

**Curriculum decision-making in the selection of new subjects in  
schools: A qualitative study of the adoption of Tourism as an  
elective in selected KwaZulu-Natal High Schools**

**Zanele Heavy-Girl Winnie Dube**

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Durban, South Africa**

**Supervisor: Professor R. Moletsane**

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## DECLARATION

I, ZANELE HEAVY-GIRL WINNIE DUBE declare that:

- (i) The research reported in this thesis, except where otherwise indicated, and is my original research.
- (ii) This thesis has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.
- (iii) This dissertation/thesis does not contain other persons' data, pictures, graphs or other information, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other persons.
- (iv) This thesis does not contain other persons' writing, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other researchers.
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Researcher: Zanele Heavy-Girl Winnie Dube

.....  
Supervisor: Professor Relebohile Moletsane

## **ABSTRACT**

Following the introduction of Tourism in the South Africa secondary school curriculum, there has been a swift growth in the number of schools offering the subject nationally. Using the adoption of Tourism as a subject in selected schools in KwaZulu-Natal curriculum, the study reported in this thesis examined the nature of curriculum decision-making, the factors that informed it and the extent of stakeholder participation in the process.

The study was located within an interpretive paradigm and employed a qualitative approach to research. A case study design focusing on curriculum decision-making involved in the selection of Tourism as a new subject was utilised in this study. From the four schools used, key stakeholders, including the principal, Heads of Departments, tourism teachers and parent members of the SGB were interviewed, based on their vested interest in both the subject and curriculum decision-making. In addition, several documents from within and outside the schools were analysed. Three theoretical frameworks informed data analysis in the study. First, Obanya's (2004) functional curriculum theory suggests that curriculum decision-making in schools is influenced by macro-political and economic factors as well as factors within the school context. Second the stakeholder theory, as proposed by Freeman (1984) posits that all stakeholders should participate in the decision-making process, including in adoption of new subjects. Thirdly, Walker's (1971) model of curriculum development posits that schools must engage in deliberations and discussions that are participatory and involve school communities in making curriculum decisions.

Informed by these frameworks, the findings from the study suggest that, first, the curriculum decision-making involved in selecting Tourism as a new subject in the participating schools was influenced by both macro-policy and institutional forces. Second, the principals were largely responsible for the decisions made, with minimal involvement of teachers and parents, and a total exclusion of learners.

Informed by these findings and literature from previous studies, this thesis proposes a framework for effective/desirable curriculum decision-making in schools. The framework posits that curriculum decision-making, particularly the selection of new subjects in schools can only be effective when it involves the full participation of all stakeholders. Such stakeholders must not only recognise and endorse the rationale for the decision, but must also understand their expected roles in the process and be trained and supported to enact them effectively. This is likely to lead to informed decision-making in the school, and in turn, to the full support and effective implementation of the decision made, including effective teaching and learning in the classroom and, linked to this, positive educational outcomes.

## **DEDICATION**

This piece of work is dedicated to:

Linda Xaba (my husband)

and

Simphiwe Dube (my son)

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# CHAPTER ONE

## ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

### 1.1 Introduction

In 1996, the then Department of Education<sup>1</sup> (DoE) in South Africa introduced Tourism as a new subject in secondary schools. With this initiative, government communicated a clear message regarding the economic importance of the tourism industry and highlighted the need for skills training in the sector (Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, 2000). In line with this, the *White Paper on Tourism Development and Promotion* (Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, 1996) emphasised the need for training in tourism. This policy laid down principles for making tourism training more accessible to previously neglected groups<sup>2</sup> (Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, 1996). It further encouraged support for the introduction and teaching of Tourism as a subject in the school curriculum. In support of this initiative, American Express in South Africa and the American Express Foundation in New York proposed to sponsor the introduction of the subject in South African Schools (South African Tourism Institute, 1994). These organisations approached the then Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEAT)<sup>3</sup> to facilitate the introduction of Tourism as a subject in secondary schools. The Department of Environmental

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<sup>1</sup> The DoE was later (in 2009) divided into two: The Department of Basic Education (for the schooling sector) and the Department of Higher Education and Training (for the post-schooling sector).

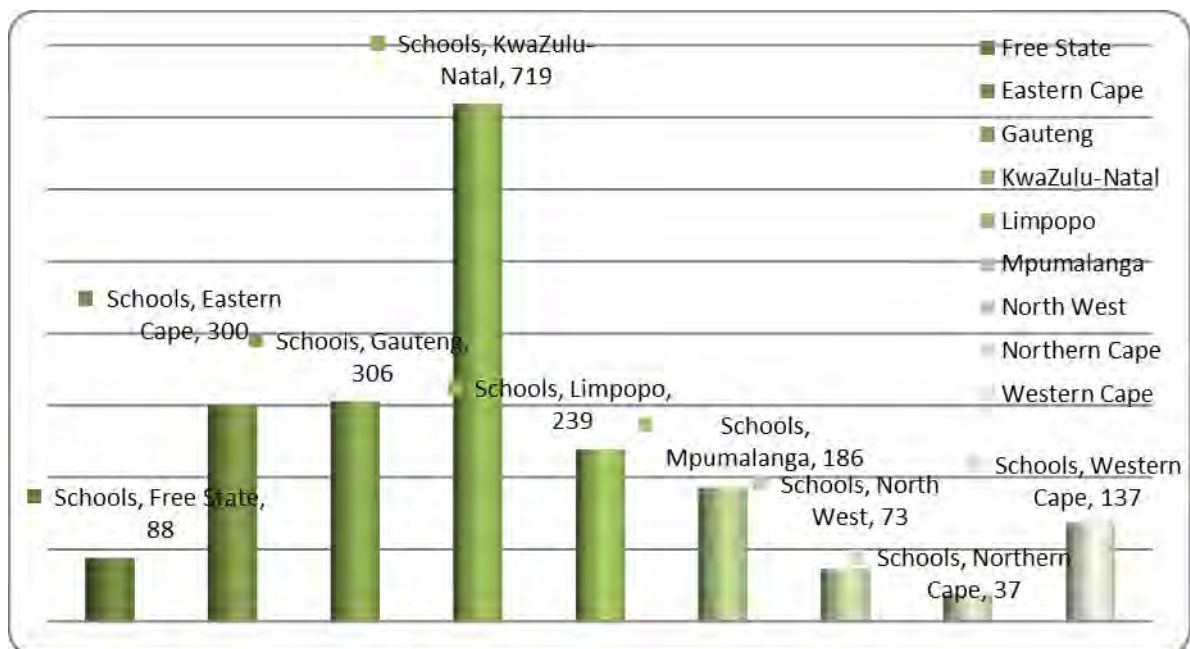
<sup>2</sup> 'Previously neglected groups' refers to the South African population (mostly black Africans, but also to some extent, Coloured and Indians) that were largely excluded from participating in the mainstream tourism activities of the country because of the policies of the apartheid government.

<sup>3</sup> The department was changed in 2009 and is now known as the National Department of Tourism (NDT)



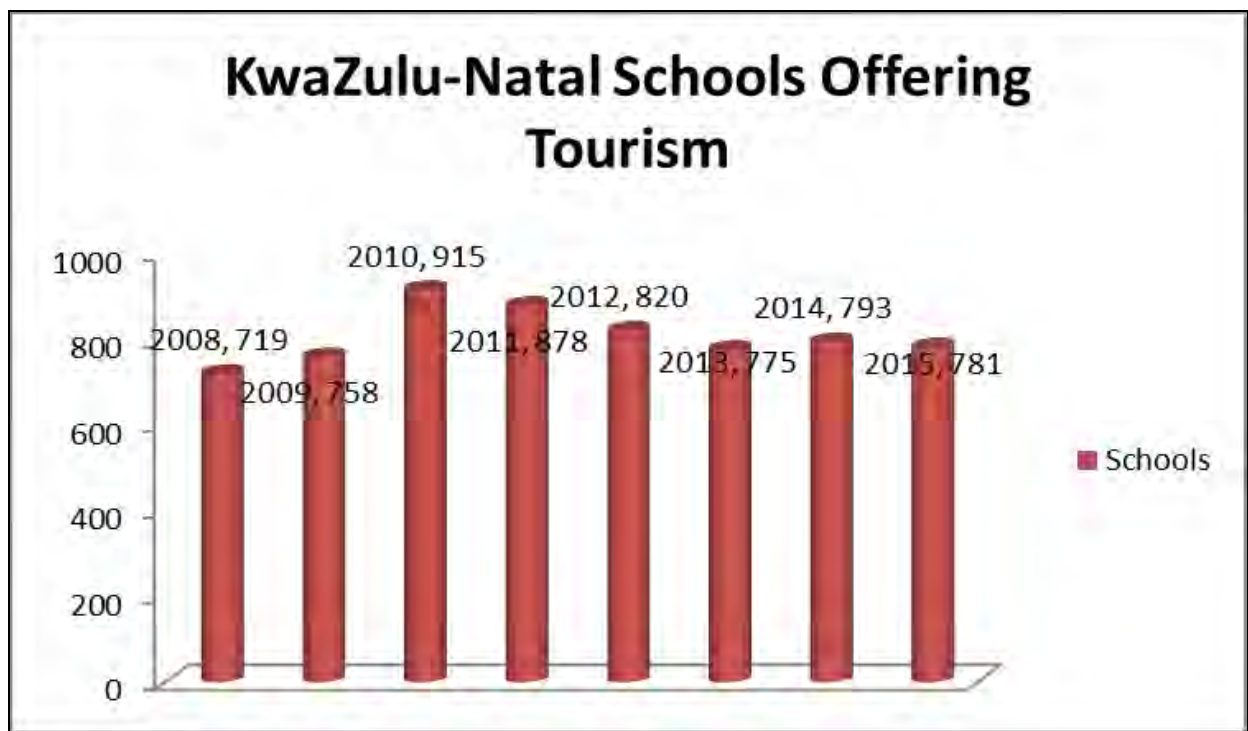
Affairs and Tourism and the tourism industry, in partnership with non-governmental organisations such as Reach & Teach and the National Business Initiative (NBI), became the driving force in assisting the national Department of Education to pilot the Tourism syllabus for secondary schools in the country (Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, 1998). The Tourism pilot project started in 1998 with 14 schools and 800 learners taking Tourism as a subject (National Business Initiative, 2008).

Since the original pilot project, there has been an exponential growth in the number of schools that have introduced Tourism as a subject in their respective curricula. From the 14 schools that offered Tourism in 1998, the number of schools offering the subject had grown to 2 085 by 2008. Figure 1.1 shows the distribution of schools per province that had introduced Tourism by 2008:



**Figure 1.1: Schools that offered Tourism in South Africa per Province, 2008 (Department of Education, 2010)**

As the graph above illustrates, the highest numbers of schools were in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) and Gauteng, with the Northern Cape having the lowest. This number grew to 915 in KwaZulu-Natal, which was the setting for this study, between 2008 and 2010 (Department of Education, 2010). The increase in the number of schools in KZN and Gauteng could be linked to the burgeoning tourism industry in these provinces (Rule, Struwig, Langa, Viljoen & Bouare, 2001). Figure 2 below illustrates the number of schools in KZN that offered Tourism between 2008 and 2015:



**Figure 1.2: Schools offering Tourism in KZN in 2008-2015 (Department of Education, 2010; 2015)**

The swift growth and decline in the number of schools offering Tourism as a subject both nationally and in KwaZulu-Natal in particular, raised my interest in the subject. In particular, I was interested in the schools' curriculum decision-making processes particularly in relation to how schools select new subjects for inclusion in their curricular offerings. In light of the

growing importance of the tourism industry in South Africa and the need for skills training in the field, the fact that the province is home to the largest harbour (Durban) in Africa, and the plethora of other social challenges that face the country (e.g., HIV and AIDS, poverty, violence, and others), I was interested in why and how these schools chose Tourism as a subject. Essentially, I was interested in understanding the factors that informed the schools' curriculum decision-making and the role of various stakeholders in the process.

## **1.2 Defining Curriculum Decision-making**

Curriculum decision-making is viewed as one of the most important undertakings in a school. Barnett and Coate (2005) define curriculum decision-making as the choices that schools make about educational values and purposes that are then reflected in the school curriculum. The process includes the establishment of goals for the entire educational programme and the selection of subjects through which the goals can be achieved (Bouck, 2008). These definitions suggest that curriculum decision-making involves choices about what knowledge is worth teaching and what subjects would best reflect or contain such knowledge.

In this study, the term curriculum decision-making refers to the process involved in the selection of subjects for inclusion in the curriculum. Of necessity, such a process has implications for the status of particular kinds of knowledge and subjects and the power of various actors in the community to make such decisions. Curriculum decision-making is a dynamic process; it involves the participation of various actors and is therefore dependent on the personalities, values, and knowledge of the people involved in it (Marsh, 2007).

From this perspective, it refers to how decisions about the curriculum are made, who makes them, what factors influence the decisions, and the conditions under which they are made. Thus, using four schools in KwaZulu-Natal as illustrative examples and contexts in which curriculum decision-making occurs, the study focused on the process and various forces that influenced the selection of Tourism for inclusion in the curriculum.

### **1.3 Tourism in the South African Schooling System**

This study used the selection of Tourism as a subject in the curriculum to understand the process of curriculum decision-making in schools. As a field of study, Tourism or Tourism Education has evolved over the years and has incurred different names in different countries. For example, in most countries the subject is known as Tourism Education (Tribe, 2000; Goeldner, 2001; Gu, Kavanaugh & Cong, 2007), while in South Africa it was initially referred to as Travel and Tourism (National Business Initiative, 1998; Earle, 2008) and later changed to Tourism, reportedly to reflect international trends (Gadebe, 2005).

Tourism courses internationally emerged in the 1980s and grew stronger in the 1990s (Meyer & Land, 2003; Jordaan, 2001). Formal teaching and training in tourism originated as a result of the developments and growth in the tourism industry. Hence Ayikoru, Tribe and Airey (2009) see education and training in tourism as one of the main sub-sectors of the complex tourism phenomenon.

Tourism was introduced as an important subject in the South African schooling system in Grades 10-12 (FET phase) with a view to developing an awareness of the value that the tourism industry brings to the local economy. The subject is meant to empower learners to understand the related services in the tourism industry and the benefits they bring to the country's economy. Moreover, it was intended to encourage learners to identify entrepreneurial opportunities for themselves, thus addressing the prevailing social problem of unemployment in the country (Department of Education, 2003a).

Since its introduction in 1998 through NATED 550<sup>4</sup>, and later in the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) in 2006, and currently in the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) in 2011, Tourism has been offered as an elective (i.e., a non-compulsory subject which a student may or may not elect to study in school). To illustrate, the South African schooling system prescribes 29 recognised subjects from which schools can choose to include in their subject offerings. The idea is that schools will choose subjects that are not only relevant and are of interest to the learners, but that are also responsive to the needs of the country (Parliamentary Monitoring Group, 2010). The 29 subjects are divided into different categories. The first category differentiates between compulsory and elective subjects. Compulsory subjects include subjects that must be studied by all learners in the school. These include the various Home Languages (HL) and First Additional Languages (FAL), Mathematics or Mathematical Literacy, and Life Orientation (LO). Elective subjects include subjects that are nationally approved from which schools may select some as subjects of choice that are included in their curriculum. These include subjects such as Physical Sciences, Life Sciences, Tourism, Hospitality Studies, Consumer Studies and Accounting, to

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<sup>4</sup> This was the curriculum that was implemented in South Africa during apartheid, also referred to as the 'old syllabus'.

name a few. The second category includes recognised and designated subjects. These subjects are required and used by universities for admission into their programmes. Examples of designated subjects include, among others languages, Accounting, Physical Sciences, Dramatic Arts, Music, Life Sciences, Accounting, History, Geography, Economics, and Business Studies (Department of Education, 2005). As discussed here, Tourism and other vocational education subjects are classified as electives that do not form part of the designated subject list (Department of Education, 2005). For this reason, this study was concerned with understanding the nature of the decision-making processes school communities engaged in when selecting a subject – specifically Tourism - for inclusion in the curriculum, as well as the factors that influenced their decisions.

#### **1.4 Purpose of the Study**

A school determines the educational knowledge it wishes to offer its learners in the form of the subjects it selects for inclusion in the curriculum. As discussed in the preceding sections, some schools have introduced Tourism in their curriculum for Grades 10-12, whilst others have not. Such curriculum decision-making occurs in the context of a human rights-based Constitution, through which the country seeks to develop an educational environment that is conducive to transformation. To achieve this, the South African Schools Act (Act No. 84 of 1996) (hereafter referred to as the South African Schools Act) was passed. This Act mandates all public schools to have democratically elected School Governing Bodies (SGBs). In accordance with this policy, the membership of the School Governing Body must include the principal (who becomes a member by virtue of his/her position) and the elected members from each of the following categories: teachers, non-teaching staff, parents, and learners. The number of parent, teachers, non-teaching staff and learner members who sit on a governing

body depends upon the size of the school enrolment (Van Wyk, 2004). However, parents must comprise the majority on the SGB, with at least one parent more than the total of all other members combined. The SGB is meant to participate in and inform all decision-making in the school, including decisions related to the curriculum.

In this context, I was interested in examining the extent to and ways in which members of the school community, including parent members of the SGB as key stakeholders, were involved in making the decisions that led to the adoption of Tourism as a subject in schools' curricula. While I recognise the significant role learners play in school governance (as espoused in the South African Schools Act) and the contribution they would have made in informing the findings of this study, the research only focused on the curriculum decision-making roles of the principal, teachers and parents. Learners, unlike other stakeholders, move through their schooling years in three-year phases from arriving in Grade 1 and Matriculating in Grade 12. For example, the FET phase (in which Tourism is offered as an elective subject) commences in Grade 10 and is completed at the end of Grade 12. Because this study examined a particular moment in schools' histories (i.e., from the time that it took to make the decision to adopt Tourism as a subject until its implementation), and because new learner representatives on the SGB are elected each year, I decided to omit this group from the study. Future studies may wish to focus on this aspect.

Informed by the understanding that curriculum decision-making is a process of selection in which all education stakeholders ideally participate, I wanted to examine how and why the decision to introduce Tourism was made in these schools. Thus, the purpose of the study reported in this thesis was to explore the nature of and rationale for curriculum decision-

making among stakeholders in the selection of new subjects for the school curriculum. Using the adoption of Tourism as a subject in the curriculum as an illustrative example, the main question in this study was: *What is the nature of and rationale for the curriculum decision-making processes schools go through in adopting a new subject in their curricula?* In pursuit of addressing the main question, the study addressed two sub-questions:

- *What factors inform school communities in their decision to introduce Tourism in the curriculum?*
- *To what extent and in what ways does curriculum decision-making in schools involve the different stakeholders from the school community?*

## **1.5 Why a Study on Curriculum Decision-making in Schools?**

My interest in pursuing this research was both personal and professional (or academic). First, my personal interest in the study was a result of my long-term involvement with Tourism at various levels of the education system. In 2001 I became a Tourism teacher and cluster coordinator for the subject in the Uthukela District in KZN province. I was responsible for supporting and mentoring schools that had introduced Tourism in their curriculum. As a cluster coordinator, I witnessed a tremendous growth in the number of schools that included Tourism. My active involvement as a cluster leader gave me the opportunity to interact with teachers from different schools. However, although I was interested in the subject and its growth, a major concern about schools' understanding of Tourism and how they came to make the decision to include it in the curriculum emerged. Discussions with other teachers revealed that there were varied understandings of Tourism as a subject. Moreover, each school's reasons for the decision to include Tourism as an elective also differed. I then



developed an interest in exploring the decisions made by schools to include Tourism in their curricula and the factors that influenced them.

Second, my interest in understanding the subject and the issues surrounding it was motivated by the need to inform my professional practice. For example, later in my career, as a Subject Advisor and Deputy Chief Education Specialist for Tourism, I was involved in supporting school-based educators' efforts in curriculum development and teaching in the classroom. During this time, a lot of schools were adopting the subject in their curricula while others were already phasing it out. The reasons for both sides of the decision were not immediately clear. Therefore, examining the factors informing the schools' decision-making and the extent of stakeholders' involvement in the processes seemed to be important issues for academic research. Years later, when I joined a tertiary institution as a lecturer in Tourism Education and with my involvement in pre-service and in-service teacher education, I was further motivated to investigate these issues.

This study will also fill a gap in the literature. Specifically, literature reviewed in this study (see Chapter Two) suggests that, on the one hand, there exists a plethora of studies on curricular issues in South Africa. For example, scholars such as Jansen (1998), Young and Gamble (2005), Harley and Wedekind (2004) and others, have written about South Africa's curriculum policy development and its implementation, as well as the many challenges that have plagued the system. In terms of curriculum decision-making, studies have focused on the decisions made by learners regarding what subjects to include in their package largely for Matriculation purposes and admission to university (Cleave, 2005; Bevins, Brodie & Brodie, 2005; Azubuike, 2011; De Wet, 2002). Research on curriculum decision-making regarding

the selection of subjects for the curriculum offering in schools is limited. Beyond the policy documents which mandate decentralised curriculum decision-making (Weber, 2008; Soudien & Gilmour, 2008) and studies that focus on teachers' curriculum and pedagogical decisions at classroom level (Coleman, Graham-Jolly & Middlewood, 2003; Stoffel, 2008; Hatting, 2008), studies that focus on curriculum decision-making at school level are almost non-existent. For example, significant research has focused on stakeholder involvement in broad decision-making and the role of stakeholders (Heystek, 2007; Mncube, 2009, Botha; 2007; Mokoena, 2011). Other scholars have focused on programmes and curriculum content in higher education institutions (Tribe, 2002; Botterill & Gale, 2005; Busby, 2001; Busby & Fiedel, 2001). However, little research has been done on the nature of and rationale for curriculum decision-making in the selection of new subjects in schools. This study represents my attempts to fill this knowledge gap.

## **1.6 Methodological Approach**

This study was located within the interpretive paradigm, which seeks to capture peoples' perspectives on their lived experiences. This paradigm holds the notion that knowledge is more subjective and humans initiate their own actions as a result of interaction with others (Merriam, 2009). It is concerned with meaning making and seeks to understand the subjective world of human experiences (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007; Merriam, 2009). Research in the interpretive paradigm is therefore able to produce rich descriptive analyses that emphasise a deep, interpretive understanding of the phenomenon (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). This paradigm allowed me to seek in-depth accounts of the participants' experiences of the phenomenon under study. My intention in this study was to explore and understand the lived experiences of stakeholders in secondary schools regarding the

curriculum decision-making processes they engaged in when adopting Tourism as a new subject for their curricula. The aim of the study was to highlight the participants' perspectives of the factors informing their curriculum decision-making.

Informed by the interpretive paradigm, the study adopted a qualitative research approach to data collection and analysis. Qualitative research approach allowed me to investigate and interpret the decision-making processes in schools as well as the reasons for them. The study was undertaken in four secondary schools in the KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) province in South Africa. To collect data, semi-structured individual interviews with a sample of key stakeholders (the principals, teachers and parents), and document analysis were used as instruments. The participants were selected using purposive sampling. Data were recorded through audio record and field notes and analysed using a thematic format. Data were coded and segmented using themes and categories. The data that were analysed were utilised to make interpretations and assertions about the rationale and the nature of curriculum decision-making among stakeholders in the selection of new subjects for the school curriculum. The research design and methodology utilised in the study is discussed in more detail in Chapter Four in this thesis.

## **1.7. Ethical Issues**

Ethical concerns as part of the fundamental design of any research project (Fin, Eliot-White & Walton, 2000) were pertinent during data collection and analysis in this study. As such, ethical approval for the study was granted by the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethical Committee (Protocol Reference Number: HSS/0217/0100) of the University of KwaZulu-Natal (see Appendix A). Regarding gaining access to schools, permission was

obtained from the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Basic Education (see Appendices B and C). Access to the schools was negotiated with the gatekeepers who were the principals (see Appendix D). Informed consent was obtained from all participants (i.e., principals, teachers and parents) based on their understanding of the purpose of the study and their willingness to participate in it, as suggested by Leedy and Ormrod (2005) (see Appendix E). At the commencement of the study, the participants were assured of their anonymity and confidentiality of our interaction as well as the anonymity of their schools throughout the research process and in the thesis. I therefore I used pseudonyms throughout the study. Interviews were audio taped with the permission of the participants. All the participants were assured that the contents of our conversations would be used solely for the research reported in this thesis.

## **1.8 Overview of the Thesis**

**Chapter One** has introduced the reader to the study, particularly outlining the background and rationale to it, as well as its purpose and the research questions. The chapter concludes with a brief overview of the research design and the ethical issues.

The next chapter, **Chapter Two** reviews the literature that relates to curriculum decision-making in schools and the role played by stakeholders in making such decisions. The chapter begins with a brief review of the policy framework that guides curriculum decision-making generally and the selection of new subjects for the curriculum. It then reviews literature related to various scholarly understandings of Tourism as a school subject and the factors that inform the various understandings. It then moves to literature focusing on the processes school communities engage in as they make decisions about the curriculum. Linked to this,

literature related to the factors that inform decisions for the selection of new subjects in the school curriculum is reviewed.

**Chapter Three** presents the conceptual and theoretical frameworks that informed the study. The study was framed within the field of curriculum decision-making in schools. Linked to this, the conceptual framework encompassed the process, the stakeholders and the structures involved therein, and the factors that shape and reshape the process and resultant curriculum in terms of the subjects adopted in the school. In addition, informed by the interpretive paradigm, the study adopted three theoretical frameworks: first, the stakeholder theory as proposed by Freeman (1984) posits that all stakeholders should participate in the decision-making process, including adoption of new subjects. Second, Obanya's (2004) functional curriculum theory suggests that schools' decision to restructure curriculum and include vocational oriented subjects, such as Tourism, that provide core skills for employment are influenced by the political and economic needs of the country as well as the school context. Third, Walker's (1971) model of curriculum development posits that schools engage in deliberations and discussions that are participatory and involve school communities in making curriculum decisions. This chapter concludes with a number of key propositions about curriculum decision-making processes that schools engage in. These propositions guided the data collection and data analysis processes in this study.

**Chapter Four** provides a comprehensive discussion and analysis of the research design and methodological orientation to the study. It locates the study within the interpretive paradigm. The chapter describes and explains the research approach, data collection and analysis methods, ethical issues, and limitation to the design.

**Chapters Five and Six** present findings from the study and address the main research question: *What is the nature of and rationale for the curriculum decision-making processes schools go through in adopting a new subject in their curricula?* In particular, Chapter Five addresses the first sub-question: *What factors inform school communities in their decision to introduce Tourism in the curriculum?* Chapter Six addresses the question: *To what extent and in what ways does curriculum decision-making in schools involve the different stakeholders from the school community?*

The concluding chapter, **Chapter Seven**, presents an analysis of the findings from the study and develops conceptual and theoretical understandings of curriculum decision-making in schools as demonstrated by the adoption of Tourism as a subject in schools. The chapter concludes by developing implications for policy, practice and further research from the findings.

## CHAPTER TWO

# TOURISM IN THE SCHOOL CURRICULUM: A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

### 2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore the rationale and process of curriculum decision-making among stakeholders in the selection of new subjects for the school curriculum. The study addressed the critical question: *What is the nature of and rationale for the curriculum decision-making processes schools go through in adopting a new subject in their curricula?* In the previous chapter I introduced the study by outlining the research problem, its purpose, and the research questions. This chapter reviews literature related to the nature of and rationale for the curriculum decision-making processes schools engage in when selecting new subjects. First, the chapter presents a review of literature focusing on the influence of national policy in curriculum decision-making in schools. The policy framework that guides curriculum decision-making in general and the inclusion of Tourism in the curriculum in South African schools are briefly reviewed. Second, the chapter focuses on scholarly understandings of Tourism education and Tourism as a school subject and the factors that inform these understandings. Third, scholarship related to the factors that inform decisions to select new subjects in the school curriculum is reviewed. Fourth, literature focusing on the processes school communities engage in as they make decisions about the curriculum is reviewed. Specifically, the role of school communities in curriculum decision-making is discussed.

## **2.2 The Policy Context**

This study was informed by the notion that the decisions made at national policy level about the introduction of any new subject in schools are crucial in informing the choices made at school level. Thus, this section presents an overview of the policy framework within which subjects in the curriculum are decided upon internationally. The chapter then moves to focus on literature related to curriculum decision-making generally, and decision-making related to the introduction of new subjects in South African secondary schools particularly. This is followed by an overview of the South African policy framework and its influence on the school curriculum.

### **2.2.1 International Policy Context**

Available research provides considerable evidence on the influence of education policies on curriculum decisions, specifically those related to the ‘vocationalisation’ of the secondary school curriculum (Resh & Benavot, 2009; Ohiwerei & Nwosu, 2009; Ofoha, 2011). In essence, official policies concerning the school curriculum cover several aspects such as subjects to be taught and packaging of the subjects, instructional time allocated per subject, and recommended textbooks to accompany classroom instruction, to name a few (Volansky, 2011). The present study focused on curriculum decision-making regarding the selection of subjects intended for inclusion in the curriculum. The study focused on the selection of Tourism as a school subject in the curriculum in selected secondary schools as a case for analysis.



This thesis argues that vocational trends and needs have a direct impact on the inclusion of particular subjects in the school curriculum internationally. For example, according to Volansky (2011), the Ministry of Education in Israel has established curriculum policies that ensure the inclusion of subjects with a vocational focus in high schools. This means that, together with academic specialties, subjects such as Tourism that focus on vocational training and certification are included in technical high school curricula. This aspect distinguishes these schools from the more 'academic' high schools that offer a more knowledge-based curriculum. The fact that the tourism track combines academic studies with vocational-technological training within this secondary school framework could have an impact on whether and how schools select subjects such as Tourism. However, the positioning of Tourism as a vocational and/or elective subject in the curriculum may limit its opportunities to be included in the curriculum, as there may be too many other subjects in the vocational list for students to choose from.

Similarly, in Nigeria the National Policy on Education that was introduced in 1981 and revised in 2004 encompasses a curriculum that integrates academic with technical and vocational subjects (Ofoha, 2011). This is aimed at empowering learners for self-employment. In 2005, the Nigerian government introduced the Senior Secondary Education Curriculum (SSEC) policy, which promotes a functional curriculum for all school levels and is aimed at preparing learners for higher education as well as providing them with relevant functional trade/entrepreneurship skills needed for employment, job creation and poverty reduction (Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC), 2008). The SSEC policy provides a list of 35 trade subjects, of which Tourism is one. According to the Nigerian Education Research and Development Council (2008), learners have to take one

trade subject alongside the compulsory academic subjects in the curriculum. This means that students must register and be assessed on at least one trade subject in the public examination.

The decision to include Tourism in the secondary school curriculum has proved not to be an easy task for most schools in Nigeria (and elsewhere). For example, there is a reported lack of knowledge about Tourism which is the reason why the subject is not perceived in its depth by the general public (Anaeto-Uba & Asoegwa, 2012). Research conducted by Orji (2014) on the perceptions of trade subjects indicates that Tourism is amongst the least selected trade subjects by schools for inclusion in the school curriculum. The author argues that this may be because schools do not have trained teachers for such subjects. Moreover, the national policy states that a school may not include a subject that is less popular (i.e., few students enrol for the subject) and that has no trained teachers to teach it.

To strengthen the teaching and learning of technical and vocational education in schools in Zimbabwe, the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education of this country adopted and implemented a policy known as the 'two-pathway education structure' for both junior and senior secondary schools in 2006 (Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, 2006). The two-pathway education structure, which is technically and vocationally-biased, is meant to give the learners a broad curriculum to prepare for post-basic education to cater for students of different abilities (Policy Circular Number 77 of 2006). This policy has redirected all schools to introduce vocational education. All secondary schools in Zimbabwe are therefore mandated by this policy pronouncement to teach technical and vocational subjects to all their pupils. Students are expected to be offered two technical and vocational subjects (such as

Tourism) and one business/commercial subject in addition to the academic subjects (Policy Circular Number 77 of 2006).

Research conducted on the implementation of vocational subjects in secondary schools in Zimbabwe suggests that the implementation of this curriculum policy has been less successful. For example, a study was conducted by Mandiudza, Chindedza and Makaye (2013) to evaluate the vocationalisation of secondary schools in Zimbabwe. The study established that vocationalisation in most secondary schools had not been achieved, as evidenced by poor to non-implementation of the policy directives due to lack of infrastructure and human resources needed for the subjects. These findings were similar to the results of the study conducted by Tshabalala and Ncube (2014) who refer to challenges in the implementation of the policy such as a lack of expertise amongst teachers, a lack of equipment, a shortage of specialist rooms for the practical teaching of these subjects, a shortage of teachers, failure by schools to find workplace learning placements for their pupils, a lack of funding, and a lack of support from parents. These challenges render the whole vocationalisation process difficult to implement.

The policies presented in this section illustrate international trends related to the vocationalisation of the secondary school curriculum. These policies have implications for how schools internationally make their decisions to include or exclude such subjects from their curriculum, which is a phenomenon that the current study sought to investigate.

### **2.2.2 The South African Policy Context**

In South Africa, the curriculum policy changes post-1994 have had a huge impact on how and why schools select particular subjects for inclusion in their curricula. Of particular relevance to this study are the South African Schools Act (SASA), 84 of 1996 (South Africa, 1996); the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS, 2011) and its predecessor, the National Curriculum Statement (NCS, 2006) Grades 10-12; the policy governing admission to higher education; and the White Paper for Post-School Education and Training.

#### **2.2.2.1 The South African Schools Act (no. 84 of 1996)**

The South African Schools Act (no. 84 of 1996) (South Africa, 1996) is the national policy that governs the running of schools in South Africa. In particular, it governs curriculum decision-making at school level. Under this legislation the authority for curriculum decision-making has been devolved to schools. It is at the school level where decisions are to be made and subjects are to be selected from an official list of subjects. The Act stipulates that such decisions must involve all stakeholders (i.e., parents, teachers, and learners). According to this policy, it is expected that parents and teachers must actively participate in the governance and management of the school (Van Wyk, 2004). Such involvement in curriculum decision-making is meant to provide parents with a better understanding of what is happening in school curriculum and to empower them with the authority to influence decisions regarding the curriculum (Apple & Beane, 2007; Van Wyk, 2007).

The South African Schools Act gives schools the power of governance through school governing bodies (SGBs). An SGB is a body made up of parents, teachers, support staff, the

principal and learner representatives. The function of the SGB is, among others, to make decisions and choices regarding subjects for inclusion in the curriculum. Because of the differences in the qualifications and skills among SGB members in different schools (for example, different levels of the socio-economic status of the parent community, the qualifications and expertise of the parent members, the geographical location of the school and related issues), there is often unevenness in the nature and quality of decisions made in schools, particularly with regard to the curriculum. Thus, this study sought to examine the nature of and rationale for curriculum decision-making in schools, the structures involved in the process, as well as the factors that influence it.

The analysis in this section suggests that policy draws tight connections between the preparation of the future workforce and the country's economic productivity. Over and above governance policy imperatives that inform decisions in schools, there are specific policies that govern the school curriculum and the kinds of knowledge that schools deem necessary for their student population and the subjects they consequently select for inclusion in the curriculum. The sub-sections below review three of these policies.

#### **2.2.2.2 The National Curriculum Statement and the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements**

The social inequalities created by apartheid policies are well known worldwide. Among these were educational inequalities created through a racialised and unequal education system. In addition to unequal funding, the curriculum known as the NATED 550, also referred to as the 'old syllabus', prepared learners according to racial groupings and for the racialised positions that they were expected to occupy in social, economic, and political life under apartheid. Its

structure played an important role in creating and enforcing inequality (Department of Education, 2003b). NATED 550 had a broad programme comprising of 124 subjects. No formal subject streams were identified in this curriculum. This means that it was possible for a learner to register for subjects that did not relate in content to future careers or that did not qualify them for entry into university.

In order to eradicate the inequalities in education created by apartheid education and to address the identified lack of structure and purpose in NATED 550, the then Department of Education introduced a new curriculum: *Curriculum 2005* (or C2005) in 1997. The introduction of Curriculum 2005 was driven by the principles of social transformation and outcomes based education. It was understood to be a planned process and strategy of curriculum change underpinned by elements of redress of past imbalances, equity, development, and improvement in the quality of the South African education provision (Department of Education, 2000). Curriculum 2005 consisted of eight learning areas that were compulsory for all learners in Grade 8. However, the policy was recalled prior to being implemented in Grades 10-12 where the vocationally-oriented subjects could be selected.

Scholars such as Jansen (1999), Jacobs and Chalufu (2000), Chisholm (2003) and Vandeyar and Killen (2003) argued that Curriculum 2005 was characterised by problems ranging from structure to implementation. This resulted in the then Ministry of Education establishing a Task Team in 1999 to review and revise Curriculum 2005 (Chisholm, 2000; Department of Education, 2001). Following consultations with stakeholders, the Task Team report led to a revised set of curriculum statements, among which was the *Revised National Curriculum Statement for the General Education and Training (GET) band* (Grades 0 – 9) that was introduced in 2001. A new set of *National Curriculum Statement for the Further Education*

*and Training (FET) band* (Grades 10-12) was released in 2003. Neither Curriculum 2005 nor the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) was introduced in the FET phase (Grade 10-12), where Tourism is being offered. Despite the fact that Grades 10 to 12 were still using the old syllabus (NATED 550), the revision of C2005 was important in informing the developments of the new curriculum, termed *National Curriculum Statement for the Further Education and Training band* (Grades 10-12). The reorganisation of C2005 and the RNCS had implications for the subjects that were included in the curriculum and that schools would adopt.

During the review of C2005 in 2001, secondary schools (Grades 10-12 or the FET phase) were still offering the NATED 550 or old syllabus (Jansen, 1999). With the introduction of the NCS in 2006, the FET phase (Grades 10-12) experienced a change in the organisation of subjects that were offered in the school curriculum. Here the curriculum took a stronger subject-oriented approach than the GET curriculum. New elective subjects had to find their way into the system and schools had to make decisions on which subjects to adopt for curriculum offering. For example, in the GET phase, two or more subjects were combined to form a learning area. One example involves Accounting, Economics and Business Studies that are taught under a compulsory learning area termed Economics and Management Sciences. In contrast, in the FET phase, each subject is taught independently from the other subjects (for example, Accounting, Tourism, and Economics) and not all these stand-alone subjects are compulsory. Schools select particular subjects from a list of approved subjects for inclusion in their respective curricula. The list of approved subjects is further divided into compulsory subjects (all learners must take them) and electives (schools may select some of these and their learners may opt to take one or more of them to make up their Matriculation package). The four compulsory subjects include two languages, Mathematics or

Mathematical Literacy, and Life Orientation), while the three electives may be selected from a range of subjects including Tourism. It is the latter subject that this study was concerned about. Specifically, the study was concerned with how and why schools come to select Tourism for inclusion in the curriculum.

As stated above, the NCS Grades 10-12 sought to redress past inequalities in education and to advance the social transformation agenda of the democratic government of South Africa (Department of Education, 2003b). For this reason, the NCS also aimed at addressing the lack of desired and needed skills in the South African workforce. Although the NCS was introduced to address the problems and limitations of Curriculum 2005, there were reported challenges regarding its implementation at school level within its first year of implementation in 2006. For example, a number of authors assert that the implementation phase of the NCS at school was problematic, citing such challenges as a high failure rate for the first Grade 10 cohort in 2006, confusion among teachers regarding what they were expected to do in the classroom due to poor training and development (Kgosana 2006; Serrao & Breytenbach, 2008), and inadequate resources (Ndou, 2008). My own analysis as an educator and subject advisor who had to train teachers in the implementation of the NCS also suggested that the NCS failed to address the challenges of C2005. This was because the NCS tended to focus on outcomes and neglected issues of content, which it left to individual teachers to construct. Thus the majority of teachers found it difficult to know what and how to teach subjects such as Tourism. Responding to this, the Minister of Basic Education, Minister A. Motshekga, appointed a panel of experts in July 2009 to investigate the nature of the challenges and problems experienced in the implementation of the NCS and to develop a set of recommendations designed to improve the implementation of the NCS (Department of Basic Education, 2009). The Task Team recommended that the existing curriculum policies be



rationalised into a single, coherent policy that would address the content and assessment per subject per phase from Grade R to Grade 12. The resulting reformed curriculum is the *Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS)* for each phase which has been phased in, starting in 2012 in Grade 10 (Department of Basic Education, 2011a). The amendments to the curriculum are meant to enable school communities to better understand each subject and to allow them to make better informed decisions about selecting elective subjects for curriculum offering. The CAPS documents provide clear guidelines to schools on the nature and amount of work in each subject, thus allowing them to make decisions about subject choices for the school curriculum.

Informed by the NCS which is guided by the CAPS, schools in the FET band (Grades 10-12) offer learners a general formative education based on a broad curriculum that is organised into subjects. The NCS provides a list of 29 subjects from which schools may choose a set for inclusion in the curriculum. The NCS and the CAPS have strict rules of combination of subjects to which schools have to adhere. According to the Department of Education (2005, 2011b), subjects are categorised into two groups. Group A subjects are compulsory for all learners and include a Home Language (HL), a First Additional Language (FAL), Mathematics or Mathematical Literacy, and Life Orientation (LO). Group B subjects are electives. This means that a school may offer any combination of any number of these subjects, and a learner must choose a minimum of three from the list. Vocational subjects, including Tourism, are listed in Group B.

In building their curriculum packages in the FET phase, schools have to take cognisance of and ensure articulation with what is offered in the GET phase as well as in the higher

education sector (Le Grange & Beets, 2005). For example, Adeyemi (2009) found that in Nigeria the study of social studies/sciences at junior secondary level (which is equivalent to the GET band in South Africa) influences learners' choice of subjects at senior secondary school level (which is equivalent to the South African FET phase). The author further noted that learners who studied social studies in the lower grades were more likely to choose Geography as a subject in the secondary school phase. However, in the South African context subjects such as Tourism, Computer Applications Technology and Hospitality Studies are offered for the first time in the FET phase (Grades 10-12). Thus, one question for this study was: *What influences schools to select such subjects for inclusion in the curriculum and how are learners influenced to choose them as electives in their curriculum packages?* Another question was: *What processes do schools engage in when making these choices?*

Other than the rules of subject combination provided in the NCS Subject Statement and CAPS, these policies provide minimal guidance on subject choice for inclusion in the curriculum. This has resulted in each school making different choices of the subjects they offer in the curriculum, with a tendency to privilege particular subjects that are popular among learners, parents and the general public. For some schools, these include subjects that are perceived to lead to sought-after careers (such as Mathematics, Science, Accounting and Economics) or those that are regarded as 'easy to pass' (Van der Berg, 2002; Bholanath, 2004). This limited guidance on the selection of elective subjects has an impact on the nature of and the rationale for the curriculum decision-making processes schools go through in adopting a new subject in their curriculum. This study sought to understand this phenomenon.

This thesis argues that the NCS, through the Subject Statement Policy and more recently the CAPS, has provided an enabling environment for schools to include skills-based subjects such as Tourism in their curriculum. In terms of the transformation agenda, this potentially opens doors for learners whose academic or career paths had previously been blocked by a rigid apartheid curriculum. However, the fact that the policy is very open in terms of subject choices for the curriculum in the elective category may result in inconsistencies in subject offerings among schools, as each school may include and exclude subjects in their curriculum offering for various reasons at any given time. This study sought to understand how schools make their decisions to include or exclude subjects from their curriculum and, in particular, how they make the decision to include Tourism as one of the elective subjects.

#### **2.2.2.3 Policies Governing Admission to Higher Education**

In addition to the NCS and the CAPS, curriculum decision-making in schools, with particular reference to subject choices for the FET phase (secondary schools), is highly influenced by the policies that govern access to higher education. These include the policy on the Minimum Admission Requirements for Higher Certificate, Diploma and Bachelors Programmes Requiring National Senior Certificate (Department of Education, 2005) and its successor, the National Policy Pertaining to the Progression and Promotion Requirements of the NCS Grades R-12 (Department of Basic Education, 2011b). Both these policies award a different status to the subjects included in the list of subjects in the school curriculum. In the first category, schools are mandated to offer four compulsory subjects, namely a Home Language and a First Additional Language, Mathematics or Mathematical Literacy, and Life Orientation. The second category comprises a list of nationally approved elective subjects such as Computer Applications Technology, Tourism, Hospitality Studies, Consumer Studies and Civil Technology. A third category includes the designated subjects which are the

subjects that are required for admission into university programmes. These subjects include Accounting, Physical Sciences, Dramatic Arts, Music, Life Sciences, History, Geography, Economics, and Business Studies (Department of Education, 2005).

While Tourism is listed as a nationally approved subject, it is not on the list of designated subjects that allow entry into Higher Education. Tourism is offered as one of the three elective subjects that a learner may choose to make up the seven subjects required for a National Senior Certificate (Grade 12). Thus, its status is arguably lower than that of subjects in the ‘compulsory’ and ‘designated’ categories. In this context, its inclusion in the school curriculum offers a fertile springboard for the examination of how and why schools make decisions about which elective subjects to include.

Gu et al. (2007) note that a contributing factor to the low status of Tourism is the fact that it tends not to receive adequate attention at school level. Similarly, Page (2005) argues that, as a relatively new field of study among academics, researchers and commentators, Tourism is sadly not perceived as a ‘serious’ subject. This is because most schools tend to place more emphasis on those subjects that are regarded as ‘academic’ at the expense of general and vocational subjects (King, Mckercher & Waryszak, 2003). This might be due to the fact that Tourism education is still regarded as a new ‘soft’ option for inclusion in the school curriculum (Goeldner, 2001). A factor that may exacerbate the low status of Tourism is that universities are prescriptive in the subjects that they approve for enrolment. As an elective subject, Tourism does not qualify students for admission into a Bachelor’s degree at university unless they take a further four subjects from the designated subject list (Department of Education, 2005). It is therefore possible that this low status of the subject

may discourage students from enrolling in it at school level and possibly beyond (Geldenhuys, 2000; Earle, 2008). Thus, universities are very influential in determining decisions on what knowledge is valued for inclusion in the secondary school curriculum. Goodson (1995) argues that when school subjects are also offered at university level, they gain more relevance and efficacy. Furthermore, most universities tend to design their own entrance requirements for enrolment into various programmes and for various qualifications. Therefore, as long as the universities can set their own entrance requirements, schools and the teachers working in them are constrained to offer a school curriculum that will match the requirements as set out for higher education. This may impact on the decisions schools make regarding the inclusion of a subject in the curriculum.

#### **2.2.2.4 The White Paper for Post-School Education and Training**

Another policy that influences the selection of subjects in schools is the *White Paper for Post-School Education and Training* (hereafter, *White Paper for PSET*) (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2013). This policy sets the scene for post-school education and training (PSET) to be achieved by 2030. The White Paper offers a coordinated and integrated conceptualisation of the provision and delivery of PSET towards the improvement of the social, economic and cultural life of citizens. It aims at an education system that will empower South African learners with skills as the country strives to eradicate the legacy of apartheid inequalities. This policy objective is closely tied to economic goals through the production of individuals with the knowledge, skills and dispositions necessary to enhance their own and national competitiveness within the global economy.

To achieve this aim, this policy makes a number of proposals on how to transform the PSET that will be expanded to cater for the needs of millions of young people who are not in employment, education or training, so that they can meet the requirements of the modern economy. This includes the expansion of general, vocational and professional educational opportunities as well as opportunities for postgraduate study and increasing access to PSET. Of particular importance to this study was the emphasis on skills as a prerequisite for growth; such growth is to be achieved through vocational education. This is meant to increase the enrolment of students in Further Education and Training colleges (currently termed Technical and Vocational Education and Training Colleges, or TVET colleges). This implies that vocational education is seen as the solution to the unemployment challenge, with TVET expected to promote both employability and entrepreneurship.

The policy might have implications for curriculum decision-making in terms of the suitability of subjects selected for curriculum inclusion, simply because secondary schools might have to create realistic expectations of post-schooling options for their learners. This fact may be influential in how a secondary school views and selects subjects for inclusion in the FET curriculum.

### **2.3 Understandings of Tourism as a Subject in the School Curriculum**

Why do schools select a subject such as Tourism for inclusion in their curriculum? Informed by the notion that understanding the nature of a subject as a field of study is an important factor in the decision-making processes leading to its inclusion in the curriculum, I will now present a brief overview of the development of Tourism as a subject, or field of study.

### **2.3.1 The Origins of Tourism Education**

Over the years, Tourism in higher education institutions (HEIs) and secondary schools has taken a variety of forms. This has shaped the decision to include it in the curriculum nationally and internationally. The literature reviewed in this study suggests that Tourism as a field of study has evolved from vocationally oriented training to an academic discipline. Specifically, available research suggests that the origins of Tourism as a field of study can be linked to vocational skills-based short courses offered in the 1960s by the tourism industry in Britain (Airey, 2008). For example, the courses offered included Hospitality and Hotel Management (Morgan, 2004; Dale & Robinson, 2001). Focusing on industry practice and operations, these occupationally-based Tourism programmes were aimed at addressing the needs of the growing tourism sector; particularly its need for labour.

Thus, in many countries, Tourism courses in higher education (including certificates and degrees) were highly vocationalised, focusing as they did on skills development and the preparation of the workforce (Cervera-Taulet & Ruiz-Molina, 2008; Airey, 2005; Ernwarti, 2003). For example, Stuart-Hoyle (2003) found that many of the existing programmes in Tourism studies included industry placements, practical field visits, and the use of case studies with a strong business management orientation. With their focus on practical skills, these programmes were designed to expose students to what they would find in industry. To this end, although the depth of knowledge and skills might have differed from one Tourism programme to another, the core syllabus was expected to provide industry-specific skills (Busby, 2003). This vocational origin of Tourism has had significant implications for its inclusion in the school curriculum internationally and in South Africa. I return to this later in the chapter.

Available research also suggests that the origins of Tourism as a subject can be linked to business courses related to travel (Cooper, 2002; Lewis, 2006). This is evidenced by the number of higher education institutions (HEIs) offering Tourism and the growth in the numbers in course enrolments in these institutions. To illustrate, in the United Kingdom (UK), HEIs offering Tourism courses increased from two in the 1980s to 48 in 2002, with the enrolment numbers of students taking Tourism courses increasing from 1 666 in 1990 to 2 388 in 2002 (Stuart, 2002). In New Zealand, the number of HEIs offering Tourism programmes increased to 13 by 2011 with the enrolment of no fewer than 139 per Tourism course (Sharpley, 2011). The same is evident in South Africa where student enrolment increased from 6 814 in 2004 to about 7 023 in 2005. By 2005, there were 13 universities and 50 Further Education and Training (FET) colleges offering Tourism courses (Earle, 2008). This growth suggests that Tourism as a new field of study is regarded as an attractive option for institutions seeking to expand their higher education portfolio and to vary their course offerings (Busby, 2001). The increase in higher education recognition for this field of study might have implications for the decisions made by school communities who might also seek to expand their curriculum with this relatively new subject in the secondary schooling system, thus providing learners with an additional option for tertiary study.

However, despite such growth, very few universities worldwide have a dedicated 'Department of Tourism' or a focused discipline on Tourism as a field of study (Visser & Rogerson, 2004; Foggin, 2003; Fidgeon, 2010). Instead, Tourism courses tend to be accommodated within such departments as Communication, Business Studies (Busby, 2001; Fidgeon, 2010), Leisure, Architecture, Design, Game Ranging and Geography (Inui, Wheeler & Lankford, 2006; De Beer, 2010). This could be because the tourism industry itself is segmented into areas of specialisation such as transportation, food services, lodging and



leisure services, and others. Hence, Cooper, Fletcher, Fyall and Gilbert (2005) maintain that there is no universal content of Tourism as a field of study. Each institution concentrates on individual aspects of Tourism. This might have implications for the ways in which Tourism as a subject and its status in the curriculum are viewed. In addition, this might impact negatively on the decision to include Tourism in schools' curriculum as schools might not understand its location as a field of study.

In South Africa, a number of higher education institutions established their Tourism programmes as an active response to the growth of tourism and national socio-economic transformation in the post-apartheid era. Many institutions introduced Tourism at a time of course expansion and transformation in HEIs, with no clear goals or educational objectives linked to the subject itself (Visser & Rogerson, 2004; Free State's Regional Steering Committee, 2010). As a result, most researchers and academics that went into Tourism studies were, and remain, non-specialists in the field (Page & Connel, 2006). This has arguably contributed to a situation where, despite the growth in the study of Tourism in HEIs, there is currently no real body of knowledge in place within the field of Tourism (Morgan, 2004). As such, although Tourism is regarded as a subject that provides skills and addresses employment challenges, it has continued to develop as a subsidiary to other fields of study as it lacks both theoretical coherence and knowledge that are unique to it.

Evidence from South African studies suggests that training in the tourism industry has historically been provided by industry and that there was no academic quest for it until the 1980s when the field expanded and the focus shifted from a practical to an academic focus (Earle, 2008). It is only in recent years that academics have begun to pursue Tourism as a

field of study. To illustrate, courses in Tourism were only introduced in the 1980s and strengthened in the 1990s (Van Der Merwe, 1999). Initially informed by international trends, most of the courses offered were purely vocational and were meant to teach work-related skills (Schuurman, 2004). According to Van Der Merwe (1999), Tourism in South Africa first developed as sector-based vocational courses for trade in travel, and hence offered narrow skills training. HEIs adopted these vocationally oriented courses as part of Business Studies, Geography, Anthropology, Sociology, History, and Communication (Steynberg, Slabbert & Saayman, 2002). Pearce, Morris and Rutledge (1998) also argue that most of the Tourism courses provided by South African HEIs are purely vocational and are aimed at empowering students with practical skills, thus preparing them for specific positions in the tourism industry and in nature conservation. According to the Higher Education Qualifications Framework (HEQF) (2007), most Tourism qualifications mainly offered at Universities of Technology (UOTs) and private institutions are aimed at developing graduates who can demonstrate focused knowledge and skills in a particular field. These are also aimed at enabling students to gain experience in applying knowledge and skills in a workplace environment, particularly the tourism industry (also see Breytenbach, 2010). This direct engagement with the tourism industry affords students the opportunity to get first-hand experience of the industry. For this reason, at tertiary education level, Tourism might be an attractive subject because of its uniqueness and integration of vocational and academic elements. This might impact on decisions by schools to include it in the curriculum. Whether this is true at high school level, particularly from the perspective of school communities, was a focus of this study.

### **2.3.2 Tourism as a School Subject**

South Africa introduced Tourism as a subject in secondary schools (Grades 10-12) and post-secondary schools after the 1994 elections (Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, 1996). The then Department of Education moved towards introducing Tourism as a school subject in order to address workforce and skills shortages in the tourism industry (Department of Education, 2003a). Similarly, in recognition of the value and scale of jobs created in the tourism industry, the then Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism (DEAT) encouraged the study of Tourism at all levels (Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, 2006). Thus, Tourism was first introduced into the South African schooling system as a vocational oriented subject in 1998 with the aim of developing entrepreneurial skills and integrating work place experience (NBI, 2005). However, currently CAPS requires no work-based learning (Swart, Booysse & Burrough, 2014; Allais, 2012).

The new government embraced Tourism as a school subject. A three-year pilot project was implemented from 1998 in 64 schools in the country, eight of which were schools in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) (Jordaan, 2001), which was the setting for this study. Informed by findings from the pilot study, the government recognised the need to include Tourism in the curriculum for secondary schools and it was then fully introduced as part of the secondary school curriculum in 2001 (Von Maltitz, 2002). Currently, Tourism, in line with the South African curriculum framework for schools as outlined in both the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) and the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS), is one of the 29 subjects from which a school may construct a curriculum for learners to obtain the National Senior Certificate (NSC). As previously outlined, Tourism is one of the elective subjects (i.e., it is not compulsory for schools to offer the subject). Tourism was aimed at

providing learners with skills that are relevant for the Tourism industry. As the CAPS Grades 10-12 (Department of Basic Education, 2011) document stipulates, the specific aims of Tourism include addressing:

...different types of tourists and the purpose of their travelling; the different tourism sectors, with special reference to transport, hospitality, travel organising and support services, and the attraction sector; map work; foreign exchange concepts and the buying power of different foreign currencies; the influence of world time zones on travel; South Africa and the SADC countries as tourism destinations; world famous icons and World Heritage Sites; sustainable and responsible tourism; marketing of tourism products; technology in tourism; customer care and the value of service excellence; and tour planning (Department of Basic Education, 2011, p. 8).

This study attempted to investigate how schools arrive at the decision to introduce Tourism as an elective subject for their learners.

The next section reviews literature related to curriculum decision-making in schools.

## **2.4 Curriculum Decision-making in Schools**

This study was premised on the notion that decision-making regarding what subjects to include in the curriculum generally and whether to introduce a new subject is informed by complex factors residing within and beyond the school, and that this decision reflects on and is dependent on the specific context within which the school functions. In this regard, Mutch (2001) claims that the process of making decisions in education involves the interaction

between and among various factors that are represented in a particular context. This section reviews literature that relates to factors that might inform curriculum decision-making in schools generally, but more particularly decisions to include Tourism in the school curriculum.

#### **2.4.1 Defining Curriculum Decision-making**

Decision-making in education appears to be a crucial phenomenon that consists of a number of activities that range from policy and financial decisions to curriculum decisions. This study focused on decision-making about the curriculum. Earlier, Phillips and Hawthorne (1978) defined curriculum decision-making as a process of deciding what knowledge should be taught to students and how it should be selected and presented. More recently (e.g., Ornstein, 1999; Nkyabonaki, 2013) curriculum decision-making has been defined as a complex phenomenon that reflects plans and activities that are to benefit students and help them achieve their goals. It includes the establishment of goals for the entire educational programme and the selection of subjects through which the goals can be achieved (Bouck, 2008, Kamugisha & Mateng'e, 2014).

These definitions suggest that curriculum decision-making involves choices about what knowledge is worth teaching and what subjects would best reflect or contain such knowledge. Of necessity, such decision-making has implications for the status of particular kinds of knowledge and subjects and the power of various actors in society to make such decisions. Those who are in power in society tend to play a major role in influencing decisions about which knowledge has most value and which knowledge could be marginalised. As such, it is no longer adequate to ask: "*What knowledge is of most worth?*" as Spencer's 1860 essay

asked in relation to what people (children) should be taught but, as Michael Apple (2000:p 180) suggests, it is also important to add: *Whose knowledge is of most worth?* This means that not only are particular viewpoints about the nature of knowledge and its importance in the curriculum significant, but the identity of those who hold particular perspectives in a society (or community) tends to influence what decisions are taken about such knowledge, with the more powerful significantly influencing decisions to a greater degree than their less powerful counterparts (see Moletsane, 2015).

The unequal power relations in communities and society and their impact on curriculum decision-making mean that the social context in which learning takes place tends to be ignored or overlooked when decisions are made about the curriculum. To illustrate, while educational policies (such as those reviewed above) challenge schools to develop democratic curriculum decision-making processes involving various stakeholders (Gultig & Stielau, 2002), principals still wield a lot of power in deciding on curriculum matters (Mokoena, 2011). This makes it difficult for democratic decisions to be taken on the selection of new subjects (e.g., Tourism). This means that careful consideration should be given to how schools and communities mediate the historical role of principals and their power of influence on curriculum decisions. Attention should also be given to the extent to and ways in which schools involve all stakeholders in curriculum decision-making processes. This study aimed to investigate this phenomenon.

This study was premised on the notion that curriculum decision-making is the core of a school's existence. Informed by the literature reviewed in this chapter, the study understands curriculum decision-making as taking place at various levels in the education system, involving policy decisions at national level, institutional decisions at school level, and

practice decisions at classroom level. The study investigated curriculum-decision-making at institutional (i.e., school) level and focused in particular on the nature of decision-making regarding the subjects selected for inclusion in the school curriculum and who the role players in this process are. Curriculum decision-making involves the participation of people in shaping curriculum matters. As discussed above, inherent in such a process is the possibility for unequal power relations which may result in some individuals and groups exerting more power and influence on the decision-making process than others. Thus, this study defines curriculum decision-making as *the processes and procedures that a school community engages in when making decisions relating to curriculum matters, including the selection of new subjects*. From this perspective, curriculum decision-making refers to how decisions about the curriculum are made, who makes them, which factors influence the decisions, and the conditions under which they are made. More specifically, the study focused on the various processes and forces that influence the selection of Tourism for inclusion in the curriculum.

#### **2.4.2 What Informs Curriculum Decision-making in Schools?**

The study was informed by the belief that decisions made by a school about curriculum matters are never neutral, and that such decisions are influenced by various factors. These factors include those outside the school (i.e., external factors) such as economic and political realities, as well as those within the school (i.e., internal factors) such as leadership, resources and teacher qualifications. This study focused on how these factors might inform curriculum decisions relating to subject selection in selected secondary schools in South Africa, with particular reference to the introduction of Tourism as a field of study.

### **2.4.2.1 Factors Originating Outside the School**

Socio-political factors tend to influence education in significant ways. First, political factors tend to have a significant influence on curriculum decision-making in schools. For example, the National Planning Commission (2011) states that the interests of all stakeholders need to be aligned to support the common goal of achieving good educational outcomes that are responsive to community needs and the economic development of the country. This is in the context of the country's competitiveness in the global economy and its reliance on the knowledge and skills available among its citizens. Brady and Kennedy (2003) maintain that the government has an interest in curriculum and that curriculum must be structured in a particular way to achieve the outcomes that are relevant to employment opportunities and the economic needs of the country. Thus, schools are expected to make curriculum decisions that address these needs, including the need to equip learners with the basic skills necessary to succeed in the workplace (United States Agency for International Development [USAID] Southern Africa, 2013). In this regard, the Western Cape Province hosted South Africa's first school entrepreneurship conference that targeted high school pupils in July 2013. The purpose of this conference was to foster a culture of entrepreneurship and innovation by promoting the development of business ideas among high school learners. As the Member of the Executive Council (MEC) for Finance, Economic Development and Tourism in the province declared, initiatives such as the School Entrepreneurship Conference provide valuable support for entrepreneurs and respond to the National Developmental Plan's aim of improving entrepreneurial skills (Western Cape Provincial Department of Finance, Economic Development and Tourism, 2013).

As stated above, the post-1994 government has been committed to educational reform that not only addresses the inequalities of the apartheid past, but also focuses on developing skills



and knowledge that will place South African learners on par with their international counterparts. It was in this context that in 1994, American Express South Africa and the United States of America (USA) initiated a proposal to sponsor a government initiative to promote Tourism as a school subject in South African secondary schools (South African Tourism Institute, 1994). Tourism education became one aspect of the government's intervention to promote tourism in the country. The provision of effective Tourism education was seen as one of the critical indicators of success (Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, 1996), including success in terms of the post-apartheid social transformation agenda (Department of Education, 2003b). To ensure affordability and accessibility, government adopted a multi-sectoral approach to training that involves secondary schools, universities and the private sector in order to ensure that tourism education and training is accessible to the previously neglected groups in society (Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, 1996).

Since 1994 (the onset of democracy in South Africa), Tourism has been on the agenda of the South African government as one area that needs to be promoted and developed. Given the recent changes in government, such as the establishment of the National Department of Tourism in 2009 and the recognition of the sector's contribution to economic development, tourism is receiving more attention from various actors in government and industry (Department of Tourism, 2011). This is informed by the belief that with the growth in the tourism industry and its importance to the national economy, teaching Tourism in secondary schools in particular has become essential. Therefore, from the government's point of view, tourism is seen as a high priority, and for this reason the subject Tourism has featured prominently in post-1994 curriculum policy reforms (from Curriculum 2005 to the NCS and CAPS). However, while the focus on tourism education and training might offer

opportunities for development in previously excluded communities in the country, given the current global and national economic challenges an over-reliance on the industry might lead to unmet expectations and disillusion among various sectors in society, which in turn might lead to an even lower status of Tourism as a subject in the curriculum (Earle, 2008). Moreover, changes in the political orientation and economy of the country may have an impact on school-level decisions regarding what subjects to include in the curriculum (Marishane, 2002).

Coupled with political influence, economic factors tend to affect decisions about the content of a school's curriculum. For example, economic factors may inform the view that tourism is key to economic development in the country and that the study of Tourism is essential for such development. To address the needs for transformation and economic development in the post-apartheid era, the tourism industry was identified as key, with implications for tourism education. Specifically since 1994, a number of economic policies, including the Reconstruction and Development Plan (RDP) in 1994, the Growth Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) in 1998, and the Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa (ASGISA) in 2006, have viewed tourism as an essential sector for national reconstruction and development of the economy in South Africa (Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, 1996; 1998; 2006). These policies identify tourism as a priority sector for and a potential contributor to national economic development and they serve as drivers for the development of training and education in the tourism industry through formal and informal training as key to achieving such development. These initiatives promise improved economic growth that will bring the economic benefits of democracy to all the people of South Africa, including the disadvantaged. Moreover, these initiatives are intended to create jobs and to provide opportunities for all South Africans (Hirsch, 2006). However,

evidence from research suggests that despite these policies, inequalities still exist, as those privileged by apartheid policies tend to remain dominant in the industry (Visser and Rogerson, 2004; Honeck, 2008). Thus Tourism education at all levels, including the secondary school level, is seen as key to closing the gap (Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, 1996).

Like many governments that see tourism as offering new employment opportunities in a growing sector of their economies (Page, 2005), this study argues that the South African government generally considers the tourism industry in the country as a potential employer of large numbers of workers. A study conducted by the Pan-African Investment and Research Services (2010) suggests that tourism's share of total employment has been increasing since 1994, reaching 11.6% in 2001 and 21% in 2008. By 2009, tourism was contributing 7.9% to the Gross Domestic Product of the country (Statistics South Africa, 2011). Tourism as a subject is thus meant to support the industry that is fast growing and providing employment opportunities. Further, teaching the subject at various levels is meant to address South Africa's problem of a high unemployment rate (Le Grange & Beets, 2005).

Tourism is also viewed as the answer to unemployment and poverty in rural areas in particular. As Abdul-Ghani (2006) notes, entrepreneurial skills are developed in many countries when rural communities identify resources that may be of interest to tourists and then develop them into tourism products that are then marketed globally. Such skills are then nurtured and developed in a responsive school curriculum. In South Africa, a study conducted by Mureithi (2010) on the interest of young people in tourism entrepreneurship concludes that most young people are likely to set up a business as entrepreneurs in tourism. However, the majority of the respondents in this study highlighted that they had not been

trained in tourism but wanted to open tourism-related businesses because the industry presents many entrepreneurial opportunities. Thus, while the tourism industry is perceived as attractive in terms of entrepreneurial opportunities, there is a lack of prospects for education and skills development. Hence Smith-Chandler (2005) argues for a positive link between entrepreneurship education in schools and an increase in tourism entrepreneurial potential. Tourism as a subject could give learners at a young age an opportunity to understand and acquire practical business skills and prepare them for a career in the tourism industry. In terms of policy, the *White Paper on Tourism Development* (Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, 1996) regards tourism education and training as one of the fundamental pillars of tourism development among those who were disadvantaged by apartheid policies. It is for this reason, among others, that government sought to introduce Tourism in the school curriculum in order to better respond to the economic needs of the country with more skills-oriented subjects.

The preceding discussion suggests that the South African government, through its policies and interventions, views tourism education and training as being at the core of the solution towards addressing the inequalities created by the apartheid regime. Thus this perspective, which includes a desire to prepare learners for employment and entrepreneurial opportunities in tourism, is likely to inform curriculum decision-making that seeks to include Tourism as a subject in the school curriculum.

The following section discusses the factors within the school context that inform curriculum decision-making generally and, more specifically, the factors for the selection of new subjects such as Tourism in the curriculum.

#### **2.4.2.2 Factors Originating within the School**

While schools make decisions about subjects that can be adopted in the school curriculum based on outside influences (as discussed in the section above), they are also influenced by factors within the institutions themselves. For example, McNaught, Phillips, Rossiter and Winn (2000) conducted a study investigating factors influencing the adoption of Information Communication Technology as a subject in schools. The findings of their study suggest that there are a number of institutional factors that, when all considered, could lead to the adoption of a new subject. These include school leadership, the decision-making styles of school leaders, the availability of resources, and teacher qualifications.

Lachiver and Tardif (2002) argue that strong leadership is the key factor in curriculum decision-making. Successful curriculum decision-making makes specific demands on school principals, the school management team (SMT), and other teachers. The SMT usually initiates and leads curriculum decision-making at school level. Therefore, effective leadership is crucial and central not only to the functional or dysfunctional nature of the school, but also to the nature and quality of the curriculum decisions made at school level - especially those that relate to the selection of new subjects in the curriculum (Fullan, 2007).

Second, available literature suggests that the role of principals in curriculum decision-making depends on their leadership style (Florez, Carrion, Calero, Gershberg & Castro, 2001; Hall & Hord, 2006). According to Florez et al. (2001), the principal's leadership style determines the level of participation in school decision-making processes. To illustrate, a principal's leadership style may reflect one of two broad categories of decision-making in curriculum matters: the democratic style that is associated with a bottom-up model of decision-making, and the autocratic style that is associated with the top-down model of decision-making. The

top-down model means that curriculum decisions are diffused down from the principal to implementers (teachers) (Hall & Hord, 2006). In contrast, the bottom-up model means that decisions are made using the school base and implies a close link between the decisions made and the school community. From this perspective, the extent and nature of stakeholder involvement in curriculum decision-making in schools is largely influenced by the leadership style of those tasked with leading the school, which is mostly the principal. Third, the allocation of resources in the form of funds and other physical and material resources also influences the nature of curriculum decision-making in schools, including who is involved in the process (Dieltiens, 2006) and the successful implementation of the decisions made about the curriculum (Hurley, 2010). Specifically, financial, physical and material resources are considered as important components for the successful implementation of Tourism as a school subject (Department of Education, 2008). Effective learning in any subject can only be realized when there are adequate and appropriate teaching and learning materials such as textbooks and other classroom equipment, as well as infrastructure such as classrooms, libraries and laboratories. The availability of such resources is, in turn, dependent on the school budget. As research evidence suggests, the emergence of the post-1994 South African state has not yet managed to address the wide gaps between rich and poor in the country and by association, between well-resourced and poorly resourced schools (Russo, Beckmann & Jansen, 2005). For example, Ramurath (2007) argues that, in most cases, teachers do not have enough resources when implementing new subjects and they have to find information and content on their own. Rural schools tend to bear the brunt of poverty and are therefore the most poorly resourced in the country (Dieltiens, 2006; Levin and Lockhead, 2012). Earlier reports by Brodie (2000) and Oaks (2001) indicated that, in terms of material/financial resources and space, the implementation of the new curriculum would be most difficult in schools that had been historically disadvantaged by the apartheid system. These studies

identified the availability of resources as critical to curriculum decisions made by school communities and whether such decisions, if made, could be effectively implemented or not. For example, in making decisions about adopting a new subject in the curriculum, a school community must first assess the availability of resources for implementing and sustaining such a subject. This study investigated the factors that had an influence on the decision to adopt Tourism as a subject in the curriculum in the selected schools.

Finally, the provision of effectively and appropriately trained educators to teach a new subject is also an important consideration in a school's decision to include some subjects or exclude others from the curriculum. More than a decade ago Du (2003) found that the majority of the teaching and research staff involved in Tourism came from other disciplines or from the tourism industry. The same sentiment was shared by Abdul-Ghani (2006) three years later, who suggested at the time that the fact that HEIs and secondary schools had just begun to offer Tourism in their curriculum meant that there were very few teachers with academic qualifications involved in teaching the subject. As Chili (2013) notes, the shortage of qualified teachers in the field of Tourism exists in the context of the Global Campaign for Education Report (2012) which calls upon countries to place the various subjects in the hands of trained and specialist teachers. As the current study was conducted almost ten years later, it was important to investigate whether there was still a shortage of Tourism teachers in secondary schools or not and whether this factor influenced school communities' decision to include the subject in the curriculum.

In South African schools, the Post Provisioning Norm (PPN) is used to determine the number of teachers employed at a particular school (Education Labour Relations Council, 2003).

Teachers are distributed to schools according to the numbers of learners and subjects offered. Therefore, prior to making the decision to adopt a new subject, schools would have to ensure that there is an adequate number of teacher posts to cater for the new subject, and that such teachers are qualified to teach the new subject. Failure to secure such teachers would result in schools relying on un/under qualified teachers who are funded by schools and not the government, resulting in poorer schools experiencing teacher shortages or having to cope with teachers who are not trained to teach the new subject (Pardesi, 2004).

Poor or no qualifications among teachers lead to poor teaching in terms of curriculum coverage as well as content and pedagogical knowledge (Makori & Onderi, 2013) and low performance among learners (Chakanyuka, 2006). Failure to consider teacher preparation in Tourism, as Chili's (2013) study found, may result in poor implementation of the subject. Similar findings from a study conducted by Van Deventer (2008) on Life Orientation teachers suggest that poor teacher preparation affect the value attached to the subject (Rooth, 2005; van Deventer, 2008).

To address teacher shortages in Tourism, the South African Training Institute (SATI) project, which was funded by the Spanish government and housed within the Tourism, Hospitality, Education and Sport Training Authority (THETA), was aimed at upgrading teacher qualifications for the teaching of Tourism (Earle, 2008). However, by 2004 SATI had trained only 123 teachers through a teacher development programme. Obviously, the number of teachers trained was far fewer than the number of schools already offering Tourism in 2004 as they catered for 127 000 learners at the time (National Business Initiative, 2008). Garth and Brennan (2004) concur, stating that by 2004 over 60% of Tourism teachers had had no



formal training in the subject. The first phase of the SATI teacher training in Tourism in 2002 was conducted through various workshops countrywide over a five-day period. The second phase in 2004 included the provision of the necessary resources to provide further teacher training at provincial level (National Business Initiative, 2005).

Since the SATI initiative, instructional programmes for training Tourism teachers have been offered. Such qualifications included a six-month Certificate in Travel and Tourism offered by the South African College for Teacher Education (terminated in 2001) and a Tourism Teacher Training Diploma offered by the Rand Afrikaans University (that became the University of Johannesburg) but that was terminated in 2006, and a Bachelor of Education qualification that is currently offered by the University of KwaZulu-Natal (Pawson, 2002; Chili, 2013). This suggests that there are still a limited number of institutions and programmes that offer training to teachers in the teaching of Tourism in schools. Whether this was one of the factors considered by the schools participating in this study in their decision to adopt Tourism as a new subject, formed part of the study that is reported in this thesis.

The following section discusses literature that addresses the question: *Who makes curriculum decisions in schools and how do members of the school community understand and enact this role?* This review offers a basis for understanding the role played by various stakeholders in curriculum decision-making processes in schools, with particular reference to the inclusion of Tourism in the curriculum.

### **2.4.3 Who is involved in Curriculum Decision-making in Schools?**

As discussed in the preceding sections, the introduction of the South African School Act (no. 84 of 1996) was arguably an attempt to bring about more participatory and democratic decision-making processes in schools, including those related to the curriculum. In a democracy, every member has a role to play in decision-making. In examining school governance practices in South Africa, initially one gets a picture of increased involvement of various stakeholders (i.e., parents, teachers, and learners) in school governance in pursuit of a common goal. As previously stated, this legislative mandate has presented principals, teachers and parents with the massive task of changing traditionally authoritarian decision-making into democratic decision-making processes in which the entire school community participates actively (Mosoge & Van der Westhuizen, 1997; Naidoo, 2005).

But what role do the various stakeholders play in curriculum decision-making in schools?

#### **2.4.3.1 The Role of the Principal**

In South Africa and internationally, the job expectations and responsibilities for school principals have been changed and expanded from decision-maker to decision-making facilitator (Steyn, 2003; Catano & Stronge, 2006; Mncube, 2009; Singh & Kumar, 2012). In the apartheid system of education, the power of making decisions, including curriculum decisions, was vested mainly in the principal. However, with the introduction of the South African Schools Act and the requirement for more inclusive and participatory decision-making, all stakeholders need to be involved in deciding upon important issues in the school, including what subjects should be taught. The South African Schools Act clearly stipulates that one role of the school principal is to facilitate participatory decision-making processes by interacting and communicating effectively with the school community. Heystek (2007) asserts that the school principal should hold all aspects of the school together, including

curriculum decision-making and working with the community and other stakeholders to arrive at such decisions. However, his study found that principals in South African schools are still hesitant to involve stakeholders and to allow active participation by parents and teachers. Similarly, McLagan and Nel (1995) earlier asserted that, with the lingering apartheid legacy, principals tend to be reluctant to involve teachers and parents in such decision-making as the latter often feel untrained and underprepared for decision-making roles in schools. A study conducted by Mokoena (2011) also concludes that decision-making practices in secondary schools in South Africa are still adhering to formal lines of authority. The locus of control and decision-making powers, including the selection of subjects to be taught, still resides mainly with the principals, with minimal participation of other school community members such as teachers, parents and learners. By virtue of their symbolic position as heads of schools, principals still use their power to influence decisions on the kind of knowledge worth including in the school curriculum (Khoza, 2003, Mncube, 2007). Reasons for this might include poor preparation for principalship (Bush & Heystek, 2006). Principals are generally of the view that implementation of new curriculum changes in South African schools puts school leaders at the centre of accountability (Berkhout, 2007), hence they feel they should decide on curriculum matters. Furthermore, educators and parents historically had very little experience of participatory decision-making before 1994, when principals were generally given absolute authority to make decisions.

#### **2.4.3.2 The Role of the Teachers**

International literature points to the value of democratic decision-making in schools. In particular, the involvement of all stakeholders in making decisions regarding the curriculum is emphasised. For example, a study conducted in Michigan, USA by Poppleton and Williamson (2004) on curriculum decision-making found that the active involvement of

teachers in school change was more powerful than any other factors for promoting effective curriculum change. The more teachers and other school community members participated in curriculum decisions, the more positive they felt about the decisions made and the more willing they were to seriously engage in future decision-making (Ramparsad, 2001; Poppleton & Williamson, 2004). A related study conducted by Mulford, Kendall, Kendall, Bishop and Hogan (2000) examined decision-making processes in Tasmanian primary schools. They identified structures and processes through which decision-making was shared among school community members. While variation existed across schools as to the extent and type of decisions in which the school community engaged, the research concluded that teachers needed to be moved beyond occasional involvement in curriculum decisions at school level. As Klock (2012) argues, teachers should take ownership of curriculum through continuous deliberation and decision-making in various forums. This would result in increased willingness by teachers to implement the decision (Somech, 2010; Samkange, 2012).

Collins (2007) argues that adding a subject to or removing a subject from the curriculum is not an activity that a single individual should carry out, as this may cause more harm than improvement. In this regard, available literature suggests that teacher participation in curriculum decision for subject selection increases their morale and commitment to the decision (Duke, 2005; Ndu & Anogbogu, 2007; Melese, 2007; Somech, 2010; Klock, 2012, Wadesango, 2012; Cheng, 2008; Mualuko, Mukasa & Judy, 2009; Wadesango & Bayaga, 2013). For example, Melese (2007) asserts that teacher participation in the curriculum decision-making process from the development stage increases the relevance and acceptance of the decision, thus resulting in effective teaching and learning of the subject. Similarly, Ndu and Anagbogu (2007) note that when teachers are not involved in decision-making they

become strangers within the school community and their commitment to the implementation of curriculum decisions is then diminished.

Yet, available research suggests that teachers continue to be marginalised in curriculum decision-making, including decisions that involve the selection of new subjects. For example, in a study conducted by Carl (2005), the results indicated that teachers were for the most part excluded from participation in curriculum development and decision-making at curriculum levels outside the classroom. Their perception was that although they were the subject specialists, little attention, if any, was given to them at the level of decision-making to make inputs, even though they were expected to implement the decisions. This study examined the extent to and ways in which the teachers in the four participating schools were involved in the curriculum decision-making processes that led to the adoption of Tourism as a new subject in the curriculum.

#### **2.4.3.3 The Role of Parents**

As stipulated in the South African School Act (no. 84 of 1996), parents have the obligation to perform certain educational functions, including the selection of subjects. Scholars have argued that parents must be more involved when it comes to curriculum decisions that affect their children's education (see Telem, 2003; Epstein, 2009; Duma, 2013). Such inclusion would make it more likely for them to become involved in their children's education and contribute to better school and learner performance. Yet research also points to the continued marginalisation of parents in decision-making, including curriculum decisions. The reasons offered for this are varied, but include the fact that parents are often uncertain about the roles that they should play in school governance, particularly in curriculum decision-

making. This is not unique to South Africa. For example, a study conducted in primary schools in Tasmania (Mulford et al., 2000) examined the decision-making processes as perceived by principals, teachers and school council members. Their study identified decision-making structures and processes through which school communities participated. While variation existed across schools with regard to the extent and types of decisions in which the community was involved, the research concluded that teachers and parents continued to be uninvolved or under-involved in curriculum decisions despite the presence of school-based management programmes and policies.

While curriculum decision-making in South Africa is meant to be a shared responsibility among members of the entire school community, the role of various stakeholders in participatory decision-making in schools has been difficult to implement. For example, Botha (2007) conducted a study on participation by stakeholders in school-based management in South Africa. The study concluded that despite policies and widespread belief in stakeholder participation in decision-making processes in schools, this had received only moderate attention locally.

This study examined the extent to which all stakeholders, including teachers and parents, engaged in real decisions about curriculum matters. The study examined the extent to and ways in which stakeholders understood this role, as well as the ways in which they performed their curriculum decision-making responsibility in the schools.

## 2.5 Synthesis

This chapter reviewed literature focusing on various understandings of Tourism as a school subject, the factors that inform these various understandings and the nature of and reasons for the decision-making processes school communities engage in when introducing new subjects in the curriculum generally, and in introducing Tourism in particular. Specifically, the chapter first presented a review of the literature on the role of school communities in curriculum decision-making. The literature reveals that a policy framework internationally and locally has significant implications for curriculum decision-making generally and the inclusion of Tourism in the curriculum in South African schools in particular. The literature suggests that educational policies are central in determining the knowledge worth teaching as they provide the framework for curriculum structure at school level. Furthermore, I reviewed local and international understandings of the origins of Tourism and its position as a school subject. The literature reveals that Tourism is viewed mainly as a vocational subject that has found its way into the schooling system with the aim of providing work-related skills.

Secondly, having been informed by the research question, I reviewed literature related to the factors that inform decisions to include new subjects in the school curriculum, with specific focus on decisions to introduce Tourism. These factors range from macro (or policy) level factors to micro (or institutional level) factors. The review suggests that school communities have to respond to these factors as they largely inform the decision to adopt Tourism in the curriculum.

Finally, I reviewed literature on curriculum decision-making processes in school communities. I specifically focused on the decision-making processes schools engage in to

introduce new academic subjects in general, and Tourism in particular. The review of the literature suggests that maximum participation by school communities is not evident when curriculum decisions involving subject selection are made. The participation (or lack of participation) in decision-making processes has implications for the status of particular kinds of knowledge and subjects and reflects on the power of various actors in the school community to make such decisions.

The next chapter presents the conceptual and theoretical frameworks that provided the parameters for the study and that guided the analysis of the data.



## CHAPTER THREE

# UNDERSTANDING CURRICULUM DECISION-MAKING IN SCHOOLS: TOWARDS CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

### 3.1 Introduction

In this study I explored the nature of and the rationale for curriculum decision-making in the selection of new subjects in schools. To do this, I explored the introduction of Tourism as a new subject in four selected schools as a case for analysis. In particular, the study addressed the question: *What is the nature of and rationale for the curriculum decision-making processes schools engage in when adopting a new subject in their curriculum?* In the previous chapter I reviewed related literature that informed the development of a conceptual framework for understanding the rationale and the nature of curriculum decision-making schools engaged in when selecting a new subject for the curriculum. I also reviewed the literature related to local and international understandings of Tourism as a school subject, the policy framework that guides curriculum decision-making processes in South African schools, the factors that inform the various understandings of the nature and reasons for the decision-making processes school communities engage in when introducing new subjects in the curriculum generally, and particularly when introducing Tourism in the curriculum.

In this chapter I discuss the conceptual frameworks that emerged from the literature reviewed in Chapter Two. I also outline the theoretical frameworks that informed the data analysis of the study. Informed by the conceptual framework and the theoretical frameworks, I conclude

the chapter by presenting a number of propositions for understanding curriculum decision-making related to the selection of new subjects in the school curriculum and, in particular, the adoption of Tourism in the schools that participated in this study.

A number of issues emerged from the review of the literature. The next section summarises the findings from the literature review that pertained to this study.

### **3.2 Summary of Findings from the Literature**

The literature on broader debates on the nature of and development in Tourism as a study field and a school subject suggests that Tourism has evolved from a vocational to an academic subject in higher education until it made its way into secondary schools. The literature suggests that, initially, most of the courses offered in Tourism were purely vocational and were meant to teach work-related skills (Schuurman, 2004) in preparation of students for specific positions in the tourism industry (Pearce et al., 1998; Cervera-Taulet & Ruiz-Molina, 2008; Airey, 2005). The vocational origins of Tourism, with its focus on entrepreneurial skills, might thus have influenced the understandings of and decisions made by school communities to adopt Tourism as a curriculum subject.

Moreover, the literature describes curriculum policies and their influence on schools' decision to adopt/not adopt a new subject in the curriculum. These policies include curriculum policy frameworks (for example, Curriculum 2005, the NCS, and CAPS) and policies that determine admission to higher education institutions (e.g., the Policy for

Admission to Higher Education, 2011). For example, there are compulsory and elective subjects as well as recognised and designated subjects. These classifications lead to subjects receiving different status and recognition in schools and universities. This study argues that ascribing different status to different subjects could influence schools' decision to include or exclude a subject from the curriculum. In particular, the positioning of Tourism as both a vocational and an elective subject in the curriculum may limit its opportunities to be included in a school's curriculum. Even where it is offered, this status may see the subject shunned by students who may view it as inferior or irrelevant. These policy imperatives might influence the way school communities make decisions, particularly curriculum decisions that determine which knowledge is worth teaching. Moreover, the composition of the secondary school curriculum and the limited guidance provided on the selection of subjects may impact on the nature of and rationale for the curriculum decision-making processes schools engage in when adopting a new subject (such as Tourism) in their curriculum, which is the phenomenon this study sought to understand.

The literature that I reviewed in the previous chapter suggests that several factors influence decisions to include new subjects such as Tourism in the curriculum. These include external factors (such as political and economic systems) and institutional factors (such as leadership, availability of resources, and teacher qualifications). It was revealed by the literature that the decision to adopt a new subject is mostly driven by political concerns. The ideologies of the ruling government seem to be entrenched in the curriculum framework and are further implemented in the various curriculum offerings at school level, as most governments tend to support a focus on skills development in the school curriculum where subjects such as Tourism are key to developing the required skills (United States Agency for International

Development Southern Africa, 2013; Western Cape Department of Finance, Economic Development and Tourism, 2013).

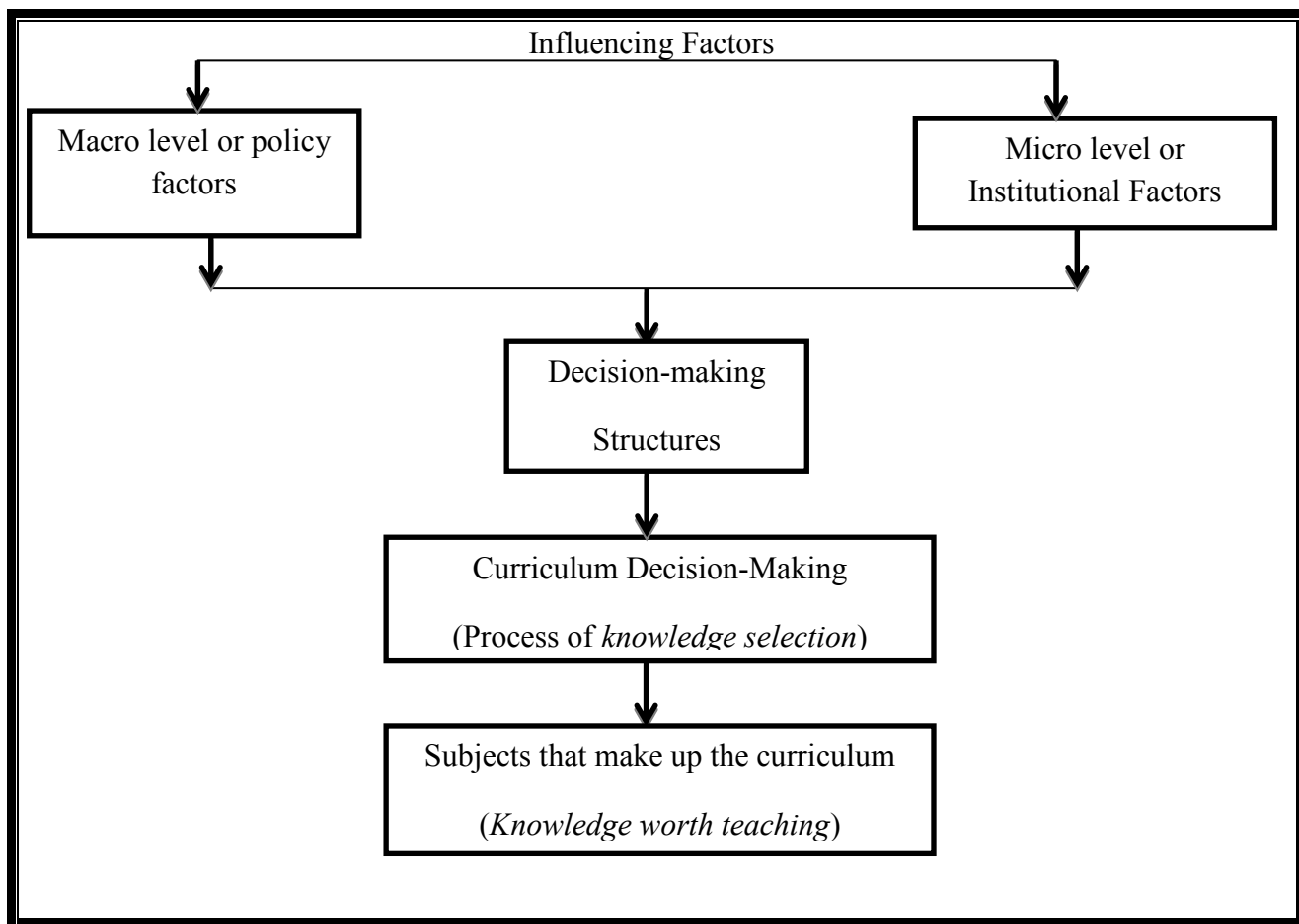
Economic factors also inform a view of tourism as key to economic development in the country; hence the study of Tourism seems to be viewed as essential for such development. Various economic policies (from RDP and GEAR to ASGISA) have identified tourism as a priority for national economic development; for this reason the need for training and skills development to support the sector through the teaching of Tourism as a school subject is emphasised.

Within schools, the literature suggests that effective democratic leadership is crucial and central not only to the functional or dysfunctional nature of a school, but also to the nature and quality of curriculum decision-making at school level (Fullan, 2007). It also became clear that any decision for curriculum change is highly dependent on the availability of resources. This implies that, when making a decision about including a new subject in the curriculum, a school community must first assess the availability of resources for implementing and sustaining such a subject. Teacher shortages, poor teacher preparation and lack of formal training in the teaching of Tourism also contribute to poor implementation of curriculum change. Specifically, the shortage or lack of Tourism teachers might therefore limit the interest of school communities to consider Tourism in their curriculum, as the lack of trained teachers might impact the implementation of the subject in the curriculum as well as the performance of the learners.

Finally, the literature suggests that curriculum decision-making processes at school level locally and internationally do not accommodate all stakeholders in the school community. Instead, principals still fail to create an atmosphere conducive for school community members to participate in the selection of knowledge worth teaching in schools (Poppleton & Williamson, 2004; Collins, 2007; Mokoena, 2011). In South Africa, this is the case even though national policy tasks principals, teachers and parents to collectively govern schools and make decisions, including those related to the curriculum. The participation or lack of participation in decision-making processes has implications not only for the power inequalities between various actors in the school community, but also on the status of particular kinds of knowledge and subjects in the curriculum. Those who are in power in the school tend to play a major role in influencing the decisions about which knowledge is most worth teaching and which knowledge is marginalised. This study therefore interrogated the prevailing understandings of and practices related to the nature of and rationale for decision-making processes schools undertake in introducing new academic subjects generally, and in introducing Tourism in the curriculum in particular.

### **3.3 Conceptual Frameworks**

Emerging from the literature review is a conceptual framework for understanding the nature of and rationale for the curriculum decision-making processes the schools in this study adopted in introducing Tourism as a new subject in their curriculum. This conceptual framework is illustrated in Figure 3.1 below:



**Figure 3.1: Conceptual Framework**

As discussed in Chapter One, in the context of this study curriculum decision-making refers to the process involved in the selection of subjects for inclusion in the school curriculum. Necessarily, such curriculum decision-making has implications for the status of particular kinds of knowledge and subjects and the power of various actors in the community to make such decisions. Curriculum decision-making is a dynamic process involving the participation of various actors and is therefore dependent on the personalities, values and knowledge of the people involved in it (Marsh, 2007). From this perspective, curriculum decision-making refers to the ways in which decisions about the curriculum are made, who makes them, what factors influence the decisions taken, and the conditions under which they are made. Specifically, it is a complex process involving various structures and it is

influenced by a variety of mediating macro/policy (such as economic, political and educational factors) and micro/institutional factors (such as leadership, resources and teacher qualifications). These factors interact to shape and reshape the decision-making process and resultant curriculum in terms of the subjects adopted in the school. Being informed by these interacting factors, stakeholders at school level engage in processes and procedures for making decisions regarding the curriculum. In this context, power relations tend to influence the nature of the decisions taken, with the more powerful exerting pressure and influence on what is worth teaching and the voices of the less powerful remaining unheard. The leadership style reigning in the schools and the availability of resources (material and human resources in terms of appropriately trained teachers) may interact to address such power relations and to influence the involvement of key stakeholders in the selection of subjects for inclusion in the curriculum.

### **3.4 Theoretical Frameworks**

The study was located within the interpretive paradigm (this will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Four). The focus of the study was to elicit understanding of the factors and processes that informed the selected high schools in their decision-making processes when they selected Tourism as a new subject in their curriculum. Informed by this paradigm, three theoretical frameworks informed the data analysis of the study. First, Obanya's (2004) functional curriculum theory will be used to illuminate the rationale for the curriculum decision-making in the schools participating in the study. Second, the stakeholder theory, as advanced by Freeman (1984), will be used to explain who made the decisions in schools, what power relations impacted the decision-making, and the reasons why people made particular decisions. Third, Walker's (1971) deliberative model of curriculum development

will illuminate an understanding of the curriculum decision-making processes the schools engaged in.

### **3.4.1 The Functional Curriculum Theory**

The process of constructing a school curriculum in the form of subject offerings is usually unique to each setting (Ajibola, 2008). Within the framework of elective subjects, each school may offer subject choices that are different from those of other schools. Ideally, this should be a function of the different needs and interests of the communities in which the schools are located (Ajibola, 2008). This study was premised on the notion that schools have different reasons for making choices regarding the curriculum, particularly in the selection of new subjects. One of the reasons for this involves the ways in which individuals and the school community conceptualise and understand the subject itself, as well as the contextual factors that feature most prominently in informing and shaping their understandings. Linked to this is the fact that decisions regarding a school's curriculum are never neutral. Rather, they are influenced by the socio-political and economic environments in which the school operates (Bell & Stevenson, 2006).

To understand the ways in which socio-political factors influenced curriculum decision-making in the four schools participating in this study, the functional curriculum theory as proposed by Obanya (2004) was used as a framework for analysis. The functional curriculum theory provides a useful framework for understanding the decisions made in schools for the selection of vocationally oriented subjects such as Tourism in the curriculum. According to Obanya, the functional curriculum theory posits that for Africa to get to the level at which it



can contribute to global knowledge in order to become a fully participating member of the global economy it has to embrace a curriculum that contributes to socio-economic transformation on the continent. In other words, the content of the curriculum must be functional and must provide a variety of core skills for lifelong learning, vocational awareness, and vocational and entrepreneurial activities (Obanya, 2004).

From this understanding, education is viewed as an investment against poverty. To this end, the school curriculum must be functional and responsive so as to develop skills that will help young people to function as competent and entrepreneurial beings in the society. In essence, such a curriculum aims towards wealth creation (Offorma, 2005) and enables learners to acquire the skills that can be used in the world of work and that can prepare them for a career/vocation. Thus, being informed by the functional curriculum theory, schools select subjects that aim to provide learners with skills for adapting to the world of work, particularly in a global economy.

One of the characteristics of a functional curriculum is its inclusion of vocational subjects. For example, as discussed in the previous chapter, the curriculum policy framework of South Africa has arguably been influenced by the functional curriculum theory. The subjects included in the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement are meant to be relevant and responsive to the needs of the country. Moreover, the curriculum is intended to redress past imbalances in the education system as well as in the general economy and in the tourism industry in particular (Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, 1996). Propelled by the fast growth of the tourism industry and the recognition of the economic contributions that tourism makes, HEIs and secondary schools in the country have adopted Tourism as a

field of study (see for example, Dale & Robinson, 2001; Strietska-Ilina & Tessaring, 2005; Saayman, 2005; Abdul-Ghani, 2006; Iannelli & Raffe, 2007). This is because the growing, dynamic and complex industry requires a workforce with appropriate knowledge and skills. As such, like most countries South Africa has identified a need for a functional curriculum in order to address societal needs such as unemployment and poverty (Obanya, 2009). Obanya (2004) explains that a 21st century curriculum for secondary education in particular should aim to encourage learners to develop their potential and capabilities for the changing demands of the world of work. However, Mbachu and Ebriere (2014) argue that there are numerous barriers to constructing a functional curriculum. Some of these challenges include lack of resources and poor funding of the schools. For example, Obanya (2009) argues that functionality in education cannot be achieved without proper funding and resources, which include effectively and appropriately trained teachers.

This study thus aimed to investigate the extent to and ways in which the decision to adopt Tourism as a new subject in the schools participating in this study was influenced by the needs and interests of the communities in which the schools were located.

### **3.4.2 Stakeholder Theory**

In this study, I sought to understand the extent of stakeholder participation in decision-making related to the selection of Tourism as a new subject in the selected schools. In this context, the following questions were pivotal: *Who made the decisions? Which stakeholders were included and which were excluded from the decision-making process, and why? What were the consequences of unequal power relations, if encountered, with regards to the*

*decisions made on the curriculum itself?* To address these questions, I utilised the stakeholder theory as posited by Freeman (1984).

The stakeholder theory (Freeman, 1984) argues that it is necessary to understand how the organisation implicitly or explicitly manages its relationships with its stakeholders with regards to decision-making. It calls attention to organisational decision-making processes, including who the stakeholders are as well as whether they have a voice in the decision-making processes. A key aspect of the stakeholder theory is to identify the stakeholders in each organisation's decision-making structures and their perceived stake in the process (Freeman, 1984). Such stakeholders must be incorporated into the organisation's decision-making processes without sacrificing the principles and values that inform decision-making in the organisation. In this regard, Freeman (1984) categorises stakeholders by interest and by power. This is reiterated by Mitchell, Agle and Wood (1997) who argue that for decisions to be made, the organisation must first identify who the stakeholders are and which of them have the power to influence the decisions. The theory posits that a stakeholder is someone who is interested in the organisation's affairs and therefore has intrinsic value. The theory further postulates that some stakeholders have more power or capacity to influence the organisational decision-making processes than others (Mitchell et al., 1997). The more powerful stakeholders tend to have greater influence and voice in the decision-making process than the less powerful ones (O'Donovan, 2002).

One of the major criticisms of the stakeholder theory is that it posits a model of the enterprise in which all persons or groups with legitimate interests participating in an organisation do so to obtain benefits, and there is no priority of individual interests and benefits over others (Donaldson & Preston, 1995). The model rejects the idea that the organisation exists to serve

the interest of its owners or one group of people. Rather, the model is based on the idea that the organisations exists to serve the many stakeholders who have an interest in it or who in some way may be harmed or benefitted by it. According to Neave (2002) who used the stakeholder theory to research policy and management in higher education, the advantage of applying the stakeholder perspective in education is the possibility of combining different elements and stakeholders in decision-making. This argues for participation of all groups with legitimate interest in the organisation.

The stakeholder theory is an approach by organisational management and governance that emphasises the importance of considering organizational stakeholders when making decisions. Although it does not account for curriculum decision-making in schools, a significant feature of this theory is its main advocacy for the principle of who is involved in the decision and whose voice really counts. This study was premised on the notion that the involvement of stakeholders in curriculum decision-making is key to determining what is taught in the school curriculum. I therefore applied the stakeholder theory to identify the various stakeholders and their respective roles in the curriculum decision-making process related to the adoption of Tourism as a new subject in the selected schools. I sought to understand the extent to and ways in which the various stakeholder groups were involved. The stakeholders included the principals as well as the school management teams (SMTs), educators/teachers, the School Governing Body members (SGBs), and parents. This was premised on the understanding that, in order to address the social and educational needs of the school community, all these stakeholders need to work collaboratively to inform curriculum decision-making in the school.

### **3.4.3 The Deliberative Model of Curriculum Development**

The third theory that underpinned this study was Walker's (1971) deliberative model of curriculum development. Although this model was developed about forty five years ago in a context of the United Kingdom, it was seen relevant for the South African context which has been recently introduced to democratic participation in school decision-making processes. According to this theory, in order to understand how schools make decisions related to the selection of new subjects, analysis must focus on the extent of stakeholder involvement and the level of deliberation among those involved in the process of curriculum development.

Walker uses a naturalistic approach premised on the notion that better curriculum development will result when those involved in it understand the process. Using his own studies on groups doing curriculum development and the way they made decisions regarding the curriculum, Walker noted that the ways of proceeding were not linear and predetermined but that they were negotiated as the stakeholders worked their way towards a decision. A significant feature of this model therefore is the high level of engagement in deliberation by all the people involved in the decision-making process. In Walker's studies, the perspectives of various individuals were tabled for open articulation and discussion in the deliberative process. Teachers' individual and collective beliefs about schools, schooling and related classroom issues constituted a kind of deliberative platform. In other words, deliberations enabled a process of negotiation among those with different points of view and value systems in order to find a satisfying solution (see also Banathy, 1987, p. 93).

Research on school-based curriculum development (Lee, Dimmock & Au Yeung, 2009; Chan, 1998) suggests that successful curriculum innovation in schools is dependent on deliberation and democracy. I therefore argue in this thesis that a deliberative approach to the selection of a new subject can best be implemented by tapping into school communities' active engagement in curriculum decision-making. A decision, for example, to adopt a new subject for the curriculum, informed by deliberation, will be negotiated and will involve as many participants from the school community as possible. Kirk and McDonald (2001) argue that meetings to arrive at the decision among stakeholders are crucial in order to get a 'buy in' from all members concerned. In these meetings deliberations enable the formulation and devising of alternatives and finally allow the attainment of the most defensible decisions and subject choices for curriculum inclusion. By using the deliberative model of curriculum development, I looked at the ways in which the school communities interacted as they decided on selecting the specific knowledge that would be represented by a specific subject (i.e., Tourism).

Many educationists have come out strongly in support of the deliberation approach (see Schwab, 1983; Banathy, 1987). These researchers stress the importance of deliberation as part of the process of curriculum development when they argue that arriving at a better curriculum decision should engage a process of negotiation among those involved. According to them, this will result in a broad social support for the intended curriculum development, as all users and other school community members will be involved and be given ample opportunity to contribute. However, Walker (2003) stresses that the course of action decided upon during deliberation is not to be interpreted as the correct course of action, but it should be considered as the best option known to the group. It is thus possible that the decision to adopt Tourism in the curriculum might not be the correct one for some schools, although it

might be regarded as the best option that was available to these schools at the time. However, although Walker's model allows for different points of view to be integrated (for example, in the deliberation phase), it has been criticised for not recognising the power relations that exist among various community members in the curriculum development process (see Meaney, 2001). For example, principals tend to exert stronger influence than other stakeholders in matters of subject selection for inclusion in the curriculum. The power and authority vested in principals may allow them to maintain a firm grip on the curriculum decision-making process when decisions have to be taken about which subjects to include and which are to be left out. This study investigated this dynamic.

A third critique of Walker's model is related to the fact that it assumes that the decision-making process occurs independently of existing institutional and external factors that determine curriculum development in a school (Armstrong, 1991). In examining school communities' experiences of the selection of Tourism as a new subject in the curriculum, this study aimed to take into account the factors (from within and outside the school) that influenced the discussions, deliberations and decisions reached to include Tourism in the curriculum.

This study therefore investigated the extent to and ways in which the school communities under study engaged in deliberation and negotiation regarding the inclusion of Tourism in the curriculum.

### 3.5 Some Propositions

Informed by the research questions posed in this study and linked to the conceptual frameworks developed from the literature review, three theoretical frameworks informed my analysis of the data. First, the stakeholder theory provided a framework for understanding who had the right to have a say in decision-making and whose right should take precedence. Second, the functional curriculum theory provided the general framework that I used to examine the formulation of the policies that guided and influenced the decision to include the vocational subject Tourism in the schools' curricula. Finally, Walker's deliberative model of curriculum development presented a broad framework within which curriculum decisions are made. In this study these three theoretical frameworks were used as a lens through which I examined the nature of and rationale for the curriculum decision-making which led to the adoption of Tourism as a new subject in the four schools participating in the study.

Using these theories that were linked to the three research questions posed in this study, three propositions for data analysis were formulated. The main research question that I sought to address was: *What is the nature of and rationale for the curriculum decision-making processes schools engage in when adopting a new subject in their curricula?* Linked to this, my study was informed by the sub-question: *What factors inform school communities in their decision to introduce Tourism in the curriculum?* Thus, the first proposition was based on the functional curriculum theory (Obanya, 2004) which posits that, for a country to effectively participate in the global economy, it must adopt education policies that promote subjects that will provide its people with core skills to contribute to the economy. Such policies should translate into the promotion of skills development in order to address the issue of unemployment. The proposition suggests that schools' decision to restructure their



curriculum by including vocational oriented subjects such as Tourism is influenced by the political realities and economic needs of the community. This means that significant forces both outside and inside the school will influence decisions to adopt a new subject such as Tourism as part of the school curriculum.

The second sub-question in this study was: *To what extent and in what ways does curriculum decision-making in schools involve the various stakeholders from the school community?* The proposition linked to this question was based on Freeman's (1984) stakeholder theory, which postulates that all stakeholders should participate in the decision-making process, which includes the adoption of new subjects. The study proposes that there are various actors who form part of the school community (i.e., the principal, heads of department, teachers and parents) and who must be involved as stakeholders in the process of making decisions about the curriculum. Failure to involve them might result in decisions that do not address the actual needs of the learners and the community. Thus, to avoid this, school communities must engage in deliberations and participatory curriculum decision-making processes in adopting a new subject as part of the school curriculum. This study was therefore underpinned by, among others, the stakeholder theory which assisted me in investigating not only the how, but also the extent to which stakeholders were involved in or excluded from making curriculum decisions, and in exploring the influence of power relations among stakeholders in the process.

Linked to the second research question was the third proposition which was informed by Walker's (1971) deliberative model of curriculum development. This model lays down the broad framework within which curriculum decisions are made. From the premise that various members of the school community have different but significant roles to play in curriculum

decision-making, this theory suggests that schools must engage in participatory deliberations and discussions that involve all stakeholders or their representatives in making decisions related to the curriculum. From this perspective, the engagement of all stakeholders in the decision-making for curriculum development is crucial so as to make effective decisions that will yield positive teaching and learning outcomes.

Guided by the propositions developed from the conceptual and theoretical frameworks, my analyses of the data that I had obtained focused on the factors that informed the school communities' participation in curriculum decisions and the extent of their involvement in making decisions leading to the adoption of Tourism.

### **3.6 Synthesis**

The chapter has presented the conceptual frameworks that delineated the parameters of the study. The conceptual framework presented in this chapter suggests that curriculum decision-making involves various structures and is influenced by a variety of interacting socio-political and educational factors, as well as factors within the school such as leadership, availability of resources and teacher qualifications. Within this context, stakeholders engage in curriculum decision-making by deciding which subjects should be taught; however, the potential exists for the more powerful to dominate the process when the school leadership fails to mediate equal power relations.

The chapter has also presented the theoretical frameworks that informed my analyses of the data. First, Obanya's (2004) functional curriculum theory suggests that schools' decision to restructure curriculum and to include vocational oriented subjects such as Tourism is

influenced by the political and economic needs of the country as well as the school community. This theory argues that, for a country to participate in the global economy, it must adopt educational policies that promote subjects that will provide its people with the core skills to contribute to the economy. Moreover, the policies should promote skills development in order to address the issue of unemployment. Second, the stakeholder theory as proposed by Freeman (1984) posits that all stakeholders should participate in decision-making processes, including the adoption of new subjects. Finally, Walker's (1971) model of curriculum development posits that schools should engage in deliberations and discussions that are participatory and involve school communities in making curriculum decisions. Walker's theory lays down the broad framework within which curriculum decisions are made. This theory suggests that the engagement of all stakeholders when decisions regarding curriculum development are made is crucial.

The three theoretical frameworks were fused to provide a lens through which I could examine how and why the selected school communities decided to adopt Tourism as a new subject. The chapter was concluded with a set of propositions that was developed from the theoretical frameworks. These propositions were used to guide the process of data analysis in this study.

In the next chapter I discuss the research design and the methodology used to address the research questions raised in this study.

# CHAPTER 4

## RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

### 4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore the nature of and the rationale for curriculum decision-making among stakeholders in the selection of a new subject for the school curriculum. Conducted in selected schools in KwaZulu-Natal province, South Africa, the study addressed the critical question: *What is the nature of and rationale for the curriculum decision-making processes schools engage in when adopting a new subject in their curriculum?* In pursuit of addressing the research question, the study revolved around the following sub-questions:

- *What factors inform school communities in their decision to introduce Tourism in the curriculum?*
- *To what extent and in what ways does curriculum decision-making in schools involve the different stakeholders from the school community?*

The previous chapter looked at the conceptual and the theoretical frameworks that guided the study. It also presented propositions that were used to guide the processes of data collection and analysis. This chapter explores in detail the aspects of methodology and research design covered briefly in previous chapters. I broadly describe the research design by positioning the study in the interpretive paradigm and qualitative research approach using a case study design. A discussion of the context of the schools under study is also presented. The chapter further describes and explains the methods and procedures that I utilised for data collection.

This is followed by a description of the data analysis procedures. Finally, the chapter is concluded with a brief discussion of the ethical considerations and some of the key limitations of the study.

## **4.2 The Interpretive Paradigm**

This study was located within the interpretive paradigm. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2000, p. 102), an interpretive understanding involves empathetic identification, phenomenological inquiry and analysis of the phenomenon. This implies that the basis of the interpretive paradigm lies in understanding the meaning or reason behind a particular behaviour. In this study, this would mean understanding the reasons and processes for school communities' decision to adopt a new subject, in this case Tourism. The ontological belief in an interpretive paradigm holds that those who are involved in the research process construct knowledge socially and individually and that they are thus informed by multiple realities (Henning, Van Rensburg & Smit, 2004). In this context, emphasis should fall on the importance of experience and an interpretation of different viewpoints on reality.

The study focused on understanding the experiences and perceptions of individuals and school communities and the values that informed their decision-making in the adoption of Tourism in the curriculum. Informed by the interpretive paradigm, I endeavoured to describe and interpret such decision-making so as to unearth individual and shared meanings among the community members under study (see Bailey, 2007; Bassey, 1999). This research paradigm assisted me in understanding and interpreting the subjective experiences and decisions of individuals and school communities as they chose to include Tourism in the curriculum. Such decision-making marks a form of curriculum inquiry, where the end of the

inquiry brings a particular decision and meaning making after a thorough study of a situation by members of the school community (Janse van Rensburg, 2001). The interpretive paradigm reflects an interest in contextual meaning making rather than in generalised rules, and it illuminates individual and small groups' perspectives in naturalistic settings.

### **4.3 Research Approach**

This research was entirely qualitative in nature, falling within the interpretivist paradigm. According to Dawson (2002, p. 115), "...the qualitative approach explores attitudes, behaviour and experiences through in-depth enquiry of participants." It therefore views human behaviour as a product of how people interpret the world. In this study, I wanted to examine school communities' rationale for the adoption of Tourism as a subject in the curriculum as well as the nature of the decision-making processes they engaged in to arrive at their decision. The qualitative approach helped illuminate how the respective school communities understood and interpreted the reasons for and the nature of the decision they made to select Tourism as a new subject.

In using a qualitative approach, the researcher relies partly or entirely on his/her feelings, impressions and judgments in the collection of data (Ary, Jacobs & Razavieh, Sorensen, 2006). Therefore, to allow for an in-depth inquiry involving the participants, I partly relied on my previous experiences as a Subject Advisor for Tourism in an education District where I was responsible for supervising the implementation of the subject in schools that had decided to include it in their curriculum. I wanted to understand and interpret the actions and experiences of various stakeholders (principals, Heads of Departments (HoDs), Tourism

teachers and parent members of the SGB) in the curriculum decision-making that led to the adoption of Tourism as a teaching subject in their schools.

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2000), qualitative researchers study phenomena in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or to interpret situations in terms of the meanings that people bring to them. Therefore, the qualitative approach to research is able to produce rich descriptive analyses that emphasise a deep, interpretive understanding of the social phenomenon. This requires the researcher to use qualitative data collection methods and analyses that enable him/her to gain in-depth understanding and interpretation of the values, needs and concerns of the people under study (see Neuman, 2011). Berg (2004) claims that qualitative methods can be used to better understand any phenomenon. These methods can also be used to gain new perspectives on subject inclusion and decision-making processes within a school. I therefore used qualitative interviews and document analysis as methods of data collection. (These are discussed more fully in subsequent sections.) Using these qualitative methods enabled me to examine the particular phenomenon under study, namely the decision-making processes that the schools engaged in the selection of a new subject.

Qualitative research favours a relatively flexible, open-ended and less structured research strategy which allows for adjustments as the research demands (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2007). Supported by the work of Henning et al. (2004), the qualitative approach I utilised in this study enabled me to investigate the complexity of the reasons for selecting Tourism as a subject and the decisions relating to its inclusion in the schools' curricula. It allowed me to develop detailed accounts of the stakeholder views in the individual schools regarding the

rationale for and nature of the decisions the stakeholders engaged when they selected Tourism as a subject.

The section below examines the case study approach that was used as the research design for the study.

#### **4.4 Case Study Design**

Informed by the interpretive paradigm and the qualitative research approach and to address the research questions, I utilised a qualitative case study design (Bassey 1999; Gerring, 2004; Zainal, 2007; Yin, 2009). Case study design is a generic term for the investigation of an individual, group or phenomenon. The understanding is that human systems have a particular wholeness or integrity and that it is important to do an in-depth investigation of the relationships between the parts and to elucidate the patterns that emerge (Bassey, 1999). Along these lines, Zainal (2007) asserts that case studies explore and investigate real-life phenomena through detailed analysis of situations and their relationships to shed light on that particular phenomenon. In this study, curriculum decision-making was selected as a unit of analysis. In particular, I focused on curriculum decision-making involving the selection of Tourism as a new subject in four secondary schools. The four schools were selected as contexts in which the adoption of Tourism as a new subject had taken place. Informed by Baxter and Jack (2008), I believed that the decision-making processes could not be understood in isolation; i.e., aloof from the contexts within which the four schools were located.



The benefits of the case study design have been highlighted by a number of researchers (e.g., Rowley, 2002; Babbie & Mouton, 2006; Creswell, 2007; Henning et al., 2004; Merriam, 2009). According to these researchers, case studies enable analyses of the phenomenon under study from a variety of perspectives. In particular, I sought to understand curriculum decision-making from the perspectives of the various stakeholders in the four schools. Furthermore, Rowley (2002) sees the case study as a systematic way of looking at the world around us. This, he argues, is done through collecting data, analysing information, and reporting the results to demonstrate a more general principle. I therefore used the case study approach to develop a sharpened understanding of how and why the stakeholders in the four schools made the decision to include Tourism in their curriculum offerings.

A case study is conducted in natural settings, aiming at yielding in-depth information about the phenomenon under study (Yin, 2009). While the phenomenon under study was the curriculum decision-making processes among stakeholders and the dynamics therein, I used the four schools as natural settings and different organisational contexts in which the phenomenon (curriculum decision-making involved in the adoption of Tourism as a new teaching subject) occurred. The schools that I selected for inclusion in the study were all located in the Uthukela District in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. Data from the four schools were aggregated to allow for in-depth understanding of the phenomenon (Bernard & Ryan, 2010). I purposively selected the four schools on the basis of their suitability for the research purpose: they had all adopted Tourism in their curricula. The fact that the case study approach provides a systematic way of looking at events, of collecting data, of analysing data and of reporting the results helped me to gain a sharpened understanding of the various perspectives the stakeholders in the four schools had about Tourism as a subject. This also

helped me to understand why and how they had selected Tourism for inclusion in their curricula.

However, case studies have been criticised for their lack of generalisability to other contexts (Yin, 2009). Therefore, I did not aim to generalise; rather, I aimed at gaining an in-depth understanding of the decision-making processes the stakeholders had engaged in. The thesis takes the view that the value of the case study approach is the detail and focus of the study and the aim is to develop as full an understanding as possible of the phenomenon in the particular context in which it occurred. The intention is to draw patterns and lessons from which other stakeholders in similar contexts might learn about the phenomenon (Yin, 2009). I thus used four schools as research sites in order to broaden the data collection and deepen my understanding of the phenomenon under study. The uniqueness of a case study and its capacity for understanding complexity in particular contexts constitute an advantage (Babbie & Mouton, 2006), which I exploited in this study.

#### **4.5 Research Sites: Introducing the Schools**

The selection of the research sites was important in the research process as it provided the context in which the phenomenon could be studied (Bernard & Ryan, 2010). For this study the research sites were schools that fall under the jurisdiction of the Uthukela District in the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Department of Basic Education. This area forms part of the Ukhahlamba-Drakensberg World Heritage Site and the Battlefields, which are two significant tourism destinations in the KwaZulu-Natal province. I therefore felt that the four schools would offer information-rich contexts in which to investigate the decision-making processes related to the inclusion of Tourism as a school subject.

At the time of data collection, 45 secondary schools (i.e., schools offering Grades 8-12 spanning both the General Education and Training [GET] phase and the Further Education and Training [FET] phase) in the district had already adopted Tourism in their curricula. As is the case in schools across the country, Tourism was and continues to be taught only in the FET phase (Grades 10-12) in these schools. For practical reasons, it was impossible to gather information from all 45 schools that offered Tourism, but by looking at a sample of schools I felt that I could gain in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under study. Thus, I chose a smaller and more manageable sample of schools to do my research in greater depth.

With this in mind, purposive sampling was used to identify the four secondary schools with Grades 10 – 12 that had included Tourism in their curricula. This sample was purposively selected as it was made up of schools that had gone through the curriculum decision-making process I was interested in and that had already adopted Tourism as a teaching subject (Robson, 2002; Ary et al., 2006). The selection of four school contexts helped me to collect diverse and in-depth data about the rationale for and nature of the decision-making processes the stakeholders in these schools had engaged in.

One criterion used to select the four schools was their non-participation in the pilot project for introducing Tourism in the school curriculum that had been conducted by the then Department of Education in 1998 (see National Business Initiative, 2008). Non-pilot schools were selected to get a picture of how and why school communities, without the pressure or influence from the Department of Education, made the decision to include Tourism in their curricula. Another criterion was the schools' willingness to take part in the study.

The social context of the schools under study was important as I felt this might directly or indirectly influence the curriculum decision-making processes undertaken by members of the school community. This was based on my belief that curriculum decision-making is a function of human interactions within a particular socio-cultural and political environment (Miles, Huberman & Saldaña, 2013). Thus, understanding certain aspects of the schools' contexts was necessary for this study in order to understand the nature of the interactions among the stakeholders involved in the decision-making process.

In the rest of the section I present a brief description of the respective contexts of the schools under study.

#### **4.5.1 Kwasakwasa Secondary School**

Kwasakwasa Secondary School<sup>5</sup> is located in a rural area under a tribal authority and a chief. This area has retained most of its natural environment, which is an aspect that strongly appeals to ecotourists. At the time of the study, the community was characterised by high rates of unemployment, with a few parents working in the nearest town or further away in Johannesburg. The school had had Tourism in its curriculum offering under the Commercial curriculum stream since 2002, starting in Grade 10 and progressing to Grade 12 in 2004. According to school documents, enrolment in the school was 650 in 2002 (when Tourism was first offered), with only five learners choosing to enrol in the subject. By 2004, 20 grade 12 learners were enrolled in Tourism. At the time of initial data collection for this study in 2010, the number had again decreased to five Grade 12 learners enrolled in Tourism. Tourism

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<sup>5</sup> Pseudonyms have been used to refer to the four schools under study to protect their anonymity.

was only offered in two grades (grades 11 and 12 only) and the number of learners enrolled in Tourism in each grade was below 15. The rest of the students were enrolled in the other two curriculum streams: Sciences and Humanities.

The school had a staff complement of 25 teachers, whose profiles are presented in Table 4.1 below:

**Table 4.1: Kwasakwasa Teacher Profile**

Position in School	Age in Years	Gender	Teaching Experience in Years	Qualifications	Teaching Tourism	Trained in Tourism
<b>Principal</b>	50+	M	26	M+3 <sup>6</sup>	No	No
<b>Deputy Principal</b>	40+	M	19	Masters in Education	No	No
<b>HODs</b>	31-40	M: 2	11-20: 2	M+3: 2	1	No
	41-50	F: 1	20+: 1	M+4: 1		
<b>Teachers</b>	21-30:	M: 3	1-10: 8	M: 4	1	No
		F: 2	11-20: 9	M+2: 5		
	31-40:	M: 4	21+: 3	M+3: 8		
		F: 1		M+4: 3		
	41-50:	M: 2				
	F: 5					
	50+	M: 2				
		F:1				

<sup>6</sup> The qualifications of teachers are expressed as M+ a number, for example M+3. This implies the number of years allocated for the completion of the recognised post Matric/Grade 12 teacher qualification on a full-time basis. M is a Matric/Grade 12 only, which denotes unqualified, M+2 is a Matric with two/three years' training which is not related to teaching and denotes under-qualified, and M+3 and M+4 are a Matric with three and four years of teacher training respectively, denoting a qualified teacher.

As the table above shows, the majority of the teachers were qualified, possessing M+ 3 (high school plus a three-year teaching qualification) and above. These included Secondary Teachers Diploma (STD), Senior Primary Teachers Diploma (SPTD), and Primary Teachers Diploma (PTD). A few had no teaching qualifications. Among these were four with undergraduate degrees including Bachelor degrees (2), Bachelor of Arts (1), and Bachelor of Administration (1). One educator had a National Diploma and four had a Grade 12. Even though the teachers with a Bachelor degree may have had enough content knowledge of the subject, the fact that they had no professional qualifications rendered them under-qualified. Such teachers, as well as those who have only a Grade 12 education, are classified as Unprotected Temporary Educators (UTEs)<sup>7</sup>. There were two teachers who taught Tourism in the school. Both had an STD qualification and one had completed an ACE in addition to the STD. However, neither was trained in Tourism, either as a subject or in teaching methodology for the subjects at secondary school level.

In terms of management and governance, the school had three levels of management posts: a Principal, a Deputy Principal and three Heads of Department (HODs). These educators comprised the School Management Team (SMT), which was the highest decision-making body in the school. In addition to the SMT, the school had established a number of sub-committees which were meant to involve teachers in decision-making processes. These included, among others, a Curriculum Committee, a Co-curriculum Committee, and a Social Committee, to name a few. The school had an elected SGB in accordance with the South African Schools Act (no. 84 of 1996). The SGB was made up of parents, teachers and learner

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<sup>7</sup> Unprotected Temporary Teachers are teachers who are employed by the South African Department of Education on a contract basis. Their contracts are renewed on a monthly basis, hence they are not protected and their services can be terminated at any time as per school or the Department of Basic Education's decision.

representatives. According to legislation, this structure is responsible for making governance decisions, including the development of curriculum policies. However, in this school this was made difficult by the fact that a number of the parent members had very low levels of formal education which potentially made it difficult for them to meaningfully participate in curriculum decision-making.

#### **4.5.2 Kuzolunga Secondary School**

Kuzolunga Secondary School is located in a rural village with a very low population (evidenced by the few houses I saw during data collection), resulting in low learner enrolments in the school. This village also falls under the authority of a chief. At the time of the study, the community was characterised by high rates of unemployment and low levels of literacy. Only a few parents worked in the nearest town (mainly as cleaners and gardeners in hotels and other local establishments) or further away in Johannesburg. The school started to operate in 1994 but only introduced Tourism in 2009. According to the school documents, enrolment in the school was 296 in 2009 (when Tourism was first offered in Grades 10 and 11 simultaneously). There were three subject streams, namely Science, Commerce and Humanities at the time the school included Tourism. Tourism was offered as an elective subject in the Humanities curriculum stream. At the time of data collection in 2010, Tourism was only offered in grade 11 and 12 with about 38 learners enrolled for Tourism. The rest of the learners were enrolled in the other two streams: Science and Commerce.

The school had a staff complement of 12 teachers, whose profiles are presented in Table 4.2 below:

**Table 4.2: Kuzolunga Teacher Profile**

<b>Position in School</b>	<b>Age In Years</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Teaching Experience in Years</b>	<b>Qualifications</b>	<b>Teaching Tourism</b>	<b>Trained in Tourism</b>
<b>Principal</b>	40+	M	23	Honours in Education	No	No
<b>HODs</b>	30+ 40+	M: 2	1-10: 1 11-20: 1	M+3: 1 M+4: 1	No	No
<b>Teachers</b>	21-30:  31-40:  41-50:	M: 1 F: 1 M: 1 F: 3 M: 1 F: 2	1-10: 6 11-20: 2 20+: 1	M: 3 M+2: 3 M+3:1 M+4: 2	1	No

As the table above shows, the majority of the teachers were qualified, holding M+3 and above qualifications. These included Bachelor of Education (B.Ed), B.Ed Honours, STD, Senior Primary Teachers Diploma (SPTD), Primary Teachers Diploma (PTD), Advanced Diploma in Education (ACE), and Higher Diploma in Education (HDE). A few had no teaching qualifications. Among these was one undergraduate Bachelor of Arts student, one with a National Diploma, and three with only a Grade 12 qualification. The latter were classified as UTEs. Even though teachers with Bachelor degrees or National Diplomas may have enough content knowledge in the subject, the fact that they had no professional qualifications rendered them under-qualified.



There was one Tourism teacher in the school. His qualification was a National Diploma in Ecotourism. However, he had no professional qualification and had received no training in how to teach Tourism at secondary school level.

In terms of management and governance, the school had two levels of management posts: a Principal and two HODs making up the SMT. The SMT was responsible for managing the day-to-day operations of the school. This body held the decision-making power for setting broad policy directions in the school and allocating resources to support school priorities. The school had an elected SGB in accordance with the South African Schools Act (no. 84 of 1996). The SGB was made up of parents, teachers and learner representatives. This structure should be responsible for making all school decisions, including curriculum decisions. However, in this school this was made difficult by the fact that there were few houses in the vicinity of the school from which the school drew its learners. As a result, very few SGB members lived close to the school, thus making it difficult for them to always be available to participate in decision-making related to the curriculum.

#### **4.5.3 Nawe Secondary School**

Nawe Secondary School opened its doors in 1996 and started operating from a nearby primary school and later secured its own premises in the same area. The land was donated by a local farmer and the school is therefore classified as a Public Farm School<sup>8</sup>, according to the South African Schools Act (no. 84 of 1996). At the time of the study, the school served a

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<sup>8</sup> A farm school in South Africa is a concept used to refer to a public school that is situated on the private property where the owner is not the state and is usually involved in an agricultural enterprise

community of people who had low levels of education and were mostly employed by the farmer. Some were employed by other neighbouring farmers and in the nearby hotels as cleaners, security guards, grounds men and workers in other menial jobs.

The school had been offering Tourism in its curriculum offering since 2004, starting in Grade 10 and progressing to Grade 12 in 2006. According to school documents, enrolment in the school was 290 in 2004 (when Tourism was first offered). At the time of data collection in 2010, Tourism was offered in all three FET grades (i.e., Grades 10 - 12) and fell under the Humanities curriculum stream. The rest of the students were enrolled in the other two curriculum streams: Sciences and Commerce.

The school had a staff complement of 13 teachers, whose profiles are presented in Table 4.3 below:

**Table 4.3: Nawe Teacher Profile**

<b>Position in School</b>	<b>Age in Years</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Teaching Experience in Years</b>	<b>Qualifications</b>	<b>Teaching Tourism</b>	<b>Trained in Tourism</b>
<b>Principal</b>	40+	M	21	M+4	No	No
<b>HODs</b>	31-40	M: 1	11-20: 2	M+3: 1	No	No
	41-50	M: 1		M+4: 1		
<b>Teachers</b>	21-30:	M: 2	1-10: 7	M: 4	1	No
	31-40:	M: 2	11-20: 2	M+2: 1		
		F: 2	21+: 1	M+3:4		
	41-50:	M: 2		M+4: 1		
		F:1				
	51+	F: 1				

As the table above shows, the majority of the teachers were qualified and in possession of an M+3 and above qualification. These included STD, SPTD, PTD, and ACE. A few had no teaching qualification. Among these was one with an undergraduate Bachelor of Administration degree, and five with Grade 12 who were classified as UTEs.

The two Tourism teachers in the school were both in possession of a STD qualification. However, neither had been trained in Tourism, either as a subject or in methodology for teaching the subject at secondary school level. At the time of data collection in 2010, only the level 1 teacher was teaching Tourism. The HOD was not teaching Tourism in that year as too few learners had enrolled for Tourism.

In terms of management and governance, the school had two levels of management posts: a Principal and two HODs, making up the SMT which was the highest decision-making body in the school. In addition to the SMT, the school had also developed a variety of structures to enhance teacher participation in the school's decision-making processes. These included Subject Committees, an Examination Committee, and a Sports Committee, to name a few. However, the involvement of teachers in making curriculum decisions was minimal except at classroom level because the school operated with many UTEs. This might have affected the nature of the stakeholders' engagement in decision-making processes because the UTEs might be less interested in the future direction and development of the school. The school had a functional SGB at the time the decision was made to include Tourism. The SGB had been elected in accordance with SASA. The SGB is a structure that should be responsible for making all school decisions, including curriculum decisions, and the existence of the SGB when the decision to include Tourism was made would have warranted the participation of

the SGB in the decision-making process. However, this was not the case as a high percentage of the SGB members did not have a high level of education and showed very little interest in curriculum matters. In addition, SGB members reflected low levels of involvement with school matters as they spent most of their time working for the farmer. This left them with little time to engage in school activities during the day.

#### **4.5.4 Busabusa Secondary School**

Busabusa Secondary School is situated in a rural area under the administration of a tribal authority, or chief. At the time of the study, the majority of the community members were unemployed and could not afford school fees. The school opened in 2000 as a Technical Secondary School<sup>9</sup> and had been offering Tourism since 2008. According to the school documents, enrolment in the school was 332 in 2008 (when Tourism was first offered). At the time of data collection in 2010, Tourism was offered in grades 11 and 12, and there was no grade 10 Tourism class.

The school had a staff complement of 14 teachers, whose profiles are presented in Table 4.4 below:

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<sup>9</sup> Technical High School is a secondary school that offers subjects that are in the learning field of engineering, as classified by the Department of Education (Department of Education, 2005)

**Table 4.4: Busabusa Teacher Profile**

<b>Position in School</b>	<b>Age in Years</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Teaching Experience in Years</b>	<b>Qualifications</b>	<b>Teaching Tourism</b>	<b>Trained in Tourism</b>
<b>Principal</b>	40+	M	15	Honours in Education	No	No
<b>HOD</b>	40+	M	17	M+3	No	No
<b>Teachers</b>	21-30:  31-40:  41-50:  50+	M: 2 F: 1 M: 2 F: 2 M: 2 F:1 F:2	1-10: 8 11-20: 2 21+: 2	M: 3 M+2: 2 M+3:5 M+4: 2	2	No

As the table above shows, the majority of the teachers were qualified, holding M+3 and above qualifications. These included Bachelor of Pedagogics (BPaed), STD, PTD, and ACE qualifications. A few had no qualifications. Among these were National Diplomas (one teacher), N6 (one teacher) and three teachers with Grade 12. The latter were classified as UTEs. There were two Tourism teachers in the school. One had STD and the other had Grade 12 with no additional qualification. Neither had been trained in Tourism, either as a subject or in teaching methodology at secondary school level.

In terms of management and governance, the school had two levels of management posts: a Principal and one HOD, and they comprised the SMT. The SGB was an official governance

structure in this school. When the school was established, as was the case in the other schools, SGB members were elected in accordance with the South African Schools Act.

#### **4.5.5 Summary of School and School Community Profiles**

I was interested in understanding the schools' rationale for curriculum decision-making and the involvement of stakeholders in the decision to include Tourism as a subject. The schools under study presented similar features with regards to school organisation, management and governance, irrespective of the different periods when Tourism was introduced as a subject. Three of the schools were located in rural communities and were under the administration of tribal authorities or traditional chiefs. One exception was Nawe School which was located on a property privately owned by a commercial farmer. These forms of authority potentially represent communities where decision-making is left in the hands of those who are regarded as being in power. The communities were located where those in power (for example, the chief or the farmer) are rarely questioned and where most decisions are left to these powerful individuals. This might have influenced stakeholder involvement in the decision-making process in the school (Odhiambo & Hii, 2012). All four schools had low learner enrolment, which may also have influenced the decisions regarding the curriculum, including the decision to adopt Tourism as a subject.

The schools in this study had low staff numbers at the time of data collection. The low teacher numbers, coupled with heavy workloads under the NCS system at the time, may have influenced the schools' decisions regarding the introduction of new subjects. Moreover, the schools presented similar features with regards to the packaging of subjects in their respective curricula. All offered three common streams: Science, Commerce and Humanities. The

exception was Busabusa Secondary School which had an additional Technical stream as it had originally been established as a Technical Secondary School.

The majority of the teachers in these schools had professional teaching qualifications. However, some were unqualified (i.e., they had qualifications that were not related to the teaching profession). This implies high teacher turnover because UTE teachers were employed on a temporary basis and teacher redeployment was common.

Of particular interest was the fact that the teaching of Tourism in the four schools was varied and inconsistent, possibly due to teacher shortages and bad decision-making. For example, at the time of the study only one of these schools (Nawe) was still offering Tourism in all three grades (Grade 10 -12), while the other three schools (Kwasakwasa, Kuzolunga and Busabusa) were offering the subject in two grades (Grades 11 and 12), which implies that Tourism might be phased out because a learner may only offer a subject in Grade 12 if it has been taken since Grade 10, unless a subject change is approved in Grade 11 under specific circumstances. This is discussed further in Chapters Five and Six.

This thesis was informed by the assumption that the existence of the SGB and SMT as management and governance structures in each school would go some way towards involving all school community members in deliberations about the curriculum, including the decision to introduce Tourism as a new subject in the curriculum. This will be explored in the chapters that follow.

The next section discusses the participants who were selected as subjects for data collection from these participating schools.

#### **4.6 Research Participants**

I used purposive sampling to select the participants. This means that I selected individuals who had a vested interest in both the subject (Tourism) and curriculum decision-making and who were most likely to be knowledgeable about the schools' decision to introduce Tourism in the curriculum. Also, it was important to include participants from each of the stakeholder groups in the schools in order to elicit their views. For this reason data were collected from an SGB member, the Principal, the HOD responsible for managing Tourism, and a Tourism teacher in each of the four schools. At Busabusa, the HOD was not interviewed because the principal managed Tourism in the absence of an HOD for Tourism. In addition to the school-based staff, including the Tourism teacher, the responsible HOD and the principals, an SGB member was selected from each school because he/she was representative of the parents in the governance structure. Table 4.5 below provides a summary of the schools and the participants from each school:



**Table 4.5: Summary of Participants from Each Participating School**

<b>Name of School</b>	<b>Year in which Tourism was introduced</b>	<b>Participants</b>	<b>Years of experience in the current position</b>	<b>Total Number of Participants</b>
Kwasakwasa	2002	Principal	18	4
		HOD	9	
		Tourism Teacher	21	
		SGB member	05	
Kuzolunga	2009	Principal	11	4
		HOD	2	
		Tourism Teacher	3	
		SGB member	2	
Nawe	2004	Principal	15	4
		HOD	5	
		Tourism Teacher	9	
		SGB member	3	
Busabusa	2008	Principal	9	3
		Tourism Teacher	7	
		SGB member	11	
<b>TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS</b>				<b>15</b>

#### **4.7 Data Generation and Analysis**

This study was located within the interpretive paradigm which called for contextualising the experiences related to the phenomenon under study. Informed by Denzin and Lincoln (2000), data for this study were generated using a variety of data collection methods. This approach enabled me to examine the nature of and rationale for curriculum decision-making processes in the schools in the introduction of Tourism. This was done to ensure that the limitations in

one method were complemented by the strengths of another. As Yates (2004) states, qualitative research is not only about observing and measuring, but also about collecting data from different sources and making sense of those data. The study used individual qualitative interviews and document analysis. These are described below.

#### **4.7.1 Interviews**

There are many ways in which participants can describe their lived experiences. In this study, the primary method of data collection was in-depth semi-structured interviews. Interviews “are not just a device for gathering information; rather, they are a process of reality construction to which both parties (interviewer and interviewee) contribute and by which both are affected” (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003, p. 140). The aim of the interview method in this study was therefore to develop a full, rich understanding of how and why the schools introduced Tourism in their curricula. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with each participant (i.e., the Principal, an HOD, a Tourism teacher and an SGB member) in each of the four schools, except one school where the Principal was also the Tourism manager. Each interview lasted for about one hour per participant in each school. Follow-up interviews were conducted with some participants to clarify and verify data. This is suggested by Wiersma (2000), who argues that an interview involves the collection of data through direct verbal interaction between individuals. This clarification process enabled me to explain the purpose of the study and allow the participants to ask clarifying questions. In addition, the interview allowed me to probe areas of interest as they arose during the interview (Gray, 2004), thus affording more opportunities for me to clarify issues with the participants. Linked to this was the fact that I could also tailor the questions to individual participants’ needs and the prevailing circumstances during the interviews.

An interview schedule with semi-structured questions was developed and interviews were conducted with all the selected participants (see Appendix F). The development of the interview schedule was guided by the research questions and the conceptual analysis developed for this study. Struwig and Stead (2001) are of the view that semi-structured interviews use broad predetermined questions that are posed to each participant in a systematic and consistent manner, but the participants are also given the opportunity to discuss issues beyond the confines of the questions. This type of interview allowed me to remain in control of the topic, but it also allowed the participants to freely give subjective responses (Henning, et al., 2004). Semi-structured interviews permit a thorough understanding of the participants' opinions and their reasoning, which would not have been possible in this study if I had used a questionnaire.

Interviews with all the participants were conducted in their respective schools after I had sought permission from the Department of Basic Education, the school management, and the participants themselves (see Appendices C, D and E for examples of the permission and consent letters). I felt that I should conduct the interviews in the schools, which was in line with the principles of qualitative data collection where data should be collected in the natural setting (Walford, 2005). After permission had been granted, I visited the schools and negotiated and agreed upon dates for the data collection period in 2010. Space to conduct the interviews was allocated on the schools' premises. The principals were most cooperative throughout the entire process. All the participants were willing to be interviewed and availed themselves of the requirements for our discussions. The interviews with the participants were audio recorded and extensive notes of the participants' responses and my own reactions to these were also recorded in writing. I also did follow-up interviews (in 2010 and 2014) with some of the participants to verify and cross-check information recorded during the initial

interviews and also to elicit additional information. The interviews were supplemented by the analysis of documentary evidence. I was given access to specific documents in the schools, as discussed in the section below. The documents that I accessed included the minutes of meetings (i.e., SMT, staff, parents, and SGB meetings), school policies, school profiles, and log books.

#### **4.7.2 Document Analysis**

To supplement the data collected by means of interviews, I also conducted document analysis. According to Bowen (2009), document analysis is an organised method for examining printed documents. Documents contain information that was recorded without the researcher's intervention and which is reasonably free from the researcher's influence (Creswell, 2007). As Cohen et al. (2007) suggest, document analysis enables the researcher to access information pertaining to inaccessible persons or subjects because documents have little or no counter activity towards the researcher as they were not documented for research purposes.

For the purposes of this study, I analysed documents such as minutes of meetings (i.e., meetings by staff, the SMT, parents, and the SGB), log books, school profiles, and school policies. I made two visits of three hours per participating school, depending on the availability of documents. During these sessions I accessed and clarified the origin and role of each of the documents I perused. The documents were also useful in making inferences about past and present incidents. The aim of documentary evidence was to try to understand why and how the decisions were taken to introduce Tourism in the respective school

curricula. I particularly traced minutes of meetings to enlighten the way in which the decision to include Tourism was made in each participating school.

Although documents were not widely used as authentic sources of data as suggested by Gribbs (2002), document analysis played a crucial role in this study as they revealed – or failed to reveal - historical transactions relating to curriculum matters and subject selection within the schools under study. However, I was cognisant of the challenge that documents are prone to subjectivity because humans tend to report more favourably about incidents that they have an interest in than about those they are less interested in. This is argued by Bowen (2009, p. 29) who states that “public records that purport to be objective and accurate contain built-in biases that the researcher may not be aware of”. This may be because such documents are not intended to be regarded as data for research purposes.

#### **4.7.3 Analysis of the Data**

McMillan and Schumacher (2001) view data analysis as a relatively systematic process of selecting, categorising, sorting, comparing, synthesising and interpreting to provide explanations of the phenomenon of interest. Specifically, Creswell (2007) views data analysis in qualitative research as an on-going process which involves the identification of significant statements, and the generation of themes and descriptions. I therefore analysed the data to develop narrative structures that could be used in the study report.

I analysed the data on an on-going basis; hence the data were integrated into all phases of the research, as suggested by McMillan and Schumacher (2001). It started immediately after the

interviews and document perusal. This helped me to reflect on the data as they were obtained and to identify gaps, which meant that strategies for collecting new and often better data had to be developed and applied. For example, I analysed each interview immediately in order to ensure that I recollected as much of the responses as I could and I then made decisions about follow-up interviews where there was a need.

At the end of the entire interviewing process and document perusal, the actual in-depth analyses of the data commenced. This was done using Tesch's eight-step descriptive analysis technique (as cited in Creswell, 2003, pp. 192-193). First, I carefully read and re-read the field notes looking for patterns, themes and ideas that described the views of the participants about Tourism and the decisions taken about its inclusion in the curriculum. Second, I selected notes from one interview and read it to find meaning in the information recorded. Third, I went through all the transcripts of the interviews and my notes on the documents that I had perused and arranged similar topics in groups. Fourth, I sorted statements according to similar meanings, which are commonly known as themes. Coding enabled me to organise large amounts of data and to discover patterns that would be difficult to detect by reading only. Fifth, I organised the data through collapsing the details into manageable units. These were synthesised in an effort to discover relationships and patterns, and in the process I was able to discover what was important and what was to be learned and thus I was able to create categories. Sixth, I arranged the codes alphabetically for easy referral. Seventh, after a number of theme and category reductions, I moved into a preliminary interpretive stage of analysis that was meant to answer the critical questions in this study. Finally, I developed my analysis and argument about the rationale for and nature of school communities' decision-making processes in the introduction of Tourism in the curriculum. This narrative is presented in the chapters that follow.

## **4.8 Trustworthiness**

The trustworthiness of the data was assured by adhering to two criteria. The first criterion was triangulation (see McMillan & Schumacher, 2001; Cohen et al., 2007). Triangulation was used to get different information and to supplement the weaknesses of one method with the strengths of another. Triangulation was done through the use of multiple methods of data collection: interviews and document analysis. The second criterion that was adhered to was seeking feedback from the participants to establish the credibility of the data. Feedback from my participants was continually sought during fieldwork and after the completion of the fieldwork by means of several visits to the schools to seek clarity and to verify if the conclusions I had arrived at were an accurate account of their experiences.

## **4.9 Ethical Considerations**

Adhering to ethical concerns as part of the fundamental design of any research project is important (Fin, et al., 2000). As such, ethical approval for the study was sought from and granted by the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethical Committee (Protocol Reference Number: HSS/0217/0100) of the University of KwaZulu-Natal (see Appendix A). This section discusses the ethical considerations that were observed. As the study involved human subjects, ethical issues had to be considered. These ranged from ensuring the confidentiality of the subjects to maintaining the confidentiality of the data collected.

#### **4.9.1 Gaining Access**

In order to gain access to the research sites (i.e., the four purposively selected schools), the cooperation and support from the schools where the research was to be conducted were crucial. The ability to collect data depends on gaining access to the source or participants (Saunders et al., 2007). Key gatekeepers control access to any research site (De Vos, Strydom, Fouche & Delpont, 2005). For the purpose of this study, the participants were recruited first through negotiating with the ‘key gatekeepers’ who were the Provincial Head of Department (Superintendent) as a representative of the Department of Basic Education (see Appendix B) and the Principal of each selected school. After permission had been granted to conduct the study at the respective schools, I sent a letter of invitation/request to schools that offered Tourism in Grades 10 – 12 (See Appendix D). I personally visited the participants’ schools prior to conducting the study. During the first visits I met the principal of each participating school. I introduced myself as a researcher and explained the nature of the study and the purpose for collecting data using that particular school. I presented a letter from the then Department of Education that authorised me to use these schools as a site for data collection (see Appendix C). The letter easily convinced the principals of my authenticity because it had been endorsed by a person in authority (i.e., the Provincial Head of Department). However, it was clearly explained to the principals that the involvement of all participants from their schools would be entirely voluntarily. All four principals granted access to their schools and teachers (see Appendix D).

#### **4.9.2 Informed Consent**

All the participants who agreed to be part of the study signed a letter of informed consent (see Appendix E) that described the nature of the research project as well as the nature of the



participants' involvement in it (Leedy & Ornmrod, 2005). The participants were consulted and advised about the research study and the purpose of the research was also verbally explained to them in order to make them understand the research context. This helped them to make an informed decision before agreeing to participate. I only proceeded with the individual interviews after obtaining consent from each participant. The participants were also informed that although they agreed to participate, they had the right to withdraw at any point during the study. A clear description of what the participants would actually be doing was given to them. Adequate information about their involvement in the study was given to them so that they could make an informed decision about participation or not.

#### **4.9.3 Confidentiality and Anonymity**

The purpose of the study was to explore the nature of and the rationale for curriculum decision-making among stakeholders, namely school management teams (SMTs), teachers and parents represented by the SGB in the selection of a new subject for the school curriculum. This was aimed at understanding why and how schools in the KwaZulu-Natal Province made decisions about including Tourism as a subject in the curriculum. This was done by examining the views of principals, SGB members, Tourism teachers, and HODs using semi-structured interviews. One challenge was that the participants were expected to talk about other stakeholders' involvement in the decision-making processes, which could have resulted in some level of discomfort and reluctance. To alleviate their fears, I assured them of the confidentiality of the information they would provide and the fact that their names would not be used in the reports developed from the study. Walford (2005) associates the concepts of anonymity and confidentiality with participants' right to privacy.

Issues such as the purpose or intention of the study, the confidentiality of the sources of data and the assurance of anonymity of the subjects were discussed prior to each interview and before the signing of the consent letter. The identity of each participant was protected and they were assured of their anonymity. I assured the participants that the data would be used only for the purpose of this study. As maintaining the privacy and confidentiality of the participants was important, the schools were given pseudonyms in this report. All documentary evidence, such as minute books and policies, were examined with official permission from the people concerned.

#### **4.10 Limitations of the Study**

This study had some limitations. First, the interview as an instrument for data collection has some limitations. Participants may feel uneasy and adopt avoidance tactics because the researcher is regarded as researching downwards. The position I was occupying at the time of data collection as a Department of Education official researching schools could be regarded as a downward approach (Hitchcock & Hughes, 2001). This means that as the researcher in the study who was in a senior management position working with subordinates (during the initial year of data collection I was a Subject Advisor in the district), it was natural to face issues of power dynamics during data collection. I felt that these power dynamics might impact the interactions between the participants and myself and that this might lead to the participants providing information that they assumed I wanted to hear. To overcome this limitation, I tried to explain my research role and to separate it from my official role as much as possible through negotiations and discussions with the participants prior to the interviews. I explained to them at the start of the interview process that I was there only in my capacity as a researcher and not as a Department of Education official. I made it clear that this was my

personal study for my PhD which was not part of the Department's visits and monitoring of schools. In addition, data were analysed immediately after the interviews had been completed to allow me to go back to the participants and to probe for responses that may have been excluded from or limited during the interviews because of power relation issues.

Another obvious limitation of this study was that the participants were required to look back and reconstruct what had already happened regarding the introduction of Tourism in the schools. Tourism was introduced in the schools in the period 2002-2009 and the data collection was done in 2010. This meant that the participants had to rely on memory and that I had to track down documents which, in some cases, were no longer available. In some instances the time lapse was as long as eight years. In such a context, collecting post facto data from participants might not be as reliable as the information from a current phenomenon. Babbie and Mouton (2001, p. 337) highlight the following as some of the threats that are posed by reconstructing past events: selective memory (where participants might recall only certain aspects of the event or process and in that way generate unreliable and invalid data); memory decay (where participants might forget some of the relevant details of the process); and social desirability response (where participants may provide the researcher with responses that they believe are desirable or expected by the interviewer). For example, participants from Kwasakwasa and Nawe Secondary Schools had to remember incidents that took place in the previous eight and six years respectively, whilst Busabusa and Kuzolunga had to remember incidents that took place in the previous three and two years respectively. It is possible that memory decay could have occurred. To address this, the study used triangulation of methods to increase the trustworthiness of the data. Specifically, two instruments of collecting data (interviews and document analysis) were used to access similar information in order to complement each other.

The study also had limitations in respect of its methodology. A methodological limitation is that though case studies allow for in-depth analyses of different cases, they are limited in representativeness. However, this was overcome through developing trustworthiness of the data so that the four sites could provide in-depth information regarding the nature of and rationale for the decision-making processes the various stakeholders engaged in when the decision was taken to include Tourism in the school curriculum.

#### **4.11 Synthesis**

This chapter has provided an overview of the design of the study. A discussion of the qualitative method as an approach for data collection was presented. Guided by the propositions derived from the theoretical frameworks that were discussed in the previous chapter, the study was located within an interpretive paradigm and employed a qualitative approach to research. A case study design involving interviews and analysis of documents was adopted to enable me to capture the factors that informed the respective school communities in their selection of Tourism as a subject and to determine the extent of the involvement of the various stakeholders in the decision-making process. To assist me in understanding and interpreting the data, a detailed description of the sampling procedures as well as the contextual factors of the sampled case schools was given. The use of various instruments to generate data was discussed and their relevance to the study was illuminated. The ethical issues that had to be addressed in the study were also highlighted. These issues included: trustworthiness of data, gaining access to the participating schools, seeking permission to conduct the study, informed consent, and confidentiality. The limitations of the study were also discussed. The next chapter presents a discussion of the findings pertaining to the study.

## CHAPTER FIVE

# FACTORS INFLUENCING THE ADOPTION OF NEW SUBJECTS IN THE SCHOOL CURRICULUM

### 5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore the nature of and rationale for curriculum decision-making among stakeholders in the selection of new subjects for the school curriculum. Using the adoption of Tourism as a subject in the curriculum as a case study, the study addressed the main question: *What is the nature of and rationale for the curriculum decision-making processes schools engage in when adopting a new subject in their respective curricula?* In pursuit of the main question, the study revolved around two sub-questions:

- *What factors inform school communities in their decisions to introduce Tourism in the curriculum?*
- *To what extent and in what ways does curriculum decision-making in schools involve the various stakeholders from the school community?*

I discussed the research design and methodology employed in this study in the previous chapter. The study adopted a qualitative research design and a multi-site case study involving four schools. Data were collected using semi-structured individual interviews with various stakeholders (i.e., principals, Heads of Departments or HODs, Tourism teachers, parents representing the School Governing Body (SGB), and document analysis. Data from audio-taped interviews and field notes were analysed using a narrative format. I now present the

findings that address the first research question: *What factors inform school communities in their decision to introduce Tourism in the curriculum?*

Available research suggests that both external and internal factors may play a major role in informing curriculum decision-making processes when a new subject is adopted in the curriculum (Marishane, 2002; Taylor, 2000; Fullan, 2007). In the case of curriculum decision-making which involves choices about what knowledge is worth teaching and what subjects would best reflect or contain such knowledge, such factors tend to dictate who participates, to what extent they participate, and in what ways they play a role in informing the decisions that are made (Mulford, et al., 2000; Collins, 2007). Those who wield more power in the school tend to play a major role in influencing the decisions regarding which knowledge is of most worth and which knowledge is relegated. Such participation (or lack thereof) in decision-making processes has implications for the status of particular kinds of knowledge in the school and beyond.

The study was informed by three theoretical frameworks. The first was the stakeholder theory as proposed by Freeman (1984). This theory posits that all stakeholders should participate in decision-making processes, such as when adopting new subjects. Second, Obanya's (2004) functional curriculum theory suggests that schools' decisions to restructure curriculum and to include vocational oriented subjects such as Tourism are influenced by the political and economic needs of the country as well as the needs of the school and its learners. This theory argues that for a country to participate in the global economy, it must adopt education policies that promote subjects that will provide its people with core skills to contribute to the economy and promote skills development in order to address the issue of unemployment. Finally, Walker's (1971) model of curriculum development posits that schools engage in

deliberations and discussions that are participatory and involve school communities in making curriculum decisions. Walker's theory lays down the broad framework within which curriculum decisions are made. This theory suggests that the engagement of all stakeholders in the decision-making process for curriculum development is crucial.

Having been informed by the conceptual and theoretical frameworks, I developed a set of propositions for the decision-making processes the schools participating in this study engaged in when they decided to adopt Tourism as a subject in the curriculum. First, the study proposes that significant forces will influence decisions to adopt a new subject such as Tourism as part of the school curriculum. Second, the study proposes that there are various actors who form part of the school community (i.e., principals, heads of department, teachers and parents) and who must be involved as stakeholders in the process of making decisions about the curriculum. Third, the study proposes that schools should engage in deliberations and discussions that are participatory and that involve school communities (i.e., stakeholders) in making curriculum decisions. Failure to involve them might result in decisions that do not address the actual needs of the learners and the community. Thus, to avoid this, school communities must engage in deliberations and participatory curriculum decision-making processes when adopting a new subject as part of the school curriculum.

Guided by the propositions developed from the conceptual and theoretical frameworks, my analysis of the data focused on the factors that informed the school communities participating in this study in making decisions leading to the adoption of Tourism. The data and discussion presented in the sections below were generated from semi-structured interviews with various stakeholders (i.e., Principals, Heads of Departments, tourism teachers and School Governing

Body members), as well as from document analyses. In the following section I discuss the findings on the factors informing curriculum decision-making in the schools under study.

## 5.2 Factors Informing Curriculum Decision-making in the Schools

In this section, I present the findings that address the research question: *What factors inform school communities in their decisions to introduce Tourism in the curriculum?* An analysis of the data related to this question was informed by the functional curriculum theory (Obanya, 2004) which recognises the influence of various factors on curriculum decision-making. The findings suggest that two sets of factors influenced the school communities' decision-making processes in the adoption of Tourism as a subject. As illustrated in Figure 5.1 below, these included factors from outside the school (i.e., macro policy factors) as well as factors from within the school (i.e., institutional factors).

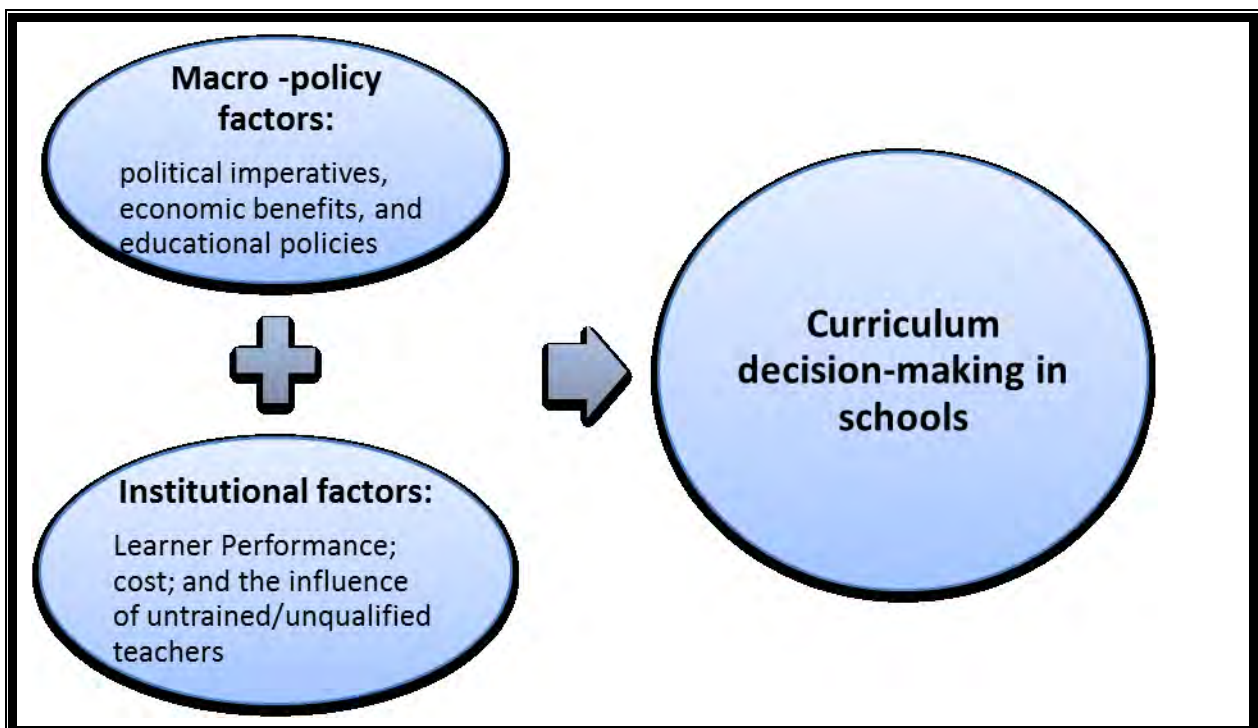


Figure 5.1: Factors Influencing Curriculum Decision-making in Schools



### **5.2.1 Macro-Policy Factors**

The findings suggest that the external environment in which the schools were located tended to have a direct influence on the choice of subjects for the curriculum. This seems to have been the case in the adoption of Tourism in the schools participating in this study. The participants linked the influence of macro-policy factors to three aspects: political imperatives, economic benefits, and educational policies. The data suggest that these factors played a major role in informing the decisions made by the school communities towards adopting Tourism as a new subject in the curriculum. The influence of educational policies is discussed in the section below.

#### **5.2.1.1 The Influence of Educational Policies**

This study posits that educational policies influence the nature of knowledge that schools under study select for inclusion in the curriculum. In South Africa, the policies related to subject selection include the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) (Department of Basic Education, 2011a) and its predecessor, the National Curriculum Statement Grade 10-12 (NCS Grades 10-12) (Department of Education, 2003), the National Policy Pertaining to the Progression and Promotion Requirements of the NCS Grades R-12 (Department of Basic Education, 2011b) and the White Paper for Post-School Education and Training (2013).

As discussed in the previous chapters, the NCS, the CAPS and the National Policy Pertaining to the Progression and Promotion Requirements of the NCS Grades R-12 are the curriculum policies that have informed the selection of subjects in schools nationally. The introduction of

the NCS for the Further Education and Training (FET) phase in 2006 led to a strong subject-oriented approach requiring that each subject be taught independently from the other subjects (such as Accounting, Tourism, and Economics). The NCS classified subjects into those that were compulsory subjects (all schools had to offer them) and approved elective subjects (schools could select subjects according to their needs and resources). The policies directed all schools to offer subjects based on prescribed rules of combination. Among the subjects on the elective list were vocational subjects that were intended to orientate learners more effectively to the world of work by teaching them skills needed for accessing the job market and for entrepreneurship. Tourism was one such subject. This policy had a significant influence on the curriculum choices of schools as they had to engage in decision-making for the selection of knowledge in the form of subjects to be included in the curriculum.

The more recent introduction of the CAPS and the National Policy Pertaining to the Progression and Promotion Requirements of the NCS Grades R-12 policies does not deviate from the NCS with regards to a subject-oriented approach. These policies also classify subjects into compulsory subjects and approved elective subjects and direct all schools to offer subjects based on prescribed rules of combination. The rules of combination require that a learner in the FET phase offers four compulsory subjects (two languages, Mathematics or Mathematical Literacy, and Life Orientation) and three elective subjects that are selected from the list of approved subjects. Other than the rules of subject combination, the policy provides minimal guidance on subject choice for inclusion in the curriculum. This has resulted in inconsistencies in subject offerings among schools as each school may include and exclude subjects in their curriculum offering for various reasons at any given time. Suffice it to note that in the schools participating in this study, at the time of the study Tourism was

offered as one of the three elective subjects in the FET phase that a learner could choose to make up the seven subjects required for a National Senior Certificate.

A second factor linked to the rules of combination relates to the fact that among the subjects schools must select for teaching, are the so-called designated subjects, which are required for admission into university programmes. Of particular significance to this study was the fact that most of the vocational subjects such as Tourism, Hospitality Studies and the technical subjects that appear on the approved subject list in the CAPS are not on the designated list. This means that these subjects do not determine or enhance a learner's chances or marketability as they do not count for university entry. However, despite this, these subjects have become popular choices for many schools. An explanation for this might lie in the fact that the government, and by extension schools and communities, regard the offering of these subjects as key to addressing the pressing socio-economic challenges such as unemployment and poverty.

A third policy that seems to influence schools in their decision to adopt an elective subject in the curriculum is the White Paper for Post-School Education and Training (hereafter, White Paper for PSET) (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2013). The White Paper for PSET is aimed at transforming the entire post-schooling sector to include not only universities, but other post-secondary school institutions as well. Thus, this policy advocates for a system with many different options including those that prepare learners for the university track (university system) and others that are more vocationally oriented and prepare learners for employment, in particular the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) system. It provides alternative forms of education and career pathing for

learners who opt for vocational subjects at secondary school level. Through the establishment of the TVET colleges, the policy aims to provide learners with high level skills that are required in industry, which includes the tourism industry. The policy states that South Africa must expand its post-schooling system to cater for more learners and to provide opportunities for the development of skills-related subjects. The vision is that such skills are needed for the country to eradicate the legacy of apartheid inequalities.

The findings suggested that the four schools in the study chose to introduce Tourism in their respective curricula partly in response to this view. For example, the participants reported that their decision to include Tourism had been informed by the view that vocational subjects such as Tourism are key to addressing skills shortages, unemployment and poverty. The perception was that introducing the subject would assist learners to leave school with skills that would help them find employment or enter post-schooling programmes at institutions other than universities. One Tourism teacher explained:

*The decision to include Tourism was made but I don't think the principal considered that it does not form part of the university requirements as it is not on that list. I think he mainly focused on the needs of the school as the subject is said to be providing skills that are needed in the work place. This is recorded as one of the aims of this subject in the CAPS for Tourism. I think this has been the major focus for the school to address the needs of our community as most of them are not working (Tourism Teacher, Busabusa).*

The literature that argues for the ability of learners to access University plays a significant role in influencing schools' decisions in the selection of a new subject (Goodson, 1995; Geldenhuys, 2000). However, the schools in this study did not take this into consideration. Instead, the parents for example, felt that skills development was a more important factor in

whether or not to adopt Tourism in these schools. They felt that the skills their children would develop in Tourism education would afford them opportunities to find work after Matric<sup>10</sup>. This may signify that the parents did not value university studies in the same light as they valued the skills that learners acquire through subjects taught at secondary school. The immediate need to develop vocation-oriented skills and to address the high unemployment and poverty rates seemed to be more powerful in influencing curriculum decision-making in schools than the need for university education, which most parents would also not afford. In an interview, one parent stated the following:

*I may not exactly tell you about the influence of universities when teachers choose subjects, but as a parent, I think the decision to include Tourism and not consider university entrance was the right one if you count that we do not have money to send our children to school [tertiary institutions]. So with Tourism they can start their small businesses or work without having to attend university. This is mostly what we need when we send learners to school because in this area very few learners go to universities each year (SGB Member, Kwasakwasa).*

Therefore, despite the fact that passing Tourism at Grade 12 level would not significantly enhance learners' chances of entering university as it is not on the designated subject list in the CAPS (Department of Basic Education, 2011a), the schools in the study adopted it. Like the teachers and parents, the principals also believed that the decision to adopt Tourism was influenced by the fact that most of the learners would not attend university because of a lack of funds. It was therefore clear that the schools' decision to introduce Tourism was not influenced by a need to meet university entrance requirements. The principals' comments

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<sup>10</sup> 'Matric' is commonly used in South Africa to refer to the final year of secondary school (Grade 12) and the qualification received on graduating from secondary school.

concluded with the views of parents and teachers, as they observed that the skills taught in Tourism would be an answer for the many learners who are unable to access universities after Matric. Rather, the decision was influenced by the need to address the skills shortage and unemployment among the youth in these communities. For these schools, introducing a subject such as Tourism would expose learners to alternative career pathways that would help them access the workplace or create entrepreneurial opportunities and to ultimately reduce the high rate of unemployment. Like the parents, the principals believed that education in these communities should focus on skills building (White Paper for Post-School Education and Training, 2013). Explaining this view, one principal stated:

*In most cases our learners do not attend universities because parents do not have money. So including Tourism would assist learners after Matric. They still could be accepted at the university but not every learner would [want to] attend university and even those learners who do not pass Matric could use these skills for business opportunities and job creation. This community needs people with skills, so if they follow avenues of education other than universities, I think they could contribute more to the community (Principal, Nawe).*

Thus the participants in this study agreed that it was sufficient that Tourism was a recognised and not a designated subject in the National curriculum. In fact, the fact that it is not on the designated list of subjects required for university entrance had little influence on the decision the schools made to adopt Tourism as an elective subject. Implementing a high school education that could help address the more immediate challenges of high unemployment and poverty rates was a more attractive path to take.

It is beyond the scope of this thesis to critique the views the Department of Basic Education holds in terms of the educational requirements of the citizens of this country. Suffice it to

note that the view and the utilitarian approach to curriculum decision-making it encourages informed these communities' decisions. For the participants in this study, introducing Tourism would promote skills development and alternative vocational careers. In turn, this would lead to improvement of the tourism industry and provide job opportunities for the youth in the communities. This finding is in line with the literature which suggests that the adoption of vocational subjects such as Tourism is mostly inspired by a political desire to increase the equity in education and employment opportunities (Brady & Kennedy 2003; Obanya, 2004; United States Agency for International Development Southern Africa, 2013). The rationale for including Tourism focused on skills building, job creation and employability and resonates well with the aims of skills development as advocated by the relevant National policies.

However, while the decision to adopt Tourism as an elective subject may be inspired by the promise of skills-building in vocational subjects such as Tourism, the CAPS Grades 10-12 for Tourism (Department of Basic Education, 2011) does not include the teaching of practical skills. For example, the document stipulates the specific aims of Tourism as including:

“...different types of tourists and the purpose of their travelling; the different tourism sectors, with special reference to transport, hospitality, travel organising and support services, and the attraction sector; map work; foreign exchange concepts and the buying power of different foreign currencies; the influence of world time zones on travel; South Africa and the SADC countries as tourism destinations; world famous icons and World Heritage Sites; sustainable and responsible tourism; marketing of tourism products; technology in tourism; customer care and the value of service excellence; and tour planning” (Department of Basic Education, 2011, p. 8).

Arguably, only the last three of these topics might be interpreted as seeking to develop skills as the rest of the objectives focus on knowledge about tourism. However, whether the actual teaching of Tourism provided the learners in these schools with practical skills training or not was not established in this study. Further studies that should focus on curriculum implementation could investigate the ways in which teachers of Tourism interpret and enact this aspect of the policy. In particular, no work-based learning is required in the policy. Such learning would provide learners with occupational skills that are used in the tourism industry (Swart, et al., 2014). As Allais (2012) asserts, despite the best intentions of the South African education policies, adopting these subjects will fail to provide learners with skills needed for employment and for addressing poverty in these communities. Thus, it seems that the economic benefits of introducing a subject such as Tourism, which is the focus of section 5.2.1.3 below, will not materialise.

#### **5.2.1.2 Political Imperatives**

The findings revealed that the decision to adopt Tourism as a subject in the schools participating in this study was influenced by the political imperative for redressing historical inequalities in the country. Informed by national policy reforms and discourses, this view sees Tourism (as a school subject) and the tourism industry as key to addressing socio-economic challenges such as unemployment and poverty and to reducing the historical racial, social class and gender inequalities, among others, which are residues of apartheid era policies. In particular, among other education reform initiatives the post-1994 government in South Africa introduced vocational subjects such as Tourism in the secondary schooling system as part of the effort to redress the imbalances of the apartheid era, among them poverty and other socio-economic inequalities in communities (Brady & Kennedy, 2003;



Department of Tourism, 2011; Kamugisha & Moteng'e, 2014). The introduction of Tourism, for example, was meant to address the lack of skills which was seen as a barrier to accessing business and job opportunities in the tourism industry, and to promote the participation of the majority of the population, mainly black Africans, in tourism. It was aimed to address the many imbalances of the past by affording learners opportunities to develop the skills required in the industry and to encourage learners to explore entrepreneurial and job opportunities.

This policy imperative did not go unnoticed in the schools participating in this study. The principals, teachers and SGB members who participated identified government's focus on the tourism industry and tourism education as a stimulus for their decision to introduce Tourism as a subject. The participants confirmed that the introduction of Tourism in their schools had been influenced by the fact that the government had advocated tourism development and tourism training as a priority for the country with the intention of improving tourism and, consequently, the economy of the country for the government and the school communities in this study. One way to achieve this aim was through a relevant school curriculum that would develop the skills needed to further improve and support the tourism industry. For example, one principal commented:

*The new government showed interest in Tourism which was a new subject in South Africa and got it into the curriculum as a way of redressing past imbalances, especially in Black communities. This was meant to help our communities to participate in Tourism activities. The subject was then added on the list which schools can choose from. As a school we saw it fitting to follow the direction of the government by adopting Tourism into our own curriculum (Principal, Busabusa).*

Similarly, a Tourism teacher voiced the issue as follows:

*Teaching tourism is extremely important especially in this province (KwaZulu-Natal) because this province is characterised by many tourist attractions which are promoted by the government to open opportunities even for small businesses. The subject is worthwhile to be taught in schools so that we are in line with what the government wants to achieve...to promote tourism in the country (Tourism Teacher, Kwasakwasa).*

Thus, the schools in the study opted to introduce Tourism because they regarded it as a subject that would align them to the national priorities such as increasing and improving tourism activities in the country.

The participants indicated that their schools were under the impression that by including Tourism in their curriculum they would also create tourism awareness in their communities. In an interview, an SGB member commented:

*The municipal government has told us that the tourism industry is very important and the provincial government stated this at all the community forums that we attended. So the decision to include this subject was also because of that, I think (SGB Member, Kwasakwasa).*

Given the low socio-economic status due to high rates of unemployment and poverty of the communities in this study, this finding was not surprising. Initiatives that promised to address these challenges by developing skills and providing job opportunities were bound to be welcomed. The location of these communities and schools in a tourism active environment also placed them in an ideal position for the adoption of Tourism as a subject. For them, introducing Tourism in the curriculum was meant to develop skills, create employment and entrepreneurial opportunities for the youth, and ultimately to address the high rates of unemployment and poverty in families.

The extent to which the introduction of Tourism in these schools has led to the realisation of these political imperatives was beyond the scope of this study. Suffice it to note that in 2014, at the time of data collection for this research and almost 16 years after the introduction of Tourism as a subject in the curriculum, very little had changed. My observations suggested that the communities were still experiencing high rates of unemployment and poverty and there were still low rates of participation in the tourism industry by the youth and other members of these communities. This suggests that political imperatives alone as a motivation for curriculum decisions do not necessarily lead to social transformation. Moreover, it is my contention that other factors, both outside and inside the schools, tend to play a more significant role in the ways in which curriculum decisions are made and impact the influence of those decisions on social transformation.

The section below focuses on the ways in which economic benefits influenced curriculum decision-making in the schools.

### **5.2.1.3 Economic Benefits**

Linked to the above, a third influence on the decision to adopt Tourism as a subject in the participating schools was its perceived economic benefits, such as skills development and creating employment opportunities. As stated above, the literature suggests that the introduction of Tourism as a subject in schools' respective curricula could be of benefit to the economy by creating job opportunities and reducing the high rates of unemployment (Page, 2005; Lewis, 2006). Similarly, a refrain among the participants in the study was the belief that adopting Tourism as a subject would help the learners from these schools to get jobs in

the Tourism industry, thereby dealing with unemployment and reducing poverty. In this regard, one principal commented:

*We have included Tourism in our curriculum because it is an engaging subject that exposes learners to employment and also career opportunities if it is taught at school (Principal, Kwasakwasa).*

Another participant concurred, and further argued that teaching Tourism would lead to employment opportunities and prepare learners to contribute to the required work force.

*We included this new subject Tourism because we thought it will [sic] help learners to get employment in the tourism industry immediately....we also wanted learners to assist community members who have small businesses but who are not aware of opportunities in the tourism industry so that the entire community benefits. Tourism helps learners to start their own small businesses such as standing on the roads and selling to tourist on weekends, as the principal would say (HOD, Nawe).*

This thinking was not surprising given the high rates of unemployment that are prevalent in the areas where the schools are located. Participants saw Tourism as potentially opening up a range of new career opportunities for learners. Their understanding was that through emphasis on Tourism as a subject in the schools, they would have direct and indirect economic benefits through employment. This view is supported by Page (2005) who notes that many governments and communities view Tourism education as an opportunity to offer new employment opportunities in this growing sector of their economies.

Linked to this, the participants also suggested that Tourism was selected because of its potential for providing entrepreneurial skills for young people. The participants regarded Tourism as a practical subject that would teach learners vocational competencies such as occupational and business skills that would, for example, help them start their own small

businesses. As one principal explained:

*Yes, we were told that Tourism [would provide skills that will prepare learners even to start their own businesses. I then thought if learners could be taught this subject they could acquire those skills and I added it in our school (Principal, Kwasakwasa).*

The parents believed that the skills that learners would gain from studying Tourism would help them to create employment opportunities so that they could become self-employed. A member of SGB observed:

*I think the teachers introduced Tourism because they wanted to give learners some skills and knowledge about the industry of tourism; then they can develop themselves by starting small businesses and sell to tourists who always pass by in this area. I think we are achieving that by giving learners some skills to work in the tourism industry (SGB Member, Kuzolunga).*

The participants thus perceived that Tourism would teach the learners economic and business skills that they would be able to use to start their own businesses and to employ people from the community. This perception is in line with the aim of the White Paper for PSET (Department of Higher Education, 2013), which is to increase jobs and to enhance skills by widening access and participation in the economy post schooling. According to this policy, skills shortage is a function of the inflexible post-school education and a major contributor to South Africa's unemployment. Thus, teaching vocational subjects such as Tourism and addressing the skills shortage would not only create employment opportunities in many areas, but would also contribute to reducing the high rates of poverty in communities. The implication here is that there is a great demand, as was also perceived by participants, for more vocational and skills-based subjects in our school curriculum.

These findings raised several questions, including the following:

- *Are learners who pass Tourism in Matric getting employed in the tourism industry?*
- *To what extent are the skills they learn in the subject proving useful in accessing jobs or in starting entrepreneurial efforts?*
- *To what extent have the economic benefits of teaching Tourism been unrealistically exaggerated?*

Addressing these questions was beyond the scope of the study. However, it is clear that the extent to which the teaching of Tourism in schools might, in practical terms, be addressing government's policy imperatives and school communities' expectations and needs (e.g., addressing unemployment and poverty) requires further study.

### **5.2.2 Institutional Factors**

Using the adoption of Tourism in the curriculum as a case study for analysis, this study focused on the nature and rationale for curriculum decision-making in selected schools in KwaZulu-Natal. This thesis was informed by the proposition that, in addition to factors outside the school as discussed in the section above, the curriculum decision-making process in schools would also be influenced by factors within the school (McNaught et al., 2000). Informed by this, I also examined the influence of institutional factors on the decision to adopt Tourism as a subject in the curriculum in the selected schools. The findings suggested that factors such as learner performance, unavailability of material resources (e.g., infrastructure and teaching and learning resources) and human resources (e.g., un/under qualified teachers) tended to play a role in the schools' decision to adopt Tourism as a subject in the curriculum.

### 5.2.2.1 Learner Performance

At the time of data collection in 2010, the participating schools were regarded as underperforming<sup>11</sup> because of poor learner performance in the Matric (Grade 12) exit examination. To illustrate, Table 5.1 below shows the percentage of learners who passed Matric in the five-year period preceding data collection for this study.

**Table 5.1 Matric Pass rate from 2005-2009**

SCHOOL	% Passed in	% Passed in	% Passed in	% Passed in	% Passed in
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Kwasakwasa	57	72	52	29	19
Kuzolunga	54	60	72	47	53
Nawe	35	49	31	58	81
Busabusa	28	19	40	37	39

As the table above suggests, for the five years preceding initial data collection for this study, learner performance in the five schools varied. With the exception of Nawe which experienced an improvement from 35% in 2005 to 81% in 2009, the other three schools experienced only a slight improvement (Busabusa) or suffered a decline in performance (Kwasakwasa and, to some extent, Kuzolunga). Whether these results can be attributed to the introduction of Tourism in these schools or not, was not a focus of this study. Further studies and analyses are needed to investigate the extent to which the improvement was a result of

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<sup>11</sup> Underperforming schools in the South African context are those schools that have not achieved a 60% pass rate for learners in Matric (Grade 12).

the introduction of Tourism at Nawe and other schools that have experienced similar improvement.

Due to the heavy scrutiny from government and the communities, the schools were under pressure to find ways of improving learner performance in the NSC examination. Tourism was adopted in the schools in different years over the period 2002 to 2009. The findings suggested that this was done partly to address the high failure rates they were experiencing at Matric level. For example, the participants in this study admitted that the high failure rate in their Matric results had influenced their decision to adopt Tourism. Moreover, the adoption of Tourism had been informed by the perception that the subject would be ‘easy to pass’ compared to other subjects in the curriculum, such as Agricultural Science and Computer Applications Technology. Goeldner’s (2001) study also found that Tourism education was regarded as a ‘soft’ option for inclusion in the school curriculum. The participants were of the view that adopting Tourism would ease the burden of poor Matric results on the schools. A teacher’s comment captures this view:

*Our results had dropped and the Principal was tired of being called to the district and circuit to explain so he thought of including Tourism to help improve the results so that we would no longer fall in the failing category. He saw Tourism as a best intervention to improve results because we had a drop in the results so we urgently needed a subject that would boost Matric performance....Tourism was indeed one.*  
(Tourism Teacher, Busabusa).

In this regard, Resh and Benavot (2003) earlier argued that some schools reorganise subject groupings and offerings on the basis of perceived student abilities and limitations. Similarly,



Tourism was introduced in these schools for those learners who were not doing well in subjects like Mathematics and Science. To illustrate, one teacher stated:

*The Principal always emphasised that the reason for the high failure rate in our school was the learners' fear of Mathematics and Science and a lack of laboratories for the sciences. I think it was for that reason that he opted to introduce Tourism which we think was regarded as an easy subject that many learners can pass so that the school can get good Matric results. However, the results for the school have still been fluctuating even when we have tried out Tourism. Maybe it is because of the other subjects that the learners are taking with Tourism (Tourism Teacher, Nawe).*

While the final assessment marks for most subjects in Matric are obtained by means of a school-based assessment (SBA) mark and the final NSC examination, the CAPS document for Tourism (and a few other subjects) requires that 50% percent of the final mark is made up of a school-based practical assessment task (PAT). The other 50% percent is made up in the final examination. The consequent (in my view, erroneous) perception that Tourism is a 'soft' option may therefore partly explain the reason for introducing Tourism as an intervention for improving pass rates in Matric in the participating schools. One of the principals explained:

*The schools followed a wave of Tourism inclusion in the district because it was a new subject in the school system and it was giving learners half marks for written work and half for work experience. This was going to help our learners to pass without having to sweat much. At this time we were having a crisis with our school Matric results and hoped for a better solution (Principal, Kwasakwasa).*

These schools regarded improving learner performance as a major motive for adopting Tourism as it was believed that the adoption of Tourism as a 'soft' option would lead to improved results. However, the fact that these schools continued to perform poorly even after the adoption of Tourism in the curriculum, which occurred in different years, suggests that

other factors might have played a role in influencing learner performance in the schools. This observation is addressed in more detail in Chapter 7. Furthermore, the extent to and ways in which this perception of the subject influenced the quality of teaching in the classrooms are important to flag even though they were beyond the scope of this study. Questions that were raised by this finding included the following:

- *To what extent and in what ways does the view that Tourism is easy to pass influence the pedagogical decisions teachers make and the strategies they use in delivering the curriculum?*
- *What impact does this have on the overall quality of teaching and learning in schools?*

Clearly, further research is needed to investigate these questions.

The next section explores the notion of Tourism as a cost effective curriculum option in the context of resource poor schools.

### **5.2.2.2 Tourism as a Cost Effective Option**

The lack of resources in education such as the lack of finances and textbooks that support teaching and learning (Oaks, 2001, Dieltiens, 2006) is often cited as a huge factor in curriculum decision-making in schools. Oaks (2001) argues that if resources are lacking, then the implementation of the curriculum will be difficult. This thesis therefore argues that the decision to introduce a new subject such as Tourism in the curriculum must be informed by resource availability in the school to support the implementation of the subject. Similarly, Dieltiens (2006) maintains that access to resources influences the nature of curriculum decisions that schools make and the success of implementing such decisions. In this context, an interesting dichotomy emerged in this study. On the one hand the participants

acknowledged the importance of resources in implementing curricular decisions and identified the lack of these in their schools as problematic, yet on the other hand they argued that it was this lack of resources that influenced the schools' decision to introduce Tourism in the curriculum. The participants regarded Tourism as a 'safe' and inexpensive option to follow in the context of their resource-poor schools. Their perception was that introducing the subject would not require any additional resources. In this regard the data did indeed reveal that, in terms of infrastructure, none of the four schools had a library, a laboratory or any other facilities and support materials needed to support teaching and learning in subjects such as Life Sciences, for example. It was for this reason that these schools identified Tourism as a viable option for learners as the perception was that it would not require additional resources outside what the schools could offer. According to one principal:

*State funding and resources that we had in the school when we made the decision to adopt Tourism were very limited. We could not afford subjects that would require us to spend more than purchasing textbooks. So we picked Tourism as we thought it would suit the resources that we were operating under (Principal, Kuzolunga).*

The fact that there were limited resources meant that the schools' choices of subjects were also limited to the subjects that would not require additional facilities. Tourism was one such subject. Another principal asserted:

*Well, based on the financial difficulties that our school operates under, we saw it fit to introduce Tourism when we phased out Afrikaans because other subjects would be so demanding. We do not have laboratories to support other subjects and we were not going to get additional funding from the Department for the new subject (Principal, Kwasakwasa).*

The participants tended to see Tourism as a subject that could be taught within the existing financial and resource constraints of these schools. All four principals thought that they only

needed to provide textbooks for the teaching of Tourism and that they could provide these even within the resource constraints that they faced. However, as they learned early on in the implementation of Tourism as a subject, even the textbooks were not as accessible as they had thought they would be. For example, an HOD lamented:

*Our school was amongst the first few schools in the district that included Tourism early in their curriculum offering. We budgeted only for textbooks as the school could not afford more than that. However, the textbooks posed a serious problem when we included this subject as we couldn't find any in the book stores and we went ahead with the decision though (HOD, Nawe).*

While most of the teachers struggled to find workable solutions for

the lack of resources, some were creative and managed to improvise. One Tourism teacher explained:

*We started teaching Tourism in our school without any books. We then depended on neighbouring schools that were already teaching Tourism as there were quite a few of them in our area that had already introduced Tourism in their curriculum offerings ....so we could borrow some books from them...although they also did not have enough. This was a huge mistake that our school made in taking a decision to add a subject without actually considering the availability of books (Tourism Teacher, Kuzolunga).*

This suggests that the system did not plan properly for the intervention, including considering and providing the resources that would be needed for to implement Tourism. It was left up to the schools to identify and access resources. The fact that the textbooks were also not available meant that meaningful teaching and learning could not be expected in these

schools, which most probably further contributed to the poor performance in the overall Matric examinations.

Some of the participants admitted, in hindsight, that they had underestimated the cost of introducing Tourism in their respective curricula. One stated:

*Our problem is that there is no additional allowance for Tourism in the norms and standards allocation from the department....it has got a weighting similar to the subjects that do not have a practical component. We actually included Tourism because we thought it would fit in in the existing resources but now I must admit we did not know much about the subject as it is very difficult for us to fund learners especially because parents also don't have such money (HOD, Nawe).*

Parents also shared a similar understanding of Tourism as a subject as they too believed that it would not require any additional resources. For them, this was a welcome situation since, due to unemployment and poverty in the communities, many parents did not have the money to pay school fees, buy new textbooks or pay additional fees for such things as field trips, workplace learning, and other learning support materials beyond the use of textbooks. For example, one SGB member commented:

*We didn't know that this subject needs so much funding and we only realised that the subject is of this nature (demands more money) immediately after the school had included it in the curriculum. It was difficult for us as parents to pay for other activities that are out of school or that require additional funds from the school fees and we have ever since been struggling with financing this subject (SGB Member, Kwasakwasa).*

The lack of proper planning and resourcing for the introduction of Tourism in these schools limited its success as an intervention, whether right or wrong, for addressing both socio-economic issues (unemployment and poverty), challenges in learner performance in terms of low pass rates in the Matric examinations.

Based on information that emerged from the literature (see for example, Chili, 2013), this study premised that learner performance and pass rates may have links to un-/under-trained poorly teachers. This is discussed in the next section.

### **5.2.2.3 The Influence of Untrained and Unqualified Teachers**

This thesis posits that a further factor that greatly influences the decision to adopt a new subject is the availability of trained teachers to teach the newly adopted subject (see Chakanyuka, 2006). This would ensure that those who teach the subject have relevant content and pedagogical knowledge in the subject (Chili, 2013). The availability of trained and qualified teachers is therefore one of the major factors that should influence the decision to adopt a new subject in the school curriculum. Ironically, the findings in this study suggest that the lack of qualified teachers in the schools motivated them to introduce Tourism. However, the available teachers had not been trained in the content or pedagogy of the subject they were expected to teach. Again, informed by the view that Tourism is an easy subject and given the fact that most of the subjects were taught by these under-qualified or unqualified teachers, the schools in the study felt that introducing Tourism would fit the levels of content and pedagogical knowledge among their teachers. For example, one principal stated:

*... when we started Tourism we didn't have a qualified teacher at that time but we wanted to add a subject that was going to help learners improve performance and*

*Tourism was ideal for improvement and also it is a flexible subject that comes from many subjects. You know we could not add [any of the] sciences because there are no teachers, but with Tourism we could use any teacher from the school with a background from other subjects. That is why we included it because we were not going to get an additional teacher so we had to use the teachers that we had* (Principal, Busabusa).

The shortage of qualified teachers seemed to be common across all subjects in these schools. As a result of such shortages, the schools in the study saw it fit to introduce a subject they thought could be taught by the available teachers. An HOD from one of the schools agreed:

*You know, curriculum changes came with new subjects such as Tourism and we included it. Although there was no teacher who had a qualification in Tourism, the principal included Tourism. The principal assured us that Tourism is not a subject that will give us a challenge even if we do not have a trained teacher. Tourism was one subject we could cope with even with the shortage of qualified teachers* (HOD, Nawe).

No additional teachers could be allocated to any of the schools because they did not qualify for in terms of Regulation 1451 of 2002, or the policy on Post Provisioning Norms (Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC), 2003). For example, the policy stipulates a model of funding “based on the principle that available posts are distributed among schools, proportionally to their number of weighted learners” (Education Labour Relations Council, 2003, C-52). Learners in Grades 10 - 12 are weighted in terms of all their subjects, including six examinable subjects. The weightings that apply to these subjects are based on class size required for that subject. In the case of Tourism, it is weighted as an ordinary subject where the current teacher-learner ratio is 1:35 (Pardesi, 2004, p. 2). The weighting of learners per

subject determines the number of educator posts to be allocated to a school. This means that the supply of teachers is fixed by the number of learners and subjects provided by the school. The schools in this study were small schools in terms of learner enrolment and thus experienced teacher shortages generally as they did not qualify for additional teachers to teach any newly introduced subject. Thus they had to be creative in their curriculum decision-making. Their decision to introduce Tourism was meant to respond to and address these resource shortages. For example, the schools introduced Tourism without any qualified teachers to teach it, as they felt that Tourism was a ‘soft’ subject that could be taught by any teacher, regardless of their training in the subject. They therefore regarded adopting Tourism as a subject as a ‘safe’ decision in the context of the shortage of teachers.

Earlier studies also found that it was common for schools in South Africa to introduce new subjects without any consideration of the availability of qualified teachers (see for example, Van Deventer, 2008; Rooth, 2005). In this regard, Rooth (2005) found that teaching Life Orientation in schools without trained teachers compromised the status of this subject. Similarly, data obtained in this study suggest that the introduction of Tourism while relying on un/under-qualified teachers threatened the quality and status of the subject. This is because, as Chili (2013) argues, poor teacher qualifications have a negative impact on the teaching and learning of Tourism in secondary schools. To illustrate, when probed the participants acknowledged that the Tourism teachers were untrained in the subject and that, due to inadequate content and pedagogical knowledge, they were not effectively teaching the subject. One of the teachers stated:

*I did not have a formal qualification in Tourism as this was a new subject that no teacher was trained in. Although the subject was demanding, there were no supporting workshops. As a result I feel I am not doing justice to teaching it as*



*sometimes I don't have enough information on what I want to teach* (Tourism Teacher, Kwasakwasa).

The Tourism teachers themselves acknowledged the fact that they were not fully qualified to teach the subject and that they were not coping well with teaching it. According to the teachers, the fact that Tourism was not offered during their teacher training in colleges resulted in the lack of trained and qualified teachers in the subject. As new Tourism teachers, they were faced with teaching a subject they were not equipped to teach. According to them, this impacted negatively on teaching and learning in these schools.

The literature considers the suitability, competence, proficiency and most importantly, a teacher's specialisation in a subject as requirements for quality teaching and learning across the subject spectrum (Pawson, 2002; Rooth, 2005, Van Deventer, 2008, Chili, 2013). Therefore, placing teachers in situations where they lack expertise and competency does not only create stressful situations for the teachers, but it also raises questions of quality in the teaching and learning of the subject.

Therefore, while the lack of resources and the shortage of teachers influenced these schools to opt for introducing Tourism in their respective curricula as a 'soft' and cost effective option, this also had a negative impact on the effective implementation of the intervention (i.e., the introduction of Tourism in the curriculum). This might mean that the socio-economic and educational imperatives that the introduction of vocational subjects such as Tourism in the high school curriculum is meant to address will remain unchanged. This will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Seven. The next section synthesises and concludes this chapter.

### 5.3 Synthesis

This chapter presented a discussion of the findings that addressed the first research question: *What factors inform school communities in their decision to introduce Tourism in the curriculum?* With reference to the introduction of Tourism as a subject in four KwaZulu-Natal secondary schools, I examined the factors that informed curriculum decision-making in these schools.

The findings that emerged from the data suggest that a combination of macro-policy and institutional factors shaped the schools' decision to introduce Tourism in their respective curricula. In considering both these factors, the schools adopted a functionalist approach (Obanya, 2004) in terms of curriculum decision-making.

In relation to macro-policy factors, the decision to introduce Tourism was influenced by the political imperative of the post-apartheid government to redress socio-economic inequalities. The findings suggest that the school communities in this study aligned their educational decisions to national policy imperatives by adopting a subject that would, in their view, address social inequalities such as unemployment and poverty. The perception was that the study of Tourism would help develop much needed skills aimed at reducing the high rates of unemployment and poverty in these predominantly Black African communities.

Linked to the first reason, the decision to adopt Tourism was influenced by the expected economic benefits associated with the tourism industry, and hence with the teaching of

Tourism as a subject in schools. For example, the expectation was that tourism skills provisioning would emanate from the subject and that this would immediately lead to employment opportunities, thereby reducing the high unemployment rate and poverty in these communities.

Moreover, the decision to introduce Tourism was influenced by educational policies such as the NCS and CAPS as both include Tourism as an elective subject in the high school curriculum. The White Paper of PSET, which promotes alternative forms of post secondary school education, also proposes vocational and occupational training that this is located, among others, in Tourism as an FET subject.

In terms of institutional factors, the schools were clearly influenced by curriculum expediency in their decision-making. From this perspective, they decided to introduce a subject that they believed would redress practical issues such as learner performance, cost effectiveness, and the shortage of trained and qualified teachers. Tourism was identified as such a subject. As under-performing schools, the schools' introduction of Tourism was based on the fact that they regarded Tourism as a 'soft' option that would be relatively easy to pass. This was meant to contribute towards improving learner performance in the NSC examinations for Grade 12 learners.

These findings suggest that the institutional factors that influenced the schools' decision to introduce Tourism might have inadvertently contributed to poor teaching and learning in various subjects, specifically Tourism. To illustrate this point, the participants acknowledged that they had made the decision to introduce Tourism because of being under-resourced both

in terms of materials and human resources. This was informed by the mistaken understanding that, as a subject, Tourism would not require any additional material resources and that any teacher, whether he/she was trained to teach the subject or not, would be able to teach it. However, as they later discovered, the lack of resources led to ineffective teaching and learning in the subject, and this jeopardised the very imperatives they meant to address by introducing the subject, including skills development, addressing unemployment and poverty, and improving learner performance in Matric. The finding that most recently, in some schools, no learners chose the subject in Grade 10 also seems to underline this finding.

In summary, the evidence in this chapter suggests that various external and internal forces that were aimed at addressing the immediate needs of the schools motivated the decision to introduce Tourism as a vocationally-oriented subject in the schools' various curricula. This finding will be discussed and analysed in more detail in Chapter Seven. In the next chapter my discussion focuses on the nature of the decision-making process that schools engaged in when adopting Tourism and will illuminate, in particular, the role of stakeholders and the extent to which they were involved in the decision-making process to adopt Tourism as a subject in the curriculum.

## CHAPTER SIX

# STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION IN CURRICULUM DECISION-MAKING IN SCHOOLS

### 6.1 Introduction

As stated in previous chapters, the purpose of this study was to explore the nature of and the rationale for curriculum decision-making among stakeholders in the selection of new subjects for the school curriculum. Using the adoption of Tourism as a subject in the curriculum as a case study, I addressed the question: *What is the nature of and rationale for the curriculum decision-making process schools engage in when adopting a new subject in their respective curricula?* The previous chapter addressed the first research question: *What factors inform school communities in their decisions to introduce Tourism in the curriculum?* In particular, the chapter identified two sets of factors namely macro-policy and institutional factors. My analysis and evaluation of these factors highlighted the way in which these forces influenced the schools' decisions to adopt Tourism.

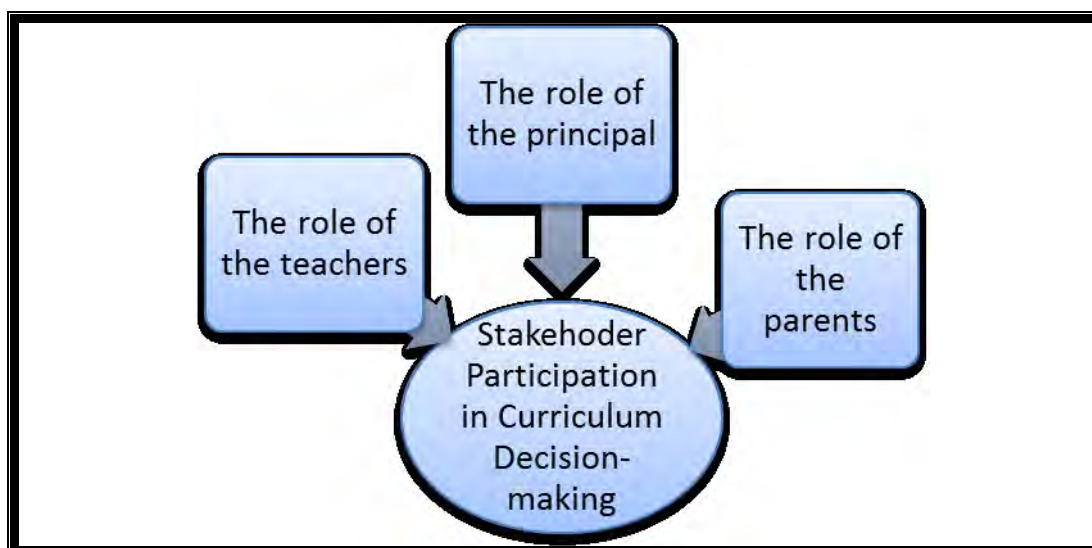
This chapter addresses the second research question: *To what extent and in what ways does curriculum decision-making in schools involve the different stakeholders from the school community?* The data analysis in this chapter was informed by the stakeholder theory as proposed by Freeman (1984) and the curriculum development theory as proposed by Walker (1971). Both these theories are rooted in the argument that there are various actors who form part of the school community (i.e., the principal, heads of department, teachers, and parents) and who must be involved as stakeholders in the deliberation process of making decisions about the curriculum. Failure to involve these stakeholders might result in decisions that do

not address the actual needs of the learners and the community. Four decades ago, Walker (1971) wrote that stakeholder involvement in decision-making processes must be characterised by engagement in deliberations and discussions. However, more recent literature suggests that, in general, curriculum decision-making processes in schools do not accommodate all stakeholders in the school and that schools still fail to create an atmosphere conducive for community members to participate in the selection of knowledge worth teaching (see for example, Poppleton & Williamson, 2004; Collins, 2007; Mokoena, 2011).

South African schools are no exception. This is despite the legislative mandate, particularly the South African Schools Act, 1996 (no. 84 of 1996) which locates decision-making processes in the hands of all stakeholders such as principals, teachers and parents (Mosoge & Van der Westhuizen, 1997). According to the South African Schools Act, the curriculum decision-making processes schools engage in, and in particular the processes regarding the selection of subjects that should be taught as part of the curriculum, must involve the entire school community who must all participate as stakeholders (see also Hogans, 2000; Poppleton & Williamson, 2004).

In this study, 'stakeholder involvement' was taken to mean the involvement and participation of all interested parties in decision-making processes at school level. In such participatory curriculum decision-making, stakeholders such as the school management team, teachers, parents and learners participate in various ways and to varying degrees in making decisions regarding the curriculum. When stakeholders within the school are not directly involved or do not participate in curriculum decision-making processes, they tend to withhold or withdraw their support for the intervention (Davis, 2002).

Thus, this thesis posits that the decision-making process about introducing new subjects in the curriculum must involve the entire school community as stakeholders. In other words, each stakeholder has a role in shaping curriculum decisions made by the school. In this context, the chapter seeks to examine the extent of and ways in which curriculum decision-making leading to the adoption of Tourism in the participating schools involved the various stakeholders from the respective school communities. The data and discussion presented in the sections below were generated from semi-structured interviews with the various stakeholders (i.e., principals, Heads of Department, Tourism teachers and School Governing Body members). Moreover, the interview data were augmented by a perusal of related documents by means of document analyses. The chapter is organised according to three main themes that emerged from the data: the role of the principal in curriculum decision-making; the role of the teachers in curriculum decision-making; and the role of the parents in curriculum decision-making. Figure 6.1 below illustrates this.



**Figure 6.1: Stakeholder participation in curriculum decision-making**

## **6.2 The Role of the Principal in Curriculum Decision-Making**

This thesis holds the notion that the principal, as the leader in the school, is expected to lead the curriculum decision-making process by ensuring the involvement and participation of the various stakeholders in the activities. This could be achieved by creating opportunities for stakeholders to engage in deliberations that lead to decisions about the curriculum (Lachiver & Tardif, 2002). In this context, this section addresses the question: *What role did the principals play in the curriculum decision-making process that led to the introduction of Tourism as a new subject in the participating schools?* First, I examine the role expectations for school principals in light of the guiding educational policies and I then move on to the principals' understandings and performance of their roles in this regard.

### **6.2.1 The Role Expectation of the Principal in Curriculum Decision-Making**

In order to understand the role of the principal in the curriculum decision-making process, it is important to first situate the principal's role in a broader context. According to Catano and Stronge (2006), internationally, the job expectations and responsibilities for school principals have been expanded from managing school operations to facilitating decision-making for academic programmes. In the South African context, principals in the apartheid era were solely responsible for all curriculum decision-making in the school, particularly in terms of selecting subjects for the curriculum (Steyn, 2003). This changed with the onset of democracy in 1994. As discussed in Chapter Two and Chapter Three in this thesis, the South African Schools Act mandates all public schools to have democratically elected School Governing Bodies (SGBs). In accordance with this policy, the membership of the School Governing Body must include the principal (who becomes a member by virtue of his position) and the elected members from each of the following categories: teachers, non-



teaching staff, parents, and learners. The number of parents, educators, non-educator and learner members who sit on an SGB depends upon the size of the school enrolment (van Wyk, 2004). However, parents must form the majority on the SGB, with at least one parent more than the total of all other members combined.

Within this structure, the role of the principal includes membership of the SGB; management of the school and its affairs; and curriculum leadership at school level. According to Section 16(a) of the South African Schools Act (South Africa, 1996), the principal is expected to develop democratic strategies for collaboration with and the involvement of all stakeholders. Moreover, the principal must render all necessary assistance to the School Governing Body so that it can perform its functions effectively. In line with this policy, as Naidoo (2005) argues, the principal as a curriculum leader is tasked to work with all stakeholders in making decisions, including those that relate to the school curriculum (see also Florez et al., 2001; Lachiver & Tardif, 2002; Fullan, 2007; Apple & Beane, 2007). Furthermore, the principal determines the stakeholders' levels of participation in any decision-making processes (Florez et al., 2001). This is a major shift in the role expectation of the principal in the post-apartheid dispensation. However, despite this shift, the literature suggests that in most schools the principals, many of whom were educated during the apartheid era, still manage the affairs of their schools, including curriculum decision-making, in an undemocratic manner by excluding other stakeholders such as teachers, parents and learners from any decision-making. This study examined the extent to which the principals in the participating schools had embraced the democratic principles espoused by the South African Schools Act in their leadership, with particular reference to the decision-making process that led to the adoption of Tourism as a new subject.

I therefore examine the ways in which the principals participating in this study understood and performed their roles as curriculum decision makers in the next section.

### **6.2.2 Principals' Role Performance in Curriculum Decision-Making**

Role performance refers to the ways in which an individual acts as an incumbent in a position (Singh & Kumar, 2012). In this study role performance refers to the ways in which the principals in the participating schools understood and enacted their roles in curriculum decision-making processes. First, the principals in this study were familiar and agreed with the democratic principles entrenched in South African Schools Act (no 84 of 1996) which, amongst others, calls for the full participation of all stakeholders in decision-making. The principals understood their role as working collaboratively with all stakeholders and creating opportunities for consultations with them. However, they expressed the view that they still found it difficult to fulfil this role. To demonstrate this understanding, one principal stated:

*There are some changes in policies about the principal's role in making decisions. In the past the decisions were taken by the principal who handed it to the teachers. Since the introduction of the SGB and SMT, things have changed because as a principal my role is now to lead these structures and to ensure that all relevant stakeholders are involved in the decision-making process, which sometimes I find difficult (Principal, Nawe).*

This comment was corroborated by the other principals in various statements. Thus, despite their recognition and acknowledgement of the change in policy, the data from the interviews with the principals suggested that there was a gap between the role expectation (as expressed in national policy) and the actual role performance in curriculum decision-making among the

four principals in the schools participating in this study. The principals continued to make decisions without the democratic participation of the stakeholders. This finding is corroborated by other studies such as those conducted by Mncube (2009) and van Wyk, 2004. To illustrate his reason for not involving other stakeholders in the decision to adopt Tourism as a new subject in the curriculum, one principal stated:

*Well, I know that I have to involve all stakeholders in decision-making processes and communicate with all of them on the decision to be taken. However, this does not happen as expected, as in the case of Tourism where I did not consult in a democratic procedure with teachers or parents because I have powers to make quick decisions as per need in the school (Principal, Kuzolunga).*

Similar to the other three principals, this principal had not sought the input of other school community members and had not created the necessary conditions and opportunities for participatory curriculum decision-making. All four admitted that meetings were only held to inform the stakeholders about their individual decision to adopt Tourism. This is despite the fact that such meetings would have served as a platform for deliberations to engage other stakeholders in a major decision that affected them. To illustrate, another principal stated:

*I called a meeting and announced the decision, you know. I couldn't allow discussions on the issue of including Tourism because if you allow discussions in the meetings you end up not getting to the decision (Principal, Busabusa).*

The principal made this decision despite the fact that formal meetings within the school could have provided an important platform for deliberations and joint decision-making, as suggested by van Wyk (2007) and Kirk and McDonald (2001). As argued by Walker's (1971) deliberative theory, arriving at the best curriculum decision should involve a process of negotiation among those affected (e.g., teachers, parents and learners). The data further

suggested that even when briefing meetings were held with the rest of the school, there were no substantial discussions regarding the curriculum. For example, available minutes of a staff meeting at Kuzolunga (dated 22/01/2009) did not record any curriculum matters on the agenda. The minutes reflected that the principal had informed the staff that Tourism would be adopted as a new subject in the curriculum.

It appeared that the principals' strategy was to initiate the idea, to make the decision to adopt Tourism, to complete and submit the necessary application forms to the Department of Basic Education, and only then to call a meeting to inform other stakeholder about the decision.

One principal explained:

*When I decided to introduce Tourism in the school, I called the SMT where I informed them of my intention and its advantages. I informed the Senior Education Manager (SEM) who supported [endorsed] the forms and then the SGB approved the decision. I informed the staff about the new subject to be included and that the forms for including Tourism had been completed and were supported at all levels in the district. Then the subject was [introduced and] taught (Principal, Busabusa).*

As discussed above, this procedure contradicted national policy and research literature that suggest that decisions made in schools should be based on democratic deliberations involving representatives of all stakeholders from the larger school community. This would create a sense of ownership and commitment among stakeholders, resulting in effective implementation of the decision (Adeyemi, 2009). Without such commitment, the decision might be poorly implemented or be derailed.

Several factors might explain the top-down approach that was adopted by these four principals in curriculum decision-making that lead to the adoption of Tourism as a new subject. One explanation might lie in the fact that all four principals were had been trained under the apartheid system that did not promote participatory decision-making or encourage consultation with other stakeholders in the school, particularly around curriculum decision-making (Steyn, 2003). As presented in Chapter Four, the principals in this study had been in their positions for a number of years and had been trained during the apartheid era in which the power to make decisions was vested primarily in the principal. In spite of the change in policy in the country, they continued to believe that decision-making was their sole responsibility. Illustrating this view, one principal declared:

*As the head of the school, I am accountable for everything that is happening in the school. Making the decision to adopt Tourism was done in the best interest of the school. I have powers to make curriculum changes in the interest of the school for improving learner performance* (Principal, Kuzolunga).

A second explanation for the top-down curriculum decision-making approach in these schools could be the principals' assumption that parents, learners and, to some extent teachers, were not equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to make curriculum decisions. The principals in this study regarded other stakeholders (teachers and parents) as incompetent in handling curriculum decisions and felt that their involvement might result in poor decision-making. This perception was not unique to these four principals. For example, Botha (2007) asserts that despite the mandates of the law as expounded in education policies, the involvement of stakeholders in curriculum decision-making in South African schools has remained poor (see also Mosoge & Van der Westhuizen, 1997; Mulford et al., 2000; Poppleton & Williams, 2004; Botha, 2007; Mokoena, 2011).

A third factor that might have influenced the principals' top-down approach to curriculum decision-making was poor learner performance in exit assessments, particularly in the final Grade 12 (Matric) examinations (see Chapter Five for a more detailed discussion). To illustrate, the table below presents the Matric performance over a three-year period leading to and including the year of my initial data collection in the schools.

**Table 6.1: Matric Pass Rate over a Three-year Period**

<b>School</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>% of learners passing Grade 12</b>	<b>% with university entrance endorsement</b>
Kwasakwasa	2008	29%	10.7%
	2009	19%	2%
	2010	57%	12%
Kuzolunga	2008	47%	10%
	2009	53%	19%
	2010	58%	13%
Nawe	2008	58%	22%
	2009	81%	10%
	2010	59%	16%
Busabusa	2008	37%	8%
	2009	39%	4%
	2010	55%	6%

As the above table suggests, learner performance in the four schools was poor in the Matric examinations for three years, including the year of initial data collection for this study (2010). This tended to put pressure on the principals to improve learner performance. The recurring poor performance in these schools called for measures that would help improve the performance. With the pressure to account for learner performance, the principals took it

upon themselves to introduce a subject that they felt would improve outcomes. To illustrate, one of the principals stated:

*I am responsible for everything that happens in the school, so if there is a decision to be made, I do so. As a principal I have some authority over decisions. If learners are failing I must change or add subjects. That is what I actually did with Tourism because the Department doesn't ask other stakeholders why learners have failed, but they would ask the principal of the school (Principal, Kuzolunga).*

It is for this reason that the principals felt that they were making the decision in the best interest of the school. For them, enacting their role in this manner enabled them to demonstrate (to government and the school community) that they were responding to and addressing poor learner performance in their respective schools. With their focus on improving school performance, the principals felt justified in ignoring the principles of democratic participation in curriculum decision-making (see Berkhout, 2007; Botha, 2007).

The findings thus suggested that the ways in which the principals participating in this study enacted their roles was contrary to national policy and recommendations from the literature. Instead, all four principals adopted a top-down approach to curriculum decision-making. They explained their curriculum leadership style as a function of their accountability to the parents and the state in terms of learner performance. They also cited stakeholders' (i.e., teachers and parents) perceived lack of expertise in curriculum decision-making as a reason for not involving them in curriculum decision-making.

As discussed in previous chapters, the literature suggests that participatory or collaborative curriculum decision-making is key to effective teaching and learning (Wadesango, 2012;

Collin, 2007; Somech, 2010). Involving teachers, particularly those who are expected to teach the new offerings, in the selection of subjects has the potential to ensure their sense of ownership and commitment to the new venture, possibly resulting in its successful implementation. Failure to involve them tends to alienate them and lead to poor implementation in the classroom. As discussed above, this might explain why the exit examinations in the four schools remained poor five years after the introduction of Tourism in the curriculum. Further studies are needed to explore this aspect.

The following section describes the views of teachers and the extent of their involvement in the curriculum decision-making process leading to the adoption of Tourism in the curricula of the respective schools.

### **6.3 Teacher Involvement in Curriculum Decision-Making**

Teacher involvement in curriculum decision-making is an essential component of the decentralisation of curriculum decision-making processes (Cheng, 2008; Samkange, 2012). Furthermore, the available literature asserts that teachers are at the heart of curriculum implementation and might therefore facilitate sound decisions (Samkange, 2012). On the one hand, it was clear from the principals' accounts that curriculum decision-making in the four schools did not involve the participation of all stakeholders, including teachers. On the other hand, it is important to examine how the teachers themselves understood their role and how they experienced the curriculum decision-making process that led to the adoption of Tourism as a new subject in their schools. This section therefore addresses the question: *To what extent and in what ways did the decision to introduce Tourism in the participating schools involve the teachers?*



### **6.3.1 The Role Expectation of Teachers in Curriculum Decision-Making**

This thesis argues that the involvement of teachers in curriculum decision-making is crucial if schools want to effect curriculum change and promote effective teaching and learning. Similarly, Somech (2010) is of the view that teacher participation in curriculum decision-making increases teachers' willingness to implement such decisions in class, which in turn promotes effective teaching and learning. In other words, the responsibility for meeting school objectives depends on teachers' commitment to the implementation of curriculum decisions. Ndu and Anagbogu (2007) further argue that the participation of teachers in making decisions empowers them with a sense of commitment and dedication when they implement those decisions. Their involvement in curriculum decision-making processes could therefore provide greater opportunities for them to enrich the decisions that have been made.

In terms of policy (e.g., the South African Schools Act), the School Management Team (HODs in particular) and classroom teachers have the responsibility to ensure that curriculum decisions are implemented at classroom level. For them to do this effectively, participatory curriculum decision-making is critical. In this context it is my position that teachers should fully participate in any curriculum decision processes and, in particular, in the selection of new subjects for the curriculum.

*But how do teachers themselves understand and enact their role in curriculum decision-making?* The next section addresses this question.

### 6.3.2 Teachers' Role Performance in Curriculum Decision-Making

The teachers in this study expressed a firmly established expectation for greater participation in curriculum decision-making in the selection of new subjects in their schools. After all, they would ultimately be responsible for the implementation of the decisions made in order to effectively teach the subject at classroom level. The teachers regarded themselves as curriculum specialists with a vital role in implementing and mediating curriculum in the classroom. They not only regarded their main curriculum function as implementers, but they also saw themselves as full participants in all stages of curriculum decision-making. They felt that their participation in the process would not only present crucial information to help influence the decision to adopt the subject, but it would be pivotal in the implementation thereof. One teacher elaborated:

*As teachers, including me who was going to teach the subject, we only knew that year (2009) when it was introduced. I could have contributed some valuable information on aspects of teaching which could have been helpful in informing the decision process. This resulted in poor planning and preparation on my side for teaching the subject (Tourism Teacher, Kuzolunga).*

Similar to the comments by the Tourism teacher in the above extract, the other teachers, including the HODs, stated that they had expected to be involved in the decision to adopt Tourism. For them, this would have ensured their commitment to and preparation for the teaching of Tourism at classroom level. The participating teachers seemed to associate being committed to implementing the decision with involvement in the decision-making stage. According to them, teacher participation, that of subject teachers in particular, in decisions that concern the subject they would teach would result in effective implementation of the adopted subject and improved overall learner performance. Similarly, available literature

suggests that that teacher participation in curriculum decision-making processes increases teacher confidence, commitment, and ownership (Ndu & Anagbogu, 2007).

While there was agreement among the teachers from all four participating schools about the critical role that they should have played prior to the implementation of the new subject, they also confirmed that they had not played any meaningful role in the selection of the new subject. As stated above, their principals did not create opportunities for them to participate in curriculum decision-making. Their participation in the selection of Tourism in their respective schools was limited to endorsing the decisions made by their principals. For example, one teacher stated:

*I would say that the principal made the decision to introduce Tourism because in most cases in this school, we are just told that this year we are going to offer which new subjects. Then as teachers we are just told that so and so is going to take those classes. There is no input from teachers (Tourism Teacher, Kuzolunga).*

This finding was consistent with the assertion by Ramparsad (2001) that in most African countries teachers are not often involved in curriculum planning and development and for this reason they see themselves only as implementers and not as collaborative decision makers.

The fact that the principals excluded these teachers from curriculum decision-making at school level and confined them to the implementation of the curriculum decisions is likely to have had negative impacts on teaching and learning. Such exclusion might have led them to feel under-valued which, in turn, may have resulted in their lack of commitment to the subject. Although none of the teachers expressed their lack of commitment to teaching Tourism in so many words, the general poor results of the learners bore witness to ineffective teaching and learning strategies on their part. This might account for the continued deterioration of the Matric results after the introduction of Tourism. Furthermore, the

teachers' lack of commitment could also account for the fact that Tourism could not be sustained in three of the schools in this study. For example, as discussed in Chapter Four, at the time of data collection three of the four participating schools were no longer offering Tourism in all three the FET grades. The principals had taken the decision to phase out the teaching of this subject in Grade 10 from 2010 (the year of initial data collection) and to only offer it in Grades 11 and 12, implying that by 2013 Tourism would be completely phased out in three of the four schools. One Tourism teacher explained:

*In our school, the principal announced that Tourism would be introduced in 2009 and in 2010 he announced again that Tourism would be phased out starting from Grade 10 [and would ultimately be dropped from the Matric offerings]. This was done without our involvement as teachers. This has resulted in teachers not being committed to the subject (Tourism Teacher, Kuzolunga).*

According to the teachers in this study, their poor commitment to the teaching of Tourism negatively affected the status of the subject in the eyes of other teachers and the learners (see also Rooth, 2008). This implies that they felt that greater participation of teachers in the decision to adopt the new subject would have created respect and a high regard for the subject and it may have generated greater commitment to the decision and its implementation. One Tourism teacher stated:

*You know ma'am, I had to teach something I was not part of its decision and not sure sometimes of its significance in our curriculum. Sometimes I even feel less dedicated to teaching Tourism because you know, being part of the decision from the start is important and also influences how we dedicate ourselves to achieve the decided reasons to introduce Tourism (Tourism Teacher, Busabusa).*

This assertion may suggest that effective implementation of curriculum decisions depends on the extent of participation in the decision-making by the concerned teachers. As the literature suggests, teacher participation in the curriculum decision-making process increases the relevance and acceptance of the decision, thus resulting in effective teaching and learning in the classroom. The teachers participating in this study argued that because of their exclusion from curriculum decision-making, they found it difficult to implement decisions made without their participation and input. In essence, problems such as low teacher morale and commitment and, consequently, poor implementation, occur when the teachers, who are supposed to be implementers, are not given a clear role to play in curriculum decision-making for the selection of new subjects.

Not only the Tourism teachers, but also the HODs who participated in this study indicated that their involvement in the curriculum decision-making process prior to implementation had been poor. As curriculum managers in the schools, the HODs strongly suggested that their role as curriculum managers was intricately tied to the implementation of the curriculum and thus they had expected to be more involved in the decision-making process that had led to the adoption of Tourism. Furthermore, as members of the school management team, they had specific responsibilities in terms of the management of teaching and learning. These responsibilities included overseeing and managing the curriculum, as well as supporting teachers in their curriculum development and teaching. Lamenting her exclusion from curriculum decision-making in her school, an HOD stated:

*Our principal did not use us for such a decision to introduce Tourism. He just dropped the decision that we needed to act on. He never realised that as an HOD I was the one who would manage the implementation of that decision and was directly responsible for teaching and learning of the subject (HOD, Kwasakwasa).*

A second HOD from another school raised a similar concern:

*We are part of the management [team] and we must make the decisions, especially those related to subjects; but in the case of including Tourism, as the SMT we only heard it from the principal as a final decision (HOD, Nawe).*

The fact that the HODs had not been involved in the decision-making process leading to the adoption of Tourism in the curriculum meant that the portfolio they held within their schools was disregarded in terms of the level of teacher participation in curriculum decision-making. As argued above, this oversight by principals may be understandable in the context of the South African secondary school system where curriculum decision-making has been historically centralised in the principal's office (see Mokoena, 2011). For the HODs, the fact that the decision to introduce Tourism as a subject was made without their involvement as curriculum managers, their ability to effectively perform in their role as curriculum managers and teacher support was limited.

The claims by the teachers and HODs in this study were corroborated by some school documents that I analysed for the purpose of triangulation. For example, the minutes of a staff meeting at Busabusa (dated 12 February 2008) read as follows:

*The school principal announced to the staff members the introduction of Tourism into the school curriculum. The reason was that most of the learners were finding Maths and Science difficult. The principal informed the staff that the school had already communicated with the Circuit Office and the decision was endorsed.*

As argued in this thesis, teachers who have participated in making decisions related to the curriculum tend to have higher levels of commitment and acceptance of the decision than

those who have not (Wadesango, 2012). Thus, introducing a new subject without the participation of teachers in decision-making can be detrimental to effective teaching and learning in the new subject.

The following section describes the role of parents and the extent of their involvement in the decision-making process leading to the adoption of Tourism in the curriculum in the four schools under study.

#### **6.4 Parents' Involvement in Curriculum Decision-Making**

Informed by the literature on curriculum decision-making (Mosoge & Van der Westhuizen, 1997; Poppleton & Williamson, 2004; Epstein, 2009; Mokoena, 2011) and the South African Schools Act, this study argues that the decision-making process regarding the adoption of Tourism in the curriculum in the schools participating in this study necessitated the involvement and full participation of all stakeholders, including parents. For example, Epstein (2009) argues that parents must be involved in curriculum decisions that affect their children's education. Such involvement would make it more likely for them to have an understanding of school curriculum matters and this will empower them to effectively support their children's learning. This section therefore addresses the question: *To what extent and in what ways did the decision to introduce Tourism in participating schools involve the participation of parents?*

#### **6.4.1 The Role Expectation of Parents in Curriculum Decision-Making**

As argued throughout this thesis, central to the provision of quality education is the role parents could play in curriculum decision-making. The South African Schools Act promotes democratic governance of schools through parental involvement and thus mandates parents to actively participate in the governance of the school. For example, the Act gives authority to parents to make decisions, including decisions relating to subject selection on behalf of the school and for the benefit of the school community (South Africa, 1996, section 20a). In this context, and given the current educational realities in South Africa such as poor learning outcomes at school level, it has become important for parents to be aware of the knowledge selected for inclusion in the curriculum so that they may provide support to their children. Thus parents are expected to play an active role in curriculum decision-making in their children's schools. Van Wyk (2007) asserts that the involvement of parents in curriculum decision-making empowers parents to have a better understanding of what is happening in the school and to better support their children's learning.

#### **6.4.2 Parents' Role Performance in Curriculum Decision-Making**

Interviews with parent members of the SGBs in this study indicated that they understood their role in the school as involving participation in the governance of the school, which would include curriculum decision-making. The parents acknowledged the need for their involvement in the decision-making processes, as this would benefit them as well as the school. For example, they felt that their involvement in the decision to adopt Tourism would have given them a sense of the direction the school was taking in relation to the curriculum. Their involvement would also have ensured a range of views, giving the school a better idea of what the parents and the community expected of the school with regards to the curriculum.



Their view was that the curriculum and the subjects taught at school should be acceptable to the parents and meet the needs of the community the school serves. This could have been achieved through the involvement of parents in the selection of Tourism. To illustrate, one SGB member commented:

*Our participation in the selection of Tourism and other subjects would have given us an understanding of what our children learn so that we can support them. I think as the SGB and parents we can participate in curriculum issues and make some contributions based on what we anticipate for the school. Our involvement as parents can help the school to select subjects that would be relevant to our children and we can motivate the children to take those subjects (SGB Member, Kuzolunga).*

The teachers also agreed that the involvement of parents in the decision to adopt Tourism would have benefitted the school community. In the extract below, an HOD stressed the need for the involvement of parents in curriculum decision:

*The involvement of parents in the decision-making process would have helped Tourism teachers not to struggle so much in persuading learners to participate in Tourism related projects which are demanding extra time. Parents were supposed to be involved with the decision to introduce Tourism because they are the ones who could encourage their children to do extra work required in the subject (HOD, Nawe).*

Furthermore, the teachers felt that the participation of parents in the decision-making process would have increased the status of Tourism in the curriculum and in the eyes of the school community.

In spite of the sentiments about the need for the involvement of parents and the fact that post-apartheid legislation has given them more powers and influence than ever before on making decisions about school governance, the findings suggested that the parents of the four schools had not been given the opportunity to enact their role of active participation in the decision-making process that led to the adoption of Tourism. When asked about their role performance in decision-making related to the curriculum, parents from the four schools participating in this study reported that they had not been involved in the decision-making processes. Like the teachers, the parents were only provided with information about the decision. An SGB member noted:

*In our school the decision to include Tourism was not taken by all stakeholders, as stakeholders involve not only the teachers, principal and HODs who are always in the school, but the parents and SGB as well. Although as parents we are the major stakeholder who is affected by the school's actions, we were not involved when the school made this major decision to introduce Tourism. [They just] informed us and we just accepted it (SGB Member, Nawe).*

The parents participating in this study thus felt that receiving and accepting information often translate into enactment of their role in the decision to select Tourism. In other words, role participation often translates into nothing more than sharing information with parents on decisions deemed to be in the interest of the school. This suggests that parents as stakeholders tended to accept roles defined for them and did not question their exclusion to participation in the decision-making processes. This attitude by parents might have been influenced by the forms of authority they were subjected to (as discussed in Chapter 4) where decision-making is left in the hands of those who are regarded as being in power. This social construct reveals a community where unquestionable respect for those who are in power influences the school communities' process of decision-making. This finding suggested that parents from such

communities tend to feel that decision-making powers are vested in those ‘selected few’ who are highly specialised (Odhiambo & Hii, 2012). This finding is also an indication that active participation and role performance by parents in curriculum decisions has not yet been developed. Parents are still over reliant on the principals for curriculum decisions and consequently rarely perform their role in selecting curriculum subjects.

One of the reasons for the lack of parental involvement in curriculum decision-making in these schools involved not only the principals’ perceptions that parents lacked knowledge on their role in curriculum decision-making, but also that the parents themselves did not fully understand their role in the school. On the one hand, as discussed above, the parents felt that they needed to be involved in such decisions. On the other, the interviews with selected SGB members revealed that they had not been fully aware of all the processes that should have been followed when the school adopted a new subject in the curriculum. In this regard, they indicated that they had limited information regarding the extent to which they should participate in curriculum decisions and the processes involved. In a similar vein, Duma (2013) notes that parents often have uncertainties about the roles that they should play in the governance of schools, particularly in curriculum decisions. The parents in this study attributed this role ambiguity to the fact that the information communicated to them by their principals and government officials was insufficient and did not provide clarity on how to get involved. For example, in the following extract from an interview one SGB member said:

*Well, although we were told in workshops that as the SGB we must form part of the discussions and decisions to select subjects that are taught in schools, it has not yet happened in our school. As parents in the SGB we do not know how we must be part of that process since this is about subjects. Teachers, especially the principal, would*

*always inform us about changes such as which subjects they are no longer teaching or which ones they are including (SGB Member, Kuzolunga).*

Another SGB member expressed a similar concern:

*The principal made the decision to include Tourism without involving us as parents. I think it was because we do not know much about the processes that are followed when subjects are selected for inclusion in the curriculum (SGB Member, Kwasakwasa).*

Despite the fact that the Department of Basic Education conducted workshops on SGB development, it appears that the SGB members representing the parents were still not fully capacitated in terms of their role to make decisions pertaining to the curriculum. As a result of this role ambiguity, the parents were not confident about how to participate in the selection of new subjects and they thus relied on the principals to invite them. This finding is corroborated by the literature. Van Wyk (2004) asserts that parents, including those in the SGB, lack confidence in enacting their roles in decision-making because they do not understand their duties and responsibilities. This view is supported by Mncube (2009) who points out that SGB members as the representatives of parents in the school lack the confidence to actively participate in school decisions. In this case they may be led to believe that they should leave all the decisions in the hands of the principal and limit their participation to being recipients of information. This could be as a result of the fact that they might find it difficult to read and interpret educational policies such as the South African Schools Act and CAPS and thus may feel that they cannot make meaningful contributions towards educational matters. In this regard it was found that the parents shifted their role of collaborative curriculum decision makers to the principal and teachers whom they regarded as experts in curriculum matters. However, this view overlooks the significant role parents can play, regardless of their levels of literacy or education in informing decisions about the curriculum and in supporting teaching and learning.

The parents participating in this study argued that lack of formal and informal opportunities to engage with and get to know about subjects that are selected for the curriculum inhibited their role in the selection of Tourism. They attributed their poor involvement to the principals who did not initiate space to allow them to participate in the decision-making process. As mentioned earlier, the SGB members participating in this study expected the principals to invite them to participate in the decision-making process. However, in these schools such invitations did not materialise as a consequence of the unwillingness on the part of the principals to allow parents opportunities to play a significant role in curriculum decision-making. This confirms a finding by Telem (2003), who notes that parents' influence over decisions about the curriculum depends to a large extent on how the principal and SMT manage the process of decision-making in a school. The desire to allow their role to be determined by the principal seems linked to the previous experiences among parents, where principals were projected as sole curriculum decision-makers (Heystek, 2007). This abdication of the parents' role in selecting curriculum subjects led to a situation where they did not enact their role in curriculum decision-making, despite the significant amount of decision-making power devolved to parents as members of the SGB.

As discussed above, this was not surprising as the idea of parental participation in school decision-making, especially in the area of curriculum selection, is often regarded as unrealistic and unnecessary. This claim was corroborated in some of the documents analysed in this study. For example, the minutes of SGB meetings at Nawe showed that discussions on finances, budget, as well as learner performance and discipline dominated the agenda of most of the SGB meetings, while curriculum matters were less prominent in the agenda items. Thus, despite the fact that most of the interviewed participants acknowledged the value of parental involvement in both the communities and the school, the principals in these schools

failed to create opportunities for such participation. This may imply a lack of knowledge on the part of the principals in terms of the extent of parental involvement required in curriculum matters and the importance of the actual role they could play. According to the parents, the principals tended to view them as incapable of engaging in school matters such as selecting subjects for inclusion in the curriculum. In an interview, one parent stated:

*The principal told us that he took the initiative and made the decision because in some cases we [parents] have nothing to do with which subjects are taught at school, especially with Tourism which was new and we [parents] had no knowledge of that subject. Therefore he did not expect much input from us. In that way we did not participate and we left it to the principal to decide (SGB Member, Busabusa).*

As the parent in the quote above suggested, the principals' decision not to consult with or involve parents in the decision-making process was linked to the view that parents lacked the expertise and the knowledge necessary to influence curriculum decision-making. In his study on the relationship between principals and the parent component of school governing bodies in South Africa, Heystek (2007) also found that principals in South African schools did not allow active participation by parents as they were under the impression that parents would make a minimal contribution to educational matters. Similarly, Botha (2007) notes that despite clear policy and widespread belief in stakeholder participation in decision-making processes in schools, parental involvement is rare in most schools, with parents themselves unwilling or unable to question their exclusion from the process. This suggests that the capacity of parents to play their role in curriculum decisions was undervalued and underutilised by the schools. This is often due to principals' lack of confidence in parents' ability to participate in curriculum decision-making. Another reason might also be that many parents do not appear to value their role in issues that pertain to the school curriculum.

Whatever the reason, the point remains that the role played by the parents in curriculum decision-making was non-existent.

The findings that have been presented in this section suggested that the parents did not play any role in curriculum decision-making, particularly in the selection of Tourism as a subject in the school curriculum. The reasons for this included the principals' views that parents lacked the necessary expertise needed to make decisions about the curriculum. Similarly, the parents acknowledged that they lacked knowledge of curriculum matters and were uncertain about their role in curriculum decision-making. This means that the parents in these schools did not contribute in any extent to the selection of curriculum subjects. Although the schools frequently referred to parents as stakeholders in the decision-making process, the nature and the extent of their involvement in curriculum decisions were insignificant. As a result of the exclusion of parents from curriculum decision-making, the four schools in this study missed an opportunity to enrich the quality of their decisions. More importantly, they missed the opportunity to utilise parental support for teaching and learning and for improving curriculum management and delivery in the schools. The involvement of parents would ensure that they feel a sense of belonging and this would encourage loyalty to the school and develop a sense of ownership, and subsequently they would identify more closely with the school curriculum.

## **6.5 Synthesis**

This chapter has presented the findings that addressed the second research question: *To what extent and in what ways did curriculum decision-making in the schools involve the different stakeholders from the school communities?* The chapter focused on the roles played by the principal, HODs (curriculum managers) and Post Level 1 teachers, and parents (SGB

members) in making decisions related to the school curriculum, with specific reference to the introduction of Tourism as a new subject.

In the first instance, the findings revealed that none of the principals in the four schools engaged in democratic or participatory decision-making to select Tourism as a new subject in the curriculum. Rather, all four principals adopted a top-down approach to curriculum decision-making. The principals explained their curriculum leadership style as a function of their accountability to the parents and the state in terms of learner performance. They also cited their lack of confidence about the stakeholders' knowledge and expertise about the curriculum and their potential for making informed decisions as a reason for their top-down approach to curriculum decision-making.

Secondly, the South African Schools Act mandates the involvement of stakeholders (teachers, parents and learners) in curriculum decision-making in schools. However, contrary to national policy, the four schools failed to involve teachers in curriculum decision-making. Instead, the teachers felt deprived of participation in curriculum decision-making. This is contrary to national policy and recommendations from previous research studies that suggest that the involvement of teachers in curriculum decision-making processes is vital if schools want to engage in successful curriculum implementation (Poppleton & Williamson, 2004; Collins, 2007; Ndu & Anagbogu, 2007; Botha, 2007).

Third, while parents' involvement in school governance such as curriculum decision-making is valued and mandated in national policy, this study found that the four schools did not involve parents as stakeholders in the decision to adopt Tourism as a new subject in the



curriculum. This implies that the opportunity for the schools to benefit from parental involvement in curriculum decision-making process was lost. Instead, the parents were marginalised and they felt that their involvement in curriculum decision-making was not valued or needed. This could be attributed to the perceptions (by principals and the parents themselves) that parents lacked the necessary knowledge needed for effective participation in curriculum decision-making.

The findings further highlighted a gap between what was expected and what actually happened with regards to curriculum decision-making in these four schools. For example, while stakeholders are expected to be meaningful partners in school governance such as being included in the selection of new subjects (as mandated by national policy and the principles of democracy), curriculum decision-making in the four schools was largely undemocratic. Decisions about the curriculum remained the prerogative of the principals, with minimal involvement of teachers and a total exclusion of parents and learners. In summary, the exclusion of stakeholders from curriculum decision-making does not bode well for democratic leadership or for the effective implementation of curriculum policies and, in particular, for positive learning outcomes in the schools under study.

In the next chapter I discuss these findings and present conclusions to the study.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

# EXPLAINING CURRICULUM DECISION-MAKING IN THE ADOPTION OF NEW SUBJECTS IN SCHOOLS

### 7.1 Introduction

Prior to embarking on this research, I had 10 years of practical experience as a Tourism teacher, a Subject Advisor for Tourism in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education, and as a Lecturer in Tourism at university level. I became interested in the subject as a result of my involvement and the growth in the number of schools that had included Tourism as a subject. One question remained important: *Why and how do schools make curricular decisions and, in particular, what subjects do they select for inclusion in their respective curricula?* In this context, the primary purpose of this study was to explore the nature of and the rationale for curriculum decision-making among stakeholders in the selection of new subjects in the school curriculum. The study addressed the question: *What is the nature of and rationale for the curriculum decision-making processes schools engage in when adopting a new subject in their respective curricula?* In pursuit of the research question, the study addressed two sub-questions:

- *What factors inform school communities in their decision to introduce Tourism in the curriculum?*
- *To what extent and in what ways does curriculum decision-making in schools involve the different stakeholders from the school community?*

In Chapters Five and Six I presented a thematic analysis as well as interpretations and discussions of the findings that emerged from the data. In this chapter, I begin by presenting a synthesis of the study, focusing on the purpose, rationale, theoretical location and methodological approach to the study. I then highlight the findings that emerged from the data, including how my thesis responds to the research questions and its contribution to the understanding of the phenomenon under study, which is curriculum decision-making in the selection of new subjects in schools. The chapter concludes with the implications emerging from the study.

The study used the adoption of Tourism as an elective subject in selected KwaZulu-Natal institutions as an entry point for understanding curriculum decision-making in the schools. Post 1994, the then Department of Education (DoE) in South Africa introduced Tourism as a new subject in Grades 10-12, known as the Further Education and Training (FET) phase. As discussed in the previous chapters, the introduction of Tourism as a school subject in secondary schools was based on the assumption that it would empower learners with the skills required for employment and that it would contribute to developing the local tourism industry and economy (Von Maltitz, 2002). It was further envisaged that the subject would provide encouragement to learners in identifying and developing entrepreneurial opportunities for themselves (Department of Education, 2003). Since the introduction of Tourism in the secondary school curriculum, as informed by the National Curriculum Statement (NCS) in 2006 and the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) in 2011, the number of schools that offer Tourism as an elective (non-compulsory) subject in their respective curricula has increased. For this reason, this study sought to understand the nature of the decision-making process that the schools engage in when selecting new subjects generally, and in adopting Tourism as a subject in schools' respective curricula in particular.

The study was premised on the notion that there are significant forces that influence the role of various stakeholders who are involved in the decision-making process to select new subjects for the school curriculum. Thus, it sought to analyse the factors that influenced such decisions and the extent of stakeholders' participation in curriculum decision-making in the selected schools.

## **7.2 Methodological Reflections on the Study**

This study was premised on the notion that decisions regarding what subjects to include in the curriculum and whether to introduce a new subject are informed by complex factors residing within and beyond the school, and these reflect and are dependent on the specific context within which the school functions. Thus, informed by the literature reviewed for this study, I came to the realisation that policy frameworks internationally and locally have significant implications for curriculum decision-making generally and for the inclusion of Tourism in the curricula of South African schools in particular. Furthermore, the literature suggested that educational policies are central in determining the knowledge worth teaching as they provide the framework for curriculum structure at school level. Moreover, the literature review suggested that there are factors that inform decisions to include new subjects in the school curriculum, with specific focus on decisions to introduce Tourism. These factors range from macro/policy level factors to micro/institutional level factors. The literature reviewed made it clear that school communities have to respond to these factors as they largely inform the decision to adopt Tourism in the curriculum. Furthermore, the literature review suggested that maximum participation by school communities is not evident when schools undertake curriculum decisions involving subject selection generally and Tourism particularly. The participation (or lack of participation) in decision-making processes by

various stakeholders has far-reaching implications for the status of particular kinds of knowledge and subjects and the power of various actors in the school community to make such decisions.

Therefore, with reference to the literature review, I identified the conceptual and theoretical frameworks for understanding the nature of and rationale for the curriculum decision-making processes schools engage in when adopting a new subject in their respective curricula. The functional curriculum theory (Obanya, 2004), the stakeholder theory (Freeman, 1984), and the deliberative model of curriculum development (Walker, 1971) informed the data collection and analysis in the study. First, the functional curriculum theory (Obanya, 2004) was used to understand the rationale for the schools' decision to select Tourism for their respective curricula. This theory posits that education should promote self-reliance, entrepreneurship and economic independence as well as assist students to overcome any form of restrictions or inhibitions imposed upon them by the environment and contextual factors. Informed by this theory, my broad proposition was that significant forces would influence decisions to include Tourism as part of the school curriculum in the various institutions. Thus, the study analysed the extent and ways in which macro/policy and micro/institutional factors influenced the participating schools' decision to adopt Tourism as part of the school curriculum.

The second theory used in the study was the stakeholder theory (Freeman, 1984). This theory posits that there are bodies, entities and people who have a kind of interest in the organisation and who are able to play a major role and influence decisions made about the organisation. My proposition linked to this theory was that the involvement of the school community (i.e., principals, heads of department, teachers and parents) in collective curriculum decision-

making, including the selection of new subjects, is likely to yield positive curriculum outcomes for the school. The study therefore examined the extent to and ways in which key stakeholders were involved in curriculum decision-making that led to the adoption of Tourism as a subject in the participating schools.

The third theory utilised in the study was Walker's (1971) deliberative model of curriculum development, which posits that schools must engage in participatory decision-making that involves all key stakeholders. Informed by this theory, this study was premised on the notion that various people forming the school community would have different roles to play in the process of making decisions about the curriculum. Failure to involve them might result in decisions that would not address the actual needs of the learners and the community. Thus, to avoid this, school communities must engage in deliberations and participatory curriculum decision-making processes when adopting a new subject (in this case Tourism) as part of the school curriculum. The blending of the three theories as analytical foci was very useful in this study. In fact, the analysis of the data using the lens of various theoretical frameworks enabled me to propose a framework that could be adopted for effective/desirable curriculum decision-making in schools.

Guided by the propositions derived from the theoretical frameworks as discussed in the previous chapters, the study was located within an interpretive paradigm and employed a qualitative approach to research. The study was undertaken in four secondary schools in the KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) province in South Africa. A qualitative case study design, focusing on curriculum decision-making involving the selection of Tourism as a new subject, was adopted. To collect the required data, semi-structured individual interviews with a sample of key stakeholders (the principals, teachers and parents), and document analyses were used as

instruments. The participants were selected using purposive sampling. The data were recorded by means of an audio recorder and field notes and were analysed using a thematic format. The data that were analysed were utilised to make interpretations and assertions about the rationale for and the nature of curriculum decision-making among stakeholders in the selection of new subjects for the school curriculum.

The qualitative case study design used in this study provided insight into the factors (both macro/policy and institutional) that informed school communities' curriculum decision-making and the extent of their involvement in the process. By means of the semi-structured interview methodology that I employed, I was able to ensure that the various stakeholders' voices were heard. The design further allowed me to approach the research from multiple sources. For example, interviews with various stakeholders were corroborated by an analysis of relevant school documents. However, I also acknowledge a few concerns about the methodological approach I adopted. First, the power dynamics between me as a senior government official and the participants might have negatively impacted the quality of the data that I obtained through the interviews, even though I had assured the participants that the research was not part of my official duties. For example, while the participants were willing to participate in the interviews, I realised during data collection that some were rather cautious and appeared reluctant to disclose certain information concerning their schools. Also, the research questions and methodology adopted in the study meant that I was looking back at a phenomenon that had already occurred. This means that I never observed the actual meetings and other forums at which curriculum decision-making took place. Rather, I asked the participants to look back and recall the ways in which their schools engaged in these processes.

I utilised a schedule of semi-structured questions to ascertain the school communities' perspectives on the nature of and rationale for their decision-making in selecting Tourism in the curriculum. The use of participant observations in key meetings, conversation among stakeholders, workshops and other forums where the decision is deliberated on, would yield more insights about how and why schools engage in such processes. Notwithstanding these shortcomings, the research will clearly contribute conceptually to the literature on curriculum decision-making in the selection of new subjects.

### **7.3 Review of the Study**

This study addressed the question: *What are the rationale for and the nature of curriculum decision-making in schools?* Chapter One introduced the reader to the study, particularly outlining the background to and the rationale for it, as well as its purpose and the research questions. A brief overview of the research design and the ethical issues was provided.

Chapter Two reviewed the literature that relates to curriculum decision-making in schools and the role played by stakeholders in making such decisions. The chapter commenced with a brief review of the policy framework that guides curriculum decision-making generally and the selection of new subjects for the curriculum in particular. This was informed by the view that educational policies are central in determining the knowledge worth teaching as they provide the framework for curriculum structure at school level. Furthermore, the chapter reviewed literature related to the factors that inform decisions to include new subjects in the school curriculum, with specific focus on decisions to introduce Tourism. The review suggested that school communities have to respond to macro/policy and micro/institutional level factors as they largely inform the decision to adopt new subjects in the curriculum.



Finally, it reviewed literature on decision-making processes schools engage in when they introduce new subjects in the curriculum, with special focus on the introduction of Tourism.

In Chapter Three I presented the conceptual frameworks that informed the study. The conceptual framework encompasses the process, the stakeholders and the structures involved in curriculum choices and the factors that shape and reshape the process and the resultant curriculum in terms of the subjects adopted in the school. I further presented the three theoretical frameworks which informed data collection and the analysis in the study. These were Obanya's (2004) functional curriculum theory that informs the rationale for curriculum decision-making in the educational system; the stakeholder theory (Freeman, 1984) that explains who makes the decisions in schools, the power relations in decision-making, and the reasons why people make particular decisions; and Walker's (1971) deliberative model of curriculum development, which presents a basis for understanding curriculum decision-making processes. The three theoretical frameworks were fused to provide a lens through which to examine how and why the selected school communities decided to adopt Tourism as a new subject in their curricula. The chapter was concluded with a set of propositions developed from the theoretical frameworks. These propositions were used to guide the processes of data analysis in this study.

Chapter Four provided an overview of the design of the study. A discussion of the qualitative method as an approach for data collection was presented. Guided by the propositions derived from the theoretical frameworks that were discussed in Chapter Three, the chapter located the study within the interpretive paradigm. The chapter described and explained the research

approach, data collection and analysis methods, ethical issues, and the limitation to the design of the study.

Chapter Five presented the findings of the study and addressed the first sub-question: *What factors inform school communities in their decision to introduce Tourism in the curriculum?*

The findings emerging from the study suggested that a combination of macro/policy and institutional factors shaped the schools' decisions to introduce Tourism in their respective curricula. These findings suggested that the various forces within and from outside the school, which were aimed at addressing the immediate needs of the school, motivated the decision to introduce Tourism as a vocationally-oriented subject in the curriculum.

Chapter Six focused on the question: *To what extent and in what ways does curriculum decision-making in schools involve the different stakeholders from the school community?*

The findings revealed that the principals had not engaged in democratic or participatory decision-making to select Tourism as a new subject in the respective schools' curricula. The study found that while stakeholders are expected to be meaningful partners in school governance, including in the selection of new subjects, curriculum decision-making remained the prerogative of the principals, with minimal involvement of teachers and a total exclusion of parents and learners.

## **7.4 Analysis**

As stated above, the overall aim of the study was to explore the nature of and rationale for curriculum decision-making in the selection of Tourism as a subject in the school curriculum.

In this section I interpret the findings from the study.

#### **7.4.1 Factors that Informed Curriculum Decision-making in the Schools**

The first research question was: *What factors inform school communities' decision to select Tourism for inclusion in the curriculum?* To address this question and being informed by the functional curriculum theory of Obanya (2004), I posit that there are significant forces outside and within the school that influence schools' decision to adopt a new subject as part of the curriculum. The data that were analysed and discussed in Chapter Five suggest that the participating schools' decision to introduce Tourism in their respective curricula was shaped by both macro/policy factors (e.g., political and economic influences and education policies) and institutional factors (e.g., learner performance, lack of resources, and untrained teachers). In considering the macro/policy and institutional factors, the schools adopted a functional curriculum approach to their curricula and their curriculum decision-making (Obanya, 2004) when they engaged in the process of selecting Tourism as a new subject.

In relation to macro/policy factors, the decision to introduce Tourism was firstly influenced by the political imperative of the post-apartheid government to redress the socio-economic inequalities of the past. The school communities in this study aligned their decision to national policy imperatives (for example, by adopting a subject that would address social inequalities, including unemployment and poverty). Informed by a seemingly functional curriculum perspective (see Obanya, 2004; Offorma, 2005), the participants initially viewed the role of schooling and the curriculum as an opportunity to alleviate these societal challenges. The influence of these forces might be explained by the schools' location in impoverished contexts that were characterised by poverty and unemployed, and by stakeholders' expectations of the role of schooling in addressing these inequalities. The perception was that learners who were exposed to Tourism as a school subject would be able

to contribute positively to reducing poverty and unemployment among young people in these communities.

Secondly, and linked to the first reason, the decision was influenced by the expected economic benefits linked to the teaching of Tourism in schools. For example, the expectation was that skills provisioning would immediately lead to employment opportunities and thereby reduce the high unemployment rate and poverty in these communities. This suggests that, as part of a functional curriculum, the new subject (Tourism) was meant to prepare learners for an elusive job market by training them in entrepreneurial skills and thereby contributing to building the local Tourism industry and economy.

A significant finding of this study relates to the way in which schools perceived educational policies as linked to the rationale for including Tourism. Educational policies such as the NCS and CAPS, that includes Tourism as one of the elective subjects in the high school curriculum, and the White Paper of PSET (Department of Higher Education, 2013) that promotes alternative forms of post school education, including vocational and occupational training, in which Tourism is located, seemed to influence school communities' curricula decision-making as they select new subjects. As the literature reviewed in this study suggests, curriculum reforms worldwide have seen a number of education policies relating to curriculum decisions being initiated in relation to vocationalising the secondary school curriculum (see Resh & Benavot, 2009; Ohiwerei & Nwosu, 2009; Ofoha, 2011; Mandiudza, et al., 2013; Tshabalala & Ncube, 2014). In this regard, the education policies of South Africa have also responded by offering vocational subjects such as Tourism (Department of Education, 2005; Department of Basic Education, 2011). Specifically, the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) for Tourism is aimed at addressing the lack of desired

skills in the South African workforce (Department of Basic Education, 2011). Similarly, it could be argued that in making their decisions, the schools were concerned with adopting a curriculum that was relevant for the needs of the community. In other words, the participants in this study believed that adopting Tourism as a subject would help learners to develop skills that would enhance their employment opportunities and address the high rate of unemployment and high rates of poverty in the communities.

A second significant but unexpected finding relates to the fact that curriculum expediency and/or responsiveness influenced the stakeholders' decisions in the four schools' contexts. The findings suggest that Tourism was selected for teaching because of its potential to respond to such institutional challenges as poor learner performance, the scarcity of resources, and shortage of appropriately and adequately trained teachers. For example, data from various interviews suggested that limited resources (including finances and the availability of teachers) meant that the schools could not afford subjects that, in their view, would require a lot of resources. In contrast, the findings of previous studies suggest that lack of resources often means that schools are reluctant to add new subjects in the curriculum (see Dieltiens, 2006; Ndou, 2008; Chili, 2013). Most of the stakeholders that were interviewed in this study expressed the view that their schools needed to use the few resources they had economically, and that Tourism as a new subject would not demand resources that the schools did not have.

Similarly, the shortage of teachers in general and the lack of trained teachers in the schooling system influenced these schools' decision to introduce Tourism. In the minds of many of the stakeholders in the schools, particularly the principals, introducing Tourism which they regarded as a 'soft' option and an easy subject that any trained teacher could teach, meant

that they would not need additional teachers to implement their decision. This perception existed despite the evidence from international research (Makori & Onderi, 2013; Chakanyuka, 2006; Chili, 2013) that suggests that teachers who are not qualified in a subject do not have the necessary content knowledge to teach the subject effectively, which in turn leads to poor performance in the subject. Linked to this, effective teaching and learning in a subject (including Tourism) in schools may be stifled by poorly trained teachers (Chili, 2013).

The findings suggest that the institutional factors that influenced the schools' decision to introduce Tourism might have inadvertently contributed to poor teaching and learning in various subjects, but specifically in Tourism. To illustrate this point, the principals acknowledged that they had made the decision to introduce Tourism because of being under-resourced, both in terms of materials as well as human resources. This was informed by the mistaken understanding that, as a subject, Tourism would not require any additional material resources and that any teacher, whether trained to teach the subject or not, would be able to teach it. However, as they later discovered the lack of resources and trained teachers led to ineffective teaching and learning in the subject, thus jeopardising the very imperatives they had meant to address by introducing the subject, including skills development, addressing unemployment and poverty, and improving learner performance in Matric. Furthermore, according to the teachers, this in turn negatively affected the value and status of Tourism in the eyes of the learners and the communities (see Van Deventer, 2008).

#### **7.4.2 Stakeholder Involvement in the Decision-making Processes**

The second research question addressed in this study was: *To what extent and in what ways does curriculum decision-making in schools involve the different stakeholders from the school community?* This question was informed by the notion that, for the decision to yield positive curriculum outcomes for the school, the school must engage in participatory or deliberative curriculum decision-making involving all key stakeholders (see also Mosoge & Van der Westhuizen, 1997; Botha 2007; Melese, 2007; Mokoena, 2011; Klock, 2012; Epstein, 2009). Stakeholder participation in school-based management provides opportunities for improving learning outcomes at school level (Botha, 2007). To address this question, the data collection methods involved semi-structured interviews that were conducted with all the participants who represented various stakeholders (i.e., principals, Heads of Department, Tourism teachers, and parent members of the SGB), and document analysis. Two theoretical frameworks informed the analysis of the data. First, the data analysis was informed by the stakeholder theory (Freeman, 1984) that posits that there are structures, entities and people who have a kind of interest in the organisation and who are able to play a major role and influence decisions made about the organisation. Second, the deliberative model of curriculum development (Walker, 1971) was used. This model posits that schools must engage in participatory decision-making that involves all key stakeholders. Therefore, this study was premised on the notion that curriculum decision-making in schools must be collaborative and involve all key stakeholders (see Botha, 2007). However, as demonstrated in Chapter Six, in all four schools participating in this study, the decisions to introduce Tourism as a teaching subject were made largely by the principals. This is in contrast to Freeman's (1984) view that managers must understand the dynamic interests and roles that exist within their institutions in order to identify and involve stakeholders in decision-making.

Two factors could explain the principals' approach to curriculum decision-making. First, as discussed in Chapter Four, the principals in this study did not possess any qualifications beyond basic teacher qualifications (such as a Teachers Diploma or an Honours degree in Education). This means that they had not received any training to prepare them for their positions and roles as principals. Therefore, without the relevant qualifications or training, the principals were unable to play their role effectively. Moreover, linked to the lack of relevant management and leadership training, all the principals had received their teacher training during the apartheid era when decision-making was centralised and vested in the principal's office. It may be for this reason, among others, that in spite of new policy mandates, the principals continued to lead schools and curriculum decision-making in a non-participatory manner (see Bush & Heystek, 2006). While all the principals understood that their role demanded stakeholder participation in all aspects of the school, with particular reference to curriculum decision-making, in reality it was the principals who made these decisions. The other stakeholders were merely informed and/or asked to endorse the principals' decisions. Moreover, the principals were of the view that the parents and teachers did not have the necessary skills that were required for engaging in deliberations for curriculum decision-making.

The findings that were discussed above are not unique to these four schools. Other studies in South Africa (see Van Wyk, 2004; Mncube, 2007; Mokoena, 2011) also found that, in spite of a progressive education policy that requires the involvement of all stakeholders in all decision-making, curriculum decision-making is still dominated by the principals. This obviously had negative consequences for teaching and learning in the schools. For example, the fact that the teachers had not been involved might have led to their poor commitment and dedication to teaching generally, and to the teaching of Tourism in particular. As Melese



(2007) concluded, teacher participation in curriculum decision-making leads to increased acceptance of the decision and ultimately to effective teaching and learning of the subject.

According to the participants in this study, parents' involvement in curriculum decision-making in the four schools was low. Opportunities for parents to play some role in the decision to select Tourism were non-existent. Coupled with this, there was poor communication between the schools and parents about the rationale for the decision or the expected consequences thereof. As Fullan (2007) asserts, the closer the parent is to the education of the child, the greater the impact on the child's success and educational achievement becomes. Thus, excluding parents from the selection of new subjects might have resulted in the schools' failure to achieve expected outcomes such as the improvement of learner performance in Tourism, skills development, development of entrepreneurship opportunities, and the resultant reduction of unemployment and poverty in the community. Supported by Epstein (2009), this thesis argues that parents' involvement in curriculum decision-making is integral to effective teaching and learning and positive educational outcomes, including improved learner performance.

## **7.5 Discussion**

The first question addressed in this study was: *What factors inform school communities' decisions to select Tourism for inclusion in the curriculum?* Informed by the evidence from this study, this thesis found that the schools' curriculum decision-making for the selection of new subjects generally and that of Tourism in particular was determined by both macro-policy and institutional forces. In addition, curriculum decision-making was influenced by the value that the school community members placed on the impact of such factors on decision-

making processes. In line with the functional curriculum theoretical perspective various forces within and from outside the school, which were aimed to address the immediate needs of the school and the community, motivated the stakeholders' decision to introduce Tourism. The decision was premised on the belief that the curriculum, in terms of subjects taught in the school, must be designed to teach students skills that will promote entrepreneurship and maximise potential for employment (Obanya, 2004).

Although the study sample was very small and the results could not be generalised to a larger population, the findings nevertheless suggest that there are competing and contradictory expectations for schools in South Africa. This is often reflected in what knowledge and subject choices are privileged in a school. On the one hand, there exists a view that schooling is a means to access higher education. Therefore, informed by this view, schools will introduce or teach subjects that prepare learners for knowledge and lifelong learning. This view puts emphasis on the so-called academic subjects (e.g., Physical Sciences and Accounting). However, children who go to schools that subscribe to this view may or may not access higher education, as a number of factors determine this. These include lack of funding, poor performance and others. As the data from this study illustrated (see Chapter Six), only a small percentage of learners is able to access higher education institutions and universities in particular, specifically learners from rural areas such as those within which the research sites were located. It is therefore my contention that curriculum decision-making that is informed by the need to provide access to higher education might, for learners in schools similar to the four in this study, be unrealistic and that it might perpetuate the very social issues it is meant to address, such as improving learning outcomes and reducing unemployment and poverty in communities.

On the other hand, there is a view that sees schooling as a means for addressing negative social issues, including reducing or eliminating unemployment and poverty. Schools informed by this view might introduce vocational subjects such as Tourism. In this vein, the schools in this study seemed to accept that they were responsible for the development of learners to access employment and thus to reduce poverty in their communities. Given the rural context of these schools, the acquisition of specific skills at secondary school level was valued for its immediate relevance to the needs of the community. However, as the evidence from the study suggests, due to a lack of trained teachers and appropriate resources for teaching, teaching and learning in Tourism appeared to be ineffective as it did not lead to better educational outcomes. Instead, poor learner performance in Grade 12 and failure to achieve the intended socio-economic outcomes were perpetuated.

The second question addressed in this study was: *To what extent and in what ways does curriculum decision-making in schools involve the different stakeholders from the school community?* My analyses of the data were informed by the stakeholder theory (Freeman, 1984) that argues for stakeholder identification and involvement in the organisation's decision-making processes, as well as Walker's (1971) deliberative model of curriculum development that argues that schools must engage in participatory decision-making that involves all key stakeholders. The findings of the study revealed that key stakeholders in the schools other than the principals had not been involved in curriculum decision-making for the selection of Tourism. Instead, the principals were solely responsible for the decision to select the new subject. As a result the teachers, who are the main implementers of such decisions, ended up not being committed to the decision and its implementation. The value that the schools' parent and teacher groups ascribed to the implementation of Tourism was based on their level of participation in the decision-making process for selecting the subject. While

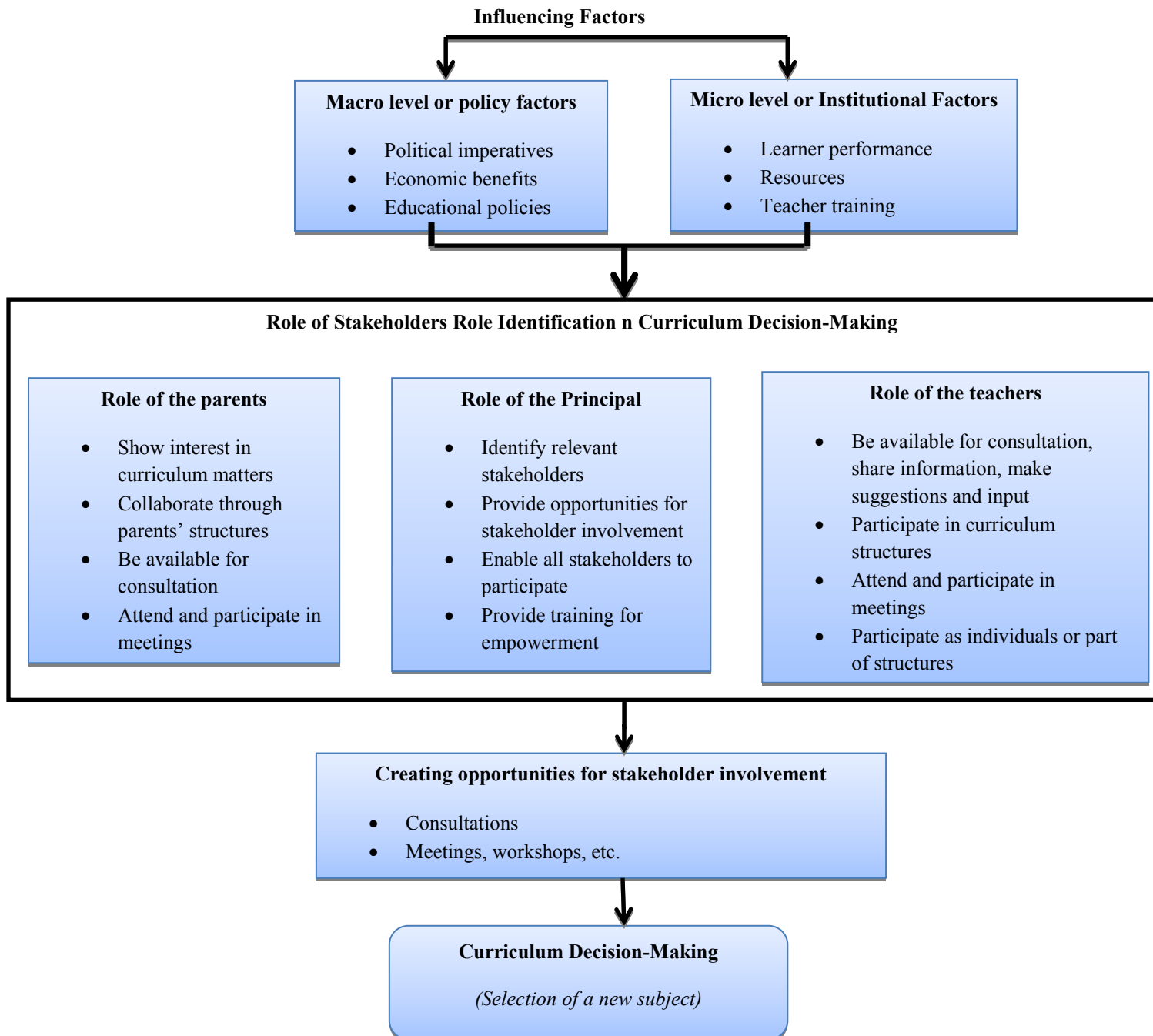
national policy mandates the involvement of all stakeholders in school governance, including curriculum decision-making, the four schools participating in this study made the decision to adopt Tourism as new subject in an undemocratic and non-participatory manner. Decisions about the curriculum remained the prerogative of the principals, with minimal involvement of teachers and a total exclusion of parents and learners.

This does not bode well for democratic leadership in schools or for the effective implementation of curriculum policies and, in particular, for positive learning outcomes for learners. Unless teachers are given the opportunity and space to participate in curriculum decision-making at a level of strategic decision-making prior to implementation, curriculum decisions made will not be effectively implemented at classroom level. This implies that the process of knowledge selection needs to involve teachers and parents to solicit their views and expertise regarding curriculum matters. If teachers are actively involved and participate in the decisions leading to the selection of curriculum subjects, they will be empowered to better implement the subject. For effective curriculum decision-making in schools, principals and other stakeholders (including parents and teachers) need to unlearn previously taught/held beliefs and practices in relation to school governance generally, and to the selection of subjects in particular.

## **7.6 Contributions of the Study**

This study will significantly contribute to the conceptual literature on curriculum decision-making in schools generally, and to democratic and participatory processes of selecting new school subjects in particular. Informed by the literature review and the findings based on the data analyses, the following question needs to be asked: *What are the requirements for*

*effective/desirable curriculum decision-making in schools?* In response to this question, the thesis proposes a framework for stakeholder involvement in curriculum decision-making in schools, as presented in Figure 7.1 below:



**Figure 7.1: Framework for Stakeholder Involvement in Curriculum Decision-Making**

The framework for stakeholder involvement in curriculum decision-making proposed here extends Walker's (1971) model of curriculum development and stakeholder involvement and has wider implications for the overall advancement of curriculum decision-making for selecting new subjects in schools. The framework posits that curriculum decision-making in schools is influenced by macro-level (policy imperatives) and micro-level (institutional) factors. For effective curriculum decision-making, the process must involve the full participation of all stakeholders (e.g., the principal, teachers, and parents). For this to happen, as the leader of the school the principal must identify key stakeholders who will inform and shape curriculum decision-making in the school. He/she must create and nurture an environment for collaboration and deliberations so as to improve the decision made (see also Walker, 1971; Brady & Kennedy, 2003; Kirk & McDonald, 2001; Marsh, 2007). In turn, the stakeholders must take advantage of the opportunities created for them to participate such as school meetings, workshops, and consultations with the principals, teachers, and others. In the context of macro- and micro-level factors, they must understand their own and each others' expected roles and enact them accordingly. This thesis argues that effective curriculum decision-making, particularly in terms of the selection of new subjects, can only be effective when it involves the full participation of all stakeholders. Such stakeholders must not only recognise and endorse the rationale for the decision, but must also understand their expected roles in the process and be trained and supported to enact them effectively.

## **7.7 Implications**

In light of the findings in this research and the conclusions drawn, this study has several implications for educational policy, practice and further research.

### **7.7.1 Implications for Policy**

Even though the South African Schools Act (no 84 of 1996) sets a foundation for the involvement of all stakeholders in schools and thus for participatory curriculum decision-making, there is still a need for interventions to ensure the actual implementation of the policy at school level. Therefore, those involved with monitoring the implementation of policies will have to recognise the capacity of school communities regarding the role and extent of their involvement in curriculum decision-making processes and provide the necessary training and support interventions. For example, the Provincial Departments of Education, with the help of the district officials, need to visit schools on a regular basis to establish the extent to which stakeholders understand and enact their roles as stipulated in educational policies. Furthermore, and in tandem with curriculum policies, guidelines for implementation at school level must be developed and the necessary support (in the form of training and resources) must be provided to schools. Such guidelines must address the significant question for schools: *What are the requirements for effective/desirable curriculum decision-making in schools?* Addressing this question in the form of guidelines for schools will help those tasked with the implementation of curriculum policies to understand what is expected, what skills they require, and what resources they need to enact their roles.

### **7.7.2 Implications for Practice**

The findings of this study also have implications for capacity development of principals in their leadership role in curriculum management and curriculum decision-making in the context of the South African Schools Act and the human rights framework within which it is framed. This framework calls for participatory curriculum decision-making in the selection of new subjects. Moreover, this process must involve all stakeholders within the school. As the

findings of this study suggest that most principals still operate in an undemocratic environment and exclude other stakeholders from curriculum decision-making, interventions geared towards changing the status quo are needed. In this context, capacity development programs that will equip principals with the necessary understanding, skills and values to create opportunities for all stakeholders to fully participate in curriculum decision-making, and to support them once they are involved, are needed. Furthermore, the training of and support for all stakeholders to perform their expected roles are also needed.

### **7.7.3 Implications for Research**

This study aimed to explore the nature of and the rationale for curriculum decision-making among stakeholders in the selection of new subjects in the school curriculum. The study had two objectives: (1) to investigate the factors that informed the selected school communities in their decision to introduce Tourism in the curriculum; and (2) to examine the extent to and ways in which curriculum decision-making in the schools involved the different stakeholders from the school community. As such, this study fills a gap in the South African literature on curriculum decision-making in the selection of new subjects generally and of Tourism as a subject in particular. However, there were several limitations that the present study could not address (see Chapter Four). For example, a key methodological limitation involved the approach to data collection that was adopted in the study (i.e., qualitative interviews were conducted with key stakeholders and school level policies and other documents were analysed). It would be interesting, for example, to address the questions raised in the study using an ethnographic approach to research. Such research could involve spending an extended period of time in a school or schools during an actual curriculum decision-making process involving the selection of a new subject. Participant observations in key meetings,



conversations among stakeholders, workshops and other forums where the decision is deliberated, coupled with extensive interviews with stakeholders, would yield interesting insights about why and how schools engage in such processes.

A second methodological limitation included the fact that sampling did not involve a key stakeholder group, namely learners, who are the ultimate beneficiaries of educational reform. Moreover, learners are the future representatives of the Tourism industry as future employees or employers of other young people who enter the world of work. Future studies are therefore needed that examine the perspectives of learners and other stakeholders (such as employers and Tourism practitioners) regarding their participation or non-participation in curriculum decision-making, with particular reference to the selection of new subjects for curricula offerings in schools. This would enrich the knowledge base on the rationale and nature of curriculum decisions that may support increased stakeholder involvement in curriculum decision-making.

Finally, research could be conducted on how the framework for stakeholder involvement in curriculum decision-making as advanced in this chapter might work through, for example, action research in schools. For example, such a study might examine how principals could be trained and supported to spread the locus of control in curriculum decision-making more evenly to other stakeholders and to encourage democratic participation.

## **7.8 Concluding Thoughts: Personal-Professional Reflections**

This study addressed the key question: *What is the nature of and rationale for the curriculum decision-making processes schools engage in when adopting a new subject in their respective curricula?* Using a qualitative research approach involving four high schools, the study used the introduction of Tourism into the curriculum as an entry to understanding curriculum decision-making in schools.

In Chapter One, I reflected on how and why I developed an interest in Tourism education and why I was prompted to engage in a study that examined how and why schools select a particular subject for inclusion in their respective curricula. My interest in reaching understandings of the research topic and the issues surrounding it was motivated by the need to inform my personal interest and professional practice. My long-term involvement with Tourism at various levels of the education system prompted my interest in exploring the decisions made by schools to include the subject in their curricula and the factors that influenced them. First, as a Subject Advisor and Deputy Chief Education Specialist for Tourism, I was involved in supporting school-based educators' efforts in curriculum development and teaching in the classroom and later, as a lecturer in Tourism education at a tertiary institution, I became concerned about schools' understanding of Tourism and how they came to make decisions to include it in the curriculum. Writing this thesis not only expanded my knowledge in the area of curriculum decision-making, but also gave me insights into the nature of and processes schools engage in when selecting new subjects in the curriculum and the factors that influence these decisions. One such factor is the context in which a school exists.

This study confirmed that, in spite of the national policy mandate and the principles of democracy, curriculum decision-making in schools is still largely undemocratic. I have used this study as a channel through which I could explicate my own thoughts and research about the role of various stakeholders in curriculum decision-making and in the selection of new subjects in particular. This research will also contribute to my continuing professional development as an academic (i.e., as a lecturer in Tourism education at a university) and will inform my own curriculum decision-making in relation to what knowledge is worth teaching. Moreover, this research has developed and enriched me professionally and academically, with specific reference to understanding the debates around theory and practice of curriculum decision-making in schools and the implications thereof for other educational institutions, including universities.

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# APPENDIX A

## ETHICAL CLEARANCE



University of KwaZulu-Natal  
Research Office, Govan Mbeki Centre  
Westville Campus  
Private Bag x54001  
DURBAN  
4000  
Tel No: +27 31 260 3587  
Fax No: +27 31 260 4609  
sshrec@ukzn.ac.za

14 MAY 2010

**MS. ZANELE HW DUBE (20000252)**  
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCE – EDUCATION

Dear Ms. Dube

**ETHICAL APPROVAL NUMBER: HSS/0217/010D**

**PROJECT TITLE: "An investigation into the factors that influence the inclusion of Tourism as a subject in the school curriculum (FET Phase) and the process involved: A case study of schools in Othukela District, KwaZulu Natal"**

In response to your application dated 10 May 2010, the Humanities & Social Sciences Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol has been given **FULL APPROVAL**.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment /modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

**PLEASE NOTE:** Research data should be securely stored in the school/department for a period of 5 years.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

.....  
**Professor Steven Collings (Chair)**  
**HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE**

cc. Supervisor (Dr. Bheki R Mngomezulu)  
cc. Ms. T Khumalo / Mrs. R Govender

## APPENDIX B

### LETTER TO THE KZN DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Zanele H.W. Dube  
Cell: 0723479030  
Email: [zandube@homemail.co.za](mailto:zandube@homemail.co.za)

---

The Research Officer  
RESEARCH, STRATEGY, POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND EMIS DIRECTORATE  
PRIVATE BAG X9137  
PIETERMARITZBURG  
3200  
16 March 2010

#### **Re: Requesting Permission to Conduct Research**

Dear Sir

I am a PhD student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal conducting a research project entitled: An Investigation into the factors that influence the inclusion of Tourism as a subject in the school curriculum (FET Phase) and the process involved four schools in the Uthukela District of the Department of Education.

The purpose of the study is to understand why schools include Tourism as a subject in their school curriculum. It also aims at how schools follow procedures in including Tourism in their curriculum. Because I intend to get in-depth information about the inclusion of subjects in the curriculum through the lens of Tourism, the four schools will be used to collect data. In understanding the inclusion of Tourism in the school the principal, SGB and teachers I will interview individually in each school. I will also review and analyse documents such as minutes of the SMT, staff, School Governing Body and parents meetings to establish the processes and procedures that were followed in the inclusion of Tourism. The period

anticipated for data collection is between May and August 2010. I also request permission to audiotape the interviews.

Throughout the research process as well as in the reporting of the findings participants anonymity and confidentiality is secured. Names of the participants and the school will not be disclosed at any point during or after the study. The data collection will not encroach on instruction time as interviews will be conducted during weekends and school holidays. The convenience of participants will be prioritised. The setting for interviews and document analysis will be their schools or other venues suitable to the participants. I hope that this study will make a contribution towards the improvement of decisions relating to subject inclusion in the school curriculum.

No costs will be incurred by the Department, the school or the participants. Any incidental costs incurred by the participants will be paid by the researcher.

Given the above information, I humbly request that your office grants permission to conduct this research. For any further information, I have enclosed herein the contacts of my supervisor.

Yours sincerely

Zanele Dube

Student number: 200000252

Cell no.: 072 3479030

E- mail: [zandube@homemail.co.za](mailto:zandube@homemail.co.za)

[zanele.dube@kzndoe.gov](mailto:zanele.dube@kzndoe.gov)

Supervisor: Dr B. Mngomezulu

Tel. No. : 031 260 3706

E-mail: [mngomezulub@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:mngomezulub@ukzn.ac.za)

## APPENDIX C

### KZN Department of Education Permission to Conduct Research



**kzn education**

Department:  
Education  
KWAZULU-NATAL

**Z DUBE  
PO BOX 52176  
BEREA ROAD  
4007**

Enquiries: Sibusiso Alwar

Date: 26/03/2010

Reference: 0029/2010

**RESEARCH PROPOSAL: AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE THE INCLUSION OF TOURISM AS A SUBJECT IN THE SCHOOL CURRICULUM (FET PHASE) AND THE PROCESS INVOLVED: A CASE STUDY OF SCHOOLS IN OTHUKELA DISTRICT, KWAZULU NATAL**

Your application to conduct the above-mentioned research in schools in the attached list has been approved subject to the following conditions:

1. Principals, educators and learners are under no obligation to assist you in your investigation.
2. Principals, educators, learners and schools should not be identifiable in any way from the results of the investigation.
3. You make all the arrangements concerning your investigation.
4. Educator programmes are not to be interrupted.
5. The investigation is to be conducted from 26 March 2010 to 26 March 2011.
6. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey at the school(s) please contact Mr Sibusiso Alwar at the contact numbers above.
7. A photocopy of this letter is submitted to the principal of the school where the intended research is to be conducted.
8. Your research will be limited to the schools submitted.
9. A brief summary of the content, findings and recommendations is provided to the Director: Resource Planning.

...dedicated to service and performance  
beyond the call of duty.

KWAZULU-NATAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

POSTAL: Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200, KwaZulu-Natal, Republic of South Africa

PHYSICAL: Office G25, 188 Pietermaritz Street, Metropolitan Building, PIETERMARITZBURG 3201

TEL: Tel: +27 33 341 8610/8611 | Fax: +27 33 341 8612 | E-mail:



**kzn education**

Department:  
Education  
KWAZULU-NATAL

10. The Department receives a copy of the completed report/dissertation/thesis addressed to:

The Director: Resource Planning  
Private Bag X9137  
Pietermaritzburg  
3200

We wish you success in your research.

Kind regards

**R. Cassius Lubisi (PhD)**  
**Superintendent-General**

...dedicated to service and performance  
beyond the call of duty.

KWAZULU-NATAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

POSTAL : Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200, KwaZulu-Natal, Republic of South Africa

PHYSICAL: Office C25, 188 Pietermaritz Street, Metropolitan Building, PIETERMARITZBURG 3201

TEL: Tel. +27 33 341 8610/8611 | Fax: +27 33 341 8612 | E mail:





**kzn education**

Department:  
Education  
KWAZULU-NATAL

**Z DUBE  
PO BOX 52176  
BEREA ROAD  
4007**

Enquiries: Sibusiso Alwar  
Date: 26/03/2010  
Reference: 0029/2010

### **PERMISSION TO INTERVIEW LEARNERS AND EDUCATORS**

The above matter refers.

Permission is hereby granted to interview Departmental Officials, learners and educators in selected schools of the Province of KwaZulu-Natal subject to the following conditions:

1. **You make all the arrangements concerning your interviews.**
2. **Educators' programmes are not interrupted.**
3. **Interviews are not conducted during the time of writing examinations in schools.**
4. **Learners, educators and schools are not identifiable in any way from the results of the interviews.**
5. **Your interviews are limited only to targeted schools.**
6. **A brief summary of the interview content, findings and recommendations is provided to my office.**
7. **A copy of this letter is submitted to District Managers and principals of schools where the intended interviews are to be conducted.**

The KZN Department of education fully supports your commitment to research: **An investigation into the factors that influence the inclusion of tourism as a subject in the school curriculum (FET Phase) and the process involved: a case study of schools in Othukela district, KwaZulu Natal**

It is hoped that you will find the above in order.

...dedicated to service and performance  
beyond the call of duty.

KWAZULU-NATAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

POSTAL : Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200, KwaZulu-Natal, Republic of South Africa

PHYSICAL: Office C25, 188 Pietermaritz Street, Metropolitan Building, PIETERMARITZBURG 3201

TEL: Tel: +27 33 341 8610/8611 | Fax: +27 33 341 8612 | E-mail

## APPENDIX D

### LETTER TO THE PRINCIPAL

Zanele H.W. Dube

Cell: 0723479030

Email: [zandube@homemail.co.za](mailto:zandube@homemail.co.za)

---

The Principal  
Sample Secondary School  
Uthukela District

Dear Sir/Madam

#### Request to conduct research at your school

I am a student who is currently enrolled at the University of KwaZulu-Natal for a PhD. I am conducting a research study as a fulfilment for this degree. The title of the study is 'An Investigation into the factors that influence the inclusion of Tourism as a subject in the school curriculum (FET Phase) and the processes involved'. It is an in-depth study exploring the process of the inclusion of Tourism as experienced by the principal, teachers and parents.

I humbly request your permission to conduct research at your school and assure you that the data will be used for research purposes only and that the school, the principal, teachers and parents will not be named. Please be informed that I have sought the necessary permission in advance from the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education and has been granted. The research will take the form of semi-structured interviews, observations as well as document review. Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with the school principal, SGB member, HOD supervising Tourism and the Tourism teacher. I will do observations of SGB meeting, parents meeting and staff meetings. Document review will include the school meetings minute books; school policy; log book and other relevant documents that might be available in the school. The involvement of all participants from their schools would be entirely voluntarily.

You have my assurance that the research will not interfere with your normal school programme or have any financial implications for your school.

I thank you for your time and hope that my request meets with your approval.

Yours faithfully

---

Zanele H.W. Dube

---

Date

## APPENDIX E

### LETTER OF INFORMED CONSENT

Zanele H.W. Dube  
Cell: 0723479030  
Email: [zandube@homemail.co.za](mailto:zandube@homemail.co.za)

---

#### **Research Title:**

An Investigation into the inclusion of Tourism as a subject in the school curriculum

The Aims of the Study:

- The objective of the study is to investigate the factors that influence the inclusion of tourism as a subject in the school curriculum in the FET phase in the Province of KwaZulu Natal and the process involved. This is aimed at alerting the DoE to the procedures applied by schools in including a new subject, such as tourism in the curriculum. The study will add to the body of knowledge and the theoretical underpinnings that inform the inclusion of subjects in the curriculum. Finally, it will influence policy formulation on tourism.

#### **Researcher:**

Zanele Dube  
Student number: 200000252  
Cell no.: 072 3479030  
E- mail: [zandube@homemail.co.za](mailto:zandube@homemail.co.za)/  
[zanele.dube@kzndoe.gov](mailto:zanele.dube@kzndoe.gov)

#### **Supervisor:**

Dr B. Mngomezulu  
Tel. No. : 031 260 3706  
E-mail: [mngomezulub@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:mngomezulub@ukzn.ac.za)

People who are willing to participate are going to be interviewed. The researcher will use individual interviews. The participants are expected to answer the questions as much as they can. The researcher is going to ask permission from the participants to use tape recorder, if the participant do not like the idea it will be not be used. The participants are not going to be paid for the data collected from them. The researcher is going to keep the data private and confidential. People who are not willing to participate in this study will face no consequences

**Declaration**

I..... (full names of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## **APPENDIX F**

### **SEMI-STRUCTURE INTERVIEW SCHEDULE**

1. What is your understanding of stakeholders in school's decision-making?
2. Tell me which key stakeholders were involved during the decision-making process to include Tourism?
3. What is your role performance in curriculum decision-making in your school (if any)
4. Explain to how you were involved as one of the stakeholders in the decision-making process to include Tourism in your school.  
  
What was the impact of being/not being involved in the decision-making process to include Tourism, if any?
5. Did the stakeholders experience power issues when the decision leading to the adoption of Tourism was made in your school?
6. In your opinion, whose responsibility is it to ensure stakeholder participation when making curriculum decisions?
7. How can you describe the process that you engaged when the decision to include Tourism was made in your school?
8. Would you say there are forces which are internal/and external to the school that influence the nature of knowledge that schools select for inclusion in the curriculum
9. In your opinion, what do you think were the external factors (such as educational policies economy and politics) that motivated for your school to decide to include

Tourism in the curriculum? (if any)

10. In your opinion, what do you think were the forces from the school that influence the decision-making process by school communities to adopt Tourism? (leadership, teacher qualification, resources)