

The University of KwaZulu-Natal

Challenges faced by the selection committees during the selection process and recommendation of the appointment of educators, particularly to promotional posts, in rural schools.

By

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A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Master of Education Degree. (Faculty of Education, Management, Leadership, Policy and Development)

Date: 9 November 2007

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Declaration

I Zakhele Denzil Mkhize declare that this study entitled '*The challenges faced by the selection committees during the selection process and recommendation of the appointment of educators, particularly to promotional posts, in rural schools*' is my original piece of work. All the sources that I have used have been fully denoted and acknowledged by means of unexpurgated references.

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Acknowledgements

I am wholeheartedly grateful to the following persons who immensely contributed to the completion of this study.

- Sbu Bayeni- My Supervisor, for his suggestion, motivation, constructive criticism, unequivocal guidance and unparalleled supervision.
- The Back up/Prop up Gang- My study group/my friends-True Champions- Senzo, Mangi, Nhlanhla, Bongani, Fikile, Lindiwe and Cwebi. These are the guys who really encouraged me to soldier on when the going was getting tougher. Thanks guys, you provided awesome reinforcements.
- All the Participants and Schools involved in the study, for sharing their wisdom, knowledge and opinions with me.
- Mr. B.S. Mkhize (ex-Circuit Manager) who granted me permission to conduct interviews in the three selected schools of uMzumbi Circuit.
- Zandile and Busi (UKZN B.Ed. Students) who assisted me with typing of my work.
- Thandeka Msimang- A lady with a celestial and angelic heart, for her benevolent generosity in lending me her camera and tape-recording equipments.
- Mr. & Mrs Sihle Mkhize and Mr. & Mrs. Mavuka Mkhize for helping me with references and rendering technical support during my study.
- Charlene for editing part of my work. What a wonderful young and energetic lady with a heart as big as ex-Tranvaal Province. I wish her well in her future studies.
- Almighty God, for taking care of me in good and bad times and also for helping me to realise my dream.

Dedication

This piece of work is dedicated to:

- My wife- Linda, my son- Olwethu, my parents (Dudu and the late Remote Mkhize)
- My siblings (Sifiso, Thulisile and Thandanani), my cousin (Skhumbuzo)
- My aunt (Thobane) and her husband (Qiniso Mtshali) and my in-laws (June-Rose and the late Duncan Mdluli)
- My nephews and nieces (Sthabiso, Mloni, Thabile, Thanda, Usiphile and Amahle)
- My late grandparents (Job and Norah Vilakazi) and (Samuel and Malubhilo Mkhize)

Once again special thanks to:

- Linda Mkhize-my wife, for her unencumbered support and assistance, she is a woman who persistently supported me for many days and nights during my study time. She is really an inspirational woman. I say without you I would not be where I am today, keep up the good work.
- Olwethu Papa Mkhize-my son, the pillar of strength. You go boy, the ball is now in your court, you need to take the baton and complete what I have started.
- The young Lions and Lionesses of the Mkhize family, Sthabiso, Olwethu, Thabile, Mloni, Usiphile and Amahle, for their unflagging assistance and support during the transcription of the interviews. I give you 10 out of 10 guys, well done!!
- Lindiwe Cele-Mkhize, for her support and words of encouragement during my study time.
- MaShozi and Thanda, for providing me irresistibly and appetizing refreshments during study time.
- How can I forget, Cousin Siyabonga Zulu, Skhumbuzo (Mshana) and Mhlonishwa (Boroughman) whom I used to send for errands from pillar to post during my study time.

Abstract

The study examined the challenges faced by the selection committees during the selection process and recommendation of the appointment of educators particularly to promotional posts in rural schools.

Through my working experience in the rural schools for the past eighteen years, I have realised that rural communities are characterized by a cocktail of social ills, such as, poverty, poor hygiene, dreadful diseases and illiteracy. From the verbal discussions with my colleagues and members of the community, it has become evident that rural schools are faced with many challenges. I have also realized that some members of the School Governing Bodies (SGBs) encounter numerous problems in performing their tasks. A School Governing Body (SGB) was constituted in terms of the South African Schools Act (SASA) No.84 of 1996. According to SASA; the SGB has many functions to perform. One of these functions is to form a selection committee to interview candidates and make recommendations to the Department of Education for the appointment of the selected educators. However, existing literature and studies revealed that the selection and appointment process in some schools is fraught with many problems. Some of the problems emanate from the nature and the way the selection committee is composed. For instance, in certain rural schools there is a low level of education amongst some parents and some members do not have conception of what is required from educators in order to qualify for employment or promotion. Subsequently, their ability to interview and select educators is questionable.

The findings of the study suggested that there are also underlying factors which affected the selection process. These factors ranged from favouritism, subjectivity and biasness, impact of the Post Provisional Norm/Model (PPN/M), selection and scoring criteria, lack of expertise to manipulation by members during the selection process. Recommendations were made on the basis of these findings, however, the results of this study may not be generalized to all the rural schools in South Africa because of a few number of participants who were involved.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction to the study

1.1 Introduction

This chapter provides the synopses of the study, background and purpose of the study, statement of the purpose, rationale, critical research questions, theoretical and conceptual frameworks, significance of the study and organisation of the study.

1.2 Background and Purpose of the study

After 1994 democratic election, Republic of South Africa (RSA) became a democratic country and was governed according to the will of the people. Despite this, many challenges had emerged in education since 1994. These challenges were caused by new changes in the form of policies enacted. The most noticeable change was the introduction of the School Governing Bodies in all public schools and their active participation in the selection and recommendation of the appointment of educators in the schools. A School Governing Body (SGB) was constituted in terms of South African Schools Act (SASA) no.84 of 1996. According to the SASA, the SGB has many critical functions to perform. One of these functions is to form a selection committee to interview candidates and make recommendations to the Department of Education for the appointment of the selected educators. However, when this regulation is practised, there are many problems experienced. Some of the problems emanate from the nature and the way the selection committee is composed. In rural schools the level of education of some members of the SGB is below matric and do not have conception of what is required from educators in order to qualify for the employment. Therefore, their ability to interview and select educators is questionable. The purpose of this research study was to investigate the challenges facing the selection committees during the selection and the appointment of educators to the promotional posts.

Interview and selection of educators had many problems such as favouritism, nepotism, biasness and bribery (Gounden, 2000). In some cases local candidates were given preferential treatment and there was a common perception that acting educators based at the schools where there are vacant posts must be given a first preference in getting such posts.

Sometimes the apparent manipulation of the selection committee either by the principals or by the influential teacher unions was more common whereby certain posts were targeted and given to educators who are members of that specific teacher union. These malpractices culminated into a number of disputes. These disputes caused a delay in the appointment of educators and contributed to uncondusive teaching and learning environment. This impacts negatively on the learning and teaching situation and aggravates the plight in the management of schools, taking into consideration the shortage of educators in the rural schools. This means that, the learners were largely affected by the disputes and were deprived of their right to learn as this process takes lengthy discussions to overcome and resolve.

From my own experience as an educator when communicating with principals and other educators, I have found that in most cases disputes are caused by the ignorance and incompetence of the selection committee. Furthermore, illiterate selectors were likely to be easily manipulated by the expert selectors. This is against the principles of democracy which, among others, promote equal participation and consistency in collective decision making. The ignorance and incompetence of some members of the selection committee resulted to power hungry candidates or teacher unions lodging a dispute. In this instance, the aggrieved candidate sees a loophole and capitalises on the mistakes made by the selection committee and lodges a dispute. In most instances the candidates win the cases as they were valid reasons to lodge complaints. The sad part of it is that if the complainant wins, as it usually happens, the whole selection process becomes useless. Furthermore, once a post has been disputed it remains unoccupied until the issue is resolved and in most cases the post is re – advertised and the selection process starts afresh.

1.3 Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study was to investigate the challenges faced by the selection committees of rural schools during the selection process and recommendation of appointment of educators to the promotional posts.

1.4 Rationale

I have been working as an educator in rural schools for the past 18 years. During these years, I have realised that rural communities are characterised by a cocktail of social ills, such as poverty, poor hygiene, dreadful diseases and illiteracy. From the verbal discussions with my colleagues and members of the community it has become pretty obvious that rural schools are faced with many challenges. I have also realised that some members of the School Governing Body encountered numerous problems in performing their tasks. One of the crucial tasks of SGBs, is to recommend educators for appointment. In most cases the selection and appointment process is fraught with many problems.

The selection process is a mammoth task which requires selection committee to undergo intensive training in order to obtain the necessary skills. The Department of Education as it is indicated on the South African Schools Act (SASA) no.84 of 1996 has to conduct this kind of training. The SGBs particularly in rural areas must be continually and constantly trained and re-trained. Constant training is a pre-requisite for the selection committee. Section (19) clearly promulgates the enhancement of capacity building of the Governing Bodies. In addition different scholars have written many articles on the importance of training of the SGBs and the selection committees. For instance, Ngcongco and Chetty (2000) suggest that capacity building for the SGBs is urgent and is a must. They strongly recommend that a budget be allocated in all provinces to enable School Governance Units to embark on a systematic and comprehensive training of the Governing Bodies on areas such as selection, interviewing and appointment of educators. It is recommended that training must be done by experts.

I have also raised the issue of some members of the SGB in rural areas as being illiterate and of some members lacking the necessary expertise required during the selection process. Therefore, their role to select and recommend the appointment of educators is questionable. The seriousness of this situation is highlighted by Middlewood (1997) when he states that illiterate selectors might have no knowledge of the job to be done because they cannot read their duties and responsibilities. Furthermore, he says that there is a big danger that expert selectors can easily manipulate illiterate selectors. Mestry (2003) concurs with Middlewood (1997) when he emphasises that in rural communities the majority of the SGB members are illiterate and this is a big challenge. I also alluded to the fact that careless mistakes occur because some members of the selection committee lack the necessary expertise. Squelch (1999) sums it up by referring to the lack of adequate expertise as a common problem which faces many School Governing Bodies particularly in rural communities. Prinsloo (2003) maintains that the effective success of the school depends largely on a thorough human resource planning process that can provide the school with the expertise that is needed to run it successfully and to create a positive culture of teaching and learning.

Lack of adequate expertise has been highlighted as the major problem which faces many SGBs and selection committees. It must be noted that as much as many authors suggest that the members of the SGBs must be thoroughly trained in order to acquire the necessary skills and knowledge. The challenge is that, how do you train illiterate people in order to prepare them for this enormous task? It is very unfortunate that the Department of Education policy did not set the minimum educational qualification requirement for people to serve in both the SGB and the selection committee.

1.5 Critical research questions

To address the issue at stake, I investigated the problems using the following research questions:

- i. What role does the selection committee play with regard to the selection and appointment of educators?

- ii. What are the challenges of the members of selection committee in performing their duties during the selection process?
- iii. How does the selection committee deal with these challenges?

1.6 The scope of the study

This research study focused on three rural secondary schools of uMzumbe Circuit. These schools were purposively chosen because of the posts marked with disputes. The 12 participants involved in the study were chosen from these three schools. From school A' selection committee four members interviewed were: (1) the chairperson of the selection committee, (2) the principal as a resource person, (3) the educator and (4) the teacher union representative who observes the selection process. From school B' selection committee four members interviewed were: (1) the chairperson of the selection committee, (2) the principal as a resource person, (3) the co-opted member and (4) the teacher union representative who observes the selection process. From school C' selection committee four members interviewed were: (1) the chairperson of the selection committee, (2) the principal as a resource person, (3) the parent and (4) the teacher union representative who observes the selection process.

1.7 Theoretical and conceptual frameworks

This research study is located in the theory of democratisation which promotes decentralisation of power (Harber, 1998). Decentralisation of power refers to the degree and nature of devolution of various powers and functions away from central authority. This theory emanated from the pressing demands for change in education during the apartheid regime which was put together by the human rights movements. There was a demand for peoples' education. "Human rights movement instils democratic values, such as co-operative work and active participation" (Archer, 1979, p.616).

It was Rondenelli *et al.* (1987) who proposed five forms of decentralisation namely: privatisation, deregulation, deconcentration, delegation and devolution. Out of the five mentioned types of decentralisation only the last one (devolution) necessarily implies transfer of power to the lower structures.

The above mentioned theory is strongly supported by right wing theory of stakeholders (Morrow, 1998). This theory has become predominant in discussions about school governance in South Africa. At the heart of this theory stands the view that the institution is composed of competing groups, each with its own particular interests which needs to be served in collective decisions. All stakeholders are regarded as equal on the grounds that there is no reason to distinguish between the status of various stakeholders when it comes to collective decision making.

This theory of democracy is directly linked to this research study because it is very imperative to ensure that democratic principles prevail during the selection process. The South African Schools Act mandated the equal participation of all stakeholders in governance and management of education. Therefore, the selection committee of a school is a democratic structure which must act within the principles of democracy which are equal participation, and representation, transparency, consistency and fairness. In performing their duties the selection committees have to ensure that there is full and active participation of all stakeholders as this is required by the theory of democracy. Where there is no fairness, transparency, and equal involvement disputes usually emerge.

1.8 Definition of key concepts

It is very imperative at this point to define some of the key terms used in order to ensure that such concepts are understood in context of this study.

1.8.1 The South African Schools Act (SASA), No. 84 of 1996

The SASA, No.84 of 1996 in this study refers to the Act by which education in the Republic of South Africa is democratised and that all public schools should be governed through the establishment of democratic structures such as School Governing Bodies (SGBs). This Act which was promulgated in 1996 marked a new era of democratisation in education and the governance of schools (Department of Education, 1996). Hence the SASA compelled all public schools to establish SGBs comprising relevant stakeholders.

1.8.2 School governance

School governance refers to the formation and implementation of school policies and rules by the School Governing Body. These policies and rules determine the manner in which the school is to be maintained and controlled in order to achieve the set objectives. The aim is to bring democracy to the level of the school. The School Governing Body is responsible for school governance at the school. According to SASA, parents must form a majority because they are the ones who have the primary responsibility for ensuring that the school is run well.

1.8.3 The School Governing Bodies

School Governing Bodies refer to structures that are designed and empowered to govern schools in terms of the SASA, No. 84 of 1996. These structures comprise parents, educators, non-educators, co-opted members (optional) and learners in the case of Secondary schools. A principal of a school becomes a member of the SGB by virtue of his official position (ex-officio). Therefore, the principal and elected members of the SGB represent the school community. In terms of SASA section 20 (1), these structures have many duties to perform, one of these duties is to form selection/interview committees to select and interview potential candidates and make recommendations to the Head of Department of Education for the appointment of selected educators.

1.8.4 The selection/interview committee

The selection committee in this study refers to a sub-committee formally appointed by the SGB which is entrusted with the responsibility of shortlisting, interviewing and recommending the possible selected candidates to the SGB. The SGB must recommend to the Head of Department of Education the appointment preferred candidates at the school. The teacher unions are invited to attend the selection process to observe the proceedings. The composition and functions of the selection committee will be discussed in details in chapter 2.

1.8.5 Stakeholders at a school

Stakeholders generally refer to the different members of the community who have an interest in what is taking place at the school. This study has confined stakeholders to mean parents, educators, co-opted members, teacher union representatives and the School Governing Body.

1.8.6 A parent of a learner within the school

The term parent refers to a member of the selection committee who is also a member of the School Governing Body elected from parents of learners in a school. This member represents the parents' views in the governance of the school. In terms of SASA, parents should constitute the majority of representatives in SGBs and a parent is defined as:

- a) the parent or guardian of a learner
- b) the person legally entitled to custody of a learner
- c) the person who undertakes to fulfill the obligations of a person referred to in (a) and (b) towards the learners education at school (SASA,1996: p2).

1.8.7 A co-opted member

A co-opted member in the context of this study is anyone who has an interest in education or has expertise or special knowledge or skills that could be of use during the selection process. This means that the selection committee could be extended by one or two members by co-opting people with expertise from outside the SGB. The deputy principals and Heads of Departments of the school and/or principals from other schools could be considered for co-option, where necessary.

1.8.8 Teacher union representative

The term teacher union representative is used in the study to refer to a member of a teacher union which is party to the KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) provincial chamber of the Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC). The South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU) and Die Suid-Afrikaanse Onderwysers Unie (SAUO) are the only teacher unions which are represented in the KZN provincial chamber of the ELRC. The teacher union representatives must be invited to be observers during the selection

process. As observers, they must ensure that the selection process is fair and transparent. The observers also address disputes that may arise and are at liberty to follow up on these disputes with the relevant structures.

1.8.9 Rural schools

Rural schools in this study refer to schools which are situated in areas which are administered by Amakhosi (Tribal Chiefs) and Izinduna (Tribal councillors). Historically these schools have been under-resourced leading to poor infrastructure such as, toilets, running water and electricity. These schools are situated in communities where unemployment and poverty are very high and education and literacy levels are very low.

1.9 Significance of the study.

The findings of the study could be useful to:

- i. The policy makers within the national and provincial departments of education in designing policies and providing guidelines for the school governing bodies and the selection committees of the schools in rural areas.
- ii. The department officials with understanding and insight of the actual practice during the selection process.
- iii. The school governing bodies in rural areas who may gain new insight into the challenges faced by the selection committees.
- iv. Other rural school principals, educators and parents with a necessary information and better understanding of the selection processes and procedures.

1.10 Organisation of the study

This study comprises five chapters, namely: chapter 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5.

Chapter 1

This chapter provides the synopsis of the study, the background and purpose of the study, statement of the purpose, critical research questions, significance of the study and the organisation of the study. The next chapter will review literature relevant to the study.

Chapter 2

This chapter reviews relevant national and international literature. It emphasises the legal framework, the importance of the management of the selection process and the challenges faced by the selection committee during the selection process. The next chapter will deal with the research design and methodology to be utilised in the research study.

Chapter 3

This chapter describes the research method, research design, research instruments, data collection and data analysis which will be employed in the study.

Chapter 4

This chapter provides answers to the interview questions, analyses and discusses the responses from the participants.

Chapter 5

This chapter presents the summary of the findings, recommendations as well as conclusion.

CHAPTER 2

Literature review

2.1. Introduction

This chapter focuses on national and international literature review around the issues of appointment of educators.

In all sectors in South Africa and other countries, there seems to be problems and challenges experienced by bodies responsible for selecting and appointing employees particularly to promotional posts. The challenges and problems that the Department of Education faces are multifold ranging from a lack of training of the School Governing Bodies (SGBs), failure to understand what the objectives of the Department of Education in selecting candidates, competition among panel members seeking to employ their own preferred candidates though they may not qualify to the posts, selector bias favouring candidates who are based in the schools where the vacant posts are advertised, to the lay members of the employment bodies. All these challenges have had a negative impact on the effectiveness of schools and service delivery expected from employees.

This chapter will look at what other sectors are doing to deal with the challenges and problems. I will start by looking at the employment procedures in Britain, USA and Australia as these three countries seem to have a good record of employing suitable candidates that make changes and good impact on the productivity and effectiveness of its organisation.

2.2. Review of International literature

There seems to be a correlation in the manner in which the selection and appointment of teaching staff were conducted in South Africa and International countries such as Britain, USA and Australia. The South African Schools Act (SASA) No.84 of 1996 section 20 (1) has common features of the Education Reform Act (ERA) of 1998 in Britain particularly sections 41 to 47. According to this Act, the School Governing Bodies of schools are duty bound to perform a number of tasks including the selection of educators to be

appointed to vacant posts. After the selection process has been completed, the selection committee of the school makes a recommendation for the appointment of the selected candidate to the Local Education Authority (LEA). The selection committee is composed of the various stakeholders of the School Governing Body such as the principal of the school, the parents, teacher representatives, co-opted members including the teacher union representatives. It is important to note that, the only difference is that unlike in South Africa, in Britain a Departmental Representative must attend all selection meetings to appoint Deputy Principals and Principals (Moodley, 2001).

In USA, the Kentucky Education Act (KEA) of 1990 also resembles SASA in the sense that parental involvement in the selection and appointment of educators is compulsory. It seems that there is an international trend that encourages parents to participate fully in decision-making processes and in matters related to education and welfare of their children. An important distinction exists between (SASA) and (KEA), in that according to KEA the Department of Education official first provide the school councils with a list of recommended candidates for senior school management posts (Lindle and Shrock, 1993). Whereas, in terms of SASA, the role of the Department of Education official is not clearly defined, it is only indicated that the District Offices must do the sifting of the applicants.

Gips and Bredson (1984) cited in Pillay (2005, p.21) solicited parents' views in New York on whether they approved of the SGB's choice of principal. 80% of parents indicated their displeasure at the choice made, citing nepotism as the prime reason for their dissatisfaction. In Australia there is a big debate about the involvement of parents in the appointment of principals (Small, 2003).

Some international scholars tend to focus on what should be done during the selection process than on the actual problems and challenges that face the selection committees. There is also a tendency of concentrating mostly on the selection and appointment of the principals and deputy principals, as a result there is little information about the selection

and appointment of the head of departments in schools as they are also members of the school management team.

2.3 South African literature

In the literature in South Africa there is an indication that there are a lot of gaps between theory (policy intentions) and practice (actual process). For instance, in terms of SASA, parents are given powers to take active participation during the selection process, however, this rarely happens in rural communities where there is a high level of illiteracy amongst parents. Hence, the discussion that is going to follow will critically revolve around the legal framework (laws, policies, documents, journals etc.) governing the selection process. Furthermore, the role of the selection committee during the selection of educators and their recommendation for appointment particularly to promotional posts will be discussed. During the discussion of the role of the selection committee in the selection process, the challenges which the members of the selection committee face during the selection process will also be highlighted.

2.3.1 Legal framework

South Africa's school reform post 1994 has entailed a major decentralisation of power to the new provinces and schools (Karlsson *et al.*, 2001). This was an attempt to democratise the process of encouraging community participation in decision-making processes. This move is in line with the principles of decentralised management, based on the assumption that schools are in the best position to make decisions about local needs (Caldwell and Spinks, 1998). The details about school governance and management of schools are clearly outlined in the South African Schools Act (SASA) No. 84 of 1996.

2.3.1.1 Composition and functions of the School Governing Body

According to (SASA) of 1996, the membership of the School Governing Body (SGB) of an ordinary public schools consists of (a) elected members, (b) the principal (*ex officio*) and (c) co-opted members. Elected members of the School Governing Body shall comprise a member or members of each of the following categories; (a) parents of

learners at school, (b) educators at the school, (c) learners in the eighth grade or higher at the school and (d) non educators at the school (Department of Education, 1996, p.19). Since the promulgation of the SASA, schools have been encouraged to become self-reliant and to be relatively self-sufficient in terms of governance, funding and the appointment of staff (Ngcobo and Ngwenya cited in Anderson and Lumby, 2005).

In terms of the SASA section 20 (1), the SGB has many crucial functions to perform, one of these functions is to form a selection committee to interview potential candidates and make recommendations to the Department of Education for the appointment of the selected educators. Ngcobo and Ngwenya (2005) argue that making such recommendation is tantamount to a formal appointment as the Head of Department of Education can only question the decision of the SGB if gross irregularities in terms of protocol and procedures are reported. They further state that, this raises numerous practical problems in communities where there is a lack of capacity to discharge this duty competently and ethically. Furthermore, section 30(1) b of SASA states that a governing body may appoint persons who are not members of the SGB to such committees on the grounds of expertise, but a member of the SGB must chair such a committee.

Unfortunately, in some of the rural communities, the elite parents usually take their children to the well-resourced schools in the nearby villages and towns. Once their children are accommodated in the so-called 'better schools' these parents totally disassociate themselves with their local rural schools. The fact of the matter is that these parents who send their children to the better schools in the nearby villages would develop a negative attitude towards local schools and really would want nothing to do with the local poor schools. These parents look down upon the schools in their neighbourhood and regard these schools as providing inferior education because of their shortage of resources. Therefore, the issue of co-opting members with expertise is not always possible in the rural schools.

In support of the afore-mentioned viewpoint, Ngcobo and Ngwenya (2005) give a clear difference between the SGBs in rural areas and their counterparts in the urban areas

because of the historical background of the schools in these areas. They state that schools situated in middle and formerly white neighbourhoods are benefiting from the changes while those in predominantly black working-class urban and rural areas are finding the demands of self-reliance and self-management more challenging. Furthermore, they state that, the schools in particular, those from the rural communities are finding it very difficult to involve community members with appropriate resources and skills.

Despite all these challenges, it is imperative to emphasise that the School Governing Bodies including those in the rural communities are expected to perform their tasks within a legislative and regulatory framework. In support of this viewpoint, Mathonsi (2001, p.17) in his panel presentation speech states categorically that:

“Since the SGBs are bestowed with the authority to recommend the staff appointments, it is equally important for these structures to be familiar with other labour related issues in order to always take informed decisions than simply rubber stamp.”

Chaka and Dieltiens (2005) concur with this view by stating that the SGBs need to be aware of the education legislations, policies and regulations, as well as laws related to labour. They further state that, without information on their legislative duties, SGB members, especially illiterate parents, often depend on the school principal for guidance. This is well supported by Karlsson *et al.* (2001) when they state that a school community given power by legislation to participate actively in school governance could have that power meaningless because of a lack of skills necessary for exercising it. Furthermore, they state that, this is a real danger in a newly decentralised South African school system, where School Governing Bodies have been given considerable powers but many schools lack the skills necessary to exercise them effectively. Ngcobo and Ngwenya (2005) concur with Karlsson *et al.* (2001) by stating that, educator appointment is a complex exercise and requires expertise that can be provided by people who have requisite training in human resource management. They further state that, the most unfortunate part of it is that, some members of the parental component of SGBs lack this expertise.

In the light of these statements, the SGB members should be knowledgeable about the intricacies of the teaching profession, have conception of what is required from educators in order to qualify for employment or promotion and be aware that any form of discrimination against candidates during the selection process is unlawful.

For instance, in South Africa, the Employment of Educators Act (EEA) no.76 of 1998 under the Labour Relations Act (LRA) of 1998 vehemently prohibits discrimination of potential candidates on the basis of race, gender, marital status, religion, disability and political affiliation (RSA, 1998). The idea behind this is to promote the underlying principles of democracy, namely: fairness, equity, transparency, consistency, equal participation and representation.

Karlsson *et al.* (2001) state that it has been recognised that many SGBs particularly in rural communities and in less advantaged urban areas, do not yet have the required skills and experience to exercise their powers and have difficulties in fulfilling their basic functions. Therefore, it has also become evident from the discussion on the previous chapter that some of the School Governing Bodies particularly in the rural communities do not adhere to the principles of democracy. Consequently, discrepancies usually occur during the selection and appointment of educators that culminate into disputes. This is a serious challenge facing the SGBs and can be attributed to the fact that the SGBs especially in disadvantaged communities lack necessary skills in performing their tasks.

Karlsson and Pampallis (1995, p.137) suggest that:

“Governing Bodies will need to develop a wide range of skills in order to perform their functions and usefully process information about their schools, Department, as well as Provincial and National policies.”

There is a concurrence to the viewpoint by many authors who raise a concern about the effectiveness of the capacity building of the School Governing Bodies. For instance, Van Wyk (2004) states that the government acknowledges that many SGBs particularly in the rural and disadvantaged urban areas do not have the required skills and experience to perform their functions. Mathonsi (2005), the co- coordinator of the National Association of the School Governing Bodies (NASGB) vehemently protests against the failure of the Department of Education to provide adequate and relevant training for SGBs in needy communities. In the Teacher (2005, p.5), it is argued that:

“ Poor schools in black communities are often served by SGBs that struggle with technical planning or with complicated language of policy because of the gaps in member’s education, while some functions of governance do not require formal education or training, quite clearly other functions do. However, providing inadequate or irrelevant training for SGBs undermines the democratisation of our education systems...”

Wylde (2005, p.8), the Head Master of St Andrew’s College in Grahamstown who was elected as President of the Internationally Confederation of Principals for 2005 to 2006 sums up the need for training SGBs in one simple sentence:

“Governing Bodies should also receive adequate training...”

It seems that these various authors point one common problem of a lack of adequate training that prevents the SGBs from fulfilling their duties effectively. However, the deficiency in training seems to be in direct contradiction with section 19 of the SASA. Under the heading “enhancement of the capacity of Governing Bodies,” the Act states the following:

1. Out of funds appropriated for this purpose by the Provincial Legislature the Head of Department must establish a programme to:

- a) Provide introductory training for newly elected Governing Bodies to enable them to perform their functions and,*
- b) Provide continuing training to Governing Bodies to promote effective performance of their functions or to enable them assume additional functions.*

(Department of Education, 1996, p.8)

The “enhancement of the capacity of Governing Bodies,” is easier said than done. In support of this viewpoint Karlsson *et al.* (2001) maintain that, although SASA obliges provincial education departments to provide capacity training in order to overcome the lack of expertise, in practice these programmes are threatened by the claim of the department of insufficient budgetary allocation. In order to avoid the serious difficulties faced by many School Governing Bodies, a special intensive training programme should be provided immediately after the new members of the SGB have assumed their powers. Therefore, constant and follow-up training particularly in areas that involve the selection of educators should be conducted in order to evaluate the performance of the SGB members.

2.3.1.2 The selection committee and its functions

A School Governing Body constituted in terms of the South African Schools Act no. 84 of 1996 must establish an interview committee (selection committee) from its own members. This committee is formed for the purpose of shortlisting, selection and interviewing applicants in order to choose the best suitable candidate for the advertised post. Additional members of the School Governing Body may be co-opted for the expertise that may be needed for a particular interview. The selection committee shall comprise:

- One departmental representative (who may be a school principal) as an observer and a resource person.
- The school principal if he/she is the departmental representative except in the case where he/she is an applicant.

- Members of the Governing Body or co-opted members excluding educator members who are applicants for the advertised posts.
- One union representative per union that is party to the provincial chamber of the Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC). The union representatives shall be observers to the process of shortlisting, interviews and drawing up of the preference list. (KZN Department of Education, 2005)

Although the educators have been brought on board in the belief that they would bring valuable expertise, the selection committees in rural schools are still faced with many challenges. This can be attributed to the fact that very few of the said educators carry out the selection interviews regularly and many of them have received little or no formal training in the selection process techniques. In support of this viewpoint, Squelch (1999, p.143) clearly states that:

“A common problem experienced by many School Governing Bodies is the lack of adequate expertise. Not all SGBs have the good fortune to be served by skilled professionals. And even if there are professional parents on the SGBs it does not mean that they are familiar with the complex educational matters. Insufficient investment in training opportunities has not fully prepared teachers, SGB members (parent component) and principals for their new roles and responsibilities.”

The involvement of lay personnel in the selection committee is a challenge on its own, taking into consideration that the rural communities are characterised by a high rate of illiteracy. Therefore, their capability and competency to select and recommend the appointment of educators particularly to promotional posts is questionable. Ngcobo and Ngwenya cited in Anderson and Lumby (2005) agree with this viewpoint by stating that, the selection and appointment of educators’ process raises numerous practical problems in communities where there is a lack of capacity to discharge this duty competently and ethically. For instance, the parents irrespective of their educational status are expected to play a crucial role in the selection process. However, the combination of inadequately trained professional selectors and illiterate selectors may lead to manipulation.

This viewpoint is supported by Middlewood (1997) when he explicitly states that during the selection process there is a big danger that expert selectors can easily manipulate illiterate selectors.

McPherson (1999) argues further and states that, there is a big disadvantage because lay people are often inexperienced in the selection process and that they may not have a thorough knowledge of the organisation, its ethos culture and objectives. He suggests that training for the entire selection committee needs not only to be considered but also to be introduced as a matter of urgency. Van Halen (1995, p.15) cited in Bush and Middlewood (1997) argues that training in the selection of educators is essential for parents:

“Parents on selection panels fall into one of three categories: those who leave the decisions to the professionals; a group that have their minds made up beforehand and do not come clean about hidden agendas; and finally, the minority who are trained in the selection processes or who are open about the process and stay with the assessment criteria along.”

According to Ngcobo and Ngwenya cited in Anderson and Lumby (2005), the function of educator appointment is complex and requires expertise that can only be provided by people who have the requisite training in human resource management. They further state that, most government officials employed by the department of education, ranging from the head of the department to school principals, have some skill in staff recruitment and selection on the basis of their professional pre- and in-service training. However, it is very unfortunate that, the same is not usually true with the parent component of the SGBs.

This implies that there is an urgent need for the training of the whole selection committee in order to be thoroughly prepared for the management of the selection process. Personally, I seem to agree with this viewpoint, as the educational authorities are legally bound and primarily responsible for ensuring that all role-players are thoroughly trained for the selection process. This study suggests that training should start with the

departmental nominee (who is either a departmental official or principal) as he/she is in the best position to ensure effectiveness in this regard. The departmental nominee acts as a resource person and is officially expected to give guidance during the selection process.

I strongly believe that facilitators and trainers in this regard must only be those who have expertise in the field of selection process. In addition, experts employed at tertiary institutions can be utilised as they have invaluable knowledge about the effective management of the selection process.

2.3.1.3 The management of the selection process

The selection process is the key activity wherein decisions are made about which personnel will fill positions that became vacant (Nel *et al.*, 2004). The selection process involves, inter alia, measuring of competencies of the potential candidates and how selectors reach consensus on the procedures for eliminating and arriving at the final decision (Nel *et al.*, 2004). Therefore, it is imperative that effective selection procedures be used to choose the most competent individual for the job (Gounden, 2000).

It is equally important that competent members of the selection committee must choose the best suitable individual. This poses a big challenge to some of the rural schools where the majority of the SGB members are illiterate. Sigudla (2002) points out that, most SGBs in the disadvantaged communities have difficulties in appointing new educators. He further states that, these difficulties partly arise from parental illiteracy, but sometimes their ignorance and reluctance to offer their services without remuneration also causes problems.

Pillay (2005) investigated the effectiveness of parents as SGB members in recommending staff for appointment. He concluded that a lack of training; nepotism, personal preference, bias and corruption flawed the process. These findings are in concurrence with Heystek (2004) when he reports that, parent components are not knowledgeable about the intricacies of the teaching profession and lack expertise to evaluate professional educators. The ministerial Committee's (2004) findings indicate that the appointment of

school principals is a contentious issue because of the process that the SGBs need to follow.

In the light of these research findings, it becomes clear that in some rural schools, the selection committees are encountering many obstacles in maintaining quality selection of educators. Consequently, their ability to effectively manage the whole selection process is questionable. The selection of educators is a continual process, which includes; shortlisting, interviewing and recommending the best suitable candidate to be appointed. This process is directly connected to the recruitment process. According to Cole (2004, p.342)

“In the overall process of tapping the labour market for suitable skills and experience, recruitment comes first and is followed by selection. Recruitment’s task is to locate possible applicants and attract them to the organisation. Selection’s task is to cream off the most appropriate applicants, turn them into candidates and persuade them that it is their interests to join the organisation, for, even in times of high unemployment, selection is very much a two-way process – the candidate is assessing the organisation, just as much as the organisation is assessing him.”

2.3.1.4 The Recruitment process

The aim of recruitment is to ensure that the school’s demand for educators is met by attracting potential candidates in a cost-effective and timely manner (Cole, 2004). In South Africa, the local department of education largely controls this task. It seems very strange though that, in most cases, particularly in rural communities, the SGB and/or its selection committee play no role during the recruitment process. This is against the guidelines for selection committees for general staff positions, which state that:

“ Each selection committee member must know the particulars of the advertisement, the job description, the selection criteria and probationary objectives.”(RSA, 1998).

It is the duty of the school managers to submit a list of existing vacancies with specifications of the posts. In turn, the Department of Education is responsible for the advertisement of all the vacant posts on provincial bulletin or in a Human Resource Management (HRM) circular such as, HRM circular No. 54 of 2005. To ensure fairness and transparency a copy of this bulletin or circular is sent to all schools.

The candidates apply directly to the Department of Education (DoE) using the common public servants application forms and the departmental standardised curriculum vitae forms. Furthermore, it is the employing DoE that handles the initial sifting of applicants for all the advertised posts. This is done in order to eliminate applicants who do not comply with the basic requirements as stated in the advertisement. Some of the candidates who do not qualify for promotional posts according to Gounden (2000) are those applicants who are currently not employed as educators in public schools or institutions, as well as who are employed by the universities, technickons, independent/private schools, governing bodies and NGOs. Once this process is completed the employing department of education passes the remaining applications to the respective schools for further scrutiny and final shortlisting by the schools selection committees (KZN Department of Education, 2005).

2.3.1.5 Shortlisting

This exercise is necessary in order to select from the total number of applicants those candidates who are suitable to be interviewed for the advertised post. The chairpersons of the respective schools selection committees receive all the applications as per schedule and all the members of the selection committee including the teacher union representatives must verify this. They must check whether the schedule corresponds with the number of the application forms. I personally think that this is the best method of verification in order to guard against any forms of irregularities. For example, other application forms 'fitted in' at the later stage. In support of this viewpoint Gounden (2000) states that, this verification method is a good system, because it does not allow any other CVs to be included in the list of applicants, without this method dishonesty could result. The selection committee must acknowledge all applications within fourteen

days of the closing date. Whether the selection committee does this is a challenge on its own. After the selection committee has sifted the applicants for the vacant posts and acknowledged them it must compile a list of shortlisted candidates to be interviewed.

The selection committee must adhere to these departmental guidelines when it compiles shortlists:

- The criteria that are used must be fair and non-discriminatory
- The curricular needs of the school must be considered
- The employer has an obligation towards educators in service, for example, those who have been acting in posts for more than two years and displaced educators
- The shortlist of candidates should not exceed five per advertised post.

According to PAM document, Chapter B, paragraph 2.4(c) selection committees must observe these regulations when recommending appointments:

- All applicants who are serving educators, and have been displaced as a result of operational requirements and who are suitable applicants for a vacant post in an educational institution must be on the shortlist.
- At historically disadvantaged institutions an educator who has acted in a post for more than two continuous years at the institution, must be included in the interviews for the post – provided that . . .
 - The educator is currently in the post
 - The post is part of the post allocation at the institution
 - The Department has approved the appointment
 - The educator has applied for the post (RSA, 1998)

The correct interpretation and implementation of the above mentioned guidelines require that selection committees should be well trained and knowledgeable about their duties. An ill-equipped selection committee, characterised by incompetence and ignorance, is likely to have misconception of the guidelines and wrongly shortlist applicants. The South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996 aims to advance the democratic transformation of society (RSA, 1996, p.2). Adams and Waghid (2003) argue that, in order for the members of the SGBs to function effectively they should have a fair

understanding of what the principles of democracy entail. This means that, the participants need to be educated and empowered regarding their tasks. And this is clearly stated in the South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996, which aims to advance the democratic transformation of society (RSA, 1996, p.2).

In the light of the afore-mentioned argument, I find it not surprising to learn that several research studies conducted have shown that many school governors are not adequately trained to deal with the imperatives of democratic school governance. This lack of training in conjunction with lack of expertise and illiteracy amongst the members of the SGBs in rural schools hamper progress, more especially during the selection and appointment of educators to promotional posts. What is more amazing is that, it is now exactly 11 years since the inception of the SGBs in accordance with SASA. It seems that, the Department of Education has no immediate plans to alleviate the problems facing the SGBs in the rural schools. The SGBs and the selection committees will continue to suffer immensely without intervention programmes put into practice.

This study intends to shed some light, about challenges faced by the selection committees in the appointment of educators to promotional posts in rural schools. This research through its findings is going to emphasise the importance of special training for the SGBs and the selection committees in rural schools to enable these structures to perform their tasks effectively. According to Ngcobo and Ngwenya (2005), the SASA requires the SGBs to be trained in appointment processes, although financial and time constraints limit their effectiveness. In addition, Adams and Waghid (2003) highlights that bad practice such as favouritism, nepotism, intimidation, bribery and other forms of corruption are traceable during the selection and appointment process of educators. This means that, despite the inadequate training, the high rate of illiteracy and lack of expertise amongst the members of the selection committees in many rural schools, the selection process is also affected by a number of underlying factors. In support of this viewpoint, Ngcobo and Ngwenya (2005, p.188) categorically state that, due to conflict of interests, selection processes can become power struggles involving:

- The principal, who in most cases wants to appoint the best qualified candidate;
- Teacher unions, who may favour the appointment of one of their members;
- SGB members, who may lack the appropriate skills and understanding to make informed judgements;
- The government, which is concerned about an efficient system.

Moreover, the shortlisting process must be done by the selection committee in the presence of the teacher union representatives and the departmental nominee in the case of a promotional post. The teacher union representatives are invited in their capacity as the observers during the process. In fact they [union representatives] must not be directly involved in the selection process. As observers, they must ensure that all the procedures are correctly followed by the selection committee. However, during the selection process, in some of the rural schools certain representatives of the teacher unions dominate the selection process due to ignorance and incompetence of the selection committees. This is absolutely against section 6 of the Employment of Educators Act 76 of 1998, the regulation that governs the appointments, promotions and transfers of educators, as it is also laid down in the selection and appointment of educators' policy (RSA, 1998). The sad part of it is that these teacher union representatives even go to an extent of questioning and disputing the criteria that are used by the selection committees in some of the rural schools. In some other cases they even do the scoring in order to make sure that their affiliate comrades who also happen to be candidates or applicants get preferential treatment and get better chances of being shortlisted. This is a very sensitive issue which needs to be addressed immediately, for instance, by redefining the status of the teacher union representatives, that is, they must be allowed to be actively involved in the selection process. Thus, in that way eliminating their domination or manipulation as they now would be part and parcel of the decision making process. This viewpoint is well supported by Gounden (2000) when he emphatically states that, all stakeholders including the teacher unions must be allowed to be involved in the selection process. Furthermore, he suggests that, this kind of involvement allows all stakeholders to offer various perspectives of the candidate thus making it possible to select the most dynamic

leader for the post. In rural schools the representatives of the Department of education should always be present during the selection process.

I have observed that in most cases the principal of the school (where he is not the applicant) becomes the departmental nominee. This should not be the case; the principal must automatically be part of the selection process by virtue of his status. Therefore, the departmental representative must be present to ensure that the correct procedures are followed. Gounden (2000) argues further and states that these departmental officials should not only oversee the process but also they must possess the necessary skills and knowledge of selection so that inconsistencies during the process can be corrected immediately.

Nevertheless, finally the selection committee has to shortlist on merit a manageable number of not more than five candidates for an interview process. Whether the shortlisting of candidates is fairly done or is influenced by outside elements remains a big challenge. However, the shortlisted candidates must now be formally informed within a period of five working days. These candidates must be invited for the interview, which is the final selection step. That is, interviewing and assessing them for the purpose of making the recommendation for the appointment of the best suitable candidate for the job.

2.3.1.6 The interview process

The interview process is sometimes controversial because there is a lot of subjectivity with regard to choosing the best suitable candidate for the post. The presence of the teacher union representatives and departmental nominees as discussed in the previous topic does not guarantee the validity of the interview process. In South Africa, the interview is the only instrument or method that is used to select potential educators for particular posts. This also is a challenge on its own as people who do well in the interview may sometimes encounter problems when it comes to the real work situation. This is well supported by (Nel *et al.*, 2004), by stating that, people who are very good

speakers during the interview usually impress the selectors. However, their eloquent articulation of responses does not necessarily mean that, they will practically also do well. In addition to the interview, he suggests a number of instruments or techniques to be used in order to choose the best suitable candidate for the job.

In South African schools, many interviews are conducted in English and this poses a challenge to some members of the selection committees in rural schools who are not well versed with the language. Magabane (2001) states that the socio-economic background of parents at that school, determines the nature and extent of parental participation in school governance in relation to the employment of teachers. Furthermore, in his study he found out that participation in the teacher employment by parents from lower socio-economic backgrounds was passive. This suggests that during the interview process, in some of the rural schools the professional selectors usually play a major role, whilst the lay selectors play a passive role. This is totally against the theory of stakeholders, which emphasises the collective role played by all the stakeholders in decision-making process (Morrow, 1998). According to this theory, all stakeholders are conceived as equals on the basis that there is no reason to distinguish between the status of various stakeholders when it comes to a collective decision-making process.

The selection interview has two purposes: to get information from the applicant, and to judge the applicant on the basis of this information (Nel *et al*, 2004). According to Cole (2004), the selection interview is far and the most common technique used for selection purposes. He also states that, unlike most other management techniques, it is employed as much by amateurs as by professionals; several commentators have suggested that such interviews are frequently neither reliable nor valid. The point is to suggest that, in most cases the interview selectors are not formally trained for this exercise. Cole (2004) agrees with this suggestion and gives two valid reasons why so many poor interviews are conducted:

- *Lack of training in interviewing technique, and*
- *Lack of adequate preparation for an interview*

He further suggests that, training that is designed to enable appropriate personnel to conduct competent interviews generally involves two major learning methods: firstly, an illustrated talk/discussion; and, secondly, the process that is taking place during the interview, and to acquire a method for harnessing that process. The second method helps trainees to experience the process by means of role-playing exercises, and to understand how they may need to adapt their behaviour in order to meet the aims of this kind of interview (Cole, 2004, p.344).

The selection committee must ensure that its panel understands how the rating scale works. I suggest that before the actual interview of candidates, the members of the selection committee should first do a mock interview as part of a practice and preparation for the actual interview process. During this pre-interview practice members should also give scores and justify why they have given such scores. During the actual interview process, the selection committees are expected to make informed decisions. Therefore, they must listen attentively, take notes and be observant. At the end of each interview session, each member of the selection committee must complete a rating for each applicant.

It is the duty of the chairperson of the selection committee to obtain each member's score and the committee must arrive at a consensus with regard to the scores awarded to the candidates. However, because of the language barrier and questions and answers that are much related to specific job description, some illiterate parent members of the selection committees in rural schools would encounter problems. The big question, are the lay selectors well acquainted with educational intricacies that the interview requires in order to correctly score the interviewees?

The interview/selection committee should guard against unfair discrimination of candidates as it is laid down clearly in section 6 of the Employment of Educators Act No. 76 of 1998 (RSA, 1998). This may result to the aggrieved candidates or the teacher union representatives lodging a dispute. They have a right to do so and refer their disputes

straight to the Council of Arbitration or to the Labour Court according to the new collective agreement resolution no. 1 of 2006 (RSA, 2006). The problem with disputes is that they take lengthy discussion to be resolved. Whilst the disputes are discussed, the learners at the school are suffering as they are left unattended to and deprived their fundamental right of being taught.

Although the interview is the only used method to assess potential candidates during the selection and appointment of educators in RSA, I personally feel that with regard to promotional posts, other assessment methods should be used, for example, asking candidates to make short oral presentations, writing tests and leadership group discussions. In addition to these, Middlewood and Lumby (1998) also suggest the following assessment techniques; firstly, in tray exercise, whereby the candidates are asked to sift and prioritise and decide action upon a sample of documents. Secondly, a written report, here candidates are given certain information and are, therefore, asked to write a report for a particular audience. Thirdly, role-play simulation where candidates are asked to enact the job applied for in a particular situation. Bush and Middlewood (1997), also suggest that, since the findings of many studies about the interview as an assessment method have proved it to be unreliable, they say that it is equally important that it plays only one part in any selection procedure. Bush and Middlewood (1997) suggest some shortfalls about the interview as an assessment method and these include, inter alia:

- Physically attractive candidates are more likely to be appointed (Gilmore, 1986)
- Most interviewers do not take notes during the process (Morgan *et al.*, 1983)
- An average candidate who follows several poor candidates is seen as particularly good (Carlson, 1971)
- Interviewers reach their decision about each candidate very early in the interview, under four minutes in one study (Hackett, 1992)

- Even in highly structured selection procedures the interview is used to justify and explain the decision rather than guide it (Salaman and Thompson, 1974)

They further, criticise the interview process as an artificial situation and that interviewers may be subjected to a logical error (by which the assumption is made that anyone with one characteristic, for example, politeness, must automatically have another, for example, intelligence) or the 'halo' effect (by which an interviewer being impressed by one characteristic will attribute positive features to all the interviewee's other characteristics) (Bush and Middlewood, 1997, p.150)

In the South African context, it seems that the interview (subjective as it is) as the most common method of selecting educators is here to stay. Therefore, improvement as suggested by many researchers is a necessity to attempt for a fair and better selection process. In concurrence with this viewpoint, Thurlow (2003) emphasises the need for objectivity in the management of selection and also highlights the question of training for those involved in the selection process, together with the nature of such training. For instance, one of the common findings of McPherson's (1999), Gounden (2000), Small (2002) and Gumede (2003) studies which are similar in terms of their investigations, that is, selection procedures and processes with regard to educators in RSA, was that, the whole selection committee should be thoroughly trained for the mammoth task of the selection and appointment of educators. However, the biggest challenge facing every South African educationalist is how do you train illiterate people in the disadvantaged communities?

Nevertheless, after the selection committee has finished conducting interviews, the names of the recommended candidates ranked in merit order on the preference list form are submitted to the SGB for its final ratification. In certain instances, the problem arises in some of the rural schools, when the SGB disregards the recommendations of the interview committee and totally disregards the selected candidates and recommends someone else.

2.3.1.7 Ratification by the School Governing Body

Once the selection committee has made its choice of candidates taking into consideration all the required criteria and every necessary document have been filled in. It must now submit its recommendation to entire SGB. The chairperson of the SGB must convene a special meeting of the full SGB members to look at the recommended candidates by the selection committee. The task of the SGB is to endorse the recommendation of the selection committee.

According to the amended Act, the Education Laws Amendment Act no. 24 of 2005. This Act serves as an amendment to the SASA, LRA and EEA with regard to the procedures dealing with the appointment of educators. The SGB must now submit, in order of preference to the Head of Department of Education a list of:

- i. At least three names of recommended candidates or,
- ii. Fewer than three candidates in consultation with the Head of Department of Education (RSA, 2006)

Previously before the amendment of this Act, the SGB would submit its preference list with the number one candidate on the list as its first choice. However, with the new amended Act, the Head of Department has a right to choose anyone of the three preferred candidates. The finalization of the whole selection and appointment process ends when the Head of Department officially writes a letter informing that particular candidate about his/her appointment to the post.

2.4 Conclusion

This study shed some light, on challenges faced by the selection committees in the appointment of educators to promotional posts in rural schools. This research reiterates and emphasises the importance of special training for the SGBs and the selection committees in rural schools to enable them to perform their tasks effectively. According to Ngcobo and Ngwenya (2005), the Schools Act requires the SGBs to be trained in

appointment processes, although financial and time constraints appear to be a limiting factor. In addition, Adams and Waghid (2003) highlights that bad practice such as favouritism, nepotism, intimidation, manipulation, bribery and other forms of corruption are traceable during the selection and appointment process of educators.

This means that, despite the inadequate training, the high rife of illiteracy and lack of expertise amongst the members of the selection committees in many rural schools, the selection process is also affected by a number of other underlying factors. In support of this viewpoint, Ngcobo and Ngwenya (2005, p.188) categorically state that, due to conflict of interests, selection processes can become power struggles involving:

- The principal, who in most cases wants to appoint the best qualified candidate;
- Teacher unions, who may favour the appointment of one of their members;
- SGB members, who may lack the appropriate skills and understanding to make informed judgements;
- The government, which is concerned about an efficient system.

It is imperative to mention that the SGBs in rural communities are faced with serious challenges regarding the selection and appointment of educators with special reference to promotional posts. Illiteracy, socio-economic background, lack of expertise, selector bias and inadequate training impede the smooth functioning of selection committees and SGBs during the selection and appointment of educators.

CHAPTER 3

Research methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter starts off by stating the key research questions. This is followed by discussion on the research approach, research design and the research instruments that were utilised in this research project. Thereafter, the actual interviews with each of the three selected schools will be discussed in details.

3.2 Research questions

To address the issue at stake, I will investigate the problems using the following research questions:

- i. What is the role of the selection committee in the selection and appointment of educators?
- ii. What are the challenges of the selection committee in performing their duties during the selection process?
- iii. How does the selection committee deal with these challenges?

3.3 Research approach

In order to address the research questions, this study is based on the qualitative approach. I made this choice because the qualitative approach would be flexible to me as a researcher and the participants involved in this study. This approach was very useful since the study was based on collecting data through semi-structured interviews. A qualitative approach was considered to be appropriate for this particular study because during data collection process, there was a greater interaction between both parties which in turn created trustworthiness. Using this method during the data collection process, I obtained greater in-depth and more details from the participants. The participants discussed issues freely and openly through direct contact with me as a researcher. During

this face to face contact participants were at liberty to provide their own personal views, perceptions and opinions about the interview questions. Through further probing questions, participants were able to clarify certain ambiguous points. However, O'Neill (2005) argues that, this openness and greater interaction between the researcher and the participants could in some cases be counter- productive.

Nevertheless, in the light of the above mentioned viewpoints, Labuschagne (2003) sums it up by stating that qualitative research approach is mainly concerned with the properties, the state and the character. O'Neill (2005) refers to the qualitative approach as an unconstrained method of phenomena study. Cohen *et al.* (2001) maintain that qualitative research provides explanation and understanding of what is unique and particular to the individual rather than of what is general and universal. Although data collection standards exist, qualitative research is highly reliant upon the researcher carrying out the study (Bogdan and Biklen, 1992). That is, the researcher has total control over the type of data collected and the methods used for analysis.

3.4 Research design

3.4.1 The sample

Three secondary schools with recurring dispute problems were chosen in Mthwalume Ward of Umzumbe Circuit. Selection committee members from school A interviewed were: the chairperson of the selection committee, the principal as a resource person, the educator and the teacher union representative who observes the selection process. Selection committee members from school B interviewed were: the chairperson of the selection committee, the principal as a resource person, the co-opted member and the teacher union representative as an observer. Selection committee members from school C interviewed were: the chairperson of the selection committee, the principal as a resource person, the parent and the teacher union representative who observes the selection process. There were a total number of twelve participants who were interviewed in this

study, namely: 3 principals, 3 chairpersons of the selection committees, 3 teacher union representatives, 1 educator, 1 co-opted member and 1 parent.

3.4.2 Purposive sampling

It is imperative to mention that efforts were already made to obtain informed consent for this research project from the relevant authorities and participants. The School of Education and Development under the University of KwaZulu Natal had already written a letter on my behalf to the Department of Education (KwaZulu-Natal) Head Office requesting permission to conduct this research project in some of the schools. Furthermore, I also forwarded requests for permission in a form of letters to relevant schools and participants. Prior to the interview session I promised and committed myself as a researcher, anonymity of the participants and confidentiality of information. There was no way that the names of schools and its participants would be divulged. I ensured that I did not mention things that create the image for other people to associate the information with the schools which were involved in this research study.

The purposive sampling was employed in this research study. In the Umzumbe circuit, there are 150 schools. Out of the total number, approximately 100 schools have been involved in the appointment of educators since the inception of staff selection committees in 1997. There had been some common challenges and problems in some of the schools, where employment of educators were made. For instance, common recurring disputed posts problems and appointed educators not resuming their duties timeously. Consequently, learners would be largely affected by the delayed assumption of duties of appointed educators. There would also be an outcry from the other educators because of overcrowding of classes, which increase their workload. Therefore, the three secondary schools facing the similar problems were chosen. It was worthwhile to choose only these three schools as it would have been a repetition to conduct a research of all the schools in the circuit. Cohen *et al.* (2002) concurs with the afore-mentioned viewpoint, that whilst purposive sampling may satisfy the researchers' needs, however it does not represent the wider population.

3.5 Research instruments/methods

Data was collected using semi-structured interviews and analysis of documents. The documents analysed included *inter alia*, the National Departmental Policy on the selection and appointment of educators, departmental documents, Laws and Acts, Human Resource Management (HRM) circulars, Personnel Administrative Measures (PAM) Documents, KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education selection procedures used for the appointment of educators to promotional posts and any other relevant literature. For example, books, journals, articles, newspapers and dissertations. The analysis of these documents assisted me a great deal in comprehending the procedures and processes of the appointment of educators particularly to promotional posts. The document analysis was used specifically to answer the question of the role of the selection committee in the selection and appointment of educators. This was thoroughly dealt with in chapter two which is entitled literature review of this study.

3.5.1 Semi-structured interviews

In this research study, I used semi-structured interviews with the chosen participants. In order to collect data, the interviews were guided by the prepared interview schedule. Most of the questions were open ended in nature which encouraged further probing and follow up questioning to guide clarity and get in depth information. Cohen *et al.* (2002) refer to the interview as an exchange of views between two or more people on a topic of mutual interest and they see the centrality of human interaction for knowledge production, and emphasize the social situatedness of research data. De Vos (2002) concurs with Cohen *et al.* (2002) when he states that the semi-structured interview is the most adequate instrument / tool to obtain an in depth information about the research project. However, he argues that the semi-structured interview has always been weakened by the fact that it is a really time consuming method. That is, more time is required not only to collect data but also to analyse them.

3.5.1.1 Preliminary interviews

Preliminary semi-structured interviews were employed to answer the key question of the challenges faced by the selection committee during the process of the appointment of educators. Further probing questions were asked to obtain more information about the mechanisms in place to overcome these challenges. It is important to mention that a pilot testing interview was done with 1 principal and two educators beforehand in order to assess my interview questions and sharpen the instruments. I had preliminary interviews with each of the afore-mentioned participants after the informed consent had been obtained from the appropriate authorities and gatekeepers. These pilot interviews with each participant took 30 minutes. Appointments, time and venues that were convenient to the participants were arranged and confirmed timeously. All these arrangements were carefully done in order to guard against other drawbacks of the interview such as subjectivity, validity and biasness (Key, 1997).

3.5.1.2 The actual interviews

3.5.1.2.1 School X rebuffed my request to conduct interviews

In this study there were three schools involved. The first school chosen had an acting principal who was skeptical about the research and did not want to participate. Another school had to be found to replace this school with unwilling principal to be involved in the study.

3.5.1.2.1.1 A detailed account of what had transpired - school X

I made an appointment with the acting principal of the school after I had obtained permission from the Circuit Manager to conduct a research of this nature. At my first visit at the school I explained my mission to the acting principal. I mentioned that participation in the study was voluntary and at any time participants could withdraw from participation if they so decided. At that time of research the acting principal had been acting for three years because of recurring dispute.

When I made the second visit where data was to be collected the acting principal demanded a formal letter from the Circuit Manager allowing me to conduct the study. He wanted to know how the school would benefit from the research. He was concerned about sharing information yet some of the issues were highly confidential. The principal was also concerned about some members of the selection committee to participate in the study.

I had to make a contingency plan and look around for another school with similar recurring disputed posts problems. Fortunately, I got a replacement school, although not exactly similar in terms of context with the one which had turned me down.

3.5.1.2.1.2 A great sigh of relief

I contacted the three remaining schools that had been chosen to be involved in the study. Understandably, I breathed a sigh of relief as I did not encounter any problems in obtaining a permission to conduct a research with the participants in these schools. However, some participants were skeptical about giving out information because they feared that the information given would be quoted and their names declared. This was despite the fact that I had explained how confidentiality and anonymity would be observed. This was very surprising in that prior to the interview session with each participant I would explain the ethical implications of the study. Their concern may be related to some participants particularly in rural areas who are not well accustomed to the face to face interviews as one of other methods used in a research project.

3.5.1.2.2 The interviews in School A

School A is a Secondary school which has an enrolment of four hundred and seventy nine learners. According to Post Provisional Norm/Model (PPN) 2007, the school is entitled to sixteen educators. The break down for school management team members is as follows: one principal, one deputy principal and three head of departments. However, the actual situation at school is that the post of the deputy principal is vacant and two head of

departments' posts are also vacant. This means that, at the present moment only the principal and one head of department are members of the school management team.

I made a first visit to the school after making arrangements with the school principal. Firstly, I met with all the possible participants, namely principal, chairperson of the selection committee and educator who was part of the selection committee. Teacher union representative was not at this meeting. At this meeting I introduced myself as a researcher from the University of KwaZulu Natal (UKZN) and explained my mission of coming to the school and meeting with them. I also explained that their participation in the research was voluntary and could withdraw at any time should they so decide. Furthermore, the data collected would be used for research purposes only and in no way would the schools and the names of the participants be disclosed. Therefore, this means that the information gathered in this study would be strictly confidential.

On my second visit, on the appointment date I arrived at the school only to receive a voice message from my cellular phone that the principal had decided to reschedule the interviews appointment for the following day because of the hectic schedule at the school. I immediately telephoned the principal and confirmed that I would be available on the following day at 8:30am. On the third day visit, I arrived at the school promptly at 8:30am as the interviews were scheduled to commence at 9:00am. The three members of the selection committee were all present except the teacher union representative. The principal tried in vain to get hold of the teacher union representative (SADTU).

3.5.1.2.2.1 Interview-chairperson School A

Interview with the chairperson of the selection committee was held in the principal's office. It started from 9:00am to 9:40am. The interview questions basically focused on the role of the selection committee during the selection process, challenges faced by the selection committee during the selection process and how the selection committee dealt with such challenges. Further questions probed the chairperson's perception about the parents' capacity to actively participate in the selection process. Before the interview

began I requested to use my tape recorder in order to capture interview discussions. During the interview the conversation was recorded in order to ensure that all what was said was captured and notes were taken at the same time. The interview went well without any disturbances.

3.5.1.2.2.2 Interview-principal School A

At 11:00am the principal of the school became available for interviews. The interview with the school principal was conducted in the office. It lasted for 1 hour, starting at 11:00am and ending at 12:00pm. Before the interview began I requested to use my tape recorder in order to capture interview discussions. The interview questions focused on the role of the members of the selection process during the selection process, challenges faced by the selection committee during the selection process and how does the selection committee deal with such challenges. Further questions were asked to establish the principal's stance on the active participation of parents during the selection process. During the interview the principal was asked to respond to questions, such as: *what is the role of the teacher union representative during the selection process?* Further probing questions were asked: *Does the teacher union representative play his/her role effectively during the selection process?* This interview was recorded on a tape recording machine while at the same I was also taking notes. This interview with the principal went well without any disturbances.

3.5.1.2.2.3 Interview-educator School A

The educator member of the selection committee, who should have been interviewed during this interview session, was busy with the examination invigilation. Therefore, the arrangement for interviews with the educator member of the selection committee was rescheduled to be in the afternoon after school. Interviews were conducted in my car at a nearby village from 6:00pm to 7:30pm. The main focus of the interview was on the role of the selection committee during the selection process, the challenges faced by the selection committee and how the selection committee dealt with such challenges. During

the interview the conversation was recorded on the tape and notes were taken at the same time. Further probing questions were asked: *do you think the selection committee has capacity to select and appoint educators? Do you think the members of the selection committee perform their function well?* Initially there were hiccups experienced during the interview, such as, I found it difficult to use the tape-recorder, asking questions and taking notes simultaneously in the car. As time went on, I became relaxed and everything went smoothly, except that the educator member of the selection committee was not comfortable with the use of the tape-recorder during the interviews. This was surprising because before the interviews began, I requested to use my tape recorder in order to capture the interview discussions. I was able to explain the reason for using the tape-recorder. I further explained that after data transcription I would make data available to him for verification. He reluctantly agreed on condition that I should bring the tape back to him after the transcription.

3.5.1.2.2.4 Interview-teacher union representative School A

As a teacher union representative was not available during the school days I managed to secure appointment with her on Saturday afternoon at her home. The interview started at 5:00pm and ended at 6:30pm. The main focus of the interview questions was on the role of the members of the selection process during the selection process, challenges faced by the selection committee during the selection process and how does the selection committee deal with such challenges. Before the interview began I requested to use my tape recorder in order to capture interview discussions. During the interview the teacher union representative was asked to respond to questions, such as: *what is the role of the principal during the selection process?* To probe further I asked additional questions, such as: *does the principal play his/her role effectively in the selection committee?* During the interview I asked questions and took down notes at the same time and the tape-recording machine was used to record the conversation. Fortunately, there were no disturbances during the interviews.

3.5.1.2.3 The interviews in School B

School B is a Secondary school and has an enrolment of four hundred and fifty five learners. According to PPN/M 2007, the school is entitled to fifteen educators and the breakdown for the school management team posts is as follows: one principal, one deputy principal, three head of departments (one of which is vacant has been duly advertised). Currently, there are four school management team members in this school, namely: a principal, a deputy principal and two head of departments. One head of department post is vacant.

I obtained permission through a face to face verbal discussion with the principal to hold interviews with the following members of the school selection committee: the principal of school, the chairperson of the selection committee, the co-opted member of the selection committee and the teacher union representative (SADTU). The principal advised to contact other members of the selection committee who would be participants in the study and explained to them my mission of getting them involved in the research study.

I phoned all the four members of the selection committee and introduced myself as a researcher from the UKZN. I explained my mission to them and highlighted that participation in this study was voluntary and at anytime they could withdraw from participation if they so wished. I also explained that data collected would be used for research purposes only and in no way would the schools and names of the participants be disclosed. This means that the information given in the study would be treated with strict confidentiality.

3.5.1.2.3.1 Interview-chairperson School B

I was able to conduct the interview with the chairperson of the selection committee as per our appointment at his home on a Tuesday starting at 6:00pm and ending at 6:55pm. The main focus of the interview was on the role of the members of the selection

committee during the selection process, the challenges faced by the selection committee during the selection process and how the members of the selection committee dealt with such challenges. Further questions probed the chairperson's perception about the parents' capacity to participate actively in the selection process. Before the interviews began I requested to use my tape recorder in order to capture interview discussions. During the interview the conversation was recorded in order to ensure all what was said was captured and notes were taken at the same time. The interview lasted for 55minutes. I encountered a technical problem with my tape-recording machine. At first I thought that everything was in order, but when I played the tape after the interview I found out that the recorded voices could not be clearly heard.

3.5.1.2.3.2 Interview-principal School B

It was much easier to get hold of the principal precisely in a week's time after I had interviewed the chairperson of the selection committee. The interview with the principal was conducted at the school during the office hours. The interview started during break-time at 11:00am and finished at 12:30pm. The interview questions focused on the role of the members of the selection committee during the selection process, the challenges faced by the selection committee during the selection process and how the members of the selection committee dealt with such challenges. During the interview the principal was asked to respond to questions, such as: *what is the role of the teacher union representative during the selection process? Does the teacher union representative play his/her role effectively?* Further questions were asked to establish the principal's perception on the active participation of parents during the selection process. The interview with the principal was also recorded on a tape recording machine while at the same I was also taking notes. A request to record the discussions was made and duly granted prior to the commencement of the interview. During the interviews some educators would move in and out of the office and this caused disturbance.

3.5.1.2.3.3 Interview-teacher union representative School B

I also got hold of the teacher union representative and an appointment for the interview was scheduled at the cottages after school hours. I met the teacher union representative and the interview started promptly at 6:00pm and ended at 7:05pm. The interview questions also revolved around issues, such as, the role of the members of the selection committee during the selection process, the challenges faced by the members of the selection committee during the selection process and how the selection committee members dealt with these challenges. During the interview the teacher union representative was asked to respond to questions, such as: *what is the role of the principal during the selection process? Does the principal play his/her role effectively in the selection committee?* Before the interview began I requested to use my tape recorder in order to capture interview discussions. During the interview the conversation was recorded in order to ensure all what was said was captured and notes were taken simultaneously.

3.5.1.2.3.4 Interview-co-opted member School B

I must mention that I encountered a problem in trying to get hold of the other member of the school selection committee. He was a co-opted member of the selection committee who resided in the local area but he has another place of stay in Durban. He is a retired person who is very busy and is involved in a number of community development projects. It took me a period of a month to get hold of him. Eventually, I managed to interview him. Our discussion started at 9:45am and ended at 10:30am, it took about 45minutes and was hastily conducted as he had another appointment with the local Mayor at 11:00am. The interview questions focus on the role of the members of the selection process during the selection process, challenges faced by the selection committee during the selection process and how the selection committee dealt with such challenges. Further questions were asked to establish the co-opted member's perception on the role played by parents during the selection process. Before the interview began I

requested to use my tape recorder in order to capture interview discussions. The interview was tape recorded and notes were taken simultaneously.

3.5.1.2.4 The interviews in School C

School C is a Secondary School with an enrolment of five hundred and sixty three learners. Currently, the school has a staff establishment of nineteen educators and the school management team members are as follows: one principal, one deputy principal and three head of departments. There are no vacant promotional posts in this school.

I made a first visit to the school and introduced myself to the principal and members of the selection committee as researcher from the UKZN and discussed my mission and the research project including the ethical considerations. I mentioned that participation in this study was voluntary and at anytime participants could withdraw from participation if they so decided. Furthermore, the data collected would be used for research purposes only and in no way would the names of the participants be disclosed. Therefore, this means that the information gathered in this study would be strictly confidential.

I received a warmth welcome from the principal and he took the initiative of organising the members of the selection committee to be available for the face to face interviews on a date that was convenient to both parties. He promised me that he would get hold of all the selection committee members who were involved in the selection process in the school. A meeting of this nature was organised where I presented myself and explained my mission as a researcher like I had done in school A and B. In this meeting the following members of the selection committee were present: the principal of the school, the chairperson of the selection committee, the parent member of the selection committee and one teacher union representative (SADTU). A date for conducting interviews with each participant was set and agreed upon.

3.5.1.2.4.1 Interview-chairperson School C

On my second visit to the school I interviewed the chairperson of the selection committee in the principal's office. The interviews started at 10:00am and ended at 10:45am. Before the interview began I requested to use my tape recorder in order to capture interview discussions. During these face to face semi-structured interviews with the chairperson, questions asked revolved around the role of the selection committee members during the selection process, the challenges faced by the members of the selection committee during the selection process and how the members of the selection committee deal with such challenges. During the interview further probing questions were asked about parents' capacity to participate actively during the selection process. During the interviews notes were taken and also discussion was tape recorded in order to ensure all what was said was correctly captured. Interviews went pretty well without any disturbances and problems.

3.5.1.2.4.2 Interview-principal School C

The interview with the principal was also conducted at the office. It lasted for 1hour10minutes, starting at 11:00am and ending at 12:10pm. The interview questions focused on the role of the members of the selection committee during the selection process, the challenges faced by the selection committee during the selection process and how the members of the selection committee dealt with such challenges. Before the interview began I requested to use my tape recorder in order to capture interview discussions. During the interview the principal was asked to respond to questions: *what is the role of the teacher union representative during the selection process? Does the teacher union representative play his/her role effectively in the selection committee?* During the interview the conversation was tape recorded and notes were also taken at the same time. The interviews went well as there were no disturbances.

3.5.1.2.4.3 Interview-parent School C

Interview with the parent member of the selection committee was also conducted at the principal's office. It started from 12:30pm to 13:15pm. The main focus of the interview was on the role of the members of the selection committee during the selection process, the challenges faced by the selection committee during the selection process and how the members of the selection committee dealt with such challenges. Before the interview began I requested to use my tape recorder in order to capture interview discussions. During the interview further probing questions were asked: *do parents have the capacity to select and appoint educators? What role do parents play during the selection process? Do parents play this role effectively?* During the interviews notes were taken whilst the discussion was tape recorded. There were minor disturbances when the learners took a break and became noisy at lunch time.

3.5.1.2.4.4 Interview-teacher union representative School C

Interview with the teacher union representative also took place in the principal's office at the school. The interview started at 13:45pm and ended at 14:45pm. The interview questions also revolved around the role of the members of the selection committee during the selection process, the challenges faced by the members of the selection committee during the selection process and how the selection committee members deal with these challenges. Before the interview began I requested to use my tape recorder in order to capture interview discussions. During the interview the teacher union representative was asked to respond to questions, such as: *what is the role of the principal during the selection process? Does the principal play his/her role effectively in the selection committee?* Before the interview began I requested to use my tape recorder in order to capture interview discussions. During the interview the conversation was recorded in order to ensure all what was said was captured and notes were taken simultaneously. The interviews went pretty well as there were no disturbances.

3.5.1.3 Conclusion

In conclusion, all the 12 participants involved in the study were treated equally and informed about the ethics of the research before the interviews were conducted. The interviews with each participant were scheduled to take only 45 minutes time, but when interviews were actually conducted the time spent with each participant varied. All the participants involved in the study were also asked the similar questions which revolved around issues such as: the role of the members of the selection committee during the selection process, the challenges faced by the members of the selection committee during the selection process and how the members of the selection committee deal with such challenges. Responses given by participants were different and this will be discussed in detail in the following chapter.

It is crucial to mention that English and IsiZulu languages were used interchangeably during the interviews with some of the participants involved in the study. However, interviews were conducted in IsiZulu language with the parent member of the selection committee in school C. It is also imperative to note that some of the participants seemed to be uncomfortable with the use of the tape-recorder during the interviews. Some participants felt that their involvement in this study might be detrimental to their positions. I was able to give them assurance that the information given during the interviews would be used for research purposes only and in no way would the names of the participants be disclosed.

CHAPTER 4

Data presentation and analysis

4.1. Introduction.

This chapter presents an analysis of data collected by conducting the semi-structured interviews. These interviews were conducted with the 12 members of the three selected secondary schools' selection committees, which are responsible for interviewing and recommending candidates to the Department of Education for appointment. From school A four selection committee members interviewed were: (1) the chairperson of the selection committee, (2) the principal as a resource person, (3) the educator and (4) the teacher union representative who observes the selection process. From school B four selection committee members interviewed were: (1) the chairperson of the selection committee, (2) the principal as a resource person, (3) the co-opted member and (4) the teacher union representative who observes the selection process. From school C four selection committee members interviewed were: (1) the chairperson of the selection committee, (2) the principal as a resource person, (3) the parent and (4) the teacher union representative who observes the selection process. Table 1 demonstrates how an ideal selection committee of schools should be composed. Tables 2-4 clearly illustrate the actual composition of selection committees of schools A-C. The composition of the selection committee was thoroughly discussed in chapter 2 (literature review).

The findings of this research are based on key research questions. The research questions focused on the role of the school selection committees in the selection and recommendation of the appointment of educators, the challenges faced by the selection committees during the selection process and the manner in which the selection committees dealt with these challenges.

It is important to present an ideal composition of the selection committee as outlined in SASA. This information is presented in a form of table 1 of the following page. Thereafter, the nature of participants of this study is also presented in table 2 for school A, table 3 for school B and table 4 for school C on pages 49, 50 and 51 respectively.

The ideal composition of the school selection committee

Table 1

Resource person	A principal/ Department of Education official
Chairperson of the selection committee	A chairperson
Parents	A parent
Educators	A educator
Co-opted member(s)	A co-opted member
Teacher-union representative(s)	Two teacher-union representatives (1 SADTU&1 NATU)
Total	Five members of the selection committee plus two observers equals to Seven members.

Table 1 shows an ideal school selection committee and how it should be structured in the case of the majority of rural schools in KwaZulu-Natal. It is important to mention that the policy governing the selection process is silent in terms of stating the precise number of members of the SGB who should form the school selection committee. The policy vaguely states that the selection committee shall comprise members of the School Governing body or co-opted members excluding educators who are applicants for the advertised posts.

Nature of the Participants in this study.

Table 2- School A

Resource person	A principal
Chairperson of the selection committee	A chairperson
Parents	Nil
Educators	An educator
Co-opted member(s)	Nil
Teacher-union representative(s)	One union representative (SADTU)
Total	4 members

Table 2 shows that there were four members who were interviewed and that there were no respondents who represented parents and co-opted members in this school. This selection committee is not a true reflection of an ideal selection committee (table 1, p.48). The conspicuous absence of other members of the SGB in the selection committee may cause discrepancies during the selection process.

Table 3- School B

Resource person	A principal
Chairperson of the selection committee	A chairperson
Parents	Nil
Educators	Nil
Co-opted member(s)	A co-opted member
Teacher-union representative(s)	One union representative (SADTU)
Total	4 members

Table 3 displays that there were 4 members who were interviewed, as there were no participants who represented parents and educators in this selection committee. This selection committee gives a wrong projection in reference to the ideal selection committee (table 1, p.48). In such situations manipulation of the selection process becomes prevalent and may lead to disputes.

Table 4- School C

Resource person	A principal
Chairperson of the selection committee	A chairperson
Parent	A parent
Educator	Nil
Co-opted member(s)	Nil
Teacher-union representative(s)	One union representative (SADTU)
Total	4 members

Table 4 shows that there were 4 interviewees from this school because there were no respondents who represented educators and co-opted members in this selection committee. This selection committee gives a wrong projection of an ideal selection committee (table 1, p.48) as some members are not represented. In such situation favouritism in one way or another is likely to occur during the selection process.

4.2. The role of the selection committee during the selection and appointment of educators.

According to the South African Schools Act (SASA) No. 84 of 1996, section 20 (1), the School Governing Body (SGB) has many functions to perform, one of these functions is to appoint a selection committee to select and interview potential candidates and make recommendations to the Department of Education for their appointment. Clearly, this means that the greater decision-making is in the hands of the SGB. Making analysis of SASA, Ngcobo and Ngwenya (2005) state that, making such recommendation is tantamount to a formal appointment as the Head of Department for Education can only question the recommendation by SGB if gross irregularities in terms of protocol and procedures are reported. They also argue that, recommendation by SGB raises numerous practical problems in communities where there is a lack of capacity to discharge this duty competently and ethically.

The focus of this study is on the challenges faced by the selection committees during the selection and recommendation of the appointment of educators in rural schools particularly to promotional posts. In order to address the issue at stake, all the 12 participants interviewed in this study were asked the same questions regarding the role of the members of the selection committee- parents, principals, educators, co-opted members, chairpersons and teacher union representatives, who usually participate in the selection process. It is very important to note that literature does not state clearly the role that each member of the selection committee plays during the selection process. However, it transpired from these interviews conducted with the participants in this study that, members of the selection committee play different important roles during the selection process.

One of the questions asked to the selection committee members was:

What is the role of the parents in the selection committee?

When the participants were asked this question, an overwhelming 92% of them argued that the parents played a minimal role during the selection process. This suggests that in

many instances during the selection process parents are marginalized. Responding to the question one principal stated that:

Parents rarely take part in the selection process because they are uneducated; therefore, they are unable to understand the intricacies of the selection process.

One educator responded to the same question by saying that mostly in rural areas parent members of the SGB are not much abreast with issues of selecting educators, the selection committee usually enlist the service of educators in this regard. These responses reveal that, the majority of the members (parent component) of the SGB in the rural areas are illiterate and lack expertise required for this task. The principals, chairpersons of the selection committee and the teacher union representatives who were interviewed in the study also highlighted that in rural schools many parents did not have the capacity to carry out these responsibilities. Confirming this, the responses of the three teacher union representatives showed some similarities, one teacher union representative explained that:

Parents should be the pillars of the selection process as the lives of their children are at stake when educators are recommended to be appointed to vacant teaching posts. Unfortunately, lack of education impedes their participation during the selection process.

One parent interviewed who formed the remaining 8% of the participants felt that, parents should play a significant role during the selection process. He agreed that sometimes a lack of education prevents other parents from taking active participation in the selection process. He suggested that parents should be taught how to be involved in the selection process and if possible, interviews must be conducted in IsiZulu language.

It is found from interviews that the parent members of the selection committee usually become inactive during the selection process. This is in line with the findings of Gounden (2000) who argues that non-educators on the selection panel had little or no idea to make decisions in respect of the selection of candidates because of their lack of education. These responses also demonstrate that in many cases the parent members of the selection

committee rarely make any contribution to the selection process. But they rely on the educators and principals for guidance and assistance during the selection process. Chaka and Dieltiens (2005) are of the similar view that SGB members especially illiterate parents, often depend on the school principal for guidance. This implies that parents' lack of expertise and their dependence on principals in the process of appointing educators could be a cause of educators and principals' domination in the selection committee process, thus breeding favouritism and biasness. Middlewood (1997) makes a stern warning against interdependence relationship between expert selectors and illiterate selectors, which can result to domination of the latter.

Legislation requires that the selection process be a collective activity involving all relevant stakeholders. The fact that some parents are not actively involved in the selection process is contrary to the promotion of active and full participation of all stakeholders in decision-making processes. It can be argued that, in theory, the policy, which requires a democratic participation of all relevant stakeholders regarding the selection and appointment of educators, is a step in the right direction. However, with particular reference to the rural communities, it is evident that there are still some gaps between the policy (theory) and practice (process), as some parents are not actively involved in the selection process. The non-active involvement of parents in the selection process would have contradicted the theory of democratic participation of stakeholders (Morrow, 1998).

What is the role of the principal in the selection committee?

When participants were asked about the role of the principal during the selection process, the responses from two chairpersons, three principals, one educator, one parent and one co-opted member showed similarities. They viewed the role of the principal as that of a resource person, advisor, a departmental nominee, overseer, facilitator and supervisor of the selection process. What is glaring is that one chairperson and the three teacher union representatives acknowledged the role of the principal as mentioned by the other participants but also gave conflicting and different views that, in some cases the principals control the selection process. Responding to the question, one chairperson responded by stating that the principal directs the selection process and gives instructions

as to how the selection process must be controlled. These utterances show that the chairperson is not well versed with the law regarding the role of the principal in the selection process. Obviously, in this regard, the principal is given too much power to dominate the selection process. This is indicated in the teacher union representative's response:

At times you find that the principal becomes the chairperson of the selection committee...which is wrong because normally the principal has to be a resource person....

This suggests that in some rural schools principals do more than what is stated in the legislation and by becoming chairpersons they are likely to dominate and manipulate the selection process by controlling the whole process in an underhand way. From my observation these responses demonstrate that the principals as much as they should be in a position to be well conversant with the procedures governing the selection process (as earlier indicated in chapter 2), they seemed to overlook the correct procedures as they tend to focus more on controlling the selection process. Therefore this could imply that, they may wittingly exploit the situation in order to remain dominant so that their own preferred candidates get appointed during the selection process. If this happened it would be a gross violation of the law as the chairperson of the selection committee is the rightful person who should be controlling the process. The principal is a resource person and gives clarity with regard to the correct procedures to be followed during the selection process.

What is the role of the teacher union representatives in the selection committee?

When asked about the involvement of the teacher unions, three principals, three chairpersons and one parent felt that the teacher union representatives were interrupting and interfering with the smooth running of the selection process. When interviewed, one principal stated that the union representatives were strictly observers, but some of them constantly intervened because they want to fight for the appointment of their preferred candidates.

One chairperson responded to the question by saying:

They forget that the chairperson is in charge of this process...they always tell us about the procedures...they have their own agenda.

From these responses it seems that the principals and the chairpersons are not comfortable with the contributions of the teacher union representatives in the selection committee. However, it comes as no surprise that 58% of participants felt this way because from my experience and discussions with other colleagues and principals, there is a common perception that teacher unions are more knowledgeable in matters of selecting educators. Eventually, they wittingly intervene and dominate the selection process, as they would want their members promoted.

However, the remaining 42% of the participants including the teacher union representatives had contrasting views. For instance, one educator regarded the presence of the teacher union representatives in the selection process as legitimate because they protect the interest of their members. These different views could emanate from the fact that they (educator and co-opted members) were not intimidated by the presence of the teacher union representatives during the selection process, whilst the principals and chairpersons felt threatened by the presence of the teacher union representatives because their hidden agenda would be exposed. What therefore this implies is that in some cases the selection process is affected by a lot of infighting amongst the members of the selection committee.

In support of this viewpoint the co-opted member stated that:

There are people who would like to manipulate the selection process to suit them or to suit their own interests and this result in bickering.

This infighting is not supposed to be happening as the selection process should be a collective process of all the stakeholders involved. Therefore, in situations where there is no collaboration of stakeholders grievances usually occur. Eventually the aggrieved candidate is likely to lodge a dispute within seven days of the grievance being known (Employment of Educators Act No. 76 of 1998). An aggrieved candidate or a union representative acting on behalf of its member/s may lodge a dispute by completing the

prescribed Grievance Form (OB1). The most unfortunate part of it is that disputes take lengthy time to resolve, thus the process of appointment of educators in posts where disputes were lodged is delayed.

What is the role of the educators in the selection committee?

With regard to the role of played by educators as members of the selection committees, there was an overwhelming consensus amongst all the respondents that these stakeholders play an important role during the selection process. Confirming this, one principal stated that:

In rural areas educators have more expertise than parents in the field of teaching...they are useful in shortlisting, drafting questions, interviewing and scoring potential candidates...

Other respondents shared similar views, that educator members give guidance to parents during the selection process; therefore, there is a great need for educators to be included in the selection committees because 'parents are uneducated in rural areas'. Yet another response from an educator revealed that due to a high rate of illiteracy amongst parent members in SGB, educators bring in some light and assist a great deal with the language barrier. These responses suggest that educators as members of the selection committees do play a major role during the selection process.

This implies that they should be involved in the selection process as they are well acquainted with expertise required in the field of education. This is also in line with the Employment of Educators Act 76 of 1998, which promulgates the inclusion of educator members of the SGB provided they are not applicants to the advertised posts (PAM Chapter B Par. 3.3 b (1)).

What is the role of the co-opted members in the selection committee?

On the question of the role of the co-opted members of the selection committees, 100% of participants revealed that the co-opted members bring necessary expertise in the

selection process. This can be borne out in responses from one parent, one educator and one teacher union representative respectively:

The selection committees...need to have co-opted members...they bring a lot of expertise...we need to ask for help from outside...

Parents are illiterate...and lack expertise...it is recommended that co-opted must be included in the selection committee...

My experience tells me that lack of expertise on the side of parents...makes the SGBs to co-opt outside members.

These responses are also not surprising because the obvious reason could be that most of parents in rural schools are deemed to be illiterate and lack necessary expertise. Therefore, the service of the co-opted members should be solicited as they would bring the necessary expertise. It became clear that the service of principals and educators from neighbouring schools was enlisted during the selection process.

The inclusion of the co-opted members is in accordance with section 3.3 b (1) of Employment of Educators Act, 76 of 1998, which states that a school selection committee shall comprise members of the governing body or co-opted members including educator members who are not applicants for the advertised posts. Therefore, the services of the co-opted members must be utilized in cases where there is a lack of expertise in the selection committee. This means that the co-option of outside people with expertise could minimize a number of problems during the selection process.

4.3. Challenges in the selection process.

It transpired from the interviews with the participants of this study that the selection process in rural schools is also fraught with a number of challenges and problems such as; Favouritism, subjectivity and biasness, lack of expertise and manipulation.

4.3.1. Favouritism, subjectivity and biasness.

According to Thurlow (2000:11) some of the common features of subjectivity are:

- Basic judgements upon intuition rather than facts and making ‘snap’ judgements, that is, the ability to understand or know what a person has said without conscious reasoning.
- Insisting on a personal stereotype of what is a good candidate. For example, during the interview, the selection panel would compare candidates with the pre-post-holder or with other candidates instead of fairly treating each candidate as an individual in his or her own right.

When all the participants were asked about the challenges which they encountered during the selection process, they gave contrasting and conflicting views. Their responses showed that apart from illiteracy and a lack of capacity to select and recommend the appointment of educators for appointment, the selection process is also affected by a number of common challenges ranging from favouritism to manipulation. Quite interestingly, 42% of the respondents consisting of three teacher union representatives, one co-opted member and one chairperson cited favouritism, subjectivity, biasness, nepotism and manipulation as common challenges. When one teacher union representative was probed further, she responded by stating that, during the selection process, it could be clear that, amongst some members of the selection committee a decision has already been made that a certain candidate must be selected.

Furthermore, she stated that it is very difficult to deal with this challenge because of the lack of concrete evidence. Another union representative stated that:

During the interview candidates who are earmarked for positions are allocated higher points of which they do not deserve such scores.

These responses show that there is an awareness of such bad practices by some members of the selection committee. This could emanate from the fact that when the selection

committee is appointed for the first time the union representatives are not invited, they are only invited to take part in the selection process. Furthermore, it must be borne in mind that the selection process is not an isolated activity. There are a lot of other processes done prior to the selection process whereby the principal works closely with the members of the SGB. These include *inter alia*, identification of the vacant post, advertisement of the post and initial sifting at the district offices. Therefore, this implies that during these off-the record activities and the initial meeting of the selection committee there could be discussions around the 'type' of candidate who may be preferred for the advertised post.

This means that by the time the selection committee sits with the union representatives, a decision as to who should be selected had already been made. Consequently, some members of the selection committee may know beforehand the kind of a person who should be recommended for appointment.

The other 50% of the participants which included three principals, two chairpersons and one educator completely downplayed favouritism on their side. They mainly highlighted favouritism, domination and manipulation of the selection process by the teacher union representatives as the main challenges faced by members of the selection committee. The absolute denial of favouritism from these respondents could emanate from the fact that, it is pretty obvious that some principals and chairpersons are very influential and sometimes collaborate to push for the appointment of their own favourite candidates during the selection process. Thus, they did not reveal this information because such statements would show their biasness during the selection process.

During the interview regarding the challenges faced by the selection committee, one principal stated that teacher unions interfered in the selection process by pointing out that 'procedures' were not 'followed'. On the same note, one chairperson felt that the role of the teacher union representatives in the selection process should be redefined because in most cases they advocate the appointment of their own members. He further stated that, if their members are not selected they opt to lodge a dispute.

These responses suggest that some members of the selection committee are either threatened or ignorant about the role of the union representative during the selection process. This implies that, it is this kind of insecure atmosphere from the members of the selection committee that the teacher union representatives take advantage of during the selection process. Eventually, the union representatives could be able to manipulate the selection process with ease.

4.3.2 Impact of Post Provisional Norm/Model (PPN/M)

The Post Provisional Norm or Model (PPN/M) is a tool used by the Department of Education (DoE) to determine the number of posts (post establishment) which each school is entitled to. The collective agreement No.3 of 2006 clearly outlines the procedures for determination of post establishment of Public Schools in KZN for 2007 academic year. According to this document, posts created for distribution to public schools shall be provisionally allocated to schools on the basis of the 2006 Annual General Survey Statistics on learner enrolment of each school. Furthermore, confirmation of the post allocated to individual public schools shall be based on the tenth day learner enrolment of 2007 at each school. On the basis of post allocation referred to above, individual schools shall identify vacancies and/or educators that are 'additional' to the post allocated of that school. Eventually, educators declared 'surplus' shall be temporarily placed in equivalent vacant posts at other schools provided that such placement would be effected preferably in the same ward, or in the same circuit or in the same district.

It has become pretty obvious that the PPN/M had a greater influence on skewing the selection process. It is found from interviews that principals, parents and educators who are selectors tend to favour the candidates who come from schools, where the post is based. When one parent was asked how the selection committee maintains fairness during the process, he responded by saying that it was very difficult to ensure fairness because amongst the candidates who are interviewed there may be one of them whose

performance is known to some members of the selection committee. With reference to the impact of the PPN/M one principal categorically stated that:

For the institution to have someone inside who wins the selection gets appointed, this benefits the institution in that the educators are not disadvantaged by being declared excess in terms of teacher-pupil ratio.

One educator selector also acknowledged that the PPN/M has a significant influence as ‘appointment of internal candidates protects educators from being redeployed to other schools’.

These responses suggest that the PPN/M had a greater influence on skewing the selection process. What therefore this implies is that, during the selection process some members of the selection committee are likely to favour the appointment of a candidate who serves in that school where a vacant post exists. This could emanate from the perception amongst some principals and educators that, promotion from within the school will create posts for other educators of the same school. Eventually, educators would be highly motivated to work harder and would be rewarded for their concerted effort, thus ensuring competition, trust and good working relations amongst them. The favourable or preferential treatment of internal candidates is contrary to what Gounden (2000, p.23) recommends that ‘internal and external candidates must be treated alike and given equal opportunity for the post’. This is also what the policy governing the selection process advocates and stipulates, that is, fair and equal treatment of all candidates during the selection process.

4.3.2.1 Example of PPN/M - School Y.

School Y has a PPN/M of 16 educators, namely: 1 Principal, 1 Deputy Principal (vacant post) and 3 HoD posts plus 11 Post Level (PL) 1 educators.

This means that, if the person who is promoted comes from another school, one educator from this school has to be declared additional to PPN/M and would be transferred to

other schools, thus affecting harmony and stability in this school. The danger here is that this school may lose an educator who may be very good in teaching, for example, IsiZulu and extra-mural activities. Whereas, if an educator from the same school is promoted nobody would be transferred to other schools and the same number of educators is maintained.

From my observation, many schools had adopted this practice of promoting internal candidates in order to hold onto their number of educators as determined by the PPN/M, hence avoiding the redeployment of educators. Therefore, this suggests that some of the selection committee members do not act in good faith when selecting the educators.

This implies that candidates within the institution where there are vacant posts could be recommended for appointment to promotional posts, thus the whole selection process becomes a mockery. It must be noted that this practice is contrary to the selection process guidelines, which promote equity and fairness. In addition, these guidelines state clearly that, no form of discrimination or preferential treatment of candidates would be tolerated during the selection process

This tendency of preferring candidates who are based on schools where there is a vacant post also became prevalent during the selection process. In support of these tendencies, Pillay (2005), who investigated the effectiveness of parents as SGB members in the selection process appointment, concluded that a lack of training, nepotism, bias and corruption flawed the process. Adams and Waghid (2003) also highlighted that bad practices such as favouritism, nepotism, intimidation, and bribery are traceable during the process of selection and appointment of educators.

The responses of the three teacher union representatives clearly demonstrate that some members of the selection committee act outside the jurisdiction of the law governing the selection process. This implies that some of the rural schools selection committees promote job protection for educators within the particular institution. It seems that the applicants from within the institution are favoured from the beginning thus receive

preferential treatment. Therefore, biasness, nepotism and subjectivity become the order of the day during the selection process (Gounden, 2000). It is now evident that the selection committees in some of the rural schools do not adhere to the underlying principles of democracy such as equity and fairness when executing their duties during the selection process. The responses suggest that some selection committees do not look for a suitable qualified candidate or a person who will contribute positively towards the development of the schools. This means that the selection process is therefore a formality as some members of the selection committee knew beforehand the candidate they wanted.

These tendencies are a gross violation of the legislation regarding the selection and appointment process. In addition, the school in question may be deprived of the opportunity of getting a suitably qualified candidate who is of course chosen on merit. In instances where there is no fairness discontentment usually emerge from unsuccessful candidates.

4.3.3 Selection and scoring criteria.

With regard to the question on how candidates are selected and scored, it transpired from 17% responses of the participants that the selection committees sometimes did not stick to the set criteria that are to be utilised during the selection process. These included responses from one co-opted member and one teacher union representative who shared similar views that one applicant was shortlisted although certain sections of the Z83 form appeared to be incomplete. This should not be the case as the Department of Education always issues out a manual prescribing a set of criteria to be utilised in the selection process. In addition, the selection committees can include their own criteria that are relevant to the school's context.

When participants were asked how they score candidates during the interview process, it was found out from their responses that there are a lot of discrepancies during this exercise. These discrepancies ranged from arbitrary scoring to over scoring and underscoring candidates. It transpired from 83% of the participants that individual selectors use their own discretion (thinking) in scoring the candidates. When participants

were asked how candidates are scored during the selection process, one chairperson of the selection committee acknowledged that raters in the selection committee score candidates arbitrarily. He argues that raters use 'their own thinking when they score' candidates. On the same question, one principal stated that the members of the selection committee were 'experts' in the selection process, thus indicating that there was no need to discuss criteria for scoring candidates.

This seems to suggest that in most cases interview questions are formulated but the expected answers are not discussed. This implies that discrepancies are likely to happen during the scoring process, as there are no specific criteria to use when scoring candidates. Therefore, it becomes much easier for selectors to give the preferred candidates high scores even if these candidates had little to say to answer the questions. In agreement one teacher union representative said 'some candidates are given higher scores of which they do not deserve'. This is more likely to occur in situations where specific candidates are identified prior to the selection process.

4.3.4. Lack of expertise

The most common problem facing the members of the selection committee in performing their duties during the selection process is the lack of expertise. This can be attributed to many factors ranging from illiteracy, inadequate training, manipulation, and infighting amongst selectors to preferential treatment of some candidates. There has been an outcry from many scholars that a lack of expertise hinders stakeholders particularly parents to participate actively in the selection process. Karlsson *et al.* (2001) state that a school community given power by legislation could have that power meaningless by a lack of skills necessary for exercising it.

Ngcobo and Ngwenya (2005) concur with Karlsson *et al.* (2001) and state that educator appointment is a complex exercise and requires expertise that can be provided by people who have proper training in human resource management. The most unfortunate part of it

is that some members of the parental component of the SGBs lack this expertise. It is ironic that SASA advocates for parental involvement in the selection process whereas some of them are not educated. Therefore, in such situations it becomes absolutely difficult to involve community members in the selection committee because of the high rate of illiteracy amongst parents in rural communities.

The responses of the participants in this study clearly confirm that there are serious challenges faced by the selection committees in rural schools. With regard to the question whether the selection committees have the capacity to select and appoint educators particularly to promotional posts, 92% of the participants had a common view that many parents who are involved in the selection panel especially in rural areas lacked confidence and expertise to select and appoint educators. The remaining 8% which included a parent component acknowledged that most parents in rural communities experienced difficulties during the selection committee. One parent argues further that if parents like him could be thoroughly and continually trained, they can be able to deal with the selection process with ease.

It comes as no surprise that most of the respondents (92%) felt that parents lacked the necessary expertise because of inadequate training and a lack of education amongst parents in rural communities. In support of this viewpoint one co-opted member had this to say:

I actually doubt about[sic] parents if they do get enough training and abreasting as far as what is expected from them, because most of the time, more especially here in rural areas you will find that parents do not know what is going on about these interviews.

A chairperson supported this statement and said that:

As parents, lack of training puts us in a difficult position because full knowledge is lacking, some of us have never been to schools, others left schools sometimes doing Standard 5, therefore, that kind of a person needs to be thoroughly trained. So that is why I say we lack knowledge because we have not received relevant training.

Most of the participants (92%) in this study cited the lack of expertise as a major challenge facing the selection process in many rural schools. A lack of expertise is largely caused by lack of training, illiteracy and a lack of education amongst some parents particularly in rural communities. This could imply that the inclusion of illiterate selectors in the selection committee is even more challenging in the sense that illiterate selectors might have no knowledge of the nitty gritty of the selection process and the duties of the educators. They largely depend on the educators to verbally inform them about the duties of educators. In support of this viewpoint, Middlewood (1997) states that, these selectors will constitute a group of those whose participation is passive in the decision making process. Therefore, what is actually taking place during the selection process is the direct contradiction of what the policy advocates. In terms of the policy that governs the selection and appointment of educators, all the stakeholders must actively participate in decision-making processes.

It is also imperative to mention that, according to section 19 of SASA, 84 of 1996, under the heading ‘enhancement of capacity of governing Bodies’ the Act states categorically that there are funds that are allocated for training of the SGBs to enable them to perform their functions and there should be continual training of SGBs to promote effective performance of their functions. This budget is allocated to the governance section of each Provincial Department of Education and officials from this section are expected to provide necessary training to SGB members. However, my observation through interaction with some members of the selection committee is that the kind of training that is provided is inadequate.

4.3.5. Manipulation of members

Manipulation refers to the skillful or underhand manner in which some members of the selection committee handle or influence the selection process. It is important to mention that, during the interviews manipulation by members of the selection committee manifested in twofold. For instance, during the selection process professional selectors

(educators) would exert control on illiterate selectors (parents) to select their preferred candidate(s).

During the interviews, the responses of 42% participants attested to this form of manipulation. These participants included three teacher union representatives, one co-opted member and one chairperson (parent). The other participants (58%) which included three principals, three chairpersons, one parent and one educator cited manipulation of the selection committee exerted by the teacher union representatives. For instance, the teacher union representatives would take advantage of the ill-informed members of the selection committee and influence in a clever manner the appointment of their members. This usually happens when the members of the selection committee are less informed about the intricacies of the selection process, thus violating the procedures governing the selection process. Many responses from the various participants in the study suggest that, manipulation in one way or another does exist during the process and in such prevalent situations it becomes difficult to overcome, because such challenges are hidden and done in a tactful manner. What therefore this implies is that, the selection process is affected by a lot of manipulation which may result to bickering amongst the members of the selection committee.

4.3.5.1. Manipulation by professional selectors.

What is intriguing is that, parents irrespective of their educational status are expected to play a crucial role in the selection process. However, the combination of inadequately trained professional selectors and illiterate selectors may lead to manipulation. This viewpoint is supported by Middlewood (1997) when he explicitly states that during the selection process there is a big danger that expert selectors can easily manipulate illiterate selectors.

When asked how they chose the best suitable qualified candidate for the post, a chairperson (parent) said that:

We call each candidate and the educators assist the parents in the selection committee, just like me, as I am not well educated. Yes they [educators] are assisting us, by telling us how many points and scores must be given to the candidates.

The fact that parent members of the selection committee acknowledged that they depended on educators and principals for guidance, made it easier for professional selectors to change and manipulate the scores awarded to different candidates. On the same question, one co-opted member cited that manipulation by the some members of the selection committee is common during the selection process.

In agreement with the other respondents, one teacher union representative responded by stating that it is a foregone conclusion that during the selection process, some principals collaborate with other members of the selection panel to ‘influence’ the outcome of the selection process in an ‘underhand way’. The other teacher union representatives concurred with this viewpoint and further argued that during the shortlisting process they always try to counter this dishonesty by allocating numbers or letters to the application forms so that all application should receive equal treatment. However, it becomes difficult to curb this malpractice during the interview process, but they question some ridiculous scores given to certain candidates and that marks the beginning of lodging a dispute.

4.3.5.2 Manipulation by the teacher unions.

It is not surprising to mention that, when the teacher union representatives were asked about their role in the selection committee, their responses mostly indicated that union representatives are watchdogs during the selection process. They only intervene when selection process deviates from the procedure and the members of the selection committee wrongly interpret their intervention as if they want to manipulate the selection process. During the interview, one teacher union representative sums it up by saying ‘our role is to ensure the fair treatment of our members’.

However, 58% of the responses from the principals, chairpersons, one parent and one educator had contrasting and conflicting views. When principals were asked about the role of the union representatives during the selection process, all three principals acknowledged that the teacher union representatives are ‘observers’. When asked about the involvement of the teacher unions, three principals, three chairpersons and one parent felt that the teacher union representatives were interrupting and interfering with the smooth running of the selection process. That is, the teacher union representatives would frequently ask that the correct procedures must be followed during the selection process. Some members of the selection committee wrongly interpret this constant intervention by the teacher union representatives. For instance, one principal stated that the union representatives are strictly observers, but some of them constantly intervene because they want to fight for the appointment of their candidates. When one chairperson was interviewed regarding the involvement of teacher union representatives in the selection committee, he responded by stating that:

They forget that the chairperson is in charge of this process...they always tell us about the procedures...they have their own agenda.

From these responses it seems that the principals and the chairpersons are not comfortable with the contributions of the teacher union representatives in the selection committee. This also suggests that they are not well capacitated with regard to the regulations governing the selection process. This should not be happening as the principal and the chairperson of the selection committee are in a better position to be well conversant with such issues.

However, it comes as no surprise that 58% of participants felt intimidated by the constant intervention of the teacher union representatives during the selection process. From my experience and discussions with other colleagues and principals, there is a common perception that teacher unions are more knowledgeable in matters of selecting educators. Eventually, they wittingly intervene and dominate the selection process, as they want to push their members to promotional posts.

Most of the respondents cited manipulation as a big challenge faced by the selection committees during the selection process. The responses of the participants demonstrated that some stakeholders particularly parents were vulnerable to exploitation and manipulation by being tactfully influenced to recommend some candidates for appointment during the selection process. It is because some parents were illiterate and others were not capacitated, therefore they become easy prey to both professional selectors and teacher union representatives. The fact that the teacher unions were sometimes given an opportunity to participate in the selection process leaves much to be desired. This is a gross transgression of SASA, because according to the policy regulating the selection process, the union representative should assume the status of the observer by ensuring that the selection process is free and fair.

4.4 How to overcome the challenges?

It transpired from the interviews that in most cases it is very difficult to overcome some of the challenges as some are intertwined (closely connected), for example, lack of expertise is connected to a lack of education and inadequate training. There are also numerous underlying factors, which can be regarded as the root cause of these challenges. Factors such as illiteracy of parents, lack of transparency amongst selectors, ignorance of selectors and lack of training emerged from the findings of this study.

4.4.1 Lack of expertise due to illiteracy and inadequate training.

Illiteracy is a major problem that faces not only the rural communities but also the Republic of South Africa as a whole. When participants were asked the impact of illiteracy of parents in the selection process, one principal responded by saying that, in rural schools people are chosen to become members of the SGBs just because they are prominent members of the community in which they live. He further argues that some of these people have never been to school and it is taken for granted that they are going to cope with the sophisticated tasks such as the selection and recommendation of educators for appointment.

One parent also concurred with this viewpoint by stating that:

It is just like you have been thrown on the deep end of the river dam just because you are well known member of the community everybody expects you to swim over.

These responses suggest that some of the SGB members particularly parents know very little about matters pertaining education. It seems that illiteracy is the major enemy faced by our rural communities. Therefore, definitely these kinds of people need kind of training that is specifically designed for them. In support of this viewpoint, one chairperson remarked that, it is wrong to provide training for both illiterate people and literate people at once. There was an overwhelming consensus from participants that constant and continual training should be provided to the members of the selection committee. One educator member of the selection committee suggested that:

I think there is one point that has been overlooked here, even if people are illiterate they are still parents. So the government should do something to make sure that training reaches those people. I think about the language barrier, there is this language barrier, most of our training, not only interviews even our training too is conducted in English. I think it is important that when training is taking place we reach these people through their own language and we have 11 languages in South Africa.

This suggests that the kind of training that some members of the selection committee receive is inadequate. This means that the Department of Education has to provide necessary training and development to SGB members particularly in rural communities where it is evident that there is a high rate of illiteracy. There were also suggestions from some of the participants that a team of professionals should conduct the selection process throughout the whole Province of KwaZulu-Natal.

4.4.2 Favouritism, subjectivity, biasness and manipulation.

Factors such as, favouritism, subjectivity and biasness are sometimes interwoven and closely linked to one another. For example, in situations where certain candidate is favoured for the position, some members of the selection committee would manipulate the selection process and become bias and subjective when scoring candidates. This is done in order to ensure that the preferred candidate gets more points and be recommended for appointment in the position.

During the interviews with participants, the responses of most participants attested to such challenges. In response to these challenges one co-opted member has this to say:

There are people who would like to manipulate others within the committee, you will find that there is no agreement between the members of the selection committee. The principal has got his own candidate, the parents have got their own candidates, educator members have their own candidate and the teacher representatives also have their own candidates. That is where the problem starts, but the whole thing as far as I look at it, it is chaos now.

It transpired from the interviews that the selection committee could be divided into two camps, namely, the principal's camp and the teacher union representative's camp. Other members of the selection committee would fit in these camps according to their feelings. During the selection process there is infighting between these camps and becomes a matter of the 'survival of the fittest'. It is a matter of each camp pointing fingers at each other. For instance, on one hand, the principals and his allies blaming the teacher union representatives for 'fighting' for the appointment of their own members during the selection process. On the other hand, the teacher union representatives are accusing the principal of having his favourite candidates. From my observation, both allegations could emanate from the fact some teacher union representatives are 'watchdogs' and more

capacitated than some members of the selection committee. When there is a deviation from policy, they usually intervene and eventually take control of the selection process.

The principal and his/her allies wrongly interpret this action as if the union representatives are fighting for the appointment of their members. Whereas, some principals also favour their own candidates during the selection process. This could emanate from the perception that some principals would use the selection process as a reward for best performing educators in their schools. Furthermore, it transpired from the interviews that PPN/M has an impact on the selection process.

It is important to note that there was a general consensus amongst the participants that it becomes absolute difficult to detect elements of favouritism, subjectivity and biasness during the selection process. It is a foregone conclusion that for obvious reasons, some members of the selection committee keep such tendencies to them and do not reveal their intentions upfront. Although the teacher union representatives try hard to eradicate such tendencies by questioning some of the decisions made during the selection process. It seems that lodging a dispute becomes the last resort.

4.5 Conclusion.

During the interviews regarding the role of the selection committee, the responses of some of the participants clearly demonstrated that some members of the selection committee acted outside the jurisdiction of the law governing the selection process. This implies that some of the rural schools selection committees promote job protection for educators within the particular institution. It seems that the applicants from within the institution are favoured from the beginning thus receive preferential treatment during the selection process.

Therefore, biasness, nepotism and subjectivity become the order of the day during the selection process (Gounden, 2000). It is now evident that the selection committees in some of the rural schools do not adhere to the underlying principles of democracy such as

equity and fairness when executing their duties during the selection process. It seems that some selection committees do not look for a suitable qualified candidate or a person who will contribute positively towards the development of the schools.

This means that the selection process is therefore a formality as some members of the selection committee knew beforehand the candidate they wanted. These tendencies are a gross violation of the democratic principles that promote transparency, consistency and fairness amongst the members of the selection committee and such activities do not promote the principles of democracy as promulgated by SASA. In addition, the school in question may be deprived of the opportunity of getting a suitable qualified candidate who is of course chosen on merit.

CHAPTER 5

Summary, recommendations and conclusion

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a summary of the findings of the study which was conducted using semi-structured interviews with the 12 participants chosen from three rural secondary schools in Mthwalume Ward. Also recommendations and conclusion are made regarding how selection process could be improved.

The study was guided by three research questions:

- i. What is the role of the selection committee during the selection and recommendation of appointment of educators?
- ii. What are the challenges faced by the selection committees during the selection process?
- iii. How do the selection committees deal with such challenges?

5.2 Summary

The South African Schools Act no.84 of 1996 section 20(1) mandated the School Governing Body to appoint a selection committee to select and interview potential candidates and make a recommendation to the Department of Education for their appointment. This was regarded as a step in the right direction taking into account that parents were involved in the appointment of educators who would teach their children. Clearly, this was a way government listened to the voices of parents. Contrary, the study revealed that what SASA advocates did not actually happen practically in most of the rural schools. This could be attributed to a number of common challenges faced by the members of the selection committees in rural schools.

These challenges ranged from manipulation, favouritism, illiteracy amongst parents, a failure by members of the selection committees to play their roles effectively, to a lack of

expertise as a result of inadequate training. The findings of the study revealed that due to a lack of education amongst some parents in rural communities, very few parents become actively involved in the selection process. Eventually, the selection process is dominated by principals and educators who have got their own hidden agenda. The teacher union representatives ended up interfering in the selection process not to ensure that correct procedures are followed, but to make sure that their preferred candidates get appointed. Consequently, the selection process is characterised by infighting, whereby in some cases the principals manipulate the selection process so that their preferred candidates get appointed. In the same way, the teacher union representatives would take advantage of the ill-trained selection committee and manipulate the selection process in favour of their members. This is not supposed to be taking place as there are clear guidelines which govern the selection process.

What is glaring is that, during the selection process some members of the selection committee seemed to be not familiar with the laws governing the selection process. The study revealed that some members of the selection committee would act outside the jurisdiction of the law, thus contravening the laws such as Educators Employment Act (1994), the Public Service Act (1994), the Labour Relations Act (1995) as well provincial legislations and guidelines about educators' appointments. For example, during the selection process, some selectors would tend to use their own selection criteria.

The laws governing the selection process clearly outlines the role that each member of the selection committee should play during the selection process. In the very same documents the correct procedures to be followed during the selection process are clearly spelt out. For instance, the law states that in the absence of the Superintendent of Education Management (SEM), the principal of that school should play the role of the resource person and provide the selection committee with proper guidelines as to how the selection process should be conducted. Quite interestingly, the principal is a person who is in a better position to be well conversant with the laws governing the selection process. However, the study revealed that though some principals acted as resource persons, they

used this position to influence and control the selection process in an underhand way in order to ensure that their preferred candidate(s) be appointed.

The study revealed that some chairpersons of the selection committees are not well capacitated with the intricacies governing the selection process. What this implies is that in such situations it becomes highly possible to find principals controlling the selection process. This kind of atmosphere could be interpreted as being created deliberately by some principals so that they could manipulate the selection process with ease.

It was also found from the study that, in some selection committees there was a lack of active parental participation in the selection process. This is not supposed to be happening because according to the SASA, parents were for the very first time in the history of the country afforded an opportunity of selecting and making recommendations to the Department of Education for their appointment. Unfortunately, in rural communities some parents struggle to play their roles effectively because of a lack of education. This inability of parents to carry out their responsibilities is a serious challenge in that, on one hand SASA advocates for active parental involvement and empowerment in decision making processes in schools. On the other hand, some parents are either passively involved or excluded in the selection process. Therefore, this means that they cannot make informed decisions particularly in matters concerning the education of their children.

It is interesting to note that, the presence of the teacher union representatives brought another dimension during the selection process. Theoretically, they are regarded as the watchdogs and observers in the selection process. The study found that, in actual practice, they constantly intervened during the selection process on the pretext that, they are checking whether the selection committee is following the correct procedures.

This kind of intervention is interpreted by some members of the selection committee as unnecessary. In addition, some members of the selection committee were threatened and perceived this constant intervention by the teacher union representatives as form of a

strategy to infiltrate the selection process in order to ensure that candidates who were affiliated to the particular teacher unions got appointed to positions. Furthermore, the teacher union representatives were regarded by some members of the selection committee as people who were more knowledgeable and better equipped in terms of the selection procedures and processes. Eventually, these preconceived ideas and perceptions had led to unhealthy working relations between the teacher union representatives and some members of the selection committee.

It is intriguing to note that many participants in the study seemed to be happy and comfortable with the role played by educators and co-opted members in the selection committee. The findings of the study revealed that educators are in a better position to be well informed about the necessary requisites of the teaching profession. Therefore, their role during the selection process was appreciated and acknowledged by all the participants in this study. The role played by the co-opted members during the selection process was also appreciated, but co-option must be done on the basis of experience and expertise of members not just window dressing.

5.2.1 The challenges

It transpired from the study that the smooth running of the selection process is sometimes hampered by a number of challenges. These challenges ranged from favouritism, subjectivity and biasness, impact of the Post Provisional Norm/Model (PPN/M), application of selection and scoring criteria, lack of expertise as a result of inadequate training to manipulation of the selection process.

It is important to note that, this study was based on the assumption that due to a lack of expertise from some members of the selection committee, manipulation, favouritism, subjectivity and biasness become a common practice during the selection process. It was when the study was conducted that the issue of the PPN/M emerged as a new underlying factor which also contributed to the skewing the selection process. The study revealed that some selectors tended to favour candidates who were based on the schools where the

post is contested. This was tactfully and strategically done in order to ensure that educators in the school are contained. In other words promotion from within the school would ensure that educators are not declared additional to the number of posts which the school is entitled to according to PPN/M. It becomes pretty obvious that if members of the selection committee could continue to adopt this kind of practice, there will be no better expertise drawn from outside the schools thus stifling the school improvement.

It also transpired from the study that it was very difficult to eradicate some challenges that were closely related. For instance, a lack of expertise is connected to a lack of education and inadequate training. In addition, there are underlying, complicated and deep seated factors which could be regarded as the root causes of these challenges. The findings of the study revealed that, factors such as illiteracy amongst parents, lack of transparency and consistency amongst selectors, preferential treatment, ignorance of selectors and lack of training.

5.3 Recommendations

The recommendations are based on the findings of this study and there is no specific or particular importance on its order. These recommendations are all important and could therefore be regarded as an endeavour aimed at highlighting the plight of the selection committees in rural schools and how the selection processes could be improved in these areas. Thus, the recommendations focus on the adequate training of the selection committees, providing guidelines and awareness to the Department of Education (DoE), officials of the DoE, SGBs, policy makers, principals, educators, co-opted members, parents and other relevant stakeholders.

The Department of Education (DoE) must ensure that the training of SGBs and selection committees is intensified. For instance, capacitating and empowerment of the SGBs and selection committees should be a continual process which is done not only as a once off activity but also through the year. This would ensure that the selectors are well abreast with procedures surrounding the selection process. Such training programmes must

include a 'mock selection process' to strengthen selectors' abilities to choose the best suitable candidates for their schools (Gounden, 2000). The DoE must also solicit assistance and advice from experts and academics in the universities to ensure that training is intensified.

Since the study revealed that there was a lack of active parental participation during the selection process, therefore, it is imperative to mention that, the workshops for capacity building particularly of parents must be conducted in a language which is easier for the majority of the beneficiaries of these workshops to understand. In the case of KZN, IsiZulu language should be used during training sessions so that the majority of parents could be able to understand what is required of them during the selection process. The fact of the matter is that, some parents are not well educated. Therefore, this does not mean that they cannot take informed decisions when they are required to do so. Illiterate parents have for years been involved in decision making processes in their tribal areas and courts without experiencing any problems. Therefore, a strategy should be adopted by the DoE to design specific training programmes for these uneducated parents, so that they would be equipped with necessary expertise in performing their tasks in school governance particularly in areas involving the selection and appointment of educators.

The principals, educators, co-opted members, parents as well as teacher union representatives should be equipped with necessary skills required during the selection process. These selectors must be made aware that any deviation from policy governing the selection process is tantamount to a misconduct charge. This means that disciplinary actions would be taken against those selectors charged of misconduct. Therefore, it is very important to warn selectors that whatever decision made during the selection process should be within the parameters of the legislations governing the selection process.

The members of the selection committee should realize that the selection process is a collective and concerted decision making process. It is within the legislation that teacher union representatives intervene where there is a deviation from policy regarding the selection process. Therefore, the presence of the teacher union representatives in the

selection process should be viewed in a positive manner and as a promotion of democratic participation in education.

The department officials should be fully and actively involved in the selection process. The SEM must be present at every selection process in his/her Ward particularly in promotional posts. Subject advisors must also be allowed to sit in the selection committees in order to give guidance about the subjects' requirements.

Principals should stop to act as resource persons and become ordinary members of the selection committees. The SASA describes a resource person as a neutral person who must be officially appointed by the SEM.

The impact of the PPN/M during the selection process should be seriously considered. The DoE should resolve that new appointments at a school will not affect the PPN/M at least for the first three years of appointment.

Generally, the interview as the only tool used to assess candidates should be revisited. In most cases eloquent speakers excel during the interviews stage but fail to perform their duties effectively after they have been appointed. This means that when appointing educators to promotional posts, the selectors should also look at the past work achievement of the candidates rather than oral presentation during the interview, as some people are very good in theory but poor in actual practice. In addition, other instruments to assess candidates during the selection process should be introduced, such as, written reports, role plays.

An independent team of selectors should be established which would be responsible for conducting interviews in various District Offices of KZN province. This would ensure that the selection process is done in a free and fair way.

The current dispute resolution mechanisms should be reviewed. The DoE must ensure that if there is a dispute that has been lodged, it must be urgently attended to. This must be done in order to speed up the process of appointment of educators.

5.4 Conclusion

The findings of the study revealed that, there are serious challenges faced by the members of the selection committees in rural schools during the selection process particularly to promotional posts. For instance, when the SASA was introduced in 1996, it aimed at empowering parents to have a major say in matters pertaining education of their children including issues around the selection of educators. It is not surprising to find that during the selection process, the very same parents are marginalized just because of their lack of education. Therefore, the issue of democratic participation of all stakeholders becomes less effective in this regard. In most cases the selection process is conducted by professional selectors such as principals and educators. It also becomes very difficult to co-opt members from outside the SGB, because of the limited number of people with necessary expertise.

The problems and challenges in the appointment of educators indicate that there is a big gap with regard to theory and policy implementation.

Most importantly, the findings of this study cannot be generalised to other rural schools in South Africa, because the research was restricted to three rural schools with their specific peculiarities. However, the study has come up with a body of new knowledge that DoE officials, SGBs, principals, educators, parents, co-opted members, chairpersons of the selection committees, teacher union representatives and other relevant stakeholders can use to improve the selection process.

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Appendix 1

Interview guide for the Principal /Departmental Representative (Resource person)

1. As a departmental representative, what is your role during the selection process?
2. When and how do you intervene as a departmental representative in the face of deviation from the policy?
3. Do you think the suitable qualified candidates get appointed during the selection process? Explain your answer.
4. Are there any problems that are beyond your control that occur during the selection process? Explain your answer?
5. How do you resolve or address these problems?
6. What are strategies and changes that need to be introduced to improve the appointment of educators?

Appendix 2

Interview guide for the chairperson of the selection committee

1. In short describe the roles and functions of the selection committee?
2. How was the selection committee composed?
3. As the chairperson of the selection committee, what is your role during the selection process?
4. What is the role of the principal in the appointment of educators?
5. Do you think principal plays his role effectively?
6. How his /her role has influenced the appointment of educators?
7. Do you think the selection committee have the capacity to selection and appoint educators? Explain your answer?
8. What are the inadequacies that the selection committee have that affect its role of selecting and appointing educators?
9. How can such inadequacies be addressed?
10. What strategies /action plans for the selection committee to use in order to deal with the problems?

Appendix 3

Interview guide for the Representatives of the teacher unions (NATU and SADTU)

1. What are the responsibilities of the selection committee during the selection and appointment of educators?
2. Do you think the selection committee have the capacity to select and appoint educators? Explain your answer.
3. What are the inadequacies that the selection committee have that affect its role of selecting and appointing educators?
4. How do these inadequacies impact on the correct staffing in the schools?
5. What strategies or action plans that the selection committee needs to do in order to deal /address these problems?
6. From your experience as the member of the teacher union what are the factors which cause disputes?
7. What are procedures that are followed in order to resolve these disputes?

Appendix 4

Interview guide for the other members of the selection committee.

Put a cross on the appropriate box that applies to you.

- Educator
- Parent
- Co-opted member

1. What is the role of the following members of the selection committee?
 - 1.1 Principal
 - 1.2 Educators
 - 1.3 Parents
 - 1.4 Co-opted members
 - 1.5 Department official
 - 1.6 Teacher union representatives
2. Do you think that the members of the selection committee perform their functions well? Explain your answer.
3. As a member of the selection committee what procedures are followed in choosing the best suitable candidate?
4. Do you think the selection committee have the capacity to select and appoint educators? Explain your answer.
5. What are the inadequacies that the selection committees have that affect their role of selecting and appointing educators?
6. How can such inadequacies be addressed?
7. What do you think are the strategies that need be introduced to improve the appointment of educators?

