

THE UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

THE SUPERVISORY ROLES OF HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS IN RURAL
PRIMARY SCHOOLS: CHALLENGES AND PROBLEMS

BY

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The supervisory roles of heads of departments in rural primary schools:
Challenges and problems.

by

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SUPERVISOR’S STATEMENT

This dissertation has been submitted with/without my approval.

.....

Mr Sibusiso, D. Bayeni

.....

Date

Declaration

I, Bongani Mthembu do hereby declare that this dissertation is my own work.

Where similar dissertations exist is referenced in my dissertation. All references as detailed in the dissertation are complete in terms of all personal communications engaged in and published work consulted.

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Student's Signature

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Date

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Supervisor's Signature

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Date

Dedication

I dedicate this research work to my family, for the support and tolerance during the very long period of study. I thank every member of the family for sacrificing quality family time.

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Abstract

This research presents an understanding of the supervisory roles of heads of departments (HODs) in rural primary schools. In documenting the roles of heads of departments, I employed a qualitative approach. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with two post level one educators, two HODs and one principal in their real settings.

In collecting data from participants I interviewed the aforementioned participants individually. Through interviews with every participant on the question of supervisory roles, it became clear how HODs struggled in the execution of their dual roles.

Emerging from all participants is that HODs had a challenging workload, which stretched beyond teaching. In addition to normal teaching, they were expected to supervise their colleagues in the subject departments they were heading with an aim to render support to their colleagues. While HODs held office as heads of department within the hierarchical structures, they were however, unable to carry out their supervisory roles beyond teaching because of their 100% teaching load and being class teachers themselves.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

This chapter begins by describing the important roles played by the middle managers in primary schools with respect to supervision and teaching in general. It appears that the roles and responsibilities of HODs in primary schools are not taken seriously by the principals and office based educators as there are no external examinations that draw public attention yet, it is known that primary education is the foundation for basic learning that every child uses in the future. Therefore, HODs role is significant. Against this drawback, it is critical to investigate how HODs in primary schools play their roles.

This chapter is an orientation to the study, and therefore, provides a synopsis, background and purpose of the study, statement of the purpose, rationale, research questions, theoretical and conceptual frameworks, significance of the study, as well as, the outline of the study.

1.2 Background to the study

In South African schools, management and leadership activities fall in the hands of Heads of Departments (HODs), Deputy Principals (DPs) and Principals all of whom occupy different levels in the school management hierarchy. These different levels of management constitute an important school management structure called the School Management Team (Department of Education, 1996). The School Management Team (SMT) is responsible for the generic fundamentals of management, which include organisation, planning, leading and control (Van der Westhuizen, 1996). To effectively carry out this duty, division of tasks among SMT members is clearly defined in the Personnel Administrative Measures (PAM) document in terms of Section 4 of Employment of Educators Act (No. 76 of 1998). Under the Employment of Educators Act (EEA), the principal is expected to manage the school effectively together with the school management team.

According to Mentz (2002) the principals' duties and responsibilities can be categorised into specific areas that include general administration, management of personnel, teaching,

interaction with stakeholders, as well as, communication. The deputy principals' responsibilities are more about assisting the principal in managing the school and promoting the learning process in the school (Botha, 2002). This is in addition to engaging in class teaching duties. The Heads of Department (HODs) are basically responsible for managing different subjects or phases within the school. The introduction of HODs also shifted the supervision of teachers from the hands of principals to the hands of HODs. The Employment of Educators Act outlines the responsibilities of HODs, and these include class teaching, ensuring effective functioning of their respective departments and organising relevant extra-curricular activities, managing subjects and, promoting proper education for the learners.

This Act (Department of Education, 1998) outlines the following specific responsibilities for the HODs to carry out:

- a) Advise the principal regarding the division of work among the staff in that department.
- b) Assist with the planning and management of school stock, textbooks and equipment for the department.
- c) Co-operate with colleagues in order to maintain a good teaching standard.

With the numerous task assigned to the HODs by the EEA, it has become clear that many HODs, especially in the rural areas, cannot effectively execute these responsibilities. Bush and Glover (2009) suggest that the tasks given to the HODs by the Act are capable of rendering the office impotent because of so many duties and responsibilities attached to the office. This situation poses a serious challenge for the HODs. They cannot carry out a dual role of being classroom teachers and supervising subject teachers under their departments. In trying to carry out these dual roles, they find it extremely difficult to provide the necessary support and coaching to help subject teachers to improve performance (Bush & Glover, 2009).

In another development, Fleisch (2008) observed that HODs working in primary schools with few learners still find themselves overloaded with administrative, supervisory, and teaching duties given to them by deputy principals or principals. This means that, despite them having few learners to teach, in some instances, HODs still faced other tasks such as administrative duties assigned to them by their superiors. This makes it practically impossible for them to supervise teachers who are under their departments. However, PAM document states that HODs are

expected to use between 85% and 90% of their time for normal teaching and between 10% and 15% for supervisory functions.

It may not be possible to adhere strictly to this expectation and innovation especially in rural primary schools with low learner population and few educators. Again, all educators are required to engage in staff development under the leadership of HODs. This enormous task of the supervision of educators sometimes receives inadequate or no attention from HODs at all and this is mainly due to their teaching responsibilities. In agreement with the scenario described above, Blandford (1997) states that middle managers are also teachers hence, their timetable will have a greater number of contact hours on a weekly basis than the number of hours allocated to those employed as senior managers.

The dilemma for most rural primary schools HODs arises out of the conflict between management of teaching and supervisory role assigned to them in terms of the EEA. In contrast, Earley and Fletcher-Campbell (1992) recommend that supervision and support time need to be separated and equally made available to HODs in order to perform their extra-curricular tasks effectively. For effective performing of his/her, duty Earley and Fletcher-Campbell (1992) held that HODs are supposed to conduct classroom visits in order to supervise, develop support and advise members in their departments. Similarly, for classroom visits to be effective, three stages come into play: pre-discussion, actual class visit and post-discussion sessions (KZN-DoE Collective Agreement Number 8 of 2003). Unpacking these concepts, DoE (2003) submits that pre-discussion is a stage where both the supervisor and the supervisee discuss expectations in terms of lesson presentation according to the classroom visit tool before the actual classroom visit takes place. The tool needs to be understood by the supervisor and the supervisee. The tool includes the manner in which lesson presentation, methodologies, classroom organisation, resources and assessment should be done.

The tool specifications in terms of what is expected during the lesson channels are highlighted and at the end of the lesson, both parties come together for a post-discussion level that allows intensive discussion and feedback. This discussion session is done when learners have departed after the contact time. However, it is worthy to note that in rural schools this is not always

possible because of numerous tasks that are expected of the HODs. Therefore, the question in the minds of stakeholders is, whether HODs get sufficient time to supervise other educators when they are subjected to the dual role of supervising and teaching. This thought provoking question has given me the desire to explore the supervisory roles of head of departments in rural primary schools.

1.3 Statement of problem

The Employment of Educators Act has assigned many responsibilities to the office of Heads of subject Department in schools, including primary schools, in South Africa. It is worthy to mention that the Act mandates the HODs to carry out supervision of other educators in his/her department, as well as, engaging in the teaching process. It is important to state that this dual role given to the HODs has reduced their efficiency and productivity (Fitzgerald, 2008). It is on this basis that I developed the urge to investigate the supervisory roles of the HODs in rural primary schools. I wanted to understand the challenges that they encounter in carrying out the assigned duties and whether such challenges make them to be inefficient or not.

1.4 Rationale of study

I have been teaching in rural primary schools for the past 26 years. During these years, I have noticed that schools were granted management posts in line with the number of learners enrolled as per Post Provisioning Model (PPM). PPM is a human resource allocation model that the Department of Education (DoE) uses to allocate teaching posts to schools. It is a well-known fact that once the educator pool in the province is identified by the Member of the Executive Council (MEC) for Education, educators are distributed to public schools. The PPM takes, among other things, the learner population into account, as it has a bearing on a school's educator post provisioning needs. The PPM is model used for the distribution of posts to the school is in accordance with the needs and priorities of the institution. For example, learners, grades and poverty index of the school are taken into consideration in the distribution of educators to the posts that have been declared vacant. At the same time, the Department equally provides schools with educators based on the learner population. In other words, the fact that a teaching post has been declared vacant in a particular school, will be automatically be filled, but issues mentioned

above will be used to decide whether the post should be filled or not as such post can be moved to another school.

Another motivational factor that persuaded me to embark on this research study was different scholarly views expressed about the functionality of the HODs in schools. For instance, Kemp and Nathan (1989) looked at the middle management in schools in Scotland and concluded that, a lack of proper management resulted in some schools not functioning properly. Similarly, Harding (1990) did a research on the training for middle management in education. Furthermore, Turner (1996) also showed how important the roles and the tasks of a subject head of department in Secondary schools in England and Wales were. In another development, Turner and Bolam (1998) researched the role of the subject head of department in Secondary schools in England and Wales. They came up with a theoretical framework for understanding the roles of the HODs. Finally, Piggot-Irvine and Lockie (1999) researched the same issue and concluded that without effective middle management there cannot be any innovative schooling.

Studies cited in the above paragraph have indicated that a lot of research has been conducted on the Head of Department or Middle Management role globally but empirical evidence shows that not much research has been done in the context of HODs dual role in South African rural primary schools. Therefore, this existing gap necessitates this research work.

1.5 Significance of study

The findings of the study could be useful to policy makers within the provincial and national departments of education when re-designing policies. The education departmental officials could have a better understanding and insight of the experiences of HODs, especially in rural settings as they carry out their responsibilities. Rural primary HODs could be able to interact with policies, and contribute to policy formulation through providing critiques based on their professional practice. The officials of the department of education in rural areas could gain new insight into the challenges faced by the HODs.

1.6 Research questions

In the process of investigating how HODs, carry out their dual roles as supervisors and as well as teachers, the following research questions were posed to undergird the study:

- What challenges do HODs face in the process of discharging their supervisory responsibilities?
- How do the HODs deal with the challenges relating to supervisory and teaching duties?

In answering these questions, I conducted semi-structured interviews in three primary schools with low learner populations. Two posts level one (PL1) educators, one from the Foundation Phase and another from Intermediate/Senior Phase. Two HODs, one from the Foundation Phase and another from the Intermediate/Senior Phase, and the principal of each of the three schools was interviewed.

The primary schools were selected through the purposive sampling technique. The choice of principals was informed by a huge accountability linked to their positions. The HODs were chosen because of their experiences in carrying out their dual roles. The class teachers were selected because of their direct link with the HODs; hence they were affected by what the HODs are doing.

1.7 Research methodology

This study is located within the interpretative paradigm and it is qualitative in nature. Qualitative research is a loosely conceptualised form of research models, in which data is elicited in the form of a descriptive narrative (Preissle, 2006). The choice of qualitative approach was informed by an ontological assumption about reality that would match the kind of data that would emerge from the field. Ontological assumption presents that realities are constructed by the social actors (Schwandt, 2000). These realities are relative in that no reality is considered more “true” than any other; they may be more or less well informed within the context of the social actors’ lives. I

interacted with principals, HODs and PL1 educators in rural primary schools. Data was produced through semi-structured interviews, which allowed for in- depth study of the phenomena under investigation (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). A detailed explanation of the interpretative paradigm, qualitative approach and semi-structured interview will be unpacked in chapter three.

1.8 Operational definition of terms

In this research study, some words are used which can only be understood within the context of this work; it is therefore, important to define those concepts as they are pertinent and are used in this study.

Rural school

It may be appropriate at this point to define the term, ‘rural’ and to provide the explanation that is crucial in exploring key issues of this study. Rural generally refers to isolated, poor or traditionally administered areas (Kozol, 1991). Rural schools tend to be defined in deficit model terms, that is, by what is lacking or not available. For instance, Kozol (1991) maintains that rural schools are characterised by poverty and geographical isolation whereby facilities and essential services are usually non-existent or in a poor state. According to Rees (1995), in most rural communities, greater numbers of inhabitants are unemployed and depend solely on subsistent farming and livestock production for their livelihood. Often, these rural places are isolated from cities, but some members of the rural communities move to the cities for employment. In rural schools, the shortage of qualified educators and poor learner population is rife (Mulkeen, 2006).

Educator and Teacher

It is important to define the concepts ‘teacher/educator’ and ‘middle manager/HOD’ in this study. According to Taylor (2002), a teacher/educator is a person who gives direction, sets performance standards and monitors outcomes. This person offers incentives and administers rewards and sanctions if the learner’s performance is below average. The terms educator and teacher are used inter-changeably in this study.

Middle manager/HOD

A great deal of the work in managing learning and teaching process operates at the middle management level in schools. Kemp and Nathan (1989) sum up the inherent ambiguity in the middle management role: there is no simple definition of middle management in schools. The closest that one can come to as a definition is to say that the school's middle managers are those people whose role places them between the senior management team and those colleagues whose job description does not extend beyond the normal teaching and pastoral functions (Kemp & Nathan, 1989). The concepts 'middle manager and HOD' are used interchangeably in this research work.

1.9 Layout of the study

This chapter begins by explaining the background within which this study is contextualised. The main focus of this chapter is on introducing the whole dissertation by explaining the rationale, motivation and purpose of the study. The critical questions that guided this research study are also provided. The methodology and methods adopted in the study are mentioned without any fully detailed description.

Chapter 2 focuses on the literature review which comprises the views of others scholars whose research is related to my work. The review of the literature is subdivided into themes. This chapter also deals with the theoretical framework which underpins the research. The framework is selected on the basis of the extent to which it enhances the understanding of how HODs are able to reconcile their dual roles of being teachers as well as supervisors.

Chapter 3 focuses on the methodology and methods that were used in eliciting the data that would assist in gaining insights about the research problem. It also describes the paradigm underpinning the study.

Chapter 4 described how the data elicited from the field is presented and analysed.

Chapter 5 discusses the findings that were arrived at after the data had been presented in Chapter 4. This chapter also concludes this research work by giving a vivid summary, the conclusion was reached and theorisation or recommendations suggested.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Chapter 1 deals with the orientation of the study; it covers the background of the study, statement of the problem, the rationale and significance of the study and the research questions. Other areas touched in chapter 1 include research methodology, operational definition of terms, limitations of the study and its layout. This chapter focuses on the theoretical framework and the review of related literature. The review of related literature presents an orderly and systematic identification, location and analysis of materials related to the research problem (Akpan, 2010). Nworgu (1991) sees the review of relevant literature as an exercise where the researcher tries to identify, locate, read and evaluate previous studies, observations, opinions and comments related to his intended research.

The aim of this chapter therefore, is to present a critical review of the literature associated with supervision of educators in primary schools in South Africa and elsewhere in the world. This literature review attempts to broaden the readers' understanding of HODs teaching and supervisory roles in rural primary schools. Again, it provides a framework for understanding many responsibilities that are played by the HODs in the rural context. Lastly, it provides rural and urban comparison in terms of the balance between teaching and supervisory roles of the HODs. I therefore compartmentalise the chapter under the following themes:

- a) Decentralisation of responsibilities to school
- b) Human resource development
- c) Curriculum management
- d) Middle management/ HODs
- e) Subject supervision
- f) The role of School Management Team

2.2.1. Decentralisation of duties in the schools

Many approaches can be used to ensure that decisions in schools are carried out. One of them is hierarchical control where the central decision makers take charge of all the responsibilities

(Leithwood & Menzies, 1998). Here, it is assumed that the decision makers would be able to monitor the actual implementation of decisions. However, this is not always possible as decisions made may be required to be implemented in different areas distant from each other. Where decisions are implemented, a variety of opinions could differ. This may lead to contestations as to how that decision would be implemented. The second approach is decentralisation of decision-making where decision actors take control of the decision.

In the case of schooling, this may be referred to as School Based Management (SBM). In SBM, decisions are transferred to professionals within the schools; generally, these refer to the principal and senior educators. Leithwood and Menzies (1998) identify four types of decision control as follows: administrative control where the principal is dominant, professional control in which the teacher corps receives the authority, community control where the community or the parents, through a board, are in charge and balanced control where the parents and the professionals (educators and principal) are in balance. These are important types of decision controls, if they are applied in a school would minimise workload assigned to HODs.

According to Grauwe (2004, p. 4), SBM is advantageous because:

- it allows educators and parents to take decisions about an issue of such importance as education is certainly more democratic than to keep this decisions in the hands of officials.
- it locates the decision-making power closer to where problems are being experienced, and will lead to more relevant policies as local staff generally know their own situation better.
- It is less bureaucratic because decisions will be taken much more quickly if they do not need to go through a long bureaucratic process (from school through several intermediary offices to the central level), but can be made at a level close to the school.
- It allows schools and educators to be held accountable for their results towards parents and the close community directly. Such accountability is expected to act as a tool for greater effectiveness.
- Teachers and especially parents will be more eager to contribute to the funding of their school if they have a say in the organisation and management it. In School Based

Management (SBM), decision-making and authority is transferred from the central authority to schools. This is done to ensure that decision made is put into action. According to Leithwood and Menzies (1998), the principals have to collaborate informally with some stakeholders such as educators, parents, students and community representatives. Indeed, it has been demonstrated that the quality of education depends primarily on the way schools are managed, more than on the availability of resources. It has also been shown that the capacity of schools to improve teaching and learning is strongly mediated by the quality of the leadership that is provided by the principal. Those factors could be used to argue for stronger control over management within the school.

2.2.2. Human Resource Development in school

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act No. 108 of 1996) is the supreme law of the land. Among other things, the Constitution is aimed at improving the quality of life of all citizens and freeing the potential of each person. In chapter 2 the Bill of Rights, Section 29, deals with education, stipulates that everyone has the right to a basic education, including adult education; and to further education, which the State through reasonable measures, must make progressively available and be accessible. In order to ensure that citizens' potential is attained in accordance with this provision in the Constitution, human resources development (HRD) is critically important in this regard.

Human resource development in this context is regarded as a process by which managers or middle managers obtain the necessary training, skills and attitudes to become a successful leader in an institution (Erasmus & Van der Westhuizen, 2002). Van Dyk, *et al*, (2001) report that work force training in any establishment is intended to prepare employees for managerial positions or improvement in work efficiency. In South African schools, teaching and non-teaching staff members are sent to workshops, seminars, conferences and in-service programme to upgrade their knowledge on the art of teaching and management. The Department of Education (DoE) spends huge sum of money yearly to upgrade educators and other staff (Fleisch, 2008). The aim is to ensure that educators particularly, the HODs are kept up to date on new curriculum and other allied matters of the school since they are the implementers of government education policies.

The HODs perform their supervisory roles that involve supervision of teachers in specific phases, induction of new staff, interaction with learners, teachers and parents. Dunford, Fawcett and Bennet (2000) report that the HODs should have sufficient training and experience that is needed for the training of educators toward curriculum implementation, which is the key business of any school. Jansen and Christie (1999) argue that the success of the new curriculum (NCS) depends on the types of training and support that educators acquire from their supervisors to implement curriculum. In the same vein, Virgilio and Virgilio (1984) argue that no change in a school will be successful without the positive and active support of educators by the supervisors.

In the area of professional development of the HODs, Steyn and Van Niekerk (2002), report that the participation of the HODs in leadership development is an opportunity that is designed to equip them towards effective educational leadership. Hargreaves (1994) says that significant change in the curriculum is unlikely to be successful unless serious attention is given to professional development of every educator holding managerial positions. In agreement with the above notion, Cawood and Gibbon (1985) observe that proper professional development of educators and managers in school positively influences professional effectiveness of the educators. Similarly, Harding (1990) is of the view that middle management development is a central factor in determining how effectively a middle manager performs the task that is assigned to him or her.

Fundamentally, Human Resource Management (HRM) is all about performance improvement through effective use of people. It is therefore essential that the HODs are allocated time to provide professional development to educators under their supervision. The personnel in an institution need to be monitored to ensure that they efficiently and effectively carry out the tasks given by the superiors. Bush and West-Burnham (1994) argue that it is the management task to promote the maximum level of performance among educators. However, in rural primary schools the HODs are unable to render support to their subordinates since they are also full time class teachers (Ali & Botha 2006). In addressing the ugly trend, Coleman (2003) submits that there is a need to revisit the role of the HODs.

2.2.3 Curriculum Management and Leadership

The success of any school is a function of managerial ability and leadership quality of stakeholders (Leithwood & Stager, 1986). In South Africa, some schools perform badly because of poor leadership quality of the principal and other supporting staff (Relkoff, 1981). Poor learner academic performance at both internal and external examinations is evidence of bad management and leadership in schools (Botha, 2002). As stated by Dunford, Fawcett and Bennett (2000), both leadership and management are necessary for a school to be effective. These scholars argue that effective management and efficient leadership should be visible in a school. It is worthy to note that the task of management at all levels in the education service is ultimately the creation and support of conditions under which teachers and their learners are able to achieve teaching and learning (De Grauwe, 2004). This also means that HODs as members of School Management Teams (SMTs) should provide support and an environment that is conducive to effective teaching and learning. Morrison (1998) also supports this and further adds that HODs have a responsibility for advice, documentation and support for staff (from policy formulation to planning, developing work programmes and consultation. The delivery of the curriculum at school is the responsibility of middle managers commonly known as HODs in the South African context. The delivery of the curriculum is done in many different ways.

Hansen (1996) suggests styles of curriculum delivery, namely, directive, supportive, participative and achievement-oriented. Directive delivery involves the giving of instructions to the educator(s) on ways in which the curriculum is to be implemented by the principal. The style, according to the Hansen (1996), has a backwash effect on learners and greater part of the curriculum might be left untouched. Supportive delivery style refers to the implementation of the curriculum by an educator in which the senior member of staff should ably assist him or her. Managers who demonstrate a supportive style must strive to develop good interpersonal relations and create a friendly atmosphere in the group that they lead. Participatory and achievement-oriented style deals with the collaboration of the principal, the HODs and educators in the implementation of the curriculum. Jansen and Christie (1999) say that the success of curriculum implementation depends on the training and support that educators receive from their supervisors and the principal.

In South African schools, the HODs use a directive delivery style to provide specific guidance for educators and equally set the standard of performance for them to follow (Codd, 2005). The HODs advise educators on how to know what is expected of them. Directive style is a one-way communication, because the HODs give the directives to educators without feedback from them. The HODs spell out the followers' role, which include what they have to do, where, when and how; thereafter, they are directed and at the same time they are closely monitored (Codd, 2005). Participatory and achievement-oriented managers always set challenging goals with an aim of improving teachers' performance. Participative managers seek suggestions and opinions of educators and consider their inputs when making decisions (The English College for School Leadership, 2007). The HODs in schools with a poor learner population may not fully demonstrate supportive style because the HODs are themselves engaged in classroom activities.

In trying to meet his/her supervisory roles, it is possible that the HODs resort to using a directive leadership style. This style allows them to direct their educators through clear guidelines. Hence, they may be tempted to stick to the directive style that requires educators to follow guidelines they set especially, in small schools. The HODs do set goals with an aim of improving performance, however they end-up not being able to monitor or supervise the processes. In order for the curriculum to be implemented effectively, Turner (1996) argues that the role of management should never be left in the hands of the HODs only. Rather, it should be a collective task whereby all educators in a school are involved actively (Coleman, 2003). Further, Coleman (2003, p. 21) reports that the role of middle managers is based on the following areas:

- Two themes of leadership and communication.
- Four main areas of responsibility of pupils, staff, curriculum and resources for example, learners and teachers are in class on time, resources are available.
- Three contexts of the department, the school and beyond the school.

With regards to routine and developmental activities, the HODs are faced with dual accountability in operation. They are accountable to the principal for the management of their departments or phases and to their educators in terms of teaching and supervision. There can be little doubt therefore, that the HODs, as the conduit between senior leaders and classroom

teachers (Siskin & Warren-Little, 1995), can and do have a central role to play through their leadership of teachers and teaching. The HODs are the driving force behind any school and key to improving the quality of the learning process (Earley & Fletcher-Campbell, 1989). They have a responsibility for planning, organising, directing and controlling the work of other teachers (Coleman *et al.*, 2003). This indicates that they are responsible for curriculum beyond their own classrooms to include supervision.

The Employment of Educators Act clearly state the main job of the HODs is to engage in class teaching, ensure effective functioning of the department or phase. According to Sergiovanni (1988), the HODs' roles include financial management, human resource management, school administration and governance. The HODs are expected to assess educators' performance. This will in turn improve teaching and learning in a school as indicated in the PAM document e.g.

- To engage in class teaching as per workload
- To be responsible for the effective functioning of the department and phase.
- To organise relevant/ related extra-curricular activities.
- To control the work of educators and learners in the department.
- To advise the Principal regarding the division of work among the staff in the department.

The HODs in many instances are placed to influence the teaching and learning process in schools. The placement of HODs in schools with higher learner population could likely result in a heavy workload. This is because the increase in learner population in a school positively influences high demand for educators, which negatively affects the roles of the HODs. It was on this premise that Turner (1996), Blandford (1997), as well as, McLendon and Crowther (1998) submit that roles of middle managers in highly populated schools are pathetic because of the enormous work they are subjected to on daily basis. Consequently, the literature relating to the functions and roles middle managers are sparse (Turner, 1996). What is apparent however, is the dual roles that the HODs play in the primary school.

2.2.4 Middle management

In any organisation, the 'Head' is paramount and ensures that objectives of that organisation are accomplished (Gunter, 2005). The HODs or middle managers are a focal point for this study.

Therefore, it is believed that in a school, the HOD plays a dual role, that of being a manager and a teacher. Schuler and Harris (1992) hold that middle managers are the people who actually implement changes in order to improve quality. Fleming and Amesbury (2001) see middle managers as individuals who have additional responsibilities to those of class teachers. Bush and West-Burnham (1994) maintain that middle management act as 'a layer' of management between the senior management and those at the 'chalk face'. Furthermore, Leask and Terrell (1997) argue that the term 'Middle managers' is used to describe all those teachers working in schools who have management responsibility for a team of staff or for aspects of the schoolwork below the level of principal. They further add that a middle manager is a member of the SMT who needs to have knowledge of all operational aspects of the school, which encompass research and development, policy and practice, curriculum issues and pastoral care. The HODs influence the actions, behaviours, attitudes, beliefs and feeling of all other staff in school to bring about positive outcomes.

Fleming and Amesbury (2001) suggest that there are four principal components of middle management, namely, middle managers have a clear vision; they are specialist in executing their roles and are good practitioners; they are effective managers of people and resources, and they have the ability to accomplish a task efficiently. Since they implement the policies of government, curriculum and extra- curricular activities, it is important that middle managers to have clear vision. According to Fleming and Amesbury (2001), their vision enables them to be good leaders in the development of the school. Middle managers are the people that are closer to both the learners and the principal or head of schools, and therefore, they have specialist knowledge that relates to their roles (Fleming & Amesbury, 2001). The major role of middle managers is managing people and resources. They are the motivators to their subordinates. Middle managers must ensure that they implement their tasks efficiently. According to Fleming and Amesbury (2001), middle managers must be able to combine leadership, management and administration in the right proportion in order to be successful.

Studies have shown that, due to numerous tasks given to middle managers in schools particularly in primary schools, HODs are confused about what is their real duty. Despite this position held by scholars, Trethowan (1991, p. 23) argues that:

Middle manager has the power and responsibility to change systems and re-allocate resources to improve best practice. Relating and cooperating in the pursuit of excellence are the basic skill of the middle managers.

Again, in many countries, the duty of the deputy head of school is taken over by the middle managers. Brown (1990) observes that over 80% of the deputy principals in secondary schools in Hong Kong are redundant because most of their duties have been taken over by head of departments. Fleming and Amesbury (2001) highlight the role played by middle managers, and argue that they include tasks, relationship and responsibilities. According to Lee (1999), the tasks of middle managers in a self-managing school are wide-ranging and these include curriculum and teaching, general administration, policymaking, professional development and appraisal. In the area of responsibilities, Gunter (2001) reports that the major responsibilities of a middle manager are to motivate, organise and monitor teacher's performance to reach goals of the school.

In the context of relationship, middle managers have to manage both internal and external relationships (Gunter, 2001). In a similar vein, Bush and Glover (2009) opine that the middle manager's role is focused on sub-units, based on learning areas or school phases. Ali and Botha (2006) argue that with the introduction of Outcomes Based Education (OBE) in South Africa, the responsibilities of school managers have been shifted towards instructional activities and the accomplishment of high quality outcomes. Some scholars, therefore, submit that if teaching and learning are to improve significantly, the HODs will have to spend much more time in the supervision of teaching and learning activities that occur daily in their subject or learning area.

2.2.5 Middle manager's supervision

Supervision involves an interaction between the supervisory team and the staff being supervised within the institution. Supervision is essentially a social process and it should be regarded as such. This interaction is centred on the curriculum and instruction as well as other professional issues that relate to the teaching and learning process (Fleming & Amesbury, 2001). Supervision is conducted on educators by middle managers in order to improve the quality of learning and

teaching in the school. Glickman (2000) identifies three models of supervision, namely, traditional, peer and clinical supervisions that supervisors might use to enhance learner's achievement. Among the choices of the supervisory models, many HODs I have talked to seem to prefer traditional supervision. McGreal (2000) describes traditional supervision as a model in which there is high level of supervisor involvement and low supervisee participation. In this model, supervisees remain passive while supervisors are actively giving instructions. The traditional model of supervision has been the most prevalent in schools and is used by all HODs in South African schools (McGreal, 2000). This method, in most cases resulted in conflicts instead of fostering positive interactions. The conflict may be as a result of the inability of the supervisees to properly carry out the directives issued by the supervisor. This 'cold war' relationship exists because the supervisees see the directives issued by his or her supervisor as insulting especially when the supervisor happens to be younger in age.

Studies have shown that in many countries the traditional supervision model is still applied in schools. This model though practiced by many countries including South Africa, has some flaws. Blumberg (1990) highlights three flaws of traditional supervision. First, the supervisor takes decisions without input from the educators and equally decides when to carry out classroom visits. Second, during the classroom visit, the supervisor collects data using instrument that was not discussed by both the supervisor and the supervisee. Third, following the final class visit, the supervisor has to complete a summative evaluation form and present the rating scores to the educators. Though much maligned, this traditional model also has several advantages. For example, it requires little time or skill as it needs minimal contact between educators and supervisors.

Glatthorn (1998) describes peer supervision as a moderately formalised process in which two or more experienced and competent educators value collegiality and agree to work together for their professional growth. These experienced educators observe each other's classes, give each other feedback about the observations, and discuss shared professional concerns. In a similar development, 'peer supervision' model recognises that educators have much in common to share, and are more likely to seek assistance from each other. Peer supervision model creates opportunities for educators to communicate with their peers. To make the model effective,

certain conditions are necessary. For example, the HOD must be supportive to improve curriculum delivery in general by assisting educators involved in peer supervision on how to work together to realise these goals and objectives. Again, peer supervision is used as an effective tool to achieve effective teaching. Whatever drawback, peer supervision is likely to “raise the level of professional talk, give educators feedback about a limited part of their teaching and help them see their colleagues and supervision in a new light” (Glatthorn 1998, p.36). Since HODs are full time class teachers, this model appears too popular in schools.

Clinical supervision focuses primarily on the improvement of instruction. This type of supervision is characterised by close and intense collegial relationship between the educator and supervisor. Clinical supervision is an intensive collaborative process of working with educators on a one-to-one basis to improve instruction. Glathorn (1998) submits that to practice clinical supervision effectively, the supervisor has to embrace a philosophy that supports the concept of educators and supervisors working together to improve instruction by identifying and solving instructional problems.

The primary goal of clinical supervision is to help educators improve their own instruction by teaching them to become independent problem solvers (Glathorn, 1998). It requires that supervisors be highly trained in instruction. The HODs must be able to appraise generic teaching skills and communicate effectively with educators about those skills. Goldhammer, cited in Wareing (1990, p. 25), identifies five different types of clinical supervision and these are listed below:

- The pre-observation conference where the supervisor establishes rapport with teachers and obtains information about the planned lesson.
- The observation where the supervisor collects data on the area of focus agreed upon during the pre-observation conference.
- The analysis and strategy phase where the supervisor analyses observation data, organises it and plans the post-observation conference.
- The post-observation conference where the supervisor and the teacher discuss the observation relative to the agreed upon area of focus.

- The post-conference analysis where the supervisor reviews the supervisory process.

To implement this model is a time consuming process. In the case of rural primary schools, the HODs do not have enough time as they teach and manage their classes for the entire school day. Oliva (1989) estimates that on the average, the supervisor needs approximately two hours per teacher per cycle of clinical supervision, that is, from pre-observation conference to the post-conference stage. Research on clinical supervision has not yet reached a point where we can safely generalise about its effectiveness. However, Reilkoff (1981, p. 30) notes that “emergent work does suggest that the use of clinical supervision contributed to statistically significant changes in educators’ verbal interactions, teaching strategies and teaching behaviour”. While all educators need supervision, they do not necessarily need to be supervised based on the same programme. Similarly, Van der Westhuizen (1997) opines that supervision cannot be restricted to one level in a school.

Schools in South Africa are faced with the restoration of a sound quality culture of learning and teaching. Currently in our schools, there is a need for quality teaching and vibrant supervision. In order to achieve that, it is necessary to understand the dynamics in the schooling system. The dynamics consist of how the HODs cope with teaching and supervisory responsibilities. In other words, the middle manager is simultaneously a leader, a manager and an administrator (Bush & West-Burnham, 1994) who works with and through other people to achieve key tasks and activities (Everard, 1986).

2.2.6 SMTs as service providers

There are measures that are crucial and available for improving the teaching and learning process. Taylor (2002) submits the measures to be accountability and support from School Management Teams (SMT). Accountability in context means doing the right thing consistently, day in and day out, in tasks, relationship interactions to fulfil or further the mission of a school. The supportive measure is the maintenance of a harmonious working relationship, and the cultivation of *esprit de corps* (Coleman, 2003). In South Africa, SMTs are made up of the principal, deputy principal and heads of departments who are tasked with the responsibility (Lindelov & Bentley, 1989). The SMT consists of a cross-section of experienced administrative

professionals in a structured decision-making process, endorsed by the school board and the superintendent. In schools where the senior position is that of the principal only, an agreement is reached that certain members of staff should be co-opted to the SMT (Blandford, 1997).

Walter (1993) argues that the SMT is responsible for effective management of the school and this consists of planning, leading and control. Bell (1992) sees planning as the identification of a course of action in order to achieve desired results. On the perspective of leading, it is assumed that the SMT is expected to play a crucial role of a leader in their school. Walter (1993) opines that the SMT should be able to know how to accomplish the mission and vision of their school through the way they provided guidance to other members of the school community. In the context of control, Bell (1992) held that control within school management is the process by which the SMT members ensure that actual activities conform to planned activities and that objectives are accomplished.

Furthermore, the SMT is to organise and provide educators with resources. Taylor (2002) suggests that without these resources educators would not be able to perform their responsibilities to meet their expectations. In rural primary schools, it seems like support service is lacking because in this area schools are understaffed. Furthermore, Taylor (2002) argues that educators will not be able to meet the expectations and demands of the SMT if there is a shortage of support from their managers. SMT members are also responsible for organisation or provision of training programmes like development programmes for all staff members. In the context of accountability, Taylor (2002) submits that educators are accountable for duties allocated to their HODs. Once a member is appointed by the school, he or she has to assume their duties of teaching and managing. Before, the HODs conduct classroom visits, they have to make decisions and agree among themselves on issues relating to curriculum, timetable, and set performance standards for learners and assessment (Fitzgerald, 2004). Before this exercise takes place, it has to be scrutinised by the curriculum manager who is also a class teacher in most rural primary schools. Accordingly, Leithwood and Stager (1986) observe that highly effective SMTs have an overall responsibility, which provides a more central role for others (consultative, collaborative shared problem solving). SMT members are always accountable for the curricula activities because that is their core business in every school whether in a rural or urban set up.

2.3 Theoretical framework

The collegial theory forms the basis for this study. The strength of collegiality is determined by the extent to which socialisation creates among members a singular view of work and how members relate to one another. Freidson (1984) reported that this theory places emphasis on shared attitudes, norms and the formation of informal and formal associations. The theory advocates a participatory approach, which focuses on capacity, ownership and commitment by creating opportunity for educators and supervisors to discuss professional issues. The theory also takes into account how individuals in the organisation become involved in the policy implementation. Furthermore, Robbins (1983) states that collegial theory allows for various viewpoints from every professional regarding decision-making for policy implementation. Collegial theory rests on the assumption that authority plays an important role when individuals reach consensus (Bush & West-Burnham, 1994). In order for middle managers to create conducive environment for learning, there must be respect for people, communities and the environments in which learning occurs (Bush, Joubert, Kiggundu & Rooyen, 2010).

Williams (1998) argues that quality teaching emerges in an atmosphere of collegiality and professional support of supervision, regardless of its form, whether peer, traditional or clinical supervision. Supervision that makes a difference occurs in an environment that embraces collaboration, which “involves supplanting the traditional norms of isolation and autonomy, by creating opportunities for interaction among educators” (Dorch, 1998, p. 2). Johnson (1990) opines that if supervision is to be responsive to the needs of educators, then the structures like subject, phase or grade committee meetings that promote collaboration and collegiality must be in place in order to nurture educators to learn the skills inherent in these new structures.

In Arcaro’s (1995) description, quality education is only possible when everybody in the school develops particular attitudes that focus on leadership, planning, teacher empowerment, teamwork, continuous improvement and customer training. There is an assumption that people who perform excellently in their work are those who are most familiar with it. This research attempts to establish whether there is a balance between the supervisory and teaching roles of the

HODs in order to achieve quality instruction, and hence, the application of the theory in the research study.

2.4 Conclusion

In conclusion, a great deal of scholarly work on middle management level in schools has been discussed. Both national and international literature on school leadership has highlighted the critical role that middle managers play. The literature looks at the management development that occurs at the senior management level and middle managers. In the area of curriculum, middle managers are more than likely to suffer from role conflict due to conflicting demands and expectations from senior managers (Turner & Bolam, 1998). In other words, middle managers may experience pressure from senior managers to adopt a school-wide view rather than take a narrow departmental perspective.

Establishing success is dependent on having sufficient time and resources. However, the common theme that runs through the findings of research on middle managers is the lack of time to carry out all that is required of them (Earley & Fletcher, 1995; Wise & Bush, 1999). In the final analysis, the chapter has examined the role of middle managers in school and has explored the extent to which effective middle managers, relevant and meaningful professional development is essential in carrying out their dual role. The next chapter discusses issues of research design and methodology.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

In Chapter Two, the review of relevant literature was conducted. The literature review focused on the supervisory roles of heads of department in the primary schools in South Africa and other countries of the world. Collegial theory was discussed as a theoretical framework that was employed in this study. This chapter focuses on issues of research design and methodology that was used in producing evidence to answer research questions. The discussion begins by outlining what a research design is all about, and then moves on to discuss methodology and all pertinent elements such as sampling procedures, data generation methods, analysis methods and so on.

3.2 Research design

The study conducted followed a qualitative case study research design. A qualitative research approach is a means of exploring and understanding the meaning that individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem (Creswell, 2007). Research designs are plans and the procedures for research that span the decision from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection and analysis (Newman & Benz, 1998). A research design is a plan or blueprint, which specifies how data relating to a given problem should be collected and analysed. It provides the procedural outline for the conduct of any given investigation. Because of the nature of research topic under investigation, which is looking into the roles of middle managers in rural primary schools, I used a case study in carrying out this study.

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2000), the qualitative approach is a broad class of empirical procedures designed to describe and interpret the experiences of research participants in a context-specific setting. This process involves emerging questions and procedures, data typically collected in the participant's setting, data analysis inductively building from particular to general themes, and the researcher making interpretations of the meaning of the data. The reason for adopting a qualitative approach in this study is to engage participants in the inquiry on the supervisory tasks of middle managers in rural primary schools.

Research methodology refers to the procedural rules for the evaluation of research claims and the validation of the knowledge gathered (Best & Kahn, 2003). According to Sekaran (2003) research methodology is academia's established regulatory framework for both the collection and evaluation of existing knowledge for the purpose of arriving at, and/or validating new knowledge. Research methodology is a blueprint or a roadmap, which I adopt in carrying out the study. The research methodology used in this study is qualitative. Within this qualitative methodology, I used a case study approach. The case study is one of the most common qualitative approaches. Although wide ranging in their scope and sequence, case studies typically focus on small groups or individuals within a group and document that group's or individual's experience in a specific setting (Lodico, Spaulding & Voegtler, 2006). A case study is a strategy of inquiry in which the researcher explores in depth a programme; event, activity, and researchers collect detailed information using a variety of data collection procedures over a sustained period of time Stake (1995). These scholars identified the features of the case study to include study of a singularity, unit or instance, in-depth, intensive, rich lively, thick description, study of a whole or a system, interconnectedness between the researcher and the case.

3.3 The interpretive paradigm

According to Ponterotto (2005) a paradigm can be defined as a set of interrelated assumptions about the social world, which provides a philosophical and conceptual framework for the organised study of the world. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) opine that in research, a paradigm guides the scholar in philosophical assumptions about the research and in the selection of tools, instruments, participants and methods used in the study. In other words, a research paradigm sets the context for an investigator's research work. There are varieties of paradigms that are used in carrying out a research. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) identify five paradigms that are frequently used, and these are: positivism, post-positivism, constructivism, interpretivism and critical theory. Of all the paradigms mentioned by these scholars, the interpretivist paradigm best suits this study because of the widely held view that reality is constructed in the mind of the individual, rather than it being an externally singular entity (Hansen, 2004).

The interpretivist paradigm espouses a hermeneutical approach, which maintains that meaning is hidden and must be brought to the surface through deep reflection (Schwandt, 2000). According to Ponterotto (2005) this reflection can be stimulated by the interactive researcher-participant dialogue. The pro-interpretivists emphasise the central goal of understanding the ‘lived experiences’ from the point of view of those who live it day to day (Schwandt, 2000). On the basis of the reason illustrated above, again, the fact that this research looks at the supervisory roles of middle managers in rural primary schools in Ugu district, this study is located within interpretivist paradigm. This paradigm enabled me to understand the multiple meanings that research participants ascribed to their situation. It also helped me to appreciate the subjectivity of the data that was generated and the fact that even as I analysed it, someone else could have analysed and understood it differently. This is in concord with education research as a social science.

3.4 Sampling

In this research study, purposive sampling was employed to identify participants. According to Suter (2006, p.212) “purposive sampling means that participants are selected because of some defining characteristics that make them holders of the data in the study of the supervisory roles of HODs”. Purposive sampling was employed in selecting the HODs and PL1 educators as holders of information relevant to HODs’ roles and responsibilities. The sample consisted of three schools in the Ugu district. These schools were chosen because of their accessibility. The selected schools were, for purposes of anonymity, referred to as School-A, School-B and School-C respectively. In School-A, the participants were the principal, HOD and PL1 educators (Foundation and Intermediate phases). In school-B participants were the principal, two HODs and two PL1 educators. In School-C participants were the principal, two HODs and two PL1 educators. The variations of a different number of participants were caused by the number of educators allocated to each school. The choice of principal and HODs was informed by their school supervisory and management responsibilities. However, the participants in the selected schools were in a position to provide relevant stories regarding their experiences of supervision in the rural primary schools especially in the ‘Beatrice ward’, which is the research site.

3.5 Research site

The study is located in a deeply rural area called Beatrice¹, which is fifty-five kilometres away from the nearest town. It is a small village located within the Ugu district, the real name of the district. Beatrice is known for its non-availability of infrastructural materials; as such, inhabitants' socio-economic status was extremely poor. There was a high level of poverty, unemployment and illiteracy in the district. Most roads were not tarred hence gaining access to some the schools was difficult, especially during rainy weather. It was this characteristic that caused me to select the schools. The schools were named School-A, School-B, and School-C respectively. This was done in order to ensure anonymity. From School-A to School-B, the distance is approximately 5 kilometres, and from School-B to School-C, the distance is 9 kilometres.

The choice of three primary schools was informed by their similar working conditions in terms of challenges and difficulties HODs faced. It was generally known that these schools were struggling as HODs had difficulties in finding time to provide educators with support in their classrooms. These schools were under-resourced in terms of human and physical aspects as it appears in their profile in the sampling; therefore, their ability to provide learners with a good quality education appeared to be doubtful.

School-A had a staff composition of nine educators comprising the principal, one HOD, six Post level-1 educators (PL1) and one teacher assistant (TA). The teacher assistant's role was to render support to the learners with learning difficulties. The grade or learning area educator invited the TA as the need arose since the TA was not confined to a particular grade. There is one security guard. The learner population was 254. The learners were from a low socio-economic background.

School-B had staff of eighteen educators and five non-educators. The staff complement comprised the principal, two HODs, two Learner Support Assistants (LSAs), fifteen PL1 educators, one administration clerk, one cleaner and one security guard. Learner support

¹ Beatrice is a pseudonym, adopted for ethical purposes

assistants are employed to render additional support to learners who experience learning difficulties. Each LSA is responsible for each phase. The learner population was 369. The socio-economic background of most learners was poor because of a high unemployment rate in the area. School- B was a Full Service School (FSS) which renders support to learners with moderate learning difficulties, which is why the staff complement was higher than School- A staff. LSAs and TAs were rendering the same services, the differences lie on the fact that LSAs were found in Full Service Schools (FSS) whereas the TAs were found in the ordinary primary schools.

School-C had staff population of fifteen educators and two non-educators comprising the principal, two HODs, twelve PL1 educators and one security guard and one administration clerk. The learner enrolment was put at 273. In summary, the total sample size for the study was thirteen participants.

3.6 Data generation process

This section outlines that process that was followed during the process of generating data that would answer research questions. Semi-structured interviews were used as the main method of data generation, and such interviews were tape-recorded as anticipated when the proposal was drafted. During the data generation process, participants agreed to have our conversations with them tape recorded. Hand written notes were also taken, and they agreed to that as well. Though it was time consuming, it was successful. Dobson (1999) maintains that the tape recording gives accurate recordings of the participants' exact words that can be replayed for accurate transcripts. Knowing that some participants might be threatened by a recorder, I negotiated and explained the use of the tape-recorder in advance. According to Kelly (2007) tape recording an interview could detract from the intimacy of the encounter, with both interviewee and interviewer in part performing for the camera or tape recorder rather than really talking to each other. The interviews began in School-A and ended in School-C as indicated below.

3.7 The interviews at School-A

As explained earlier, School-A had a staff composition of nine educators comprising the principal, one HOD, six Post level-1 educators (PL1) and one teacher (TA). There was one

security guard. The learner population was 254. The learners are from a low socio-economic background. Interviews were conducted at school, detailed hereunder:

Principal-A

I phoned the principal to set an appointment for the interviews, and this was in accordance with her schedule. The interview was conducted in the principal's office. I arrived at the school at exactly 12h35 and was received by the principal who took me to her office. Since I had already explained my intention and purpose of the study, I gave her the consent form to sign which she willingly did. The interview commenced and I probed her about her role as an educator and the principal at the same time. The interview process lasted for 60 minutes and there were no interruptions whatsoever. At the end of the interview, I thanked her for agreeing to participate in the study and for allowing me to talk to her teachers.

Head of Department at school -A

The interview appointment with the HOD from School-A was arranged telephonically. Thereafter, the interview was conducted after school contact time in one of the classrooms. There were interruptions as learners were sweeping the floors in various classrooms and were making noise. Questions that were asked focused on his role as an HOD in a rural school and his responses were interesting. The interview came to an end by exactly 3h25. The interview lasted for 60 minutes.

Educator-A

The interview appointment with the educator from School-A was done telephonically and on the scheduled date and time, I had come to the school. The interview was conducted in a classroom. During the interview, I tried to establish the role that this educator played in the teaching process and in being supervised by the HOD. The interview which was very interesting lasted for 60 minutes because there was no interruption.

3.8 The interviews at School-B

Interviews were held on site as explained below:

Principal-B

I phoned the principal of school B to set an appointment for interviews, which was in accordance with his schedule. The interview was conducted in his office. I arrived at school at 12h50. Since I had informed him of my intention, I gave him the consent form to sign which he did willingly. The interview started and I asked him about his roles of HODs' supervision being an educator and the principal at the same time. The interview lasted for 60 minutes.

HODs at school B (one for Intermediate Phase) and (another for Foundation Phase)

I informed participants that they were free to speak out their minds. The assurance was necessary to rest their mind and stabilise the interview environment. Since I was conscious of the time and the fact that I did not want to disrupt school activities, the two HODs (one for Intermediate phase and another for Foundation phase) were interviewed. Interviews were held in the staffroom in the afternoon. It is worthy to mention that the interviews went on uninterrupted for an hour long for HOD.

Educator-A (Foundation) and Educator-B (Intermediate) at school B

The interviews were conducted with both educators separately in the classroom. Appointments were set through telephone. We had our interviews at 14h00 for the foundation phase educator and 15h10 for intermediate phase educator. Both interviews were conducted in their respective classrooms. In both sessions there were disturbances. Educator A indicated that she was no more interested in the HOD post due to what she termed as 'overwork' to her current HOD post. Educator B requested a feedback on recommendations of the study. We had an hour long session for each participant.

3.9 The interview at School-C

Interviews in School-C were conducted as explained hereunder:

Principal-C

When I phoned the principal for the date of the interviews, she was willing to accommodate me in her tight schedule. On the appointed date, I phoned her again to confirm her readiness for the interview and her reply was positive. The interview was held in her office at 13h00. I asked her about the role that was performed by her HODs. She informed me about numerous challenges that were faced by the HODs in her school and the manner in which they were coping and adjusting to those challenges. The interview lasted for 60 minutes and all the questions I asked were answered to my satisfaction.

HODs (one for Intermediate Phase and another for Foundation Phase)

The interviews with two HODs, one for the Intermediate Phase and another for the Foundation Phase were conducted separately. An appointment was made telephonically with HODs. Interviews were conducted in the staffroom during the time when learners were tidying up their classrooms. Two HODs actually explained how they were able to cope with difficult tasks of being class teachers and at the same time conducting supervision. The interview lasted for an hour twenty minutes for each session without disturbances.

Educator-A and Educator-B at School-C

The interviews were conducted with two educators; one for Foundation Phase and another for Intermediate Phase. The interview appointments with two educators from different phases in schools were made telephonically. We were able to agree on the time, date and venue. On the appointed date, I set out to the school, on a completely different date from the one I fixed with the Principal and HODs. The reason for the variation on the date was that by the time I finished with the Principal and the HODs it was late, hence I could not proceed to interview educators. Both educators were interviewed separately in a classroom, and they informed me of supervisory

roles of their HODs. I was told by educator-A for instance that, if there was any channel for my recommendations to get to the authorities she would be happy. Her comment suggested that she was strongly against the role that was played by the HODs in her school. The interview lasted for seventy-five minutes.

3.10 Data generation methods

In qualitative research, there are different types of data generation methods such as observation, shadowing, field note taking and interviews. There are a few types of interviews, and these include, focus group interviews, unstructured interviews, semi-structured, open-ended, structured interviews and life-history interviews (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993). Of all the interviews mentioned, I found semi-structured interviews to be relevant for this study because they increase the comprehensiveness of the data and make data collection somewhat systematic for each respondent. Barker and Johnson (1998) argue that semi-structured interviews are a particular medium for enacting or displaying people's knowledge of cultural forms, as questions, far from being neutral, are couched in the cultural repertoires of all participants, indicating how people make sense of their social world and of each other. In a similar vein, Walford (2001) defines a semi-structured interview as a two-person conversation initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining research-relevant information. According to Best and Kahn (2003), the purpose of the semi-structured interview is finding out what is in or on someone else's mind. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011, p.411) identify the purposes of semi-structured interviews which they say are to:

Evaluate or assess a person in some respect, select or promote an employee, effect therapeutic change, as in the psychiatric interview, test or develop hypotheses, gather data as in survey or experimental situation and sample respondents' opinions as in door-step interview.

The advantage of a semi-structured interview "...is that it allows for greater depth than is the case with other methods of data collection" (Best & Kahn, 2003, p.210).

3.11 Data analysis methods

Data analysis is the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to a mass of collected data (Mncube & Harber, 2010). The data collected from the field was arranged, organised, coded and transcribed the interview recordings. A major feature of qualitative data analysis is coding (Flick, 2009). Coding enables the researcher to identify similar information, search data and retrieve those items that bear the same code (Gibb, 2007). Gibb (2007) further submits that coding can be performed on many kinds of data, focusing on specific acts, conversations, practices, reports, behaviours, settings, events, conditions, contexts, symbols, tactics, meanings, states, intentions, constraints, and participation.

The data was transcribed verbatim and this offered me the opportunity to really get into the detail of it. More details to follow in chapter 4.

3.12 Trustworthiness Issues

The aim of trustworthiness in a qualitative study is to support the argument that the study's findings are "worth paying attention to" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 290). One of the ways I used to address trustworthiness of the findings was the use of field notes that were recorded in a researcher journal. The notes reflected the time I walked into the gate of the school to the start of my interviews. The notes were very helpful as they captured other elements that cannot be captured by video camera or tape recorder. In this study, trustworthiness was further enhanced through other means such a triangulation. Triangulation entailed talking to different people in the same institution who could provide rich information that would address the research questions. The other trustworthiness measure that was used is credibility.

"Credibility can be associated with objectivity and validity in quantitative research, and it entails neutrality of the researcher during the data gathering process" (Babbie & Mouton, 2002). The other measure is transferability. This activity involves readers or other researchers and or peers viewing the study and its findings. To address this issue, researchers need to provide thick descriptions of the research process so that other researchers who want to do similar studies can follow precise steps in the same way as the previous researcher (Guba & Lincoln, cited in Babbie & Mouton, 2002). To address the transferability issue, I included in Appendix of several of data

analysis documents that were used to generate the answer to the research question. The complete set of data analysis documents and the file are available upon request. This access to the study's "paper trial" allows other researchers the ability to transfer the findings of this study to other cases.

3.13 Ethical issues

In this study, ethical issues were taken into consideration. To be ethical is to be aware that participants have their rights to privacy and sensitivity, which are to be protected if information about their personal interests is revealed (Henning, Rensburg & Smit, 2004). The ethical clearance form was completed and submitted to the School of Education research office. The purpose was to ask for permission to conduct the study and to check if I had complied with ethical conditions of conducting research.

After the ethical clearance was approved, I sought an official permission from the gatekeepers to visit schools or sites of study. Before I embarked on the data collection exercise, I wrote letters to gatekeepers, Department of Education and principals to seek their permission to conduct research among their staff members of their schools and also give consent for their own participation in the study. I was delighted when all my requests for permission to conduct research were granted. Again, I did prepare a consent form which was given to all research participants to sign. Before I presented the consent form to each of the participants, I orally informed them that they were at liberty to withdraw from the research process at any stage they felt that their privacy has been invaded, or they no longer wanted to participate. I want to state that throughout the interview none of my participant withdrew

3.14 Conclusion

The research paradigm used in this study was a qualitative case study. The study was based at three rural primary schools in the Ugu district. The research instrument used was a semi-structured interview. The sampling was purposive since the research questions targeted specific members of staff to be interviewed. The trustworthiness of the study was ensured through interview notes. The ethical issues were done through the use of informed consent. The next chapter focuses on the data presentation and discussion.

CHAPTER 4

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

Before I began the interviews with my participants I ensured that ethical issues were adhered to. For example, participants were informed that their participation was voluntary and that they were free to withdraw from participating at any time if they so desired without stating the reasons. And it was highlighted that their participation in the interviews did not have any benefits.

This study was investigating challenges and problems related to the supervisory roles of the HODs in rural primary schools in the Ugu District. The previous chapter dealt with methodological issues. This chapter focuses on data presentation, analyses and discussion. The data were analysed by using content analysis, which is a process by which many words of texts are classified into much fewer categories (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). Content analysis is a systematic and objective means of describing and quantifying phenomena (Krippendorff, 1980; Sandelowski, 1995). It is a research method for making replicable and valid inferences from data to their context, with the purpose of proving knowledge, new insights, a representation of facts and a practical guide to action (Krippendorff, 1980). I read and transcribed each interview verbatim with each transcript having enough space between lines and wide margin for the writing of notes and codes. I then divided the text data into segments of information and labelled each segment with codes. I searched for patterns in coded data to categorise them and information overlapping as redundancies was removed from codes. Lastly, codes were collapsed into themes, which were discussed in detail.

Thematic analysis was applied which is a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). I used thematic analysis to organise and describe data in rich detail. Findings were presented in different forms according to themes, which emerged, and discussions followed every data presentation. The chapter is organised into sub-headings related to the research questions guiding this study. Notwithstanding the sub-headings, the major themes in the analysis and discussion are stated below and were:

- i. Shortages of educators
- ii. Acute shortage of instructional resources
- iii. Time factor
- iv. Educators' supporting role to HODs
- v. Lack of adequate training
- vi. Strategies of handling large classes
- vii. Making use of the available teaching and learning resources
- viii. Making time in the absence of any

4.2 What challenges do HODs face in the process of discharging their supervisory responsibilities?

All the interviewed participants (Principals, HODs and Educators) were asked to comment on the duties of HODs. All participants acknowledged that HODs faced many challenges, which obstructed them from carrying out their duties as effectively as they should. Based on his experience in managing departments in both rural and urban schools, one HOD from School-A was asked to reflect on his experience as an HOD in a rural school. He suggested that there was a lot that needed to be done in rural schools in order to improve supervisory capacities of the HODs. All participants agreed that supervisory duties of HODs were fundamental to improving the standards of teaching and learning, but they pointed to unfavourable conditions such as lack of sufficient time, as the main hindrance to effective supervision. This was in line with the view of Mulkeen (2006) who argues that conditions in rural schools leave a lot to be desired because of the environment that the educators and learners find themselves in, which were not conducive to teaching and learning.

4.2.1 Shortage of educators

Educators are the 'engine' that propels any education system because they direct teaching and learning in the classroom. Duties of educators are extensive and range from the implementation of the curriculum to exercising and or monitoring extra-curricular activities in the school. In rural schools, the major challenges that educators face relate to the shortage of qualified educators. This is because most qualified educators want to be posted to urban schools where better

amenities are provided and basic infrastructure is available. The rejection of rural schools by educators may have brought about the shortage of educators, and this forms the focus of this study.

Principal, HODs and educators of School-B reiterated the acute shortage of resources in schools, which posed a great challenge for HODs and negatively affected performance of their responsibilities. Most rural primary schools in South Africa do not have enough educators (Howie, 2000; Maile, 2004). The few qualified educators that are available, teach large classes and this contributes to further challenges that HODs faced in carrying out their supervisory responsibilities (Human Science Research Council, 2005). Principal-A of School-A said:

Many qualified educators scramble for teaching posts in urban and peri-urban schools.

They do not want to go to rural schools, which they see as horrible places to live in.

This view is shared by Howie, (2000) who said that a considerable number of schools in South Africa suffer serious shortcomings, ranging from poor access to water, telephones and electricity, to the condition of many school buildings. One educator from School-A said:

I am at this rural school because I was deployed here after completing my university studies. I do not have plans to settle here at all. I am looking around with a view to leave this remote and horrible place for a better school in urban areas where there are basic facilities like electricity, running water, proper classrooms and libraries.

An HOD from School-C reported that:

Shortage of resources in rural schools made it hard for educators to stay in those institutions for long. They need urban schools, which have basic facilities such as clean tap water and electricity.

A principal from School-C said:

When educators run away from rural schools because of poor facilities, it becomes a big challenge for the HODs who will be obliged to take many classes to teach and have very little time for their supervisory roles.

Principal from Schools-A reported that:

Sometimes HODs may not be able to discharge supervisory roles because every time educators come to teach in rural schools, they hardly stay for more than a year.

This study has found that HODs also shun teaching in rural schools due to prevailing living conditions in these areas. Whenever they get opportunities to join well-resourced schools, they leave.

The principal from Schools-A said:

Most educators who graduate from colleges and universities and who come to this school and leave before the first year lapses. Some educators who I may have recommended for appointment as HODs also do the same. This means, supervisory duties of HODs in this school is pointless because we do not have educators who are prepared to stay here and discharge duties effectively.

An HOD from School-B said:

I am intrigued by the position of being an HOD, but not at this school where there are no adequate educators. Educators come and go before the end of the term. The only reason that is keeping me at this rural school is that I do not have an urban school to go to.

This therefore leaves rural schools without sufficient number of teachers, barely functioning and operating without proper supervision, which ultimately results in poor performance of learners compared to their urban counterparts (Kemp & Nathan, 1989). Because of the shortage of educators, there is evidence of multi-grade teaching in rural schools. The HODs still have a 100% teaching load yet they are expected to conduct supervisory duties. What then happens is that when the HODs have to conduct supervision, they will have to leave their classes unattended. Since they cannot leave the class unattended, another educator will have to take over the HOD's class. The problem is that the educator who takes over the HOD's class already has his own class to worry about. In the end, two classes are bunched together under the custodianship of one educator. This is how multi-grade teaching comes about because the classes might not necessarily be of the same grade.

4.2.2 Acute shortage of instructional resources

The shortage of instructional resources in rural primary schools has been a major problem that has tended to negatively affect school effectiveness. Without sufficient instructional resources, school goals cannot be achieved. The data indicate that all participants in this study were unanimous that there were shortages of instructional resources like textbooks. Many educators

consider books as the main resource that can be used by educators as well as the learners. When asked to comment on the challenges regarding resource availability at his school, the principal of School-A said that there was a chronic shortage of textbooks at this school. The HOD from School-B commenting about resources situation in schools said:

It is difficult to perform duties in this department to the fullest potential because there are no textbooks. Most of the available textbooks are out dated and a few that are there were in tatters.

This position was supported by Phurutse (2005) who suggests that rural schools do not have adequate teaching and learning resources such as textbooks. Another HOD from School-C said:

Supervision and teaching were hard because there were no simple resources like textbooks.

This HOD submitted that textbooks were invaluable teaching aids that a teacher adapts and improvises with in his teaching; therefore, it is not possible to teach without a textbook. This submission was highlighted by Coombs (1995) who held that life for the teachers would be more difficult without textbooks, and that, as a result, learning which may take place, will certainly be less effective.

Principal-C from School-C reported the difficulty that HODs face when they try to conduct meaningful supervision and hold educators responsible for failing to deliver when they in fact do not have textbooks to refer to. In this regard, one HOD said that:

The absence of textbooks was a big challenge in HODs' supervisory roles because they (textbooks) are at the core of every curriculum.

Omari and Moshi (1995) echo similar sentiments when they highlight the lack of textbooks in most schools particularly in rural areas as rife. They noted that textbooks had three major roles, namely, to provide the major vehicle for curriculum delivery; being the main if not the only source of information for the teacher and, being the bases for examinations and assessments. This made textbooks the second most important factor for educators in terms of key determinants of learners' performance (Coleman, 2003).

One HOD of School-C said:

It was difficult to supervise educators and held them responsible for failing to teach in a school where there was not even a single textbook for the subject. Water drips inside the classroom when it rains and this contributed to high rate of learner absenteeism during rainy season.

Another HOD of School-C said:

Besides my supervisory roles as an HOD, I am also involved in teaching. I sometimes teach subjects I was not trained to teach because of the shortage of educators. Worse still, there are no textbooks and libraries for learners to use. So, how can I effectively perform my supervisory roles under such circumstances?

The data indicate that without adequate teaching and learning resources, it becomes difficult for educators to teach and this poses a big challenge for the HODs in terms of performing their supervisory duties. Taylor (2002) echoes similar sentiment, saying that educators cannot meet the expectations and demands of the SMT if there is a shortage of support from management and that such a scenario hinders meaningful supervision by the HODs.

Principal of School-C described the shortage of resources in rural schools as *'an impediment that caused poor performance because educators and HODs were unable to maximise their work'*. This goes hand in glove with the idea of Taylor (2002) who suggests that in rural primary schools, support service is lacking and that, such a scenario had resulted in HODs in rural schools failing to perform their supervisory responsibilities as well as their urban counterparts do.

HOD of School-C said:

How can I perform my supervisory duties in a school where I did not have an office and stationery?

Principals also confirmed that there were limited office spaces for the HODs and educators. The data indicated that the lack of office accommodation and stationery made it difficult for the HODs to discharge their duties effectively. Carnoy and Galabawa (2006) argue that in order for

effective supervision and teaching and learning to take place, the following resources should be made available: Qualified and highly motivated educators, textbooks and an effective management system.

4.2.3 Time factor

In rural primary schools in South Africa, the shortage of educators has caused HODs to be overloaded with school activities hence they hardly had time to perform other school duties. It is very common to hear HODs and educators who took up posts in rural schools complaining of lack of time to carry out assigned tasks. The principal from School-B reported that:

The responsibilities seem to be unbearable for the HOD in rural schools who were faced with large classes and few educators. The principal from School -B concluded by saying that most HODs in rural schools spent much time teaching and doing little or no supervisory duties.

One HOD from School-C reported that he was also fully involved in teaching as well, therefore, had limited time for supervision. Fleisch (2008) also argues that the HODs working in rural primary schools were overloaded with administrative, supervisory and teaching duties hence it was not possible for them to supervise educators regularly.

When asked to comment on the issue of managing time for teaching and supervising, an HOD from School-C, responded by saying that:

Being a fulltime educator means that minimum time is allocated for the HOD duties.

This was in agreement with Ali and Botha, (2006) who opine that in rural primary schools, HODs are unable to render support to their subordinates because they are also full time educators. The study has shown that full time teaching responsibilities left the HODs without sufficient time to perform their supervisory roles. The situation in rural schools is in stark contrasts with the Personnel Administrative Measures (PAM) document, which stipulates that HODs should spend about 85% of their time teaching and 15% doing supervisory tasks.

When asked to comment on how HODs balance their time of teaching and supervising a school principal said:

HODs are supposed to teach as well as to perform their duties of heading departments. They do have full teaching loads and in this school, the load is above average because of the shortage of educators. That has resulted in HODs failing to perform their supervisory roles well.

One point that was common to all principals I talked to was that supervision that was done by the HODs was less effective because it was done in a haphazard manner. Equally, educators interviewed concurred with that view and said that HODs in rural schools were overloaded with teaching responsibilities such that they did not have enough time for doing management duties. In a bid to balance teaching and supervisory duties, some HODs have ended up compromising supervision by cheating. Such cheating entailed writing bogus and fraudulent reports which stated that they had observed educators teaching in class when in fact, they did not. In this regard one of the HODs from School-C interviewed said:

Scarcity of time leads to quick fix exercise as I have many classes to teach and supervisory activities to perform. I end up play around with paper work to make it look like I have done my work properly.

On the same issue, another HOD from School-A said that he was supposed to have regular meetings with educators in his department. However, because he was always busy with teaching, he simply wrote bogus reports claiming that he held meetings with a few educators. He concluded by saying that this action compromised the quality of education. Clearly quality education is not being provided when schools are managed this way. Quality of education depends primarily on the way schools are managed (Leithwood & Menzies, 1998).

The data also show that HODs were engaged in more activities other than just teaching and supervision. For example, on the issue of extra-curricular activities in rural schools, principal-A indicated that the HODs took part in activities such as school sport or arts and involvement in such activities also limited their supervisory roles. Turner (1996), Blandford (1997) and McLendon and Crowther (1998), share the similar views about HODs; they maintain that the

duties of middle managers (HODs) in rural high schools were pathetic because of enormous tasks they were subjected to on daily basis. Other time consuming activities included attending meetings on a regular basis. To explain this, one HOD from School-B said that the reason why he could not carry out supervisory duties in the school was because he had weekly meetings to prepare for and attend. He said:

Integrated Quality Management Systems (IQMS) and management meetings held by the school regularly consumed both teaching and supervision time.

4.2.4 Educators' supporting roles to the HODs

In addition to the challenges faced by the HODs in rural schools as presented in the previous paragraph, HODs indicated that there was a lack of support from educators. Without support from educators, it was very difficult for the HODs to achieve what was expected of them. All HODs interviewed revealed that the educators did not play any supporting roles, and this left the HODs to engage in lone efforts to manage the schools. Instead, all they received were insults and insubordination. In addition to this view the HOD from School-C highlighted that absenteeism by educators was another problem that gave him nightmares. Concurring with this view about high levels of absenteeism among educators, another HOD from the same school said:

Whenever it rains, many educators refuse to come to school on the pretext that the road to school was not passable. As a result, carrying out supervision on that day becomes impossible and getting support from these educators is completely out.

On the same issue of teacher absenteeism, principal of School-C responded by saying that:

Educators also absented themselves especially on the week they get paid. Some educators do not come to work when they get their salaries, some come to work smelling beer, and as such, class observations cannot be done under such circumstances.

On a slightly different issue, one HOD from School-A reported that educators in rural schools engaged in un-acceptable behaviour simply because they knew that officials from the district offices hardly visited their schools. On a similar note, another HOD from School-B said:

Some educators fail to submit their lesson plans and schemes of work for supervision. You warn them to submit all their work and get ready for supervision, but they simply do not take that seriously.

Besides the problem of absenteeism, some educators were said to be weak on punctuality. This means that the HODs would have to conduct the duties that the late educators were supposed to be doing. This added more work to the HODs. In addition, such behaviour also set a bad example for the learners. More learners would follow the example of the late learners which may lead to more ill-discipline among learners and which the HODs would have to eventually deal with.

The main point that emerged from all the educators interviewed was that the supervisory roles of the HODs were viewed as inconsequential. In terms of Glickman's (2000) typology of supervision, the data implies that all the HODs that participated in the study used traditional approach to supervision. Traditional supervision was described by McGreal (2000) as a model in which there is high level of supervisor's involvement and low supervisee participation. From the information gathered from the HODs, it is evident that supervisors (HODs) involved themselves mainly in teaching, ignoring the supervision of educators. Similarly, an educator from School-B showed that HODs did not take class observations seriously. They often used shortage of resources such as stationery in schools as an excuse for their inefficiency. Another educator in School-B who was asked to comment on duties of the HODs, said:

HODs' supervisory roles were not important because nobody supervise them. Moreover, for those who were willing to do their duty, there were inadequate resources and educators were not supportive.

One educator from School-C clearly demonstrated his contempt for supporting his HOD by repeatedly asking for reasons as to why he was supposed to support the HOD in carrying out his official functions. He thundered:

Why do I have to support him? Is he sharing his salary with me? That man has been disturbing me with his supervision exercises. I have nothing to do with him!

From my own perspective, the duty of the HODs has created tensions between them and educators. Such tension between supervisors and supervisees are not surprising as they are

characteristic of the traditional model of supervision. McGreal (2000) argues that the traditional model usually results in conflicts instead of fostering positive interactions, possibly, as a result of the inability of the supervisees to carry out the directives that are issued by the supervisors.

Commenting on the importance of supervision done by their HODs, an educator from School-A, said:

My HOD hardly comes to supervise my teaching and whenever he comes, he just completes his evaluation form and asks me to sign at the end of the lesson. We do not hold any discussion with me and he does not ask for my opinion on how we can work things out for the betterment of all.

This was an indication that some rural teachers saw the HODs' supervisions as unimportant. This view is supported by Blumburg (1990) who highlights that one of the flaws of traditional supervision is that HODs do take decisions without input from the educators.

4.2.5 Lack of adequate training

One disturbing issue that affected educators in rural schools studied was lack of training and continuing professional development of educators. Poor performance of educators in rural schools was directly linked to the inability of most educators to show that they were abreast of current developments in their area of expertise. One HOD from School-B reported that there was a need for continuing professional development activities for the HODs. This idea is in line with the view held by Coleman (2003) who said that there is a need to revisit the role of the HODs in schools, particularly those located in remote areas where most qualified teachers do not want to go. Dunford, Fawcett and Bennet (2000) are of the view that HODs should have sufficient training and that this could be done through conducting regular workshops.

To this end, this is what the principal of School-C said:

From my advantaged position, only very few conferences and workshops are organised for the HODs. The annoying thing is that only few HODs are able to attend such conferences because of the distance from the school.

This view is at variance with that of Steyn and Van Niekerk (2002) who argue that the participation of HODs in leadership development is an opportunity that is designed to equip them with skills to become effective educational leaders. Nevertheless, the principals were not doing much to help with the training of the HODs.

Educator from School-B reported that HODs in rural schools viewed themselves primarily as ordinary educators and not as heads of departments. This is because they were involved solely in teaching duties and less in administrative work. One educator said:

Some HODs rarely attend district meetings where they are expected to be given new information that concerns any change in the curriculum; rather they are themselves entangled with irrelevant things that do not bring progress and advancement to the school.

This view is supported by Jansen and Christie (1999) who argue that the success of national curriculum statement (NCS) depends on the types of training and support that educators receive from their HODs. However, the unfortunate reality is that officials in the Department of Education do not expose the HODs to what is happening in the districts.

4.3 How do the HODs deal with challenges that they face when performing their duties?

Concerning the challenges faced by the HODs in carrying out their official functions, all the HODs interviewed acknowledged that there were enormous challenges. They classified the challenges as discussed below:

4.3.1 Strategies for handling large classes

The problem faced not only in rural schools but also in urban institutions is that of large classes. In South Africa and most African countries, the issue of large classes is a perennial problem yet it remains unresolved. This has resulted in educators' low performance (Chikoko, 2008). The HODs were unanimous in acknowledging that large classes bedevilled rural schools in the district. In that regard one HOD from School-C said:

What I do to overcome the situation is to divide classes among the number of available educators. Even if it means one class having 65 learners, I have to do that because it is

better to have a huge class that has an educator rather than having a small size class without an educator.

Another attempt to address the problem of large classes an HOD from School-A said:

The strategy that I used to overcome the problem of large classes size was to write letters to the principal requesting that he requests more educators from the district offices.

He felt this was usually the right procedure, but it did not really help because educators simply did not want to teach in under-resourced schools. This means that the HODs had no power to deal with the problem of large classes and they only hoped that authorities from the Department of Education would one day come up with the solutions. One HOD from School-B suggested that the district offices should be supportive to the rural schools by improving facilities and giving educators rural allowances and other incentives that might attract them to accept postings to rural schools.

4.3.2 Making use of the available teaching and learning resources

As has been already noted, all participating HODs confirmed that many educators worked without textbooks. On this particular issue, an HOD from School-A reported that his learners faced a similar problem and that one textbook was used by 7 learners. Responding to the question about how they dealt with that challenge, one educator from School-A said:

I have my personal textbooks which I use to prepare for my classes, and equally gave them out to learners.

On the same issue, one HOD from School-B had this to say:

I did not have my personal copies, but I borrowed some from colleagues from other schools and gave it out to my learners.

The data from this study indicated that the HODs overcame the challenge of the shortage of textbooks by using their own. Those who did not have copies were forced to borrow them from other schools. These HODs did all this because they realise that work cannot be done if textbooks are not made available for the learners. This was in line with the view of Taylor (2002)

that without resources such as textbooks, educators would not be able to perform their responsibilities to meet their expectations.

Regarding the absence of facilities such as libraries, laboratories, poor classrooms, unavailability of electricity and poor roads, this study found that the HODs were forced to use what existed. The HOD from School-B said:

One of my fundamental duties was to relay information about the curriculum to educators in my department. However, it was difficult for me to travel to the district offices to obtain some information because transport was my major problem here. Also, the District officials hardly ever come to this school especially during raining season because roads are bad and dangerous. Communication is poor here because we do not get proper network signals, and therefore, communication through mobile phones does not work either. All that makes it hard for me to get current information from district offices so that I can disseminate to educators.

This has had a negative effect on the HODs' supervisory roles in that they are unable to perform their duties because of lack of functional facilities (Van der Westhuizen, 2002). Another HOD felt that poor facilities or complete lack of them in rural schools caused educators to refuse postings to most of these schools. This view is supported by Carnoy (1999) who asserts that many educators in rural areas are not there by choice, but they have striven to move to urban schools because of the poor living conditions they have experienced.

.3.3 Making time in the absence of any

On the issue of limited time for performing supervisory roles, all the HODs recognised the problem that they had very limited time to fit in all their roles. One HOD from School-A specifically said:

The only ways I can overcome the challenge of teaching many classes at a school with few educators and at the same time perform supervisory roles, is by focusing on one aspect. In this case, what I focus on more is teaching the learners rather than supervising educators who, by the way, are very few and they come and go every now and then.

Again, the data from the study showed that the HODs did take their supervisory roles less seriously in rural schools because they strongly felt that the conditions were not conducive to proper supervision. The principal from School-B said:

Since there was a shortage of educators, HODs and I have to concentrate, more on teaching and this affected our managerial responsibilities a lot.

On the same issue, one HOD from School-B had this to say:

The fact that I have many classes means that there is less supervisory duties. Moreover, we have not been paid rural allowances for being HODs in rural schools, and the whole stuff is very discouraging and disheartening. I just balanced my paper work and life goes on. Nobody really cares about it anyway.

Principal from School-B reported that many HODs dedicated much of their time to teaching as a result thereof, supervising the teaching process was left unattended. This had a negative effect on teaching because for teaching and learning to effectively take place, supervision needs to be performed. According to Kitta (2004), schools in Tanzania must be inspected by education officers at least four times a year to assess the level of teaching and learning. The data indicated that the district officials did not regularly supervise rural schools. As a result, the HODs hardly perform their supervisory duties in these rural schools. Van der Westhuizen (2002) seems to share the view that rural schools were moving towards disaster because of outright neglect by the district officials who refuse to pay regular visits and acquaint themselves with the problems faced by the schools.

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter has presented the data and initial findings on the supervisory roles of the HODs in rural schools. In arriving at these findings, content analysis was employed. The researcher transcribed the data and used an open coding system on it. Findings indicated that a major problem was the conflicts that often resulted between the principal and the HODs. The findings also reveal that for supervisory roles to be effected as the policy requires, HODs must not be full time teachers. The final chapter will focus on the summary, conclusion and recommendations.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides the summary, conclusions and recommendations emanating from this research. The chapter begins by presenting the summary or the overview of the entire research process leading to the conclusions reached. In the end, some recommendations to various stakeholders are presented.

5.1.1 Study overview

The dissertation begins by highlighting the background to the study, the rationale for the study is explained, and the research questions are presented that guided the researcher in carrying out the research. In Chapter 2, literature that was reviewed is discussed. As part of that process, the views of other scholars on the role of middle managers are explored. Chapter 3 explains the research design and methodology that was used in carrying out this research work. In chapter 4, qualitative data that was elicited through semi-structured interviews is presented and discussed thematically, that is, according to the frequency of the themes that emergence from the data. Chapter 5 summarises the findings that emerged from the data chapter, and this culminates in the conclusions and recommendations.

5.1.2 Conclusion

The key research questions that guided in arriving at the findings highlighted above were as follows:

- What challenges do HODs face in the process of discharging their supervisory responsibilities?
- How do the HODs deal with the challenges relating to supervisory and teaching duties?

5.2 Recommendations

5.2.1 Shortage of educators

The principals, HODs and educators reiterated the acute shortage of qualified educators in rural primary schools. Principal from School-A said,

Many qualified educators scramble for teaching posts in urban and peri-urban primary schools. They do not want to go to rural schools, which they see as horrible places to work in.

These schools were characterised by shortcomings, ranging from poor access to water, telephones and electricity, to poor condition of school buildings. The study found that HODs also shunned teaching in rural schools because of poor conditions that prevail in those places. If they get a teaching post, they hardly stay in rural schools. When they get the opportunities to join well-resourced schools, they leave immediately. For instance, the HOD from School-C indicated that the shortage of resources in rural schools made it hard for educators to stay in those institutions for long. They need to work in urban schools because they have infrastructure such as running water and electricity. The principal from School-C reported that when educators run away from rural schools because of poor facilities, it becomes a challenge for the HODs who are obliged to teach many classes and dedicate very little time to their supervisory roles. In my opinion, the shortage of resources in schools has been a major problem that has hindered school effectiveness. Without sufficient resources, school goals cannot be effectively achieved. The findings indicated that without adequate teaching and learning resources, it becomes difficult for educators to teach and it poses a big challenge for the HODs to perform their supervisory duties.

5.2.2 Time factor

Three principals interviewed indicated that the duties assigned to the HODs that are located in rural schools, seem to be unbearable for them as they are also faced with large classes and too few educators. The principals concluded by saying that such a situation has tended to make most HODs in rural schools to spend most of their time teaching and doing less or no supervisory duties at all. In that regard one HOD reported that *“I am also involved in teaching as well; therefore, I have limited time for supervision”*.

Another HOD from School-C added that, being a full time educator means that minimum time is dedicated to HOD supervisory duties. This assertion is in agreement with Ali and Botha (2006) who opine that in rural primary schools, HODs are unable to render support to their subordinates because they are also full time educators. This situation in rural schools contrasts with the Personnel Administrative Measures (PAM) document which stipulates that HODs should spend about 85% of their time teaching and 15% doing supervisory tasks. One point common to all interviewed principals was that supervision done by HODs was not done properly because it was done in an abrupt manner. Equally, educators interviewed reported that HODs in rural schools were overloaded with teaching responsibilities and that they did not have enough time for doing management duties. Therefore, due to the need to balance teaching and supervisory duties, some HODs compromised supervision by cheating. This took the form of writing bogus reports, stating that they had observed educators teaching in class when in fact, they did not.

5.2.3 Educators’ supporting roles to HODs

A central point that emerged from all the educators interviewed was that the supervisory roles of HODs were viewed as inconsequential. From the information gathered from the HODs, I learnt that some HODs engaged themselves solely in teaching at the expense of supervising educators. Similarly, an educator from School-B indicated that HODs did not take class observations seriously. In the same vein, one principal interviewed responded by saying, *“Educators also absent themselves especially on the week that they get paid”*. One HOD reported that educators in rural schools engaged in their unbecoming behaviours because they knew that people from district offices hardly visit their schools.

5.2.4 Lack of adequate training

On the issue of sending HODs to training sessions, this research has found that most of the HODs interviewed failed to fully discharge their duties because they lacked adequate training and proper orientation of what was expected from them. Dunford, Fawcett and Bennet (2000) were of the view that HODs should have sufficient training and this could be done through conducting workshops and regular training for the HODs.

5.2.5 Large classes

The HODs interviewed, unanimously acknowledged that rural schools in the district were bedevilled by large classes. In trying to cope with large classes one HOD from School A said:

The strategy that I used to overcome the large classes size was by writing letters to the principal requesting that he request more educators from district office. It did not really help because educators simply did not want to teach in under-resourced schools.

5.2.6 Teaching and learning resources

All the HODs interviewed confirmed that they operated with insufficient teaching and learning resources including facilities such as libraries, laboratories, poor classrooms, electricity and poor roads, HODs were forced to use what was available. This situation negatively affected HODs' supervisory roles, and that they were unable to perform their duties because of lack of functional facilities (Van der Westhuizen, 2002).

5.2.7 Limited time to perform supervisory duties

The findings from the study indicated that the HODs took their supervisory roles less seriously in rural schools because they strongly felt that the conditions in which they operated were not conducive to proper supervision. One principal reported that many HODs allocated all their time to teaching as a result thereof they ignored supervising teaching process. This had a negative

effect on teaching because, for teaching and learning to effectively take place, supervision needs to be conducted as well, and HODs are responsible for that. According to Kitta (2004) schools must be inspected by education officers at least four times a year to assess level of teaching and learning.

5.2.8 Lack of support systems

It is expected that the SMT members should provide adequate support for teachers by empowering them with knowledge in curriculum related matters, and facilitate access to for example, human and physical resources. The findings reveal that the studied schools were not receiving support from either the Department of Education or the community or parents in a number of ways. The Department of Education failed to supply stationery to the case study schools on time; they supplied it at the beginning of the year instead of late in the previous year. Multiplicity of demands led some SMT to abdicate their duties and tended to depend on others to perform their curriculum management duties. For instance, the principal, who is the key figure for curriculum delivery in a school, had shifted curriculum responsibilities to the HODs. My interpretation of this was that the SMT was not clear about the curriculum and therefore their practices began to impact negatively on the entire schooling of learners. The curriculum policy's intentions and goals may be jeopardised when the policy is not understood by curriculum leaders within the schools. I found that HODs in different schools led their departments in different approaches. One teacher from School -B said:

It is different schools with their own cultures in one school. HODs work in their own circles and groups and there is a feeling that one needs to be successful in his/her circle.

These practices affected negatively on children learning because there were gaps in learners' knowledge when they move to the next grades or phases.

5.3 Limitations of study

In the KZN Department of Education, there are about 6000 schools, and these schools are located in different contexts. These contexts may shape how they deal with supervisory practices

of the HODs. It was therefore, impossible to include every school in the study since it was a case study. Since all schools cannot be accommodated in this study, is that only three primary schools from the UGU district were involved. Therefore, the findings of the study cannot be generalised although they can give insight into the challenges faced by the HODs in some rural schools.

5.4 Conclusion

The findings of this research showed that something still needed to be done in order for the supervision by the HODs in rural primary schools to be effective. While the findings are not necessarily being generalised, it can be argued that the major findings can be referred to when trying to deal with issues such as the ones that are addressed in this research. Therefore, the following recommendations are proposed for various stakeholders and presented next.

The first recommendation is about the supply of qualified teachers in rural schools. The shortage of qualified educators in rural primary schools is not limited to just one school, but a widespread phenomenon. It has also emerged strongly that the reluctance of educators to work in rural school is closely related to the lack of infrastructure in those places. As a result, for that issue to be dealt with there is a need for a holistic approach. The Department of Education should not work in isolation, but should work together with other departments to deal with the issue of infrastructural development in the rural areas. The shortage of qualified educators is a mere symptom of a major underlying problem and as long as people in the rural areas have no access to basic amenities like running water and electricity, educators will be more likely to shun rural schools. However, while such long term infrastructural development is taking place, the Department of Education can offer rural allowances and other incentives for educators who are willing to work in the rural areas. Only then can schools have sufficient qualified staff, thus freeing the HODs to focus on their supervision roles.

Regarding resources at schools, both the SMTs and the Department of Education should be made accountable. For example, the Department of Education needs to make the provision of resources such as textbooks a priority. At the same time, the SMTs should also engage in fundraising

activities to finance the procurement of the needed resources. It is difficult for supervisors to criticise educators for not doing their job well if there are insufficient resources. Therefore, the resources should be provided so that educators have no scapegoat for not doing their job well.

It was revealed that most HODs in rural schools that participated in the study spent much of their time teaching and doing less or no supervisory duties at all. In relation to this issue, it is recommended that the HODs should be released to do their supervision duties. This is in relation to the provision of fully qualified educators in the schools. Only then can HODs have no excuses for not supervising and end up writing bogus reports.

It is also recommended that the writing of bogus reports should end because they will engrain within the educators, the already prevalent perception that supervision is inconsequential. Educators should also change their attitude and provide support to the HODs. They also need to be punctual and avoid absenteeism and work together with the HODs in creating a good environment for teaching and learning to take place. This support should also come from SMT members. They also need to provide adequate support and avoid delegating everything to the HODs, since such practices can only lead to HODs being swamped by too much work. Finally, it is recommended that educators receive more adequate training on how to carry out their duties. There is a need for more workshops, internally conducted in the schools and also those that are provided by the Department of Education. They need to be trained about the unprofessional conduct such as practices of making bogus and fraudulent reports. If the issues that are highlighted in this section can be done, there is a chance that this study will have contributed towards improving the quality of teaching in the country.

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Annexure A

Interview questions for educators

Please tell me about your teaching experiences in your grade(s)/ phase.

1. What support is expected to be provided by HODs? Do they provide this support?
2. Discuss your HODs supervisory roles in your phase.
3. How often does your HOD meet with educators in your phase? And what discussions and debates generated at these meetings?
4. What forms of skills do you acquire as a result of the phase meetings?
5. How do you make sure that teaching and learning time is used effectively in your phase?
6. How do you get feedback from your supervisor in your class?
7. How does HOD supervision informed and changed the way you teach?

Interview questions for HODs

Please tell me about your teaching and management experiences in your grade(s)/phase.

1. How do you manage your teaching responsibilities and supervisory roles within your phase?
2. Discuss your supervisory roles in your phase.
3. What challenges do you encounter when you execute your supervisory roles in your phase?
4. How do you provide support and skills to educators in your phase?
5. How do you ensure that educators in your phase are teaching confidently?
6. How you that ensure that development do takes place in your phase?
7. What forms of skills are acquired by the educators as a result of your supervision?
8. How your supervisory roles are informed and changed the way you teach?
9. How do you make sure that teaching and learning time is used effectively?

Interview questions for principals

Please tell me about your teaching/management experiences at your school.

1. How do HODs balance teaching responsibilities and supervisory functions in your school?
2. Discuss HODs supervisory roles in your school?
3. How do HODs play their supervisory roles in your school?
4. How do they provide feedback to their supervisees?
5. How do HODs make sure that every educator participates in phase activities?
6. How do HODs create confidence in their supervisees?
7. What forms of skills are acquired by educators in your school as a result of HODs supervision?
8. How are HODs supervisory roles informed and change the way the educators teach?

Annexure B

P.O. Box 260
HIGHFLATS
3306

The Principal
.....School
..... Ward

Dear Sir/Madam

Request for permission to do research (Student No.: 201510593)

My research topic is: **The supervisory roles of head of department (HODs) in rural primary schools: Problems and challenges.** My name is Bongani Mthembu, a student at the University Of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) studying a Master’s degree specialising in Education Leadership, Management and Policy (ELMP). As part of the requirement to complete my degree, I am required to conduct research in schools.

I wish to request for permission to conduct interviews with you and your staff in your school on my research project.

The data collected will be analysed and be made available to you if you need it. However, your names and name of your school will not be divulged and linked to the information provided. You are free to withdraw your participation from the research project at any time should you so feel. Findings will only be used for writing up my dissertation. You are not obliged to answer all questions. The interviews will last for 30 minutes and I will interview one HOD, one educator per phase and principal at your school.

If you have, any queries or issues of clarification do not hesitate to contact my supervisor Mr Sibusiso Bayeni on 031 260 7026 during working hours or myself on 073 573 9098.

I am looking forward to your reply.

Yours faithfully
Bongani Mthembu (0735739098)

Declaration

I..... **(Please print your name in full)** hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project and I consent to participate in the research project.

I fully understand that I am free to withdraw my participation from the research project at any time should I so feel.

Signature of participant.....Date.....

Annexure C

P.O. Box 260
HIGHFLATS
3306

The Educator
.....School
..... Ward

Dear Sir/Madam

Request for permission to do research (Student No.: 201510593)

My research topic is: **The supervisory roles of head of department (HODs) in rural primary schools: Problems and challenges.** My name is Bongani Mthembu, a student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) studying a Masters degree specialising in Education Leadership, Management and Policy (ELMP). As part of the requirement to complete my degree, I am required to conduct research in schools.

I wish to request for permission to conduct interviews with you on my research project.

The data collected will be analysed and be made available to you if you need it. However, your names and name of your school will not be divulged and linked to the information provided. You are free to withdraw your participation from the research project at any time should you so feel. Findings will only be used for writing up my dissertation. You are not obliged to answer all questions. The interviews will last for 30 minutes and I will interview one HOD, one educator per phase and principal at your school.

If you have any queries or issues of clarification do not hesitate to contact my supervisor Mr Sibusiso Bayeni on 031 260 7026 during working hours or myself on 073 573 9098.

I am looking forward to your reply.

Yours faithfully
Bongani Mthembu (0735739098)

Declaration

I..... (Please print your name in full) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project and I consent to participate in the research project.

I fully understand that I am free to withdraw my participation from the research project at any time should I do feel.

Signature of participant.....Date.....



Enquiries: Sibusiso Alwar

Tel: 033 341 8610

Ref.:2/4/8/257


Mr Bongani Mthembu
Zamokuhle Home
P.O. Box 260
HIGHFLATS
3306

Dear Mr Mthembu

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DoE INSTITUTIONS

Your application to conduct research entitled: **THE Supervisory Roles of the Heads of Department s (HODs) in Rural Primary Schools: Challenges and Problems**, in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education Institutions has been approved. The conditions of the approval are as follows:

1. The researcher will make all the arrangements concerning the research and interviews.
2. The researcher must ensure that Educator and learning programmes are not interrupted.
3. Interviews are not conducted during the time of writing examinations in schools.
4. Learners, Educators, Schools and Institutions are not identifiable in any way from the results of the research.
5. A copy of this letter is submitted to District Managers, Principals and Heads of Institutions where the intended research and interviews are to be conducted.
6. The period of investigation is limited to the period from 01 July 2012 to 31 December 2013.
7. Your research and interviews will be limited to the schools you have proposed and approved by the Head of Department. Please note that Principals, Educators, Departmental Officials and Learners are under no obligation to participate or assist you in your investigation.
8. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey at the school(s), please contact Mr. Alwar at the contact numbers below.
9. Upon completion of the research, a brief summary of the findings, recommendations or a full report / dissertation / thesis must be submitted to the research office of the Department. Please address it to The Director-Resources Planning, Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200.
10. Please note that your research and interviews will be limited to the Schools and Institutions in the Ugu District.


 Nkosinathi S.P. Sishi, PhD
 Head of Department: Education

2012/07/20
 Date

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

KWAZULU-NATAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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17 July 2012

Mr Bongani Mthembu 201510593
School of Education and Development

Dear Mr Mthembu

Protocol reference number: HSS/0498/012M

Project title: The supervisory role of heads of department (HODs) in rural primary schools: Problems and challenges.

EXPEDITED APPROVAL

I wish to inform you that your application has been granted Full Approval through an expedited review process.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number. Please note: Research data should be securely stored in the school/department for a period of 5 years.

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

Yours faithfully

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Professor Steven Collings (Chair)

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cc Supervisor Mr SD Bayeni
cc Academic leader Dr D Davids
cc School Admin. Mrs S Naicker

Professor S Collings (Chair)
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