012:18). According to the South African Qualification Authority (SAQA) on National Policy for Assessment, (2008:14) formative assessment is assessment designed to feed into further learning and is very important for the learning process. A range of classwork, homework, oral question and answer activities are examples of formative assessment. Formative assessment is an ongoing process focusing on improving learner performance during the teaching and learning process. In contrast, summative assessment is conducted at the end of sections of learning or whole learning programme. Examples of summative assessment are standardised class tests, portfolio assessment, mid-year examinations and end-of-year examinations. The comparison between formative and summative assessment is table below:

Table 2.1: Comparison of formative and summative assessment

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT	SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT
It is an on-going activity	It takes place at the end of a section, programme or year
The evaluation takes place during the learning process. It happens not once but several times.	The evaluation does not happen during the learning process but after it, that is, at a course or unit completion.
The strategies assess whether learners are doing well or need help by monitoring the learning process.	Strategies progress learners to the next grade. It advises if they have achieved the learning goal or not.
The purpose is to improve learning by giving meaningful/developmental feedback to learners.	The purpose is to evaluate learner achievement.
It considers evaluation as a process	It considers evaluation as a product

(Source: Adopted from Renard, 2020:3-4).

Assessment is a process that helps to monitor and record the learning progress and is used not only in education, but also in the private sector to assess whether progress is being made and to identify strong points and weaknesses in the business (Brown, 2011:15). According to Oyebola (2013:2-3) it is through assessment, particularly continuous formative assessment, that the teacher is able to construct a comprehensive picture of the short-term and long-term needs of the learner which thus informs future teaching and learning. This is supported by the figure below which highlights the fundamental components of assessment.
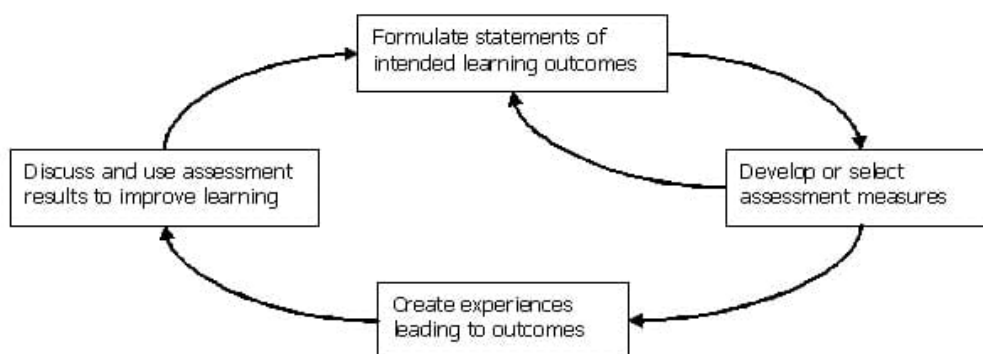
(Source: Adopted from Oyebola, 2013:3)

Figure 2.1: Fundamental components of assessment

When implementing assessment, the teacher should

- Formulate statements of intended learning outcomes which means that the intended goals should be described so that learners know what knowledge is skills should be acquired and developed.
- Develop or select assessment measures to ensure that in designing the assessment task, the intended outcome will be achieved
- Create experiences leading to outcomes to ensure that learners have experiences during the teaching and learning processes, thereby achieving the intended goals by engaging them.
- Discuss and use assessment results to improve learning is when assessment results are used to improve individual students/learners' performances not as an audit or a yardstick for judging them (Oyebola, 2013:3).

Formative assessment is the type of assessment used predominantly in schools of which school-based assessment forms a part.

2.3   SCHOOL-BASED ASSESSMENT

School-based assessment has a major role to play in education. Students spend the best part of their young lives in school, and it is through the teachers' assessment that their abilities can be better understood. To rely solely on the one-time examinations as is common practice in the final decision-making is to obscure the vision of a teacher.

School-based assessment is comprehensive, systematic, continuous, diagnostic and integrative (Ukwuije, & Opkara, 2013:4). It requires active participation and involvement of students with emphasis on learning rather than importance of scores and grades (Ukwuije, & Opkara 2013:4). According to Ifeanyieze and Aneke (2013:29-37), school-based assessment is a type of assessment that incorporates different categories of people (teacher, parent and peers) into the process of determining learning outcome to support and motivate a child to become interested in learning and making a steady progress. This form of assessment permits the learner to get support from people and to assist in participating in the assessment thereby enhancing individual learning in the class and at home.

School-based assessment process should be linked to and be a logical outcome of the normal teaching programme, as teaching, learning and assessment should be complimentary parts of the whole educational experience (that is, the school-based assessment component is not a separate once-off activity that can be timetabled or prepared for as if it were a separate element of the curriculum), according to the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (2014:3).

2.3.1 Characteristics of School-Based Assessment

School-based assessment is an assessment which is embedded in the teaching and learning process. It has a number of important characteristics which distinguish it from other forms of assessment which are presented in Figure 3.2 hereunder:
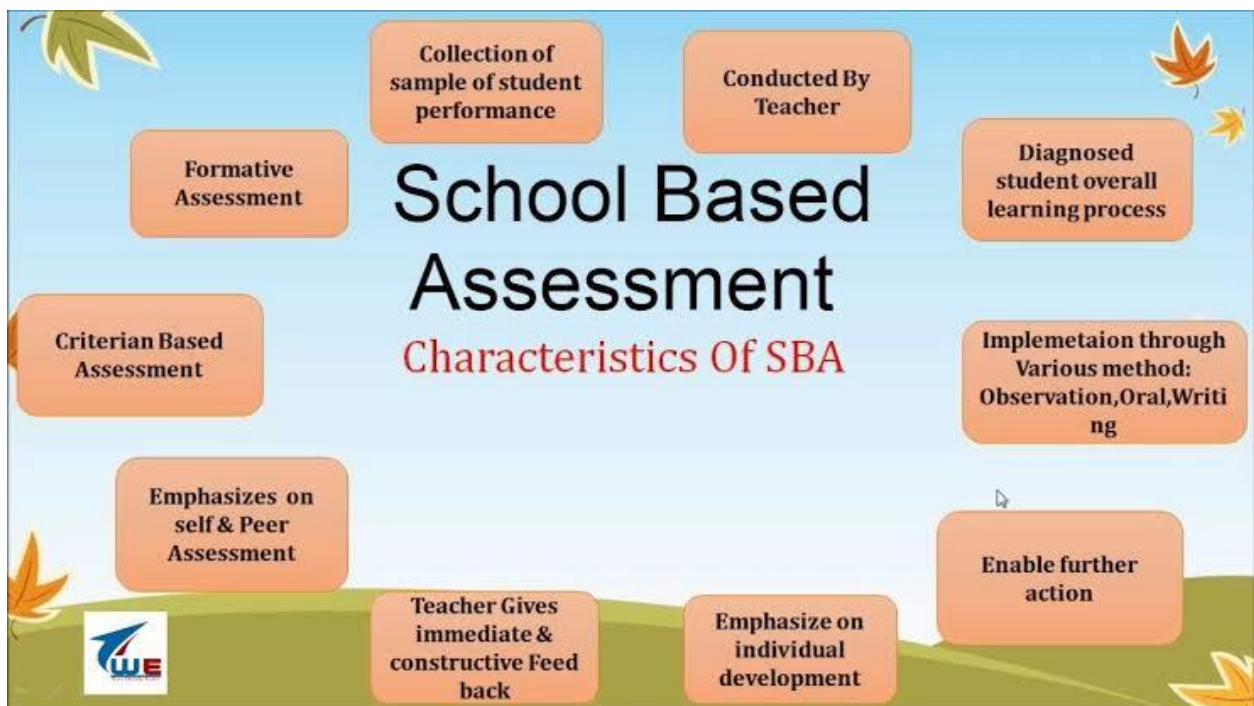
(Source: Adapted from: YouTube. School-based assessment, its origin and characteristics, September 6, 2018),

Figure 2.2: Characteristics of school-based assessment

- It involves the teacher from the beginning to planning the assessment programme, to identifying and/or developing appropriate assessment tasks right through to making the assessment judgements.
- It allows for the collection of several samples of student performance over a period of time.

- It can be adapted and modified by the teacher to match the teaching and learning goals of the particular class and students being assessed.
- It is carried out in ordinary classrooms.
- It is conducted by the students' own teacher.
- It involves students more actively in the assessment process, especially if self- and/or peer assessment is used in conjunction with teacher assessment.
- It allows the teacher to give immediate and constructive feedback to students.
- It stimulates continuous evaluation and adjustment of the teaching and learning programme.
- It complements other forms of assessment, including external examinations. (http://www.hkeaa.edu.hk/en/sba/sbahkdse; Aduloju, Adikwu & Agi, 2016:4).

From the above outlined characteristics, it can be concluded that school-based assessment involves both the teacher and the learner throughout the process and is a system for continuously collecting information on learners' learning status, for the purpose of planning and future improvement of teaching. It is therefore imperative that its implementation should be learner-centred where constructive and developmental feedback is constantly provided to learners. The teacher is able to improve and adjust the teaching methods to suit learners. Multiple opportunities for assessment tasks are vital in the process for improving learner achievement. School-based assessment is also characterised by the fact that it is criterion based, which implies that it is judged against specified determined standards. The determined specified standards spell out knowledge, skills and attitude to be considered for competence (Aduloju et al., 2016:7).

School-based assessment is an integral part of instruction as it determines whether the goals of education are being met. It inspires stakeholders to be sure and improve during the process of teaching and learning. For example, teachers are being directed to check if learners are learning what they are supposed to learn. In the process they can check if they are teaching what they are intending to teach and even assessing if there is a need of changing the teaching methods. (www.edotopia.org.za).

The role players in the implementation of school-based assessment are the teacher and the learners. In addition, school-based assessment emphasises self and peer

assessment as learners will know what they are supposed to improve during learning. Teachers should have proper planning in place on how school-based assessment is to be conducted throughout the academic year to achieve the intended goals. Learners and parents should be aware of the planned annual programme of school-based assessment for that particular academic year.

School-based assessment informs the teacher of learners' performances During the process, barriers are identified during the process because multiple assessment methods are used. Multiple assessments include amongst others oral presentations, observations and written assessments (Aduloju et al., 2016:4). Constructive and immediate feedback is given by the teacher to parents and learners or any interested body and individual support is given where possible.

School-based assessment motivates performance to both learners and educators (Ifeanyieze & Aneke, 2013:29-37), With regard to students, it stimulates self-evaluation, for example they will ask themselves the following questions:

- How am I doing as a learner as I'm in charge of my learning? If I know how I'm doing, how can I do better? What else would I like to learn more?

For teachers' self-evaluation the following questions will be asked:

- What is working well for the students? What can I do to help students more? In what direction should we go next, etc.?

If learners are able to focus on answering the questions above, they will be responsible for their learning and therefore improve their weaknesses during teaching and learning. Regarding teachers, they will be able to use good teaching methods to assist their learners in the process of teaching and learning.

A further aspect to consider with school-based assessment is its cyclical nature being an integral part of the teaching and learning process.

2.3.2 The Cyclical Nature of School-Based Assessment

The cyclical nature of school-based assessment relates to the teaching focus, learning and teaching strategy, assessment strategy and assessment standards as depicted in Figure 3.1 and then described fully in the section below.

Teaching Focus
What must be taught?

Learning and teaching strategy
(What methods will best help learners achieve the learning outcomes?)
The assessment of the specified standard leads to *decision-making*.

Assessment standards
(How will the educator know if the learner has achieved the learning outcomes?)
The specified standard is *measurable*.

Assessment strategy
(What methods of assessment will enable learners to demonstrate achievement of the learning outcomes?)
The specified standard is *monitored*.

(Source: Adopted from DoE, 2008:4)

Figure 2.3: The cyclical nature of school-based assessment

2.3.2.1 Teaching Focus

The role of the teacher is to ensure that teaching and learning process focus on specific goals. Teachers need to develop strategies of communicating the intended goals or learning outcomes to learners because if goals are not communicated learners may not see the importance of engaging themselves in the activity.

2.3.2.2 Learning and Teaching Strategy

Taking the learning outcomes into consideration, the educator will then focus on methods that will best assist learners to perform better. The outcomes will therefore direct the teacher in making decision on what is to be done in the next step. Once the decision on how to help learners has been taken and implemented, the next step of

gathering information through checking and observing learner's activities continues and becomes cyclical (Chavalala, 2015:54).

2.3.2.3 Assessment Strategy

Different assessment methods are selected and used. Examples of such methods are diagnostic, formative and summative assessments. It is recommended that the methods used focus on direct measures of learning, which will enable learners to demonstrate achievement of the learning outcomes.

2.3.2.4 Assessment Standards

The educator will observe the learners in the process whereby he/she collects evidence about their performances. The collected evidence will be interpreted in relation to the assessment standards set. This will enable the teacher to make judgements based on the progress made by the learners. The challenges that hinder the implementation of school-based assessment might be the assessments standards that are used while assessing learners. If implementers are setting good assessment standards, the outcomes might be also good, meanwhile if they are not the results will also be not good.

2.3.3 The Nature of School-Based Assessment

The nature of school-based assessment cannot be undermined, hence this study. In emphasising the matter, the Department of Education issued a circular with a directive on the implementation of school-based assessment for Grades 10-12 and a management plan highlighting one of the key principles. This relates to the nature of school-based assessment which should be subjective, valid, fair, time-effective and criterion reference (Eastern Cape Department of Education Assessment Instruction 18 of 2016:3).

Another important nature of school-based assessment is that it helps educators to set standards from performance demonstrated, understanding, knowledge and mastery. The nature of school-based assessment is that it evaluates progress on the performance of learners and further indicates the types of methods and modifications which are most effective during teaching and learning. The outcomes displayed during

school-based assessment process assist in determining future teaching. The nature of school-based assessment therefore relate to students' progress by means of what they have learned by demonstrating and using the new skills acquired (www.edutopia.org.za).

The nature of school-based assessment is confirmed by South African Qualification Authority (SAQA, 2005:1) where it outlines school-based assessment as a structured process for gathering evidence and making judgements about an individuals' performance in relation to registered national unit standards and qualifications. The aims, nature and analysis conform with the mentioned (SAQA, 2005:1), without them school-based assessment will be a fruitless implementation exercise.

2.4 CONSERVATIVE VIEW OF SCHOOL-BASED ASSESSMENT

Conservative means not usually liking or trusting change, especially sudden change. Conservatives were equally likely to prioritise economic prosperity, family, community and the pursuit of health, happiness and freedom (Sterling, Jost & Hardin, 2019:1). A conservative is defined as one who adheres to traditional methods or views (https://www.google.com).

Johnson (2015:1) describes conservatism as being associated with attempts to sustain social harmony between classes and groups within an organic hierarchical order grounded and collective history and cultural values. Conservatism is a doctrine that emphasises the value of traditional institutions and practices. It is a preference for the historically inherited rather than the abstract and ideal. This preference has traditionally rested on an organic conception of society that is, on the belief that society is not merely a loose collection of individuals but a living organism comprising closely connected, interdependent members. Conservatism is a philosophy promoting traditional social constitutions in the context of culture and civilisation.

Conservatives thus favour institutions and practices that have evolved gradually and are manifestations of continuity and stability (Minogue, Dagger, Viereck & Bal, 2020:1). Conservatives seek to preserve a range of institutions such as religion, parliamentary government and property rights with the aim of emphasising social stability and continuity (https://www.google.com). In their journal, Sterling et al.

(2019:1) state that conservatives are more likely to mention religion, social order, business, capitalism, national symbols, immigration and terrorism.

It can thus be concluded that the conservative view is averse to change or innovation and holds on traditional values and a conservative can therefore be called a traditionalist or consistent (https://www.google.com).

Conservative education preserves traditional curriculum (https://www.google.com). They believe that the primary role of education is academics. The four pillars of conservative education policy in the United States focused on the 'Every Student Succeeds Act' (ESSA) in their implementation of education. The four pillars are: Local control, parent choice, accountability and quality content.

Local Control reaffirms that educating students is the responsibility of state and localities, especially in the areas of funding, personnel, and reviving poorly performing schools.

Parent Choice refers to educational choice and innovation for parents and students by trusting that parents will do what is best for their children, while not absolving lawmakers from providing oversight.

Accountability demands that states, local districts, and individual schools be transparent through the provision of information to parents that is accessible, timely, comparable, and easy to understand.

Quality Control asserts that high academic standards and aligned tests - both chosen by the state - are crucial because they evaluate what a student is learning (Conservative Leaders of Education, 2011:1)

The four pillars conservative education policy are relevant to the study as follows: -

Pillar one highlights that the funding of learning is the responsibility of the state. In this study funding in high schools is also the responsibility of the government with the aid of parents where necessary.

Pillar two indicates the innovation of parents in advancement of their children's education. In this study, the parents are also entrusted with improving and assisting

high schools in the successful management of the schools through elected SGB members.

Pillar three refers to accountability. In this study, the department, national, provinces, districts, circuits and schools should account to their performances to parents. Example, a parent is allowed to visit the school to check the progress of his/her learner without hinders.

Pillar four specify the quality of standard used for learning. In this study the formal tasks that form part of school-based assessment should be quality assured at school level and at the end by Umalusi as the quality assurer of the South African education system (Conservative Leaders of Education, 2011:1)

The perspective from the conservative point of view is that although parents have a choice in the education for their children, the education system stresses that children should be taught to be fully literate and equipped with necessary tools for becoming responsible citizens (Pondiscio, 2019:1). According to the National Education Philosophy of Malaysia, (Idris, 2015:2), the product to be produced is the perfect and complete individual, who will not have only passed the examination. School-based assessment was therefore intended to avoid producing temporary knowledge in learners there by memorising to pass examination (Adediwura, 2012:15).

From the discussion about conservatism's views of education, school-based assessment should be part of teaching and learning process; however, the focus on school-based assessment for conservatives is on individual performance, but on achieving the goals that are accepted by the society at large.

2.5   LIBERAL VIEW OF SCHOOL-BASED ASSESSMENT

Liberalism is an attitude of respecting and allowing many different types of beliefs or behaviour (https.google.com). In other words, it is a political and moral philosophy based on liberty and equality. One of the basic tenants of liberalism is tolerance (https://www.goodreads.com). The concept of liberalism has a wide influence on contemporary work within the field of education. Given this breadth, it is not surprising that liberalism can be involved in the service of multiple ends, many of which appear to be at odds with one another (https.google.com).

Liberal education is an approach to learning that empowers individuals and prepares them to deal with complexity, diversity and change. It provides students with broad knowledge of the wider world. For example, science, culture and society as well as in-depth study in a specific area of interest. A liberal education helps students develop a sense of social responsibility and strong transferable intellectual and practical skills such as communication, analytical and problem-solving skills and a demonstrated ability to apply knowledge and skills in real-worlds settings (https://www.aacu.org/leap/).

The Helen Suzman Foundation promotes liberal constitutional democracy. It is their firm belief that the Constitution of South Africa is a liberal document. In its preamble it calls for "a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights", which aims to "free the potential of each person" and where "every citizen is equally protected by law (https://www.givengain.com). The South African education system practices democracy, equality and social justice, therefore assessment should not be judgemental during teaching and learning.

Liberalism in South Africa has had a history of importance because of its failure to adhere consistently to the belief that when the 'loss of liberty for non-whites' occurs, it 'inevitably meant [the] loss of liberty for whites as well'. The National Union of South African Students (NUSAS) is an example of a liberal organisation's inability to solve this dilemma. Initially NUSAS concentrated on academic needs, following a 'students as such' policy, and then later transformed its ideals into a 'students in society' view, becoming socially active in defiance of the Nationalist Government (Kline, 1985:139).

Since liberalism is meant to be about freedom for all individuals regardless of race, their view on school-based assessment will be not that of one size fits all approach. Furthermore, liberals generally support ideas and programmes such as freedom of speech, freedom of the press, religion, free markets, civil rights, democratic societies, secular governments, gender equality and international co-operation (https://www.jstor.org/topic/).

It can thus be concluded that a liberal views on school-based assessment can be used to support the educational needs of children in their school context. School-based

assessment allows their learners to build their ability and also support them to overcome the gaps in learning if detected during assessment. In other words, it will assist both teachers and learners to understand the 'why, what and how' of their learning. Individual support to learners will be provided during this process depending on the

Yin and Adamson (2015:15-28) define school-based assessment from a liberal point of view by alluding that school-based assessment's aim is to getting an overview of the performance of a student in learning, assessing the activities carried out during the teaching and learning process, continuous information about teaching and learning as well as planning and repairing of teaching and learning. School-based assessment in the liberal perspective also serves to test and evaluate the performance of students in all respects. Assessment includes academic achievement, extra-curricular and personality of students through the process of the teaching and learning (Abdullah, Idris, Hamzah & Sembak, 2015:24).

I concur with the liberal view of school-based assessment as the study focused on its implementation during the process of teaching and learning in high schools of the Mopani West District.

2.6 SCHOOL-BASED ASSESSMENT IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN EDUCATION SYSTEM

In the South African Education system, "assessment is a continuous planned process of identifying, gathering and interpreting information about the performance of learners, using various forms of assessment. It involves four steps: generating and collecting evidence of achievement; evaluating this evidence; recording the findings and using this information to understand and thereby assist the learner's development in order to improve the process of learning and teaching" (DBE, 2011a: 77).

School-based assessment, which is part of formal assessment, was introduced into the South African education system in 2011 as a compulsory component (National Protocol for Assessment Grades R-12, 2011b:5). Formal assessment tasks are marked and formally recorded by the teacher for progression and certification purposes and school-based assessment makes up 25% of the formal assessment

(DBE, 2011a:78). As indicated earlier, school-based assessment is an assessment of a holistically evaluation of the cognitive aspects (intellectual), affective (emotional and spiritual) and psycho-motor (physical) (Adediwura, 2012:15).

The marks accumulated during the learner's academic year in Grades 10-12 form part of the final mark. Initially it was referred to as continuous assessment (CASS) but it constitutes school-based assessment and examinations (Van Staden & Motsamai, 2017:14). The two terms serve the same purpose; therefore, they can be used interchangeably. However, the term school-based assessment is used in this study.

According to the circular number 05 of 2017:1, for the Eastern Cape Department of Education, assessment instruction on the implementation of school-based assessment for Further Education and Training (FET), school-based assessment is an assessment model designed to assist teachers and learners to assess individual progress and monitor the remediation of areas in which learners need assistance throughout the year. School-based assessment refers to the formal and informal assessment tasks carried out at school for marks to be included in the learners' evidence of work. School-based assessment is an assessment which is embedded in the school's teaching and learning process (http://www.hke.aa.edu.hk/en/sbahkdse).

As depicted in Chapter 4 of the South African CAPS policy (DBE, 2021:a), school-based assessment comprises different types of assessment tasks used for the evaluation of learners throughout the year to gather valid and reliable information about the performance of the learner on an on-going basis against clearly defined criteria, using a variety of methods, tools, techniques and contexts (Umalusi, 2019:13). Assessment, primarily, is aimed at improving student learning and achievement based on criteria, using variety of methods, tools, techniques and contexts (Poliah, 2019:4), which should ensure a transparent, valid and reliable evaluation (Oduloju et al., 2016:5).

School-based assessment is thus a complimentary part of the teaching and teaching process, and aims at gathering valid and reliable information needed by the teacher in the classroom about the performance of the learner. It provides complete information about student achievement, but it can do more than simply diagnose and identify

student learning needs; it can be used to assist improvements across the education system in a cycle of continuous improvement in the teaching and learning process (Oduloju et al., 2016:3).

It is during this process where the learners' work is collected and assessed. School-based assessment reports the efforts, achievements and progress of the learner, while on the other hand prepares them for the final examinations. As a result, school-based assessment is a monitoring device which provides feedback to the information collected by the teacher to assist him or her in adjusting teaching and improve student learning (Mkpae & Obowu-Adutchay, 2017:23).

The aims of school-based assessment are

- To continuously assess students in a pressure-free environment.
- To reduce reliance on one-off public examination.
- To improve reliability of assessment by having more than one assessment by a teacher who is familiar with multiple collection of tests for judgement.
- To reflect the standard and ability of student.
- To foster teaching and learning.
- To reinforce learner autonomy and independent learning.
- To empower teachers to become part of the assessment mechanism (Aduloju et al., 2016:4).

Based on the preceding aims, it could be concluded that school-based assessment aims at providing information about learning. School-based assessment can be used to diagnose learner strengths and weaknesses and provides feedback on teaching and learning.

School-based assessment is extensively used in many educational systems to provide information about student achievement (Mkpae & Obowu, 2017:23) as the very nature of it means that it can be used in the beginning, middle or at the end of learning and teaching process (National Institute of Education, 2015:7). Key stakeholders play an important role in the process and include teachers, departmental heads and deputy principals with elected officials, policy makers, employers, and the public at large wanting to know whether students are learning successfully and progressing

academically in a school situation. Therefore, it can be concluded that school-based assessment improves validity through assessing factors that cannot be included from external examinations (https://www.edglosary.org/assessment/).

2.7   SUMMARY

This chapter gave an overview of the theoretical perspective on school-based assessment. It discussed the aims, nature and cyclical perspectives of school-based assessment were outlined. Under cyclical nature of school-based assessment, the teaching focus, learning and teaching strategy, assessment strategy and assessment standards were outlined. The chapter also gave the analysis of school-based assessment while focusing on the school and assessment as important concepts where school-based assessment is taking place. The characteristics of school-based assessment is also extensively discussed. The last discussion in Chapter 3 is the Conservatives and Liberals views on school on school-based assessment.

From the discussions in this chapter, it can be concluded that school-based assessment is indeed an integral part of teaching and learning. The following chapter presents a review of literature that is relevant to the implementation of school-based assessment in high schools.

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW ON IMPLEMENTING SCHOOL-BASED ASSESSMENT

3.1   INTRODUCTION

The theoretical perspective of school-based assessment was discussed in Chapter 2. Chapter 3 reviews the literature on challenges of implementing school-based assessment in high schools. Focus thereof will be on defining the concept of a literature review and then reviewing literature on the principles of school-based assessment in high schools, challenges of implementing school-based assessment in high schools globally, in Africa, and in high schools in South Africa and summary of the chapter.

3.2   DEFINITION OF THE CONCEPT LITERATURE REVIEW

There is no specific definition of the concept literature review. Various scholars define it differently (Arshed & Danson in MacIntosh & O'Gorman, 2015:31; Bolderston 2008:87; Wiersma & Jurs, 2005:32). The literature review should enumerate, describe, summarise, objectively evaluate, and clarify previous research by surveying scholarly articles, books, and other sources relevant to a particular area of research to elicit a comprehensive summary of previous research on a topic (Wiersma & Jurs, 2005:32). This means that a literature review is a comprehensive survey of the works published in a particular field of study or line of research, usually over a specific period, in the form of an in-depth, critical bibliographic essay or annotated list in which attention is drawn to the most significant works. A literature review can be informative, critical and useful in a topic as it identifies what is known and unknown in a research topic (Bolderston, 2008:87)

The concept literature review is thus the ability of a researcher to explore the unknown about a subject and establish coherent facts that are known about it. It is a process through which a topic of inquiry can be defined, gaps identified, and it can facilitate better understanding of the state in a subject area and advocate for further research (Arshed & Danson, 2015:31 in MacIntosh & O'Gorman, 2015:31).

The review of literature for this study focused on providing an overview of the literature reporting on challenges that hinder the implementation of school-based assessment. The focus is on high schools regarding availability of different sources that are important in assisting the correct implementation of school-based assessment.

3.3   PRINCIPLES OF SCHOOL-BASED ASSESSMENT IN HIGH SCHOOLS

Raman and Yamat (2014:66) stated that school-based assessment is rooted in teaching and learning with the teacher playing a major role from the start to the end. The programme of assessment is approved by the Department of Basic Education at national level but then provinces and districts draw their own assessment programme that schools implement. It is therefore vital that teachers are involved in the planning of the assessment program, developing relevant assessment tasks until making assessment judgement (DoE, 2020:1).

To design and develop assessment tasks, Brown and Abeywickrama, (2010:1) offer principles of assessment that serve as guidelines in ensuring that tasks and tests are useful, appropriate, effective and credible. These principles, discussed in the next sub-section, include practicality, reliability, validity, authenticity and wash back.

3.3.1 Practicality

This principle has to do with time and cost constraints during the construction and administration of the assessment tool. It basically means that tests should be economical, and their format must be easy to understand. The test's time frame must be suitable, easy to administer, and its assessment process should be straight forward (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2010:3). Practicability in this study refers that the assessment task should be easy to design, administer and to score. The layout duration allocated should not be expensive to administer. In the Mopani West District, some assessment tasks are expensive to administer because they need a lot of printing because they are too long. Hence it is difficult to practice them in poor disadvantaged schools.

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3.3.2 Reliability

The principle of reliability means that assessment should be constant over time. The assessment should be student-related, rater-related, administrative-related and test-related (Brown and Abeywickrama, 2010:4). For the purpose of this study, reliability means that the school-based assessment tasks given to learners during teaching and learning should not be biased. A reliable assessment task will produce similar results from different groups of students even if it is marked by different people. Some school-based assessment tasks given to learners in Mopani West District tend to be biased, hence they give opposite results when learners sit for their external examinations.

3.3.3 Validity

Validity means the assessment should assess what it needs to assess; the latter entails for example that the assessment should be content or criterion based. The principle of validity in this study focuses on school-based assessment tasks which measure exactly what it intended to measure (Brown and Abeywickrama, 2010:5). Assessment tasks should measure what the educator expects to know from his/her teaching. In Mopani West District some assessment tasks are just given to learners for compliance only. In some instances, tests are given without the content being taught. This is unfair practice to the learners do not have the background knowledge to complete the assessment task.

3.3.4 Authenticity

The assessment tool should be authentic when contextualised within the teaching and learning environment. The language should be simple and the topics interesting, meaningful and relevant in order to reproduce the real-world experience (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2010:6). The assessment instrument should be contextualised to the teaching and learning environment and require the student to demonstrate proficiency by applying knowledge to solve a real-world problem. This could be through multiple choice, fill in, true and false questions. In longer questions, a rubric which indicates achievement criteria will help both students and teachers. In the Mopani West District improvement is needed amongst teachers in developing rubrics for assessment in order to improve learner performance.

3.3.5 Wash Back

This refers to the influence of assessment on teaching and learning within the classrooms. This principle can either be positive or negative. Positive wash back can be desired effects of the assessment whereas negative wash back refers to the undesired results of assessment. Positive wash back may be attained when the definitions of the language ability are not limited and teaching and learning focuses on the intended goals of the lesson. To avoid negative wash back, instructional planning should be affected (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2010:7).

To sum up this section, the principles of school-based assessment should be reflected in all assessment processes and procedures and guide teachers' approach to assessment. Aligned with the principles of school-based assessment is giving immediate and constructive feedback which assists in the development of the learner in the process of teaching and learning in high schools. It is therefore during this process that the learner is being assisted to achieve his or her potential.

The above paragraph is supported by Raman and Yamat (2014:67) when stating that school-based assessment encourages ongoing assessment for development rather than examinations which are used for determining learner progression. In essence, the implementation of school-based assessment prevents learners from becoming examination machines.

Positive feedback can be attained by instructional planning, this entails the feedback that links teaching and assessment by aligning assessment and instruction, this practice results in avoiding negative wash back which are unexpected results of an assessment (https://www.cal.org). There is a positive wash back gap in the Mopani West District due to how school-based assessment is implemented. Most teachers focus on tests or examinations written during their teaching process. This practice results in negative wash back, as learners are prescribed content knowledge but do not develop the relevant knowledge and skills which should be applied to real-world assessment tasks. The focus is on summative assessment only.

3.4 IMPLEMENTING SCHOOL-BASED ASSESSMENT IN HIGH SCHOOLS GLOBALLY

Although school-based assessment is implemented and accepted internationally, not much research seems to have been conducted on its success, strength and weaknesses (Mansor et al., 2019:1). Mansor et al. (2019:1) suggest that there are positive benefits regarding implementation of school-based assessment in high schools; however, the implementation of school-based assessment is a challenge to schools and teachers. The way teachers conceive the nature and purpose of assessment in the classroom has contributory factors in its implementation and could relate to the attitude of the teachers towards school-based assessment. For example, if a teacher has a negative attitude such as feeling that it is time-consuming, the outcome of the assessment will produce negative results. However, if the teacher understands that its purpose is to continually give developmental feedback to learners, school-based assessment could be implemented effectively. The perceptions of school-based assessment may arise from historical, cultural, social and policy contexts within which the teacher operates. It is therefore difficult to have a globally homogeneous understanding of implementation of school-based assessment amongst teachers (Brown, Gebril & Michaelide, 2019:2).

This section explored the implementation of school-based assessment in high schools of Canada, Britain, China, Brazil, Australia and Chile. The focal point of discussion includes presence of high schools, financial, human and physical resources as well as the types of assessments and challenges on implementing school-based assessment in each one of them. For this study the state of financial, human and physical resources plays a vital role in the implementation of school-based assessment. It is with this reason that on each country their status is highlighted.

3.4.1 Implementing School-Based Assessment in Canada's High Schools

This section explores the implementation of school-based assessment in high schools of Canada, Britain, China, Brazil, Chile and Australia. The focal point of discussion includes presence of high schools, financial, human and physical resources as well as the types of assessments and challenges on implementing school-based assessment in each one country.

3.4.1.1 Availability of High Schools in Canada

According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) reviews, which ranks education systems worldwide, Canadian teenagers are amongst the best educated in the world. The country is ranked on the 3rd position amongst the 15 wealthy countries.

High schools are available in Canada, and they do implement school-based assessment. About 95% of Canadian parents chose public schools for their children. Their primary schools offer Grades 1 to 6, junior high schools offer Grades 7 to 8 and senior high schools offers Grades 9 to 12 (www.ourkids.net/school/Canada).

3.4.1.2 Financial, Human and Physical Resources in Canada

Financial Resources: All students receive free education in the Canadian public school system. Public secondary/high school is free for local residents in Canada. Fees are only charged for international students. Although Canada is rich as a nation, funding for public education is controversially increasing. Public school parents are sometimes compelled to pay between 5 dollars and 100 dollars per term for extra-curricular classes. Regarding the implementation of school-based assessment, financial resources are not a challenge because the country spends more on education than any country in the G8[1] (education-in-Canada).

Human Resources: Shortages of teachers in parts of Canada's territory has an impact. Canada is currently struggling to fill vacancies to an extent that it is turning to migrants to meet their needs. The country is particularly in need of early childhood education, secondary high school which is Grades 9 to 12 teachers. According to the district communications manager of North Vancouver, the number of teaching graduates entering the teaching profession is far less than those who retire. The shortage is mostly in high school mathematics and science.

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[1] Multilateral group consisting of the world's major industrial democracies: Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States

It is evident that the implementation of school-based assessment in high schools of Canada is being challenged by the shortage of teachers. The country, however, fights the challenge by using on-line (school-based assessment) and teaching.

Physical Resources: Overcrowding in some classes in the East provinces of Canada emerges from insufficient teachers (cbc.ca/news/Canada). The most prominent sources of teacher's stress include heavy workload, lack of time, resources, insufficient support and different special needs to be given to students in the classroom. Amongst others are the challenges of the working condition cuts to teacher's education programmes and lack of speciality in instruction which may hamper the implementation of school-based assessment (Leroux & Theoret, 2014:1).

3.4.1.3 Type of Assessments and Challenges on Implementation of School-Based Assessment in Canada

School-based assessment, implemented in Canada, plays a vital role. According to the Canadian Constitution, education is the responsibility of the province or the territory. Canada does not have a national curriculum to be implemented by provinces/territories. Based on this practice, assessment programmes will differ from province to province (Volante & Benjaafar, 2008:205).

Provincial ministers of education in Canada join together in the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC), to collaborate best practices for their education system. Formative assessment is the common assessment practised in Canada and is used in class in the form of tests, projects, assignments, reading, writing and Mathematics. The assessments are criterion referenced and they are developed by Canadian teachers under the supervision and guidance of provincial/territorial assessment offices.

The study by Tong and Adamson (2015:1-2) on student voices of school-based assessment revealed some challenges in the implementation of formative assessment as some students did not appreciate school-based assessment. They claimed that they do not receive sufficient feedback from their teachers. The outcry of educators is that they encounter pressure in implementing formative assessment as they are supposed to set formal tasks on their own. They feel they are overloaded with work.

The school's socio-economic status hampers the implementation of formative assessment in some contexts.

3.4.2 Implementing School-Based Assessment in Britain's High Schools

3.4.2.1   *Availability of High Schools in Britain*

The British education system has its schools divided into primary education which offers Grades 1-7, secondary education offering Grades 7-9 and high schools' education which offers Grade 10-12. However, there are dissimilarities in their education system in England and Wales. The government introduced the National Curriculum system in England and Wales, which regulates their education system. Policies, planning, monitoring, assessments are governed by the National Curriculum system (hmc.org.uk).

Primary and secondary education is compulsory however, after writing of the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE), further schooling is optional (https://www.pointtopointeducation.com). School-based assessment is implemented, and it has been an important aspect of the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) in England for the past thirty years (Opposs, 2016:52).

3.4.2.2   *Financial, Human and Physical Resources in Britain*

Financial Resources: In the United Kingdom (UK) schools are either state schools which are funded by the government and free for all pupils or independent schools which charges fees to the people (https://www.pointtopointineducation.com). States schools receive funding from their local authority or directly from the government.

Since 2015, schools has been faced with additional cost pressures and uncertainty over their finances. Such schools have responded to the financial pressure by reducing the number of teachers and other staff and limiting buying learning resources (www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted). Additional costs have an impact in the negative impact of implementing school–based assessment.

Human Resources: Shortages of teachers has been making headlines and raised concerns throughout the nation. This concern was supported by the 2018 data from the Teachers' Retirement System (TRS) that revealed that there were more than 5 000 active teachers who are over 55 years and nearly 36 000 who are between 50 to 54

years of age. This data serves as an indication that most teachers will soon be eligible for retirement. This challenge might have a negative impact on the smooth running of the country's education system as a whole including school-based assessment (saanys.org.za).

Physical Resources: The average ratio of class size in England is 2.7 for both primary and secondary schools. The individual child has his/her own seat with a laptop, smart pen and a mouse (inews.co.uk). The general secretary of the National Education Union stated that the number of learners in state–funded secondary schools have risen by almost 150 000 since 2014 and it affects the proper implementation of school-based assessment as teachers are not able to give feedback to individual learners.

3.4.2.3 Type of Assessments and Challenges on Implementation of School-Based Assessment in Britain

School-based assessment assists teachers in allocating marks to learners when assessing skills in experimental techniques in science or drama performances. School-based assessment is also regarded as an alternative form of assessment rather than written examination at the end of the study or course (Opposs, 2016:52). Both formative and summative assessments are regularly used in secondary schools. The most frequently used formative assessment methods are short oral tests, short written tests which have a duration of 5-20 minutes and written homework or classwork. The most widely used summative assessments are end of topic tests and mid-term or end term assessment (https://eacea.europa.national=policies).

According to Brink and Bartz (2017:2) challenges when teachers are implementing formative assessment are that they tend to neglect its importance in favour of summative assessment. High school teachers do not use the results of summative tasks to determine what is to be re-taught for learners to master the content measured by the assessment. Staff development on implementing both formative and summative assessment is also lacking. With regard to formative assessment, teachers do not engage in purposeful reflection regarding the content and results from the assessment. This practice results in ineffective instruction. Feedback to learners is not effectively given, therefore learners do not take ownership of the assessment results to improve achievement (Brink & Bartz, 2017:1).

3.4.3 Implementing School-Based Assessment in China's High Schools

3.4.3.1 *Availability of High Schools in China*

Teaching has a history of being a highly respected profession in China. The country has the largest education system in the world. From 1986, compulsory education was declared as mandatory for 9 years for all children. The country has had a long history of providing education to international students in its high schools and universities (chinaeducenter.com).

China's modern education system is composed of three parts, which are pre-school education, basic education (primary education and high/secondary education) and higher education. High school lasts for a minimum of three years (chinahighlights.com/travel). The country has involved its teachers in the implementation of formative assessment policy (Brown & Gao, 2015:1), which has been implemented in high schools.

3.4.3.2 *Financial, Human and Physical Resources in China*

Financial Resources: The nine-year compulsory education policy in China gives students that are above the age of six years the opportunity to have free education at primary and junior secondary schools although schools charge miscellaneous fees (chinaecducentere.com, 2020:3). School-based assessment is implemented in China because their education system focuses on enhancing a person's worth and career.

Human Resources: China has a consistent teacher development system. Newly appointed teachers undergo an induction process where they work together with master teachers (more experienced teachers) in lesson planning and for general improvement. This practice boosts schools in implementing school-based-assessment. Because of the availability of human resources, namely, newly appointed teachers who were supported by experienced teachers, 10:71 million students sat for the National Higher Education Entrance examination (chinaeducenter.com, 2020:1).

Physical Resources: Physical resources seem not to be a challenging factor in China. For example, in areas with favourable conditions, regional education departments, educational institutions, experts, scholars and individual teachers, are encouraged to

compile textbooks. This exercise is done in compliance with basic requirements set in the syllabus of the 9-year compulsory education.

Teaching and learning resources which complement and supplement the textbooks includes reference books and manuals for teachers, illustrated booklets and atlas for school instruction or doing homework. Computer software produced in line with government mandate is used by both learners and teachers to facilitate teaching and learning. The implementation of school-based assessment is therefore not a challenge regarding physical resources (chinaeducenter.com, 2020:1).

3.4.3.3 Type of Assessments and Challenges of Implementing School-Based Assessment in China

China is one of the larger nations that have state or provincial-level standards. Their assessment systems mostly combine state and local assessments. This practice assists in strengthening teacher participation assurance of high-quality local assessment to be moderated for consistency in scoring learners. This process therefore improves the quality of teaching and learning (Hammond & McCloskey, 2008:2).

The context of China's on-going educational reform is based on promoting self-regulated learning (SRL) and using assessment in improving learning (Zhang & Li, 2019:2). However, there are unfolds gaps in the Chinese high school teacher's classroom assessment, which include:

- Classroom assessment (CA) consists primarily of low level and closed-ended tasks.
- No allowance of sovereignty or responsibility in classroom assessment
- Self-assessment practice is mostly self-grading.
- Classroom assessment involves mere marking of peer grading but not peer assessment.
- Feedback from the teacher focuses on written tasks and the levels of achievements, with less opportunity of regulation-level feedback.
- Most students feel threatened by classroom assessment although the teacher tries to encourage them.

Most researchers advocate a paradigm shift from summative assessment to formative assessment because assessment should be seen as an instrument to improve learning and not only to measure learning (Brown & Gao, 2015:19). In China, formative assessment has been promoted in education reform policy in 2001 and 2010. Resistance to formative assistance has occurred as it challenges traditional assessment's values such as reliability, fairness and objectivity (Brown & Gao, 2015:19).

However, there are benefits in using formative assessment such as allowing teachers to design open-ended tasks, for example English debates and speeches can be organised for assessment purposes. Self-grading and peer-grading has the advantage of familiarising students with assessment criteria. Other positive aspects of formative assessment are teachers' guidance and students' self-reflection in identifying mistakes as an opportunity for further progress (Brown & Gao, 2015:19).

3.4.4 Implementation of School-Based Assessment in Brazil's High Schools

3.4.4.1 *Availability of High Schools in Brazil*

Basic education is the first level of education in Brazil, and it consists of primary (elementary) and secondary (high school) education. Primary education, which is compulsory, comprises Grades 1 to 9 with learners ranging from 6 to 14 years of age. Schooling at this level lasts for a period of 9 years. Secondary education, which is not compulsory, comprises Grades 10 to 12 with learners ranging from 15 to 18 years of age Schooling in this level lasts for a period of 3 years (OECD, 2018:10).

Although secondary/high schools are available in Brazil, only 69% of 15 to 19 years old and 29% of 20 to 24 years are enrolled for education. This is as a result that education at these levels is not compulsory and the education system focuses on developing and promoting vocational education. Vocational education and training in Brazil therefore open pathways into the labour market (OECD, 2018:10).

3.4.4.2 *Financial, Human and Physical Resources in Brazil*

Financial Resources: The Brazilian government spends a large amount of funds on education. In 2017, the spending on public education was 5,1% of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP); however, the allocated funds are insufficient. According to the

Brazilian Federal Constitution, the states are responsible for funding upper secondary education in Brazil. Brazilian States and Municipalities allocate funds as per learner enrolment. The set target that Brazil wants to reach by 2024 for its investment in public education is 10% as per Brazil's National Education Plan (OECD, 2018:24).

*Human Resources: T*he is a shortage of teachers in the country which results in teachers working at two different schools on a daily basis, using a four-hour shift system. This means that teachers have limited time for lesson preparation and teachers also have limited time for further study (Agustin, 2019:1). According to OECD (2020:38), the teacher student ratio in Brazilian public high schools is at 1:30.

Physical Resources: Physical resources are allocated to Brazilian schools based on learner enrolment. UNESCO (2019:41) highlights that although there has been evident improvement in the availability of physical resources , many schools still lacks basic material resources and infrastructure, with existing infrastructure not being maintained and in a poor condition; for example, 3% to 6% of the Brazilian schools are without water, electricity and sewage services, only 10% of the public schools have green spaces and playgrounds and there is limited access to digital resources in the Brazilian high schools.

3.4.4.3   Type of Assessments and Challenges on Implementation of School-Based Assessment in Brazil

School-based assessment, referred to as classroom-based assessment is used in Brazilian secondary schools. Classroom-based assessment commonly consists of tests and homework assignments rather than self and peer assessment which are not common practices (Camargo & Ruthven, 2014:1).

Teachers in Brazil conduct bi-monthly examinations as a form of formative assessment where assessment results offer learners constant feedback on their performance and it enables them to calculate their grades and overall score (Almeid, Rosistolato & Cerdeira, 2022:940).

3.4.5 Implementation of School-Based Assessment in Australia's High Schools

3.4.5.1 Availability of High Schools in Australia

The Australian education system consists of primary (kindergarten) which caters for Grades 1-7, starting from children aged 7 till 13/14.There is junior secondary that offers Grades 8 -10 for learners between 14/15 -17. Australian senior secondary (high school) caters for Grades 11 and 12 for learners aged 17-18/19. When learners complete the senior secondary education, they are awarded a senior secondary certificate of education. They can then choose to further their studies with higher education courses, vocational education or start venturing into the world of work.

3.4.5.2 Financial, Human and Physical Resources in Australia

Financial Resources: The Australian state and territory government provides funding for both primary and secondary education. The funds that are allocated to schools for education purposes differs depending on the number of learners that are enrolled at the schools. Schools with high enrolment receive better allocation of funds than those with low enrolment of learners. Parents are requested to voluntarily pay levies per year and parents are compelled to pay for uniform and excursions for their children.

Human Resources: Australia has a healthy number of professional teachers; however, it is struggling to cope with rise of enrolment due to growing number of international students. The workload that the teachers face causes them to quit the profession and become part of those that are not recommending teaching as a career (Hefferman, Longmuir, Bright & Kim, 2019:10). According to the report by South Wales Department of Education, shortage of teachers is evident in subjects like mathematics, sciences, technology and applied studies although the supply of primary teachers in Australia is good. The teacher student ratio is at 1:50 for secondary schools.

Physical Resources: Even though the Australian education system has capital funding which caters for building schools, there are still gaps in public schools as opposed to private schools (OECD, 2019:17). In Australia, public schools that are located in rural areas often have issues with lack of physical infrastructure (buildings, grounds heating and cooling systems) and educational material resources (textbooks, science laboratories, information technology and libraries) (Cobbold, 2020:6). Thirty five percent (35%) of learners in Australian public schools are negatively affected by lack

of infrastructure as compared to only nine percent (9%) of those in private schools (OECD, 2019:4).

3.4.5.3 Type of Assessments and Challenges on Implementation of School-Based Assessment in Australia

Australia has implemented school-based assessment in their high schools with assessments being externally moderated. There is a logical framework that directs educators on the assessments of students. School-based assessment supports teaching and learning, assists in the monitoring of the teaching and learning process and provides feedback to students on their learning (Allen, 2012:16).

There seems to be limited challenges on school-based assessment implementation in Australia; however, there is a lack of knowledge and skills for setting of standardised tasks for school-based assessment by teachers in Australia (Allen, 2012:16).

3.4.6 Implementation of School-Based Assessment in Chile's High Schools
3.4.6.1 Availability of High Schools in Chile

Chile's education system is divided into pre-school, primary school, secondary (high) school and tertiary education. Schools in Chile are owned by municipalities. Although attendance at pre-schools is voluntary, primary schools is compulsory for all children who are 8 to 14 years of age. Secondary schools' education is also compulsory, and it offers education for learners ranging from 14 to 18 years (Chile Ministry of Education: www.scholaro.com).

Secondary/high schools are available in Chile. Learners receive education at this level in preparation for entrance into higher education institutions of learning. (Chile Ministry of Education: www.scholaro.com).

3.4.6.2 Financial, Human and Physical Resources in Chile

Financial Resources: In Chile, the education funding system comes from the public sector through their municipalities. Besides the funds that are paid by the state through municipalities, there are school grants that finance Chilean schools, with funds being directly paid to the schools. The allocated money consists of 85% for early childhood education and 79% for primary and secondary education. Municipal government

schools are forbidden from charging fees or co-payments for education purposes (OECD, 2017:8).

Human Resources: There seems to be an excess of teachers in the education sector in many municipalities of Chile. Although there is no official estimate of the excess of employment in education the excess relates to teachers, teaching assistants and administrators. The teacher student ratio in public schools is 01:24 (OECD, 2017:14).

Physical Resources: One of the responsibilities of the school grant system includes the maintenance of their infrastructure. The grant further aims at supporting and maintaining furniture as well as expanding existing infrastructure. Despite of the above-mentioned aim, there are identified gaps with regard to physical resources. Some of the gaps include risky drinking water and flaws in construction of building which do not meet the standards (OECD, 2017:18).

The Ministry of Education as a result, implemented a strategic plan for school infrastructure within the period of 2014 to 2018 to upgrade infrastructure in schools. Another focus was to provide free textbooks, teaching guides and supplementary books to all learners at all levels of schooling in the country. The strategic plan also aimed to ensure the establishment of libraries as well as the provision of resources as per the schools' application needs (OECD, 2017:18).

3.4.6.3 Type of Assessments and Challenges on Implementation of School-Based Assessment in Chile

School-based assessment has been long been used in Chilean education. School-based assessment implementation challenges are limited because teachers have had access to diverse professional development activities. The activities include but not limited to courses, subject specialisation seminars, municipal workshops, internship projects and post-graduate studies provided by institutions of higher education. Teacher professional development is determined by the teachers themselves whereas it is facilitated by the state (municipality) (Santiago, Fiszbein, Jaramillo & Radinger, 2017:228).

Challenges experienced in the implementation of school-based assessment is the shortage of qualified teachers in subjects such as Mathematics, Science and

Language of instruction. Workload for teachers is also a challenge because their teaching time is above OECD average. More than 60% of Chilean teachers works 38 to 43 hours or more per week. Some other challenges in implementing school-based assessment in Chile are insufficient internet access and no trained teachers who can support learners with educational needs (Santiago et al., 2017:227).

3.5 IMPLEMENTING SCHOOL-BASED ASSESSMENT IN HIGH SCHOOLS IN AFRICA

Traditionally most African high schools use summative assessment at the end of each academic year where the teacher is the single unconditional judge of learner performance (Atibuni & Olema, 2017:34). Other key players like parents, peers and the learners themselves are sidelined in the assessment process. Atibuni and Olema (2017:34) further state that learners are denied the chance to actively build and understand the assessment feedback through constructive, active and co-operative learning.

Research undertaken in many African countries on the implementation of school-based assessment has revealed a common factor in that low teacher competence levels affect assessment results (Mhishi, Mandoga, Tunjera & Bhukuvhani, 2012:32-33). As an example, the curriculum and assessment policy (CAP) framework) was introduced in 2009 in Lesotho schools with limited success. The findings of research revealed that teachers felt incompetent and faced challenges which hindered the smooth running of school-based assessment implementation (Moea, 2022:72), The challenges include lack of resources like textbooks and teacher and learner guides. Teachers were assigned to teach content with which they were not familiar to them; for example, a qualified specialist in accounting was supposed to teach music as a subject. Syllabus misalignment, limited time, language of instruction barriers, learners and inspectors lack of support also served as barriers during the implementation of school-based assessment (Moea, 2022:73). In addition, teachers felt that the government imposed the curriculum and assessment policy implementation without further support such as workshops and training (Moea, 2022:73).

In another example, continuous assessment (school-based assessment) sometimes referred as formative assessment in Namibia has been affected by budget cuts

resulting in delays on scheduling workshops intended to capacitate educators (UNESCO, 2021:4). Kayoko (2019:V) revealed challenges faced by grades 11 and 12 mathematics teachers in the process of school-based assessment which included the high number of learners in the classrooms, non-availability of assessment policy guidelines, lack of resources for teaching and learning, no commitment that prevailed amongst learners and inadequate time for implementing assessment activities. Lack of proper skills for pedagogical content, assessment planning and implementation, workload such as classes size with more than thirty learners in one classroom are challenges faced in many Namibian schools (Mateya, Utete & Ilukena, 2016:158).

This section explores the implementation of school-based assessment in high schools of Botswana, Ethiopia, Zimbabwe, Kenya, Nigeria and Ghana. The focal point of discussion includes presence of high schools, financial, human and physical resources as well as the types of assessments and challenges on implementing school-based assessment in each country.

3.5.1 Implementing School-Based Assessment in Botswana's High Schools
3.5.1.1 *Availability of High Schools in Botswana*

Primary and junior secondary education is regarded as basic education in Botswana. Seven years are spent in primary (Grades 1 to 7) and three years in Junior secondary (Grades 8 to 10). Two years of learning are for senior secondary/high school which is Grades 11 and 12 (UNICEF, 2019:9).

There are 50 unified schools that teach both junior and secondary education in the country. High schools are available and are known as senior secondary schools. It is only learners whose grades are high enough on their junior certificate examination who qualifies to be admitted to the senior secondary programme (https://education.stateuniversity.com).

3.5.1.2 *Financial, Human and Physical Resources in Botswana*

Financial Resources: Parents are charged a co-payment fee for education, but those that are in lower income groups, receive free education for their children for the first 10 years of their schooling from 6 years of age. Basic education in Botswana is free but not compulsory. The co-payment paid by parents assists in indirect costs like

sports fees, transport, stationery and uniforms which are not paid by the government (https://education.stateuniversity.com).

Prioritisation in spending or budgeting for education activities in Botswana is limited by the fragmented responsibilities among many ministries; however, financial resources is not a major challenge in the implementation of school- based assessment (UNICEF, 2019:18).

Human Resources: In Botswana, the teacher student ratio of 40:1 is favourable when compared to primary and secondary/high schools internationally. It is for this reason that the implementation of school-based assessment is not a challenging factor. Another significant issue is that the country seems to be having more than enough teachers for English, Setswana, history and geography subjects (UNICEF, 2019:18).

Physical Resources: The Botswana news dated 26/07/2018, reported the address by Mr Tsheledi Khama during the Kgatla meeting that the government had set aside R3 million towards the maintenance of public schools. It was indicated that the motive thereof was to ensure that public schools are habitable and attractive to learners. Despite the favourable budgetary situation, there has been a marked shortage of textbooks and infrastructure in Botswana (UNICEF, 2019:18); however, school-based assessment is not directly affected by physical resources.

3.5.1.3 *Type of Assessments and Challenges on Implementation of School-Based Assessment in Botswana*

Like many other African systems, Botswana's education system is mostly influenced by Western education ideas and models (Bagwasi, 2018:1). It is governed by the Revised National Policy on Education (RNPE) which specifies that learners write the final examination called the Botswana General Certificate for Secondary Education (BGCSE) to determine if the student is eligible for entry into tertiary education (Malejane & Diraditsile, 2019:3).

Teachers assess learners monthly by using their own formulated tests based on the topics or content taught. For example, common tasks are written monthly, quarterly, or during June (half-yearly examinations). This assists teachers in understanding what the students know or what they do not know. These results will foster improvement in

learners during teaching and learning activities (Koloi, 2012:2). School-based assessment in Botswana assists in preparing students for standardised examinations which are written for 'high stakes' decisions such national examinations. These standardised national examinations are written when learners complete primary, junior and secondary school. The Junior Certificate Examination (JCE) is for junior secondary level and Botswana General Certificate in Secondary Education is obtained after completing senior secondary level (Koloi, 2012:18). This type of assessment is a summative assessment. Teachers do not focus on development of students, but they focus on good performance of learners at the end of the year. This practice is exercised to enhance their reputation in order to make them eligible to be appointed in higher positions like being moderators or examiners (Kontle, 2017:8).

Koloi (2012:18) alluded that teachers in Botswana lack knowledge in using formative and summative measurement procedures. The author further suggests that since training of teachers on assessment is insufficient, in-service or professional training for teachers in assessment can assist in acquiring skills required for the assessment process.

3.5.2   Implementing School-Based Assessment in Ethiopia's High Schools

3.5.2.1   Availability of High Schools in Ethiopia

Ethiopia remains one of the poorest countries in the world. The country has the second largest population after Nigerian (borgenproject.org/education/2016:2). Primary schools are from Grades 1 to 8, junior secondary schools from Grade 9 to 10 and senior secondary schools from Grade 11 to 12 (Bauduy, 2008:3). High schools are known as senior secondary schools and are mostly attended by children from the age of 12 years up to 16 or 18 years. Upon completion of senior secondary education, the students sit for the Ethiopian school leaving certificate which is followed by the Ethiopian Higher Education Entrance Examination if the student desires to further studies (scholar.com/pro/countries 2020:1).

3.5.2.2   Financial, Human and Physical Resources in Ethiopia

Financial Resources: Education in Ethiopia is free and compulsory for all children from the age of 5 years to 16 years. Funding of schools in Ethiopia is paid directly to schools

by the government. The government decentralised the administration of funds and activities of schools to the local authorities in sub-districts with the aim of accommodating local needs (WENR.wes.org/2018/11/education). The country is faced with income disparities due to the economy which affects the education system and the implementation of school-based assessment.

Human Resources: According to 'The Blog magazine' 2016:1, the ratio of teacher to student ranges from 1:64 in Ethiopian classrooms, which means that learners do not receive the individual attention they might need in order to reach their full potential. It is for this reason that it is difficult to implement school- based assessment in such over-crowded classes. Salary and benefits of the teaching profession seemed to be the primary factor of concern to teachers (Mengistu, 2012:1). The challenge results in teachers exiting the education system.

Physical Resources: Although the Ethiopian government prioritises education, it struggles to maintain the expansion of its system and the number of children who attend school (WENR.wes.org/2018/11/education). Textbooks are developed by the General Education Curriculum Framework Development Department of Federal Ministry of Education (WENR.wes.org/2018/11/education). Public schools in Ethiopia do not maintain a good learning environment; for example, public schools around Bahir Darin in Amhara state lack neatness, windows, doors, electricity and there are smelly areas where schools are located. It is difficult to implement school-based assessment in such learning environments. In addition, most public schools have no laboratories, computers and internet facilities (Begna, 2017:107).

3.5.2.3 Type of Assessments and Challenges on Implementation of School-Based Assessment in Ethiopia

The Ministry of Education in Ethiopia introduced continuous assessment as a technique of achieving quality education within the education policy of the country. The focus was to bring about a paradigm shift from the old traditional system of judging learners to a new developmental assessment (Gemechu, 2014:70). There are three types of assessment techniques used in the Ethiopian education system which are Assessment OF learning, Assessment FOR learning and Assessment AS learning.

Teachers reported assessment OF and FOR as most commonly used. Assessment AS learning is used by physical education teachers.

Assessment OF = How students have performed at the end of teaching by using questions and students answer. i.e., Monitor learning and give immediate feedback.

Assessment FOR = It is teacher driven whereby teacher aims to check how to improve student learning engagement and performance; for example, giving reflective exercises, peer assessment, problem solving activities. This technique assists teachers in improving the teaching and learning process.

Assessment AS = Allows students to monitor their learning by being encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning. It benefits learners as they become proactive about their learning, helps good interaction between them and their teachers, provides opportunities of self-assessment, peer assessment projects and assignments (Tulu & Roba, 2018:18). The three assessment types are mainly formative in nature.

Challenges hindering the effective implementation of the various techniques during assessment include lack of teaching and learning facilities, time allocated for lessons, school or class environment, class sizes, low student motivation and lack of student knowledge (Tulu, 2014:18).

3.5.3 Implementing School-Based Assessment in Zimbabwe High Schools
3.5.3.1 *Availability of High Schools in Zimbabwe*

Zimbabwe's education system has a complex history stemming from the colonial system that resulted in divisions on racial lines. The country gained its independence from colonial rule in 1980 and had the same venture for trying to invest highly in education (Shizha, & Kariwo, 2011:ix-xi).

Despite the economic crisis experienced in Zimbabwe, its education has retained its ranking in Africa. The United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) ranked Zimbabwe in 9th position in 2015, whereas the World Economic Forum's 2016 Global information Technology ranks it 4th in Africa in terms of the quality of mathematics and science education behind Ivory Coast, Mauritius and Tunisia (Zimfact.org/factsheet.2018:1).

The country's school system is regulated by the Education Act of 1987. Their primary schools are from Grades 1 to 7, junior secondary schools from Grades 8 to 9 and senior secondary/high school from Grades 10 to 12. High schools are known as secondary schools in Zimbabwe (Zimgfact.org/factsheet 2018:8).

3.5.3.2   *Financial, Human and Physical Resources in Zimbabwe*

Financial Resources: Education is compulsory, and children have the right to free education. Shizha and Kariwo (2011: IX) state that while the education system was meant to be entirely free from 1980, parents currently pay fees to support state budgets as these are not sufficient depending on the school itself. The poor economic conditions in Zimbabwe often result in parents failing to pay school fees, hence it is difficult to maintain the existing infrastructure.

Land distribution which was initiated by the ruling party in the year 2000 created the economic crisis that negatively affected the education sector. The crisis resulted in educators being affected by political, economic and social insecurity which resulted in a decline in their salaries (Shizha & Kariwo, 2011: ix-xi). It is for this reasons that school-based assessment becomes a challenge in producing positive practice.

Human Resources: Chikowore (2020:1) a human rights activist, suggested that teachers in Zimbabwe are no longer valued and respected by the community due to their low salaries. Teachers and lecturers tend to leave Zimbabwe for greener pastures in Botswana and South Africa, resulting in a shortage of skilled and experienced teachers (Chikowore, 2020:3) which hinders the implementation of school-based assessment.

Physical Resources: School enrolment in Zimbabwe has risen around 95 percent rate resulting in 50 to 60 learners in a class. According to United Nations Development Programme, (UNDP) 2018, Zimbabwe has the highest textbook availability ratio in Africa. However, teachers face poor working conditions. Chikowore (2020:4) states that the current president Emmerson Mnangagwa and his government are failing in expanding the education system by building schools in marginalised areas and disadvantaged urban centres. Classes are overcrowded as there are 60 instead of 35 learners in the classroom. This situation results in a major workload for teachers.

In many instances, there is no proper infrastructure for schools resulting in makeshift structures. Physical resources of this nature impact negatively on the implementation of school-based assessment. Murwira (acting primary and secondary education professor) acknowledged that Zimbabwe has a deficit of +/- 3000 school buildings for both primary and secondary schools across the country.

3.5.3.3 Type of Assessments and Challenges on Implementation of School-Based Assessment in Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe Schools Examination Council (ZIMSEC) has been reluctant in implementing school-based assessment in their schools as it has been criticised for being subjective, informal and open to biasness to teachers (Mhishi et al., 2012:1).

Assessment in primary and secondary education has mainly been summative, conducted at the end of the learning cycle. The Zimbabwe School Examination Council (ZIMSEC) is responsible for all examinations in primary and secondary education. School-based assessment is commonly used in practical subjects (monicapost.co.za, 2017:1); however, lack of formal training and skills in assessment is a contributory factor to poor implementation.

3.5.4 Implementing School-Based Assessment in Ghana's High Schools

3.5.4.1 Availability of High Schools in Ghana

The education system in Ghana consists of six years of elementary (primary) and eight years of junior secondary and another three years of senior secondary education. Elementary/primary offers Grades 1 to 6, junior secondary offers Grades 7 to 9 and senior secondary offers Grades 10 to 12. Although Basic Education (Grades 1 to 9) is compulsory in Ghana, senior secondary education (Grades 10 to 12) is not compulsory. High schools are available in Ghana, and they are known as senior secondary schools. Admissions to senior secondary schools is competitive based on learner performance in junior secondary education.

3.5.4.2 Financial, Human and Physical Resources in Ghana

Financial Resources: Elementary education and senior secondary education are free at Ghanaian public schools; however, parents have to pay for uniforms. Although

education is free in elementary education and senior secondary education, there is inadequate financing in education. The Ghana Education Trust Fund (GETF) is unable to provide sufficient funds for education in Ghana (Ghanaian Times, 2022:7).

Human Resources: Non-fee-paying secondary education for learners in Ghana has resulted in high enrolment and consequently a shortage of teachers and increased workload (Chanimbe & Dankwah, 2020:1). Although there was an increase in the number of teachers in the Ghanaian education system in 2020, the inadequate supply of trained and qualified teachers remains a challenge as well as disadvantaging the distribution of trained professional teachers in rural areas in Ghana (Sasu, 2020:1).

Physical Resources: Most schools in Ghana have inadequate cloakrooms which results in absenteeism by girls especially during their menstrual cycle. Large class sizes have prevailed with the removal of cultural barriers which prevented girls from attending school. School timetables have since been adjusted to accommodate girls who are expected to carry out domestic chores at home. Some classes are conducted under trees due to lack of infrastructure and in some cases, poor infrastructure contributes to learner drop-out (Ghanaian Times, 2022:25 - 26).

3.5.4.3 Type of Assessments and Challenges on Implementation of School-Based Assessment in Ghana

School-based assessment, referred to as classroom assessment, is not used for learner improvement (Kotor, 2014:125-126). The challenge is that teachers use assessment for compliance to their education leaders and parents and basically to save their jobs.

Teachers in Ghana do not have proper knowledge and skills for implementing classroom assessment (school-based assessment), therefore their assessment is not based on developing learners. Teachers rely on their traditional model of paper and pencil assessment which basically compromises the aim of classroom assessment for developing learners. Recommendations indicated that in-service training for teachers is needed to resolve the identified gaps regarding classroom assessment (school-based assessment) (Kotor, 2014:125-126).

3.5.5 Implementing School-Based Assessment in Nigeria's High Schools

3.5.5.1 *Availability of High Schools in Nigeria*

Education in Nigeria is free and compulsory for primary education which caters from Grades 1 to 9 for for learners between the ages of 6 to 15 years. Lower/Junior secondary offers Grades 7 to 9; thereafter learners are awarded the Basic Education Certificate. Senior secondary schools offer Grades 10 to 12. When learners complete lower or junior secondary education they can choose to continue with senior secondary education or they may choose vocational, technical or business school. High schools are available in Nigeria, and they are known as upper/senior secondary schools (SASU, 2022:01). The learners who elect to continue with upper/senior secondary can proceed to tertiary after completing their upper or senior education (SASU, 2022:06).

3.5.5.2 *Financial, Human and Physical Resources in Nigeria*

Financial Resources: Poverty seems to be the contributory factor in the Nigerian education system. Financing of education is the greatest challenge in the education system of Nigeria (Davis, 2022:1) with the country's budget falling 20% below that suggested by the United Nations (UN). The issue of poor funding has result in common non-payment of academic staff in most rural areas of Nigeria.

Human Resources: According to Olawale (2016:2), one of the factors that works against the smooth running of education in rural areas of Nigeria includes insufficient academic staff. This challenge results in some teachers faced with teaching two or more subjects which are outside their areas of specialisation. The author further alludes that, despite the Nigerian ratio of 1:30, educators in urban areas often face classes of 60 learners and above. The supply of well qualified teachers also does not align the demand for secondary schools in Nigeria.

Physical Resources: Nigerian education is generally dominated by poor infrastructure such as classrooms with broken walls, open roofs, damaged chalkboards and lack learner furniture. The poor condition of infrastructure results in teaching and learning being conducted under trees. Poor hygiene is evident in secondary schools of Lagos State in Nigeria due to unacceptable and deficient water closet toilets and lack of running water. In general, the Nigerian education system has insufficient computer

laboratories or internet connections which means that learners are not being exposed to global standard (Olatunji & Thanny, 2020:7). The above-mentioned conditions plainly indicate the high deficiency of physical resources in Nigeria.

3.5.5.3 Type of Assessments and Challenges on Implementation of School-Based Assessment in Nigeria

School-based assessment, commonly called continuous assessment or internal assessment, is used in Nigerian schools. Kennedy and Ayamu (2021:34) highlight that continuous assessment was introduced to compliment the scores of supplicant students in awarding them with certificates. The latter refers that the students promotional marks consisted not only from the once off examination marks only, but it included continuous assessment marks.

The implementation of internal assessment in Nigerian secondary schools has challenges that include lack of knowledge and understanding by teachers. Teachers consider continuous assessment as a periodic testing while ignoring affective and psycho motor domains of improving learning (Oyedeji, 2017:14). Lack of skill in constructing standardised assessment and non-uniformity standards of internal assessment by secondary schools in Nigeria compromises the validity and reliability of internal assessment.

3.5.6 Implementing School-Based Assessment in Kenya's High Schools

3.5.6.1 Availability of High Schools in Kenya

Kenyan education system consists of eight years of primary education which is regarded as Standards 1 to 8 with learners ranging from 6 to 14 years. Secondary school education lasts for four years with learners ranging from 15 to 18 years. Primary education is free and compulsory whereas secondary education is free but not compulsory. At the end of Standard 8 learners sit for Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) examinations in order to be awarded with certificates (Ndemwa & Otani, 2020:12).

High schools are available in Kenya and are known as secondary schools. The secondary schools are divided into general schools mostly located in big towns of Kenya and vocational secondary schools. General secondary school education

focuses on learners planning to proceed to higher education whereas vocational secondary schools focus on learners who are planning to pursue their skills and join the labour market. After receiving their Kenyan Certificate of Primary Education, learners are free to join the vocational or general education (Ndemwa & Otani, 2020:1-3)

3.5.6.2 Financial, Human and Physical Resources in Kenya

Financial Resources: Education in Kenya is mainly financed by the government. The Minister of Education at National level is responsible in the budget allocation for primary and secondary education (Ndemwa & Otani, 2020:17). Insufficient funds for employing new graduate teachers from their teacher-training colleges is a serious challenge (Ndemwa & Otani, 2020:18).

Human Resources: A lack of teachers prevailed in Kenya after the introduction of free education, particularly as many learners who were forced to drop-out because of poverty, were able to return to school. The practice therefore resulted in heavy workloads leading to teachers being demotivated and leaving the education system. The Student-Teacher Ratio (STR) in public secondary schools is 41:1 with a limited number of a girls because of cultural norms; girls are still relegated to basic home-related chores rather than education (Ndemwa & Otani, 2020:12).

Physical Resources: Generally, there is inadequate physical resources for education in Kenya. The harsh geographical condition in the country contributes to the poor physical resources, such as lack of infrastructure, cleanliness of schools and lack of running water in addition to overcrowded classes. Although textbooks and activity fees are financed by Kenyan National government, the country experiences a lack of textbooks, which means that learners are compelled to share textbooks (Ndemwa & Otani, 2020:11).

3.5.6.3 Type of Assessments and Challenges on Implementation of School-Based Assessment in Kenya

The Kenyan education system uses school-based assessment, which they refer it as school-based internal assessments. School-based assessment includes tests,

quizzes and projects set by teachers to lead learners to better performance (Jawor, 2020:28).

Despite the focus on school-based assessment implementation, teachers in public secondary schools are overloaded and lack of time remains a challenge. Lack of resources such as computer hardware and software also contribute as a challenge for record keeping. Lack of knowledge of school-based assessment by all stakeholders hinders the smooth running of effective school-based assessment (Jawor, 2020:33).

3.6 IMPLEMENTING SCHOOL-BASED ASSESSMENT IN HIGH SCHOOLS IN SOUTH AFRICA

Education can be regarded as the key foundation of development of a modern country like South Africa. According to World Education News + Reviews (WENR, 2017: 21), the South African education system comprises of three levels which are primary, secondary/high level and tertiary level. South Africa practices a unique system regarding school fees - its system is governed by two legislation policies which are South African Schools Act (SASA) no. 84 of 1996 and National Norms and Standards for School Funding (NNSSF) paragraph 110 of 1996. The South African Schools Act (SASA) sets up key points about the right to education, school governance and school funding. The NNSSF defines how the government funds public schools and differentiates the liabilities of parents or school governing bodies. The two acts have a crucial influence in finance management. However, a survey by the DBE has found that the government is struggling in providing adequate school infrastructure and basic teaching and learning materials. This situation affects negatively in the quality of education that learners should receive (Phakathi, 2019:1).

According to the South African Act no.84 of 1996, schooling is compulsory for learners aged 07 to 16/18. There are three stages in which schooling is divided: 1. Foundation Phase (Grades R to 3), 2. General Education and Training (GET), consisting of intermediate phase (Grades 4 to 6) and Senior Phase (Grades 7 to 9) and lastly, Further Education and Training (FET) from Grades 10 to 12.

A teaching and learning international survey, conducted in 2019, established that 32% of teachers in South Africa were aged 50 and above. The survey also highlighted that

South Africa is not producing science, technology, engineering and mathematics teachers. South Africa can produce only 15 000 new graduate teachers per year, well below the 25000 needed in maintaining the effective teacher-pupil ratio (Maphalala & Mpofu, 2019:4). However, between 18 000 and 22 000 teachers leave the teaching profession every year. Although South Africa employs migrant teachers to alleviate teacher shortages, the problem persists. The Centre for Development and Enterprise has predicted that the country would need to have 456 000 teachers by 2025 (Maphalala & Mpofu, 2019:2). The South African education system needs to create a conducive a working environment which will assist in retaining teachers, especially experienced teachers and those with scarce skills such as science, technology, engineering and mathematics (Maphalala & Mpofu, 2019:3).

In reviewing literature on exploring challenges of implementing school-based assessment in high schools of Mopani West District, the focus is on principles of school-based assessment in high schools as defined in the South African Schools Act no.84 of 1996 paragraph 1.19.3. Assessment in the National Curriculum Statement Grades R-12 comprises school-based assessment and practical assessment tasks and it is compulsory, according to the National Protocol for Assessment Grades R-12 (DBE, 2011b:6) as indicated below, although this study's focus is on the FET phase:

Table 3.1: Overview of formal assessment

PHASE	SCHOOL-BASED ASSESSMENT COMPONENT %	END-OF-YEAR EXAMINATION %
Foundation Phase	100	0
Intermediate Phase	75	25
Senior Phase	40	60
Further Education and Training Phase	25	75

(Source: Adopted from National Protocol of Assessment, DBE, 2011b:7)

Chapter 4 of CAPS outlines the different forms of formal assessments that are to be implemented in various subjects that are offered in schools; however, it is silent on how marks should be allocated (DBE, 2011a).

This section discusses the implementation of school-based assessment in high schools in South Africa. These challenges are discussed with reference to all provinces, namely, the Eastern Cape, the Free State, Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, Mpumalanga, North West, the Northern Cape and the Western Cape, except for Limpopo province where the study is conducted. The focal point of discussions in each province includes presence of high schools, financial, human and physical resources as well as the types of assessments and challenges on implementing school-based assessment.

3.6.1 Implementing School-Based Assessment in Eastern Cape High Schools

3.6.1.1   Availability of HIGH SCHOOLS in the Eastern Cape

High schools are available in Eastern Cape Province. The total number of schools are 6064 and 953 (School4SA, 2022:3).

3.6.1.2   Financial, Human and Physical Resources in Eastern Cape

Financial Resources: Most schools in the Eastern Cape are no-fee paying which are funded by the government through norms and standards (Msaka, 2023:2). The MEC of Department of Education in Eastern Cape, Gade, in his speech for the financial year 2023/2024, alluded that priority is given to learners and schools when it comes to budget allocations.

Human Resources: The Eastern Cape Department of Education faces critical shortages of teachers in most of its schools. The report by the portfolio committee in the province indicated that nearly over 2 000 schools have vacant teaching posts (careerportal, 2023:18). News24, 2023 revealed the crisis of 380 schools with vacant posts of principals, 39 schools with vacant posts of deputies, 272 schools with vacant posts of heads of departments and 692 schools with vacant posts of teachers. One member who is serving in the portfolio committee alluded that together with the MEC of Education in the province, their plan is that the vacant posts will be filled by 2024. This shortage as well as large enrolment figures have an effect on the teaching and learning process as revealed by Maqoqa and Mvenene (2023:i) that the large numbers of learners in the classroom causes increase of teacher's workload, therefore, it is difficult to give developmental feedback and provide individual attention to learners.

Physical Resources: The province experiences migration of learners from rural to urban schools which results in overcrowding of classes ranging from 50 to 60 learners in schools in urban centres (careerportal, 2023:18). Most learners are compelled to walk between ten to thirty kilometres daily to access schools which indicates a lack of sufficient schools located in areas where learners could attend regularly thus combatting non-attendance and drop-outs (Ndayi, 2020:16).

The budget speech address by the MEC of Education of the Eastern Cape province reported that additional funding allocated to education will alleviate physical resources such as inadequate or lack of textbooks and stationery which is a challenge in schools. The Department is committed to dealing with backlogs regarding sanitation and infrastructure in the 2023/2024 current financial year as follows: 100 schools will be fenced, 50 schools will be provided with decent sanitation, 20 schools equipped with electricity and infrastructure and 280 schools with running water.

3.6.1.3 Type of Assessments and Challenges on Implementation of School-Based Assessment in the Eastern Cape

School-based assessment in the form of formative assessment tasks continuously receives attention, it is prescribed by the National Protocol for Assessment Grades R-12 in South Africa because school-based assessment is the ''heart and soul'' of teaching, learning and assessment (Department of Basic Education, 2021:19).

School-based assessment has challenges as indicated in the 2021 school-based assessment marks where some schools' assessment marks were rejected by Umalusi, the quality assurer in South Africa. Trying to mitigate the challenge, the Department held two centralised provincial school-based assessment moderations with the affected schools. The moderation process was also done in ten high enrolled subjects only and schools that were presenting Grade 12 for the first time in 2022 (NSC Booklet, 2022:19).

3.6.2 Implementing School-Based Assessment in Free State High Schools

3.6.2.1 Availability of High Schools in the Free State

Free State has 3 032 schools across the province, however there are 347 secondary and high schools in the province (School4SA, 2022:1).

3.6.2.2 *Financial, Human and Physical Resources in the Free State*

Financial Resources: Free State school education Act no.2 of 2000, chapter 9 confirms the funding of public schools by the department. Like in other provinces, public schools receive Norms and Standards according to quintile 1-5. Schools that are categorized as quintile 1-3, are no-fee schools, however schools that are categorized as Quintiles 4 and 5, might pay school fees.

Human Resources: Tshekedi (2022: iii) revealed that the working environment of educators in Free State is generally not conducive for teaching and learning, which tends to affect their morale. The author further revealed that most educators has resorted to absent themselves from school on Mondays, Fridays and pay days which means that the SMT has to re-schedule classes and re-allocate teaching of classes resulting in overloading of educators that are present.

Physical Resources: There is a critical shortfall of teaching resources such as teaching aids and equipment in Free State schools (Tshekedi, 2022: iv). Overcrowding of classrooms with a high student teacher ratio affects the quality of teaching because educators are unable to attend to all learners.

Lebone (2022:70-71) indicated that there is a lack of electricity in some schools, therefore internet connectivity is a challenge which affects the use of technology and digitalisation in high schools. Most schools located in rural areas suffer from lack of infrastructure, security and basic teaching and learning materials (Lebone, 2022:72).

3.6.2.3 *Type of assessments and challenges on implementation of school-based assessment in the Free State*

The Free State department of education implements school-based assessment as per the policy. The challenges in school-based assessment in South Africa are outlined by Dr Poliah in 2019 when presenting the report by Umalusi Colloquium as follows: teacher capacity, quality and standard of tasks, score variation, teacher and parent assistance, mimic examinations, quality assurance and support. The latter also affects the Free State Department of Education's high schools. It should be noted however, that school-based assessment possesses its own challenges differently, depending on the location of the school environment.

3.6.3 Implementing School-Based Assessment in Gauteng High Schools

3.6.3.1 *Availability of High Schools in Gauteng*

High schools are available in Gauteng with 2056 schools and 917 secondary/ high schools in the province.

3.6.3.2 *Financial, Human and Physical Resources in Gauteng*

Financial Resources: Even though higher percentage of funds are allocated to education through National Norms and Standards for schools, some schools in Gauteng still faces financial resources (Mabula, Mashaba & Maile, 2023: i). The GDE allocates funds to schools based on the number of learners in the schools' previous year enrolment; however, forced over-enrolment of learners has severe strain on already inadequate funding (Mabula et al., 2023:4).

Human Resources: Gauteng is faced with a serious shortage of qualified and experienced educators. This crisis affects the quality of education; for example, available teachers who might not have the skills for teaching specific subjects. Teacher absenteeism is also regarded as a challenge in some schools in Gauteng (CAPS 123, 2023:9).

Physical Resources: Gauteng is an economic hub in the country which attracts people from other provinces to migrate to the province for economic opportunities (Mabula et al., 2023:3). The migration pattern causes public schools in Gauteng to be pressurised to admit more learners resulting in overcrowding of classrooms. Teaching and learning materials such as textbooks are insufficient due to admission of extra learners at the beginning of each year especially in no-fee public schools (Mabula et al., 2023:4).

The GDE recommends that the life span of textbooks is five years; however, this is not effective because of the way the textbooks are looked after by learners. Even though school have a textbook retrieval programme in place, retrieving of all textbooks is not successful. Lost textbooks by learners which should be replaced by the parents is not done especially in no-fee schools (Mabula et al., 2023:5).

3.6.3.3 Type of Assessments and Challenges on Implementation of School-Based Assessment in Gauteng

School-based assessment, as indicated earlier, is a compulsory component for progression and promotion in all the different school phases according to the National Protocol for Assessment (DBE, 2011b:6). The challenges of school-based assessment implementation in Gauteng is generally minimal. The latter is supported by the Umalusi report that indicates only a low number of rejected school-based assessment marks (Umalusi Report, 2019:4).

3.6.4 Implementing School-Based Assessment in KwaZulu-Natal High Schools
3.6.4.1 Availability of High Schools in KwaZulu-Natal

High schools are available in Kwa-Zulu Natal, however the availability vary as per the geographic location, for example rural areas have larger numbers of small schools in terms of enrolment (Gumbi, 2021:1). Kwa-Zulu Natal has 6 264 schools across its area inclusive of 1760 high schools.

3.6.4.2 Financial, Human and Physical Resources in KwaZulu-Natal

Financial Resources: In KwaZulu-Natal, financial funding is like in other Provinces in South Africa, where schools are funded according to Quintiles 1-5 depending on the wealth of the surrounding community (USAID, 2015:2). Schools categorised as Quintiles 1 to 3 are declared as no-fee schools; however, schools in Quintiles 4 and 5 can charge schools fees as they get small amount of funding from the government. Parents are afforded the right to apply for a school-free exemption if they cannot afford to pay (Dass & Rinquest, 2017:143).

Human Resources: The human resource issue of teacher shortages is a serious contributory factor that disturbs the teaching and learning process.

Physical Resources: There is shortage of basic teaching and learning physical resources such as textbooks, stationery and laboratory equipment in KwaZulu-Natal. Poor or inadequate infrastructure like classrooms, which results in overcrowding, toilets and safe drinking water remains a challenge in most schools (Department of Basic Education, KwaZulu-Natal. 2021:12).

3.6.4.3 Type of Assessments and Challenges on School-Based Assessment in KwaZulu-Natal

Challenges are encountered during the implementation of school-based assessment in KwaZulu-Natal schools. Van Staden and Motsamai (2017:1) identified challenges aligned to non-adherence of policy, differences in classroom practices and inconsistency of monitoring and moderation practices as themes of variation in school-based assessment implementation. Heads of department in high schools lack in-depth knowledge and understanding of functions that they are supposed to execute for making school-based assessment reliable, credible, and valid (Van Staden & Motsamai, 2017:2).

3.6.5 Implementing School-Based Assessment in Mpumalanga High Schools

3.6.5.1 Availability of High Schools in Mpumalanga

The total number of all schools in Mpumalanga Province equals to 2 252 schools across the province (School4SA. 2022:1) with high schools totalling 569.

3.6.5.2 Financial, Human and Physical Resources in Mpumalanga

Financial Resources: The Mpumalanga Department of Education was allocated 43% of the total provincial budget for the financial year 2022/2023. The budget aimed to fund teaching and learning, school infrastructure, learner/teacher support materials (LTSM), school furniture and relevant equipment. The budget also aimed to continue with the implementation of the Presidential Youth Employment Initiative (Silaule, 2022:1).

Human Resources: There is a lack of qualified teachers at most rural schools in Mpumalanga results as teachers are not prepared to stay in rural areas because of social, professional and cultural isolation (Du Plessis & Maestry, 2019:07) and it is not easy to attract qualified teachers to come and teach in rural areas Another contributory factor that discourages teachers to apply for positions in rural areas schools, are the number of learners in the schools.

Physical Resources: Even though the budget speech by the Mpumalanga Finance MEC in March 2022 acknowledged that education is a basic right for every child and young people in the society (Silaule, 2022:1). the Department delayed the

implementation of infrastructure projects in schools for the academic year 2020/2021, which has resulted in challenges of provision of infrastructure. The unpredictable migration pattern to urban areas and the growth of population in informal settlements results in the available infrastructure being insufficient. The Department has been compelled to utilise mobile classrooms to alleviate the challenge, however overcrowding prevails (Mpumalanga Province, 2023:246).

In 2023, the Department provided tablets through the Ubuhlebuzile e-Learning Programme to Grade 12 learners. These tablets were loaded with e-Learner Teachers Support Material (e-LTSM) to alleviate the shortage of textbooks. However, circular number 40 of 2023 gave a directive regarding retrieval of the tablets (Circular no. 40. 2023:1).

3.6.5.3 Type of Assessments and Challenges on Implementation of School-Based Assessment in Mpumalanga

In Mpumalanga high schools, school-based assessment is implemented, and it comprises of formative assessment in the form of various formal tasks conducted during the year. Half-yearly and trial examinations also form part of school-based assessment.

3.6.6 Implementing School-Based Assessment in North West High Schools

3.6.6.1 Availability of high schools in the North West

North West is a very small province; therefore, it accounts for only 6% of all schools in the country. The total number of both high schools and primary schools is 1 835 (School4SA. 2022:1)

3.6.6.2 Financial, Human and Physical Resources in the North West

Financial Resources: The North West Department of Education provides funding to public schools in the province. Some schools qualify to be no-fee schools, as per the Quintile system, depending on their socio-economic status (Tefu, 2021:2).

Human Resources: SADTU provincial secretary stated that the Northwest Department of Education has failed in providing schools with educators (Tefu, 2021:1). This

condition is a serious challenge that results in learners not receiving quality education because schools are understaffed.

Physical Resources: The Department of Education appeared before the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) to report on the status of the school infrastructure in the province and its progress on improving conditions of schools in the province (Khechane, 2022:1). The MEC, Mmaphefo Matsemela, stressed that the Department would continue to build new schools, additional classroom blocks, maintain existing buildings, construct and maintain ablution facilities, erect perimeter fences, provide water and sanitation and provide furniture to schools in the province. The MEC acknowledged that they are striving to eradicate the poor state of the learning environment because it can negatively affect the teaching and learning process (Khechane, 2022:1). Textbooks and stationery are provided free of charge by the Department to learners; these textbooks are to be retrieved at the end of each year by the school.

3.6.6.3   Type of Assessments and Challenges on Implementation of School-Based Assessment in the North West

North West Department of Education is directed by policy to implement school-based assessment. The learner who does not have school-based assessment marks without valid reason cannot be resulted, as aligned with the National Protocol for Assessment (DBE, 2011b:9).

3.6.7   Implementing School-Based Assessment in Northern Cape High Schools

3.6.7.1   Availability of High Schools in the Northern Cape

Northern Cape has 614 schools across the province (School4SA. 2022:1) of which 145 are high schools.

3.6.7.2   Financial, Human and Physical Resources in the Northern Cape

Financial Resources: The Northern Cape Department of Education has introduced no-fee schools as indicated by the Quintile system; 404 schools are categorised as Quintile 1, 2 and 3 schools which are no-fee schools. This amounts to 74% of the total schools in the province for the financial year 2023/2024 (MEC for Education Budget Speech 2023/2024).

Human Resources: There is a marked shortage of teacher in the province, especially experienced teachers and those with scarce skills such as science, technology, engineering and mathematics (Maphalala & Mpofu, 2019:3).

Physical Resources: Northern Cape Province is not excluded from difficulties in funding from the DBE.

It is necessary that the Department of Education as the employer should create conducive environment for teaching and learning. In his study, (Maduna, 2022:118), uncovered that the schools' rural setting, poor and old infrastructure, lack of teaching and learning material and large class sizes contributes to teachers' stress level aggravates the medical conditions and mental health of both teachers and learners.

3.6.7.3 Type of Assessments and Challenges on Implementation of School-Based Assessment in the Northern Cape

School-based assessment is a requirement that should be implemented in South African schools. Both school-based assessment and practical assessment task component must have marks for each assessment task done, be guided by the Subject Assessment Guideline and moderated, according to the National Protocol for Assessment (DBE, 2011b:8-9).

The challenges experienced during the implementation of school-based assessment in Northern Cape Province is that most public schools have big class sizes and physical resources are insufficient. For example, in the study conducted by Sithole (2017:78) it is highlighted that schools that have no resources like textbooks and classrooms experiences challenges during teaching and learning, hence there is poor performance and failure to implement school-based assessment efficiently.

3.6.8 Implementing School-Based Assessment in Western Cape High Schools
3.6.8.1 Availability of High Schools in the Western Cape

Dano (2021:1) highlighted that there are insufficient number of high schools in the province with roughly three primary schools which are feeders to one high school. The worst existing scenario indicated is in the Victoria Mxenge area, there are five (5) primary schools which are feeder to one high school (Dano,2021:1). School

admissions for learners after passing Grade 7 have always been controversial issue in the province. A classic example is that from the 1 449 public schools in the province, 984 are primary schools and only 384 are high schools (Dano,2021:1).

3.6.8.2   *Financial, Human and Physical Resources in the Western Cape*

Financial Resources: Public schools in the Western Cape are not allowed to refuse admission, suspend pupils from classes, deny pupils to cultural, sporting, or social activities due to parents being unable to pay school fees. Further to this, it is illegal to refuse to issue school reports of learners (WCED, volume 400, 2023:20). The poor management system of funds provided by the government to schools in the Western Cape negatively affects the smooth running of schools. Aligning to funding strategies with policy goals is essential in ensuring that financial resources are effectively utilised (Beyonyi, 2022:3).

Human Resources: There is a concern about shortage of teachers, especially for mathematics and physical sciences (Dano, 2021:3). The WCED addressed the issue of shortages of teachers by employing up to 1 143 teachers in 2023. (Cloete, 2022:1).

Physical Resources: Inadequate availability of high schools in the Western Cape results in shortage of classrooms. The MEC, David Maynier, admitted that there is insufficient infrastructure in the province, but it is addressing the issues with the use of mobile classrooms (Dano, 2021:3).

3.6.8.3   *Type of Assessments and Challenges on Implementation of School-Based Assessment in the Western Cape Province*

School-based assessment is implemented in the Western Cape. According to the National Protocol of assessment 2012:3, school-based assessment should be used in providing developmental feedback to both the learners and the teachers to improve teaching and learning.

3.7   SUMMARY

This chapter reviewed literature on the implementation of school-based assessment and its challenges in the process of teaching and learning. The study drew literature from global perspective by focusing on situations in high schools in Canada, Britain,

China, Brazil, Australia and Chile. In Africa, the focus was on high schools in the following countries: Botswana, Ethiopia, Zimbabwe, Ghana, Nigeria and Kenya. The same was done in South Africa's provinces: the Eastern Cape, the Free State, Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, Mpumalanga, the Northern Cape, North West and the Western Cape, except Limpopo province where the study is being conducted.

Discussions on each of the above-mentioned countries focused on their high schools on the following aspects: availability of high schools, financial, human and physical resources as well as the type of assessments and challenges of implementing school-based assessment. It emerged that the education systems of all countries differed with regard to levels of schooling. The different financial strengths of each country contributed to the differences in provision of human resources as well the availability of physical resources. The common practice identified is that almost each country is implementing school-based assessment, though with different challenges.

It can thus be concluded that although school-based assessment appears to be the core culture in the school learning ecosystem, there are concerns about the effective implementation of school-based assessment.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 3 reviewed literature on challenges the implementation of school-based assessment globally, in countries in Africa and provinces in South Africa except for the one in which the study is conducted. The discussion focused on the availability of high schools in the different countries, as well as financial, human, and physical resources. The type of assessment and the challenges faced by the high/secondary schools during the implementation in each country was also discussed.

This chapter outlines the research methodology, which incorporates the research paradigm, approach and design that were used in this study. The research methods are described including the population and sampling, the data collection and data analysis. The final sections relate to reliability, validity and trustworthiness and ethical followed by the research.

4.2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research methodology are the methods and techniques used for conducting research, and refers to all the methods used by a researcher in conducting research (Surbhi, 2018:2). Research methodology are ways of systematically solving research problems (Patel & Patel, 2019:1).

4.2.1 Research Paradigm

The term paradigm i derived from the Greek word *paradeiknya* meaning pattern. It has been broadly defined by many academics such as Brooke (2013:7), Kivunja and Kuyini (2017:1), Kamal (2019:14), Abbadia (2022:1). For example, Brooke (2013:7) described a paradigm as "set of beliefs that guides an action" which is embedded in all educational research. Kivunja and Kuyini (2017:26) stress that paradigms represent the researcher's beliefs and values about the world, which means that the research paradigm refers to the researcher's thoughts and beliefs about the study on hand and

would thus guide their actions during the study. In other words, a paradigm determines how the researcher manages the study, collects, and analyses data (Kamal, 2019:14).

The research paradigm influences the philosophical decisions which the researcher makes during the research and directs how data are to be collected, interpreted and analysed. According to Abbadia (2022:1) research paradigm is an on-going process where the researcher constructs the research plan to assist throughout on how the theories and practices of the study works.

The three different research paradigms which support educational research are positivism, interpretivism/constructivist and pragmatism. These research paradigms are outlined in the table below with related philosophical elements (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017:26).

Table 4.1: The research paradigms and related philosophical elements

TYPE	ONTOLOGY	EPISTEMOLOGY	METHODOLOGY	AXIOLOGY
	Answers the question: What is the form and nature of reality and what can be known about it?	Answers the question: How is it possible to know reality?	Answers the question: How do we as inquirers go about discovering reality?	Answers the question: Why do we discover reality?
Positivism	Researcher maintains an objective reality	Knowledge is real and objective, obtainable via measurement and statistics (reductionism)	Surveys, experiments, statistical analysis	Researcher maintains an objective stance
Interpretivism/ constructivism	The focus of the researcher is subjective on reality	Knowledge is dependent on beliefs, values, and lived experience (constructivism)	Field studies, case studies, hermeneutics, phenomenology	Researcher will be subjective
Pragmatism	The researcher will be objective/ subjective	Knowledge is obtained by doing and acting.	Mixed-methods research, action research, design science	The researcher will adopt both objective and subjective point of view.

(Source: Adopted from Msimeki, 2021:120).

The above table on ontology, epistemology and methodology is discussed hereunder.

4.2.1.1 Ontological Assumptions

Ontology, an ideological assumption (a philosophical supposition) dealing with people's concern in believing in something because of the nature or reality thereof (Kivunji & Kuyini, 2017:27), addresses itself to the question of whether the social phenomenon being studied is real (Jackson, 2013:52). Meem (2020:2) maintains that ontology is concerned about our beliefs regarding the type and nature of reality and the social world, it is the study of 'being' and it concerns itself with 'what is' the nature and existence and structure of reality and what is possible to know about the world.

Ontology could be described as the existence or the reality that is demonstrating the nature of something which is regarded as truth. Whenever the term ontology is mentioned, there is an expectation to respond to the questions on what reality is and what is known about the nature thereof (of reality) (Hayati & Dalimunthe, 2022:72). As ontology is a means to provides answers to the origin and or existence of objective science, it assists the researcher in conceptualising the form and nature of reality that he/she can believe in (Hapsari, Ramadani, Supratama & Hidayat, 2023:5). The belief or ontological position taken by the researcher dictates the methods to be used in a particular study. The nature of reality in this study lies in the understanding of the implementation of school-based assessment in high schools of the Mopani West District.

4.2.1.2 Epistemological Assumptions

Epistemology originated from the Greek word '*epistime*' which means knowledge. It is concerned with what is acceptable as valid knowledge (Collins & Hussey, 2014:47), and refers to the assumptions made about the type of knowledge or the possibility to uncover the world, it is about the information that serves as accepted knowledge and how the researcher acquires and interpret it (Meem, 2020:1). It. Epistemology incorporates how people come to be aware of and knowledgeable about something and how it reveals the truth or reality (Kivunji & Kuyini, 2017:27). Epistemology relates to fundamental knowledge, its nature, its form of reality and how it can be gained to be communicated to other human beings.

Kivunji and Kuyini (2017:27) maintain that the source of true knowledge may originate from built-in knowledge, logical knowledge, authoritative knowledge and empirical knowledge. It is for this reason that the researcher should establish the source of knowledge that they intend to persuade. Epistemology has been recognised as a useful conceptual tool for exploring how knowledge has been produced in research (Nguyeni & Chia, 2023:1).

In the context of this study, the acceptable knowledge is about what is regarded as true information which can be acquired from participants. Epistemology theory assisted the researcher in the study because it concerns itself in attempting understand how knowledge is formed and its relationship with the truth (Hapsari et al., 2023:5). Epistemology assists the researcher in proving whether the acquired knowledge that is under investigation is personally experienced.

4.2.1.3 Methodological Assumptions

According to Cohen, Manion and Morisson (2018:10), methodological assumptions suggest that qualitative research should be conducted in natural, uncontrived, real-world settings where there are minimal interferences. Data collection should be systematic, and the analysis of data should be inductive with constructions and findings being derived from the data during the research, a process influenced by the researcher's values. The study must have value derived from the researcher's choice of research focus, its framing and bounding, a working methodology, data collection and analysis together with its reporting of the findings (Cohen et al., 2018:10).

Methodology is thus a process where the researcher decides what data is to be collected, from whom, and how data is to be analysed (Jansen & Warren, 2020:1). The research aims and objectives are the ones who has the major influence on the methodological assumptions.

The aim of this study was to explore the challenges of implementing school- based assessment in high schools of the Mopani West District, therefore the researcher used a qualitative approach to collect data from teachers, Heads of Department and deputy principals in their natural settings (schools) through the use of various data collection methods.

4.2.1.4 Axiological Assumptions

Axiology refers to the ethical issues that need to be considered and be observed in the research process (Kivunji & Kuyini, 2017:28). . The considered ethical issues are founded on the understanding that human beings have dignity that should be respected and fundamental human rights to make choices which the researcher should respect.

In other words, axiology deals with values (Hayati & Dalimunthe, 2022:177), where the researcher understands the values together with their roles in the research (Alele & Malau-Aduli, 2023:16). Axiology requires researchers to take into consideration the following questions:

- What must be done to respect the rights of each participant?
- What are the ethical principles to be observed during the research?
- Which cultural and inter-cultural issues need to be addressed during the research?
- How can the research be conducted in a respectful manner?
- How can risk be minimised or reduced during the research?

It is of vital importance that the researcher should address ethical issues at all stages of the research process.

This research was framed within constructivist grounded theory.

4.2.1.5 Constructivist Grounded Theory

Constructivist grounded theory was developed by the sociologists Glaser and Strauss in the late 1960s (Charmaz, 2012:12). It is from this theory that their student Charmaz, an American sociologist, improved and developed the constructivist grounded theory. Constructivist Grounded Theory has become one of the most used qualitative research approaches (Stough & Lee, 2021:1) and used as an analytical research methodology (Damyanov, 2023:4).

Constructivist grounded theory is a qualitative method that assist in producing theoretical insights that are valuable to educational research and educational practices

especially in teachers (Lindquist & Forsberg, 2021:1). Constructivist grounded theory is a systematic methodology and a version of grounded theory that emphasises the subjectivity of researchers and posits that researchers construct data and theory through interactions with social processes (Charmaz, 2014:8). It focuses on constructing reality and meaning between the researcher and the participants (Thornberg & Charmaz, 2012:14), focusing on generating new theories through inductive analysis of the data gathered from the participants rather than from a pre-existing theoretical framework. Constructivist grounded theory focuses on the belief that reality is socially constructed by individuals who interact with one another to create meaning (Damyanov, 2023:08).

Constructivist grounded theory views reality as social and human actors and it studies participants' actions in resolving the problem at hand (Charmaz, 2017:2). It re-shapes the interaction between the researcher and participants during the research process and thus views the researcher as the co-participant but not as a neutral observer. This is particularly true as constructivist grounded theory is commonly used in describing how the researcher influences data connection and it also forms part of the interpretative actions of studies (Holoway, 2021:307). It offers a foundational positioning of valuing the research participant findings which are grounded in the participant's data and considers the context of the individual participant (Clarke, Healy & Featherstone, 2023:50).

The characteristics of constructivist grounded theory developed by Charmaz (2014:18) are explained below and a table adopted from Stough and Lee is utilised to outline the common characteristics of constructivist grounded theory methodologies. The unique characteristics of constructivist grounded theory, which depict a different setting from other approaches are commonly data collection, data qualitative coding, theoretical sampling, development of memos and re-constructing theory and writing the draft. (Charmaz, 2014:18).

- **Gathering of Data**

This serves as the first step in the constructivist grounded theory approach. It is in this step where rich and detailed data are being gathered. The data gathered is used in investigating and exploring the study at hand. During this process, the understanding

of how the participants is handling and reacting to the situations being explored will prevail.

- **Qualitative Coding**

Qualitative coding in constructivist grounded theory is characterised by making sense of the collected data, identifying concepts and labelling of data according to what it entails.

- **Theoretical Sampling and Sorting**

This is a stage where the researcher checks if the data collected are sufficient for the research. During checking, the researcher may consider it appropriate to extend and elaborate further on the available collected data. This stage is characterised by refining, identification of gaps and gaining more insight into the unknown as the researcher. The developer of constructivist grounded theory, Charmaz (2014:2), maintains that the purpose of theoretical sampling focuses on elaborating and refining the categories constituting the theory. This entails that the researcher moves back and forth in the process of data collection and data analysis (Creswell, 2014:12).

- **Analytical Memo Writing**

This is the stage where the researcher writes down ideas that were generated during the interaction with participants specifically for data collection. The memo provides the researcher's thoughts and opinions that display how data are taken apart and analysed. This basically entails how the researcher compares data at hand and a way of exploring more ideas.

- **Re-Constructing Theory and Writing the Draft**

The existing theory is reconstructed for interpretation and to further include important concepts that emerge from the research. It is then that the researcher's ideas can be rendered in the form of writing, edited for style and language.

Because constructivist grounded theory focuses on participants' perspective, it uses an open, exploratory approach This is particularly suitable or relevant when studying issues related to social equity and education because it really considers both the

researcher and the participants as constructing the research process together (Lindquist & Forsberg, 2021:1).

Constructivist grounded theory transforms the interaction between the researcher and the participants in the research process, who are teachers, Heads of Department and deputy principals. It is considered a useful method for pursuing critical qualitative inquiry as it fosters critical questioning throughout the inquiry. In this study of exploring the challenges in implementing school-based assessment in high schools of the Mopani West District, constructivist grounded theory assisted the researcher during interviews and observation (Charmaz, 2017:13).

Constructivist grounded theory was adopted for this study because in exploring the challenges in the implementation of school-based assessment, it required an open-ended approach for data collection and analysis.

4.2.2 Research Approach

Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods are three research approaches which may be used. Each approach has specific implications for choice of tools. The following table indicates differences between quantitative and qualitative research approaches and implications for each of the approaches:

Table 4.2: Differences between quantitative and qualitative approaches

DIMENSION	QUANTITATIVE APPROACH	QUALITATIVE APPROACH	IMPLICATIONS FOR THIS STUDY
Design	Experimental	Non-experimental	Exploratory design: non-experimental
Setting	Laboratory	Field	At schools
Data Collection	Instruments: electronic /mechanical devices, tests, questionnaires	Collection of narratives which can be either existing diaries, or newly conducted interviews	Face-to-face Interviews

DIMENSION	QUANTITATIVE APPROACH	QUALITATIVE APPROACH	IMPLICATIONS FOR THIS STUDY
Data Type	Numerical: ratio, interval, ordinal	Descriptive, for instance interview protocols, written records, or videos	Descriptive interviews
Analysis	Descriptive and analytic statistics	The analysis is aimed at revealing the meaning	Inductive analysis according to the themes of the study
Generalisa-tion	Focus on testing hypotheses	Focus is on generating hypotheses	The focus was on generalising findings which are like the studies

(Source: Adapted from Cropley, 2019:22-23)

The qualitative research approach was identified as appropriate for this study as behaviours, experiences and perceptions of participants are gathered by responding to questions which commence with 'how' and 'why' instead of 'how many'. A qualitative approach is used in understanding the thoughts, concepts, or experience of people in the study. It is basically a survey done to gather people's thoughts and experience (Thattamparambil, 2020:6). The use of qualitative method of research thus offers participants the opportunity to express their respective views regarding the key questions of the study (Bhandari, 2020:2). The researcher collects first-hand information directly from participants (Hill & Helmers, 2014:20). It is a type of research where data is explored and investigated to provide deeper insight and understanding of the real problem of a study (Tenny, Brannan, Brannan & Sharts-Hopko, 2023:35) and the data cover aspects of the subject in depth and in a detailed format since it is collected from human experience (Sharma, 2018:5). The qualitative research method assists the researcher in receiving meaningful information from the participants' spoken words (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2013:24) through interview questions that allow probing and prompting responses.

Qualitative researchers aim more often to explain rather than merely describe because they are constantly trying to make sense of what they see and hear in a specific content (Kielmann, Cataldo & Seely, 2012:12). This is the view that aligns with this

study's aim, that contributed to the rationale of using qualitative approach method. The research question laid a vital role in informing the researcher to adopt the qualitative approach on exploring how educators, Head of Department and deputy principals are engaged in their teaching and learning process while implementing school-based assessment. The researcher was aware that this approach focuses on the personal, subjective and experiential basis of knowledge. It is for this reason that the participants and the researcher were involved in constructing meaning regarding school-based assessment implementation. The interaction took place in their natural setting of their schools, where rich data were collected using semi-structured interviews (Creswell, 2014:17).

Creswell (2014:16) highlights that the research process is flexible rather than fixed and it involves multiple sources of data such as examining documents, observing behaviour, or conducting interviews where the researcher is a key role player. Qualitative approach uses inductive and deductive data analysis allowing the researcher to build patterns, categories and themes from the bottom up, organising data into more abstract units of information. In qualitative research, participants' meanings are more significant and highly esteemed above those of the researcher. The qualitative approach is also reflexive, and it gives a holistic account of the research.

The researcher aimed unearth the complexity with the implementation of school-based assessment implementation in high schools of the Mopani West District by gaining an understanding of challenges experienced by educators, Heads of Department and their deputy principals. These participants' behaviours and mostly their experiences regarding how school-based assessment is implemented in the process of teaching and learning needs to be properly understood (Nassaji, 2015:12).

A qualitative approach can be used to explore sensitive topics and culturally defined experiences which provides valuable insights into a phenomenon, people's behaviour, perception, and experience. Qualitative research provides a deep understanding of a complex phenomenon, it is also useful in that the data set is generally small, convenient and cost effective to create (Askarzai & Unhelkar, 2017:44).

Mcleod (2019:7) states that the direct and close involvement by the researcher enables the researcher to have an insider's view of the field, which offers an advantage because the researcher can discover issues that are often missed (such as subtleties and complexities) by the scientific enquiries. The main strengths of qualitative research are that it provides complex textual descriptions of how people experience phenomena.

Hennink, Hutter and Bailey (2020:24) confirm that qualitative research is a broad umbrella term covering a wide range of techniques and philosophies; however, the authors argue that qualitative research is an approach that enables one to examine people's experience in detail by using a specific set of research method, inter alia, in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, observations, content analysis, visual methods and life histories or biographies. The distinctive features of qualitative research approach mentioned by these authors motivated the researcher to choose it because the study focuses on understanding the challenges that hinders school-based assessment implementation from the participants.

According to Hennink et al. (2020: 25), one of the most distinctive features of qualitative research is that the approach allows one to identify issues from the perspective of one's study participants and understand the meanings and the interpretations that they display to behaviour, events or objects. The practice assists in obtaining insight into the interpretations about a phenomenon that cannot be possible with qualitative research. This means that the qualitative research approach assists in gathering non-numerical data and determining the underlying reasons, views or meanings from the participants or subjects.

The qualitative approach was relevant in this study because it aimed in exploring the challenges experienced in the implementation of school-based assessment, therefore the participants' views and reasons were obtained. During the interviews and observation sessions, the researcher was able to ask questions which guided the participants to respond while giving their own opinions and experiences. The chosen methodology assisted in gaining more insight and creating a relevant platform to interact with the participants while observing their feelings and gestures.

4.2.3 Research Design

The research design intends to provide an appropriate framework for the study by determining the choices to be made in order to receive relevancy of the information (Sileyew, 2019:27). A suitable research design is required for research to be successfully carried out. The main agenda for a research design is to translate the research problem into data collection and analysis so that relevant answers to research questions are provided (Asenahabi, 2019:1).

Bhandari (2022:1) defines the research design as a strategy used to answer research questions while using empirical data. In other words, it is a complete scheme or programme of research because it encompasses the work to be done and how it is supposed to be done while employee various research methods in order to align well with the paradigm (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017:18).

The research design is therefore the conceptual blueprint within which research is conducted. A scholar prepares an action plan, which constitutes the outline of collection, measurement and analysis of data. The research design is not associated to any particular technique of data collection or any particular type of data. When designing research, it is necessary that we recognise the type of evidence required to answer the research question in a reasonable way (Akhtar & Islamia, 2016:17).

A well-planned research design helps in ensuring that the methods used match the research aims and the kind of data to be analysed. It should be noted that the research problem determines the type of design one should opt to use. Regarding this study, the researcher adopted a qualitative research approach guided by a descriptive and exploratory case study within a bounded system where participants were selected because of their uniqueness and the fact that its context is real life in its physical and historical setting (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014:28).

The research design was ensured to effectively address the research problem which constituted the blueprint for the collection, measurement and analysis of data (De Vaus, 2006:1). This is supported by McMillan & Schumacher (2010:490) when describing a research design as the plan or the 'glue' that holds all elements together in a particular study (Akhtar, 2016:7).

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To sum up, Cohen et al. (2018:38) define a research design as "a plan for and foundation for approaching, operationalising and investigating the research problem or issue; setting the approach, theory/ies and methodology/ies to be employed; the type of data required and how it will be collected (instrumentation) and from whom (the population and or sample) how the data will be collected, analysed and interpreted and reported". The focus thereof was to obtain sufficient information on challenges experienced during implementation of school-based assessment. The key that drove the researcher was the aims of the study (University of Newcastle Library, 2022:1).

4.3   RESEARCH METHODS

Research methods as considered the building blocks of the scientific enterprise (Patten & Newhart, 2018:1) or rather the practicality ''how'' part of the research. (Jansen & Warren, 2020:1). Research methods are the strategies, processes or techniques used in data collection and analysis to uncover new information or creating a better understanding of a particular topic (University of Newcastle Library, 2022:1). These methods include population and sampling, data collection and data analysis.

4.3.1 Population

Population is described as a group of individuals or events from which a sample is drawn and to which results can be generated (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014:5). Bhandari (2023:1) defines population as the whole group from whom the researcher wants to collect information and thereafter draw conclusions. In research, a population does not always refer to people, however it might refer to a group which contains elements of anything that the researcher wants to study. This can refer to items such as objects, events, organisations, countries, species or organisms; in other words, population refers to the set or group of all the units on which the findings of the research are to be applied (Shukla, 2020:4).

The target population in this study comprised educators, Heads of Departments, and deputy principals at high schools in the Mopani West District in Limpopo (Patton, 1990:48).

4.3.2 Sampling

When researchers sample, they select a sub-group of the targeted population that the researcher plans to study for the purpose of making generalisations about the target population (Creswell, 2012:627). Purposive sampling was used for selecting participants from the Mopani West District as they are considered representatives of the population and met the objective of the study as they come from the same schools within the district and had common characteristics.

Educators, Heads of Department and deputy principles were sampled as they represent all individuals who are responsible for the day-to-day management and implementation of school-based assessment. The former are implementers of school-based assessment and the latter two oversee the process by monitoring and evaluating it. Participants identified were considered to be rich in information and therefore their responses would assist in gathering data for this study.

Five high schools in the Mopani West District were purposively selected. The reason being that they are the ones to abide by Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) while implementing school-based assessment. It was assumed that their responses would be valid, reliable and credible as they play a vital role during the implementation process. On the other hand, the researcher as their curriculum advisor, would be able to access these schools.

The study sample from the five schools consisted of:

- Ten (10) educators, two from each school. They participated in individual semi-structured interviews as they implement school-based assessment.
- Ten (10) Heads of Department, two from each school. They participated in individual semi-structured interviews because they are directly in charge of monitoring and supporting teachers during the implementation of school-based assessment.
- Five (5) deputy principals, one from each school. They were interviewed individually because of their experience of being expected to monitor and support Head of Departments. Deputy principals are also regarded as curriculum managers in their respective schools.

- The total number of participants sampled for this study was 25.

Table 4.3: Participants sampled

PARTICIPANTS	NUMBER	DATA GATHERING INSTRUMENT
Educators	05X02=10	Individual semi-structured interview
Heads of Department	05X02=10	Individual semi-structured interview
Deputy Principals	05X01=05	Individual semi-structured interview
Total	**25**	

4.3.3 Data Collection

Data gathering instruments are tools that are used for collecting data in research (Canals, 2017:4) and include, amongst others, interviews, observations, questionnaires, policy documents and other relevant literature. These tools are basically directed by the research questions and objectives of the study. The researcher must ensure that the instruments chosen for the research that they are conducting are valid and reliable. Figure 4.1 below serves as an example of qualitative data collection techniques:

(Source: Adopted from Bhat, 2023:1)

Figure 4.1: Examples of qualitative data collection tools

The instruments or tools that used for qualitative data gathering in this study were individual semi-structured interviews and participant observation.

- Interviews

An interview is a qualitative research technique that involves the researcher asking questions to communicate with participants in the process of data collection (Bhat, 2020:1). Interviews give the researcher the chance to interpret other people's own experiences (Fontana & Frey, 2005:697). Interviewing Interviews are flexible, specifically asking a series of questions and allowing for in-depth analysis from a moderately small sample size (Young et al., 2018:1). Interviews has an advantage of allowing participants to bring some unique and interesting aspects of the study drawn from own experiences that the researcher never thought of which places the focus of the research on participants' point of view (Madziyire, 2014:143-144). This study has mainly used interviews and the researcher's observations to gather data from participants. Therefore, other research instruments like questionnaires were not be applied. Qualitative data was therefore generated as opposed to quantitative or statistical data.

Interviews are far more of personal form of research, than questionnaires. In the individual interview, the interviewer works directly with the participant. Unlike with mail surveys, the interviewer could probe or ask follow-up questions. Interviews are generally easier for respondent, especially if what is sought is opinions or impressions (Valenzuela & Shrivastava, 2018:3).

According to Roulston and Choi (2018:1), in the process of interviewing, researchers sequence questions to generate free-ranging conversations about research topics. Interviews are most effective for qualitative research because they help to explain, give better understanding and explore research subjects' opinions, behaviour, experiences and phenomenon (https://guides.lib.t.edu> interviews). Guided by the definitions of interviews, one can regard interviews as one of the significant approach of data gathering that involves verbal communication between the researcher and the participants.

There are different types of interviews which include structured, semi-structured and unstructured.

The *structured interview* is also known as a standardised interview. It is mostly close-ended and used during focus group interviews. The researcher or interviewer strictly adheres to interview protocol, which implies that the questions are pre-determined and should be followed as such. There is no opportunity to probe and explore further. The structured interview may assist in targeting a specific phenomenon under investigation (Welman, Kruger & Mitchell. 2011:166).

The *semi-structured interview,* also known as an open-ended interview, falls between the structured and unstructured interviews. The interviewee and interviewer engage in a one-on-one question and answer session. In the process, the interview is focuses on a specific topic but are flexible in order to gather more information. This semi-structured interview offers the researcher the latitude to probe participants, while maintaining the topic under study. This type of approach might assist in situations where the researcher does not have enough time to conduct the research whereas detailed information about the topic is required (Greef, 2014:348; Welman et al., 2011:166).

Unstructured interviews, also known as in-depth interviews, are helpful in discussing sensitive topics where the researcher intends to build a bond with the participant. The chances of getting truthful information might be 100%. This interview involves the researcher as an interviewer and the interviewee as the participant, where both the researcher and the interviewee join together in participating in a one-on-one question and answer session. During the process more questions can be asked and answered in no specific order or time frame. The participant is free to give as much information as he/she can with regard to their experiences, perceptions and knowledge on the topic under discussion. The aim of this type of interview is to explore much information in the topic, however the researcher remains mindful to ask questions to the interest of the topic. In the process the researcher is expected to probe participants in order to obtain the most in-depth information (Welman et al., 2011:166).

In this study, semi-structured interviews of approximately 20 minutes were conducted in a mutually agreed location at the time convenient to participants. According to

Bryman (2012:40), although semi-structured interviews have specific areas that they need to cover, the order of the questions and the exact wording of the question are left to the discretion of the interviewer. This practice therefore gives the researcher the opportunity to quickly respond to unforeseen issues, problems or clarity seeking questions to the participants. Semi-structured interviews are more flexible since they use more of a conversational approach (Seabi, 2012:89).

Semi-structured interview questions on school-based assessment challenges designed for interviews with educators, Heads of Department and deputy principals... The interview schedule (*cf.* Appendices F, G & H) comprised two sections namely: biographical information and contextual questions.

- **Biographical questions**

According to Brown (2021:3) biographical questions refers to a description of someone's life. It includes basic information such as place of birth, date, education, interest. etc. Hereunder follows the biographical questions that were used in this study.

- What is your highest professional qualification?
- How long have you been in the teaching field?
- When did you start to teach in high school?

The purpose of biographical questions assists in sharing the life of another person. In this study, biographical questions were used by the researcher to acquire information about participants' qualifications and experience in the teaching field (Brown, 2021:3).

- **Contextual questions**

Contextual questions are very precise questions based on a particular context or situation. These questions assist in learning more about what people are doing and the reason of doing it (Brown, 2021:3). The contextual questions that were used in this study are as follows:

- What is your experience of implementing school-based assessment for you subject?
- Do you have adequate knowledge of implementing school-based assessment?
- Were you trained on school-based assessment implementation?

- How often are you supported and monitored for school-based assessment from different stakeholders?
- What challenges do you encounter during school-based assessment implementation?

In this study, contextual questions assisted the researcher in collecting data from the participants as they portrayed the reality of the situation. Participants were able to relate their personal experience because this type of questions can only be answered in a particular context.

Bogdan and Biklen 2007:11) attest that semi-structured interviews encourage the participants to talk about areas of interest in more depth and to pick up on topics and issues related to the situation under discussion.

There are advantages and disadvantages to using semi-structured interview. The advantages are:

- They are useful when the participants cannot be reached telephonically.
- Detailed questions can be asked.
- The researcher can ask probing questions.
- It is direct and avoids delays or disappointments of technical interruptions.

In contrast, there are disadvantages:

- Interviewees may provide indirect or filtered information.
- It is time consuming.
- Interviewees might feel uncomfortable.
- It is more costly due to transport.

- **Participant Observations**

"Observation is a first-hand eye-witness account of everyday social action" (Schwandt, 1998:106) involving the systematic process of recording the behavioural patterns of participants, objects and occurrences without necessarily questioning or communicating with them (Maree, 2007:84). Participant observation is the research method where the researcher commits themselves in a particular social setting or a

group whereby, he/she will observe the behaviour, interaction and practices of the participants (George, 2023:1).

In this study, the researcher's role as the observer was to observe and record the behaviour displayed by educators Heads of Departments and deputy principals, without necessarily communicating or questioning them.

Participant observation during research reveals things that participants would not normally disclose by word of mouth. Observations refer in particular to information collected through non-verbal reactions from participants, that might have been missed during interviews and other forms of data collection (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000:305). A classic example is when participants are observed in a natural setting. Participants may react or behave in a positive or negative manner because of the nature of the environment. This reaction portrays the individual's opinion. The researcher watches the portrayed reaction, evaluates and draws conclusions.

The researcher observed for example, the processes and procedures followed in meetings, as detailed in the observation schedule. This practice assisted with follow-up interview questions based on the kind of behaviour being observed.

Participant observation in this research was regarded as a supportive or supplementary tool to collect data that might complement or revise a perspective of what people think and do in practice.

There are advantages and disadvantages to using participant observations. The advantages are:

- It allows the researcher to generate rich and exact qualitative data.
- It is a flexible research method
- It can be used in combination with other research methods (interviews).

In contrast, there are disadvantages:

- The researcher might be biased. It can raise ethical concerns on the part of the research.
- It can be very expensive, time consuming and sometimes challenging to implement.

4.3.4 Data Analysis

Once some data have been collected the researcher may begin the data analysis. This is an ongoing process and can run concurrent with data collection (Creswell, 2014:17). Qualitative data analysis is primarily an inductive approach where data are coded and organised into categories which assists in identifying relationships amongst the classifications (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014:395). The objective of data analysis is to explain the data plainly, identifying what is typical and untypical of the data, showing the contrasts, similarities, and other existing designs in the data, and ultimately answer research questions or test hypotheses (Creswell, 2002:95).

Content analysis, which is a more practical approach, could be used as a qualitative method of data analysis. It can be applied to both textual and visual data but is more often applied to the latter. At its core, content analysis is a data collection technique used to determine the presence of certain words, themes, or concepts within data (Delve & Limpaecher, 2023c:2).

In contrast, thematic analysis, as an inductive approach, is a spontaneous approach to qualitative data analysis that allows researchers to explore patterns across their data. Thematic analysis in the process is involving the researcher where he/she should identify and understand key themes in the data and how they relate to one another. 'Themes' are overarching categories of common information which are related to research phenomenon, that tells a story about its scope (Delve & Limpaecher, 2023c:2).

Thematic analysis as a method of analysing qualitative data which involves reading through the available collected data from transcripts of in-depth interviews or focus groups (Caulfield, 2019:1). The researcher closely examines the data to identify common themes/topics, ideas and patterns of meaning that repeatedly comes up. In other words, thematic analysis is a method of identifying patterns in meaning across the data to derive themes. During this process the researcher is actively subjective in making the data meaningful (Delve & Limpaecher, 2023c:1). This means that the researcher pays close attention to ensure that only available data is analysed to prevent picking up information that is not available.

Thematic analysis can assist the researcher in avoiding bias (Caulfield, 2019:1). Since thematic analysis is subjective, the researcher should analyse data based on the main question and reduce bias by allowing participants to review the results, verify with more data sources, check for alternative explanations and reviewing findings with peers.

Thematic analysis is a descriptive presentation of qualitative data which was adopted in the study because it is a flexible method that can be adapted to many different kinds of research. This type of analysis assisted the researcher in generating new insights from the collected data because of its flexibility and accessibility. Data collected during interviews and observations were identified and clustered into how they relate to each other on exploring the implementation of school-based assessment in Mopani West selected high schools.

Thematic analysis has six steps, namely, familiarisation, coding, generating themes, reviewing themes, defining, and naming themes and writing up (Braun & Clarke, 2006:6). Each of these steps followed in this study is described hereunder:

STEP 1 Familiarisation: All the audio recorded data from teachers, Heads of Department and deputy principals was transcribed. Notes which were written during observation were also transcribed. Thereafter, the transcribed data was reviewed. I was able to familiarise myself before with all the transcriptions before progressing to the second step of coding individual items.

STEP 2 Coding: I coded data by highlighting descriptive phrases or sections of sentences regarded as important and/or of interest for the study. Codes were further grouped together as per their importance and interest for the study.

STEP 3 Generating themes: The coded data that was grouped as per their importance and interest for the study was arranged into patterns to create themes. All irrelevant data was detected and discarded or removed.

STEP 4 Reviewing themes: It is in this step that the themes are useful and portray an accurate representation of the data. I went back to the collected data and compared it against the themes. After being certain that the data and themes correlate the I was able to move to Step 5.

STEP 5 Defining and naming themes: It is at this stage where a final list of themes was created, defined and named, namely, challenges working against school-based assessment, successes on implementation of school-based assessment etc.

STEP 6 Writing up: The analysis of data and the presentation of the findings is found in Chapter 5. The analysis was guided by the research questions, aims and approach to the study. The results of findings are reported under each theme. In conclusion of this step, the researcher shows how the analysis has answered the research questions.

4.4   RELIABILITY, VALIDITY AND TRUSTWORTHINESS

It is important for any research project to indicate the extent to which its information is reliable, trustworthy and valid. Rather than prescribing what reliability and validity should look like, the research should attend to the overall trustworthiness of qualitative research. Reliability and validity actualise trustworthiness (Rose & Johnson, 2020:432).

Newman, (2006:462) defines reliability as 'consistency' and validity as truth. Reliability and validity are two important psychometric characteristics of measuring instruments (Punch & Oancea, 2014:298). Validity and Reliability in research are well defined, however they are related concepts. Reliability and validity are both about how well a method measures something (Carrol and Goodfriend, 2023:1).

This section outlines how reliability, trustworthiness and validity were addressed in this study.

4.4.1 Reliability

Reliability refers to how consistently a method measures something and in qualitative research, reliability refers to the consistency of the researcher's interactive style, recording of data and interpretation of data (Nndwamato, 2017:41). Sarantakos (2013:99) suggests that reliability means that an instrument is consistent and there is consistency of data across the sites. This means that If the same result can be consistently achieved by using the same methods under the same circumstances, the measurement is considered reliable (Middleton, 2019:2).

Reliability provides assurance to the researcher, which assists in the desired objectives being successfully reached while remaining true to the research design and the methodological structures (Sithole, 2017:44). Reliability assists the researcher to avoid repetition in terms of findings.

To minimise uncertainty with reliability in this study, educators were asked the same set of questions, the same applied to Heads of Department and deputy principals. The study also promoted reliability by making explicit the theoretical framework which informs the study and from which findings from prior research can be integrated or contrasted.

4.4.2 Validity

Validity of qualitative research refers to the degree of congruence between the explanations of the phenomena and the realities of the world. Validity refers to how accurately a method measures what it is intended to measure. If research has high validity, that means it produces results that correspond to real properties, characteristics and variations in the physical or social world (Middleton, 2019:3).

Sarantakos (2013:99) describes validity as the property of the research instrument that measures its relevance, precision and accuracy. There is a need for the researcher to record all expectations to improve validity. According to Cohen et al. (2018:245), validity is an important key to effective research. If the research is invalid, then it is worthless.

Middleton (2023:2) identifies seven key types of validity in research which are face validity, content validity, construct validity, internal validity, external validity, statistical validity and criterion-related validity. In this study only content validity and face validity were considered because of the qualitative method employed in this study. The others can only fit well in a research where quantitative method is used.

Content validity refers to the degree to which an assessment instrument is relevant to and representative of the targeted construct it is designed to measure (https://link.springer.com). This means that it is the extent to which the measurement covers all aspects of the concept being measured (Middleton, 2019:5). Content validity is a subjective form of measurement because of its reliance on people's perception

(Middleton, 2023:3). In this study content validity was assured by gathering data using consistent questions when interviewing educators, Heads of Department and deputy principals, of the selected high schools in the Mopani West District.

Face validity, also referred as logical validity, is a simple form of validity where one applies a superficial and subjective assessment of whether one's study measures or tests what is supposed to measure. For example, the test will be regarded valid if it accurately measured intelligence in an IQ test (statisticsshowto.com/face-validity). Middleton (2023:1) states that face validity is not a scientific method because it is not quantified by a statistical method. In this study, interviews and participant observations were used to collect data and ensure that data collected were reliable. Validity was practised in this study by ensuring that participants answered questions that the study aimed to explore. The study cannot be valid without being reliable, the latter was uncovered in the study.

The concept of trustworthiness was ensured through the norms of credibility, dependability, confirmability and transferability of the qualitative findings in this study as discussed below.

4.4.3 Trustworthiness

A study is accepted as trustworthy if the qualitative researcher demonstrates that the analysed data has been conducted precisely, consistently and in an exhaustive manner (Nowell, Norris, White & Moule, 2017:1). This can be done through recording, systematising and disclosure of analysis methods. Disclosure of methods during data analysis coupled with detailed information enable the reader to determine whether the process is credible (Lemon & Hayes, 2020:13).

The objective of trustworthiness is governed by four key dimensions which are credibility, dependability, confirmability and transferability.

4.4.3.1 Credibility

Credibility is the correspondence between qualitative research participants' own perspective and how they are represented by the researchers in their findings (Nowell et al., 2017:16). The information is regarded credible when participants agree with the

research findings. Lemon and Hayes (2014:3) suggest that credibility is demonstrated through an audit trail throughout the data collection and analysis process.

In this study, the gathered information from the participants and the confidence in the truth will be the most important criterion to measure credibility (Pilot & Beck, 2014:2). The credibility of the study was maintained using appropriate research questions that were in line with the qualitative method.

4.4.3.2 Dependability

Dependability in qualitative research aims at providing transparency in the research processes by demonstrating the dependency in the process (precisionconsultingblog.com). According to Lemon and Hayes (2020:7) dependability is evident in research because coherent themes use reported data across the transcripts.

Dependability in this study was practised by ensuring that the research process was logical, traceable and clearly documented.

4.4.3.3 Confirmability

Confirmability refers to when raw data from the research findings are confirmed during the conclusion (Nowell et al., 2017:6).

In this study, peer debriefing sessions was conducted several times, a practice that assisted in confirmability throughout the research process.

4.4.3.4 Transferability

Rich presentation of the findings together with appropriate verbatim quotations and thick descriptions enhances transferability (Lemon & Hayes, 2020:4)

In ensuring trustworthiness in this study, protocols and procedures were established which are relevant and necessary. This practice assisted in keeping the study worthy by readers (Amankwaa, 2016:85).

4.5   ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethics relates to conduct that distinguishes between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour (Mohd Arifin, 2018:1). Ethical norms tend to be broader and more informal than laws (Resnik, 2020:6) but are important in conducting research because the considerations ensure that the research is conducted with respect to persons, animals and the environment, respect for knowledge and also respect for justice and compliance with law (University of Southampton, 2022:4).

In order to conduct research, ethical clearance is required. This study was undertaken under strict compliance of the University of South Africa's ethics committee which ensure that collected data, dissemination, and publication of findings from the study are done in the interest of the participants and the community without harming it in any way. Ethical clearance was first attained from the university (*cf.* Appendix A 2019/05/15/64027848/18/MC). Letters to the Limpopo Department of Education requested permission to conduct research (Refer to Appendix B1 & B2). Schools were then approached to participate in the research (*cf.* Appendix C) and invitations to participate with an information letter and attached consent forms (cf. Appendices D & E) were sent to prospective participants.

This research was guided by the Policy on Research Ethics for UNISA and adhererence to all guidelines outlined for research. Researchers are governed by a code of conduct when collecting data from human beings (Bhandari, 2021:1). Research ethics are vital in research for scientific integrity, prevention of violation of human rights and dignity, and most importantly is to maintain the collaboration between science and the society at large. Ethical considerations in research refers to a set of principles that guide the researcher's design and practices.

The protection of human beings through appropriate application of ethical principles and protocols are vital in all research studies (Mohd Arifin, 2018:1). In this study, the research adhered to the professional competency and expertise which promoted the aims of the research, and further to that, ethical standards which promoted values such as trust, mutual respect and fairness, that are essential. In this study, all ethical issues that had to do with the welfare of the participants were respected. Ethics can literally be regarded as the consideration of morals, emotions and awareness of one

another's dignity (Steffen, 2016:1). To achieve this, the researcher ensured that the participants' privacy, anonymity and confidentiality were respected and not violated. The names of the schools involved were kept confidential, ensuring anonymity and not revealing the school and the participant identities. Although the identities of participants were known to the researcher, they have been referred to as Deputy Principal A, HoD A and Educator A as per the ethical guidelines, The study was done in the interest of the participants from the five schools with high consideration of not harming them in any way. In addition, participants were invited to participate voluntarily without being forced and were assured that if they so wished, they could withdraw at any time without recrimination. This was done through ensuring that participants were informed to give informed consent to participate willingly in this study and their safety was being maintained (Bhandari, 2021:2).

Through the participants' permission, the interviews were audio-recorded to assist in collecting accurate information to be transcribed for analysis. A copy of the transcript was given to the participants to confirm or add or clarify the information before analysis.

4.6   SUMMARY

Chapter 4 focused on describing the research methodology and research methods which guided this research. The methodology referred to the research paradigm, constructivist grounded theory, the qualitative research approach and an exploratory case study. The rationale for choosing qualitative method as the suitable method for the study while gathering data was explained. One of the reasons why qualitative method was regarded as the relevant approach in this study is that it is regarded as the core when a researcher intends collecting data directly from participants. The research methods comprised the population of educators in the Mopani West district, the purposive sample of educators Heads of Department and deputy principals of the five selected high schools. Semi-structured individual interviews were conducted with the 25 participants guided by an interview schedule and this data was supported by participant observation. Data collected through interviews and participant observation were analysed using thematic analysis which entailed five steps. Reliability, validity and trustworthiness were separately outlined for ensuring that the study maintained

methodological norms. Ethical considerations during this study, to protect participants as human beings were highlighted. Participants' rights, confidentiality and respect was explained.

Chapter 5 presents the findings of the data analysis supported by verbatim quotes from participants.

CHAPTER 5

PRESENTATIONS OF FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION

5.1   INTRODUCTION

Chapter 4 focused on presenting the research methodology and research methods which guided this research and offering the rationale for the methodological choices.

This chapter presents the findings emerging from the data analysis and their interpretation. The approached employed is a descriptive narrative based on the emergent themes and categories. The process was done while considering the research questions. The main research question of the study was: *What are the challenges of implementing School-Based Assessment (SBA) at high schools in the Mopani West District?*

The findings presented and interpreted are supported with verbatim participant responses recorded during interviews and observations. Data interpretation is regarded as a crucial stage in conducting the research. This is the next step that follows data has been analysed. During data interpretation, meaning to the clarified and analysed data is allocated. It embraces the explanation of the trends and patterns unfolded in the available data (Hipp & Williams, 2020:5).

5.2   BACKGROUND TO THE SELECTED SCHOOLS IN THE MOPANI WEST DISTRICT

South Africa has nine provinces of which Limpopo is one of them (www.gov.za).. Below is the map of South Africa which indicates the nine provinces:

Provinces of South Africa

Figure 5.1: Provinces of South Africa

Limpopo has among other government departments, a Department of Education. The Limpopo Department of Education has its head office situated in Polokwane, which is the capital city of Limpopo. The Limpopo Department of Education is divided into ten districts which are: Waterberg, Mogalakwena, Sekhukhune South, Sekhukhune East, Capricorn South, Capricorn North, Vhembe West, Vhembe East, Mopani East and Mopani West. The focus on this study is Mopani West District.

The Mopani West District is one of the ten education districts of Limpopo with district offices situated in Tzaneen under the Greater Tzaneen Municipality. The district consists of 13 circuits (https://wwww.facebook.com>people>mopani-west-district). Figure 5.2 presents the map of Limpopo which indicates the districts:

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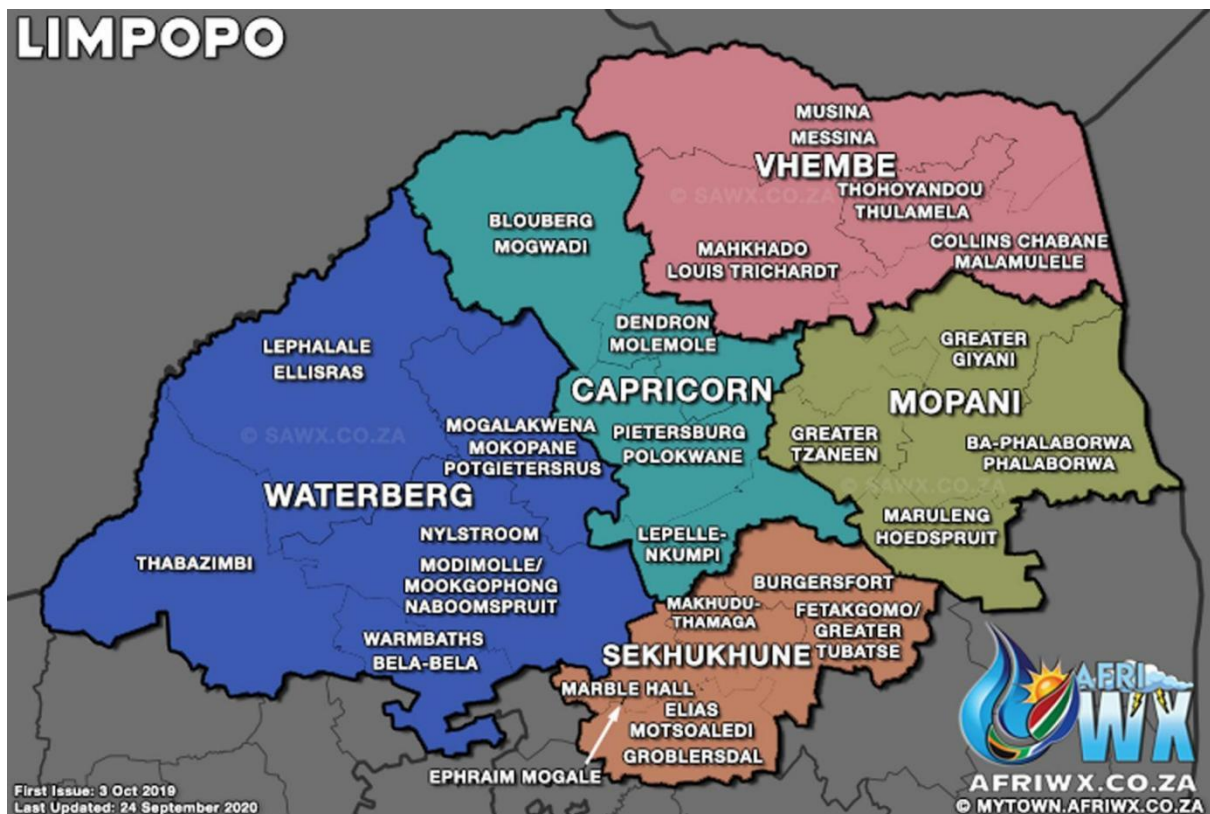
Figure 5.2: Map of Limpopo

The Mopani West District has 113 high schools and 334 primary schools (LDoE, 2021:1). Five high schools were randomly selected from the total number of high schools in Mopani West District for purposes of the study. The five high schools were randomly identified for use in conducting the research study because they were within proximity to the researcher. For ethical reasons these schools are identified as School A, School B, School C, School D and School E.

Table 5.1. presents the background of the five selected schools in terms of location, language of learning and teaching and primary language of learners and educators.

Table 5.1: Background of the five selected schools

SCHOOL	AREA	LANGUAGE OF LEARNING AND TEACHING (LoLT)	PRIMARY LANGUAGE(S) OF LEARNERS AND EDUCATORS
A	Township	English	Xitsonga
B	Semi-Rural	English	Xitsonga and Sepedi
C	Deep-Rural	English	Sepedi
D	Rural	English	Xitsonga
E	Deep-Rural	English	Sepedi

5.2.1 Differences in Location Areas of the Selected Schools

This section discusses the location of different schools which were selected for the study. They include townships, rural areas, semi-rural and deep-rural areas.

5.2.1.1 Township

In South Africa, townships were designed as dormitory towns for the labour required to serve the needs of mining and other industries and had limited social services and economic infrastructure. Townships originated because of racially segregated apartheid system (Mampane & Bouwer, 2011:1) and the term 'township' refers to the habitat for black people from mainly low-income background (Suzuki, 2021:2), or an area on the margin of a town or city that has been historically used as a racially segregating living arrangement (Blakeley 2023:1).

Townships has been seen as the residential areas for the middle to lower income earners but with the dawn of democracy in 1994, there has been a significant developmental change (Mashilo, 2022:1). Townships in South Africa have been expanded and developed with a current estimation of 532 of townships in South Africa where half of the population resides (Pennington, 2023;4); however, many of them still lack essential infrastructure, running water, electricity and proper roads. Township schools are dominated by black children (Blakeley, 2023:3).

5.2.1.2 Rural

A rural area is an open territory of land with low population and large amount of undeveloped land. Rural areas cover areas that are situated outside the cities and towns (Sakketa, 2023:4). In rural areas, household are located far away from one another or clustered in villages. Most people living in rural areas work on farms, work seasonally or do not work at all. (National Geographic Society, 2023:2). Parents in rural areas survive on menial work, and tend to have a lower level of education and do not attach much value to schooling. Rural areas are generally poverty stricken, consequently the deprived socio-economic status of parents in rural areas places learners at a disadvantage.

A rural area is characterised by its geographic isolation and small population size; therefore, a rural school's definition corresponds to the general understanding of a rural area. Rural areas are generally remote and relatively underdeveloped. As a result, most schools in rural areas lack the necessary physical resources and basic infrastructure such as water, sanitation, roads, transport, information and communication technology (Du Plessis & Mestry, 2019:2),

5.2.1.3 Semi-Rural

Semi-rural areas are partly rural, this means that it falls between rural and urban areas. It consists of a mixed living population. Semi-rural areas are located on the outskirts between town and villages (Collins English Dictionary). Semi-rural areas could be described as falling within the small countryside of town/township and village. The area might be a stone's throw away from the township or the town itself.

5.2.1.4 Deep-Rural

Deep rural areas refer to open swathes of land having few homes or buildings with a very low population (Du Plessis & Mestry, 2019:2). The deep-rural settlement is where displaced populations settle on land outside of cities and towns. There is also less community infrastructure than in townships and rural areas (UN Refugee Agency, 2022:1).

5.2.2 Background of the Five Selected Schools

Each of the selected schools is described in terms of location of the school, physical structure and facilities of the school, learner enrolment in the school, classification of the school in terms of performing and under performing schools, population of learners per classroom, discipline in the school and information about teaching staff members (non-permanent and permanent staff), as they contribute to exploring the implementation of school-based assessment in the Mopani West District.

5.2.2.1 School A

The school is situated in the township of Greater Tzaneen Municipality. The school offers Grades 8 to 12 within the immediate area as well as outlying villages and neighbouring villages, hence some learners use different means of transport to come to school. Some of the school buildings are new; however, there are some buildings which are old. The school has a high enrolment of approximately 1 200 learners. High enrolment results in overcrowded classrooms with about sixty learners per class. Despite the high enrolment, discipline amongst learners and teachers is good. The school is classified as a performing school, hence high enrolment.

The principal and some of the SMT members hold permanent positions. Most teachers are permanently employed, with a few that being temporarily employed.

5.2.2.2 School B

The school is situated in the semi-rural area of Greater Tzaneen Municipality. The school also offers Grade 8 to12 within the immediate area as well as outlying villages. The school had newly built state-of-the-art buildings. Learners who come from the neighbouring villages use private transport to come to school.

The enrolment of the school is almost at 850.The classes are not overcrowded because there are sufficient classrooms. The school is regarded as a 'yo-yo' preforming school because their learner performance is not consistent. The pass rate performance of the school fluctuates, with the school performing very well in a particular year and perform poorly the following year. The discipline for both learners and teachers in the school is generally good.

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The principal is on acting capacity because of the resignation of the former principal. Most teachers are permanently employed, with only few being temporarily employed.

5.2.2.3   School C

The school is situated in a deep-rural area of the Greater Letaba Municipality. It offers Grade 8 to 12 for learners who lived within the same village area. The school is small with two blocks of classrooms and two mobile classes. The school is classified as an under-performing school, hence the low enrolment of approximately 300 learners. Some class rooms are used as staff rooms, which results in classes having more than 50 learners in each. The discipline within the school is poor and seems to affect quality teaching and learning in the school.

Staff members numbered twelve including the principal. All the staff members held permanent positions.

5.2.2.4   School D

The school is situated in a rural area of Greater Tzaneen Municipality. It offers Grade 8 to 12 for learners who live within the area and the outlying villages. The school has moderate enrolment of 560 learners. Although the infrastructure looks old, there are no seriously overcrowded classes as each has 35 to 50 learners. Gangster-ism and bunking of classes prevails in the school, and few learners were from child-headed families. The later compromised the excellent discipline of the school. However, the school is classified as one of the performing schools because of their Grade 12 results.

Almost all the teaching staff, the SMT as well as the principal were permanently employed, only one teacher us temporarily employed in the accouchement leave post for four months.

5.2.2.5   School E

The school is situated in a deep rural area of Greater Maruleng Municipality. The school offers Grade 8 to 12 for learners who live within the area. The enrolment of the school is 350. Late coming and absenteeism by both learners and teachers are rife at the school. Most of the learners live with their grandparents and some were orphans.

The status quo resulted in lack of discipline and parental involvement in the education of the learners.

More than half of the teaching staff and SMT members held temporary or acting positions. The principal is the only one with a permanent position.

Regarding the locations of the five selected schools, it was observed that the schools are located in different settings. School A located in a township, school B in semi-rural, school C in deep-rural, school D in moderate rural and school E also in the deep-rural area (Table 5.2). The location of the school plays an important role in teaching and learning which affects the implementation of school-based assessment.

During the first visit to the schools, it was observed that the physical structure of the schools has an impact on teaching and learning which affects the implementation of school-based assessment. Schools without WiFi network connection makes it difficult for learners, Heads of Department and deputy principals during implementation of school-based assessment.

The observation reveals that from the five selected schools, the ones in deep rural areas are classified as underperformers whereas those in townships are classified as performing schools. The school with a high enrolment experience challenges in implementing school-based assessment. This emanates from high number of learners who have different barriers during teaching and learning. The situation therefore impacts the learners, teachers, Heads of Department and deputy principals in their implementation of school-based assessment.

Ill-discipline amongst learners prevailed mostly in under performing schools therefore implementation of school-based assessment was affected than in schools with well-disciplined learners. The latter is coupled with non-motivated temporarily employed educators. The permanent employed educators work harder and seem to be motivated as compared to their colleagues. This situation affects the implementation of school-based policy.

5.3 ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF QUALITATIVE DATA: EDUCATORS

Analysis and interpretation of qualitative data was directed by the information collected from interviews with teachers.

5.3.1 Biographical Information: Educators

The findings are divided into biographical information and contextual analysis. Table 5.2 presents biographical information for each of the two educators per school, their gender, age, qualifications in the subject that they are teaching and the teaching experience.

Table 5.2: Profiles of the participating educators

SCHOOL	AGE	GENDER	TEACHER INSTITUTION	QUALIFICATION IN SUBJECT TAUGHT	TEACHING EXPERIENCE
School A	26	Female	University	Degree	02 years
	38	Male	University	Post-graduate	10 years
School B	28	Female	University	Post-graduate	04 years
	40	Male	Teachers Diploma	Secondary Teachers Diploma (STD)	12 years
School C	30	Male	University	Post-graduate	03 years
	45	Female	Teachers College	Diploma	16 years
School D	32	Female	University	Post-graduate	10 years
	54	Male	University	Post-graduate	28 years
School E	27	Female	University	Degree	11 years
	60	Male	Teachers' College	Diploma	30 years

Regarding biographical information, the discussion focused on highest professional qualifications, teaching experience in the current school, experience in the subject taught and experience in the teaching field. This process was directed by the following questions (*cf.* Appendix H, first part on biographical information).

- What is your highest qualification?
- How long have you been teaching in this high school?
- How many years have you been in the teaching fraternity (years of experience?).

The analysis revealed that most of the sampled educators from the five schools had diplomas, degrees and postgraduate qualifications for the subjects they teach. Most participants are experienced in the teaching field, only few are newly employed teachers.

5.3.2 Contextual Analysis and Interpretation of Data: Educators

This section discusses experience in teaching the subject, knowledge of school-based assessment, support given to teachers within and outside the school and how often they get that support. The training that the teachers receive on school-based assessment, the challenges that are encountered during the implementation of school-based assessment, and the pros and cons of school-based assessment are also discussed and analysed. However, the following were used as the directive (*cf.* Appendix H, second part on contextual information):

- How long have you been teaching the subjects that you are allocated?
- Kindly share your understanding on school-based assessment?
- Do you receive support within or outside the school on how to implement school-based assessment in the subjects that you are teaching, how often?
- Were you trained on school-based assessment implementation? If yes, please indicate by whom were you trained and when?
- Since it is compulsory to incorporate school-based assessment in the process of teaching and learning, what challenges do you experience? Please share.
- When do you experience challenges during school-based assessment implementation?
- How do you experience challenges during school-based assessment implementation?
- What have been the negative or positive highlights you have experienced during the implementation of school-based assessment?

Most responses from the teachers showed dissatisfaction about the training they received. The common reason given was inadequate training such as once-off training. One teacher in School B responded as follows to this question: Were you

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trained on school-based assessment implementation? If yes, please indicate by whom were you trained and when.

"I was never trained, since I joined this school due to deployment from my previous primary school, I was allocated to teach this subject".

The other teacher in School A stated: *"The last training, I received was a one-day training which lasted for only two hours, which was a rush of slides by the subject advisor, on engaging with her, she highlighted that the agreement with the UNIONS was that she is not supposed to keep us for a long time because there is no catering for teachers."*

Another teacher in School C responded to the same question as follows: *"MMM…. Workshops by subject advisers were not informative. E.g., facilitators reading the document of slides without emphasis or explanation on the basis of school-based assessment implementation in the classroom as per the policy."*

It was noted with concern that teachers had little or no knowledge of the subject assessment guidelines (SAG) for their allocated subjects. The latter therefore places implementation of school-based assessment at risk. One teacher in School B shared her frustration when answering: Do you receive support within or outside the school on how to implement school-based assessment in the subjects that you are teaching, how often?

"My HOD has never taught life sciences, how is she going to monitor and   support me"?

Most responses by teachers indicated concern about the load of administrative work in the process of school-based assessment. They referred to the time needed in setting tasks, marking of tasks, giving feed backs and re-setting of tasks in order to give learners multiple opportunities. The issue of administrative work for teachers as a challenge was also highlighted by Mansor et al. (2019:70).

From the question: Since it is compulsory to incorporate school-based assessment in the process of teaching and learning, what challenges do you experience? The

teacher in School A responded as follows: *"Yoo…, it's frustrating to be a teacher who should deliver knowledge to learners and at the same time you are to do clerical work".*

In responding to the question: How and when do you experience challenges during school-based assessment implementation? The responses were:

The teacher in School D: *"Hey! you know what, let's not compare our learners with those learners in the former model C schools. Those in former model C speak 'die Moeder taal' (mother tongue) and are taught in the same language. In our situation, there is a serious problem of language barrier."*

One teacher in School E shared the frustrations they experienced with regard to learners: *"It's difficult to implement school-based assessment with the type of learners we are having, most of them have been pushed through the system due to age cohort and other progression factors."*

A colleague in the same school alluded that: *"These learners lack knowledge of the importance of school-based assessment, they consider examination as the important assessment."*

Another contextual factor that impedes school-based assessment implementation that prevailed during the study was overcrowded classes. According to the amended personnel administrative measures (PAM) document of 2016 no.170, the class ratio in public secondary schools supposed to be 1:35. It emerged from the interviews that most public schools are faced with a high number of learners in a class.

One teacher in School B shared the frustration of overcrowded class when answering this question: What have been the negative or positive highlights you have experienced during the implementation of school-based assessment?

"Our classes constitute of 60 to 65 learners each, this results in poor control of the class on assessment activities".

5.4 ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF QUALITATIVE DATA: HEADS OF DEPARTMENT

Analysis and interpretation of qualitative data was directed by the information collected from interviews with Heads of Department.

5.4.1 Biographical Information: Heads of Department

The findings are divided into biographical information and contextual analysis. Table 5.3 presents biographical information for each of the two Heads of Department per school, their gender, age, qualifications in the subject that they are teaching and the teaching experience.

Table 5.3: Profiles of the participating Heads of Department

SCHOOL	AGE	GENDER	TEACHER INSTITUTION	QUALIFICATION OF SUBJECT TAUGHT	TEACHING EXPERIENCE
School A	40	Female	University	Degree	10 years
	55	Male	University	Master's degree	12 years
School B	43	Female	University	Degree	08 years
	50	Male	University	Degree	15 years
School C	46	Female	University	Postgraduate	13 years
	56	Male	University	Postgraduate	17 years
School D	43	Male	University	Postgraduate	14 years
	58	Female	University	Busy with Master's degree	18 years
School E	45	Male	University	Degree	12 years
	60	Female	University	Postgraduate	16 years

Data were collected from ten (10) Heads of Department (five males and five females). The interview questions in this section were devoted on highest professional qualifications, period in the head position and experience in the teaching profession.

5.4.2 Contextual Analysis and Interpretation of Data: Heads of Department

The contextual analysis will emerge from the responses by Heads of Department from the following questions (*cf.* Appendix G).

- Which stream (e.g., Business Sciences, Languages, Natural Sciences, etc..) are you heading in the school?

- How many subjects (state the number) fall in the department you are heading?

- Does the school where you are head of department have school-based assessment policy documents?

- Have you been trained (work shopped) on how to implement the school-based assessment document?

- Kindly share the challenges you have experienced when you support and monitor the implementation of school-based assessment in the department you are heading?

- When and how do teachers under your department experience challenges during school-based assessment implementation?

- Why do teachers experience challenges during school-based assessment in the department you are heading?

- Kindly describe the educator's perception and outcomes that you have observed regarding school-based assessment.

- What is the impact of those perceptions that affect the implementation of school-based assessment? Please motivate your answer.

Most responses from Heads of Department indicated that lack of knowledge on the subject that they are heading is the challenge in school-based assessment implementation. Below is the response from one Head of Department in School C when responding to: How many subjects (state the number) fall in the department you are heading?

"As an HoD, my specialising subject is history, however I'm mandated by the school to head all social subjects, therefore content knowledge is a challenge in some subjects on my side".

Another prevailing challenge highlighted was the workload which prevent them in monitoring and supporting teachers during school-based assessment implementation. The Head of Department from School D responded to the question: Which stream (e.g., Business Sciences, Languages, Natural Sciences, etc..) are you heading in the school? as follows:

"I'm just a co-opted SMT member who should monitor and support all science subjects from Grades 8 to 12, it is very difficult to do justice with this workload".

Heads of Department indicated that school-based assessment is good, however its disadvantage is a lot of administrative work. One Head of Department from School E respondent to the same question by alluding as follows: *"As the HoD, I am expected to do pre- and post-moderation of formal tasks, the evidence thereof are written moderation tools. The exercise creates a lot of administrative work"*.

Some challenges that impede implementation includes resource shortage. The latter is supported by Barile (2018:01) when stating that school resources are essential for student collaboration and research. Dube-Xaba (2020:10) also lamented that lack of resources such as internet and additional books hinders successful implementation of school-based assessment. The author further states that it is difficult to assess practical assessment tasks, commonly known as PAT when lacking resources needed. One Head of Department from School C highlighted how lack of resources impede implementation of school-based assessment when responding to: Why do teachers experience challenges during school-based assessment in the department you are heading?

"Most teachers under my department revealed that they struggle to access internet when they want to assist learners in doing projects and assignments".

The same sentiment was shared by the Head of Department: *"Bear in mind that completing projects and other assessment tasks requires research. Just imagine having two laptops to be utilised by the entire school"*.

Resistance to change by teachers were pointed out by a Head of Department from School D when responding to: When and how do teachers under your department experience challenges during school-based assessment implementation?

"The old and more experienced teachers resist in adapting to the new teaching methods and implementation of new policies like the school-based assessment policy".

The latter was emphasised by Head of Department from School B who exclaimed: *"Despite the availability of the annual teaching plan for each subject, one teacher persisted that she cannot rush to new content and leave the learners behind"*.

Content gap from teachers serve as the detrimental factor during school-based assessment implementation. Heads of Department from Schools D and E shared the same opinion by indicating that teachers in their schools lack knowledge of the subjects allocated to them. The contributory factor is that they teach subjects which are not their majors due to lack of teachers. These teachers fail to implement the school-based assessment policy.

The lack of professional development for both teachers and Heads of Department with regard to school-based assessment prevailed to be a challenge in setting of quality formal assessment tasks. This was alluded by one Head of Department from School E when responding to: Kindly share the challenges you have experienced when you support and monitor the implementation of school-based assessment in the department you are heading?

"Most teachers are not setting standardised question papers because they are not capacitated. Most question papers for school-based assessment, assesses only low or middle order cognitive levels."

The subject assessment guidelines (SAG) stipulate the types of formal assessment tasks that are supposed to be written. The responses from Heads of Department indicated some disadvantages in this regard. For instance, one Head of Department highlighted the following when responding to: Kindly describe the educator's perception and outcomes that you have observed regarding school-based assessment.

"Most of the forms of assessments such as assignments, investigations and projects are done under uncontrolled conditions and in groups of learners and their performance outcomes yield false results.

The Head of Department from School A expressed his views when responding to the same question by stating that: *"Formal assessments which are done by learners outside of the class gives false results as parents, siblings or anyone might have done the work on behalf of the learner".*

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5.5   ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF QUALITATIVE DATA: DEPUTY PRINCIPALS

Analysis and interpretation of qualitative data was directed by the information collected from interviews with Deputy Principals.

5.5.1 Biographical Information: Deputy Principals

The findings are divided into biographical information and contextual analysis. Table 5.4 presents biographical information for Deputy Principals per school, their gender, age, qualifications in the subject that they are teaching and the teaching experience.

Table 5.4: Profiles of the participating Deputy Principals

SCHOOL	AGE	GENDER	HIGHEST QUALIFICATION	TEACHING EXPERIENCE	YEARS AS DEPUTY PRINCIPAL
School A	46	Female	Bed Degree	19 years	03 years
School B	48	Female	Master's Degree	21 years	04 years
School C	55	Male	Master's Degree	26 years	06 years
School D	50	Male	Honours Degree	20 years	05 years
School E	46	Male	BA Degree	18 years	02 years

Five (5) Deputy Principals participated in the interviews consisting of two females and three males. The interviews in this section, paid attention to the highest professional qualification, the duration in being the Deputy Principal and experience in the teaching fraternity (*cf.* Appendix F).

5.5.2 Contextual Analysis and Interpretation of Data: Deputy Principals

Contextual analysis interview questions for deputy principals were asked by the researcher. The focus was according to the revised Personnel Administrative Measures (PAM) published on the government gazette number 09 of September 2022, where in, Chapter A6 outlines the core duties of the deputy principal.

In this study the focus of the analysis was on the duty of the deputy principals with regard to their duties during the implementation of school-based assessment in Mopani West District (*cf.* Appendix F).

- Kindly share the challenges you experienced in implementing school-based assessment?

- What do you think are the advantages and disadvantages of school-based assessment?

- What challenges do Heads of department and teachers experience during school-based assessment implementation?

- Kindly explain how you support and monitor the Heads of department in attending to the challenges of school-based assessment?

- What strategies are in place to improve school-based assessment in your school?

The challenges mentioned by the deputy principal in implementing school-based assessment was with regard to little training on the monitoring and support of school-based assessment: The latter was alluded by the deputy principal from SCHOOL B when responding to: Kindly share the challenges you experienced in implementing school-based assessment?

"Aaahh,eish, as the curriculum manager of the school, I received no formal professional training in school-based assessment implementation. I rely on gaining confidence through my colleagues".

Some deputies were not aware that they are curriculum managers in a school setting. One deputy principal from School B responded to the same question as follows: *"I received no induction as the deputy principal. I was taken by surprise when visited by the subject advisor who informed me that as the deputy principal, I am the curriculum manager in my school".*

The responses from deputy principals to the question: What strategies are in place to improve school-based assessment in your school? This question was asked because of their virtue of being custodians of curriculum delivery in their schools. Their responses to the question differed. The deputy principal from School A, for instance indicated that he checks on the drastic rise on school-based assessment tasks against the external assessments. He further indicated that he allows or agrees with only 5% difference on learner performance between the two tasks, should there be a wide variance, the teacher and the Head of Department would be required to clarify the

inconsistencies and necessary interventions will be employed. The deputy principal from School C explained: *"You know what? I can't have strategies on issues that I am not confident on what is being implemented."*

The deputy principal from School D emphasised the pros and cons of school-based assessment by responding to the question: What do you think are the advantages and disadvantages of school-based assessment?

"MMM…. you know what, I can't give you a proper answer on that question, I am frustrated, the principal of the school is mostly not at school, I am therefore expected to attend to the day-to-day smooth running of the school. How can I do best on monitoring and support of school-based assessment issues?"

The response on the negative impact of school-based assessment on the final marks or results of learners was indicated as one of the disadvantages of school-based assessment. The deputy principal from School E indicated that the impact is negative, his response was as follows: *"School-based assessment rejection in the final examination contributes in poor performance of our school. It seems as if teachers are assisting learners in class during their writing of school-based assessments."*

During the interviews, it was noted with concern that the deputy principals had varied understandings with regard of the role and importance of school-based assessment. The responses were also evident that the Heads of Department and teachers experience challenges in the process of school-based assessment implementation. The deputy principal from School A highlighted the following when responding to: What are the challenges that are experienced by Hod's and teachers in the process of school-based assessment implementation?

"Lack of content knowledge amongst HoD's leads to teachers taking advantage as they seem to know better. One HoD shared that one of the teachers once uttered that I know the subject content, there is nothing that you can support me with".

Although some participants agreed that school-based assessment is vital for the promotion and progression of learners, the deputy principal from School C had a different opinion regarding how school-based assessment is conducted, this was

evident when responding to: Why and how do teachers and Hod's experience challenges in the process of school-based assessment implementation?

"I feel that the way school-based assessment is done at the moment, Aaaa…. its structure makes the learners lazy. After writing the assessment, they don't worry any more. They don't bother to get feedback that will assist them in correcting their mistakes in the test".

During follow-up probing questions like: Were your learners and educators given clear explanations on the importance of school-based assessment? One deputy principal admitted by simple stating: *"We've failed in that regard".*

The common responses from all participants in the study indicated that workload, large numbers in classes, lack of learning materials and resources and insufficient training by the Department of Education work against proper implementation of school-based assessment. The negative impact results in poor attitudes among the implementers.

There are also mixed feelings on school-based assessment implementation. Some participants alluded that it is good as it prepares learners for the final examinations, however, some discredit it because they feel it has a lot of paper work.

5.6   SUMMARY

In this chapter, the findings emerging from the analysis were presented and interpreted in terms of the factors contributing to the implementation of school-based assessment in the five selected high schools in the Mopani West District.

This section began with the presentation of the background of the five selected schools supported by participant observations and a reflection of what was observed in each school regarding location, physical structure, enrolment of learners, performance of the school, population per class, discipline and status on staff employment. Data on participant's responses during interviews was outlined in this chapter.

The biographical information of teachers as participants in the study were outlined in the form of table and thereafter the responses on the questions asked to teachers followed. The same approach was used where Heads of Department and deputy principals' biographical information and responses to the questions.

From the preceding discussions in this chapter, one can conclude that most teachers, Heads of Department and Deputy Principals lacked in-depth knowledge and understanding of their roles and functions in making school-based assessment reliable, credible and valid. The latter was caused by lack of effective induction and training by the district and provincial offices.

The final chapter that follows, Chapter 6, presents the introduction, the summary of the research findings by answering the five research questions. The research conclusion is briefly outlined and the recommendations to Department of Basic Education (DBE), deputy principals, head of department and educators is highlighted. The way in which the study will contribute to the education department and the implementers of school-based assessment in high schools together with the suggestions of further research on the topic is outlined. Limitations during the study is also discussed. The chapter concludes by giving the final word.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1   INTRODUCTION

This final chapter concludes the study by presenting a summary of findings, drawing conclusions and offering recommendations for this research which explored challenges of implementing school-based assessment in high schools of the Mopani West District. The main research question: *What are the challenges of implementing School-Based Assessment (SBA) at high schools in the Mopani West District?*

6.2   SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

The summary of the research findings are presented by outlining how the study addressed the research questions:

6.2.1 RQ1: Why is school-based assessment not successfully implemented in high schools in the Mopani West District?

The findings of this study revealed that the National Protocol of Assessment policy document provides limited guidance on the implementation of school-based assessment, therefore this opens the loophole for individual teachers, Heads of Department and deputy principals to interpret according to their understanding. An example to the latter is that the policy is silent on the allocation of marks on the variety of tasks that are learners are required to complete.

All interviewed participants indicated common challenges which works against the successful implementation of school-based assessment in high schools of Mopani West District: workload, overcrowded classes, insufficient training on implementation and lack of resources.

6.2.2 RQ2: What challenges do high school educators face in implementing school-based assessment?

The study established that lack of guidance and support during the implementation of school-based assessment policy to educators raises challenges. Examples to support the statement is that there were no sufficient training workshops from the Department of Education regarding implementation of school-based assessment. Some educators are expected to teach subjects which are not in their professional specialisation. The latter results in lack of confidence in the process of teaching and learning.

Overcrowded classes that educators are supposed to teach in high schools of Mopani District remains a challenge, the latter result in a delay for educators to give developmental feedback to learners because they spent long periods in marking the assessment tasks. The lack of resources in most high schools of Mopani West District becomes a challenge to educators since some assessment tasks in subjects like tourism and physical sciences to mention a few, need equipment to be successfully completed.

6.2.3 RQ3: What challenges do high school Heads of Department face in implementing school-based assessment?

The research revealed that heads of departments are aware that it is their responsibility to lead and manage the sections allocated to them at school; however, they indicated challenges such as lack of knowledge in some subjects that they are heading.

Heads of Department that participated in this study highlighted the issue of workload that hinders them in proper moderation of tasks before they are written. Some even indicated that they do not know what is expected of them when moderating tasks, hence they resort to approving the tasks by appending their signature and stamping without even having a glance on the tasks. It was clear from how educators responded to the questions of challenges of school-based assessment that they find it challenging in balancing their core expected duties with their additional workloads.

6.2.4 RQ4: What challenges do high school deputy principals face in implementing school-based assessment?

Despite the fact that deputy principals are regarded as curriculum managers in their schools, the study revealed that they are not so sure of what they are supposed to do with regard to curriculum implementation in their schools. One of the examples indicated was that they are not confident on what a quality and standardised assessment task entails.

Heads of Department are the ones that attend workshops on the implementation of their different subjects. The practice becomes a challenge to deputy principals because they remain with insufficient knowledge in the implementation of school-based assessment. The administrative duties and responsibilities that deputy principals are expected to perform in their schools prevents them from proper and effective implementation of school-based assessment.

6.2.5 RQ5: How can the challenges of implementing school-based assessment at Mopani West District high schools be overcome?

It is evident that intensive developmental programmes for teachers, Heads of Department and deputy principals is needed to overcome the challenges of school-based assessment implementation in Mopani West District high schools. Teachers in Mopani West District high schools need training to ensure their competency in designing quality school-based assessment tasks because they are the key implementers.

Heads of Department should have knowledge of moderating the assessment tasks, as this will assist in ensuring that the tasks are in line with content coverage and cognitive levels, as stipulated by the policy documents. Deputy principals, as curriculum heads of the institutions, should draw assessment plans to avoid a haphazard route of conducting assessments. Learners and parents should be provided with the annual assessment programme in order to be well prepared for all assessments.

Lack of financial, physical and human resources should be addressed by the schools with the assistance of relevant stakeholders such as Limpopo Department of Education and School Governing Bodies.

6.3   RESEARCH CONCLUSIONS

The study has revealed that high school teachers, Heads of Department and deputy principals in Mopani West are faced with complex challenges that work against them in effectively implementing school-based assessment. Support by external structures such as government workshops offered by curriculum advisors for different subjects should be conducted. Self-development by registering to study with institutions of higher learning, reading of policies and circulars that are related to school-based assessment for their subjects can instil better understanding.

6.4   RECOMMENDATIONS

Hereunder is a discussion of the study's recommendations.

6.4.1   Recommendations to The Department of Basic Education

It is recommended that the national and provincial (Limpopo) Department of Basic Education could:

- Conduct workshops for high schools' educators, heads of departments and deputy principals to attend and be empowered to implementation of school-based assessment at least twice per annum.
- Construct more classrooms, and provide more educators, heads of departments and deputy principals wherever there is need to alleviate overcrowding and heavy workload.
- Provide all high schools with Learners and Teachers Support Material (LTSM).

6.4.2   Recommendations to Deputy Principals

It is recommended that high schools could each have at least two deputy principals who will share administrative duties and curriculum duties to alleviate overloading one in Mopani District. That is, one could be the administrative manager and the other a curriculum manager to focus on school-based assessment, etc.

6.4.3 Recommendations to Heads of Department (HoDs)

It is recommended that all heads of departments of Mopani District high schools could attend annual induction programs which are focused on their core duties such as implementing school-based assessment, monitoring and supporting educators, etc. They could also be provided with referral books to which they could confirm as they are executing their duties.

6.4.4 Recommendations to Educators

It is recommended that all Mopani District high schools' teachers could attend at least two workshops per annum on implementing school-based assessment, and subject assessment programs of subjects they teach to ensure they can execute their duties well. They could also be provided with referral books to which they could confirm as they are executing their duties.

6.5 CONTRIBUTIONS FOR THE STUDY TO EDUCATORS, HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS AND DEPUTY PRINCIPALS

6.5.1 Contributions of the Study to Educators

- Educators will be aware that planning, identification and development of assessment tasks that are fair to all learners are of vital importance.
- Educators will be enlightened to offer multiple opportunities to learners.
- Educators are main role players in implementing school-based assessment.
- Immediate and positive feedback should be given to learners, this practice will prepare learners for the final examination.

6.5.2 Contributions of the Study to Heads of Department

- Heads of Department will be reminded that their roles as middle managers of the schools should include timeously monitoring and support of the implementation of school-based assessment.
- School-based assessment plans should be available and be implemented in the subjects that they are heading.

- All tasks should be moderated and be approved by them before they are executed by teachers.

6.5.3 Contributions of the Study to Deputy Principals

- Deputy principals as curriculum managers will be aware that they need to work as a team with the heads of departments for the successful implementation of school-based assessment.
- Deputy principals should make sure that curriculum resources needed during the implementation of school-based assessment are available.

6.6 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Further research on exploring the challenges on the implementation of school-based assessment as the integral tool for teaching and learning is recommended by the researcher. The future research could include the reliability, validity and credibility of school-based assessment. The focus on further research on school-based assessment implementation could be from foundation phase (grades R-3), senior phase (grades 4-7) and General Education and Training (grades 8-9) because that is where it carries more weight than in Further Education and Training(grades10-12). To site an example is that assessment in foundation phase is 100% school-based with no examination written. Another suggestion for further research emanates from the fact that the sampled schools in this study were located in rural areas, further studies on school-based assessment challenges could be done in schools that are located in urban areas.

6.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Research limitations can emerge from the research design by the research. The shortcomings from the research, limits the researcher on what can be concluded from the start, however it can at the same time presents the foundation of the future research (Gupta, 2022: slide 2 and 3). The author shared common limitations of qualitative research such as biasness by the researcher, participants unwillingness to share the information and lack of generalisation of findings.

Alex (2023:1) suggests that researchers are encouraged to discuss the limitations of their research study to enhance the process of the research and allowing the readers to gain and understand the study's framework and value.

Theofanidis and Antigoni (2018:157) define limitations as characteristics of design or methodology that influence the interpretation of the findings from the research under study. This might be the unforeseen challenges that emerge in the process of the study. Limitations represent weaknesses within the study which contributes to the outcomes and conclusions of the research (Ross, Bibler & Zaidi, 2019:261).

The latter is supported by Jansen (2022:01) when he states that limitations are weaknesses of the study, especially factors that are mostly beyond control of the researcher. The factors in limitations might include time, funding, equipment, data or even participants. The author further states that limitations are shortcomings that limits what research can conclude from a particular study. However, limitations can serve as the foundation of presenting future research.

The study concurs with Jansen's (2022:01) definition because limitations in this study were seen as flows or shortcomings which results in unavailability of resources. For example, the area (setting) where the study is conducted and the sample size of the participant. Limitations which were identified during this study include: the setting of where the interviews took place, the participant's effect and the data collection and its analysis. The settings of the interviews, the participants' effect and data collection and analysis are discussed below.

6.7.1 The Setting of the Interviews

The setting of the interviews was mostly not appropriate. There were several interruptions due to the fact that the interviews were conducted at the participant's workplace during working hours. Efforts to avoid and reduce interruptions such as knocks on the door were a failure. The noise caused by colleagues and learners was also unavoidable.

6.7.2 The Participant's Effect

The fact that some of the participants knew the researcher, the participants might have been hesitant to answer the interview questions honestly or fully. These participants might have decided not to disclose some of their personal in-depth experiences. The small number of the sampled participants could have given the limited findings of the study.

6.7.3 The Data Collection and Analysis

The fact that the nature of the study is qualitative, it relied on the researcher's judgements of the collected data and its analysis. The researcher served as the main data collection instrument through the interviews and participants observation. Analysis of collected data was also done by the researcher. Although reliability and trustworthiness were considered and practiced throughout the study, the possibility of biasness by the researcher could not be ruled out. Another factor is that data collection was time-consuming because interviews require more time than questionnaires.

6.8 A FINAL WORD (SUMMARY)

The aim of this study was to explore challenges of implementing school-based assessment at high schools of the Mopani West District of Limpopo, South Africa. The sampled participants were from five selected high schools consisting of ten teachers, ten Heads of Department and five deputy principals. This study was important because the final examinations results (75%) combined with school-based assessment results (25%) indicate a marked difference at the end of the academic year, which therefore raises a concern about school-based assessment implementation.

The study has successfully revealed what it intended to explore. It emerged from the study that the school-based assessment policy is not correctly implemented due to a range of challenges that are experienced during the process. Despite of the fact that school-based assessment implementation happens in environments that do not guarantee its success as revealed by the study, there is an overwhelming sense of desire and willingness amongst teachers, Heads of Department and deputy principals who are ready to go the extra mile in ensuring the success of its implementation.

It can be concluded from the study that school-based assessment is key during teaching and learning, therefore, the Department of Education, deputy principals as curriculum managers, Heads of Department and teachers should be well conversant in implementation of school-based assessment.

KEY TERMS: School-Based Assessment, Implementation, High Schools, Educators, Heads of Departments, Deputy Principals, Challenges, Exploring, Assessment and Mopani West District.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Ethical Clearance Certificate

UNISA | university of south africa

UNISA COLLEGE OF EDUCATION ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Date: 2021/06/09

Ref: **2021/06/09/07275471/11/AM**

Name: Mrs. TS HLATSHWAYO

Dear Mrs. TS HLATSHWAYO

Student No.: 07275471

Decision: Ethics Approval from 2021/06/09 to 2026/06/09

Researcher(s): Name: Mrs TS HLATSHWAYO

E-mail address: 07275471@mylife.unisa.ac.za

Telephone: 0736492869

Supervisor(s): Name: Prof LDM Lebeloane

E-mail address: leblldm@unisa.ac.za Telephone: 012 429 -4433

Title of research:

EXPLORING CHALLENGES OF IMPLEMENTING SCHOOL-BASED ASSESSMENT IN HIGH SCHOOLS OF MOPANI WEST DISTRICT.

Qualification: PhD CURRICULUM STUDIES

ThankyoufortheapplicationforresearchethicsclearancebytheUNISACollegeofEducation Ethics Review Committee for the above-mentioned research. Ethics approval is granted for the period 2021/06/09 to2026/06/09.

*The**mediumrisk**applicationwasreviewedbytheEthicsReviewCommitteeon2021/06/09 in compliance with the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment.*

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

1. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to the relevant guidelines set out in the Unisa Covid-19 position statement on research ethics attached.
2. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.

3. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee.

4. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.

5. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing.

6. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientificstandardsrelevanttothespecificfieldofstudy. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act,no4of2013;Children'sactno38of2005andtheNationalHealth Act, no 61 of2003.

7. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data requires additional ethics clearance.

8. No field work activities may continue after the expiry date **2026/06/09**. Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

Note:

The reference number **2021/06/09/07275471/11/AM** *should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.*

Kind regards,

Prof. ATMotlhabane   **Prof. PM Sebate**

CHAIRPERSON: CEDURERC   **EXECUTIVE DEAN**

 Sebatpm@unisa.ac.za   motlhat@unisa.ac.za

Approved - decision template – updated 16 Feb 2017

Appendix B1: Letter requesting permission to conduct research: LPDBE

UNISA | college of education

Request for permission to conduct research at high schools of Mopani West District, Limpopo Province, South Africa

Topic: Exploring challenges of implementing school-based assessment in high schools of Mopani West District.

Date: 08 January 2019

The Head of Department
Limpopo Province Department of Basic Education
113 Biccard Street
Polokwane
0700

Dear Madam

APPLICATION FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

I, Hlatshwayo Tsakane Sylvia, would like to apply for a permission to conduct research in five sampled schools in Limpopo Province. The schools are in Mopani West District and the circuits are Nkowankowa, Khujwana, Xihoko, Lepelle and Rakwadu2.

I am currently registered with university of South Africa for a PhD degree with specialisation in curriculum studies. It is for this reason that I request to be granted permission to do research with the selected schools. My supervisor is Prof. Lebeloane LDM. My research topic is EXPLORING CHALLENGES OF IMPLEMENTING

I hope my application will be considered.

Yours faithfully

Hlatshwayo TS
(Student no. 7275471)

UNISA | college of education

Request for permission to conduct research at high schools of Mopani West District, Limpopo Province, South Africa

Topic: Exploring challenges of implementing school-based assessment in high schools of Mopani West District.

Date: 08 January 2019

District director
Limpopo Department of Basic Education
Mopani West District
P/bag X4032
Tzaneen
 (0850)

Dear Madam

APPLICATION FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

I, Hlatshwayo Tsakane Sylvia, would like to apply for a permission to conduct research in five sampled schools in Mopani West District. The selected schools are in Nkowankowa, Khujwana, Xihoko, Lepelle and Rakwadu2 circuits.

I am currently registered with university of South Africa for a PhD degree with specialisation in curriculum studies. It is for this reason that I request to be granted permission to do research with the selected schools. My supervisor is Prof. Lebeloane LDM.

I hope my application will be considered.

Yours faithfully

Hlatshwayo TS

(Student no. 7275471)

DEPARTMENT OF

EDUCATION
MOPANI WEST DISTRICT

Ref:2/2/3 Enq: Magabane PMK Tel: 0153066801

Email: MagabanePMK@edu.limpopo.gov.za

Hlatshwayo TS

24 Leadwood Crescent

Arbor Park

Tzaneen

0850

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
MOPANI WEST DISTRICT
DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

2019 -05- 0 6

PRIVATE BAG X4032
TZANEEN 0850

LIMPOPO PROVINCE

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 : " EXPLORING CHALLENGES OF IMPLEMENTING SCHOOL-BASED ASSESSMENT IN HIGH SCHOOLS OF MOPANI WEST 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 schools concerned.

3.3 The conduct of research should not 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).

27 peace street, Prosperitus Building, Tzaneen, 0850, Private BagX4032 Tzaneen, 0850
The heartland of South Africa- development is about people!

Request for permission to Conduct Research : Hlatshwayo TS

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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.

_____.

MODIKA PP

DISTRICT DIRECTOR

06/05/2019

DATE

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
MOPANI WEST DISTRICT
DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

2019 -05- 0 6

PRIVATE BAG X4032
TZANEEN 0850

LIMPOPO PROVINCE

27 peace street, Prosperitus Building, Tzaneen, 0850, Private BagX4032 Tzaneen, 0850
The heartland of South Africa- development is about people!

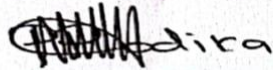*Request for permission to Conduct Research : Hlatshwayo TS*

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Appendix C: Request for permission to conduct research at Schools

Topic: Exploring challenges of implementing school-based assessment in high schools of Mopani West District.

Date: 08 January 2019

The school principal

Dear Sir

I, TSAKANE SYLVIA HLATSHWAYO, am currently doing research under the supervision of PROF. LDM. LEBELOANE. I am studying PHD in Education, specialising in Curriculum Studies at the University of South Africa. We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled *Exploring Challenges of Implementing School-Based Assessment (SBA) in High Schools of Mopani West District.*

The aim of the study is to explore the challenges experienced in high schools of Mopani West during the implementation of school-based assessment. Your school has been selected because it meets the criteria for the purposive sampling method chosen for the study which are:

 • The school is a high school.
 • The school has the deputy principal as the curriculum manager.
 • The school has the HOD's as the support and monitoring agent during school-based assessment implementation.
 • The school has educators as the implementer of school-based assessment.
 • The school is situated in the Mopani West District.

The study will entail:

 • Coming to your school to observe and conduct interviews with the deputy principal, two heads of department (HOD's) and two the educators. This will assist in determining the challenges working against the correct implementation of school-based assessment in Mopani West District.

The potential benefits of this study are:

- Understanding how school-based assessment policy directs during the process of implementation.

- It will allow the teachers to evaluate the perceptions they have when it comes to school-based assessment implementation.

- Allow teachers to understand how their perception might hinder the positive results of school-based assessment policy.

- For the education fraternity, it will allow us to ensure that there are measures put in place to support and guide Deputy Principals, Heads of departments and educators during the implementation of school-based assessment.

- From a societal point of view, we will have knowledge of how society should be involved in the education of our learners.

Potential risks are:

- Due to the nature of the study, there might be some discomfort among Deputy Principals, Heads of departments and the educators in becoming aware that they were not doing their roles as expected by the school-based assessment policy.

Confidentiality is paramount due to the nature of the study. To ensure and promote confidentiality of all the participants, anonymity of all participants in the study will be maintained and guaranteed. The names of the participants and of the school will not be used anywhere in the research report in order not to identify them as participants in the study. I will also ensure that sensitive information given to me by the participants is not portrayed in a way that easily leads to them being identifiable in the study.

Further to what I have outlined above, the research will be conducted according to the ethical standards enshrined by the Unisa Ethics Committee. Should any risk to the study and/or the participants occur, the incident will immediately be reported in writing to the CEDU Ethics Committee and to my supervisor, Prof LDM Lebeloane for his attention and guidance.

CAN I WITHDRAW 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 participate, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a written consent form. You are free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. I will be using interviews while observing the participants.

WILL I RECEIVE PAYMENT OR ANY INCENTIVES FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY?

There will be no reimbursement or any incentives for participation in this research.

Feedback procedure

- A summary report of the findings will be sent to the Deputy Principal, Heads of departments and the educators as they are the key participants in the study to peruse and read. Those who feel that they would like to have their responses removed/modified, will be given enough time to email the researcher and state their concerns.

- The final research report will be uploaded on the UNISA on-line repository and be easily accessible to other students should they want to conduct a similar study and/ or expand on what I have done.

Should you require any further information or want to contact the researcher about any aspect of this study, please contact TS Hlatshwayo on 0736492869 / 7275471@mylife.unisa.ac.za.

Should you have concerns about the way in which the research has been conducted, you may contact Prof LDM Lebeloane on lebelldm@unisa.ac.za.

Yours sincerely

HLATSHWAYO TS

(Student number: 7275471)

Cell number: 0736492869

Appendix D: Participant Information Sheet

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PARTICIPANT/ INFORMATION SHEET TO TEACHERS, HEADS OF DEPARTMENT AND DEPUTY PRINCIPAL

Date: 08 January 2019

Title: EXPLORING CHALLENGES OF IMPLEMENTING SCHOOL-BASED ASSESSMENT IN HIGH SCHOOLS OF MOPANI WEST DISTRICT.

DEAR PROSPECTIVE PARTICIPANT

My name is Tsakane Sylvia Hlatshwayo and I am doing research under the supervision of Prof LDM. Lebeloane, a professor in the

Department Science and Technology, School of Teacher Education towards a PhD with specialisation in Curriculum Studies at the University of South Africa. We are inviting you to participate in a study entitled: Exploring challenges of implementing school-based assessment in high schools of Mopani West District in Limpopo.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?

This study is expected to collect important information that could:

- Assist the department in ensuring that school-based assessment in high schools is adequately implemented as per policy directive.

- Understands the challenges teachers experience during the implementation of school-based assessment.

- How negative perceptions towards school-based assessment can affect the final results and the culture of teaching and learning in high schools.

WHY AM I BEING INVITED TO PARTICIPATE?

You are invited due to the following:

- This study may increase awareness to the problems encountered during the implementation of school-based assessment in high school.

- The awareness of the challenges may assist in avoiding the wrong implementation of school-based assessment in order to achieve its positive goal.

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- There is no right or wrong answer. The knowledge gained may provide insights and assist in re-evaluating the perceptions you might have had as a person either consciously and/ or unconsciously.

- Participation is voluntary; therefore, there are no rewards or benefit for participating in this study. You will not be forced to disclose what you do not want to reveal.

I obtained your contact details from the school and will only be used for the research purposes and only with your endorsement. Ten teachers, 10 heads of department and 05 deputy principals sampled. This will ensure that the study is not biased and allows for different views from the five selected schools.

WHAT IS THE NATURE OF MY PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY?

- For the teachers, the study involves answering interview questions, in some cases, follow up questions may be asked to clarify pointers that might not be clear.

- During the interviews, the study will involve having an individual face –to-face interview with the researcher whenever and wherever is convenient for the interviewee at the school.

CAN I WITHDRAW 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 form. You are free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

By taking part in this study, you will be assisting us to gain a deeper knowledge of how different stake holders within high schools can be assisted to ensure that they are better prepared and equipped for the implementation of school-based assessment The deputy principals, heads of departments and teachers will have a chance to understand what they are expected to do during the process of school-based assessment.

ARE THERE ANY NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES FOR ME IF I PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH PROJECT?

- Other than you being critical about your way of looking at things, there are no physical in participating in this research project.

- The questions will be designed in a way that will limit any risk of being identified as a participant and with the research open to more than one participant in your school, the risk of being identified are limited.

- I will have no knowledge of the participants. This will ensure that there is no or minimal breach of confidentiality and confidentiality will be sustained to avoid any legal and/ or economic perils.

- The name of the school and that of the participants in the study will NOT appear anywhere on the report/ findings. Codes and/or pseudonyms will be used throughout the study.

- To ensure impartiality and objectivity in the data collection process, the researcher will use a code number or a pseudonym when referring to the participant's answers in her study to ensure that no one can be identified.

- A report of the study may be submitted for publication, but individual participants will not be identifiable in such study.

- As a researcher, I will endeavour to be open and transparent in addressing any phase of the study from the initial stages of collecting data, analysing data and interpreting data and distribution of the findings to all stakeholders concerned.

WILL THE INFORMATION THAT I CONVEY TO THE RESEARCHER AND MY IDENTITY BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?

Your name will not be recorded anywhere, and no one will be able to connect you to the answers you given. Your answers will be given a code number, or a pseudonym and you will be referred to in this way in the data, any publications, or other research reporting methods such as conference proceedings. A report of the study may be submitted for publication, but individual participants will not be identifiable in such a report.

HOW WILL THE RESEARCHER(S) PROTECT THE SECURITY OF DATA?

Hard copies of your answers will be stored by the researcher for a period of five years in a locked cupboard/filing cabinet at home. For future research or academic purposes, electronic information will be stored on a password protected computer. Future use of the stored data will be subject to further Research Ethics Review and approval if applicable. After the 5 years' period has lapsed, hard copies will be shredded and/or electronic copies will be permanently deleted from the hard drive of the computer through the use of a relevant software programme.

WILL I RECEIVE PAYMENT OR ANY INCENTIVES FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY?

No incentives or payment will be given to the participants.

HAS THE STUDY RECEIVED ETHICS APPROVAL?

If this study receives written approval from the Research Ethics Review Committee of the CEDU, Unisa, a copy of the approval letter can be obtained from the researcher if you so wish.

HOW WILL I BE INFORMED OF THE FINDINGS/RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH?

If you would like to be informed of the final research findings, please contact TSAKANE SYLVIA HLATSHWAYO on 0736492869 or email 7275471@mylife.unisa.ac.za. The findings are accessible for 6 weeks after collecting data after that, they will be locked away for safe keeping and for submission for the completion of the degree.

Should you require any further information or want to contact the researcher about any aspect of this study, please contact TS HLATSHWAYO on 0736492869 / 7275471@mylife.unisa.ac.za.

Should you have concerns about the way in which the research has been conducted, you may contact Prof LDM Lebeloane on lebelldm@unisa.ac.za.

Thank you for taking time to read this information sheet and for participating in this study.

Thank you.

HLATSHWAYO TS
(Student number: 7275471)
Cell number: 0736492869

Appendix E: Consent Forms

UNISA | college of education

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY (Return slip)

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 and /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 have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Participant Name & Surname: (please print) _____

_____   _____

Participant Signature   Date

Should you require any further information or want to contact the researcher about any aspect of this study, please contact T.S Hlatshwayo 073 6492869 / 7275471@mylife.unisa.ac.za.

Should you have concerns about the way the research was conducted, you may contact Prof LDM Lebeloane at lebelldm@unisa.ac.za.

Tsakane Sylvia Hlatshwayo13 April   2021

Researcher's Name & Surname   Researcher's signature
Date:

Appendix F: Interview Questions for Deputy Principals

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Provide the appropriate answer to the questions below.

1. Biographical Questions

1.1 What is your highest professional qualification?

……………………………………………………………………………………

1.2 How long have you been in your current position (as deputy principal) in the school?

…………………………………………………………………………………..

1.3 How many years have you been in the teaching fraternity?

……………………………………………………………………………………

2. Contextual Questions

2.1 Kindly list the challenges you experienced in implementing school-based assessment.

……………………………………………………………………………………

2.2 What do you think are the advantages and disadvantages of school-based assessment?

……………………………………………………………………………………

2.3 What do you think are the causes of challenges of implementing school-based assessment?

……………………………………………………………………………………

2.4 Kindly explain how you support and monitor the Heads of department in attending to the challenges of implementing school-based assessment.

…………………………………………………………………………………

2.5 What strategies are in place to improve the implementation of school-based assessment in your school?

………………………………………………………………………………….

THANK YOU FOR TAKING YOUR PRECIOUS TIME TO BE PART OF THE STUDY AND HAVING THIS INTERVIEW WITH ME.

Appendix G: Interview Questions for Heads of Department

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Biographical Questions

1.1 What is your highest professional qualification?

………………………………………………………………………………………………

1.2 How long have you been in your current position (as head of department) in this school?

………………………………………………………………………………….……………..

1.3 How many years have you been in the teaching fraternity?

………………………………………………………………………………………………….

2   Contextual Questions

2.1 Which stream (e.g., Business Sciences, languages, natural sciences, etc.) are you heading in the school?

………………………………………………………………………………………………….

2.2 How many subjects (state the number) fall in the department you are heading?

………………………………………………………………………….…………………………

2.3 Does the school where you are head of department have school-based assessment policy documents?

………………………………………………………………………….…………………………

2.3 Have you been trained (work shopped) on how to implement the school-based assessment document?

……………………………………………………………………………………………………..

2.4 Kindly list the challenges you have experienced when you support and monitor the implementation of school-based assessment in the department you are heading.

…………………………………………………………………………………………………..

2.5 What do you think are the advantages and disadvantages of school-based assessment?

……………………………………………………………………………………………

2.6 How do you manage the school-based assessment formal tasks in the department you are heading?

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

Kindly describe the educator's perception that you have observed regarding school-based assessment.

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

2.7 What is the impact of those perceptions that affect the implementation of school-based assessment?

Please motivate your answer.

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

Appendix H: Interview Questions for Educators

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Biographical Questions

1.1 What is your highest professional qualification?

…………………………………………………………………………………….. ……

1.2 How long have you been teaching in this high school?

…………………………………………………………………………………………..

1.3 How many years have you been in the teaching fraternity (years of experience)?

………………………………………………………………………………………….

Contextual Questions

2.1. How long have you been teaching the subjects that you are allocated?

…………………………………………………………………………………………

2.2 Kindly share your understanding on school-based assessment?

………………………………………………………………………………………….

2.3 Do you receive support within or outside the school on how to implement school-based assessment in the subjects that you are teaching, how often?

…………………………………………………………………………………………..

2.4 Were you trained on school-based assessment implementation? If yes, please indicate by whom were you trained and when.

………………………………………………………………………………………………

2.5 Since it is compulsory to incorporate school-based assessment in the process of teaching and learning, what challenges do you experience? Please share.

………………………………………………………………………………………………

2.6 How do your learners respond to school-based assessment activities?

……………………………………………………………………………………………….

2.7 Kindly explain how you give feedback of the formal tasks assessment written by your learners?

………………………………………………………………………………………………

2.8 What have been the negative or positive highlights you have experienced during the implementation of school-
based assessment?

Appendix I: Observation Schedule

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WHAT TO LOOK FOR:

CRITERIA	DEPUTY PRINCIPAL	HEADS OF DEPARTMENT	EDUCATORS	COMMENT
Context: the climate that prevails in the school conducive to teaching and learning?				
Communication: the verbal and non-verbal communication, body language, eye contact.				
Observation of attitudes towards school-based assessment, attitudes of stakeholders towards implementing school-based assessment will be observed.				
Type of leadership and support during the challenges of implementing the school-based assessment in schools Researcher will record the types of leadership and support during the challenges of implementing the school-based assessment in schools.				
Interaction: observe and record the interaction (cordial, forced, mutual, top-down/ bottom-up, etc.) of deputy principals, HoD and educators during the implementation of school-based assessment in schools.				

Appendix J: Proof of Editing
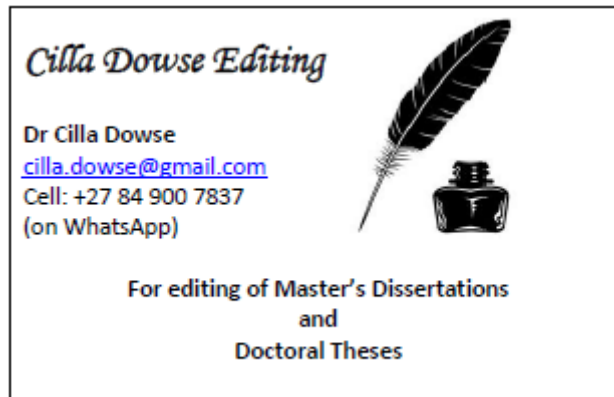
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TSAKANE SYLVIA HLATSHWAYO

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

Curriculum Studies
Faculty of Education
University of South Africa

EXPLORING CHALLENGES OF IMPLEMENTING SCHOOL-BASED

ASSESSMENT IN HIGH SCHOOLS OF MOPANI WEST DISTRICT

Cilla Dowse
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Cilla Dowse
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Appendix K: Turnitin Report

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BASED ASSESSMENT IN HIGH SCHOOLS OF MOPANI
WEST DISTRICT

by

TSAKANE SYLVIA HLATSHWAYO

Submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree

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