

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

**Leading teaching and learning in an overcrowded classroom: Experiences
of four teachers in two secondary schools**

By

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Education in the Discipline, Educational Leadership, Management and
Policy.**

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DECLARATION

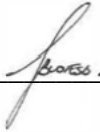
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Dr S. B. Blose

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I waited patiently for the Lord, and he inclined to me, and heard my cry (Psalms 40:1)

I would like to acknowledge and express my appreciation to:

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- My friends, colleagues and relatives, Hlengiwe Khanyile, Smangaliso Nxumalo, Mbali Mpanza and everyone who was there for me through the journey, may the good Lord bless you abundantly.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this study to my children Lwandile, Nokunotha, Zamaxhoko, Zibusiso and Siyamthanda.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

SMT	School Management Team
KZN	KwaZulu-Natal
DOBE	Department of Basic Education
PPN	Post Provisioning Norm
CAPS	Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement
SGB	School Governing Body
UNESCO	The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
SDT	School Development Team
B.ED	Bachelor of Education
NATU	National Teachers Union
LTSM	Learning and Teaching Support Material
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
SADTU	South African Democratic Teachers Union
PGCE	Postgraduate Certificate in Education

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore teachers' experiences of leading teaching and learning in complex conditions of overcrowded classrooms. The study was conducted in two secondary schools in King Cetshwayo District. The study intended to understand teaching practices enacted by teachers leading teaching and learning in overcrowded classrooms. Again, the focus was to explore challenges experienced by teachers leading teaching and learning in overcrowded classrooms. Lastly, the objective was to elicit the strategies applied by teachers to respond to challenges they experience in overcrowded classrooms. In order to understand strategies enacted by teachers in overcrowded classroom conditions, the context responsive and adaptive leadership was adopted as a theoretical framework in this study. Methodologically this study was located within the interpretivist paradigm which views reality as subjective and emanating from peoples' lives and experiences. In addition, the case study research methodology was adopted to understand the participants' experiences. Two methods were used to generate data, namely, semi-structured interviews and observation. The interview sessions were recorded using a tape recorder before there were analysed. Thematic analyses method was used to analyse data generated through both interviews and observations. The study found that teachers are not well equipped with skills to enable them to teach in overcrowded classrooms. Teachers lack training and support from District officials and the Department of Basic Education at large. Teachers experience numerous challenges in overcrowded classrooms, including violence (fights in classrooms), high noise levels and cheating among learners emanating from stress caused by seating arrangements and lack of space. The study showed that these teachers do not capitulate to the challenges of overcrowding, but they improvise and discuss strategies between themselves, meet regularly with individual learners to ensure quality teaching. Finally, the study revealed that the schools in which study was conducted assist teachers through intervention by Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and school management teams (SMT).

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CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND AND ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

Teachers in schools play a significant role of accompanying the young children society to adulthood through facilitating effective teaching and learning. In order to achieve this, a conducive classroom environment is needed among other things. In South African public schools, a classroom is meant to accommodate a learner-teacher ratio of 35:1 for secondary schools and 40:1 for primary schools (Department of Basic Education, 2013). However, in public schools, especially in rural areas and townships, the learner-teacher ratio surpasses the norm as classrooms are overcrowded. Prior to 1994, the education system in South Africa was segregated in terms of race (Baruth, 2009); this system was discriminatory and mostly dominated by inequalities. Although numerous attempts are made to redress past imbalances, schools in previously disadvantaged areas have not been fully transformed.

This study focuses on teachers leading teaching and learning specifically in overcrowded classrooms. It aims to explore these teachers' experiences of leading teaching and learning. In this introductory chapter, I discuss the background to the study, the objectives of the study, the research questions, clarification of key concepts and lastly, I present an outline of all the chapters that make up the study.

1.2 Background of the study

An overcrowded classroom is understood and perceived differently in different contexts. According to New York Independent Office (2010) overcrowded classroom is the one that exceed its enrolment capacity by 2, 5%. This means that an overcrowded classroom is the one that contains learners above its carrying capacity.

In South Africa, the recommended learner-teacher ratio is 40: 1 for primary school and 35: 1 for secondary schools. The classroom that exceeds this learner-teacher ratio can be regarded as overcrowded. Although this is the norm there is a great number of schools that have classrooms with over 50 learners instead of 35 or 40 (Marias, 2016: Motshega, 2012). The overcrowding phenomenon encompasses many deprivations for both teachers and the learners. On the one side, teachers leading teaching and learning in overcrowded schools are challenged by learners

who are seated in three or four at a desk that is originally a two seater. This makes it difficult for an educator to move around in the classroom to monitor learners' learning. Again, an overcrowded classroom does not allow a teacher to attend to learners' diverse individual needs. Furthermore, overcrowding also impacts on learner behaviour, as May (2018) states that an overcrowded classroom poses a threat to the effectiveness of teaching and learning and thus lowering learner performance which subsequently demotivates teachers. These difficulties affect the quality of teaching and learning.

On the other hand, an overcrowded classroom impacts on learners as well, for instance, Makielski (2018) explains that large classrooms are much noisier compared to smaller classrooms. The overcrowded classrooms are characterized by violence and other forms of bullying among learners (Siddiqui, 2018). Given the above background, the purpose of this study was to explore teachers' experiences of leading teaching and learning in overcrowded classrooms. Through the experiences of these teachers, I was able to understand what it means to lead teaching and learning in overcrowded classrooms. This understanding involved the complexities and the working practices in such contexts.

1.3 Statement of the problem

The overcrowding in classrooms seems to compromise the quality of teaching and learning. This is supported by Siddiqui (2018) who rightly claims that classroom overcrowding retards the improvement of teaching and learning as classrooms sometimes have over 50 learners instead of at least 35. Owing to this phenomenon, teachers are finding it difficult to lead teaching and learning in overcrowded classrooms where learners are seated in three or four in a desk that is originally made for two. This situation is likely to hinder teachers from interacting with all learners and also from walking around to monitor the progress of learners in class. Makielski (2018) states that overcrowding make it difficult to maintain discipline and the good functionality of the whole school is disrupted. In the light of these complexities, this inquiry sought to understand experiences of teachers leading teaching and learning in overcrowded classrooms. This included their challenges, strategies they apply to respond to challenges and also their leadership practices in overcrowded classrooms.

1.4 Rationale and motivation for the study

In this section, I provide the justification for the study at three stages, namely, personal, practical and theoretical.

Personal

During my early years of schooling in 1970s, we used to be crammed and squashed in one classroom with other grades as there were few classrooms. Classes were overcrowded with 60 or more learners. Sometimes the numbers went up to 100 and more. Our teachers used to divide us by age groups, the younger ones attend in the morning and the grown-ups attended in the afternoons. The conditions were not conducive for teaching and learning as there was a lot of bullying and noise. Again, in the Secondary school we had to travel long distance of about 20 kilometres to the school. On top of this long travelling we were squashed in overcrowded classrooms. During that period, the teachers and learners had no voice. The living conditions were very harsh as the classrooms were overcrowded and smelling because of strong sweats as well as extremely high noise levels and heating. Seeing that overcrowding is still an issue in schools although our country is 25 years into democracy, I therefore wanted to explore the experiences of teachers who are leading teaching and learning in overcrowded classrooms.

Practical

I have been a teacher for twenty five years and I have taught in two different school contexts. I have developed an interest in understanding overcrowding and the influence thereof in teaching and learning. The first school at which I taught had enrolled 500 learners and the classrooms were sufficient. The second school is located in a township and its enrolment has always been above 1000 learners. Learners in classrooms are always above 60. When I got to this school, I found it difficult to manage my workload, especially marking of assessment tasks and also giving remedial work. The running of examinations was a disaster as the department of education had formal dates for the commencement of examinations. The grade 08 and 09 learners were always victims, because they had to write early and leave the schools in order to free the space for senior classes. From my experience as a teacher, chaos and conflict among learners as well as confusion among educators in schools has been challenges that overcrowding brought. Additionally, high temperatures in classrooms due to poor ventilation also caused stress to teachers. These challenges have led to many teachers including myself being demotivated and losing hope. Having experienced overcrowding, I want to understand

how do other teachers deal with overcrowding as they lead teaching and learning in their classrooms.

Social

Upon the review of literature on overcrowding in classrooms and the experiences of teachers teaching such classrooms, I discovered that there are very few scholars who based their studies on teachers' experiences of leading teaching in overcrowded classrooms. A study conducted by Mailumo (2018) within overcrowded classroom phenomenon revealed that teachers' high stress levels compromise quality of teaching and learning. Furthermore, Marias (2016) found that interaction between teachers and learners is hindered by over crowdedness of a class. In addition, overcrowding makes it difficult to maintain discipline and order in a classroom which then negatively affects the classroom climate (Kurniawati, 2016).

Seeing that the literature on teachers' experiences of leading teaching and learning in overcrowded classrooms, it is evident there is not enough details. Therefore, I wanted to add to the body of literature by further exploring the experiences of teachers. This includes; the complexities and also working practices.

1.5 Significance of the study

This study provides an in-depth understanding of the factors hindering teaching and learning in overcrowded classrooms using the teachers experiences in over enrolled classes. Data generated in this study may assist the Department of Basic Education in rethinking new strategies that they can use to reinforce laws to restrict overcrowding to overcome challenges associated with overcrowding. This study also provides DOBE with a need to keep tracking the enrolment in schools using headcount to relieve teachers from overcrowding. Furthermore, the researcher felt the need to undergo this study as a way to encourage the DOBE to increase budget to improve infrastructure. This study also generated knowledge for School Management Team (SMT) who are managing teachers affected by overcrowding in classrooms to introduce support committees and have regular motivational talks to assist teachers to share skills to curb challenges of overcrowding as the study revealed that teachers are not fully supported. As a researcher, I have been exposed to a number of studies but I have realised that up to this far teachers are not provided with enough training opportunities on the aspect of overcrowding.

This study has also gathered findings that suggest to the institutions of higher learning or universities to design modules that prepare teachers for the context of overcrowding.

1.6 Objectives of the study

This study aimed to:

- Understand leadership practices enacted by teachers leading teaching and learning in overcrowded classrooms.
- Explore challenges experienced by teachers leading teaching and learning in overcrowded classrooms.
- Elicit the strategies applied by teachers to respond to challenges they experience in overcrowded classrooms.

1.7 Research questions

- What are the leadership practices enacted by teachers leading teaching and learning in overcrowded classrooms?
- What are the challenges experienced by teachers leading teaching and learning in overcrowded classrooms?
- How do these teachers respond to challenges they experience when teaching overcrowded classrooms?

1.8 Demarcation of the study

This study was conducted in King Cetshwayo District, uMhlathuze circuit in KwaZulu-Natal. Only two Secondary schools were selected. One of these Secondary schools is located in a rural area and the second one is located in a township. The selection of these schools was guided by the context of overcrowding as the study was aimed at exploring teachers' experiences in overcrowded classrooms.

1.9 Outline of chapters

This study is organised into five chapters, and below I provide a synopsis for each chapter:

Chapter one

This chapter introduces the whole study in order to guide the reader and also to project the possible outcomes of the study. The chapter presents the background and orientation of the entire study, as well as the rationale for the study. Included also in this chapter are the objectives and the research questions that the study aims to riposte.

Chapter two

Chapter two presents the review of literature related to experiences of teachers leading teaching and learning in overcrowded classrooms. This chapter reveals the research work that has been done around the studied phenomenon. In addition, the chapter presents the theoretical framework that informed the study. This includes adaptive and context responsive theories.

Chapter 3

Chapter three explains the whole research process. The chapter begins by presenting the research paradigm in which the study is located, the research design as well as the methodology. Again, the chapter explains the research methods that were used to sample participants, to generate data and also to analyse data. Lastly, the chapter addresses the issues of ethics and trustworthiness.

Chapter four

This chapter presents the findings which are the core of the study. In this chapter, the findings are presented using the themes that emerged from data which was generated through semi-structured interviews and observations.

Chapter five

Chapter five is marking the final section of the research report. In this chapter the conclusions drawn from the findings are presented, and the recommendations based on the findings are discussed.

1.10 Chapter summary

As this is an introductory chapter, the background and the purpose as well as the rationale of the study were presented. Furthermore, this chapter discussed the objectives and the key questions that the study aims to unpack. In the next chapter the literature review and the theoretical framework are presented.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

The first chapter presented an orientation to the study. Having outlined the orientation to the study, this chapter focuses on the literature review on the experiences of teachers leading teaching and learning in overcrowded classrooms. As it has been indicated previously, this study seeks to explore the teaching strategies enacted by teachers leading teaching and learning in overcrowded classrooms. The chapter commences with a discussion of the literature that relates to the concept of overcrowding. This is presented around concepts and themes. These themes are; Causes of overcrowding in schools, Teacher leadership role in an overcrowded class, school effectiveness in an overcrowded classroom, impact of overcrowding in teaching and learning, learner behaviour, importance of motivation in an overcrowded classes, Management of change, Research conducted on large classes, management strategies for overcrowded classes. Later on, an exposition of theoretical framework underpinnings of the study is made. The two theories that framed this study are context responsive leadership theory and adaptive responsive leadership theory.

2.2 Clarification key

Below I present a conceptualisation of two concepts namely overcrowded classroom, and teacher leadership.

2.2.1 Overcrowded classroom

According to New York Independent Office (2010) overcrowded classroom is the one that exceed its enrolment by 2, 5%. Buchanan and Rogers (1990) define an overcrowded classroom as those with 80 or more learners. Looking at South African context for public schools, the learner teacher ratio is 30:1 (DOBE, 2014). Shirley (2017) argues by mentioning that the school is said to be overcrowded if it exceeds its carrying capacity of student population by 5%. Furthermore, Shirley (2017) indicates that overcrowding exists when a school enrolls above its carrying capacity or above the facilities that can fit the number of learners and teachers. The concept over enrolment is alternatively used for overcrowding in schools (Shirley, 2017). This

is because overcrowding exists when a school takes or enrolls more learners than what it can accommodate (NCES, 2000).

In some cases mobile classrooms are used in many countries to solve the issue of overcrowding temporarily (Rodriguez, 2017). I agree with the fact that these classes solve a problem temporarily because they are very hot thus causing stress to both teachers and learners. Makieski (2018) claims that an overcrowded classroom exists when facilities do not match or correspond with the enrolment. Makieski (2018) further puts more emphasis that education is the most powerful weapon to overcome and break the cycle of poverty. This implies that in order to improve teaching and learning, overcrowding has to be dealt with strongly or accordingly. The developing world is highly affected by overcrowded classes (Benbow, Mizrach, Oliver & Said-Moshiro 2007). This cannot be easily addressed if funding is not increased (Amua-Seky, 2010). The lack of funding according to research conducted in Ghana causes the shortage of resources like classrooms and other important Learner Teacher Support Material (LTSM) which make it difficult for teachers to use staff resources like slides, flow charts, loud speakers etc. Ogbondali, (2010) comments on lack of classroom space and inadequate educational facilities. Poorly qualified teachers and poor learning and teaching conditions in overcrowded classrooms are posing a challenge in the teaching profession (Yelkpereri, 2012).

Researchers suggest that most schools in the world use temporary shelters called park homes. I agree with all the above explanations of overcrowding in classrooms. In this study, I also view the classroom that exceeds this ratio as an overcrowded classroom. Overcrowded classrooms present challenges for most educators. In my years of teaching I have experienced learners getting sick of lung diseases and heat stress in overcrowded classrooms. Teachers are absenting themselves from work and end up resigning from the teaching profession. This kind of pressure may result in shortages of experienced teachers (Mailumo, 2018). In addition, Santiago (2007) asserts that teacher scarcity and overcrowding in classrooms are worsened by stress issues emanating from overcrowding in countries like New Zealand, Sweden and Germany. In South Africa the problem of overcrowding is affecting mostly the rural areas and township schools (Mchunu, 2009). According to Mchunu, (2009) the teacher learner ratio has been reduced from 34:1 to 31:1 in 2014 but still the problem of overcrowding persists in South African schools. Therefore, in this study the researcher will focus on teaching practices and challenges experienced by teachers in overcrowded classrooms.

Classrooms may be simply explained as apartments where students and the educator can be positioned on consistent basis, where they interact and know one another and work together (Juliana, 2016). If the classroom is overcrowded, the process of interaction is not easy. It is also difficult for an educator to know each child by name (Asodike & Onyieke, 2016). This creates problems when a teacher is not skilled to work with a large enrolment in class. According to Amissa, Frempong and Owusu-Ansah (2016) it is difficult to identify learners with learning problems and to maintain order as well as to arrange the classroom properly in an overcrowded classroom. Large class is regarded as the one which has the learner-teacher ratio far exceeding the suggested procedure of a specified country (Mailumo, 2018). This might sound like a dream these days as schools are holding classes with learners above 60, which is more than the expected carrying capacity, therefore teachers have to be strong in terms of skills to be able to capacitate and sustain teaching and learning in overcrowded conditions. So teacher leadership is a vital weapon which might assist teachers in teaching overcrowded classrooms.

The pictures below are showing poor working conditions in overcrowded classrooms:

A Public Primary School in Nigeria



Source: Yachiyo Engineering Co., Ltd

A Public School in Kenya.



Source: Encarta ® Encyclopedia 2005.

2.2.2 Teacher leadership

Leadership is about establishing direction, aligning people and also inspiring them through motivation (Toer & Ofari, 2008). Leadership is linked to leadership values and purpose to achieve results (Bush, 2006). In the South African context, leadership is all about moving an organisation forward and creating a sense of direction. Cuban (1988) links leadership with change.

Harris and Muijs (2004) explain teacher leadership as a model where all staff members in an institution at different levels are given an opportunity to lead without being pushed by a formal role. These teachers have the audacity to lead. Teacher leaders have the courage to take the initiative to lead (Bush, 2006) Teacher leadership is described as an action that transforms teaching and learning in a school or anything that ties school and community together on behalf of learning and that advances social sustainability and quality of life for a community (Crowther, Kaagen, Ferguson, & Hann, 2002). In this study teacher leadership may enhance quality education in an overcrowded classroom by sharing skills to bring success in a school.

Boal and Hooijberg (2001) characterise teacher leadership as a form of collective leadership in which teachers develop expertise by working collaboratively. In contrast, Barth (1999) sees teacher leadership as going beyond just collaboration and teamwork or taking part in decision making. Teacher leadership is about fulfilling demanding and critical functions often only undertaken by senior management including the following: choosing textbooks, shaping curricular and designing staff development programmes (Wesley, 1991). Teacher leadership is further defined as an ability to motivate colleagues to change. Furthermore, in 2003, the general Teaching Council for England and National Union of teachers commissioned research into teacher leadership as a distinctive form of professional collaboration for school improvement. These teachers are viewed as experts who spend most of their time in classrooms, but take on leadership role at times where innovation and development is required (Harris and Muijs (2004). Harris and Mauijs (2004) also elaborate by mentioning that these teachers take up an opportunity to lead and go the extra mile.

2.3 Review of literature

In the next section, I present the review of literature in thematic form.

2.3.1 Causes of overcrowding in schools

Overcrowding appears to be a major concern for most teachers. Most researchers have provided a number of forces that attract learners to enrol in large numbers in schools. Rapid population growth and new policies promoting compulsory and free education are the major causes of overcrowding in schools (Marias, 2016). This has also been aggravated by the fact that the

country became aware of the fact that literate society is more productive or successful than illiterate (Marias, 2016). Therefore I see education as a weapon to fight poverty. According to Juliana, Asodike and Marias (2016) overcrowding in developing countries is as a result of strong social demand for formal education. This has resulted in developing countries having insufficient learning resources (Makielski, 2018). This includes resources like desks, textbooks, and other learning and teaching support material. Marias (2016) further state that schools are overcrowded due to the awareness of that society with a literate population progresses and develops much quicker than the one that is illiterate.

Overcrowded classrooms are determined by a number of learners in a school divided by the total number of teachers (Juliana, Asodike & Onyieke, 2015). Large class sizes are not preferred by most teachers; as a result teachers opt to use corporal punishment in order to cope in overcrowded classes (Mweru, 2010). This behaviour of teachers is due to more pressure to create order in overcrowded classroom. Ijaiya (1999) emphasises that overcrowding in classrooms compromise quality of teaching and learning education. Meanwhile Edholm (2009) complains about the fact that education was made to be accessible to all South Africans so this has posed a threat to teachers work in class. The removal of school fees due to democratisation of schools in South Africa according to Edholm (2009) has allowed many families the opportunity to take their children to schools, consequently leading to large classes that teachers are struggling to cope with. This might mean that our education system may lose educators of high quality.

2.3.2 Teacher leadership role in an overcrowded class

For education to achieve its outcome in an overcrowded classroom condition, it requires that teachers be motivated to become leaders. Teachers have to work as leaders in collaboration with other education professionals (Rodriguez, 2017). This collaboration is done to improve education programmes and outcomes. This does not only exist within education professionals but with other stakeholders like parents or families and students. This interaction and involvement of others like teachers, staff and students as well as families will ensure that unity is maintained and support is provided to improve the goals of the school. All these stakeholders will help to build good relations with the school thus giving assistance through sharing ideas to improve programmes and outcomes and grant sponsorships to solve overcrowding issues (Rodriguez, 2017).

In an overcrowded classroom it is difficult to maintain order and discipline since learners' state of mind is disturbed by large numbers in class (Aguba, 2009). Teacher leaders will motivate learners and gear them up to change their state of mind for learning to achieve positive outcome in overcrowded contexts. According to May (2018) discipline is the key towards effective management of the school and classrooms. If learners are overcrowded, discipline becomes a challenge since the class environment is not conducive for learning (May, 2018). According to Aguba (2009) discipline is required to produce teachers and learners who are disciplined. Discipline helps to produce well cultivated citizens. Leaders leading teaching and learning in overcrowded classrooms environment need to have determination and should have an ability to manage resources (Marias, 2016). These leaders have to be adaptive in nature and be able to compromise their own time. Their responsibility is to teach novice teachers to adapt to overcrowded classroom environments.

Many teachers are threatened by leading teaching and learning in overcrowded schools since their teaching dynamics become limited (Ali, Naz, Maqbool & Rana (2011). By nature a teacher is supposed to lead using different strategies and dynamics, but overcrowded classroom conditions hinder such dynamics (Mundt, 1991). The effectiveness of the teacher and his leadership skills are threatened. Ali, Naz, Maqbool and Rana (2011) claim that teachers are to be protected as they are the most vital tool that is utilised all around the world. If they are exposed to overcrowding challenges, learners performance will be negatively affected thus school effectiveness will be compromised (Ali et al. 2011). Furthermore, Mundt (1991), claims that teachers who are challenged normally lose self-confidence, and are vulnerable to stress, confusion, frustration thus becoming isolated since they have low self-esteem. In Pakistan female teachers are mostly vulnerable and negatively affected by overcrowded conditions (Ali, Naz, Maqbool & Naz, 2011). This is confirming that female teachers need to be assisted and motivated to work in challenging context of overenrolled classes.

Predominantly classrooms that are highly overcrowded pose a serious problem in leading teaching and learning in the majority of South African schools. Phillips (2011) argues that the problem of overcrowding is not only affecting South Africa but the whole universe. According to Davis, (2013) it is challenging to teach and learn where there are learners more than 50 in a class. Teaching is less productive as it become difficult for the teachers to utilise different teaching methods (Opoku-Asare, 2014). Classroom discipline and individualisation of learners cannot be done easily as most of the time is spend trying to create order in class (Elibraki, 2017). Khumalo and Mji, (2014) as well as Imitiaz, (2014) concur that teaching in overcrowded

classes makes the learning environment to be unsupportive. Bayat, Louw and Rena, (2014) put more emphasis on the issue of declining matric results as learners move to other grades without mastering the content knowledge of the previous grade due to overcrowding.

2.3.3 The context of leading teaching and learning in an overcrowded class

Leading teaching and learning in South African overcrowded schools as well as in the United States according to Johnson (2004) has never been easy. Aguba (2009) concurs that the work of the teacher is not only in the classroom, but should prepare learners for the future. Therefore, there is a need to encourage and urge teachers to make classroom environments conducive and workable for the effectiveness of teaching and learning.

Teacher-learner relationship is negatively affected by overcrowded conditions (Ellis, Limjoco & Johnson, 2011). Leadership in schools is the key towards managing and controlling behaviour in overcrowded schools. Classroom management by the teacher plays an important role in reducing problematic conduct to maintain positive classroom climate and effective learning in overcrowded classes (Oliver, Wehby & Reschley, 2011). Disruptive behaviour and violence increases the level of stress among educators (Oliver, 2006). Therefore, teachers need to make an effort to adapt to the problem of overcrowding so as to come up with relevant solutions. Teachers have to prevent misbehaviour and maintain order in these complex conditions of overcrowded classrooms.

Teacher leadership in overcrowded classrooms according to Muijs and Harris (2013) calls for dedicated teachers who lead beyond and within the classroom. This will enable the teacher to assist and identify other teachers and learners towards improving their educational practices. The duty of the teacher does not end in the classroom, but it stretches to the future and prepares the child for adulthood (Johnson, 2004). Other authors like Steyn (2003) and Juliana (2016) concur with the fact that teacher leadership includes a move from top-down hierarchical management towards agreed and shared decision making community building and teamwork. Collaborative decision making and active participation among teachers collectively help to develop expertise (Ester & David, 2017). This can be achieved by forming a community of practice where teachers help one another where they equip one another to manage teaching and learning in overcrowded classrooms. The most important aspect is that of retaining learners in class through managing learners bunking classes and controlling of learners behaviour (Garrett,

2015). In the South African context teacher leadership is about accepting the situation taking place in the school environment and being able to take up formal and informal leadership roles within and outside an overcrowded classroom (Grant, 2006). This can include taking up responsibility to control ground duty roster to reduce drug abuse, motivate teachers to attend to their teaching periods on time and prevent drug addiction as well as other forms of misbehaviour inside and outside the classroom.

2.3.4 Impact of overcrowding in classroom management

The main goal of managing classroom is to provide learners with new and better chances to learn (Kurniawati, 2016). Therefore, classroom management in an overcrowded context is for the teacher to organise learners, space, time, and material so that learning can take place smoothly (Kurniawati, 2016) Teachers leading in such classrooms have a duty to implement and use effective classroom strategies to produce positive classroom climate. Wiseman and Leah (2018) contend that in overcrowded classrooms, teachers find it challenging to implement these strategies since they become demotivated and thus lose interest and love for their classrooms. According to Leah, (2018) demotivation among teachers result in teachers to lose love and interest for their classrooms. Learning environments should be conducive and productive to generate co-operation, goodwill and respect in an overcrowded classroom (Levin & Nolan, 1996).

Overcrowded classrooms pose numerous challenges and constrains towards the engagement of learners. Teachers in overcrowded classrooms spend about 30-80% time trying to address the issues of discipline, and this make it difficult to teach (Makielski; (2018); Leah; (2018) & May, (2018.). Makielski, (2018) agree with the fact that overcrowded classrooms are a challenge in schools as learners become disruptive and that demands a lot of time spent disciplining the leaners. Discipline is an action used by the teacher to enforce rules and respond to the way learners conduct themselves, badly or misbehaviour (Garrett, 2015). Effective classroom management includes communication that is clear enough for everyone in class. This communication is difficult in overcrowded classroom environments since only the learners at the front will be able to hear the teacher. According to Ester and David (2017) the educational expectations are difficult to achieve if classrooms are poorly managed.

Teachers leading teaching and learning in an overcrowded class should observe and learn children's behaviour. Kucukler and Kodal (2019) suggest that teachers should walk around to monitor misbehaviour and effective functioning in class. In an overcrowded class there is no space to move around so these class management strategies are a problem since learners are packed. Teachers are supposed to watch learners' behaviour and continuously assess and sustain their progress, but this is not easy in an overcrowded class as it takes a long time to mark many scripts (Arens, Moris & Watermann, 2015).

Classroom management is a challenge in an overcrowded classroom (Emmer & Stough 2010). Furthermore, Onwu and Stoffels (2005) contend that there are constrictions that emanate from overcrowding in classroom if it is poorly managed. There is a shortage of space for the teacher to walk and move around the class to monitor the work of students (Marias, 2016). Extreme work load and lessened chances for the majority of students to partake actively in class and also the teacher will have less time to meet individual learner need for discipline, socialisation, motivation, assessment and self-activity. Overcrowding makes it difficult for the teacher to know each learner by name. The teachers just recall the names of those learners that are brilliant or naughty.

Successful and effective learning is strongly guided by physical environment. Teachers leading teaching and learning in overcrowded classroom need to enact strong leadership to improve academic achievement. Effective leaders are the ones who can deal with overcrowding in the classroom since they can work collaboratively with others in teams effectively (Tarr, 2010). Conducive environment requires teachers who feel free to take risks (Northouse, 2015). Taking a risk means that a teacher is brave to come up with new strategies and be able to share that with other colleagues. According to research conducted by Rodriguez (2017) overcrowded classrooms do not produce high quality education and the teachers are not prepared to manage overcrowded conditions. Oliver (2006) claims that the lack of teacher preparedness to cope with overcrowded classrooms has led to many teachers to quit and abandon teaching profession. This is due to the less time or attention given to teachers by the education authorities and each student. Individual attention given to individual student is delayed in an over enrolled classroom, thus reducing quality and progress of teaching and learning (Siddiqui, 2018).

Learning environment negatively affects disadvantaged children's ability to learn (Ijaiya, 2010). Majority of time is spent controlling and organising the classroom (Mailumo, 2018). Overcrowded conditions create a challenge for teachers to implement or utilise different

strategies to ease the crowding since it limits time to use those methods. This problem exists mostly in developing countries like South Africa and Ghana. Academic success is interrupted thus quality education is compromised since each child does not get enough attention (Johnson, 2004). Poor quality may have a negative effect on learner behaviour.

2.3.5 Learner behaviour

The school has a role to discipline and teach learners while leading and controlling to maintain order in class. Learners are expected to observe authority by showing respect through conforming to school laws and regulations (Boyi, 2014). This means a school should have a code of conduct to assist educators to maintain order and to better control learners behaviour in overcrowded classrooms. Disciplined youth help the country to have youth who will not discipline themselves but for others and the whole nation (Boyi, 2014). If the classes are overcrowded student indiscipline takes place, especially if there is no proper management of learners' behaviour. Proper management means or call for everyone in a school to take the initiative to own the school and lead at the same time. Overcrowding tends to increase the rate of absenteeism among both educators and learners (May, 2018). If learners are not attended to for a long time they misbehave as there is no one to enforce discipline to manage them. Vandalism, delinquency and violence as well as drug abuse is increased in overcrowded schools that lack discipline (May, 2018). Marias (2016) mentioned that in countries like Ghana where overcrowding persists, the day cannot pass without a case or reports of indiscipline due to overcrowding. Marias (2016) further explains that because of overcrowding classroom management is not easy. Despite all the challenges overcrowding has to be managed for the sustainability and effectiveness of school education. Rodriguez (2017) suggests that teachers are responsible for creating a workable environment in an overcrowded environment where it seems unworkable because it is perceived as normal in most South African schools due to limited funding and increasing population. Teacher motivation to encourage creativity and sustainable teaching methods may be an important aspect in this regard.

2.3.6 Importance of motivation in overcrowded classes

Motivation is important in the work place as it may be used to reduce and increase tension in the workplace especially where overcrowded classrooms exist (Chireshe & Shumba, 2011).

Motivation can be regarded as the backbone of human behaviour. It helps behaviour to achieve a goal and thus become effective (Chireshe, 2014). Motivation originates from a need (Makura, 2014). It is important to increase motivation and morale for educators leading teaching and learning in overcrowded classrooms in order to improve their sense of professionalism (Steyn, 2003). It is also very vital to understand that quality education is the key to safe environment and healthy educational climate in a school (Hosky, Osma & De Matos-Ala, 2013). This is important in understanding that teaching in overcrowded schools is challenging since teaching is a stressful profession. Motivated educators tend to attain full commitment to work (Chireshe, 2014). Alessandro in Leghotlo (2014) argues that if educators are highly motivated will be more effective as compared to those who are unmotivated. This is saying that even in large overcrowded classes it is possible to achieve the best results if teachers and school leaders are all motivated. Highly motivated educators are able to come up with new teaching strategies that may be adopted in a classroom to improve teaching and learning. They are also able to motivate their learners to work co. operatively (Leghotlo, 2014). Motivated teachers produce motivated learners. Al shlowly (2014) states that overcrowding has led to psychological problems for teachers. Teachers are to be equipped with skills to adapt so as to become dynamic thus adapt to changes taking place in schools. Female young educators are a victim in Ghana overcrowded classrooms and this affects education negatively (Ali, et al. 2015).

There is a crisis in South African Education which is confirmed by literature (Makura, 2014). The crisis is on low educator morale in majority of communities in South Africa especially in those schools that are overcrowded with larger number of learners in class. Those crises include changes with the curriculum, and difficulties to maintain discipline since corporal punishment was demolished (Christie, 2008). Also low salaries and promotional policies are not clear. I can also mention an issue of high educator/ learner ratio and ill-discipline which adds to demotivation. Poor working conditions like shortage of classrooms while class size is extremely high adds to stress and dissatisfaction of teachers (Steyn, 2003).

According to Naong (2011) demotivation among educators is the issue of unequitable work load distribution, undisciplined learners, high rate of learner pregnancy and no respect teachers (Legotlo, 2014). All this contribute to poor performance as learners are lazy and the department blames teachers for poor results (Naong, 2011). According to report by VSO in Zambia and Malawi educators are demotivated and they feel that they are not included in decision making process and the society does not understand the pressure of large class they are faced with. They want their learners enrolled in those overcrowded schools (Makura, 2014).

2.3.7 Management of change

An increase in the number of class enrolments in South African Schools require people like teachers and school leaders who make up the school organisation to manage and implement change (Mullin, 2010). School teachers and school management teams need to work together in achieving change in overcrowded classroom context. Teachers are regarded as the means of change (Mullin, 2010). Again, Mullin (2010) believes that teachers together with their managers are the ones who can manage these large class sizes better. Change according to Pashiardis (1997) is a deliberate effort to change the status quo by modifying the functions, structure, technology and purpose of an organisation. This scholar means that change is a way of improving a school's situation to create a healthy organisation (Weshuisen, 2007). By a healthy organisation I mean an environment that is safe for everyone in it to achieve better results. Improvement will help an organisation such as a school to achieve its goals and thus become effective (Coldwell, 1989). Recently there was a struggle between what schools are today in terms of basic infrastructure and what it is desired (Weshuisen, 2007). The desire is to have improved schools, safe environment where classes are manageable and able to individualise learners thus monitoring progress of learners effectively. For the Department of Basic Education to achieve their desires, it is vital for them to consider the balance between school enrolment and the infrastructure.

Despite many challenges facing our schools, we need to provide some strategies to manage large classes. Steyn, (2008) provides many challenges facing South African schools. Among them I have selected just few which are: Ineffective financial management, enrolment expansion (overcrowding), shortage of basic infrastructure etc. Our education department needs to control class sizes and develop infrastructure in order to reduce frustration and stress among educators (Mailumo, 2018). School principals need to be equipped with skills to manage finances, deal with discipline problems, conflict and change management as well as education law. Reason why I choose principals is because they have the responsibility to improve school climate (Legotlo, 2014). National and Provincial government has to support and provide necessary leadership and relevant resources to overcome challenges linked to overcrowding. By relevant resources I mean like adding more classes after checking the enrolment in schools and keep making follow ups. (Legotlo, 2014).

Brodinsky and Neill (1983) put more emphasis on enthusiasm, loyal personnel and a strong driving force as the characteristics of a healthy school (organisation). A healthy school is the one that is able to deal effectively with unreasonable pressure from the community and survive in a long term (Hoyt, 1991). Large class enrolments are brought in by population growth within the community. So schools as organisations should be able to deal effectively with pressure brought by overcrowding through motivation, and collaboration with other stakeholders.

2.3.8 Research conducted on large classes

Research conducted on large classes and overcrowding show that teachers in large classes experience the following disadvantages; there is a lack of proper movement in the classroom, have difficulty in assisting learners who are slow learners, marking of books and giving feedback is a big challenge (Matherechere, 2014). Noise levels are high and that causes a lot of disturbance as well as controlling learners work is difficult (Matherechere, 2014). Because of overcrowding in most schools in developing countries students' performance has dropped (Ethrenberg, 2001). Dropout rates in learners and high rates of failure are also a major concern (Mulryan, 2010)

Research conducted by Finn, (2015) on large sizes suggests that small classes have the following advantages: Smaller classes help students to improve their learning and behaviour in all academic subjects in every grade. Attending small classes increases the chances of progressing from high school thus reducing stress that leads to dropouts (Finn, 2015). Teachers are able to cope with misbehaviours of students because they do not feel their control helpless or that misbehaviour can worsen to the point where instruction is disrupted (Finn, 2015).

These are classes of above 35-40 learners. They make it difficult to communicate with individual students to spend enough time in instruction or to manage behaviour well (Finn, 2015). Majority of educators complain that overcrowded classrooms do not allow using a variety of teaching methods effectively (Exeter, 2010). They become demotivated and react differently because of overload. Some of the teachers tend to lose strength and decide to exit the system. Latest research conducted on class sizes shows that smaller classes have a lasting effect (Zyngies, 2014) Class size can make an even bigger difference when teachers change their methods and attitudes (Zyngies, 2014).

Research findings show that most learners enter higher education institution environment with limited knowledge as they are only equipped with mastering and simple recalling of knowledge known as surface learning (Exeter, 2010). Problem solving skills and critical thinking skills are difficult to test in large classes, yet they are important for our growing and changing economy (Biggs, 1999). Large class sizes are blamed mostly for reducing student- teacher interaction (Mulryan-Kyne, 2010).

A study conducted in Ghana by Amua-Sekyi, 2010 is that lack of funds was seen to be a major problem as was expressed by some respondents. These financial problems make it impossible to have resources like slides, flow charts etc. (Amua- Sekyi, 2010). Lack of large classroom space was another issue raised by most respondents. Respondents from open- ended, questions by lecturers: Inability to concentrate in large classes, individual attention is difficult, monitoring of lesson is inadequate for teachers and lecturers. Inadequate time for questioning, low participation and difficult to give feedback on assignment and quizzes as teachers are unable to mark the papers in time.

The teacher has more time to attend to each learner in a small class as compared to large overcrowded classes. If more time is given to observe and communicate with each child, teaching and learning becomes more effective (Barnett, 2004). Health and safety is also another benefit as in large classes learners tend to be at risk in terms of health. They tend to infect one another. Barnett (2004) suggested that reducing class size might help to improve the effectiveness of our education.

2.3.9 Teachers as assets of change in overcrowded classes

Large class size calls for a strong spirit of team work. This begins with a teacher being a leader. This means teachers have to be equipped with good leadership skills (Grant, 2012). Leadership is a process which works towards movement and change in a school (Grant, 2012). Teacher leaders are the ones who can work well in managing large classes. Teacher leaders are those teachers who work towards change in their classrooms. Teacher leaders can operate at various levels in an organisation (Harris & Muijs, 2004). Teachers in large classes need to be granted an authority to take part in decision making (Chikoko, Naicker & Mthiyane, 2015).

Teacher leaders have to be creative to implement change in their classrooms. For teachers to function as leaders in a large class calls for a combination of factors that is interpersonal and personal factors (Glickman, 2002). Teachers should strongly lead and manage the teaching and

learning process. They have to spend most of their time in the classroom interacting and leading at the same time (Harris & Muijs, 2004). Teacher leaders have to control behaviour in class (Linson, 2013), Furthermore, Linson (2013) suggests that learners should be taught to work independently on their own. Besides being independent students have to be taught responsibility. Teachers leading teaching and learning in overcrowded classes should keep on giving guidance to learners and check their understanding regularly.

Long (2012) shared that thorough planning and motivation to ensure that learners are kept involved all the time are the key towards effective class management in overenrolled classes. He further suggested that teachers should establish schedules to maintain order as students and class flow easily and efficiently if they know what is expected of them. Be strict about discipline and rules. This can be achieved by sticking to the code of conduct of the school that sets out rules. As a teacher in an over enrolled classroom; if you have to leave the classroom for some reasons have reserve activities. By fall-back activities one means those pieces of writing like worksheets or reading activities that they will work on while you are away. Long (2012) also encouraged teachers to manage time carefully and to always have extra activities in place in case of extra time. Have a seating plan organized and identify those students who are stressed and let them sit next to students who are having a strong understanding of material. Ensure that as an educator in overcrowded class you take note of any difficulties taking place in class and talk about them (Makielski, 2018).

Schools leaders in large classes have a duty to manage functionality and organise order for effective functioning of the school (Volhuter, 2008). The organisational structure of an institution will help the school to function better. Organisational structure refers to the way in which the functions are organised in a school to ensure the effective functioning of the education system administration (Steyn, 2003). Organising a large class with challenges as explained earlier in the discussion calls for a tough effective mechanism of control. This is to say the school should have structures in place to coordinate, control and supervise the functionality of an overcrowded class (Naidoo, Joubert, Mestry, Mosoge & Ngcobo, 2008). It is very vital to understand that a school is a formal organisation that needs to have order maintained in it.

A school; as a formal organisation is defined as the planned coordination of activities of a group of people for the realisation of a common goal (Mckenna, 2000 & Mullins, 1995). Leaders of overcrowded classes should structure the school activities in an order that is going to suit the

large groups of learners (Naidoo, 2008). Structuring of the school may require teacher leaders who are strategic and creative. Teachers, pupils, parents and non-teaching staff should be motivated by leaders to ensure that quality teaching and learning is continuously taking place to avoid misconduct of learners (Weshuisen, 2004). Leadership has a duty to help large classes to develop methods to constantly manage large classes better by organising sessions where ideas will be shared. This means that teachers have to hold meetings regularly (Weshuisen, 2007). Leadership may be described as integrated and dynamic application of the leaders' abilities in an authoritative manner, which will convince, inspire, bind and direct followers to realise common ideas (Potgieter, 1972). The role of the leader in this case is perceived as giving guidance in directing or channelling educators towards gaining confidence to manage the process of teaching and learning in a large class (Weshuisen, 2007). Bester (1970) in Weshuisen, (2007) gives the following definitions of leadership: Leadership is a way of interacting and more specifically of communication between the leader and his followers. A person who can stimulate the group to change an activity into an achievable goal within the group through sharing of ideas. This calls for a leader in a large class to be creative, interact frequently with the teachers and learners to stimulate group effort to achieve effectiveness of the school.

Culture of a large school is an aspect or element that can help in maintaining excellent personal relationships, set an organisation's tone and brings about excellent living conditions (Naidoo, 2019). Culture in a school is defined as the glue that unites members through common language, dress, food, religion, beliefs, aspirations and challenges (Merriam and Mohamed, 2000). Hoyt (1994) views organisational culture as a driving force for understanding character of a school. Maintaining a school culture in an overcrowded school will enable the school to set a tone of an institution using rituals like assemblies, prize giving ceremonies where they gather learners for motivation and guidance (Naidoo, 2019). By doing so the learners will get to understand their norms and meaning of an institution thus cultural features are gained.

The principal as well as teachers should avail themselves to participate in the community activities in-order to share concerns of a large class. This will help to benefit both the school and the community as children are the future and the community needs them thus communication will become better. Accepting overcrowding as normal situation is suggested by Asodike (2016). Furthermore, Asodike (2016) states that overcrowding has become a normal habit; therefore teachers need to come up with possible solutions to curb and minimise disturbances. Grouping of learners according to capabilities while applying for more funding

to improve school infrastructure and technology to work better has been suggested (Amissah, Frempong & OwosuAnsah 2016). Teacher aide where donations are available is also viewed as another solution to assist since they are affordable for some public schools.

Local donations and administrator involvement to keep monitoring overcrowded conditions so as to assist teachers and managers in overcrowded classrooms not to feel a burden. Cohen and Manion (1983) put more emphasis on classroom setting as the classroom is regarded as the heart of learning and every educational system. Curriculum implementation is not effective without proper management of the class. Therefore, Naidoo (2019) and Ijaiya, (2010) suggested rotation of seats and ensure that the well behaved learners are at the back. Seating arrangement can make or mar any lesson (Cohen & Manion, 1983). Numerous scholars (Ijaiya, 2010, Adesina, 1990, Cohen & Manion, 1983) have revealed that overcrowding has a negative effect on teaching and learning.

A high level of noise in an overcrowded class weakens and diminishes the quality and quantity of teaching and learning (Moditsaole, 2012 & Ijaiya 2010). Overcrowding; without proper management and improvement of infrastructure, cannot be curbed (Adesina, 1990). According to Ijaiya, (2010) overcrowding is one of the factors that need special attention to uplift the falling standard of education especially in public schools as it has impacted negatively on the NSC (National Senior Certificate) examinations results especially for mathematics and other sciences that require a lot of individualisation.

Equipping teachers leading teaching and learning in overcrowded classrooms with classroom management skills and motivation is the best solution. In other words, motivation is the key strategy to manage and monitor large classes; I would say this should be done for both educators and learners. This is because in South Africa overcrowding is seen as not being addressed (John, 2013, & Naidoo, 2019). Modisaotsile, (2012) demanded that teacher training be improved to address teaching and learning challenges in overcrowded classrooms.

In some schools in the Eastern Cape, learners are sitting three or four to a desk meant for two, thus making it difficult to move freely, and disrupting traffic flow in the classroom and compelling astonishing devices to move around. According to report by South African Teachers Union (SADTU) approximately 15 schools in North West Province are highly affected by overcrowding (SABC, 2013). Principals should give support to influence change among educators improving discipline. Principals should give support to influence change among educators and learners behaviour. Improving discipline will help educators with large

class sizes to achieve better results in terms of pass rate and reduce bullying in classrooms (Chikoko, 2012). Education is a way of improving life for all of us in South Africa (Legotlo, 2014). Our department of education has a duty to ensure that they capacitate the school districts, schools as well as training colleges and their principals with skills to continuously monitor large classes.

Principals as drivers of change and important tools in making school effective should be developed professionally (Herman, 1994). More training and follow up workshops for all schools encountering large class sizes should be organised. Continuous monitoring and evaluation of learner enrolment should be conducted by education managers (Riesen, 1971). Teachers are to be trained to use equipment like projectors, wireless address system to facilitate effective teaching and learning (Benbow, 2007).

Large classes do not mean a disaster for learning in a school and ensuring good quality education (Biggs, 1999). By disaster in this context of overcrowding I am referring to unworkable environment. Teachers have to find ways or strategize coping methods that are to make policies work for them in overcrowded contexts. Moreover, Biggs (1999) further spells out that those learners are only able to adapt if they are motivated. Improving instruction methods and designing an enhancing curriculum can have a strong influence in student engagement and learning outcomes (Biggs, 1999). Motivation in this case I believe can assist educators to improve their teaching methods. It can be technology improvement or new discipline measures as they can make things easier in controlling large classes. Lecturers disagree that large classes affect their quality of teaching and assessment. Students agreed with lecturers that large class sizes do not enable them to attend to learners with special needs (weaker learners) to do remedial work (Yelkperli, 2004).

For the teachers to accommodate challenges of working in overcrowded classrooms, a structured lesson, cooperative learning and group work strategies can be used as a solution (Gibbs and Jenkins (1992). However Janson (2001) contends that group work does not work for all South African teachers; therefore teachers need to strategize the best solutions or options to match their context. This means that an individual teacher will have to match him as an individual. Therefore, the researcher will be discussing context responsive leadership theory and adaptive leadership theory which form the basis of this study.

2.4 Theoretical Framework

This study is framed by a combination of two leadership theories namely; adaptive leadership theory and context responsive theory. These theories are discussed in details below.

2.4.1 Context-responsive theory

Leading teaching and learning in overcrowded classroom appears to be a challenge to teachers as they have different backgrounds. Context-responsive theory is one of the theories framing this study. This theory entails that teachers should understand the context through which they are leading or operating. In this case the context of overcrowding in classrooms affect teaching and learning; so in this study context responsive leadership theory will help to shape the way teachers handle overcrowding since they have a better understanding of the context. Yulk (2002) say that context responsive approach in leadership is a useful approach to examine the strategies enacted by teachers in overcrowded classrooms to improve learner performance. Teachers who are able to recognise and effectively respond to their context are able to enjoy a great deal of success (Bredson, Klar, & Johansson, 2008). Yulk, (2002) and Villagas and Lucas, (2002) put more emphasis on the understanding of context under which each individuals is operating. Hoyt and Miskel (2002) again state that effective leadership depend on personality characters of leaders and situational variables like task structure, positional power, and subordinates, skills and attitudes. Hoyt and Miskel (2002) further explain that teachers leading in overcrowded classrooms should be made to match the situation through motivation and training. Hoy and Miskel (1982) suggest that it might be of good help to match a certain type of leadership to a particular situation. Lerthwood, Harris and Hopkins (2008) agree and further suggest that successful leaders of turnaround schools employ or use leadership practices in concert with each stage of school improvement.

The theory of context-responsive leadership include three prepositions according to Ladson-Billing (1995): Academic success of a leader can be achieved by a student or a learner. Student must develop a perilous realisation that will permit her to contest the status quo of the societal demand. Teachers therefore should be taught to prepare learners to face the societal demands. For teachers to achieve excellent results in overcrowded classrooms, they need to integrate indigenous social knowledge and community members' proficiency and encompass schoolchildren in social developments and tasks for collective empowerment (Yulk, 2010). The context to respond to in this study is overcrowding that is escalating in schools these days. In this study context driven theory fits as it may influence the way teachers behave and choose

the teaching methods that suit the overcrowded classroom conditions (Yukl, 2010). This is to say that leadership has a strong influence in changing individuals' behaviour. Yukl (2010) and Reynolds (2015) concur that classroom size can affect the quality of work in a school.

Context-responsive leaders according to Villega and Lucas (2002) are the those who are able to uphold the views of students from different backgrounds, have a consciousness towards socio-political background of the environment they are operating in, are responsible and capable for bringing change in education or embrace constructivists views of teaching and learning and lastly build on learners prior knowledge and beliefs to lead them to new knowledge. Other authors like Gay and Kirkland (2003) argue that educators must understand their status in the environment where they are working as people and also understand the context in which they teach to succeed and effectively teach and manage overcrowded classrooms. Therefore working in overcrowded classrooms call for teachers leading teaching and learning there to become the change agents so that they can improve student performance.

According to Enright (2011) context driven leadership enables to prepare assist and equip school leaders especially those leading teaching and learning in overcrowded classrooms with skills to adapt and be able to meet demographic veracities. This will help to achieve quality education (Reynolds, 2015). Context driven theory according to Johnson (2003) and Reynolds (2015) enforces that teachers leading teaching and learning in overcrowded classes focus on four key elements: equitable educational chances, high quality teaching and learning, arrangement and location of services, resource and policy mechanisms. This according to Reynolds (2015) will enable teachers working in overcrowded classrooms to enact the teaching approaches that will make the sociocultural integration an integral part of the wider school culture, the use of creative approaches to staff development and leadership, revising mission statement, conducting both summative and formative assessment to examine the reality of school culture and ensure quality teaching through the engagement of community and team work (Reynolds, 2015). This leadership theory encourages teachers leading in overcrowded classrooms to provide broad based support through teamwork, building consensus and having shared responsibility to overcome challenges that arise during the teaching and learning process (Reynolds, 2015). Leadership using context driven approach in overcrowded classrooms will know where and when and how to push back or reshape the teaching strategies as well as the elements to achieve a better and favourable environment for the school to achieve its goals (Bredson, Klar & Johnson, 2008). They furthermore emphasise that teachers have a responsibility to shape and structure classroom environment. Shaping the classroom in this

context of overcrowding means reduced stress and job pressure among educators leading teaching and learning in overcrowded classroom contexts.

2.4.2 Adaptive leadership theory

Adaptive leadership allow for institutions to properly plan for change and consider different number of factors affecting the complex nature of the leadership relationship. Adaptive teacher leadership theory is guided by the environmental readiness, motivation and the handling of complex situations (Natalie, 2017). Adaptive leadership entails that leaders in overcrowded classrooms should change behaviour in accordance to the situation they are faced with (Yulk, 2010). This theory is about dynamic leaders who adapt to different situations where they lead. Adaptive leadership theory sees leadership as complex dynamic process that arises in the interactive space that exists between people (Yulk, 2010). Leadership according to adaptive leadership theory is a dynamic phenomenon that transcends the capabilities of individuals alone. It emanates from interaction, tension and exchange of rules governing changes in perception and understanding (Yulk, Mushad, 2010). Adaptive leadership theory emphasise the kind of leadership that is interactive and embedded in the context (DeRue, 2011). It frames leadership as a complex interactive and dynamic from adaptive outcomes for example innovation, learning and adaptability emerge (McClevy, 2007).

Adaptive leadership theory is the best fit in this study since it will assist in manoeuvring the complexities and assist leadership to be flexible and supportive towards the management of overcrowded classrooms. Pressure of overcrowding and other changes in schools today require leaders who are open or responsive to change (Khan, 2017). Teachers leading teaching and learning in overcrowded classrooms have an important role to play and help navigate through environmental changes. Adaptive leaders allow leaders to mobilise people to tackle the challenges and strive for excellence (Heifetz, 2009). Environment can be changed by motivation of both teachers and learners to create an environment conducive to teaching and learning. In this study teachers will motivate each other and learners to excel. As schools are complex adaptive systems they work collaboratively to resolve complex issues like overcrowding in classrooms. Complex adaptive theory can be applied to resolve issues during the times of confusion and harsh conditions in overcrowded schools. Complex theory focus on strategies and behaviours that foster organisational and subunits creative learning and adaptability that arise when the right complex adaptive systems are activated (Bien, Marion & Mckelvey, 2007). This theory is guided by three pillars which are administrative leadership,

adaptive leadership and enabling leadership. According to Uhl-Bien, (2007) administrative leadership is based on formal roles like planning and coordinating activities of an institution. Adaptive leadership is responsible for looking at emerging changes in an organisation, so therefore these leaders are proactive self-motivated kind of leaders (Uhl-Bien, 2007). Enabling leadership allows and enables for structures to address creative problem solving, adaptability and learning.

It is vitally important to note that leadership in an overcrowded classroom environment is too complex and difficult to be handled by an individual. It is rather a complex relationship of many different teachers working together and operating as a team. Adaptive leadership theory will help organisations during the period of transition in the 21st century Knowledge Era to achieve better ways to adapt to change collaboratively. Teachers should form sustainability of professional learning community where they will work together to move the school forward. Professional learning community depends on its members, understanding that they are professionals working in an overcrowded school environment to ensure the success of an organisation to create a positive learning environment. To achieve this goal school teachers need to work together, engage themselves in research as well as motivating one another to be lifelong learners (DOBE, 2013). Thus I suggest that professionals in complex adaptive systems which are overcrowded schools should be flexible and commit themselves to lifelong learning processes.

2.4.3 Combining the two theories

These theories, adaptive leadership theory and context-responsive leadership theory played a significant role in guiding my thinking in the process of analysing and interpreting data. First, the adaptive leadership theory enabled me to engage with the leadership practices of teachers leading teaching and learning in a difficult context. Second, the context-responsive leadership assisted me in understanding the influence of context on these teachers and vice versa.

2.5 Chapter Summary

In this chapter a variety of literature of overcrowded classrooms was reviewed. Discussions and arguments by different authors have shown a common challenge in managing and coping

with teaching and learning in overcrowded classrooms. A discussion of adaptive and context responsive leadership theoretical framework was also provided. The next chapter will present research designs and methodology that were used to check teachers' attitudes and challenges of teaching in overcrowded classrooms.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter provided a discussion on literature debates around the classroom overcrowding phenomenon. In addition, the chapter discussed the context responsive leadership and teacher leadership which are theories that constituted the theoretical framework of the study. This chapter aims to present the research design and methodology that informed the study. In doing this, I begin by discussing the interpretive research paradigm, qualitative research design and case study research methodology. In addition to this, the chapter presents research methods that enabled me to conduct the study, these include, convenient and purposive sampling method, data generation methods and thematic data analysis method. Finally, the chapter concludes by explicating the issues of trustworthiness and also the issues of ethics in the study.

3.2 Research Paradigm

This study aimed to understand teachers' experiences of leading teaching and learning in overcrowded classrooms. To achieve this, I located myself as a researcher within the interpretive paradigm. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2008) view interpretive paradigm as a worldview that includes a deeper insight and understanding of human behaviour and their experiences. Burton, Brundrett and Jones (2008) attest that interpretive paradigm involves a deeper knowledge, insight and understanding of human behaviour as well as how they form relationships. According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000) interpretivists start from understanding an individual and then understand their interpretation of reality in order to gain a full understanding of people's personal views about a particular phenomenon or about the world around them. This means that interpretivists believe that people behave in different ways and respond to situations differently; this suggests that the meanings that people develop influence their behaviours. Since this study sought to understand the experiences, which may involve the successes and challenges of teachers teaching in overcrowded classrooms, the interpretive paradigm was found to be relevant.

3.3 Research Design

This study adopted the qualitative research design. Qualitative research uses general open questions, obtain textual data from the participants, analyse and describe data for themes and conduct the study in a subjective and biased manner (Creswell, 2008). In support of this, Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) also indicate that qualitative studies generate data that involve words (textual data). Qualitative researchers believe that the understanding of the phenomenon is derived from the participants' social settings and these researchers view the social setting as one of the enablers to comprehending social knowledge. In qualitative research, the researcher depends mostly on the views and ideas of the participants (Lapan, Quartaroli & Riemer, 2012). Likewise, this study relied on teachers' views and ideas as it intended to gain more information on leadership practices enacted by teachers who lead teaching and learning in overcrowded classes. This study was conducted in schools where these teachers work, because qualitative studies are conducted in participants' natural setting or environment. Again, I asked open-ended questions to the participating teachers, and as a result textual data was generated to understand the participants' experiences (Creswell, 2008).

3.4 Research methodology

The research methodology that was adopted in this study is the case study. According to Rule and John (2013) case studies aim at describing what it is like to be in a particular situation? Utilising the case study design in this study assisted the researcher to describe and explore teachers' deep understanding and experiences of leading teaching and learning in overcrowded classrooms. I adopted the case study methodology to get an in-depth understanding and examination of teaching strategies in overcrowded classrooms. Creswell (2012) corroborates with Rule and John (2013) as he indicates that case studies aim to understand and obtain an in-depth examination of a surrounded system like an on-going process or an event. Others scholars like Punch (2009) also view a case study as aiming at obtaining an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon in its natural setting recognising and understanding its situation and complexity. Creswell (2012) puts more emphasis when he says the case is isolated for research in terms of time and physical limits. Therefore, the case study brings about clarity for understanding complicated issues and can assist by giving more knowledge and strength to what is already known through previous research (Dooley, 2002). This explanation is further supported by Gustafsson (2017) as he states that a case study methodology is mostly suitable for individual research as it gives ample opportunity to explore each feature deeply. In this study the case is constituted by teachers leading teaching and learning in overcrowded classrooms. According to Dooley (2002) a qualitative case study demands complete interpretation and analysis of a sole instance, phenomenon or public unit. Therefore, complete interpretation and analysis from the participants' point of view will be gained. The case study methodology suggests that the biased nature of human mind creates its own meaning (Baxter & Jack 2008; Yin, 2015). In this study, the case study methodology assisted the researcher to understand the feelings and perceptions of teachers about overcrowding issues in classrooms.

3.5 Sampling

A sampling is smaller collection of units from a population that is used to find truths (Stake, 2005). In this study, I made use of purposive and convenient sampling methods. Below I provide a detailed discussion of these two methods.

3.5.1 Purposive sampling

Purposive sampling is viewed by Creswell (2008) as a method that allows the researcher to deliberately select the participants, a learning site and a research technique to be used in the study. Purposive sampling as a method allows the researcher to select participants in accordance with the interest of what a researcher wants to gain (Maree, 2007; McMillan &

Schumacher, 2010; Van der Weshuisen, 2010). In this study, the participants who possessed relevant and rich information to respond to research questions were selected (Maree, 2007). This is supported by McMillan and Schumacher (2010) who emphasise that purposive sampling allows researchers to hand pick participants who match the objectives of the study. Since this study explored the experiences of leading teaching and learning in overcrowded classrooms, four teachers who teach in such contexts were purposefully hand-picked. The selected teachers were identified from two secondary schools located in different settings, one from a semi-rural area and the other one from a township school. Both schools face a similar phenomenon of overcrowding. It is important to highlight that these teachers were selected because of the experience they have as they teach in overenrolled schools.

3.5.2 Convenient Sampling

Convenient sampling is described by Ilker, Sulaim and Rukayya (2016) as a non-random sampling procedure that involves the selection of participants on certain criteria like easy access, availability, located at close proximity to participate willingly in the research study. In this study, my choice of sample was also informed by schools' proximity as I was concerned with easy access to the targeted schools. Therefore, I selected two schools in the vicinity where I reside for convenient reasons.

3.6 Data generation methods

The data was generated using two methods or tools, namely semi-structured interview and observation. Semi-structured interviews were used as the primary methods and observation was a supplementary method in the study. These tools were selected because they were in line with the qualitative research design which was adopted in this study (Creswell, 2012; Descombe, 20014; McMillan & Schumacher, 2011; Oka & Show, 2000; Rule & John, 2011; Yin 2003). In this study the three features for generating data in qualitative data has been followed (McMillan, & Schumacher, 2011). Firstly, data were generated from participants in their natural context or setting. Secondly, the generated data was in the form of words not numbers. Finally, a variety of data generation methods were used in order to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under research or that which is being studied. Different sources of data helped the researcher to gain a wider understanding on the studied phenomenon (Kramel-kile, 2012). This is further asserted by McMillan (2012) who says that multiple data generation methods help to improve the quality of the study. Below I present the two methods:

3.6.1 Semi-structured interviews

This study used semi-structured interviews to engage with teachers teaching in overcrowded classrooms. Semi-structured interviews are vehicles that assist researchers to gain deeper understanding of participants' experiences as they use open-ended questions (Creswell, 2002; Creswell, 2007). Semi-structured interview was used because it allows for probing in order to get more information (Bartram, 2014). An interview schedule was prepared to guide the researcher during interview sessions. An interview schedule was used to channel the study so that the researcher knows what to ask from participants. Tellis (1997); Walker, Bush and Oduru (2006) warn researchers about the dangers of using a single method or interviews alone in qualitative research. Using interviews alone might cause the participants to divert from the point. Thus, these scholars suggest that the interview is used with other methods of generating data. In this study, observation was used to supplement the interview method. Below, observation as a data generation method is explained.

3.6.2 Observation

Observation is a strategy used to understand the realities of a certain phenomenon under research (Mc Millan & Schumacher, 2014; Myers, 2013; Cohen; 2011). They further point out that observation is about assessing or checking reality to confirm what people are doing and saying. Observation is a way of capturing or gathering live data from the participants' natural setting in order to take note of how people react or behave in different situations and events (Simpson & Tuson, 2005). This was achieved by being on site (classroom) to check and listen to what was really happening and observe the behaviours of the participants in their natural setting. In this way, I was able to study what strategies are enacted by teachers in overcrowded classrooms as well as to observe the challenges and realities of the context they function within in relation to the overcrowded classrooms demand. Observation offers a researcher an opportunity to obtain live data from its natural setting. This method assisted the researcher to gain insight and understanding of what is happening in overcrowded classrooms. According to Simpson and Tuson (2005) observation means that the researcher goes to a classroom and observes what is really happening in that class. As a researcher, I was able to observe the teaching practices enacted in overcrowded classrooms. I adopted a stance of being a non-participating observer so as to avoid interruptions which could have reduced my concentration and focus as a researcher (Mc Millan & Schumacher, 2014).

During observation, the field notes were developed to keep track of all the occurrences and situations as related to the study. I engaged in observations without having predetermined assumptions, and teachers teaching in the most overcrowded classes were observed. I sat at the

back of the classroom so as to eliminate disturbances; and I gained more insight about teaching and learning strategies that teachers use in overcrowded classrooms. This was achieved through the use of observation schedule which guided me in terms of areas of focus (Simpson & Tuson, 2005). It was vitally important to observe these teachers as I got the first-hand experience of what is happening in overcrowded classrooms.

3.7 Data analysis

Data analysis is a way of creating order by undergoing the process of data interpretation (Zide, 2013). Thematic analysis was used to analyse data generated through both semi-structured interviews and observation in this study. Thematic analysis is a way of finding, interpreting and reporting data (Clark, 2006). This stage of research analysis is vital because it enables the researcher ample time to evaluate data (Bogdan & Biklein, 1998). Data analyses helps the researcher to organise data that has been generated in order to make sense of the gathered data (Regenesis, 2003). Data from interviews were digitally recorded. I started by recording the semi structured interview sessions through the use of digital voice recorder and cell phone for backup reasons. The voice records were subsequently transcribed into a textual or word format. Lodiso, Spaulding and Voegtle (2010) state that firstly data should be organised in the format that will help the researcher to analyse it easily. After the transcription of data, I coded data then arranged it in table format with themes. Coding was done to each section of work that was analysed from the text in transcripts. Each section was coded and given a theme. Coding refers to the process where the researchers continuously read through the transcribed data and divide it into substantial logical components (Maree, 2007). Subsequent to the coding process, the data was categorised into themes. The conclusions were then drawn and verifications were made from the analysis with the aim of matching the findings with the original research questions.

3.8 Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is an attempt to verify and to ensure that the research is of good quality (Lincoln & Guba, 1989). Four key elements or strategies used for verifying trustworthiness are credibility, transferability, conformability and dependability. Below I explain these elements of trustworthiness in detail:

3.8.1 Credibility

Semi structured interviews and observation methods were used as tools to ensure that the study measured its intended purpose or its credibility. Credibility is all about assessing and checking whether data obtained is accurate to show the observed social phenomenon (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Manageable sample of four educators teaching in overcrowded context was used in this study to ensure credibility. Participants were interviewed and observed in their schools where they operate. Tape recording of interviews and observations was also done for the purpose of credibility.

3.8.2 Conformability

Confirmability is the process done to eliminate biases in the study. Conformability focuses not just only on descriptions and researchers' predictions but is the outcome of the ideas and experiences of participants (Shanton, 2004). According to Lincoln and Guba (1985) conformability is a strategy used by qualitative researchers to show their level of neutrality in the study. I verified and re-checked the accuracy of data with all my participants through member checking. This process entailed sending the transcripts to participants to check if they were correctly represented. All the participants confirmed that findings were correct. I also used the copies obtained from interviews to verify the findings of the transcribed notes.

3.8.3 Dependability

Yin (2014) views dependability as a way of testing quality used during data generation process. This scholar further claims that there is a strong correlation between credibility and dependability. Therefore, in this study dependability was ensured by using two data generation methods which were semi-structured interviews and observation. Since this study was qualitative in nature; to enhance dependability I made sure that the study provide more in-depth or quality details to assist future researchers to follow similar design. Lastly, the research report was given to my supervisor as a critical reader for proof reading.

3.8.4 Transferability

Transferability refers to the magnitude to which the reader is able to generalise findings with regards to his or her context (Morrow, 2005). In support of this Lodico, Spaulding and Voegtle (2010) concur that transferability is a measure of similarities between the researchers' context and other contexts as perceived or judged by the audience. To improve transferability, I gave descriptive detail on context and all the processes that were involved in this research. This was

done to allow the reader to do his/her own judgement in terms of transferring the findings of this study to a similar context.

3.9 Ethical issues

Ethics in research are an important aspect when conducting research studies that involve humans (Cohen; et al., 2007). Scholars like Mc Millan and Schumacher (2010) suggest the guidelines to be adhered when conducting a study. Informed consent, avoiding deception, ensuring confidentiality and anonymity, avoiding harm and respecting privacy of the participants are to be observed. The researcher has a responsibility to obtain consent, protect the participants from any harm and maintain privacy (Drew, 2007). Letters to request the participants to take part in research were written. Consent from the participants to participate in the study was obtained and they were requested to sign it. Signing a consent form is an important aspect of research (Clark & Dawson, 1999). A clear explanation of what research is all about and what is expected of the participants. An informed choice was made. Participants were told that their names were not going to be revealed, instead pseudonyms were used.

According to Neuman (2000) the research must respect the autonomy of all people participating in research. The researcher wrote a letters to get permission to conduct research from both the Education Department and the school principals where research was conducted. Lastly, the researcher also applied for ethical clearance from the University.

3.10 Limitations

Generalizability is the most relevant limitation in this study. This study is conducted in the context of secondary schools, therefore conclusions cannot be generalised as it provides data that is limited to two secondary schools which cannot be generalised to a larger population. Gayi, Mills and Airasian (2009) confirm that qualitative research's findings are not context bound and cannot make conclusions that can be generalised to a bigger population. To respond to this limitation the researcher gave detailed descriptions of every aspect of data obtained from the participants.

3.10 Chapter Summary

This chapter focused on research design and methodology that guided the research process. The interpretivists paradigm was firstly discussed then qualitative research design and case study methodology were fully discussed as they formed pillars of methodology in this study. Apart from the methodology pillars, the sampling, data generation and data analysis methods

were discussed. Finally, the issues of trustworthiness, issues of ethics as well as limitation to the study were explained. In the next chapter the findings of the study will be presented and discussed.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented a discussion of research design and methodology. Included in this discussion was the method that was adopted for analysing data, namely thematic analysis. To this end, the generated data was firstly transcribed and then analysed following the thematic analysis process. In this chapter, I present the findings which are a product of the analysis process to provide answers to the key research questions. The chapter begins by presenting a profile of participants and schools in which they work. Thereafter, the themes are presented.

4.2 Profiling of the participants

In this study, I generated data from four participants. These participants came from two different secondary schools. The names of the participants and their schools are not revealed in the study for anonymity reasons. Instead pseudonyms are used. Below I present the names of participants and schools in a table, thereafter; a full profile for each participant is presented.

Name of participant	Name of school
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Mr Mlautsi	Hlombe Secondary School
Mrs Alane	
Mr Njobz	Zabalaza Secondary School
Mrs Mahewu	

Table 1: List of participants

4.2.1 Mr Mlautsi

The first participant is named Mr Mlautsi for anonymity reasons. Mr Mlautsi is between 30-35 years and teaches in a school named Hlombe secondary for anonymity reasons. Mr Mlautsi has been teaching in this school for 15 years and he holds a B. Ed Honours degree. His school is ranked at quintile 4 and is located at Empangeni in Lower Umfolozi Circuit, King Cetshwayo District. The school is under-resourced and has poor infrastructure. By poor infrastructure in this context I mean that the school has few classrooms or classrooms that do not match the enrolment. Again, the school lacks technological equipment like computers, projectors, sound system, air conditioners etc. The school enrolment at the moment is 1 440 and the learners are accommodated in 23 classrooms. In fact, the school requires 23 additional classrooms to match the enrolment. Mr Mlautsi has 78 learners in his classrooms and is teaching Creative Arts which requires a lot of space for practical activities and interaction. The school has a computer lab and a library; but these facilities are too small to accommodate all the learners. Besides being a teacher, Mr Mlautsi also serves as a member of the School Governing Body (SGB).

4.2.2 Mrs Alane

The second participant is named Mrs Alane for anonymity reasons. Mrs Alane is between the ages of 35-40 years and teaches in a secondary school named Hlombe Secondary School for anonymity reasons. Mrs Alane has 8 years of teaching experience and her teaching career started at Hlombe Secondary School in 2011. She holds a Bachelor in Education (B.Ed.) degree and she is currently teaching Agriculture and Life Sciences. Her school Hlombe Secondary

School is ranked at quintile 4 and is located in Lower Umfolozi Circuit in King Cetshwayo District. The school is under resourced and has very poor infrastructure. The school enrolment is 1 440 and the learners are accommodated in 23 classrooms. In fact, the school requires 23 additional classrooms to match the enrolment. The school has a computer lab and a library but these facilities are too small to accommodate all the learners. Mrs Alane has 75 learners in her classroom. Besides being a teacher, Mrs Alane also serves as a Chair person of School Development Team (SDT) committee.

4.2.3 Mr Njobz

The third participant is named Mr Njobz for anonymity reasons. Mr Njobz is between the ages 45-50 and he is a senior teacher. Mr Njobz has 21 years teaching experience and he started teaching in Zabalaza School in 1998. He holds a B. Ed Honours Degree. His school, Zabalaza Secondary school is ranked at quintile 3 and is located in Umhlathuze Circuit in the King Cetshwayo District. The school enrolment is 1020 and the learners are accommodated in 14 classrooms. The school has a shortage of classrooms, as a result most of the GET classrooms are overcrowded with 60 and above learners in each class. Mr Njobz's classroom has 67 learners and he teaches Tourism and English. The school has a library and a computer lab but these facilities are dysfunctional as they are not used for teaching and learning. Again, these facilities are too small to accommodate all the learners. Besides teaching, Mr Njobz is a sports organiser in the school and also a union site steward for National Teachers Union (NATU).

4.2.4 Mrs Mahewu

The fourth participant is named Mrs Mahewu for anonymity reasons. Mrs Mahewu has three years teaching experience and started serving at Zabalaza Secondary School in 2016. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Tourism and a Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) which she obtained from one of the institutions in KwaZulu-Natal. Her school, Zabalaza is ranked at quintile 3 and it is located in a rural area of Umhlathuze Circuit, King Cetshwayo District. The school enrolment is 1020 and the learners are accommodated in 14 classrooms. The school has a shortage of classrooms and as a result most of the GET classrooms are overcrowded with 60

and above learners in each class. The school has a library and a computer lab but they are dysfunctional as they are not used for teaching and learning and are too small to accommodate all the learners. Mrs Mahewu is teaching English and Tourism. Besides teaching, she is serving as a netball coach in the school; again, she is a member of the Whole School Development Committee.

4.3 Data Presentation

The findings in this study are presented in five themes that emerged from data, to address the main critical questions. Below I present these themes independently. The identified themes are teaching methods enacted by teachers in overcrowded classrooms, teacher support from school management team and code of conduct as a control measure, lastly; how teachers respond to the problems experienced in overcrowded classrooms.

4.3.1 Teaching methods enacted by teachers in overcrowded classrooms

In trying to respond to kind of leadership practices enacted by teachers leading teaching and learning in overcrowded classrooms, I came up with the need to address the teaching approaches utilised by teachers in an overcrowded classroom context. Overcrowding in schools seems to be a hindering factor towards managing and monitoring the smooth running of teaching and learning. As a result, teachers have to find working methods to teach and achieve their objectives in overcrowded classrooms. Teachers who participated in this study were found to display various teaching methods to ensure effective teaching in overcrowded classrooms. The participants in this study identified methods such as, question and answer, peer teaching, telling and group discussion as the most used methods of teaching in overcrowded classrooms. For instance, Mr Mlautsi and Mrs Elane believe that grouping learners and the use of telling methods make teaching and learning to be smooth in overcrowded classrooms. This is what was articulated by Mr Mlautsi.

“I use diagnostic teaching methods like question and answer. This is done to understand what they know as well as to identify problem areas. Telling method and group discussions are also used. For those who are slow to think, I use questioning method most of the time.” (Mr Mlautsi)

Mrs Alane shares the similar understanding as Mr Mlautsi about the telling method and questioning, however she emphasised the use of peer teaching as learners learn faster and better from their peers. She explains:

I use question and answer and group discussion methods because individualization is difficult. I also give brilliant learners a chance to teach their peers as they listen to their peers. Extra time is needed as it is difficult to finish a lesson on time because of questions and discussions. (Mrs Alane)

Apart from the use of questioning and telling methods; Mr Njobz suggested presentations and more learner participation as a survival mechanism in an overcrowded class. This is what Mr Njobz had to say:

I combine different teaching methods. Among those methods I can mention telling, group discussion method as a way of involving learners. I also use peer teaching in the form of presentations by learners from their groups. Presentations help to reduce high noise levels as learners are highly engaged and they learn a culture of listening. The problem is that I cannot check all groups in a day and the lesson is delayed. (Mrs Alane)

Other than the use of telling method, Mrs Mahewu who is a novice educator seem to be confused and frustrated as learners don't respond to questioning method and she gives more of the written activities to keep the learners calm and involved in an overcrowded class as she says:

I use telling methods. I have tried questioning method but they do not respond and I felt it is not working for me. They don't answer my questions. Because I think they're afraid of their peers. To engage them I give more of written activities. (Mrs Mahewu)

It appears that there is some kind of confusion on the best methods to use in overcrowded classrooms, but teachers are having elements of commitment by spending more time in their

classes as they have mentioned the use of afternoons and break times to assist learners to catch up. I have also observed that teachers are motivating learners to do their school work as they teach. Scholars like Opoku-Asare (2014); Friedman-Kruss, Raver, Neuspiel, and Kinsel (2014) mention that teacher preparedness is ruined and demolished by high levels of interruptions that arise from the effect of overcrowding. As a result of overcrowding, teachers are overworked. I have observed that over enrolment in classrooms negatively affects teaching and learning as there are many interruptions that arise in class. Mr Mlautsi mentioned that the results or performance for other learners is poor as they do not write or listen in class due to high levels of stress associated with overcrowding. It appears that teachers need to be reskilled in terms of teaching strategies suitable for overcrowded classrooms in order for them to survive in such contexts.

The National Education Policy Act: Norms and Standards for Educators (Notice 82 of 2000) stipulates seven roles of a teacher, namely, mediator of teaching and learning, interpreter and designer of all learning programmes, assessor, learning area specialist, teacher as a scholar and lifelong learner, giver of pastoral care, leader administrator and manager of curriculum. These roles are observable from the participating teachers as they are going an extra mile trying to design workable strategies to survive and achieve good results in overcrowded classrooms. Teachers in these schools have tried to create workable environment in overcrowded classroom conditions by engaging learners through presentations, giving more activities, lecture methods and questioning to check their understanding. This indicates that that they are continuously learning from this experience of overcrowding. This resonates with the sentiments of Asodike and Onyeike (2016) who claims that teachers have a duty to lead and find ways to mediate teaching and learning even in challenging overcrowded context.

From the data extracts, it appears that educators ensure the sustainability of the advancement of quality education through the use of a variety of teaching methods. This is in line with the adaptive leadership theory which stipulates that teachers direct and lead teaching and learning through flexibility and passion (Crowther, Kaagen & Hann, 2002). This means that for teachers to cope in overcrowded classrooms, they need to have passion and integrity to manage learners patiently. The way teachers respond in this study, shape up the environment of an overcrowded class. In this way they are showing a good understanding of diverse classroom situation as they are teaching learners from different backgrounds (Yulk, 2002). Responding to the context has benefited teachers to enjoy great deal of success in a challenging context of overcrowding as they are continuously developed. Furthermore; Reynolds, (2015) concurs that teachers are

channelled by their school management teams or leaders to improve their working conditions to produce quality results. This influence the way teachers behave in class to create a positive classroom climate.

4.3.2 Teacher support from school management team

Teachers leading teaching and learning in overcrowded classroom environments revealed that their school management team (SMT) influence their teaching practices positively. Some of teachers in this study view teacher support as an important aspect they require to fulfil teaching and learning in overcrowded contexts. Some of the participating teachers highlighted that the kind of support they receive is insufficient. Thus, the participating teachers blame SMT members for the high number of cases of learners' misbehaviour. This was articulated by Mr Mlautsi:

“I can say there is less support, because school management team is (SMT) not always there during one-on-one parents meeting. SMT members say the cases are too many to be handled by them as they have their own duty load”.
(Mr Mlautsi)

To confirm the same idea; Miss Mahewu has this to say:

No support from SMT. I feel that the support is not enough. IQMS [performance management] processes are done but no change. They keep on asking for subject improvement plans from us. Hold one-on-one and Departmental meeting but nothing is done about overcrowding. School Management team only attend to the big cases where they involve parents. No intervention and I have come to an extent where I think maybe the problem is with me. (Miss Mahewu)

It emerged from the participants that School Management Teams are also negatively affected by overcrowding. School leaders need to be prepared through continuous training and development (Heystek, 2016). This will be done to equip school managers with better strategies to manage overcrowded schools. Bottery (2004) further mentions that principals end up working overtime on daily basis to overcome challenges of overcrowding. This is to say school management team might fail educator performance if they do not conform to over time.

Teachers mentioned that SMT members are maintaining order by ensuring that teachers are attending classes. SMT should ensure that the school environment is conducive and supports teacher collegiality in their sub-committees and through Departmental meetings (Mestry, 2017). Regular meetings help teachers to learn and share concerns with their managers.

While other participants lamented about poor support from SMT members, others claim that SMT members do provide support and this enables them to succeed even though they operate in a challenging context. Mrs Alane appreciates the motivational talks and strong supervision by School management team to ensure order within the school. She had this to say:

They intervene through taking rounds and talk to learners who are troublesome. Overcrowded classrooms are prioritised and they target all the troublesome learners in these classrooms. Those who are affected by drugs are referred to SANCA for rehabilitation. The SMT invites people from outside to motivate learners. (Mrs Alane)

Miss Njobz shares a similar view with Mrs Alane about the intervention and assistance provided by SMT through motivation and parental involvement to maintain order which sustain good performance. Although, she appears to be overwhelmed by the SMT's interventions she had this to say:

The push from SMT is too much, lots of meetings. I feel the pressure on us as teachers is too much. Class visits are also done to observe and monitor teaching and learning. They organize team building outings for us as teachers to distress and get motivation. They also intervene through parental involvement and moral support through motivation. But some learners do not have parents. (Miss Njobz)

The data discussed above shows the School Management Team that is doing what is expected of them in terms of supporting teachers and forming community of practise where teachers meet regularly to discuss matters that affect them. Khuzwayo (2013) and Heystek (2016) rightly state that SMT has a role to lead, guide, encourage through motivation and offer support for progress and effectiveness of teaching and learning.

4.3.3 Challenges posed by overcrowded classroom

Overcrowding poses a great challenge for teachers in terms of learner behaviour thus leading to teacher behavioural problems. Teachers have raised many concerns about learner behaviour on how learners' respond towards overcrowded classroom conditions. Although some teachers are happy about other learners who are doing well and respond positively in classes; but there are those who take an opportunity to misbehave as they think teachers won't see them. Among those misbehaviours are high noise levels, throwing of papers on the floor, sleeping due to heat stress. Behaviour control is not easy for teachers. This is what Mr Mlautsi had to say in response to teaching challenges experienced.

Learners react in a positive way they engage fully but some learners take advantage and chat with their friends while I am teaching, some do not write as they know that I won't be able to check all their workbooks due to large numbers.

Mrs Alane shares the similar sentiment with Mr Mlautsi that learners do not write the class activities as they are used to assess learner performance in class. The slow learners are deprived and become angry and confused or sleep in class.

You cannot be happy in overcrowded class, not all learners participate, others do their own things, not fair to challenged learners, fast learners enjoy and work fast as they grasp easily, the slow ones are deprived and remain reserved and stuck in confusion, and a teacher has no time as she is rushing to finish work schedule. Frustrated learners sometimes become rude towards the teacher. (Mrs Alane).

Presentations work better as learners are kept involved. They don't have much to explore since they have the end in mind that after the explanation (lecture method) then they will have to do presentation. Mr Njobz explained:

Behaviour and conduct of learners is controlled as there are limitations when learners are actively involved as there is not much to explore, they try by all means to keep themselves involved. (Mrs Alane)

Mrs Mahewu highlights that work schedule is compromised as there are too many learners to attend to. Learners opt to sleep and others make noise if they are not taken step by step.

They do listen but there are some noise distractions from others. Commotion and noise in class is there but when doing lecture method it is better as there are less distractions. Learners do not do written activities yet I give them to assess their level of understanding. (Mrs Mahewu)

What is evident in this study is that teachers leading teaching and learning in overcrowded classes use different teaching strategies. Although teachers are using different teaching methods in overcrowded classrooms, numerous challenges that hinder progress and effectiveness of teaching and learning were found. Learner ill-discipline, high noise levels, sleeping and sicknesses were found to be common in overcrowded classrooms. This creates challenges in terms of teaching and learning as education goals are unattainable due to issues like high noise levels and cheating among learners.

During the observation sessions, I observed that teachers spend a lot of time trying to organize learners as they keep moving. This movement is high especially after breaks. Others are trying to escape (for bunking) as the classroom is too hot. High noise levels were also observed and the teacher kept on disciplining learners. Teachers also raised that after breaks they feel like failures as they are unable to exercise discipline due to strange behaviours shown by learners. Teachers mentioned that they find it difficult to exercise their leadership roles. What inspired me is that other teachers are able to cope and enjoy teaching as they exercise strong disciplinary measures entirely in overcrowded class. Learners were seated according to their abilities in their rows and as they were involved they were cooperative.

From the literature I have learnt that teachers who are strategic and context driven are able to achieve good results as learning environments become positive (The Employment of Educators Act, 76 of 1998). By context driven Educators, in this context I mean those who accept the overcrowded conditions and adapt to respond to it positively (Meador, 2019).

A study conducted by Ngokabuenui, (2015) revealed that overcrowded classrooms limit progress as learners are difficult to control. Poor academic performance, lateness to class attendance, stealing are mentioned by participants as other behaviours that hinder teaching and learning in overcrowded classes. According to Ngokabuenui, (2015) strategies are required to curb deviant behaviours to facilitate effective teaching and learning in overcrowded classrooms. Overcrowding compromises safety for both learners and teachers as fights (violence) and other unacceptable behaviours are common in overcrowded classrooms (ACLU,

2013). Measures to combat unsafe conditions should be considered as important in overcrowded schools.

4.3.4 Code of conduct as a control measure used by teachers in overcrowded classrooms

The participants in the study revealed that there is a guiding policy in place to control behaviour of all learners. This policy serves as a guideline for both teachers and learners to maintain order and discipline within the school and classrooms. The policy is there to create a safe environment in schools. Participants mentioned that the code of conduct has no specifications for overcrowded classrooms. This means that it is general for all learners. Participants gave comments on policies in place to guide learners' behaviour: This is what Mr Mlautsi said:

“Yes there is code of conduct, offence slips are collected for misbehaviour and filed for each misbehaving learner and then parents are invited. There is school disciplinary committee. SGB also has a structure that is dealing with discipline”. (Mr Mlautsi said)

Although the code of conduct guides teachers in maintaining order in their classrooms, the teachers however highlighted that the code of conduct is not specific for managing overcrowded classroom. As a result, a teacher has a role to make the code of conduct work in an overcrowded classroom. This was shared by Mrs Alane:

Yes, there is a school code conduct which is read to them every year. The policy is for the whole school but you as a teacher in overcrowded classes make it work for you by making learners understand the purpose of the policy. As a teacher I then decide for myself to devise strategy to cope as there is no specific policy to deal with overcrowded classroom. I give more revision and extra work to improve performance. Reinforce discipline. (Mrs Alane)

Mr Njobz also appreciates the code of conduct as a guiding policy and as well as disciplinary hearing as a measure towards correcting behaviour and disciplining learners in overcrowded classroom contexts.

Code of conduct appears to be the only tool that is used to guide us as teachers to control learners' behaviour. Our school has adopted the use of

offence slips as a way of keeping records of misbehaving learners. Teachers together with grade heads hold regular meetings emphasising and motivating the use of the code of conduct as well the completion of offence slips so as to track discipline records with teachers. (Mr Njobz)

While Mr Njobz is impressed by the availability of code of conduct as a guide, Miss Mahewu is concerned about the fact that code of conduct is giving minimal help towards monitoring behaviour in her classes.

Code of conduct is there but its help is minimal or does not help. A certain amount of offence slips have to be collected before a parent is invited. But it's not working for me.... (She was starting to cry)..... Not effective at all. (Mrs Mahewu)

From the above discussion it is clear that teachers do have a policy to guide them in controlling the behaviour of learners which assist in improving performance. What inspired me in this study is that some teachers are flexible and able to create a workable environment through the use of the code of conduct and offence slips as a vehicle towards the tracking of misbehaving records. It is clear that code of conduct is the key towards classroom management in overcrowded context for effective teaching and learning (Department of Education, 2008). Teachers also use the code of conduct to create a positive learning and environment and parental involvement. This is confirmed by Asodike and Onyeike (2016) as he suggests that teachers are the driving force towards the creation of workable positive classroom environment in overcrowded conditions through proper classroom management. Mestry (2012) claims that the collaboration of School Management teams, School Governing Bodies and Teachers as well as learners is important for instilling discipline using the code of conduct as a guide. The correct usage of Code of conduct in overcrowded classrooms may help to build constructive learning environment. Motivation of teachers towards gearing them up to use the code of conduct is pushed and encouraged by school management teams.

It is apparent that adaptive teacher leadership is required by teachers to implement or utilise the code of conduct in over- enrolled classes to monitor learner behaviour. It is clear that although Code of conduct is available as a guiding policy, teachers are to make it work by motivating learners about its importance (Northhouse, 2016). The use of offence slips by educators in this study is evident as it is in line with the keeping of simple records to track and monitor continuous misbehaviour (Mestry, 2012).

4.3.5 Implications of overcrowding on teachers

Lack of behaviour management skills seem to be a threat to teachers leading teaching and learning in overcrowded classrooms. Teachers in over-enrolled schools context revealed that leading teaching and learning is frustrating. Teachers highlighted that the school management team is giving them a hard time as they try to push them with deadlines: as a result irritable and stressful behaviour affect teachers leading teaching and learning in overcrowded classrooms. It also emerged from the interviews that teachers are demotivated by teaching in an under resourced overcrowded environment. Mr Mlautsi voiced his frustration about leading teaching and learning in overcrowded environment, as he fails to meet deadlines or due dates. This was articulated by Mr Mlautsi in this manner:

I now have negative attitude towards school work as I am feeling like a failure. I can't finish work on time, my HOD is always running after me for marked scripts and mark lists, I can't meet deadlines. I am stressed; practically it takes me more than two weeks to finish my marking because I am also teaching. (Mr Mlautsi)

Miss Alane is also concerned about anger that results from standardisation of moderation dates as marking takes longer than normal in overcrowded classes. Miss Alane said:

Teachers are very angry, they delay time to go to class, and others take unnecessary sick leaves. Teachers are annoying, all the time when a learner from my class gives them trouble they keep telling me that your class is not disciplined. "Your class is noisy, they don't submit", they have negative attitude towards overcrowded classes. Marking 250 scripts is a challenge, due dates and moderations are standardised, overcrowded classes are not recognised. (Miss Alane)

Overcrowding also impact negatively on class attendance and emotional behaviour which threatens teachers' security as participants talk about corporal punishment: Mrs Njobz articulated:

Actually teachers don't like overcrowded classes. Teachers dodge classes and attend periods very late. They sometimes go to class on time and come

back after 15 minutes leaving the learners unattended as they avoid high noise levels. Life becomes difficult if the neighbouring class is unattended and then I also leave my class to check the neighbouring class as the learners go out of the class, teaching and learning is disturbed. Teachers take long leave during marking time as marking is stressful and frustrating. I see myself as incompetent in an overcrowded class as I teach for a short time and keep on shouting at the learners to keep quiet all the time. Some exercise books are not touched as there is too much to mark in each class; teachers become emotional as they feel incompetent. Teachers are tempted to use corporal punishment. I even feel unsafe as they are too many for me alone. (Mrs Njobz articulated)

Finally, it also emerged that fear of incompetence affects teachers emotionally and end up being overworked as Mrs Mahewu says:

Like I was saying fear and stress as I sometimes feel incompetent and depressed and that make me to sleep a lot as I feel tired all the time. I end up going an extra mile trying to teach other parts properly of which it delays me from completing work schedule on time.... (She repeats putting more emphasis): When results do not come up the way you expecting there is fear and stress and think that there is something wrong with me.

The above discussions are the implications on teachers of leading teaching and learning in overcrowded classroom environments. Teachers raised numerous behaviours that arise due to mismanagement of high enrolment in schools. Teachers raised issues of fear of being incompetent, stress, and inability to meet due dates thus becoming depressed and ending up being overworked. This creates conditions whereby teachers leave classes before time and sometimes taking long unnecessary leave due to high stress levels. They revealed that they fail to exercise their leadership roles fully due to overcrowding pressures they encounter as they lead teaching and learning. Although they encounter such pressures; they remain committed to teaching (Ainscow, Hopkins, Southworth & West, 1994). Commitment of teachers plays a vital role to improve effectiveness of teaching and learning.

This is in line with Northouse (2016) as he states that teacher training needs to prepare teachers to manage overcrowding. Teachers in this study revealed that they have a lot of frustration as they find it hard to deal with challenges like late coming, high noise levels and absenteeism.

This creates a need for continuous teacher development training workshops for teachers to manage stress. Job pressure associated with overcrowding lead to an aggressive behaviour for teachers as there is too much required of them. Magueen and Litz (2015) voiced that committed teachers are buffered by moral injuries such as trauma, guilt and anxiety caused by overcrowding. Moral injuries tempt teachers to misbehave as one participant mentioned the issue of corporal punishment usage in class which is against teachers' code of conduct.

I also observed that overcrowding impact negatively on time management and innovations towards teaching and learning. Such conditions lead to too much pressure that delay time for feedback and revision which are important aspects for effective teaching and learning. Literature confirms that teachers leading teaching and learning in overcrowded classrooms need support in terms of motivation and collaboration for team work to improve teacher morale so as to create positive school culture (Magueen & Litz, 2015). Team work between the school teachers is further supported by Reynolds (2015) as it helps to improve teacher abilities. In fact this mostly affects highly committed teachers' morale and results in feelings of guilt and anxiety which end up buffering teacher effectiveness. From context responsive leadership, teachers' ability to lead and motivation to adapt and respond to context of overcrowding is the best in this study (Bredson, Klar & Johnson, 2018). Strong leadership skills and flexibility of teachers to understand the value and the importance of education will create fruitful learning atmosphere in overcrowded classroom conditions. Villegas and Lucas, (2002) add up the importance of teachers to hold students' views in order to improve classroom climate of an overcrowded class.

4.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented the discussion of data and the findings that arose from the data. Five themes were used to discuss data and present findings. These theme provided answers to these three critical questions namely, what are the leadership practices enacted by teachers leading teaching and learning in overcrowded classrooms? What are the challenges experienced by teachers leading teaching and learning in overcrowded classrooms? How do these teachers respond to challenges they experience when teaching overcrowded classrooms?

In the next chapter, I present the conclusions drawn from the findings and the recommendations made to different stakeholders.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter contained the discussion of data and the findings. These findings were presented, in five themes; namely teaching methods enacted by teachers in overcrowded classrooms, teacher support from school management team, challenges posed by overcrowded classrooms, code of conduct as a control measure used by teachers in overcrowded classroom, implications of overcrowding on teachers. This is the final chapter of this study, which aims to provide the study summary, the conclusions drawn from findings as well as the recommendations to different stakeholders.

5.2 Summary of the study

The main aim of this study was to explore the experiences of teachers leading teaching and learning in overcrowded classrooms. This was a qualitative case study of four teachers from two secondary schools in King Cetshwayo District. Before the discussion of the conclusions which are organised in accordance with the research questions that underpinned the study, I begin by presenting the summary of the entire study to remind readers of the contents of each chapter.

Chapter 1 presented the introduction to the study in terms of the key areas of the research process; namely the background to the study, the rationale of the study, the research questions as well as the aims of the study.

Chapter 2 explored the literature on studies that have been conducted around the studied phenomenon. This was done to broaden the researcher's understanding of the studied phenomenon and also to enable the researcher to understand literature gaps in terms of the studied phenomenon. In addition to literature review, this chapter also discussed the teacher leadership theory and the context responsive leadership theory which are the theories that constituted the theoretical framework of this study.

Chapter 3 described the actual methodological components that were utilised to enhance the study process. The chapter began by explaining interpretivism as a position that was taken by the researcher to view the world. The chapter also discussed the qualitative research design as well as the case study methodology which are methodological processes that were adopted in this study to understand the experiences of teachers. Again, the methods of sampling, generating data and analysing data were discussed. Lastly, the discussion of ethical and trustworthiness issues was presented.

Chapter 4 focused on data discussion and presentation of findings of the study. This chapter began by profiling participants and schools in which the participants work. Thereafter, the findings were presented thematically in five themes that emerged from data.

5.3 Conclusions drawn from the findings

In this section I present the conclusions that were drawn from the findings of the study. The conclusions are drawn around each research question. Before the conclusions are presented, I begin by reminding readers the key questions that propelled this study:

Key questions

- What are the leadership practices enacted by teachers leading teaching and learning in overcrowded classrooms?
- What are the challenges experienced by teachers leading teaching and learning in overcrowded classrooms?
- How do these teachers respond to challenges they experience when teaching overcrowded classrooms?

5.3.1 Leadership practices enacted by teachers leading teaching and learning in overcrowded classrooms

This study has explored the experiences of teachers leading teaching and learning in overcrowded classrooms. South African teachers are guided by one policy in terms of curriculum in public schools namely, Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS). Teachers leading teaching and learning in overcrowded schools are also guided by the same policy although their context poses different challenges. This study revealed that teachers leading teaching and learning in overcrowded contexts are confronted by numerous challenges relating to discipline, limited resources, time management and also struggles of best suited pedagogies. As a result, these teachers were found going the extra mile as their leadership response to the demands associated with overcrowded classrooms. Another practice that was found from the participating teachers was the adoption of various teaching strategies to moderate the situation. These teaching strategies involved question and answer, telling and group discussion and presentations or peer teaching as ways of encouraging learner participation.

Teachers in this study focused on ensuring the sustainability of teaching and learning in overcrowded classrooms through the use of various leadership practices. The leadership practices displayed by teachers appeared to match the situation under which they operate with the aim of school improvement. Active involvement of learners during teaching and learning was found commonly used by teachers in overcrowded classes. Teacher preparedness was also confirmed to assist teachers' ability to manage complexity of overcrowded classes. Teachers leading teaching and learning in this study seem to train and motivate learners to face social demands through presentations and peer group teaching. The practice of understanding working context also assists teachers to prepare their learners to manage and exercise leadership in over-enrolled classes. Teachers working in overcrowded contexts understand their working conditions and equip or motivate learners to work collaboratively with them to reduce chaos and lower stress associated with overcrowding. By so doing, teachers are fulfilling the duty of shaping and restructuring the classroom environment to reduce job pressure.

Leading teaching and learning in overcrowded context is not an easy task, but teachers in this study were found displaying creativity and flexibility. Teachers outlined the incorporation of life experiences, encouraging of learners' self-sufficiency, collaborative learning and the

creation of self-effacing as well as provision of relevance as useful strategies to enhance teaching and learning. Teachers base lessons on the needs that arise from the class. Collaboration in an overcrowded context helps one to learn from the other. Many studies revealed that students learn better from their peers. Thus teachers in this study also encourage teaching methods that include self-study and group controls in over enrolled classroom contexts to assist learners assess themselves by identifying problem areas by themselves.

5.3.2 Challenges experienced by teachers in overcrowded classrooms

Overcrowding in schools actually influences the way in which educators deliver the curriculum. Among the challenges experienced by teachers in this study are learner misbehaviour, lack of support from School Management Team and teacher stress. This study found that teachers lacked skills to manage learners' behaviour in overcrowded classes. This is caused by the fact that teachers are overworked since there is too much pressure put on them. Irritable and stressful behaviour leading to burnout of the teachers is noticed in some participants in this study. High stress level drives some of the teachers to use corporal punishment. It is evident that teachers' leadership skills are challenged and thus limited by the context of overcrowding.

This is saying teachers need more support in terms of classroom behaviour management. It is evident that even the Code of Conduct that guides teachers towards managing discipline to control behaviour of learners seems to be ineffective as learners seem to enjoy the alternative measures to discipline them and at the same time it punishes the teacher as well, as he is to be there during detention. These punishment measures also require the presence of the teacher, therefore it look like these alternative measures to corporal punishment are punishing the teacher as well. Therefore, there is the need for the reskilling and empowerment of teachers leading overcrowded classrooms to assist them with skills to employ democratic principles in most challenging contexts.

The findings have also revealed that there are other school teachers who are able to manage overcrowded classrooms with the help of School Management Team and other stakeholders as well as motivation towards teacher leadership. Collaboration of teachers with SMT and others seem to be a solution towards effectiveness of teaching and learning in overcrowded classrooms. There was an indication in the data that teachers who are getting enough support

achieve better results even in challenging conditions like overcrowding. It also appeared that teachers form the professional learning communities in schools where they share skills and matters affecting teaching and learning. Regular meetings are also held to do follow up and progress.

Teachers are also challenged by too much pressure from SMT as they lack strategies to manage learners with behavioural problems thus delaying the lesson. Teachers working with over enrolled classes are trying hard to meet due dates which are similar with other normal or standard enrolment. These teachers end up being over worked as they work after schools, break time and during the weekends. This has created a negative attitude and demotivation to some teachers as overcrowded schools are not catered when determining the due dates. This has created barriers towards improvement and cause a lot of stress which lead to teacher absenteeism. More of these issues can be found in section **4.3.5 of chapter 4**. School teachers themselves are not empowered to deal with stress to cope with overcrowded classroom pressure. The lesson learnt from this study is that teachers are negatively affected by overcrowded classrooms.

5.3.3 How do these teachers respond to challenges experienced when teaching overcrowded classrooms?

One of the main aims of this study was to explore teachers' experiences of leading teaching and learning in overcrowded classrooms (refer to Chapter one, page 2). After examining the four themes that emerged from generated data the following teacher responses were revealed.

Teachers are working as pacesetters to ensure that quality education is provided in overcrowded classes. Teachers are also holding regular information sharing and subject meetings with School Management Teams where teachers as professionals discuss problems that affect teaching and learning and come up with some strategies. Sharing of skills to manage overcrowded classes seems to be a resolution towards managing teaching and learning in these schools. The study revealed that teachers are creative and resilient as well as responsive to the context of overcrowding. This has assisted teachers to come up with teaching and leadership strategies that shape the classroom conditions. In short teachers in this study were reactive to the context of overcrowding rather than being proactive.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the findings, I make the following recommendations which are directed to three particular stakeholders namely, the Department of Basic Education, School Management Teams with specific reference to school principals and lastly fellow Researchers.

5.4.1 Recommendation to the Department of Basic Education

I make few recommendations to the Department of Basic Education. Firstly, based on overcrowded classes in schools I suggest that they enforce laws that restrict number of admissions done by the schools so as to control overcrowding in schools. Regular follow-up visits and head counts are done to maintain the prescribed numbers in schools. Measures to improve infrastructure for the overcrowded schools, especially for those schools that are highly affected by this problem. This can be through improved budget or mobile class provision. The Department of Basic Education should focus on granting bursaries for teachers who are working in overcrowded schools to sharpen their teaching methods and strategies for improving teaching and learning. Department of Basic Education should also ensure that re-skilling of teachers with other measures like the use of new teaching technologies and support programmes to manage and improve skills to instil discipline in large overcrowded classes. Support programmes should aim at addressing the needs of diverse workforce like teachers who are challenged by overcrowding issues.

5.4.2 Recommendations to school management teams

School Management Teams need to introduce teacher support committees where teachers with stress problems will be assisted. The school Principals are to implement measures to strengthen teacher motivation and to professionally develop teachers working in overcrowded classroom contexts. Some educators in this study revealed that they are not receiving enough support from the SMT, so therefore they should be motivated to cope in over- enrolled classes. Teachers leading teaching and learning in overcrowded classes are challenged by the implementation of the Code of conduct, therefore there should be collaboration of teachers, learners and school

management team to continuously improve Code of conduct in accordance with the context or the needs of each school.

5.4.3 Recommendation to future researchers

Future researchers should explore the teachers' views on safety and security in overcrowded schools. Findings in this study revealed that teachers working in overcrowded contexts feel unsafe as there is poor ventilation, frequent fights, stealing and other forms of misbehaviours. Surely they can make positive contributions towards normalising the classroom environment for overcrowded classes.

5.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter marks the final statement of the study which explored the experiences of teachers leading teaching and learning in overcrowded classrooms. This study was guided by three research questions to understand the experiences of these teachers. The study revealed that teachers are threatened by overcrowding issues in classrooms. These challenges end up ruining the classroom climate and making teaching and learning to be ineffective. Teachers were trying hard to adapt and manage the challenges of overcrowding in classrooms as they have used a number of strategies. As this is the last chapter, I presented conclusions drawn from the findings and made recommendations that are directed to different role players namely, the School Management Team, Department of Basic Education authorities and the future researchers.

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APPENDIX A

PERMISSION FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF BASIC EDUCATION



education

Department:
Education
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

Enquiries: Phindile Duma

Tel: 033 392 1063

Ref.:2/4/8/1769

Mrs BN Biyela
PO Box 77008
Empangeni
3880

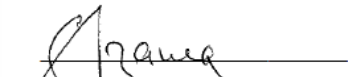
Dear Mrs Biyela

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DoE INSTITUTIONS

Your application to conduct research entitled: “**LEADING TEACHING AND LEARNING IN AN OVERCROWDED CLASSROOM: EXPERIENCES OF FOUR TEACHERS IN TWO SECONDARY SCHOOLS**”, 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 22 April 2019 to 01 September 2021.
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 Phindile Duma 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.

Khombindlela Secondary School
Ziphazonke High School


Dr. EV Nzama
Head of Department: Education
Date: 23 April 2019

ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE



26 July 2019

Mrs Bonakele Biyela (217080423)
School of Education
Edgewood Campus

Dear Mrs Biyela,

Protocol reference number: HSS/0246/019M

Project title: Leading teaching and learning in an overcrowded classroom: Experiences of four teachers in two secondary schools

Approval Notification – Expedited Application

In response to your application received on 27 March 2019, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol has 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 1 year 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.

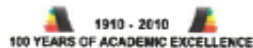
Yours faithfully

.....
Dr Rosemary Sibanda (Chair)

/ms

Cc Supervisor: Dr Sbonelo Blose
cc Academic Leader Research: Dr Ansurie Pillay
cc School Administrator: Ms Sheryl Jeenaarain

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee
Dr Rosemary Sibanda (Chair)
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Website: www.ukzn.ac.za



Founding Campuses: ■ Edgewood ■ Howard College ■ Medical School ■ Pietermaritzburg ■ Westville

LETTER TO THE GATEKEEPER

10/01/ 2019

The Principal

Dear Madam

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT YOUR SCHOOL

I am Bonakele N. Biyela and I am conducting research as a requirement of the University of KwaZulu-Natal towards a Degree of Master in Education. The title of the research study is “Leading teaching and learning in an overcrowded classroom: Experiences of four teachers in two secondary schools”.

I would like to use your school as one of the research sites, and this letter intends to request your permission. The focus of the study is on assisting teachers with teaching and learning strategies to survive and adapt well in complex conditions of overcrowding ..., therefore I would like to request your teachers to participate in the study. Should permission be granted, the interviews with them will be scheduled for dates and times that are convenient for them. Care will be taken that no disruption is caused during such interviews. Please also note that the participation in this study is voluntary, and the participant has the right to withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequence. In addition, you are assured that details of the school and the participant will be kept confidential, and your identity will never be disclosed to anyone.

For more information and questions about the study, you may contact the researcher or the research supervisor on the following details:

Name of researcher Cell No: 0784007601 email: bonakelentombiyomusa@gmail.com
Supervisor: Dr. SB Blose; Tel No.: (031) 260 1870; Email: Bloses@ukzn.ac.za

You may also contact the Research Office through:

P. Mohun

HSSREC Research Office,

Tel.: 031 260 4557 E-mail: mohunp@ukzn.ac.za

Thanking you in advance.

Yours in Education

Mrs B.N Biyela

APPENDIX D

LETTER GRANTING PERMISSION FROM A SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

Dear Bonakele

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT ----- HIGH SCHOOL

Your letter titled “Request to conduct research at has reference. Please be informed that you are granted a permission to conduct your research at the above mentioned school.

Yours sincerely

(School Principal)



CONSENT SOLICITATION LETTER

Dear Miss/ Mr.....

REQUEST FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE RESEARCH

I B.N Biyela, am conducting a research as a requirement at the University of KwaZulu-Natal towards a Degree of Masters in Education. The title of the research is “Leading Teaching and Learning in overcrowded classroom: Experiences of four teachers in two secondary schools”.

The objectives of the study are:

1.5 Objectives of the study

- To understand leadership practices enacted by teachers leading teaching and learning in overcrowded classrooms.
- To explore challenges experienced by teachers leading teaching and learning in overcrowded classrooms.
- To elicit the strategies applied by teachers to respond to challenges they experience in overcrowded classrooms.

The study will focus on assisting teachers leading teaching and learning strategies to adapt well in complex conditions of overcrowding. This letter intends to elucidate the purpose of the study and to request your participation in the study.

Please note that:

- Your confidentiality is guaranteed as your inputs will not be attributed to you in person, but reported only as a population member opinion.
- The interview may last for about 1 hour and may be split into two parts depending on your preference.
- Any information given by you cannot be used against you, and the collected data will be used for purposes of this research only.
- Data will be stored in secure storage and destroyed after 5 years.
- You have a choice to participate, not participate or stop participating in the research. You will not be penalized for taking such an action.
- Your involvement is purely for academic purposes only, and there are no financial benefits involved.

- If you are willing to be interviewed, please indicate (by ticking as applicable) whether or not you are willing to allow the interview to be recorded by the following equipment:

	Willing	Not willing
Audio equipment		
Photographic equipment		
Video equipment		

I can be contacted at:

Email: bonakelentombiyomusa@gmail.com ...

Cell: 0784007601 ...

My supervisor is DR S.B Blose who is located at the School of Education, at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. He can be contacted at:

Email: Bloses@ukzn.ac.za

Phone: 031 260 1870

I hope this letter will find your positive consideration, thanking you in advance.

Yours Sincerely

Name and surname

OBSERVATION SCHEDULE

This schedule is aimed at observing teachers leading teaching and learning in overcrowded classrooms. I will among other things focus and take notes of the observation following:

1. Teaching methods used in class
2. Classroom environment.
3. Learners' behaviour in an overcrowded classroom in response to teaching method used.
4. Interventions from the SMT to assist the teacher to cope with overcrowded classrooms.
5. Observe whether are there any policies in place to guide educators to control behaviour of learners during teaching and learning processes to improve performance.
6. What is the behaviour of teachers in response to overcrowded classrooms, for example punctuality, preparedness, and time they spend controlling behaviour.

APPENDIX H

SEMI- STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

In my letter requesting this interview I have indicated that I will be conducting research on Leading teaching and learning in an overcrowded classroom. You have consented to this interview. I would like to retell that the aim of this interview is to obtain information about the teaching methods used by teachers leading teaching and learning in overcrowded classrooms. *(NB. These questions will guide my discussion with the teachers and probes are indicated under each question. However, follow-up questions will be posed depending on the response of the participants).*

1. Which teaching methods do you use in your most overcrowded class?

2. How do learners behave in an overcrowded classroom in response to teaching method used?

3. Are there any interventions in place from the SMT to assist the teacher to cope with overcrowded classrooms?

4. Are there any policies in place to guide educators to control behaviour of learners during the teaching and learning process to improve performance in an overcrowded classroom?

5. What is the behaviour of teachers in response to overcrowded classrooms?

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This serves to inform that I have read the final version of the dissertation titled:

**Leading teaching and learning in an overcrowded classroom:
Experiences of four teachers in two secondary schools,**
by B. N. Biyela, student no. 217080423.

To the best of my knowledge, all the proposed amendments have been effected and the work is free of spelling and grammatical errors. I am of the view that the quality of language used meets generally accepted academic standards.

Yours faithfully

S. Govender

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