

**“TAKEN OFF-THE-PEG”: AN ENQUIRY INTO THE PERSPECTIVES OF
SCHOOL STAKEHOLDERS ABOUT POLICY BORROWING AT THE
MICRO-LEVEL**

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**A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of
the requirements for the degree of
Master of Education
Educational Leadership, Management and Policy (EMLP)
School of Education
University of KwaZulu-Natal
December 2015**

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DECLARATION

I, Nokukhanya Satimburwa, declare that:

The research reported in this dissertation (titled “*Taken off-the-peg*”: an enquiry into the perspectives of school stakeholders about policy borrowing at a micro-level) except where otherwise indicated is my original work.

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I, Dr Phumlani Erasmus Myende, declare that this dissertation has been submitted with my approval

.....

Supervisor's signature

.....

Date

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost I want to acknowledge God Almighty and attest to the fact that “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me”. All Glory goes to him.

I thank God for providing me with the following with people who have made my journey easier and more fruitful:

My loving husband, Feromonch Satimburwa, thank you for being my biggest fan, for supporting me and for giving me the space and time to pursue my ambitions. Thank you for believing in me and encouraging in times of despair and laziness. My victory is your victory. I am blessed to be led by a man of your character.

To my mother, Thokozane Ndlovu, thank you for instilling in me the importance of education. Thank you for raising me into the woman I have become.

To my mother and father, Beki Satimburwa and Gabriel Satimburwa, your love and support is immeasurable. Daddy, you made me believe in myself and see the potential that I have. I hope I can be a blessing to you as you have been to me.

To my supervisor, Dr Phumlani E Myende, thank you for your time, your support, your patience and your dedication towards your work. Thank you for always guiding me and for seeing more in me than I sometimes saw in myself. Thank you for freeing my thoughts from limitations. Your constructive criticism has positively shaped me and has made me much more than I previously was.

To my lecturer, Dr TT Bhengu, thank you for the meaningful contribution you have made towards this work. Your words of encouragement and your support have gone a long way.

To my classmates Zamo Ncokwana and Zakhele Nzuzza, thank you for dragging me the finish line. I thank you for all your motivation and support that you provided in completing this work.

To the participants who gracefully agreed to participate in this study. I thank you for your time and your input in freely sharing your experiences with me.

ABSTRACT

The Department of Basic Education mandates that all schools must have policies. These policies should be formulated and guided by the national legislation, namely the South African Schools Act. (SASA, 1996). Whilst this is the expectation from the DBE there are some schools that

choose to copy the policies of other schools. This practise is termed policy borrowing. Having observed that the policy borrowing practice was used at some schools the researcher sought to explore the perspectives of stakeholders regarding its use and whether it was acceptable. An interpretive qualitative study, utilising a case study methodology was used and semi-structured interviews conducted to generate data. Two principals, one deputy principal, two heads of department (HoDs) and four post-level one (PL1) educators were interviewed. Based on the findings, the study concluded that there are both advantages and disadvantages. Whilst it presents an opportunity to learn from best performing schools the policies that are borrowed are usually context-insensitive, largely symbolic and not conducive to stakeholder participation. Context consideration is essential when looking to borrow policy from another school. Positive results are likely to be achieved when all stakeholders are given the opportunity to participate in the policy process. The findings further revealed several reasons that led schools to borrow policies, notably the intention to learn from best practise, the external pressure exerted by the Department of Basic Education (DBE) officials to school leaders, and the lack of leadership required to facilitate policy formulation. Participation needs to be one of the values featured in the policy process and it is recommended that the principal distribute leadership so that they can harness the untapped skills of teachers. The study proposes a model that can help schools better use the policy borrowing approach to ensure that they have guiding principles if they engage in this practice.

ABBREVIATIONS

DBE	Department of Basic Education
HoD	Head of Department
PL1	Post level one educator
OBE	Outcomes Based Education
SASA	South African Schools Act
SGB	School Governing Body
SMT	School Management Team

PISA

Programme for International Student Assessment

OECD

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

School governance for effective teaching and learning can be practicable if schools have policies and they follow guidelines as prescribed in them. As stated in the South African Schools Act (SASA) No. 84 of 1996 (RSA, 1996a), the governance of a school is vested in the school governing body (SGB) because, as stated in Section 16.1 and 16.2 of SASA Act No. 84 of 1996 (RSA, 1996a) it stands in a position of trust towards the school, and this function mandates that schools, in collaboration with their SGBs formulate policy. The demand is based on the government's notion of establishing partnerships with local communities at school level (Smit & Liebenberg, 2008; Tsotetsi, van Wyk & Lemmer, 2008). Active and meaningful involvement of stakeholders in the policy process at grassroots level is based on an assumption that possibilities for policy ownership will result. The Department of Basic Education (DBE) policies may not be responsive to the contextual factors that each policy must address in a particular setting (Bhengu, 2012). The functional value of policy includes a collective attempt to address problems, potential or real, facing the school and establish the parameters of and directions of action (Brynard & de Coning, 2004; Colebatch, 2006). Policy formulation should involve stakeholders, in line with the prescriptions of SASA, through the roles featured in Sections 20.1A-E and 21.1A-D of the legislation (RSA, 1996a).

The above discussion indicates the imperative of formulating school policies. While literature shows why policy formulation is imperative at a school level, some schools resort to what Phillips and Ochs (2004) call "policy borrowing". This entails one institution copying a policy from one context to use in its own (Dolowitz & Marsh, 2000; Phillips & Ochs, 2004; Phillips, 2005). The focus of this study is on policy borrowing at a school level, seeking the perceptions of stakeholders around the practise and the factors influencing schools to engage in it. This chapter serves as the introduction of study, presenting the background, rationale, statement of the problem, aims and objectives, and the significance of the study. A brief clarification of the main concepts is also provided. It concludes with an outline of the organisation of chapters.

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The practice of copying policy from one context to another is known as ‘policy borrowing’ (Phillips & Ochs, 2004), which *per se* is not new but has existed for the past four decades when the notion of learning something of value from education systems elsewhere dominated the discourse (Phillips, 2000). Therefore, it has a long tradition as an attractive approach. In the past 14 years, there has been a resurgence of ‘policy borrowing’ discourse at international level (see, Dolowitz & Marsh, 2000; Ochs, 2006; Winstanley, 2012; Chung, Atkin & Moore, 2012; Chow, 2014).

Literature (Dolowitz & Marsh, 2000; Phillips, 2000; Phillips & Ochs, 2004; Phillips, 2005) suggests that policy borrowing can be a beneficial practice. For instance, there can be a legitimate desire to learn and improve practice at a home institution. Phillips (2000) states that in such instances there is a commitment to rigorous examination of the external context, which enables those who wish to borrow to obtain a contextually balanced perspective prior to policy application. Such attitudes and practices help in ensuring that the contextual complexities that may exist do not hinder the policy process. While this has been happening at a macro level (between departments from different countries), it is gaining popularity at the micro level (between institutions within the one country). It is not happening between smaller institutions within one country, but in this case has been observed taking place between schools.

Whilst it is logical for schools to copy and try to emulate best practice from performing schools there are also other considerations that come into play that may result in this practice achieving undesirable outcomes and hindering a fruitful policy process. Phillips and Ochs (2004) highlight methodological challenges and complexities associated with policy borrowing. Examples of these, as noted in research (Phillips & Ochs, 2004; Waldow, 2009; Steiner-Khamsi, 2010; Bhengu, 2012; Chung et al., 2012; Winstanley, 2012; Chow, 2014), include ensuring that a borrowed policy is suitable for the new context and that policy support is gained.

Recent studies (Chakroun, 2010; Chung et al., 2012; Winstanley, 2012; Chow, 2014) have also suggested that the policy borrowing approach has had limitations. In his analysis of the Outcomes

Based Education (OBE) approach to teaching, Jansen (1998) attributes one of its major flaws is its failure to consider classrooms' contextual factors in South African schools.

Another issue to raise is that policies by nature are designed to accomplish certain goals (Anderson, 2006). In the school contexts, goals are crafted by principals in collaboration with key stakeholders (Melton, Mallory & Chance 2012), but the principal's leadership is crucial (Clarke, 2007) because s/he is credited with the school's achievements of targets, including learner outcomes (Ross & Gray, 2006; Berkhout, 2007; Myende & Chikoko, 2014). The life and direction the school takes is driven by the leader (Prew, 2007; Ngcobo & Tikly, 2010), hence the principal's skills to perform all these tasks are crucial, including ensuring people participation (DoE, 1996b) in decision-making on issues affecting them, now regarded as a central purpose in the transformation of education (Bhengu, 2012). The basic argument being advanced is that if those likely to be affected by policy results are involved in the policymaking process the legitimacy of the process and its results will be enhanced (Brown & Duku, 2008; Bayeni, 2012) and efficient and effective delivery of the intended outcomes will be achieved (DoE, 1996b). Therefore, the lack of participation in the policy process may be viewed as imposition and may result in resistance.

Available literature (Halpin & Troyna, 1995; Dolowitz & Marsh, 2000; Ochs, 2006; Waldow, 2009; Chakroun, 2012; Steiner-Khamsi, 2010; Chung et al., 2012; Winstanley, 2012; Chow, 2014) has neither focused on policy borrowing at a school level nor conceptualised it from a South African schools' perspectives. Even the models that have been used to explain policy borrowing at higher levels have not touched on school level but rather focus on developed countries (Philips & Ochs, 2004; Chow, 2014). There is also limited research in the South African context, with Marsh and Sharman (2009) arguing that literature on policy transfer should broaden the scope of case selection and move away from excessive preoccupation with Western countries. Thus, in this study I aim to fill the void in scholarship by exploring the policy borrowing approach within the school context.

1.3 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

My interest in the study has been sparked from two different perspectives of my experiences. The first is the teacher perspective, the second from an academic perspective given the knowledge I have gained through my studies. The teacher perspective is influenced by the practice at my school when my HoD presented me with policies which she said I should store in my file. Upon reading them I realised that they were not suitable for the conditions prevalent at my school. Merely for display and not implemented, there was no school-based policy to guide practice.

As I acquired a deeper understanding on the functional value of policy, which includes a collective attempt to address some evident problem and a means to establish parameters of and directions of action (Brynard & de Coning, 2004; Colebatch, 2006), I became concerned by the situation in my school as the manner in which the policy process unfolded appeared to be flawed. Policy is a process that involves the recognition of a problem and the formulation of a strategy or guiding principles to deal with and respond to it (Taylor, Fazal, Lingard & Henry, 1997). Although writers (Dunn, 1994; De Clercq, 1997; Dubnick & Romzec, 1999; Dye, 2011) present the policy process differently, the manner in which it unfolded did not resemble any of the approaches outlined in the literature of the policy process.

Through liaising about this concern, one of my colleagues, who happens to be a school principal, mentioned that from her observation this was a common trend within some schools, particularly those in rural and township areas. She added that there were consultancy agencies that formulated policy packages for schools which did not go through a consultative process with the schools but merely presented a pre-made policy for the school, hoping that it would serve the school as anticipated.

While the practice of policy borrowing is witnessed in the school context, research has only focused on that which occurs between two or more countries, and most of the research available on this practice is not in the South African context (Halpin & Troyna, 1995; Dolowitz & Marsh, 2000; Ochs, 2006; Chung et al., 2012; Winstanley 2012; Chow, 2014). For the purpose of bridging the gap in literature and bringing the practice of policy borrowing to scrutiny, I became interested in this study.

1.4 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

As I argue above, policy formulation becomes crucial because policy serves as a guide to solving school problems (Cochrane & Malone, 1995). When policy is borrowed there is a vast range of irregularities that exist in the practice, the first of which is people participation. I argue that such a process should be underpinned by people's participation, which according to Bayeni (2012) is the ingredient of a democratic policy process. The second is irregularity is the policy's suitability for the context in which it is borrowed. This is crucial as incompatibility with context may result in complexities that may hinder a fruitful policy process (Phillips & Ochs, 2004; Waldow, 2009; Steiner-Khamsi, 2010; Bhengu, 2012; Chung et al., 2012; Winstanley, 2012; Chow, 2014).

Policy borrowing is happening yet there are no clear valid reasons why some schools are using this approach. Research has not covered principles that schools, or school stakeholders in particular, follow in the process. Nor are there studies exposing the influence of policy borrowing at school level, a gap which this study intends to fill.

1.5 AIM AND FOCUS OF THE STUDY

Given the problem presented above, and focussing on two schools, the aim of the study was to explore the phenomenon of policy borrowing at school level. It aimed to understand the perspectives stakeholders had regarding policy borrowing and the factors that influence schools to engage in policy borrowing.

1.5.1 Objectives of the study

The objectives of this study are:

- To explore the perspectives stakeholders have towards the practice of policy borrowing within the school context.

- To explore the factors influencing schools to engage in the policy borrowing practice.

1.5.2 Key research questions

Building on the aims, the study seeks to answer the following key research questions:

- What are the stakeholders' perspectives towards the practice of policy borrowing within the school context?
- What are the factors that influence school stakeholders to engage in the policy borrowing practice?

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

The value of the study is centred around the relevance of policy borrowing at the school level and also on the limited literature that is available. Policy borrowing in the school is not a new phenomenon; however, studies researching the phenomenon at the school level are scarce. This study may therefore contribute to understanding policy borrowing and its implications at a micro-level (school level). By doing so, it will be able to add to the limited body of literature on policy borrowing at the micro-level, at the national level and international level. The findings may also assist those engaging in policy borrowing to better understand the practise and to use this understanding to evaluate their decision to enhance its effectiveness.

1.7 CLARIFICATION OF KEY CONCEPTS

This section provides an overview of the key operational concepts in this study, namely policy borrowing and policy process.

1.7.1 Policy Borrowing

Policy borrowing is a type of policy transfer that exists along a continuum of educational transfer (Ochs & Phillips, 2004). Along this continuum are variations in copying, emulation, combinations and inspiration (Dolowitz & Marsh, 2000). Copying involves direct and complete transfer (Dolowitz & Marsh, 2000), also referred to as importing, appropriating, assimilating or transferring (Phillips, 2005).

One view is that policy borrowing is “the conscious adoption in one context of policy observed in another” (Phillips & Ochs, 2004, p. 774). In their later work, Ochs and Phillips (2004) proposed the view that borrowing is the transfer of policies from one political system to another.

Contrary to this view, it is the most obvious consequence of learning from and understanding what is happening elsewhere in education (Phillips, 2000). Mossberger and Wolman (2003, p.428) define policy transfer as “a form of decision-making by analogy, using another entity’s experience as a source of ideas and evidence.” In the absence of literature on policy borrowing in the school context, the study borrows from international literature which suggests that it is about taking policy from one context and using it in one’s own.

In this study, the observation has been that there are schools that choose not to formulate their own policies but rather use those of other schools. Due to this exercise the study also adopts the views presented above and presents policy borrowing as a form of decision-making that involves the deliberate and conscious copying of policy from one school to another (Phillips, 2000; Mossberger & Wolman, 2003; Phillips & Ochs, 2004). For example, in schools this occurs when schools take disciplinary policy from one school and use it as their own.

1.7.2 Policy Process

Policy making is a process (Dubnick & Romzec, 1999; Dye, 2011) which writers present as having various steps. For Dye (2011), they include identification, agenda setting, formulation, legitimisation, implementation and evaluation. Similarly, Dunn (1994) regards the policy process as a series of events comprising agenda setting, formulation, adoption, implementation and assessment. Both these scholars share the view that the steps seldom happen in a linear fashion but may occur simultaneously, with each overlapping. Conversely, De Clercq (1997) suggests that the policy process is made up of four distinct stages which follow a linear sequential order, namely initiation, formulation, implementation and evaluation: “the policy process is an interactive, continuous, and contradictory political process which includes all the activities and decisions of the different social actors concerned at different stages” (De Clercq, 1997, p.131).

For the purposes of this study, the policy process will be defined as an interactive, continuous and at times contradictory activity in which different stakeholders partake (De Clercq, 1997). It is

characterised by different yet interrelated steps or stages, all with a distinct function, ranging from problem identification to formulation, implementation and evaluation (Dunn, 1994; De Clercq, 1997; Dye, 2011).

1.8 ORGANISATION OF THE REPORT

The report consists of five chapters, a brief outline of which follows.

Chapter One has presented the introduction and background to the study, followed by the rationale which highlighted the circumstances that have motivated the researcher's interest towards this particular phenomenon. This was followed by the statement of the problem, the aims of the study, the objectives, the research question and significance of the study. The chapter presented a brief clarification of the key concepts.

Chapter Two will present the review of literature. Prominent debates around policy borrowing and policy will be discussed at both the local and international level. This chapter will also discuss the theoretical framework that underpins this study.

Chapter Three focuses on the research design and methodology used to conduct the study. In this chapter I provide explanations and justifications for research design and methodology choices. The limitations to the study are listed.

Chapter Four of this report focuses on the presentation and discussion of the data, presented under the themes and direct quotes used to substantiate the claims.

Chapter Five provides a summary of the findings and concludes the study. This chapter makes recommendations and lists implications for further research.

1.9 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter has provided the introduction and background to the study, the issues surrounding the phenomenon of policy borrowing and responses to them. The rationale has listed the experiences that have resulted in the researcher gaining interest in the topic with a statement of the problem,

aims and objectives of the study, the research question and significance of the study. A brief clarification of key concepts was provided.

Chapter Two will focus on a thorough review of literature including a conceptualisation of the key concepts and the theoretical framework.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL LITERATURE ON POLICY BORROWING

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, literature on policy borrowing is discussed with the two research questions presented in Chapter One guiding the presentation of literature. The importance of such a discussion is to expose the debates to determine what is known and what has been studied about the phenomenon at both local and international level. The chapter begins with debates on conceptualisation of policy borrowing, followed by a discussion of broad perspectives then the importance of policy at school level. A discussion on leadership and policy will be followed by a discussion on the influence of policy borrowing on the policy process and the principles that guide it. The theoretical framework used in this study will be discussed, culminating in a recall of issues that have emerged from the literature.

2.2 CONCEPTUALISING POLICY BORROWING

Policy borrowing is not a simple concept as it encompasses a number of aspects; however, Ochs and Phillips (2004) contend that it is a type of policy transfer that can be used at institutional, local, regional and national level. It exists along a continuum of educational transfer with variations such as copying, emulation, combinations and inspiration (Dolowitz & Marsh, 2000; Ochs & Phillips, 2004). While these authors provide clear conceptualisation, there are inconsistencies in literature regarding the concept and scholars such as Phillips (2005) who synonymously refer to it as copying, appropriation, importation, transfer, assimilation and diffusion. Dolowitz and Marsh (2000) specifically define copying as a type of borrowing that involves direct and complete transfer.

Because of this ambiguity it is necessary to specify its meaning in the context of the study. As presented in Chapter One and based on literature, policy borrowing is simply defined as a form of

decision-making that involves the deliberate and conscious copying of policy from one school to another (Phillips, 2000; Mossberger & Wolman, 2003; Phillips & Ochs, 2004). It is important to understand why institutions decide not to formulate their own policies but opt for borrowing from others, thus, the next section examines the discourse around the causes. Given that the literature is sparse, the study draws on research into other institutions though it is anticipated that it will be relevant also to schools.

2.3 CAUSES OF POLICY BORROWING

Studying the phenomenon from different perspectives, one group is engaged in understanding policy borrowing, another with factors that enable and facilitate the process. The former is concerned with finding out what can be learnt from abroad whilst the latter interrogates how and why policies are borrowed (Steiner-Khamsi, 2004b; Waldow, 2009). This study examines why schools use the approach and the practicalities of how the borrowing actually takes place.

Borrowing does not occur because policy approaches used elsewhere are necessarily superior, but there are various factors that influence it (Steiner-Khamsi, 2006), notably globalisation (Dale, 1999; Halpin & Troyna, 1995; Steiner-Khamsi, 2014) which has accelerated the trend to a norm rather than exception. The views and educational approaches of advanced industrial societies have seen prominence and are being used to advance their educational approaches and boost economic development of one of their most expensive expenditure items, education (Kennedy, 2011). Globalisation has resulted in countries evaluating their approaches to education and attempting to align them to international standards, now perceived as the norm. As Steiner-Khamsi (2014) notes, most cases of policy borrowing are de-territorialized and based on broadly defined international standards.

Countries that are now used as international benchmarks are called ‘reference societies’, and Werning Rivera (2004) suggests three factors influence others to view these foreign contexts as exemplars of emulation or as reference societies, namely, comparability, whether geographical, historical or cultural proximity; prestige; and performance. These are explicitly rational factors as schools that want to learn will model their reforms around schools that are successful, those that

are perceived to be more prestigious and those that achieve better results. Similarly, Phillips (2000) suggests that the popularity surrounding ideas of the superiority of other approaches to education have persuaded others to adopt educational reforms from these contexts, however, the global arena is seeing the reconstitution of reference societies, which as will be shown below, are now in respect of performance on international comparative tests (Sellar & Lingard, 2013).

Reference societies manifest themselves in two dimensions, policy discourse and policy text (Ball, 1994). The former occurs when policy is borrowed to incite debate without an intention to implement the policy. However, in some cases the debate may lead to policy action. In contrast, the latter is geared towards facilitating policy change and is accompanied by policy action (Ochs, 2006). Whether it is policy text or policy discourse, Winstanely (2012) argues that the idea of being inspired by a positive experience is not problematic in itself. However, the issue arises when data is manipulated to support the introduction of ideas (Winstanely, 2012). As will be shown below, there are circumstances in which pressure is exerted on those that borrow to manipulate such data, thus elevating the status of policy from elsewhere and espousing the policy borrowing approach. Seemingly, it occurs because a time may come when there is a conducive and favourable climate for policy change. This may be influenced by globalisation or other internal factors, conceptualised as the policy window and characterised by factors that support policy change (Kingdon, 2003; Steiner-Khamsi, 2006).

Steiner-Khamsi (2014, p.156) explains the policy window as a convergence of three streams, namely, problem recognition (recognition of a problem); policy (availability of solutions); and political (new developments in the political realm, for example, recent change in government). An example of this policy window can be illustrated by the borrowing of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programmes by South Africa from the USA. The apartheid legacy left large inequities in the access to educational systems and opportunities (Stuart, 2012) whilst disinvestment and isolation from the global community resulted in South Africans working in conditions that were not impacted on by new technologies (McGrath, 2002). More recently, as Ashton (2005) and Stuart (2012) have found, South Africa is characterised by high unemployment rates with available labour lacking the necessary skills and expertise as a result of a manufacturing skill gap created during apartheid. The prevailing conditions created a policy

window and a welcoming space for a multinational partnership to take shape and eventually lead to the borrowing of a US-based TVET programme focused on manufacturing skills (Stuart, 2012).

Marsh and Sharman (2009) present four mechanisms that may result in a policy being borrowed and perhaps in data being misrepresented, namely, learning, competition, coercion and mimicry, each to be discussed below. Although they will be presented individually this does not reflect reality. It is difficult to draw clearly distinct lines between each and they may operate as separate entities or work in an additional way to influence the decision to borrow. The literature is based on cross-national borrowing (borrowing between countries); however, the reasons can also be used to explain borrowing at the micro level (between small institutions).

2.3.1 Learning

Learning is motivated by a legitimate desire to learn from another institution so that the borrowed policy can produce more efficient and effective policy outcomes in practice (Marsh & Sharman, 2009). It is vital for schools to function efficiently and effectively as this has a direct influence on learner outcomes (van Wyk & Marumoloa, 2012). In this case, borrowing is preceded by an intense and in-depth scientific and academic investigation of the foreign context (Phillips, 2000), which here may refer not to another country but to other schools, institutions or organisations that are outside the school but which borrow the policy. This activity would require a preliminary activity termed ‘policy tourism’, the practice of the borrowing country or institution visiting the reference society that best demonstrates success as determined by international measures (Winstanely, 2012). This allows for better understanding of the foreign context. The policy text that is therefore borrowed can be used as an exemplar for innovation of new practices at home in order to inspire policy changes (Ochs & Phillips, 2002a). However, there is a group of scholars who contest that there is not much to learn from foreign contexts

(Steiner-Khamsi, 2014), seeing “loose coupling” between an envisioned and an enacted policy and, as a consequence, between how a (global) policy looks on paper and how it is (locally) implemented. The question that remains for this study is: can schools really learn from others if this is the reason for policy borrowing, and what influence will this have on the policy process?

2.3.2 Coercion and Competition

Marsh and Sharman (2009) view coercion as the pressure or rather the influence that may be exerted by powerful states or other international organizations associated with conditions attached to their lending. This is however one vantage point. The notions of “comparability”, “international standards in education” and “international benchmarking” can in themselves be viewed as forms of coercion. As observed by Phillips and Ochs (2004), there are many cases of policy having been borrowed to converge or unite educational reform with global initiatives. The image of a countries education, as portrayed by the education international rankings that come in the form of the results of international studies conducted by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), has been seen a major contributor in guiding countries regarding where they should borrow. These studies include the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) and the Trends in Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), and are now seen as an important factor in judging a country’s status. Performing poorly on these platforms scandalises and exposes a country’s weakness in its education and creates a policy window. The need for change is accelerated and legitimacy is established for mimicking those who have been ranked higher (Steiner-Khamsi, 2004).

This has been evidenced by a shift in the migration of policy, previously from the West to the East but now in the opposite direction, due to the high performance of Eastern-Asian countries in these international studies (Sellar & Lingard, 2013). In their study, Crossley and Forestier (2014) reviewed the Hong Kong education system, formerly structured around Western schooling. As Hong Kong shifted from this structure and adopted its own approaches inherent to their own culture and norms, considerable gains were made. Crossley and Forestier (2014) comment that it is ironic that the United Kingdom (UK) government has come to emulate its former colonial state, showing the significance that international rankings have on a countries image. As noted by Brown (1997), the results of these tests are now a measure of global competitiveness of national economies.

Another high performer in the PISA has been Finland, and due to pressure and wanting to fair better the UK has borrowed Finland’s Masters in Teaching and Learning (MTL) programme to attempt to improve teacher quality (Chung, Atkin & Moore, 2012). The attraction of borrowing

was surrounded by debate that created clear contrasts in the UK system and the Finnish system, thus providing evidence from the latter to highlight the perceived deficiencies in the former (Phillips, 2000). The aim of this was to scandalise policy and practices in the UK in order to substantiate and validate the need for reform (Phillips & Ochs, 2004). However, the outcome of this borrowing was, like many others, unsuccessful (Reid, 2011; Sung, 2011; Rappleye, Imoto & Horiguchi, 2011; Stuart, 2012; Chow, 2014). In their study, Chung et al., (2012) showed how this initiative had little success and was quickly withdrawn. In both these cases what can be seen is that borrowing is an attempt to enhance the country's ability to compete internationally (Phillips & Ochs, 2004). Can coercion between schools through assessment performance be the reason schools borrow?

Steiner-Khamsi (2014) advances this argument and posits that “the pressure to borrow is great to the extent that policy analysts are frequently placed in the awkward position of having to retroactively define the local problem that fits the already existing global solution or reform package” (p. 156). This line of argument supports the above claim that the act of borrowing has become an exception rather than a norm (Halpin & Troyna, 1995) and when there is only one option or approach that is seen as credible that in itself is coercion. Research (Robertson & Waltman, 1992; Phillips & Ochs, 2004; Steiner-Khamsi, 2004; Steiner-Khamsi, 2014) has found that at moments of policy contestation and conflict, policy borrowing has a certification effect on domestic policy talk. Looking elsewhere is influenced by short-term appearances and pressures brought about by the need to find solutions to urgent problems. Robertson and Waltman (1992) suggest that during these moments, easier options are scarce, thus, as discovered by SteinerKhamsi (2014), in such circumstances an alternative, supposedly more neutral policy option has been said to have a salutary effect on policy conflict and favourably acts as a coalition builder to opposed advocacy groups. Policy is therefore borrowed to legitimate the adoption of reform at home (Halpin & Troyna, 1995; Steiner–Khamsi, 2004; Steiner-Khamsi, 2014). Although not explicit, this advances the argument that the credibility associated with policy borrowing is a form of coercion

2.3.3 Mimicry

According to Marsh and Sharman (2009, p.272), “mimicry, also known as emulation or socialisation, explains the process of copying foreign models in terms of symbolic or normative factors, rather than a technical or rational concern with functional efficiency”. There is a direct relationship between mimicry and coercion and for Marsh and Sharman (2009), when the policy is borrowed from these reference societies, the act is undertaken so that the borrowing country may be perceived by others and themselves as “being advanced, progressive and morally praiseworthy” (p. 272). Similarly, Steiner-Khamsi (2004) suggests that policy may be borrowed to glorify education at home in comparison to other countries.

In a study conducted by Kennedy (2011), after thorough analysis, he deduced that the OBE approach in Hong Kong universities was borrowed to mimic international policy direction. However, the move to borrow this approach was also shaped by the pressure from the OECD in terms of its expectations of what characteristics defined a quality university (Kennedy, 2011). Other scholars (Reid, 2011; Sung, 2011; Rappleye et al., 2011; Stuart, 2012; Chow, 2014) have also produced similar findings, suggesting that the policies were borrowed to mimic current international trends and conform with what was internationally regarded as best practise.

Reconciling these entire mechanisms one can see there are links between them, and reasons to borrow may overlap, even though this may not be explicitly stated. They are all aimed at solving internal problems and minimising the uncertainty associated with new policies (Chow, 2014). Given the reasons outlined above it becomes crucial to understand the context which is being interrogated in this study. The next discussion will provide a discourse on the role of policy at the school level.

2.4 THE ROLE OF POLICY AT SCHOOL LEVEL

As mentioned in the introduction and background, amongst other functions, policy serves as a collective means to address and prevent problems facing or likely to face an organisation (Brynard & de Coning, 2004; Colebatch, 2006). Policy is therefore formulated in order to establish the

parameters of and directions of action to respond to the challenges faced or anticipated by schools (Brynard & de Coning, 2004; Colebatch, 2006). In their work, van Wyk and Marumoloa (2012, p.102) define school policies “as instruments that give direction to the day-to-day operations of a school by guiding the behaviours of educators, learners and parents whilst clarifying the school’s expectations”. They also describe the function of policy and address it as a tool that provides the foundation for the structures and organisation of the school by effectively communicating the core values inherent in its vision and mission statement (van Wyk & Marumoloa, 2012). Given their function, there are different types of policies, grouped according to the method of control (Cochrane & Malone, 1995).

Since it is the SGB that is tasked with issues of school governance it is in a position of trust towards the school (RSA, 1996a). The SGB formulates policies that are mainly regulatory, allowing for control over certain activities and imposing restrictions or limitations on the behaviour of people, and procedural, deciding who is going to do what and how (Cochrane and Malone, 1995; De Clercq, 1997; Anderson, 2007). Such policies include controlling school finances; adopting a code of conduct for learners; determining school times; supporting the principal, educators and other staff; maintenance and improvement of school property; determining extra-mural curriculum and subject options (RSA, 1996a). This leadership aspect of the SGB will be elaborated on below.

2.5 LEADERSHIP AND POLICY IN THE SCHOOL CONTEXT

South Africa, like most countries, is shaped by its history. The advent of democracy from the apartheid system of rule resulted in the reconceptualisation of policy frameworks at all levels of the education system, including that of the school (McLennan & Thurlow, 2003). This manifested itself through the forging of systems, structures and frameworks that would be underpinned by participation of all stakeholders, consultation, equity, effectiveness and efficiency, accountability and shared responsibility, with an overall emphasis on democracy in all spheres of school governance (McLennan, 1995). The rationale behind this was to transform from the previously imposed top-down autocratic decision-making hierarchy characterised by exclusion, and to give all people more power and responsibility, thus facilitating transformation by creating a norm of

democracy (DoE, 1998). This is said to enhance school effectiveness and enable increased school functionality whilst promoting the development of democratic values (Mncube & Harber, 2010). The discussion will focus on two sources of school leadership, namely the SGB and the principal.

2.5.1 SGB and policy

At school level, the SGB is the structure that has a legal mandate for the professional governance of the school (RSA, 1996a). It is a representative body of stakeholders that comprises the school principal and components of teachers, parents, learners (through the RCL) and non-teaching staff. The SGB pioneers the formulation of policies pertaining to the day-to-day professional management of the school (RSA, 1996a; van Wyk & Marumoloa, 2012). Beyond the formulation stage, it plays a key role in school matters through the implementation of its policies (van Wyk & Marumoloa, 2012; RSA 1996a). By virtue of being stakeholders, the SGB needs to work together and make decisions in the pursuit of common interests and goals (Moekoena, 2011).

SGB members therefore need to have thorough knowledge of their legal obligation and issues pertaining to school governance (Mncube & Mafora, 2013). They need to have the capacity to fulfil these obligations so as to enhance school effectiveness (Mncube & Mafora, 2013). However, various studies have suggested that the challenge that remains is that at times SGBs lack the capacity to execute their functions in line with the principles and values outlined in the South African Schools Acts (see McLennan & Thurlow, 2003; Dieltiens, 2005; van Wyk & Marumoloa, 2012; Mncube & Mafora, 2013). Dieltiens (2005) proposes that the complex language used in legislation documents creates a challenge for some school governors which results in them being unable to perform their tasks efficiently. The nature of the tasks at hand requires knowledge, information and skills that some SGB members do not have. Other factors that hinder the realisation of these goals are:

unequal power relations, socio-economic status, the rural-urban divide, lack of continuous member training, different cultural expectations of diverse communities, language barriers, race, lack of expertise and confidence in parents, lack of time and transport which contribute to poor attendance at meetings, gender, poor communication of information, poor organisation and the high turnover rate of governors (Mncube & Mafora, 2013, p.14).

Many studies have echoed the dissatisfaction of some SGB members, especially the learner and parent component, with the reality of their membership being seen as tokenistic (Carrim, 2011; Mncube, 2012; van Wyk & Marumoloa, 2012; Mncube & Mafora, 2013). The lack of capacity of the SGB component can act as a hindrance and barrier to a fruitful policy process.

2.5.2 School principal and policy

The role of the principal as a leader is “coordinating and influencing the behaviour of people so as to achieve the goals of the organization” (West- Burnham, 1997, p.185), however, it emerges that principals are under-prepared for a new role which requires them to be able to work in democratic and participative ways to build relationships and adopt more collaborative and inclusive decision-making processes (DoE, 1996b; McLennan & Thurlow, 2003; Mokoena, 2011). So, while the expectation is that school governance should be characterised by democratic values such as tolerance, representation, collective decision-making, equity, informed choice, consultation, and rational discussion, the opposite is happening (van Wyk & Marumoloa, 2012; Mncube & Mafora, 2013).

Literature (Buchen, 2000; Fullan, 2001; Fullan, 2007; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2011) suggests that principals need to be able to harness the skills, inputs and expertise of all stakeholders in the school, especially that of teachers. According to Fullan (2007), there has been an acknowledgment that teachers are a powerful yet untapped knowledge base that could be used to drive change and bring about much needed improvements in schools. “They alone are positioned near all the fulcrums for change and know the everyday problems and solutions” (Buchen, 2000, p.35). The position taken by Buchen (2000) is justifiable, given the nature of the work that teachers do. This places them at a strategic position to be able to identify, diagnose and provide practicable solutions for improving teaching and learning as vital agents in policy solutions.

Fullan (2001, p.115) asserts that “educational change depends on what teachers do and think.” As teachers are acknowledged as leaders and given the opportunity to participate as equals in decision-making and in other school matters, they will be able to use their skills and expertise to facilitate much needed educational change. Katzenmeyer and Moller (2011) affirms that teacher leaders have the capacity to build alliances and networks in order to achieve their goal. It is these connections that can help them to pull together the necessary people, funding and additional

resources to fulfil their plans of action (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2011). Educational change can therefore be facilitated through this increased pool of resources.

Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, Meyerson and Orr (2007) capture the scope of the principal's job description, stating that "principals must be educational visionaries and change agents, instructional leaders, curriculum and assessment experts, budget analysts, facility managers, special programme administrators and community builders" (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007, p.1.) In contemporary times it has been widely acknowledged that the principal must work with others to provide a broad range of skills and expertise needed to facilitate educational change and respond to the various challenges (Harris, 2009; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2011; Ghamrawi, 2013; Nappi, 2014; Lai & Cheung, 2015). The lack of capacity of the SGB makes it necessary for principals to be able to identify teachers with the necessary skills and assist in some of the functions outlined above, including those related to policy as stipulated by the South African Schools Act. This potential for teacher leadership and participation can only be harnessed by a principal who is willing to distribute leadership.

Nappi (2014) regards the benefit to the principal as an important factor resulting from teacher leadership. This viewpoint is based on the rationale that teacher leaders can lessen the burden on the principal by sharing the responsibility (Barth, 2011; Curtis, 2013; Nappi, 2014). Principals can therefore assign teacher leaders to head committees, order textbooks, draft policy, manage some of the schools resources and provide professional development. According to Barth (2011, p.25), "when teachers pull an oar for the entire school, they offer valuable assistance to the overworked and overwhelmed principal and to the school itself". Barth (2011) adds that when teachers lead, principals expand their own capacity by being a leader of a competent team with a shared vision and able to work collaboratively to provide support to each other, thus increasing its efficiency.

In the quest to create such conditions, principals' daily behaviours can either support or undercut a culture of teacher leadership and collaboration (Curtis, 2013), because they can perceive teacher leadership in different ways. Others may see teacher leaders as partners who can help them to share their overwhelming responsibility, while, conversely, others may see them as a challenge and threat to their authority (Curtis, 2013). Whatever the view, Marishane, Botha and Du Plessis (2011) posits that there is a concern that the prevalent management structures in South African schools

are unsustainable, mainly due to the hierarchal structure that persists. The type of leadership that is able to foster the conditions addressed above needs to move away from hierarchal practices, one such practice being distributed leadership.

Distributed leadership places importance on interaction rather than action (Spillane, 2006; Harris, 2009). Similar to teacher leadership, it acknowledges both formal and informal leadership to play a role in organisational change and the position an individual occupies enables them to access certain resources (Spillane & Camburn, 2006). There are situations where there are resources that have the potential to benefit others, however, due to their position they may not be able to access them, thus limiting growth and optimal organisational performance (Spillane & Camburn, 2006). Distributed leadership helps to create a greater space for participation and access to resources because a distributed perspective on leadership recognises that leading and managing schools involves multiple individuals and that the practice of leading and managing is more important than the nature of roles and responsibilities associated with leading and managing (Harris, 2009). It recognises that all teachers have leadership qualities that can in some way contribute to enhancing the school (Harris, 2008).

A further justification for distributed leadership is that it has the potential to build capacity within a school through the development of the intellectual and professional capital of the teachers (Day & Harris 2002, Nappi, 2014). Leadership becomes a collaborative effort involving all teachers (Lambert, 1998), however, as stated above, teachers need to be capacitated to improve teacher quality. The call for teacher leadership and subsequently distributed leadership provides an opportunity for providing necessary skills that are needed in the policy process. It also creates space for participation and collaboration, which is said to be limited when using the policy borrowing practice, and for capacity building for all stakeholders, SGB and teachers alike.

This could help produce relevant policies to respond to challenges faced in the school context.

2.6 POLICY BORROWING AND ITS INFLUENCE ON THE POLICY PROCESS

Taking into consideration the significance of policies in the school context, agenda setting and policy formulation play an important role in creating space through which the envisaged democratic values expected in school governance can be featured. Agenda setting and policy formulation are some of the stages present in the policy process, which has been defined as an interactive, continuous, and at times contradictory activity in which different stakeholders partake (De Clercq, 1997).

The table below illustrates the different stages and the respective significance that each holds in relation to problem-solving.

Table 2.1: Five stages of the policy cycle and their relationship to applied problem-solving

Stages in Policy Cycle	Applied Problem – Solving
1. Agenda setting	1. Problem recognition
2. Policy formulation	2. Proposal of solution
3. Decision-making	3. Choice of solution
4. Policy implementation	4. Putting solution into effect
5. Policy evaluation	5. Monitoring results

Source: Howlett and Ramesh (2003, p.13).

As indicated by Howlett and Ramesh (2003), agenda setting involves the recognition of problems, of which there may be a multiplicity. However, not all can be set up for further investigation because a problem is any condition or situation that produces needs or dissatisfaction for which those concerned require redress or relief from those in charge (Dye, 2011). There will be some conditions that are placed on the policy agenda whilst others are not and, as Dye (2011) contends, the power to influence what will be a policy issue is crucial in the policymaking process. This stage may take a top-down or bottom-up approach, the power being vested in the stakeholders who are able to exert influence in the context. Having identified the problems, the quest for alternative solutions follows.

This stage of ‘policy formulation’ can be defined as one in which policy proposals are developed to resolve issues and problems (Dye, 2011). It is at this stage that the cause of action is determined. Policy formulation is concerned with the “*what*” questions associated with generating alternatives to address the identified problems (Cochrane & Malone, 1995). At this stage, those which the policy will affect should be able to participate and generate alternatives for the cause of action. According to Bhengu (2012), this is because participation can be seen as the gateway to democracy and people participation in decision-making on issues affecting them directly is now regarded as a central purpose in the transformation of education. As previously declared by Phillips and Ochs (2004), when a policy is borrowed it is deliberately and consciously copied from one school to another. When policy is borrowed it is “taken-off the peg”, meaning it is mainly transferred from one context to the other without engagement with local stakeholders. The questions arise as to how the aspect of participation in the policy process is maintained, given its importance. Is there a space for effective participation and if so how it is created? If there is no space how does this impact on the policy process?

The space questioned above is not only vital for ensuring that democracy is achieved, but if those likely to be affected by policy results are involved in the policy-making process the legitimacy of the process and its results will be enhanced (Brown & Duku, 2008; Bayeni, 2012) and efficient and effective delivery of the intended outcomes achieved (DoE, 1996b). Gale (2003) adds that the foregrounding of democracy in which all people are engaged in public processes is the legitimate basis for the policy’s authority. Similarly, Dieltiens (2005) argues that the legitimacy of decisions depends on the degree to which those affected by them have been involved in the decision-making process and have had the opportunity to influence the outcomes. One of the roles of leadership is to define the values and vision of the school and to set direction (Melton, Mallory & Chance, 2012). It is therefore crucial that school leadership creates this space for participation so as to influence policy ownership by stakeholders. The lack of participation in the process may be viewed as imposition and may result in resistance, thus hindering a fruitful policy process and rendering the policy borrowing practice inappropriate if it does not have an aspect of local stakeholders’ involvement. The lack of capacity of the SGBs and principals mentioned above could be the reason some schools use the policy borrowing practice. These factors create a policy window and leave

little room for a positive influence on the policy process. Thus, policy borrowing may be a matter of need rather than preference.

The stage that follows decision-making is implementation, seen by Howlett and Ramesh (2003) as putting into practice the chosen solution. van Wyk and Marumoloa (2012) write that policy implementation is concerned with the actions of individuals or groups that are directed to achieve the outcomes as directed by the objectives. Given the involvement of different people, policy implementation needs to happen in a planned way, the key being to increase commitment and support of the policy by those who are responsible for it (van Wyk & Marumoloa, 2012). This is because policy is both a product and a process, with the participating actors not simply passive spectators who willingly implement any policy that is presented (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010). According to McLaughlin (1987), implementing bureaucrats will put their own interpretations and meanings on the intended policies and in the process use their power or discretion to subvert or transform the goals of the policymakers. In this regard, implementers also have power.

As argued above, when a policy is borrowed it is increasingly difficult for the implementers to own it (Gale, 2003; Dieltiens, 2005; Brown & Duku, 2008; Bayeni, 2012). According to Tummers, Bekkers and Steijn (2009), this condition is policy alienation and occurs when individuals have little or no influence on the strategic planning. They will experience feelings of powerlessness and policy meaninglessness, and so “feel themselves to be objects controlled and manipulated by others or by an impersonal system” (Tummers et al., 2009, p.688). This powerlessness may result in the non-implementation of policies because implementation is not only a linear, one-way process whereby text is given, but rather it also involves various negotiation zones that facilitate the transformation of intentions, practices and consequences generated in a dynamic environment (Rizvi & Lingard, 2010; van Wyk & Marumoloa, 2012).

In the event of the policy being implemented, the next stage would be policy evaluation, which involves assessment of the intended outcomes as outlined in the policy (Howlett & Ramesh, 2003). However, as questioned above, a situation of non-implementation is a possibility. In such cases what then will be evaluated? Dolowitz and Marsh (2000) suggest that policy failure occurs when transfer is uninformed, inappropriate, or incomplete. If the intention behind the borrowing was to

implement non-implementation may be viewed as policy failure as the intentions if that policy will remain unfulfilled.

The discussion above has served to highlight the importance of policy in the school context and how policy borrowing may hinder a fruitful policy process. Of various issues that have emerged the first is that the SGB tasked with this crucial role of policy formulation and policy implementation usually lacks the capacity to fulfil the mandate. Secondly, lack of participation and the promotion of democratic values in the policy process may have a negative impact, resulting in borrowed policy not receiving support. This lack of support and ownership results in powerlessness of the implementers and may lead to non-implementation. The discourse on teacher leadership and distributed leadership was factored to address such conditions. However, the question arises as to what is used to guide practice in the event of non-implementation. This discussion has highlighted that policy borrowing, if administered in an improper way, may negatively influence the policy process. Given its influence on the policy process, the next discussion is of the guidelines that may be used when using it.

2.7 PRINCIPLES GUIDING POLICY BORROWING

Although there are numerous studies that have focused on policy borrowing, few have looked at the process directly, that is, guidelines or steps followed and how the process actually unfolds (Dolowitz & Marsh, 2000, Mossberger & Wolman, 2003). The aim of this section is to provide guidelines for those who want to engage in policy borrowing. These are aimed at guiding those engaging in policy borrowing so the practice can produce more fruitful results. The set of criteria are borrowed from Mossberger and Wolman (2003) and recommend what would be required to engage in rational analysis of policies being borrowed and their potential for application to the new context. The set of criteria are awareness, assessment and application, each discussed below. **2.7.1**

Awareness

Mossberger and Wolman (2003) present awareness as an activity that deals with access to information, policy ideas and policy approaches that are available. Apart from globalization, new technologies have made information more accessible and there are many channels through which

information can move. They include professional organizations, media, Internet, chance contacts, conferences and publications. Once a policy idea has been identified the quality of information is of utmost importance because it will have important consequences for the adopter's ability to assess its appropriateness and usefulness. Mossberger and Wolman (2003, p. 430) state that, "scope and accuracy are two important criteria for information quality" and they should guide the decision to borrow.

2.7.1.1 Scope of information

As suggested by the name, scope of information deals with knowledge of other contexts and locations in which the policy has been used (Mossberger & Wolman, 2003). This involves a broad and in-depth interrogation of the context from which one wishes to borrow. Mossberger and Wolman (2003) advise that thorough investigation of the context needs to be assessed to see the differences and similarities and to analyse why some policies have been more successful than others. The merit of the policy that will be emulated can be judged through an evaluation of the extent to which it has proven successful in a context characterised by significant similarities with it having addressed a similar problem.

2.7.1.2 Adequacy and accuracy of information

Those who will adopt the policy require accurate information about the goals, design, and actual operation of policies under consideration in order for them to be able to compare and contrast with their own context and evaluate the appropriateness of the policy. Mossberger and Wolman (2003) propose an interrogation of systematic and complete information targeted in order to obtain adequate, credible, unbiased and accurate information. They warn that the potential borrower is obliged to be cautious of the results of programme evaluations and its criticisms in light of the promotional information that may be available (Mossberger & Wolman, 2003). Once credible information has been this information needs to be assessed against set criteria.

2.7.2 Assessment

Assessment deals with systemically evaluating the information and using the outcomes of this evaluation to make an informed choice. The process of assessment should follow the processes outlined below.

2.7.2.1 Similarity of goals and problems

The potential adopters must now take the information they have gathered and identify what problems the policy was addressing or what goals were associated with the policy or its different variations (Mossberger & Wolman, 2003). According to Mossberger and Wolman (2003) the borrower should then determine the extent of similarities or differences between the problems they face and the goals they wish to pursue. Differences may exist, however this does not necessarily equate to the dismissal of the policies. Policy may still be borrowed on such grounds as innovation and experimentation. Another criterion to be considered is policy performance.

2.7.2.2 Policy performance

Policy performance involves an assessment of the extent to which the policy was successful, that is, the degree to which it achieves its intended outcomes and the conditions and circumstances under which these outcomes achieved (Mossberger & Wolman, 2003). Mossberger and Wolman (2003) regard it as a systemic and critical approach should be adopted at every stage. In analysing the policy performance they suggest a thorough evaluation of the evidence of policy effects, the associated advantages and shortcomings as well as variations of a policy idea (Mossberger & Wolman, 2003).

2.7.2.3 Differences in settings

An evaluation of the degree of differentiation between the contexts should then be considered. According to Mossberger and Wolman (2003), such a task assesses the effects that the differentiation in context may influence implementation or outcomes of the policy. The assessment of contextual variables, such as political, social, and economic institutions, political culture, public opinion, available resources, and the existence of other policies that affect efficacy is considered so as to make judgement on whether the disjuncture in the policy environment, the problem, or the goals will influence the effectiveness or the political viability of the proposed policy (Mossberger & Wolman, 2003). This leads to the application criterion.

2.7.3 Application

Having systemically conducted the above activities, the information that has been gathered and assessed may or may not be considered when the decision is being made. Mossberger and Wolman (2003) state that after considering the findings the policy may be borrowed as is, modified or rejected. The credibility of this phase is advanced if the decision is taken based on adequate, reliable information and thorough engagement has been done to assess the problem, policy goals, performance, and environment (Mossberger & Wolman, 2003).

The process outlined above serves as a guideline to assist those who engage in policy borrowing. Although there is limited information on studies that have applied these guidelines, in the absence of other mechanisms they do provide a rational approach to the process. The next section presents the theoretical framework adopted for the study.

2.8 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study employed the Four Stage Composite Model proposed by Phillips and Ochs (2004) to interrogate the phenomenon of policy borrowing. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) state that theories and models can be used interchangeably as they have the same function, and are explanatory tools. This is conditional on the theory being accurate, so as to provide a more visual representation that can be beneficial in achieving clarity and focussing on key issues of a particular phenomenon.

The review of literature has highlighted that the policy process does not happen in linear succession with one step automatically leading to the other, as suggested by the model. However, the model will be able to serve fitness of purpose as it will explain the reasons behind schools wanting to look to other schools as exemplars. It shows what influences the decision to borrow, and can be used to explain why schools engage in policy borrowing.

The model is characterised by four stages which illustrate the policy borrowing process, as illustrated in Figure 2.1 (below), with the arrows suggesting temporal linkage rather than causation (Phillips & Ochs, 2004; Phillips, 2005). The processes is illustrated in a circular manner since

policy implementation and internalisation will lead to a new status quo which in the future will also be subject to further impulses, thus repeating the cycle. According to Phillips and Ochs (2004), their model is a product of historical developments and will inevitably change as a result of future attempts to apply it to instances of policy borrowing in various contexts. The four stages of the model are:

- I. Cross - national attraction
- II. Decision
- III. Implementation
- IV. Internalisation/ Indigenisation

The initial cross-national stage involves a rationale for wanting to borrow policy and leads to the next stage, the decision stage. This comprises four key decision typologies, namely, the theoretical decision; the realistic or practical typology; the quick-fix and the phoney typology. This leads to the implementation and the internalisation or indigenisation stage, which is also characterised by four stages.

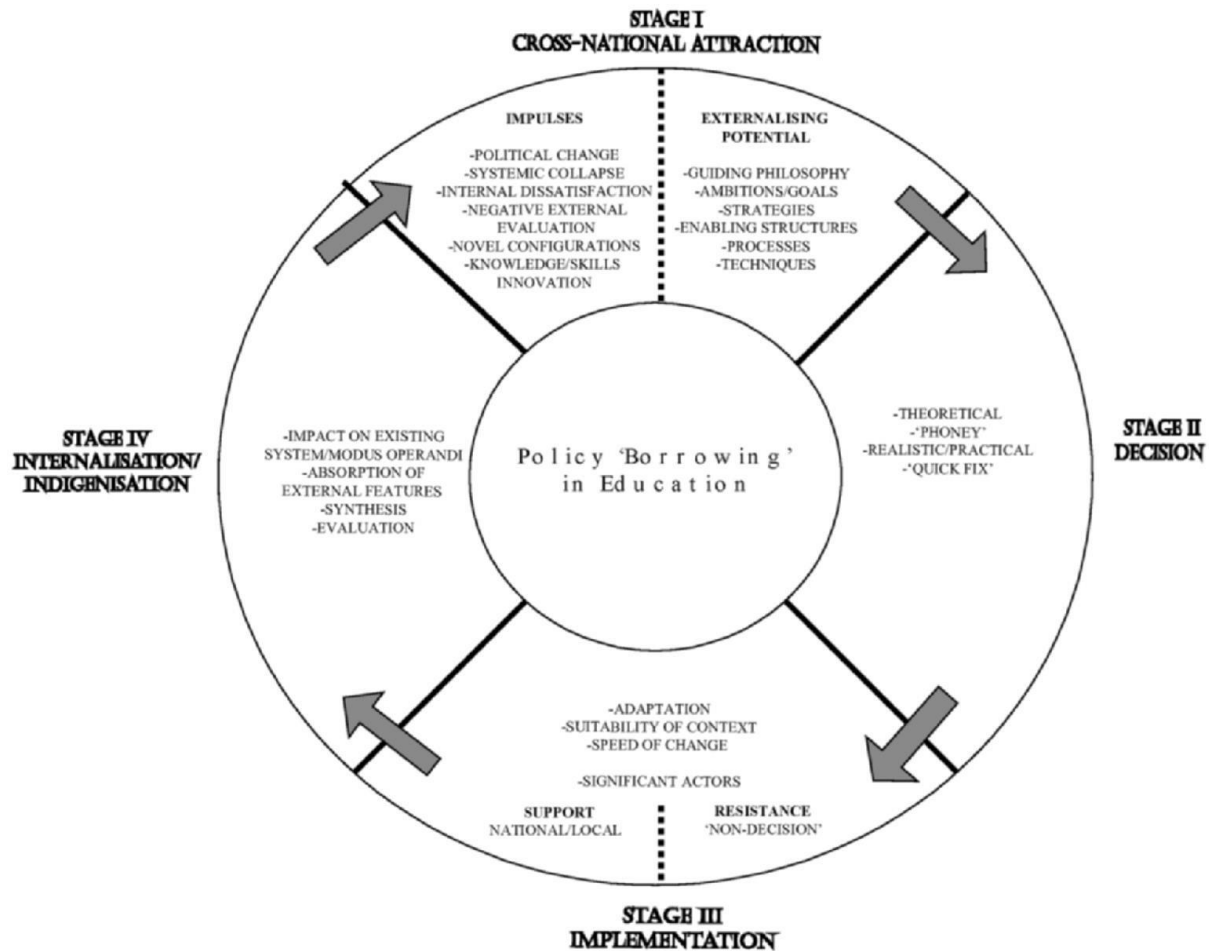


Figure 2.1: Policy borrowing in education: composite processes (adapted from Phillips & Ochs, 2004)

I. Cross - national attraction

As illustrated in Figure 2.1, this stage is characterised by two elements, the first of which is termed “impulses.” According to Phillips and Ochs (2004), impulses are regarded as the prevailing circumstances that spark off a desire to borrow or the preconditions for borrowing.

They originate from various phenomena or catalysts, namely:

- Internal dissatisfaction: On the part of parents, teachers, students, inspectors and others.
- Systemic collapse: Inadequacy or failure of some aspect of educational provision; the need for educational reconstruction following war or natural disaster, as in the case of post-Apartheid South Africa. Negative external evaluation: Poor Grade 12 results or poor ANA results.

- Economic change/competition: Learner migration resulting in loss of income for the school and decrease in staff through PPN.
- Political and other imperatives: The need to ‘turn around’ policy as voters become dissatisfied about the status quo of public education.
- Novel configurations: Globalising tendencies through the use of standardised testing to evaluate schools.
- Knowledge/skills innovation: Failure to exploit new technologies.
- Political change: New directions as a result of change of government.

(Phillips, 2000)

The impulses outlined above may inspire schools to look elsewhere to solve existing, emerging or even potential problems and challenges that they may anticipate. Phillips and Ochs (2003) refer to the aspects of educational policy or practices that may be borrowed are called the externalising potential. This is a guiding philosophy, including broad objectives such as equal access to education and gender equality; ambitions or goals, improving results in numeracy and literacy as aspired to by ANA; strategies, involving aspects of the governance of education; enabling structures, changing funding and administration, new types of schools and general organisational reform; processes, assessment procedures, reporting, teaching norms and regulatory systems; and techniques, teaching methods (Ochs & Phillips, 2002a; Phillips & Ochs, 2003).

II. Decision Stage

This stage comprises four key decision typologies, each briefly discussed below. Phillips and Ochs (2004) regard the theoretical *decision* typology as based on the broad objectives. An example of this would be a school which is aiming to ensure inclusivity. This is a broad objective and in terms of this typology there may be no commitment to ensuring that it is successfully implemented. Phillips (2000, p. 31) writes that the ambition of such broad perspectives is “not susceptible to demonstrably effective implementation”. It could be used symbolically to merely elude pressure from stakeholders knowing that there is no real commitment or intention to change or improve the prevailing conditions.

The next is the *realistic or practical decision* typology. In this instance, successful approaches that have proved successful in a particular place are located. Phillips (2000) proclaims that approaches

that are sought are those whose success is not based on a variety of contextual factors. This entails assessing foreign policy regarding contextual factors and its feasibility for implementation (Phillips & Ochs, 2004). The analysis process is undertaken on the basis of a legitimate desire to find a practical solution. According to Ochs (2005), this activity is motivated by a genuine desire to find practical solutions, so as to improve education at home, and compete better.

The third decision typology is called the *quick fix* and is taken “in times of immediate political necessity” (Phillips & Ochs, 2004, p. 780). Steiner-Khamsi (2006) argues that borrowing is not undertaken because foreign solutions are superior; however, policy borrowing it is said to have beneficial effects on the contestations surrounding domestic policy conflict. The above statement encapsulates the reason a quick fix approach can be symbolic of a commitment to change even if such change may be superficial. Much caution is advised on this typology as it may have a negative impact on the policy process (Phillips, 2000; Phillips & Ochs, 2004). In their earlier work, Phillips and Ochs (2003) categorise South Africa`s decision to adopt OBE as a quick fix:

A striking example in recent years has been the enthusiasm in South Africa for ‘outcomes based education’ (OBE), an approach to teaching and learning which was controversial in countries with a much more stable base to their educational provision than South Africa had in the immediate post- Apartheid period. OBE has not worked well in the South African context because the essential infrastructure for an experiment on the scale envisaged was not in place and because insufficient regard was had to the contexts of implementation (Phillip & Ochs, 2003, p. 455).

The forth is termed *phoney decision* typology, which Phillips and Ochs (2004) state occurs when policy is hastily borrowed to appease stakeholders, but for which there is no likelihood of its introduction into the ‘home’ system. This is congruent with findings of a study which found that policy was borrowed due to pressures from the DoE to have policies texts whenever asked for by an official. The easiest way to comply with this requirement is to borrow them from other schools (Myende, Bhengu & Ndlovu, forthcoming). On the other hand, Robertson and Waltman (1992) suggest that borrowing may be undertaken if easier alternatives are not available and when there is uncertainty and controversial problems. Whatever the reason, the practise of policy borrowing should be approached with caution.

III. Implementation

Phillips (2000) and Phillips and Ochs (2003) argue that implementation is influenced by contextual factors because the degree of adaptation is dependent on a large number of contextual factors prevalent in the new context. The attitudes of significant actors, people or institutions with the power to support or resist change, will determine the pace of implementation. Resistance may result in the form of delayed decision or lack of decision-making regarding implementation (Phillips, 2000).

IV. Internalisation/Indigenisation

The last decision stage is the internalisation or indigenisation stage which includes an evaluation of the impact of the policy on existing systems, the absorption of external features of the policy, synthesis of the policy and its evaluation (Phillips & Ochs, 2004). The four stages associated with this phase are the impact on existing systems or *modus operandi*, which examines the motives and objectives of the policymakers in conjunction with the existing system; the absorption of external features, which involves the analysis of context to evaluate and understand how and to what extent the features of the borrowed policy have been adopted to the system; synthesis, which describes the process through which educational policy and practice have become part of the overall strategy of the borrower; and evaluation, concerned with reflection and evaluation to best discern the realistic or unrealistic expectations of borrowing (Phillips & Ochs, 2003).

In the initial discussion in this section, the researcher noted that the explanatory value of models lies in them being accurate (Cohen et al., 2011). In the model outlined above, one of the flaws that can be said to devalue explanatory power is the exclusion of context as an overarching variable in the policy borrowing process. Although not represented explicitly in the illustrated model, scholars (Phillips, 2000; Ochs & Phillips, 2002a; Phillips & Ochs, 2004) acknowledge the significance of context and argue that context is of crucial importance to the development of education systems and policies. Ochs and Phillips (2002b) have identified five forces of context which interact with policy borrowing at different stages:

1. contextual forces that affect the motives behind cross-national attraction
2. contextual forces which act as a catalyst to spark cross-national inquiry
3. contextual interaction that affects the stage of the policy development

4. contextual interaction that affects the policy development process
5. contextual interaction that affects the potential for policy implementation

The contextual considerations place responsibility on those wishing to borrow policy not only to fully interrogate the model but also to consider the contextual factors that influence the process of policy borrowing. Noah (1986, pp. 161-162) warns that:

The authentic use of comparative study resides not in wholesale appropriation and propagation of foreign practices, but, in careful analysis of the conditions under which certain foreign practices deliver desirable results, followed by consideration of ways to adapt those practices to conditions found at home.

This makes the issue of context a significant variable in considering what to borrow and from where to borrow it from. Phillips and Ochs (2004) have acknowledged that whilst there are many more variables that influence policy borrowing, the challenge remains in how the issue of context can be addressed as there remain inherent challenges in studying it. They argue that such factors are difficult to quantify, given the complicated and unique interaction of contextual factors, time delays of key factors coupled with the challenge of isolating particular aspects from each other (Phillips & Ochs, 2004). Some of these challenges are the degree to which contextual factors influence the process of attraction and the stages of transfer (Holmes, 1981; Phillips & Ochs, 2004).

2.9 ISSUES EMERGING FROM THE LITERATURE

Policy borrowing occurs in schools, however, there is a dearth of literature on the phenomenon at this level. Literature only shows the factors that influence policy borrowing that takes place between different countries. In this context, what can be said to be the most influential factor are the country rankings on international tests, which have been seen to set benchmarks as those of best practise. It emerges that for policy borrowing to produce desirable results it must be guided by strict guidelines. These include the awareness of information, policy ideas and policy approaches that are available. Secondly, the process should be guided by an in-depth assessment of the context in terms of its settings, the similarity of goals and problems and the factors influencing policy performance. Lastly, all these factors should be assessed and considered when the decision is made.

Literature further shows that the interaction of various factors can create a policy window, thus legitimising the policy borrowing practise. They include the incapacity of the SGB, which may render policy borrowing as a need rather than a preference. That being said, it emerged that the policy borrowing may negatively influence the policy process due to a number of factors. One is that the practise may compromise democracy by decreasing the space for participation. Due to policy alienation, borrowed policies may seldom be implemented, further hindering a fruitful policy process.

Although there are factors that influence schools to engage in policy borrowing there is still a need to explore it at school level as there is a dearth of literature on the phenomenon in the school context. Given that the practice is occurring, it may be difficult to stop schools from engaging in it. Therefore there should be principles guiding how it should be carried out for the outcomes to produce a fruitful policy process. My argument emanates from the importance of policy at the school level and that policy borrowing may directly or indirectly influence it. This study is hoping to close this gap by exposing real life experiences regarding policy borrowing drawing from two schools.

2.10 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter has provided debates on the phenomenon of policy borrowing. By initially conceptualising policy borrowing the concept was put into context. Following this was a discussion on the causes of the practice of policy borrowing which led to a debate on the importance of policy at the school level. A discussion of policy borrowing and its influence on the policy process was then discussed, followed by principles that guide policy borrowing. The next stage focused on the theoretical framework. Lastly a summation of emerging issues was presented to demonstrate why this study is further needed, given the literature on policy borrowing. The next chapter will focus on the research design and methodology used to conduct this study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter Two presented a review of literature and the theoretical framework underpinning this study. This chapter describes the research design and methodology used in conducting this study, as the outline of the plan and strategy followed to obtain the relevant answers to the research questions as presented in Chapter One.

The chapter begins with a discussion of the research paradigm under which this study is couched, followed by a discussion on qualitative research and procedures for the selection of participants, the data generation method and data analysis method. As part of methodology ethical issues, trustworthiness will be guided by Lincoln and Guba (1985).

The approach to the chapter is that the researcher presents the design and methodological choices and explains them through the literature. Thereafter, all design and methodological choices are justified to provide the reader with an understanding of why they were suitable for the study.

3.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM

Basit (2010) describes research paradigms as models, perspectives or conceptual frameworks that help the researcher to organise their thoughts, beliefs, views and practices into a logical whole. They signify a particular worldview that underpins what is acceptable to research and how such research should be conducted (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). After careful analysis of the positivist, post-positivist, post-modern, critical and interpretivist paradigm, this study is located within the interpretive paradigm. Interpretive research endeavours to understand the subjective world, human experience and what informs human behaviour within the scope of the chosen context (Cohen et al., 2011; Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). The nature of the study is such that an in-depth understanding is required from the participant's experiences in relation to the phenomenon of policy borrowing. The researcher acknowledges that these experiences are crafted from the participants' own personal interactions within the policy process in the given context. Such interpretations are bound by the context in which participants live.

The study explored policy borrowing at the school level, located within the interpretive paradigm and knowing the views of the participants are multifaceted and can only be informed by the participants' lived experiences within their context. Reality was therefore created through the views presented, based on their experiences. This makes the interpretive paradigm highly appropriate as interpretivists subscribe to the notion that the social world is focused on the subjective views of the research participants and enables the researcher to explain social reality as it is perceived and created by the research participants themselves (Basit, 2010)

This study interviewed different participants from different contexts in order to find multiple realities as constructed by the participants, based on their own context and their respective positions at school level.

3.3 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

The research design serves to identify and create the appropriate tools and procedures to successfully answer the research questions, well suited for the nature of the study (Kumar, 2011). A research design may adopt either a qualitative or quantitative approach. As the study focuses on exploring and understanding the meaning the participants ascribe to policy borrowing and “the purpose of this study is to achieve depth rather than breadth” (Basit, 2010, p.18), the qualitative approach is most suitable for this line of inquiry (Creswell, 2014). This approach is suitable for this kind of enquiry as the aim is to get an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon from the different perspectives of the participants. The naturalistic insight of exploring real-world situations as they unfold and evolve on a daily basis also makes the approach favourable for this line of enquiry. In addition, qualitative studies examine the meanings, perceptions, experiences and understandings of those involved in the activity or event being studied (Adams & Smith, 2003; Patton, 2001). Participants were drawn from schools engaging in the policy borrowing practise.

3.3.1 Case study methodology

Case studies have the ability to investigate and report the real-life, complex, dynamic and unfolding interactions of events, human relationships and other factors in a unique stance (Cohen et al.,

2011). Bertram and Christiansen (2014) characterise the nature of case studies as a style of research that aims to describe what it is like in particular situation and context. Single case studies make it possible to uncover rich descriptions and detailed experiences of the participants, and to gain insight on how they perceive and experience the phenomenon (Rule & John, 2011, Basit, 2010). Rule and John (2011) note shortcomings to this approach by arguing that although in-depth data can be obtained the findings cannot be generalised to other cases as there is no comparative dimension within the study. Due to these shortcomings, multiple case studies were explored, two in particular. It must however be noted that the intention was not to generalise but rather to compare and contrast the experiences of the participants according to their respective positions. As suggested above, the choice was also influenced by the intention to get a diverse range of data from the various contexts. The choice of the sites was also influenced by the geographical, organisational and institutional boundaries which couched the sites (Cohen et al., 2011).

Edmonds and Kennedy (2013) suggest that multiple case studies have the ability to allow the researcher to balance an in-depth understanding of each particular case under exploration whilst simultaneously achieving width in a form of sampling logic. In both schools the principal, deputy principal (only in the high school), HoDs and PL1 educators were interviewed, thus achieving the width outlined above. Both cases were selected based on the knowledge that they engaged in the policy borrowing approach in some instances. The case studies could therefore provide real-life experiences within the participants' respective contexts. The case study approach is also well aligned to the interpretive paradigm under which this study is underpinned.

Case studies are usually conducted in a naturalistic manner which can be easily understood by a wider audience because they are easily comprehensible and they speak for themselves. As intended by the paradigm the case study allows for the exposure and understanding of unique and key features which may otherwise be lost in large scale studies. They allow for thorough exploration because they can embrace the development on new and unanticipated themes and uncontrolled variables (Nisbet's & Watts, 1984). This flexibility allows the participants to shape the interview process, thus allowing the interviewer a more insightful account of the event being explored. The researcher sought to guide the discussion by introducing the broader questions and was guided by the participants' responses. The intention was to ensure that the participants' views and perspectives were central to the findings.

3.4 SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS / SAMPLING

The research sites and the participants within the school were selected purposively. Unlike random sampling, purposive sampling requires the use of discretion so as to select participants who will be able to advance the purpose of the research (Basit, 2010; Rule & John, 2011). According to Teddlie and Yu (2007) in Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011), this type of sampling involves a trade-off, which on one hand provides greater depth to the study and on the other provides less.

The schools, as the cases and research sites, were chosen because they were viewed as encapsulating a number of issues prevalent in the population relative to the phenomenon of policy borrowing (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). Common characteristics include both schools being no-fee paying public schools, situated in an RDP settlement area exhibiting some of the characteristics mentioned above, having a high learner enrolment and high learner-teacher ratio, inadequate floor space and limited resources. The schools were also an appropriate case because they engage in the policy borrowing practice. However, this does not warrant the researcher generalising the findings. After thorough investigation of the school context, the researcher deduced that the school had characteristics that were representative of other schools in similar contexts. Other considerations included accessibility and convenience regarding the location of the research sites and the high school has borrowed one of the policies from the primary school which resulted in the relationship being feeder school of the other. This allowed the researcher to understand the application of a borrowed policy and how this influenced the policy process.

Regarding the participants, the selection included two principals, one deputy principal (DP), two HoDs and four PL1 educators. The school management team (SMT) members (principals, deputy principal and HoDs) were selected because of the leadership roles they play in the formulation and implementation of policy. In particular, the principals as SGB members were selected based on the knowledge, interest and experience in relation to the policy process based on the roles prescribed for SGBs in the South African School Act. The PL1 included one teacher who also served as member of the SGB. This teacher was included because of knowledge of the policy process, as described above, but also as policy implementers on the ground. The composition of PL1 was also

inclusive of one site steward, viewed as having an intermediary role in the contestation and endorsement of policies and hence able to provide rich information in the school context. A novice educator was included so as to provide insight into experiences based on interaction, if any, with the policy process

The breadth of the policy process results in different stakeholders interacting with policy borrowing at different levels and in different intensities. The broadness of the participants' experiences was able to capture the different perspectives and experiences from different vantage points. An added benefit of using multiple participants is aligned to triangulation, which according to Rule and John (2011) is a means to producing high quality, rigorous and respectable research. Triangulation may be achieved by using multiple sources, as in this study, or by alternatively using other methods to support the findings that have been generated (Rule & John, 2011). The diversity of sources or methods strengthens the validity of the findings by eliminating bias and inaccuracy introduced by an overreliance on a single source or method (Rule & John, 2011). Contrary to this view, Van der Mescht (2002) argues that while the use of multiple sources can broaden the scope and produce a fuller picture, this does not necessarily equate with that picture being more accurate. Bertram and Christiansen (2014) propose that to create a more accurate account, triangulation may be intensified not only by consulting multiple sources but also by presenting the same question in more than one way. This approach was taken by the researcher in this study and applied at the initial interview phase and after the interviews. The researcher called and emailed the participants to clarify some of the views they had offered and to pose further questions on issues that had emerged.

3.5 DATA GENERATION METHODS

The function of the data generation instrument is to produce data that is required so as to provide answers to the research questions. Bertram and Christiansen (2014) refer to this as the fitness for purpose approach. As the research approach is qualitative, thick data descriptions are required to bring meaning to the phenomenon under exploration. To achieve this objective the study used semi-structured interviews.

According to Cohen et al., (2011), an interview is an interchange of views between two or more people on a topic of mutual interest. The function of interviews is to be able to obtain information on what a person knows, likes, dislikes or thinks about a certain phenomenon (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). Interviews seek the centrality of human interaction for knowledge production, and emphasise the social situatedness of research data (Cohen et al., 2011). The benefit of semi-structured interviews is that they are able to generate in-depth, descriptive data using few participants (Thompson & Walker, 2002; Neuman, 2006; Maree, 2007; Cohen et al., 2011). The nature of semi-structured interviews gave the researcher room for the expansion of information through probing and subsequently the clarification of information.

Moreover, the semi-structured interview allowed for understanding the participants' experiences, attitudes and values and preferences in relation to policy borrowing.

The interviews were administered on a one-on-one basis to allow the participants to speak freely, honestly and to comfortably share their views without fear of intimidation. Whilst conducting the interviews it became necessary to use both English and IsiZulu, which resulted in a better flow of the conversation and made the participants feel at ease. The interviews were conducted at the participants' convenience regarding time and venue after having set-up an appointment and provided them with the information sheet and a summary of what was expected from them. Each interview was allocated 60 minutes, which meant that ample time was afforded for the conversation. Whilst there was an easier flow of conversation with PL1 teachers, it was more challenging when interviewing SMT members due to power relations. This was countered by the researcher taking a neutral role as interviewer and not allowing the participants to influence the course of interviews by taking charge. As suggested by Neuman (2006), the quality of interviews depends on the researcher's ability and competence in asking questions. This came to play when researching upwards, as in the case of the SMT members. Other challenges encountered included the participants diverting off-topic, necessitating guiding them back to the topic.

3.6 DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURES

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) conceptualise the activity of qualitative data analysis as a process involving organising, accounting for and explaining the data: “In short, making sense of data in terms of the participants definitions of the situation, noting patterns, themes, categories and regularities” (p.537). Miles, Huberman and Saldana (2014) similarly suggest that data analysis involves reduction, presentation and the drawing of relevant conclusion based on the data.

The data was obtained through interviews which were recorded then transcribed following the transcription conventions. Data analysis began at the transcription phase. Whilst transcribing, the researcher was able to interact with the data and relive the interview. Gaps and silences were noted at this preliminary stage. The researcher was able to communicate with the participants and gain clarity, probe and discuss some of the issues that emerged. Because of the ability to obtain the full textual data, the data was reported *verbatim*. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) promote this approach because direct conversations can be immensely rich in data and detail.

Data was analysed for its nomothetic properties, seeking emergent and pre-ordinate patterns and trends and similarities (Cohen et al., 2011). Content analysis was used to bring meaning to the data, favoured because it has the ability to take any qualitative data, reduce it, and make–sense of the large volume of qualitative material, whilst attempting to identify core consistencies and meanings (Patton, 2002, in Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009). Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) similarly note that content analysis takes texts and analyses, reduces and interrogates them into summary form through the use of both pre-existing and emergent themes.

The text was broken into smaller units of analysis that were guided by the emergent themes then reduced through the identification of similarities, contradictions and inconsistencies. The data was presented in an economical way in the form of the findings which highlighted the most significant points that emerged (Cohen et al., 2011). Explanations and conclusions were made based on the evidence from the findings.

3.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

When conducting research it is vital that ethical considerations be taken into account. Apart from the moral perspective, when research is conducted in an ethically sound manner, the quality of the research is enhanced thus positively contributing to its trustworthiness: “Ethics are concerned with morale principles embraced in a society and have to do with behaviour that is considered right or wrong” (Rule & John, 2011, p. 111). The three ethical principles are autonomy, nonmaleficence and beneficence.

Autonomy requires that the researcher provide the participants with all the relevant information and allow them the right to choose whether or not to participate and to choose to withdraw from the study at any point they choose (Rule & John, 2011). In the study the researcher provided an information sheet (Appendix E) and explained to all participants the nature of the study and what was required of them. The participants were given an opportunity to ask for clarity on any issues they did not understand and were notified about the issue of withdrawal. As prescribed by Basit (2010), participation was voluntary and free from coercion. Permission was obtained from the school principals to conduct the study and also from the participants. Ethical clearance was provided by the University of KwaZulu-Natal and the DoE to endorse the researcher to conduct the study.

Other ethical aspects include issues of anonymity and confidentiality. Guided by Tolich (2001), the school and the participants were given the opportunity to choose their own pseudonyms to ensure that their identities would be protected. Regarding confidentiality, no information from a participant would be disclosed in any way that might enable the individual to be traced. All this ensured that the principle of non-maleficence was adhered to.

Beneficence was achieved as the findings of the study expanded the limited knowledge and literature based of policy borrowing at the school level. The guidelines on policy borrowing may be used by those schools engaging in the approach to enhance its effectiveness. Furthermore a model was proposed to guide those engaging or still wishing to engage in policy borrowing.

3.8 TRUSTWORTHINESS

Although qualitative research deals with subjective realities and people's interpretations of lived events it is still important that the research follows appropriate methods and processes so it can be rendered valid. Trustworthiness is a concept proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985) as an alternative to what Positivists call reliability and validity, with four criteria that can be used.

These are discussed as follows.

3.8.1 Credibility

Credibility endeavours to deal with the question of how congruent or accurate the findings are in reflecting the participant's reality through the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), ensuring credibility is one of most important criteria in establishing trustworthiness. Prior to the research, I consulted other studies that had dealt with the same phenomenon. I then employed a research design and methodology that was well established and commonly used by other researchers in exploring policy borrowing. Source triangulation was applied through the use of multiple participants and further taking an opportunity to ask the participants the same question in different ways, thus ensuring that a full and clear description was obtained (Shenton, 2004; Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). The first aspect helped me to confirm whether the data collected from the sources was consistent or inconsistent (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). As further suggested by Bertram and Christiansen (2014), I used a tape recorder to record all the interviews verbatim, to get more accurate transcripts. Shenton (2004) argues that this approach can be an important provision for promoting credibility as it helps to convey the actual situations that have been investigated and, to an extent, the contexts that surround them. The recordings were personally transcribed and replayed to ensure that they captured the interviews correctly. Other aspects included informing participants that ensuring anonymity and confidentiality was guaranteed and this resulted in them responding honestly and giving their in-depth views on the issue. The final stage involved member checking which entailed analysing the data and then getting an opportunity to first clarify the participants views and adding on the new information based on the new responses they had provided. This was performed after the interviews had been transcribed.

3.8.2 Transferability

Transferability has emerged as an alternative provided for what the positivists refer to as generalisability or external validity of a study (Rule & John, 2011). According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), transferability is concerned with the extent to which the findings of one study can be applied to other situations. There are conflicting views in this regard. Shenton (2004) argues that transferability is not possible as observations are defined by specific contexts. Other writers (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Bertram & Christiansen, 2014) argue that transferability is possible because a specific context represents a broader group. This is because, as proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985), it is up to the reader, rather than the original investigator, to determine if the findings can be transferred or applied to another setting. These scholars add that as long as the original researcher presents sufficient descriptive data to allow comparison, he or she has addressed the problem of transferability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The researcher followed this guideline by providing a thick description of the phenomenon and the context under study. Although, the intention is not to generalise the findings of the study but through a thick description of the context and the occurrences in the context, those interested in understanding why policy borrowing happens, particularly those in similar contexts, may learn from this study.

3.8.3 Dependability

For Rule and John (2011), dependability strives to assess methodological rigour and coherence deployed to the activity of generating findings and case accounts which can be accepted with confidence in the research community. Shenton (2004) suggests that dependability can be assured by providing an in-depth coverage that allows the reader to assess the extent to which proper research practices have been followed. Guided by Shenton (2004) and Rule and John (2011), in the research design and methodology chapter I provided sufficient and extensive information on the research design, its implementation and also on the data collection method. To ensure dependability, triangulation of sources was employed. Prolonged engagement was exercised during interviews. Member checking was also conducted after the interviews as the researcher called the participants at a convenient time to clarify issues and probe further on new issues that had emerged. The plan was to return to the participants to confirm whether the transcripts were representative of what they were conveying, but due to time constraints this was not possible.

3.8.4 Confirmability

Rule and John (2011) borrow from Guba (1981) and offer the view that confirmability is a means “to address concerns about the researcher’s influences and biases on the study” (p.107). According to Shenton (2004), it can be achieved if steps are taken to help ensure as far as possible that the work’s findings are the result of the experiences and ideas of the participants, rather than the characteristics and preferences of the researcher. During data collection and during data analysis the researcher maintained a neutral position in order to ensure that analysis and interpretation was not disrupted by personal views. Although I do not support policy borrowing in the form that I have seen it unfold I shifted focus to the experiences of the participants as opposed to my own. I tried not to impose my own understanding by continually asking the participants if the interpretation was accurate and by engaging in member checking.

This ensured that the findings were generated from the participants’ point of view, not my own personal views.

3.9 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter has presented the research design and methodology followed in conducting this study. Issues regarding the research paradigm and the research approach and methodology were discussed, followed by a dialogue on the data generation method and the data analysis approach respectively. Trustworthiness and its respective criteria were then presented followed by a discussion on the selection of the research site and the participants. A dialogue on ethical considerations was followed by an outline of the limitations.

The next chapter provides a detailed presentation and discussion of the data.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Having provided an account of the research design and methodology used this chapter serves to present and discuss the findings that emerged from the interviews. This will unfold under two themes guided by the research questions, each consisting of sub-themes:

- Stakeholders' perspectives towards the practice of policy borrowing.
- The factors influencing schools to engage in the policy borrowing practice.

Prior to the presentation of the themes a profiling of the participants will be presented so as to outline the position each participant holds at the school. This is important as the participants expressed their views based on their unique experiences and interactions with the policy process relative to the position they hold and the level of influence or non-influence they have in the policy process.

4.2 PROFILING OF RESEARCH SITE AND PARTICIPANTS

One school is a primary school and the other a high school, both located in the Pinetown District. The geographical area is characterised by high levels of poverty and unemployment and low literacy rates. Although the schools are not in close proximity regarding their distance, the primary school is the feeder school for the high school, a relationship established due to similar school cultures and policies that have been institutionalised. Both were characterised by a high enrolment with the high school having 1,500 learners and the primary school having 1,100 learners respectively. They had a similar composition of staff and learners regarding race, and both were no-fee public schools.

Table 4.1: Participants Profiles

SCHOOL A: HIGH SCHOOL		SCHOOL B: PRIMARY SCHOOL	
Name	Position	Name	Position
Sizwe	Principal	Lungile	Principal
Zama	Deputy Principal	Zamani	HoD
Khanyi	HoD/ Site Steward	Rato	PL1/Site Steward
Mnqobi	PL1/SGB	Sihle	PL1

Zodwa	PL1(novice)		
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The names are pseudonyms used during data generation in order to ensure participant anonymity.

4.3 STAKEHOLDERS' PERSPECTIVES TOWARDS POLICY BORROWING

The intention here was to understand whether stakeholders perceived the policy borrowing approach as an acceptable practice or not. Complex views emerged which could be coherently understood within the context of the participants' understanding of policy and its significance at the school level and in the environments in which they operated. Therefore, in trying to understand the participants' perspectives on whether policy borrowing was an acceptable practice or not, it became necessary first to elicit their understanding of policy and its role in general. Only then was it possible to gain an insight into whether they viewed the policy borrowing approach as acceptable, and the reasons associated with each perspective.

The discussion around the participants' understanding of the roles of policy is presented under the theme "Participants' understanding of the role of policy in the school". In analysing the perspectives, it emerged that there were two sets of perspectives, one which showed that the practice of policy borrowing is not acceptable and one which supported it. To present these perspectives two themes are used, namely policy borrowing as an acceptable approach and policy borrowing as unacceptable approach. Prior to engaging in these two main aspects the participants' understanding of the role of policy and the participants' disregard for the authority of policy is discussed.

4.3.1 Participants' understanding of the role of policy in the school

The views presented by participants around the role of policy in the school showed that there are multiple roles played by policy and the views elaborated on the purpose for the use of policy. It emerged strongly that policy was a tool to direct, control and regulate behaviour, so as to achieve effective school governance. The following responses provide evidence for the finding:

Sihle (PL1): *According to my knowledge school policies are there to direct, to give direction to a school because everywhere if there are no policies there won't be any progress happening in that institution. So it is important that there policies so they can be followed so there can be progress.*

Sizwe (Principal): *School policy is important for regulation and control. As a manager you need to a tool to guide and manage behaviour. Policy outlines how things should be done, when they should be done and by whom they should be done. Policy is also developed to respond to certain problems and challenges.*

Zamani (HoD): *Policy is such that people must stick to it so that the school can be organised and controllable.*

Khanyi (HoD/Site Steward): *The policy is important in terms of running the school efficiently, for things to run smoothly policy is important.*

Zodwa: *School policy is very important because it governs the school basically. It [is] what keeps the school organised, and structured.*

Similarly, literature reviewed (Brynard & de Coning, 2004; Colebatch, 2006) suggests that policy is a means to establish the parameters of and directions of action. The position held by the participants that suggests a positive relationship between policy and effective school governance is grounded on the notion that policy is a process that involves the recognition of a problem and the formulation of a strategy or guiding principles to deal with and respond to the particular problem (Taylor, Fazal, Lingard & Henry, 1997). The clear understanding of policy might persuade one to believe that stakeholders respect the authority associated with policy. The converse of this was however uncovered in the conversations with participants. The emerging issues in these conversations are presented below.

4.3.1.1 Disregard of policy

Unlike the unanimous understanding that participants held regarding the role of policy, there were inconsistent views on whether stakeholders had respect for its authority. The faction that held this view attributed disrespect to various factors, including poor leadership, inconsistency in the application of disciplinary measures, poor relations amongst staff and the SMT, lack of support from the DBE in applying disciplinary measures, lack of participation in the policy process, and, predominantly, union support. The literature that was reviewed was silent on the issue and did not indicate whether stakeholders respected the authority of policy and focused on policy perspectives

at the macro-level rather than within context of South African schools. The stakeholders had the following to say:

Rato (PL1/Site Steward) and Sizwe (Principal): strongly felt that union mediation influenced teachers to disregard the prescriptions of policy. The following statements were provided:

Rato (PL1/Site Steward): *Other people rebel because they know, like for example there are unions. The union has an obligation to defend its member even if they know that the member is on the wrong side. Sometimes others rebel because they know they are not the ones who will be answering in the mediation, because they have a union that will defend them.*

Sizwe (Principal): *This (referring to disrespect of policy) is not just an epidemic in the teaching sector; it's the public sector in general. There is no respect for policy. This starts because we do not enforce policies even the Departmental policies. Teachers know that they are protected by their unions.*

Moreover on a similar tone, **Sizwe (Principal) and Lungile (Principal):** offered the following the views:

Sizwe (Principal): *They do understand it but that doesn't mean that they value it. You see, we come from a system where everything was prescribed to us and now we are expected to make decisions on our own. The problem is we tend not to respect the very same decisions that we take.*

Lungile (Principal): *I don't think we take policies seriously. It is our background. It starts from the school then eventually it translates to officials who are manning the school. Because the background was poor initially when they started school and when they completed school. So now the background, the mind-set is not geared towards studying policies and understanding that policy guides practise.*

In addition to this statement **Sizwe (Principal)** added:

If you work according to policy you are labelled as a heartless person and even the very Department that is supposed to assist you in enforcing that policy seldom supports you. If you follow procedures of trying to dismiss a teacher there is red-tape and also a danger aspect as that teacher can cause you harm.

Zama (Deputy Principal) offered the following view related to inconsistency in the application of policy:

If we as management are not consistent, when you treat person one differently from person two and people are watchful. Person three you treat them differently, than it becomes very difficult to exercise the school policy, as long as you're not consistent. If there is a policy then there should be applied with consistency.

Similarly **Mnqobi (PL1/SGB)** noted the following regarding enforcing the disciplinary measures outlined in policies:

...you really don't get any disciplinary action as a teacher or SMT member if you do not follow the school policy. You need to be disciplined.

Zodwa (PL1-novice) felt that lack of proper induction and mentorship into the school resulted in divergent behaviour. This was seen in the following statement:

It because they take it lightly, and the reason why they take it lightly is the result of not being informed properly. You hear from other people that there is a policy for this, but still retain that ,ok, but nobody ever came to me directly and told me that this is a policy for this and that, so you should follow this and that. So they will take it lightly and advantage of that fact, and not follow the procedure.

The view offered by **Sihle (PL1)** suggested that the authority of policy had been diminished because the policies that were said to be in place were not implemented:

But on the other hand, you know our school has been operating with no policy ever since I arrived here and we are still surviving. So, maybe the role of policy is not as important as I think it is.

Sihle (PL1) further offered the following comment regarding lack of participation in the policy process:

It must not be that only a selected few who are chosen to do policies pertaining to the whole school because. We, as adults and teachers should be involved, only then will we respect it and take it seriously. You cannot make a policy without telling me or making, me aware of it. Maybe I can also have input. I think everybody involved meaning the teachers, staff has to be there.

The view offered by Sihle reconciles with the view echoed by various authors. Brown and Duku (2008), Bhengu (2012) and Bayeni (2012) argue that people participation is an essential component in gaining support and giving legitimacy to the policy process. Such participation builds commitment towards the policy goals and the results of the process are enhanced. Participation will yield to efficiency and it will lead to the achievement of effective delivery of the intended outcomes (DoE, 1996b).

These findings show that the stakeholders share different perspectives on the respect for policy even though some were based in the same school. As discussed in Chapter 3, this is the intricate nature of interpretive research which aims at understanding the subjective world, to understand human experience and to understand what informs human behaviour within the scope of the chosen

context (Cohen et al., 2011; Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). Such contradictions are therefore acceptable as the nature of the study accepts the notion of multiple realities. Against this backdrop it became possible to understand the multiple views that the participants held on whether policy borrowing was an acceptable practice.

4.3.2 Policy borrowing as an acceptable practice

As stated above, participants were not consistent in holding one opinion on the issues that were under discussion. Based on their understanding of policy and influenced by their contextual experiences some believed that the policy borrowing approach was an acceptable practice. They provided several reasons, including one that borrowing of policy was offering opportunities to learn from other schools. They noted that there were some issues that hindered successful implementation of policies and schools were functioning without written policies, which meant they could have them taken from other schools for the sake of having them. A detailed discussion of these issues is provided in the themes presented in the next section.

4.3.2.1 Policy borrowing as an opportunity to learn

Although there were more negative aspects than positive, as will be shown, most of the participants acknowledged that policy borrowing created an opportunity to learn from others. This opportunity availed itself when schools witnessed the good performance of other schools and wanted to emulate their practices so they could improve their own performance. Participants felt that learning encompassed understanding of how other schools did things and how this translated to improved learner outcomes. Learning, however, could only be realised with certain considerations, such as an evaluation of the context from which the policy was to be borrowed. In the literature review, Phillips (2000) acknowledged that in such instances there is a commitment to rigorous examination of the external context, because of an intention to find practicable solutions that can produce more efficient and effective policy outcomes (Ochs, 2005; Marsh & Sharman, 2009). Learning can take on many forms, with some more intense and effective than others. The views offered by the stakeholder represented this factor of learning in different ways.

Lungile (Principal) took this simple approach to learning:

We can look at them and they can serve as a guideline as to how to formulate our own policy.

Zama (Deputy Principal) offered the offered the following comment:

You must take some aspects which befit your school, but not to take the whole document and do cut and paste. I am totally against that, because at the end of the day you are not in the learning curve, if you are compiling a policy you are in part of a learning curve. You need to deliberate and argue with others and say this must not be like that so that it should befit us all and own it.

Mnqobi (PL1/SGB) had the following to say:

I think it helps in a way ...my child goes to School X and they are using something that is good like their school uniform policy... So as Blacks schools it helps us to become more westernised. So it builds us. But the issue of detention we cannot do it because you will make learners come out at five o'clock and maybe they get raped and you will get into trouble. Yet learners in White schools know that their parents will come and pick them up. We need to make a mechanism that by four o'clock the learner is out for safety issues. There are instances where we can take those ones like school uniform and discipline where we need to be strict and call in the parent.

Khanyi (HoD/ Site Steward) presented the following vantage point:

I think networking as HoDs is very important maybe to improve your marks or results in your department, I do not see as something wrong to go and check how others are working like as an HoD in terms of recording, I do go outside to other schools that are performing better and functioning in a good way so it important to go and check how they do it. Not only for the department even for the school as well, if I see a school performing well I would also like to see as well, there is a unit they are able to control the learners and educators so I don't think it's wrong that I go and see how they operate things... so when you learn you copy and do as them.

Zodwa (PL1-novice) advanced the following perspective:

I would first look for similarities between School A and School B. firstly, if I am going to look for the policy that I am going to borrow, I must find a school that is similar to the one that I want to borrow from and implement the borrowed policies. Because it doesn't work if I am going to find a random school that doesn't function the way my school functions. I need to find a school that works exactly like mine, they have to be at least very similar and find that school's policy as well is not borrowed. They must have sat down and researched theirs, and have put in time and effort to make up this policy of theirs and that it is working.

The comments suggest that the stakeholders viewed policy borrowing as offering an opportunity to learn. The learning that was described by most of the participants simply involved either looking at or checking the policies of other schools then using those in one's own school, or as a guide to construct one's own school policy. Literature cautions against this simplistic approach and notes

that there may be shortcomings due to what is termed “loose coupling” in which there is differentiation between an envisioned and an enacted policy and, as a consequence, between how a policy looks on paper and how it is implemented (Steiner-Khamsi, 2014).

Mnqobi and Zodwa as shown in the previous comments placed emphasis on the issue of context. The findings show that what happens in literature is similarly applicable to practice. In the discussion of the theoretical framework, scholars (Phillips, 2000; Ochs & Phillips, 2002; Phillips & Ochs, 2004) acknowledge the significance of context and argue that it is of crucial importance to the development of education systems and policies. The argument advanced here regarding the consideration of context in the policy borrowing process will receive more analysis in the subsequent themes. The next discussion focuses on policy borrowing being viewed as an appropriate approach based on the experiences stakeholders viewed as hindering policy implementation.

4.3.2.2 Policy borrowing: “an easier approach to policy formulation”

In the discussion of policy borrowing and its influence on the policy process, policy implementation is presented as an activity that is concerned with the actions of individuals or groups directed to achieve the outcomes as directed by the objectives (van Wyk & Marumoloa, 2012). As previously discussed, there are a number of issues that result in stakeholders having disregard for policy. Following from that, it emerged that in the school context there are a number of obstacles that result in policy not being enforced. This lack of follow through on policy prescriptions and the inability to enforce policy hinders the implementation of policy. Based on this non-implementation some stakeholders felt that the policy borrowing practice presented a much easier way to have policy documents in place as per requirement by the DBE.

These additional views were offered:

Zamani (HoD):

I think it's much better to just take other schools policies because we have a norm of not doing things by the book. So we can't invest time on an activity when we know very well that the policy that we come up with will not be used.

Sihle (PL1):

The ones they practise are immediate like when there is a situation they think of what has to be done. It's not something that is documented, written down stating that if something like this happens these are the steps to be followed. It's just a thing that is made up at that time not something that ...in a way they can end up asking each other and each person has their own opinion and they can end up taking the best opinion which was never agreed upon.

The comments offered by Zamani and Sihle reveal that in practice stakeholders within the school seldom use policy to guide practice. This could be linked to the disregard of policy or to the issues that have been provided as hindering the implementation of policy. Based on the further probing it emerged that some stakeholders preferred policy borrowing because they felt that their school was able to function in the absence of policy.

4.3.2.3 “We are functioning without policy”

The study reveals that the ability of schools to function without policies was seen as factor that caused them to think borrowed policies could be accepted. Given this they felt that policy borrowing was acceptable as policies in general were not aligned to address the challenges they faced. They therefore did not see the need to invest their time in policy formulation. “We are functioning without policy” is a bold statement and it brings into question what the participants view as being a functional school, however that was not the scope of the enquiry in this instance. The stakeholders who added a comment in this regard gave various reasons for deducing that their schools were functioning without policy. Based on this ability to function in the absence of policy, they viewed the policy borrowing approach as acceptable.

Mnqobi (PL1/SGB) offered the following comment:

You know, culturally we are used to the oral tradition. We are not really people who rely on what is written down but we rely on what we are told and what we see happening.

Ever since I came to this school I really don't remember getting inducted on the policy but I see what is expected through what I am told and what actually happens. It's not what is

written down that is important. It is what happens that matters, and that is teaching and learning is taking place.

Sizwe (Principal) shared the following:

Another thing, I see even with the Department policy it should not be the same. They must look at the different contexts like in rural areas and suburbs it can't be the same. It should be different. So that is why we are able to cope without policies because if we used the guidelines by the Department they are just not culturally sensitive. We hardly refer to the policy. We use other methods. They may be wrong but they work because teachers are still teaching and learners are still learning. At the end of the day that is the goal for a school.

Zodwa (PL1-novice) offered the following comment:

Well it comes to dealing with matters as to when they arise, thinking on your feet. Now this has happened, I know for a fact that this policy what it says about this thing is not going to be effective, and it not going to get the necessary resolution that I want for this situation. We are still functioning, the enrolment is high and the results are good. So what's the use of policy?

The perspectives that were offered give an indication that stakeholders felt that in their contexts the applicable policies that could be formed guided by the DBE policies were unable to address the unique challenges and problems they faced. It emerged that, regardless of policy, they were able to achieve the basic goals of schooling, namely teaching and learning.

The vantage point of seeing the policy borrowing practice, in the way understood by the stakeholders, as an acceptable practice infers that stakeholders may understand the theoretical value of policy as expressed in the first theme. From the views offered, however, it is evident that in practice the application of policy is not necessarily the main ingredient that ensures that teaching and learning takes place within the school. The stakeholders suggested that their respective schools had been able to cope and function in the absence of policy documented and formulated within the school. Mngqobi suggests a broader view in understanding what policy actually is, as not necessarily what is documented but what happens. The narrow interpretation of policy being interpreted as a process that involves different stages can therefore be challenged based on the evidence presented by the stakeholders. Perspectives of those who view policy borrowing as an unacceptable approach will be next focus of the presentation.

4.3.3 Policy borrowing as an unacceptable practice

Whilst there were those who believed there were some merits in the policy borrowing approach there were others who felt that it was an unacceptable practice. Their reasons were that borrowed policies remained symbolic and were not implemented. They were insensitive to the inherited context and hindered the process of stakeholder participation in the policy processes.

4.3.3.1 Borrowed policies are symbolic

There are participants who strongly assert that in most cases borrowed policies remained symbolic, borrowed with no intention of being implemented. Policies were only there to comply with the expectations of the DBE and not to influence practice. The participants stated that those responsible for ensuring that policies were available in the school borrowed for the sake of presenting them when required to do so by government officials. In this way these policies were not used as they had not been borrowed with the intention of being used, a process referred to as ‘mimicry’, or copying foreign models in terms of symbolic or normative factors rather than a technical or rational concern with functional efficiency (Marsh & Sharman, 2009). In this case the foreign context refers to the school from which the policy is borrowed. The following views were shared:

Khanyi (HoD/ Site Steward):

...In most African schools they are only doing it for compliance because when you get to look at their policy and what is happening, it does not go hand in hand... we sometimes do that and we do not implement that policy.

Sihle (PL1) added as follows:

It (policy) is something that is not practised. I think they are merely doing it to fill up information that is not used because you cannot have a policy that you do not know how it was formulated and what was the intention behind formulating it.

Zama (Deputy Principal) shared the following perspective:

Sometimes you find that the policies are not known by the teachers in the school and only known by the principal, and the principal is only keeping them for the sake that if the employer wants them.

Zamani (HoD) added:

...the purpose of taking the policy is because they are forced to have it. They take it for the sake of having it not for the purpose of using it. So they don't implement it.

The views presented above indicate that the borrowed policies were taken out of a need to comply but with no intention of implementing. Taking a policy as a means of complying is referred to as ‘coercion’, and has a direct relationship with mimicry. As Marsh and Sharman (2009) stated, when the policy is borrowed from these reference societies (schools that are high performers and have a good image), the act of borrowing is undertaken so that the borrowing school may be perceived by others and themselves as “being advanced, progressive and morally praiseworthy” (p. 272). This was echoed by the stakeholders.

Rato (PL1/Site Steward) was of this view:

There are some schools that are totally dysfunctional, but on paper they have the best policy. When the inspectors come they are fooled by the policies yet this is not the true impression of the school.

Mnqobi (PL1/SGB) shared the following comment:

The problem is the whole system by the Department. They need a tool that will help them assess school functionality. Schools take the policies of other schools so they can be viewed as advanced. When you actually go to the school you realise there is no order whatsoever. They do not even know the very same policies they presented to the inspector.

The argument of symbolism that has been discussed above was in some instances influenced by the borrowed policies being unable to respond to the needs of the context to which they had been lent. The next theme will explore this further.

4.3.3.2 Borrowed policies are context-insensitive

Drawing from the participants, it can be argued that schools are unique and their policy needs are determined by their environmental dynamics. Based on this assumption, policies borrowed from school A may not respond to the needs of School B as they operate under different circumstances. In a discussion on principles guiding policy borrowing, Mossberger and Wolman (2003) advise that thorough assessment of the context needs to be conducted to see the differences and similarities, and to analyse why some policies have been more successful than others in different contexts. This is because the merit of the policy that will be emulated can be judged through an evaluation of the extent to which it has proven successful in a context characterised by significant similarities, with it having addressed a similar problem (Mossberger & Wolman, 2003). This makes the issue of context an important consideration in the policy borrowing process. Views

offered by the stakeholders expressed a lack of consideration of context. Some were of the view that the reference societies or, in this context, the reference schools from which the policies were copied had no comparability. Comparability factors include geographical, historical or cultural proximity, prestige and performance (Werning Rivera, 2004). The act of borrowing therefore resulted in irrelevant policies which were not responsive or sensitive to the home context being borrowed. These are some of the views that were presented:

Lungile (Principal) offered the following view:

Each and every school faces unique challenges. If you take a policy from an ex Model C school that policy might work there but it will not work in our environment. The staff and learner composition are totally different, the resources are totally different, and the environment there is conducive for learning. Here we have an issue of floor space, overcrowded classrooms and so on. They do not face those challenges.

Sizwe (Principal) made the following comment emphasising the important of context:

You must look at the environment of the school that is very important. The learner population must be the same and the community must be similar. This is because if these factors are different the policy might not work in the particular school it is being borrowed too. The staff composition is also important to consider. You cannot introduce something that needs expertise that your staff does not have. We have learnt not to be persuaded by the image of schools that look good on paper but do not produce good results. Also we cannot look at ex Model C schools the resources in terms of infrastructure and financial resources is way beyond what we have. The SGB component as well has professionals who can further support the school through their various expertise. We do not have that.

Khanyi (HoD/ Site Steward) commented on the different cultural norms:

For example there is a school ...where my son went for orientation and when he came back he said for Grade Twelve they should be greeted as 'Sir' by the Grade Eight learners. The culture here or environment rather if that were to happen it would become a joke (laughter) there would even be more chaos, but I like it, it very good. But I just can't use it here.

Zamani (HoD) made mention of the disjuncture between policy and practice:

It is (policy borrowing) not right because you must make your own policy because you know your needs in your school. Policy is formulated according to the situation and context. So you have to formulate it yourselves. If you take somebody else's policy the contexts are not the same... It is better if you do it on your own because you understand your context and if you formulate a policy it must speak to your situation. You know a simple thing like calling in a parent. Our policy says we must send a letter with the learner and provide the parent with the time at which they should arrive. This is what we have

observed happening in ex Model C schools. Reality is parents come in as they please. You in the middle of a lesson and they will come. You cannot turn them away because that is the norm.

Rato (PL1/Site Steward) touched on the idea that policy was guided by the vision and mission of the school:

So if the policy is borrowed that means that the vision and mission is also borrowed, because the policy is built based on the environment in which the school is situated and the vision and mission. If you can take a policy from Durban North you will find that it won't work in a school situated in the informal settlement because of resources, infrastructure, socio-economic class; and again the policy is influenced by the culture of the children that you are teaching... For example, in Black schools you will find that the policy says that our learners must shave their hair, only to find that there are children affiliated to Shembe religion, thus they cannot shave their hair.

Mngqobi (PL1/SGB) touched on the issue of awareness of how a policy may interact with the environment:

Discipline is a major issue. Our policy says we should detain learners and this is something that is a norm in ex Model C schools. But the issue of detention we cannot do it because you will make learners come out late and maybe they get raped and you will get into trouble. Also our learners some are parents, they have children, some come from child headed-homes, so how do you detain that learner. As well as the issue of security, which teacher will stay behind because this area is not safe? There is safety in numbers. Yet learners in White schools know that their parents will come and pick them up and the school is secure or they have transport and so on.

It is therefore important to have a thorough knowledge of the context and the location in which the policy has been (Mossberger & Wolman, 2003). This requires a broad and in-depth interrogation of the context one wishes to borrow from. The issues raised show that borrowed policies, as discussed under the previous theme, remain symbolic. The reference to ex-Model C schools suggests that they are the ones viewed as reference schools. As noted by Phillips (2000), the popularity surrounding ideas of the superiority of other approaches to education has been seen to persuade others to adopt educational reforms from these contexts. However, as expressed through the views presented, incomparability of context results in these policies remaining symbolic as they are unable to address or speak to the challenges and needs of the environments to which they have been lent. Lack of stakeholder participation is the next point of discussion.

4.3.3.3 Policy borrowing hinders stakeholder participation

Literature (Brown & Duku 2008; Bayeni, 2012; Bhengu, 2012) has shown that participation in the policy formulation process ensures that all stakeholders have a sense of ownership for policies. Responses from the interviews echoed similar sentiments with stakeholders expressing that the manner in which policy borrowing was facilitated resulted in them being excluded from participating in the agenda setting and policy formulation stages where they could influence decisions. Room for participation was only available at the implementation stage when they were presented with policies and told to implement them. The manner in which the policy process unfolded resulted in stakeholders being unwilling to implement them. So in cases in which some schools wished to implement borrowed policies they failed to do so because of a lack of ownership and because these policies were not practicable and therefore could not respond to contextual dynamics. Research (Brown & Duku 2008, Bayeni, 2012; Bhengu, 2012) has shown that stakeholders want to be involved. They provided the following views as evidence to support the arguments made above:

Mnqobi (PL1/SGB) shared the following sentiments:

We must negotiate on policy and all agree. That is what democracy is. What happens is you are just given a policy and told to do this as if you have no capacity to contribute to issues that will affect you. If you do that I will say, well it's your policy, you follow it.

The lack of participation resulted in lack of ownership of the borrowed policy. **Rato (PL1/Site Steward)** offered this view:

...that is why I have a problem when the school borrows (that is why I use the word "plagiarism") because it not something that you own, you borrowed somebody else's work. Now, how would you even be committed to that policy? Because it is not yours.

Sihle (PL1) had the following perspective:

I think everybody should be involved...the whole staff has to be there so opinions can come from different people. It must not be that only a selected few who are chosen to do policies pertaining to the whole school ...You cannot make a policy without telling me or making me aware of it.

Zama (Deputy Principal) commented on the role of the teacher SGB component in disseminating information and facilitating participation of teachers in decision-making:

... in the SGB there is a component of educators, they are representing us. Since they are representing us, whatever they take as a decision it does not become a verdict, it just a

decision. They must come back and consult with us, but sometimes that does not happen. You will find that some of the things are happening, but the responsibility lies with those who are with the SGB, to come and tell us that this is going to happen.

The findings are congruent with what is observed in literature. Lack of participation in the policy process, especially in the policy formulation phases, resulted in policy alienation, which occurs when workers have little or no influence on the strategic planning and thus results in feelings of powerlessness and policy meaningless (Tummers, Bekkers & Stiejn, 2009). These adverse feelings have been known to yield policy resistance and non-implementation, as noted in the responses provided by Sihle and Rato.

The views expressed above were foregrounded on a belief that participation in the policy process would lead to policy ownership. Allowing people to participate and engage significantly in the policy process is a legitimate basis for its authority, as the legitimacy of decisions depends on the degree to which those affected by them have been involved in the decision-making process and have had the opportunity to influence the outcomes (Gale, 2003; Dieltiens, 2005). It is reasonable that these policies are not accepted as the process of acquiring them is not participative.

Zama (Deputy Principal) offered the following strategy regarding the use of the policy borrowing approach in an inclusive and participatory way:

But unpacking is very important I agree, the policy says this but for the sake of our school...I am talking about principles, when it principles you can say we can bend but a policy cannot. So that the people can own it, you need to consult in a level of management, down to the level of educators and parents involvement. You don't just call parents to the meeting to talk about monies, you need to call the parents for the policies, where we are going to say this is the school policy and do you understand it; if they don't understand it than where can it be amended. We don't bend the policy, we amend it.

In light of the current *status quo* of policy being borrowed and being imposed, **Zodwa (PL1novice)** felt that there was lack of morale and commitment to engaging meaning in the policy process:

Of course! The ship is sinking and you want to keep the ship afloat. So, of course I think it would be great, but I fear that a lot of my colleagues have gotten so used to this mode, that probably I maybe the only one who is willing to sit down and work, because that what I feel will be hard work, because you will have to start from the ground and build this thing

up, and it will take time and a lot of personal time of which a lot of colleagues do not want to give.

The diverse views seem to suggest that although the shortcomings of policy borrowing are evident and the benefits of participation known, there seems to be a lack of commitment in engaging in policy processes. This could be due to the disregard of policy or perhaps, put in other terms, the challenges associated with enforcing policy at the school level.

Findings that have been analysed and presented have shown that the stakeholders had positive and negative perspectives towards policy borrowing. The participants, even those who were against the use of policy, provided in-depth views on reasons for schools to engage in the process of policy borrowing.

4.4 REASONS SCHOOLS USE THE POLICY BORROWING APPROACH

In Chapter Two of the dissertation the literature discourse presented different factors that influence countries to use the policy borrowing approach, for example, to learn and find realistic solutions, because of coercion or pressure from external forces, or as a means to please officials or to mimic other schools by merely having policy text that is considered praiseworthy but that is not used. The decision to borrow may be due to a lack of leadership in facilitating a fruitful policy process. As evidenced by the participants' responses and suggested by literature, it is difficult to draw distinct lines separating each from the other (Marsh & Sharman, 2009). They may operate as separate entities or work in an additive way to influence the decision to borrow (Marsh & Sharman, 2009). For the sake of presentation each of the sub-themes will be discussed separately.

4.4.1 Learning from the best practice

Despite this practice being perceived as unacceptable by most of the participants in this study some revealed that where one school is the best another can learn from it. One way to learn from high performing schools is to observe through their policies what they do and how they do it. It also emerged that when schools are in a similar environment, with similar circumstances, similar policies can be used.

In the discussion of learning as a cause for borrowing in Chapter Two, Philips (2000) note that learning involved sourcing successful methods and techniques that have been used elsewhere, with the intention of introducing them in one's own context. International literature cites countries that are used as international benchmarks as reference societies. The characteristics of attraction to other countries include comparability, whether geographical, historical or cultural proximity; prestige and performance (Werning Rivera, 2004). In the school context it can be seen that schools would use other schools as exemplars and want to copy their policy with the intention of producing desired outcomes, provided that these schools share the characteristics mentioned above. Most of the participants supported this line of thought, however, from the responses the characteristics of attraction seemed to have a hierarchal weighting. Performance and prestige were the most important characteristics, with comparability hardly being considered in the decision to borrow. The following comments were offered:

Lungile (Principal) echoed the following sentiments:

I think as a school we should modify ... to suit and meet the children's experience and background. It's a modification, they are good and we can learn from them because they have been successful in other schools. But what we should do is we should look at them study them and modify them to suit our own environment. Apart from the environment we must know what that policy was trying to address because we do not have the same challenges even though we may be in the same contexts.

Sihle (PL1) shared the following:

Maybe what you can do is you can look at them and compare what is suitable for your school which one is suitable for your school. The thing is in this school for example I do not think they have ever drafted policy from scratch. Or rather let me say I have never been part of that process. So we can use the policies of other schools to guide us. But of course if we are serious about it we must look at schools that have a similar context to ours.

Similarly **Rato (PL1/Site Steward)** stated:

What I am saying is that you can take the policy because maybe do not know how a policy is combined. In such cases you can than collect policies from different schools just to get an idea. So that if the school is doing it policy, what is it that we need to do.

Sizwe (Principal) noted as follows:

You know when I did the PDMP I realised that it is important to network and learn from others. But learning is more than just reading something on paper. If we want to learn regarding a policy we need to go to the site and understand the context, what the policy

was responding too, how it was implemented and what factors resulted in its success or failure. Then in that case we can use the policy borrowing approach to learn and maybe do as that school is doing.

As attractive as this may seem the participants expressed the view that such undertakings should be taken with caution and certain considerations made. All of the participants brought up the issue of context as an important variable to be considered. Learning could only produce fruitful results by being mindful of the context and interacting with the policy, not just on a superficial level but also through engagement with those who had used it, as expressed by Sizwe. No matter how dynamic a policy solution may appear, there would be contextual factors that would cause its success or failure. Phillips (2000) asserts that approaches that were sought are those whose success was not based on a variety of contextual factors. As advised in the theoretical framework section, this entails assessing foreign policy regarding contextual factors and its feasibility for implementation (Phillips & Ochs, 2004). Despite the learning opportunity that policy borrowing could provide, it also emerged that these opportunities were not exploited and the approach was merely used for the sake of compliance.

4.4.2 Coercion, mimicry and phoney

Whilst literature by Marsh and Sharman (2009) presents coercion as the pressure exerted by powerful states or other international organisations associated with conditions attached to their lending. It can also be contextualised as the pressure exerted by the DBE for schools to have school policies in place. Another view is that the idea of “comparability” can in itself be viewed as a form of coercion. Comparability plays itself in terms of which schools are perceived to have progressive and more advanced policies, thus resulting in mimicry, also known as emulation or socialisation. It explains the process of “copying foreign models in terms of symbolic or normative factors, rather than a technical or rational concern with functional efficiency” (Marsh & Sharman, 2009, p. 272). As observed by Phillips and Ochs (2004), there are many cases in which policy has been borrowed to merge or unite educational reform with global initiatives. In this case, a school may borrow so as to be in line with the expectations of the DBE and to subscribe to what is perceived as the norm in education.

On the other hand, the phoney decision typology discussed in the theoretical framework states that this occurs when policy is hastily borrowed to appease stakeholders but for which there is no likelihood of its introduction into the 'home' system (Phillips & Ochs, 2004). The responses suggested that schools merely used the policy borrowing approach so that they could comply with the prescriptions of the DBE. The policies are neatly filed and remain unused except to be presented to Department officials upon request.

As expressed by literature the concept of coercion, mimicry and phoney are somewhat interlinked with one being the product of the other. Participants shared these views:

Sizwe (Principal) advanced the following view:

Whatever systems they have in place they feel they are working for them so they borrow the policies to just comply with the Department.

Zamani (HoD) made the following comment:

...they don't implement it. Maybe the purpose of taking the policy is because they are forced to have it. They take it for the sake of having it not for the purpose of using it. So they don't implement it.

Lungile (Principal) made the following observation:

You know what they are doing it to satisfy the inspectors particularly. When the inspectors come they want the school policies and surprisingly inspectors will refer you to a particular school and tell you about how remarkable their school polices are. When you do go there to network and try to learn you find out that they just took them from somewhere else and they are not even used. Others will just take the policy because in a way it has been approved by the inspector.

Rato (PL1/Site Steward) provided the following historical perspective:

It was after 1994 when this whole thing started. Black schools did not have policy before, so it was something new and people were in the dark about what is a policy, how it should be done, who should be involved and so on. So if you are in the dark, the way out that they saw because the department with the HOD that they want a school policy; so what they decided to do is to just take a policy from another school and just place it ... **Sizwe (Principal)** added as follows:

I think they also want to be perceived as a progressive school so they take things from exModel C schools which will end up not even being used. Also as sad as it may in some cases it is because of laziness and a general lack of interest. But I think from my experience the main reason is that they do not see the reason to formulate their own policy when they

know very well it won't be used. They would rather just take it from elsewhere to adhere to the prescriptions of the department.

Mnqobi (PL1/SGB) gave the following perspective based on his experience in the SGB:

I always raise this in the SGB meetings that we are the ones that understand our school. Some members will propose things that they hear about from other schools and say that this school must do it even though those things are not feasible. They just want to appear as something they are not on paper. We end up not making any resolutions on matters. Next you just find that the officials are coming and you see policies. You ask yourself, where are these policies from?

Phillips (2000) suggests the view that the popularity surrounding ideas of the superiority of other approaches to education has been seen to persuade others to adopt educational reforms from these contexts. As presented by Lungile, Sizwe and Mnqobi, there is a tendency to want to adopt policies that are perceived as better regardless of their practicability. I have alluded to the idea of reference schools which other schools may be tempted to copy or mimic. As mentioned by Lungile, if the policies of a particular school have already been endorsed by the inspector that in itself is a form of coercion and results in mimicry. It was earlier stated that the reasons for schools utilising the policy borrowing approach are not necessarily isolated but may be linked to each other. The above discussion leads to the leadership or lack thereof in facilitation of policy borrowing.

4.4.3 Lack of leadership

Emerging from the analysis of the perspectives of participants is that there is lack of leadership which results in the policies being borrowed and not formulated within the school. In the conversations, it emerged that teachers (post-level one) blame school leaders for not leading the policy formulation process and doing things without guiding principles. School leaders included both the SGB and the principal. Teachers expressed their desire to participate and add a valuable contribution in decision-making. In the discussion on “school leadership and policy” it was stated that teachers believed that they alone were positioned where all the fulcrums are for change. They alone know what the “day-to-day problems are and what it takes to solve them” (Buchen, 2000, p. 35). Teachers called for a more distributed leadership approach because it helped to create a greater space for participation and access to resources. This could be gained because:

a distributed perspective on leadership recognises that leading and managing schools involves multiple individuals and that the practice of leading and managing is more important than the nature of roles and responsibilities associated with leading and managing (Harris, 2009).

Literature suggests that distributed leadership recognises that all teachers have leadership qualities that can in some way contribute toward enhancing the school functionality at different levels (Harris, 2008).

Whilst this was the call from teachers, those who led schools argue that there was a lack of initiative from other stakeholders, especially teachers who did not want to participate in policy issues. Emerging here is that different people blamed each other and it seems no one was willing to take the lead in the policy process. Schools therefore remained with insufficient skills to facilitate policy formulation. The voices below provide evidence of the argument made above.

Zamani (HoD) made the following comment regarding a school leader who used policy borrowing which resulted in the policies that were borrowed not being implemented:

That leader lacks leadership skills... How can you control because you must have something to control. You don't have knowledge and skills for your position. If you are leading you must have something to guide you on how to lead. Policies need to there for that guidance. You need to have an instrument that will guide you on how to do things. If you don't have that then the people you are leading are headed to the wrong direction. What you are doing is just futile.

Lungile (Principal) provided the following comment on leaders who copied the policies of other schools:

The problem is they are neglecting their duties of actually coming together and working together and making polices. That's how it should go but because of laziness, ignorance and laissez faire in which the school operate. In reality we know very well that whenever we want to plan something we come together and sit with the staff members.

Zodwa (PL1-novice) gave the following view regarding school leaders:

So as I said from the onset, people are not animals that you are going to tame them, that will never happen. People are smart and never undermine the intelligence of other people, so for anything if you want it to succeed I am telling you, bring in the people. That is the role of leadership, to make people buy into the vision and mission of the school. To have positive influence. Let them partake and say 'guys we want this institution to go higher, what is it that we can do for this institution to go forward?', sit down with them even if it

takes four days, that we suspend teaching and learning for 4 days, let us sit down and come up with a way forward. There is something called a turnaround strategy and ask 'what is it that we can do?' if you involve people you will be surprised by the response you will get from the people and you can evaluate which idea is the best. But then they do not want to share leadership and delegate. As a leader you must be able to delegate and identify people with skills that can add value. If you are unable to do that in itself displays poor leadership qualities.

Sihle (PL1) expressed a lack of trust and confidence in leaders who used policy borrowing:

... You don't have leadership skills ... That show that you are disorganised. You not a leader that's all I can say.

Mngobi (PL1/SGB) provided the following perspective on the lack of capacity of SGBs and the role principals ought to play in sourcing people with the relevant expertise in order to assist the SGB: *...even the introduction of SGB's from the onset for me it was wrong, because it was the South African Schools Act that came with the concept of SGB's. Now, you cannot just introduce the SGB in a country where almost eighty percent of the Blacks are illiterate.*

After that, you say that the schools must elect SGB's from an illiterate community, and then you say they must compile a policy; even the word policy to them is foreign that is the reason to say that the SGB must be part and parcel of the policy compilation. Now in these circumstances the school principal must be able to source teachers who have the skills so they can help the SGB parent component but principals don't want to work with people who have expertise. They feel threatened.

Khanyi (HoD/ Site Steward) commented on the lack of teacher initiative in participating in the policy process:

...teachers in general when they have to come and do reading or discuss policy they are reluctant to come. ... in a meeting where they are given instruction as to how they should be doing their work, what should happen in the case the educator arrives late in class, or when absent what should be done?, a teacher has to do a list of things and obviously they will not like to discuss that because it involves their behaviour. But if it the learners they will take it more seriously and say that the kids are mischievous, and if a learner does something wrong they will want to call the parent in and they actually do even for minor cases.

Zama (Deputy Principal) added the following regarding the lack of initiative or commitment of teachers in participating in the policy process:

At staff meeting we discuss problems we experience with learners, shortage of resources but when I raise the issue of teacher absenteeism for example then I will be the one left to address it. Teachers do not want to participate in identifying problems that control their behaviour... If we are trying to address issues relating to them they will become defensive and act as if they are being attacked especially if they know they have deviant behaviour.

In defence of teachers lacking initiative, **Rato (PL1/Site Steward)** shared the following views: *...It is not because of laziness, it is because I do not perceive anything that the policy is doing for me; because if teachers are lazy they would not teach during school holidays or on weekends trying to make the learners to pass better....My problem is that the question that the teachers ask themselves is 'yes we have compiled the policy, and then what?' A person naturally wants to know if I do this what will I get out of it, or rather what is going to benefit the community or the school. If I do not see the benefit, I will keep on postponing, the reason being that it is not something to me that is urgent.*

The discourse on leadership and policy in chapter two puts forward that one of the roles of school leadership is to influence people so as to achieve organisational goals (West- Burnham, 1997). Emerging from the comments above is that school principals are unable to get the support of teachers when they use the policy borrowing approach. In a previous comment offered by Zama under the section “policy borrowing presents an opportunity to learn”, she argued that policy borrowing could be used, but it was up to school leaders to create the space for discussion, so that the borrowed policy could be reshaped in order to address the contextual challenges unique to the school. Allowing space for participation and interaction would likely produce a policy that could be practicable and one that would be owned by all stakeholders. Influence extends to the ability of being able to make teachers understand what benefit could be reaped from policy.

In addition to influence, principals are tasked with coordinating the behaviour of people to fulfil the school goals (West-Burnham, 1997). Coordinating involves the ability to harness the skills, inputs and expertise of all stakeholders in the school, especially that of teachers (Fullan, 2001; Fullan, 2007; Buchen, 2000; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2011). As expressed by Zodwa, teachers wish to participate and to make a meaningful contribution to decision-making. Conversely, Zama and Khanyi were of the view that teachers lacked commitment in participating in the policy process, especially on issues regarding their own practise. In this instance as well, the authority rested on leadership to have the ability to influence and coordinate the behaviours of people accordingly, so that they would participate in order to achieve fruitful outcomes. As argued by Fullan (2007), teachers are a powerful yet untapped knowledge base that could be used to drive change and bring about much needed improvements in schools. Influencing and coordinating the behaviour of teachers presents an opportunity with which significant gains can be made by school principals in facilitating a productive policy process that can add value to the school.

4.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The chapter has presented the findings and their discussions under two main themes. It emerged that policy borrowing can yield positive and negative gains. The views expressed show that there are more negative implications and therefore policy borrowing should be approached with caution. Responsibility has been placed on school leaders to facilitate a fruitful policy process encompassing values of participation and democracy even when using the policy borrowing approach. The next chapter will summarise the findings and present conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Having presented and discussed the data generated through semi-structured interviews, this chapter summarises the findings through restating the research questions and, from the findings, drawing conclusions and making recommendations. Prior to the conclusion, the chapter proposes a model which may serve as a guide for engaging in policy borrowing at the school level. The proposed model is based on a premise that the practice carries some valuable contributions which suggest that we may not fully discourage school stakeholders to engage in it. However, given some of its challenges a guide is required. Drawing on the perspectives, this study has tried to make a unique contribution by presenting what can be used to guide the practice.

5.2 STUDY SUMMARY

This study sought to explore the practise of policy borrowing at school level. The motivation arose from my experiences as a teacher, having observed policy borrowing in practice and from my experiences as a student of policy, having gained an understanding of the significance of policy in the school context and how policy borrowing can influence the policy process at school level. I was studying this phenomenon in the school context with the study focussing on establishing the perspectives of school stakeholders about policy borrowing. The study focussed on views on whether the practice was acceptable and what influenced some schools to engage in it.

To achieve what I was looking for and to get an understanding of policy borrowing I visited literature. In Chapter Two I interrogated both local and international literature focussing on policy and policy borrowing. In the literature, the key debates that emerge were firstly that there is a scarcity of literature focusing on policy borrowing at school level and more specifically from the South African context. Secondly, literature examining borrowing between countries showed that policies were borrowed based on a country's ranking on international tests. Thirdly, stakeholder participation and involvement in decision-making results in policy ownership, lack of which results

in policy alienation. Fourthly, it emerged that school leaders need to exercise distributed leadership so as to create the space for participation in the policy process. The model used as the theoretical lens of this study showed that it had shortcomings in that it analysed policy borrowing at a macro-level and it did not factor in the influence of vital issues such as context in its scope. Therefore, the model was used in this study as a framework but it did not fully cover what may be happening in schools. Having established the discourse around policy borrowing, I needed to indicate how I would conduct this study.

Chapter Three offered the steps I followed in order to generate answers to the research questions. Here discussions centred on the interpretive paradigm, the qualitative research approach and the case study methodology that was used in this study. Issues surrounding trustworthiness and ethical considerations were also discussed.

Having used the framework I then presented the data in Chapter Four. The findings were presented under two main themes, namely:

□ Stakeholders’ perspectives towards policy borrowing □ The reasons schools use the policy borrowing approach

Under the theme of stakeholders’ perspectives, sub-themes interrogated the views of policy borrowing as an acceptable approach and policy borrowing as an un-acceptable approach. Factors emerged as reasons policy borrowing presents an opportunity to learn. Secondly, policies may be borrowed because of pressure from external forces or to mimic other schools by having policy text that is praiseworthy. Lastly, the decision to borrow may be due to a lack of leadership. Out of the exploration of these themes I was able to arrive at the findings which will be summarised below under the heading “research questions restated.”

5.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS RESTATED

This section provides the summary to findings of this study as discussed in detail in Chapter Four. The key research questions are used to summarise the findings. It provides a clear picture about how the research has answered the key questions asked in this study.

5.3.1 What are the stakeholder's perspectives towards the practice of policy borrowing within the school context?

The findings demonstrated that there were those who viewed policy borrowing as an acceptable approach and those who viewed it as unacceptable. Each of these perspectives will be summarised below.

5.3.1.1 Policy borrowing as an acceptable practice

Some perceived policy borrowing as an acceptable practice, because it was offering opportunities to learn from other schools. This learning opportunity could best be harnessed if schools were in the same context. However, it also emerged that learning could happen through engaging with policy texts of schools from different environments and using them as a guide to formulate one's own policy.

A further finding which made the policy borrowing practice acceptable was that in the school context there were dynamics and issues that hindered the implementation of policy. These included poor leadership, poor relations amongst staff and the SMT, inconsistency in the application of disciplinary measures, lack of support from the DBE in applying disciplinary measures, lack of participation in the policy process, and union support. The interaction of these factors resulted in policy measures not being implemented. For this reason stakeholders felt that they would rather borrow policies because policies were there merely to comply with the prescriptions of the DBE.

Under this sub-section the last finding was that stakeholders felt their schools were functioning in the absence of policy. This was based on a premise that the policies they had were not being implemented and, regardless of this, teaching and learning were taking place.

5.3.1.2 Policy borrowing as an unacceptable practice

Conversely, there were those who felt that policy borrowing was an unacceptable practice. Their reasons were that borrowed policies remained symbolic and were not implemented, these policies are further insensitive to context to which they are inherited and they further constrain the process of stakeholder participation in the policy processes. Each of these will be discussed below.

There was a strong sentiment that borrowed policies were merely taken for the sake of having policy in place, thus making them symbolic. The participants noted that the borrowed policies were not context-sensitive. This meant that they could not be implemented because they were not able to respond to the challenges prevalent in the context they were borrowed from. The stakeholders felt that policy was intended to guide practise and if it failed to fulfil this objective then that policy was not credible. More so, the manner in which policy borrowing took place resulted in lack of stakeholder participation. Stakeholders therefore felt excluded from decisionmaking. Apart from the policy being context-insensitive, the lack of participation in the policy process resulted in stakeholders not owning the policy and in turn in non-implementation.

5.3.2 What are the factors that influence school stakeholders to engage in the policy borrowing practice?

Participants had multiple views on why schools engage in policy borrowing. Firstly, there was the view that policy might be borrowed as a means to learn and find realistic solutions. Secondly, policy might be borrowed because of coercion or pressure from external forces, as a means to please officials, or to mimic other schools by merely having policy text that is considered praiseworthy but that is not used. Lastly, the decision to borrow may be due to a lack of leadership in facilitating a fruitful policy process. Each of these will be summarised below.

5.3.2.1 Learning from the best practise

Through dialogue it was revealed that when one school is performing well other schools can learn from that school. Learning can happen when these other schools look at the policies of good performing schools and analyse what these schools do and how they do it. The schools can therefore borrow the policies of the good performing schools so they too can improve. In this instance, policy borrowing can be used as a tool to find practicable solutions that will positively influence practise. However, successful borrowing can only be realised if schools borrow from others with similar contexts and if, when the policy is borrowed, room for participation is created through discussion with all stakeholders within the school.

5.3.2.2 Coercion, mimicry and phoney

The evidence generated through the interviews suggests that the reasons schools borrow policy is because of pressure to comply with the expectations of the DBE and to please Department officials who visit schools to check whether they have policies. For this reason schools borrow the policy text of other schools so as to appear to have policy that is in line with Departmental policy but that can be considered as progressive and praiseworthy. There is no intention to implement these policies and they remain in files to be produced when needed by officials.

5.3.2.3 Lack of leadership

The findings suggest that school leaders lack the necessary skills to work in collaborative ways with stakeholders. Whilst democracy should be the foregrounding principle, it appears that schools still operate in a hierarchical nature with school leaders dictating what should be done and when. This approach demonstrates a lack of leadership as the role of leaders is to influence people and harness the skills of individuals so as to meet the goals of the schools. It was found that SGBs lacked the capacity to engage effectively in the policy process. Whilst teachers said that they wanted to participate in decision-making, school leaders stated that teachers did not want to engage in issues that guided their behaviour and practice. Teachers expressed that principals needed to distribute leadership so that teacher leadership could flourish. This could solve the issue of the skills shortage, especially within the SGB. If teachers were capacitated to participate and engage effectively they could add a meaningful contribution to the policy process.

5.4 CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings summarised above, the following conclusions are made in this study:

There are advantages and disadvantages in using policy borrowing. It can be used as a means to learn from the best, to see what they do and how they do it. Learning should involve more than perusing through policy text but thorough consideration should be given to context. Furthermore, the scope of information should be analysed thoroughly. Borrowing schools must be able to

compare and contrast their own context with the one in which they are borrowing the policy, and evaluate the appropriateness of the policy in their context.

When schools are in the same context it is possible that they can learn from each other. One way to do so is by borrowing the policies of the school that is performing well and using the policy. This is one of the reasons schools use the policy borrowing practice.

Schools borrow policy so they can comply with the expectations of the DBE and to please Departmental officials. They are not concerned with using those policies to guide practise.

There appears to be a lack of leadership from principals and teachers alike. Principals are still operating in hierarchical ways that are preventing others from participating. They are failing to identify and harness the skills of teachers who can be able to add value to the school. Teachers want to participate in decision-making but they are selective when it comes to issues for which they have to be accountable.

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following paragraphs present recommendations of this report. Presented as three sectors, they are offered to researchers, to the schools, to principals and teachers, and to the Department of Basic Education.

5.5.1 Recommendations directed to researchers

5.5.1.1 Implications for further research

There is scarcity of research regarding policy borrowing in the school context, more so in the South African context. Based on this observation I recommend that further studies be conducted at school level to create more knowledge about this phenomenon. These studies should focus on more schools and include the views of all stakeholders in the school. It should elicit the views of SMT members, teachers (novice and senior), SGB members, learners and parents. It would also be worthwhile to include the views of unions as they have been cited as being significant agents in the mediation of school-related matters pertaining to their members. The inclusion of all these

stakeholders would help to uncover more perspectives related to the experiences of the stakeholders. This is not to say that the findings expressed in this study are not valid. However, it is important to be able to gain more insight on policy borrowing so that it can be better understood and used effectively.

5.5.1.2 Implications for model re-evaluation

There are no explanatory models that explain policy borrowing at the school level. Researchers should endeavour to create an explanatory model that can be used to analyse policy borrowing at school level. This should address the issue of context which has been noted as one of the shortcomings of the model used in this study. Below I propose a model that may be used by those engaging in the policy borrowing practice and those who may still wish to use the practice. I decided to propose the model on the basis of my second conclusion, in which I state that this practice offers some valuable gains for the schools and cannot be thrown away. However, there is need to guide it in order to make sure that it caters for the important facets of the policy process as presented in Chapter Two. A proposed model will be presented prior to the conclusion.

5.5.2. Recommendations directed to schools

A distributed leadership approach should be applied by principals. They should understand that in order to achieve the objectives and goals of the school they need to work in collaborative ways with all stakeholders. Principals or those tasked with leading the policy process should endeavour to promote participation in the policy process so as to gain support for policy decisions. Principals need to be able to harness the skills of all those they lead and use these skills to enhance the effectiveness of their schools. They need to use those who are skilled in policy to capacitate the SGB and other members so that all stakeholders can understand the gains that can be made when practicable policies are formed and implemented.

Teachers need to be committed and show initiative in schools so that teacher leadership can be realised. Decisions that are made should be withheld and respected and teachers need to take accountability for their actions.

There is an argument that has been presented that where schools are in the same context there can be gains by using the policy borrowing. Schools need to understand that policy is intended to guide practise and look for exemplars where schools face similar contextual challenges. Only then, may borrowed policies provide practicable solutions in practice.

5.5.3 Recommendations directed to the Department of Basic Education

The DBE should work collaboratively with school leaders and have support structures so that relevant policies can be enacted from the DBE policies and be implemented. The DBE should capacitate school principals through training on new ways of school management so that principals can exercise values of democracy in their leadership in relation to policy processes and all other school leadership matters.

5.6 CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE STUDY

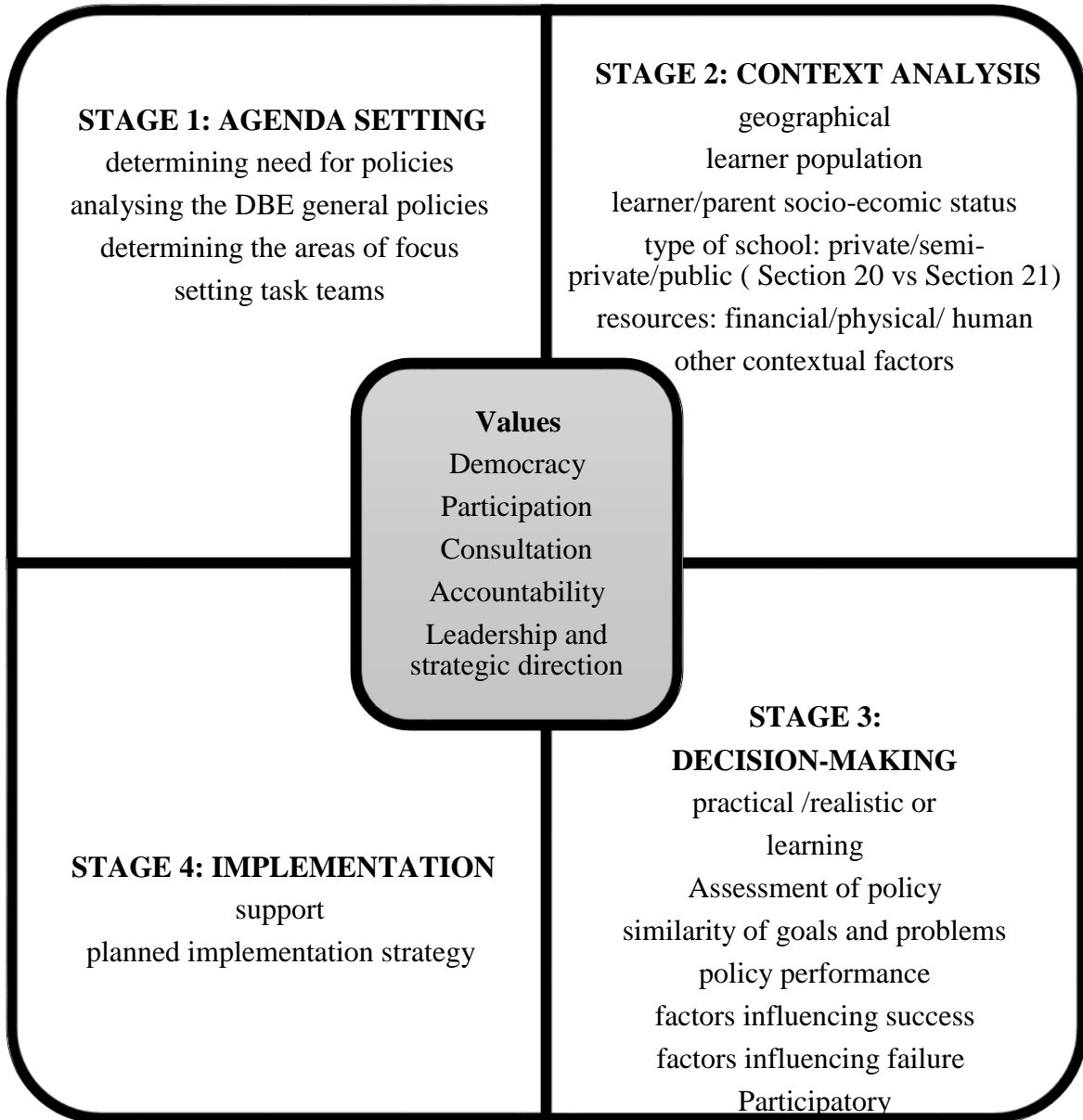
During the literature search I did not come across any study that deals with policy borrowing at the school level in the South African context. This means that this study has provided literature on a practise that is neglected yet it is happening in some schools. Given that this is happening and it is not guided, I have proposed a model that may serve as a guide to schools that are engaging in policy borrowing or those that may wish to engage with it in the school context.

5.7 A PROPOSED MODEL FOR POLICY BORROWING BETWEEN SCHOOLS

The model proposed below is a modification of the model produced by Philipps and Ochs (2004). It was generated using the model by Phillips and Ochs (2004) and has also drawn from the perspectives of various scholars (Phillips, 2000; Mossberger & Wolman, 2003). The model has four stages, namely: Agenda Setting, Context Analysis, Decision Making and Implementation. It is suggested that all the stages be guided by the following values: That is why in this model all the stages should be guided by values of: Democracy, Participation, Consultation,

Accountability and Leadership and strategic direction. An illustration of the model is presented below and each of the stages discussed.

5.7.1 Figure 2: A proposed model for policy borrowing at the school level



Stage 1: Agenda Setting

Agenda setting involves collectively tabling problems or challenges faced by the school or likely to face it. Whilst the model presented by Phillips and Ochs (2004) features cross-national attraction, it assumes that policies are based on the identified needs and the requirements by the DBE general policies. At this stage the focus areas of every proposed policy is determined.

Stage 2: Context Analysis

Context analysis is an imperative stage in which a school will look for a reference school that has similar contextual characteristics. Some of the failures that have been associated are due to the borrowed policy not being practicable, because it does not speak to the context of the schools which have inherited it. Contextual considerations include the geographical location of the school, learner population, learner/parent socio-economic status, type of school: private/semiprivate/public (Section 20 vs Section 21) and resources (financial/physical/ human) available to the school. Assessing these factors and more will assist in seeing whether the policy can be made practicable in the home environment in which it is being borrowed.

Stage 3: Decision- making

As in the model by Phillips and Ochs (2004), the **practical/realistic** decision is a feasible decision that is taken so the policy can be implemented. Phillips (2000) suggests that decisions that should be sought are those that are not dependant on a variety of contextual factors. Stage 2 of this model however provides space in which contextual factors can be assessed and guide the decision to borrow. The decision-making as proposed in the model of this study is that it must be participatory, which means in must include all stakeholders, especially teachers as they are at the receiving end of any policy and implementation largely depends on their adoption of policies.

Learning occurs when a school decides not to take the policy as it is, but either to look at it as a guide or use the policy and amend it accordingly to respond to the environmental dynamics found in the school. The decision-making process must happen when certain considerations have been made. There should be full scope of accurate information regarding the context. The policy that is being borrowed must be assessed in terms of the similarity of the goals and problems it was addressing in context from which it is borrowed to the goals and problems it aimed to address in

the context to which it is being lent. The policy performance must be assessed and factors influencing policy failure, policy success and non-implementation of the policy must be understood (Mossberger & Wolman, 2003).

Stage 4: Implementation

Implementation deals with putting the chosen solution to practice (Howlett & Ramesh, 2003). Literature (Phillips, 2000; Phillips & Ochs, 2004) notes that successful implementation is dependent on contextual factors and on the attitudes of significant actors (people or institutions with the power to support or resist change). Resistance may be a product of significant actors feeling isolated in the policy borrowing process. That is why in this model all the stages should be guided by values of:

- Democracy
- Participation
- Consultation
- Accountability
- Leadership and strategic direction

Such values are intended to rally support and respect for policy decisions. Another important aspect is that implementation must happen in a planned strategic manner so that all actors will know what is expected of them and know the consequences of their actions.

5.7.2 Analysis of the model

This section provides an analysis of the model. It provides the strengths and weaknesses and the opportunities and threats that the model presents.

Strengths

- The model acknowledges contextual factors in the policy borrowing process as these have been cited as being a hindrance to a fruitful policy process in the school context.

- The model foregrounds the policy borrowing practice with values that are likely to promote policy ownership through collaboration.
- The model steers the policy borrowing practice to achieving learning or finding practicable solutions that will influence practice.

Weaknesses

- Although there are gains that can be achieved through participation of all stakeholders, involving them all and arranging meetings for all these stages requires time which may not be available, given that teachers are already reluctant to participate due to work overload.
- The model assumes that all stakeholders are committed to finding practicable solutions. This may not be the case thus resulting in lack of participation and commitment towards the process.

Opportunities

- Through collaboration, specialist skills can be identified and harnessed to enhance this process for it to lead to the borrowing of relevant policies.
- Collaboration encourages teacher leadership which may lead to teachers taking ownership of initiatives.

Threats

- Failure to enforce policy decisions due to external stakeholder interventions.
- Lack of support from the DBE.
- Lack of knowledge on the benefits of policy and lack of knowledge around policy engagement and processes.
- Lack of leadership skills in exercising distributed leadership and foregrounding the process by the suggested values.

5.8 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This is a small scale study, so although the findings are valuable they cannot be generalised to a wider audience. However, I have provided a thick description of the findings to make readers understand the context under which this study was conducted. Given these descriptions similar situations may be interpreted from this study provided there is a clear understanding of the similarities between the two contexts.

5.9 FINAL WORD

The study was conducted to explore policy borrowing in the school context. The study sought to explore the perspectives of stakeholders regarding policy borrowing and the reasons schools engage in policy borrowing. It emerged that there are limited advantages to policy borrowing and these could only be gained if schools were in the same context. The manner in which policy borrowing is facilitated results in lack of participation of relevant stakeholders in the policy process. It emerged that borrowed policies could not be implemented because they were not owned by all stakeholders and were context-insensitive. Schools engaged in policy borrowing as a way to learn from best practise or as a means to comply with DBE expectation or lastly because of a lack of leadership in facilitating a fruitful policy process.

In this chapter, a summary of the findings has been presented and conclusions drawn based on them. Recommendations have been offered and a model for policy borrowing at the school context has been presented. The intention of this is to assist those engaging in policy borrowing and those who may want to use the approach to understand it better, so it can yield more positive results. More research on the phenomenon is required so that policy borrowing can add value to the policy process.

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APPENDIX A

C 1656
Nyalazi Rd
Kwa-Mashu
4360
7 January 2014

Dear Principal

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

I am currently studying for the degree of Masters of Education with the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal, Faculty of Education. As part of the requirements for this degree, I am conducting a research project in which explore the perceptions of school stakeholders on the approach of policy borrowing.

The study is titled: **“Taken-off-the-peg: exploring the perceptions of school principals on the policy borrowing approach”**. The main aim of the study is to understand the perceptions of stakeholders and what stakeholders perceive to the reasons for policy borrowing at the school level.

There will be an interview with the principal, deputy principal, HoD and two teachers of the school which is expected to take a maximum time of 60 minutes each.

Participants’ anonymity and confidentiality throughout the research project, as well as in the reporting of the findings is assured. Schools and individuals will not be identified in the in the report as I will use fictitious names. Participation is purely voluntary therefore participants are at liberty to withdraw from the study at any given stage and there are no negative consequences they will face for their withdrawal. For any further information, I have enclosed herein the contacts of my supervisors. It is also guaranteed that the information you provide will only be used for the research purposes and it will be stored safely in the University for five years and be destroyed after.

Please note that to participate in the study does not equal to any rewards and it is only on voluntary basis. Please also note that date, time and venue for the discussions will be arranged in consultation with participants and the researcher will ensure that the participants are not supposed to be on duty during the time of the interviews.

Should you have questions and problems related to the study, please feel free to contact me by email: ndlovukay101@gmail.com or my supervisor by email: myendep@ukzn.ac.za . You can also call me on 078 398 7706.

Yours Sincerely
Nokukhanya Satimburwa

APPENDIX B

Dear Participant

Thank you very much for your agreement to participate in this project exploring policy borrowing at the school level. This project is part of my Master`s degree under the supervision of Dr PE Myende, University of Kwa-Zulu Natal (South Africa). It is important that you read and understand the explanation for the study before signing this consent form. By signing this consent form you agree to the following:

1. You understand that participating in this project offers no financial benefits, but that participation in itself may provoke your critical thinking about issues affecting your school and how they can be addressed.
2. Activities of this study may take place after school and there is no guarantee that a meal or light refreshments will be provided.
3. Your choice to participate is only voluntary and you can withdraw at any time and there will be no negative consequences for withdrawal.
4. The information you will provide will be treated with confidentiality and your identity will be protected.
5. Transcripts of all sessions will be made available to you and you are allowed to withdraw some of or all the information you will provide in the case of second thoughts.
6. The information gathered in this study will be kept for five years in a secured and safe place at the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

Should you have questions and problems related to the study, please feel free to contact me by email: ndlovukay101@gmail.com or my supervisor by email: myendep@ukzn.ac.za. You can also call me on 078 398 7706.

Name of the Participant _____

Contact details _____

Signature _____

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE: PRINCIPAL/DEPUTY PRINCIPAL/HoD

1. What is your understanding of policy?
2. What is the importance of school policy?
3. Ideally, how do you think the policy process should unfold?
4. What are some of the values that should underpin the policy process?
5. How do you ensure that values of participation and democracy are featured in the policy process?
6. What are the challenges towards a fruitful policy process?
7. Why do schools use the policy borrowing approach?
8. What are the advantages of policy borrowing?
9. What are the disadvantages of policy borrowing?
10. How does the policy borrowing approach influence the policy process?
11. What is your view on teacher leadership?
12. How do you deal with the problem of skills deficit in the SGB?
13. When borrowing what are the things you consider most important?
14. What is the role of leadership in the policy process?

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE: TEACHERS

1. What is your understanding of policy?
2. What is the importance or role of school policy?
3. Ideally, how do you think the policy process should unfold? Who do you think should be involved?
4. What are some of the values that should underpin the policy process?
5. What are the challenges towards a fruitful policy process?
6. Why do schools use the policy borrowing approach?
7. How do you feel about implementing a policy that you have not been part of formulating? Why do you feel that way?
8. What guides practice in the absence of policy?
9. What are the advantages of policy borrowing?
10. What are the disadvantages of policy borrowing?
11. How does the policy borrowing approach influence the policy process?

APPENDIX E

INFORMATION SHEET

The Researcher:

Nokukhanya Satimburwa is carrying out this research as part of the requirements for a **Master's Degree** in the **Educational Leadership, Management and Policy Specialisation**.

It has been approved by the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal and is being supervised by Dr Phumlani Myende of UKZN.

Contact Details

Nokukhanya Satimburwa: Cell (078 398 7706) Fax (086 263 8281) Email (ndlovukay101@gmail.com)

Dr Phumlani Myende: Cell (073 991 2393) Office (031 260 2054) Email (myendep@ukzn.co.za) **Aim**

of the study

The aim of the study is to explore the perceptions of school stakeholders on the approach of policy borrowing and to find reasons why schools engage in this practise.

Participants: What is required of you?

- A face to face interview that will take approximately 45 minutes.
- The interview will be taped.
- You have the right to decide not to take part or to withdraw from participating at any stage.

Confidentiality and Anonymity

I will take every measure possible to ensure that the identity of the school is never known by anyone and that the identity of the individuals interviewed remains confidential as well. I have the interests of the school at heart and am very aware of the dangers to a school from unwanted publicity.

Pseudonyms will be used and direct quotes will be used but will be identified using categories and the chosen pseudonyms.

APPENDIX F

University of KwaZulu-Natal Ethical Clearance approval

02 April 2015

Mrs Nokukhanya Satimburwa 204519702
School of Education
Edgewood Campus

Dear Mrs Satimburwa

Protocol reference number: HSS/0197/015M

Project title: "Taken-off-the-peg: exploring the impact of the policy borrowing approach at a school level".

Expedited Approval


In response to your application dated 24 March 2015, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol have been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

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

Please note: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 3 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

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

Yours faithfully


APPENDIX G

Approval from the Department of Education



education

Department:
Education
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

Enquiries: Nomangisi Ngubane

Tel: 033 392 1004

Ref.:24/8/369

Mrs N Satimburwa
C 1656 Nyalazi Road
Kwa-Mashu
DURBAN
4062

Dear Mrs Satimburwa

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DoE INSTITUTIONS

Your application to conduct research entitled: "TAKEN-OFF-THE-PEG: EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF THE POLICY BORROWING APPROACH AT A SCHOOL LEVEL", 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 15 March 2015 to 15 April 2016.
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 Miss Connie Kehlogile 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 Office of the HOD, Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200.
10. Please note that your research and interviews will be limited to schools and institutions in KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education.

Umtapho High School

Nkésinathi S.P. Sishi, PhD
Head of Department: Education
Date: 31 March 2015

KWAZULU-NATAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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APPENDIX H

Turnitin Certificate

Turnitin Originality Report

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CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY 1.1. INTRODUCTION School governance for effective teaching and learning can be made practicable given schools have policies, and they follow guidelines as prescribed in those policies. As stated in the South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996 (RSA, 1996a), the governance of the school is vested in its governing body and as stated in Section 16.1 and 16.2 of SASSA Act No. 84 of 1996 (RSA, 1996a) the governing body stands in a position of trust towards the school this function mandates that schools, in collaboration with their School Governing Bodies (SGBs) formulate school policies (RSA, 1996a). The demand for SGBs to formulate school policies is based on the government's notion of establishing partnerships with local communities at school level (Smit & Liebenberg, 2008; Tsoetsi, van Wyk, & Lemmer, 2008). Active and meaningful involvement of stakeholders in the policy process at grassroot level is based on the assumption that possibilities for policy ownership will result. Closely linked to that is the fact that the Department of Basic Education (DBE) policies may not be responsive to the contextual factors that each policy must address for it to work in a particular setting (Bhangu, 2012). The policy process is an important component for effective school governance. The functional value of policy includes a collective attempt to address and even prevent some problems facing or likely to face an organisation. Furthermore, policy is also used as a means to establish the parameters of and directions of action (Brynard & de Coning, 2004; Colebatch, 2006). The main idea here is that the exercise of policy formulation should involve a number of stakeholders. This is in line with the prescriptions of the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 (Republic of South Africa, 1996a) where school governance issues should involve all stakeholders including the parent component through the SGBs. This partnership of SGBs with the school is prescribed in the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 (Republic of South Africa, 1996a) through the roles featured in Section 20.1A-E and the functions featured in Section 21.1A-D respectively. The above discussion indicates the imperative of formulating school policies. While literature shows why policy formulation is imperative at a school level, some schools resort to what Phillips and Ochs (2004) call

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