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**The Role of Subject Advisors in Supporting Teaching and Learning: Experiences of
Primary Schools' Departmental Heads.**

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A dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of
Education in the Discipline of Educational Leadership Management and Policy.

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DECLARATION

I, **Xoliswa Hetty Mdabe**, declare that

- i. The research reported in this dissertation, except where otherwise indicated, is my original work.
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This dissertation has been submitted with/ without our approval.

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Date

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my late mother, Thandi Princess MaNgema Maphanga, who did not get an opportunity to see the woman that she raised. Thank you for your strength, unconditional love and teaching me that life is a collection of beautiful memories created by deciding to live each day.

The Lord is my strength and my song; he has given me victory. This is my God, and I will praise him— my father's God, and I will exalt him!

Exodus 15:2

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore the leadership role of Subject Advisors in supporting teaching and learning in primary schools. The study explored this role from the perspective of Departmental Heads as curriculum leaders in primary schools, examining what they expect as support from Subject Advisors and how they experience the offered support. Reviewed literature shows that there has been an identified relationship between district leadership from Subject Advisors that supports teaching and learning and teacher performance together with learner achievement. While there is some South African literature of district-level support for teaching and learning, there is not enough on the experiences of those who receive this instructional support. Hence, this is what motivated the exploration of this topic.

This qualitative study was approached from the interpretive paradigm. It comprised of five Departmental Heads from three primary schools in the Umlazi district. The study made use of face-to-face semi-structured interviews as a method of data generation. The theory that underpinned this study was the theory of districts as institutional actors in systemic reforms.

The findings of this study revealed that subject advisors do support teaching and learning in primary schools; however, this support falls short of expectations. While Departmental Heads did not only rely on Subject Advisors for curriculum-related support, they believe that the support they get from them for teaching and learning does influence learner achievement. The study concluded with key lessons from the whole research journey. Among these lessons was that collaboration between Subject Advisors and Departmental Heads is important as it enhances teaching practices and specialises the support given to each school. This collaboration in planning and formulating key strategies on curriculum-related issues also enriches the professional development programme for Departmental Heads as curriculum leaders and teachers. This collaboration enhances teaching practises which has positive contributions to the overall learner achievement.

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ATP	Annual Teaching Plan
CAPS	Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DoE	Department of Education
DOs	District Officials
DP	Departmental Head
EEA	Employment of Educators Act
HoDs	Heads of Department (in schools)
KZN	KwaZulu-Natal
NS	Natural Sciences
PLCs	Professional Learning Communities
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SA	South Africa
SMTs	School Management Teams
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisations
WSI	Whole School Improvement

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

Education districts are essential to the success of schools as their role is key to establishing and maintaining quality teaching and learning. Education districts are directed by policy to form collaborative relationships with the principals and teaching staff of schools to guide and support them professionally (Bantwini & Moorosi, 2018). This chapter will first introduce the background and rationale for the study. This will be followed by a clear statement of the problem, further highlighting the purpose of the study. The research objectives and questions will be outlined. Furthermore, key concepts will be clarified followed by the delimitation and limitation of the study. Finally, the chapter will conclude with an outline of the study.

1.2 Background and rationale

The education system, particularly in South Africa, has seen many changes over the past years due to the political dispensation in 1994. This has been evidenced in the constantly changing roles of education officials, together with the changing policies. Educational goals and objectives still need to be achieved even in this continuously changing environment. These goals and objectives can only be achieved if those in the position to enable achievement are well equipped to deal with the changing context (Fullan, 2007). According to Pansiri (2008), the main objective of schools is to ensure that quality teaching and learning takes place which will result in enhanced learner performance. Quality teaching and learning occurs when teachers are well developed and supported to effectively teach (Barrett & Breyer, 2014). According to Protheroe (2008), successful schools are those that have seen leaders shifting their focus to effectively leading and managing teaching and learning.

Supporting effective teaching and learning in schools is the responsibility of many officials within the education system. In South Africa, the Department of Education has ensured that there is the employment of people who are responsible for supporting instruction in the classrooms. Included in this are school leaders and district officials as stipulated in the Policy on the organisation, roles and responsibilities of education districts (RSA, 2013). The main purpose of education districts in South Africa is to ensure quality education through the support

of effective teaching and learning (Hernandez, Roberts & Velma, 2012). District officials in the district office are intermediaries between the National, Provincial Departments and local schools (Hernandez et al., 2012). They ensure that policies on paper translate to policies in action.

There have been several studies conducted locally and internationally, that have tried to establish a relationship between district leadership practices and learner achievement (Bantwini & Moorosi, 2018; Honig, 2013; Marzano & Waters, 2009). These studies found that indeed, district leadership plays a significant role in supporting teaching and learning and finding solutions to the different challenges that the schools face. In South Africa, the officials that lead in supporting teaching and learning in schools are Subject Advisors (Bantwini & Diko, 2011). Subject Advisors have specialist knowledge in the different subject areas and are key in the content development of teachers and curriculum heads in schools (RSA, 2013). The roles and responsibilities of a Subject Advisor are clearly stated in *The Guidelines on the Organisation, Roles and Responsibilities of Education Districts* (RSA, 2013). In other parts of Africa, Subject Advisors are also referred to as field officers, and they are also responsible for supporting instruction in schools (Moswela, 2010). In America, the superintendents take responsibility for all that happens within the schools in their area, and this includes leading instruction and enhancing learner performance (Gabbard, 2012). This responsibility extends to ensuring those Subject Advisors are available to support instruction in these schools. Sykes, Schneider, Plank and Ford (2009) state that the main role of superintendents is to serve as the middle ground agencies. This is similar to the intermediary role assumed by Subject Advisors in South Africa (Hernandez et al., 2012). This further emphasises the significant role played by Subject Advisors in connecting the schools with the departmental goals and supporting the achievement of goals.

There is a belief that the quality of learning by learners is dependent on the quality of the instruction (Barrett & Breyer, 2014). This is developed if teachers are professionally equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to make sure learners effectively learn (Anderson, 2000). The teachers that are mainly responsible for supporting the implementation and management of the curriculum are Departmental Heads. They assume the role of curriculum leaders in schools. Buczynski and Hansen (2010) state that it is difficult for teachers to learn new strategies and techniques required to respond to learners' views of the subject and adopting

ways to facilitate and guide their learning if they are not supported. Hilty (2011) adds that school-based and office-based teachers (Subject Advisors) must take part in teacher leadership as an instructional leadership activity. This may be done by engaging in the national educational projects, professional organisations and other external networks to ensure that they continuously build their capacity and perform their tasks in a competent manner (Hilty, 2011). Through participating in these activities, teaching and learning in schools are continuously supported, resulting in enhanced learner performance.

The constant changes in educational policies and the context of education that has been alluded to have led to the realisation of a great need for school leaders to focus on leading and supporting instruction as opposed to merely implementing policies and monitoring work (Seobi & Wood, 2016). These changes are viewed through the many discussions on instructional leadership and its importance for the learner's performance. While school leaders such as principals and Departmental Heads have a more immediate and direct influence on what happens in the schools, district leaders have been identified in the literature as those officials in the perfect position to effectively support teaching and learning in schools (Marzano & Waters, 2009).

As a new educator working in constantly changing conditions, it became clear to me that self-learning and development should take priority if I want to succeed. The struggles of more experienced teachers in my school, particularly with the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) further emphasised the issue of continuous development and the importance of instructional support in schools. It is imperative then that those in the position to teach and effect change are well trained and continuously supported (Barret & Breyer, 2014). My interest was further developed when I realised the lack of constructive support that teachers received from senior employees and district officials with regards to curriculum activities and current teaching methods and strategies in the school I teach. To perform at an optimal level, one has to gain ongoing support and partake in self and professional development activities (Delpont & Makaye, 2009). According to Chong and Ho (2009), the quality of teaching in classrooms is the most important factor affecting learning, and the quality of an education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers. Studies conducted by Bantwini and Diko in 2011 and another by Mavuso and Moyo in 2014, revealed that there are factors that influence the role of Subject

Advisors in supporting teaching and learning in schools, which however have not been fully explored and reviewed due to limited literature (Mavuso & Moyo, 2014). I, therefore, found it necessary to explore this phenomenon from the perspective of Departmental Heads as curriculum leaders in schools.

1.3 Statement of the Problem and Purpose of the Study

The increased number of underperforming high schools in South Africa has not only put those particular schools under the microscope; however, the primary schools that feed these high schools with learners, are also under the same scrutiny (Heystek, 2015). This kind of practice suggests that these primary schools must receive the same kind if not more support to enhance effective teaching and learning for improved learner performance. However, this has not been the case. Bantwini and Diko (2011), point out that there is still a gap between the expected leadership role of district officials (Subject Advisors) in supporting teaching and learning in schools and the actual practice or support received by Departmental Heads and teachers in the schools. They further add that the district leadership role of supporting teaching and learning in schools is a subject that has not been fully explored in South African literature and there may be many justifications to the number of teacher expectations which lead to the lack of fulfilment (Bantwini & Diko, 2011). Mavuso and Moyo, (2014) agree with the above view and believe that many other factors may be informing the perspectives that Departmental Heads have as Curriculum Heads in schools on the leadership role of Subject Advisors in supporting instruction in primary schools. These factors include lack of resources such as learning material and human capital in the district offices; however, these possible factors have not yet been fully explored as there is limited research done on district leadership in South African schools (Mavuso & Moyo, 2014).

The South African Department of Basic Education (DBE) policy on school districts clearly outlines the support to schools that should be received from school districts. The policy indicates that district offices must work in collaboration with school leaders to offer professional support (RSA, 2013). The aim is to provide the support that will enhance the quality of teaching and learning and ensure that all South African learners have access to high-quality education at all times (Bantwini & Moorosi, 2018). There seems to be a lack in the support that Departmental Heads as Curriculum Heads in schools receive from Subject

Advisors affecting the teacher's professional development process (King-McKenzie, Bantwini & Bogan, 2013). Evidence from previous studies conducted also reveals that there is a gap between the support stipulated by policy and the experiences of leaders and teachers in schools (Bantwini & Diko, 2011). Furthermore, while these studies give insight into the experiences of district officials in supporting schools, there seems to be a lack of studies that look at how schools, particularly school management teams experience the support from district officials. Of interest in this study is how Departmental Heads experience the role of Subject Advisors in supporting teaching and learning in primary schools. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to understand how Departmental Heads experience the practices of Subject Advisors when supporting teaching and learning in primary schools.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

1. What do primary school Departmental Heads understand and expect to be the leadership role of Subject Advisors in supporting teaching and learning?
2. How do primary school Departmental Heads experience the leadership role and practices of Subject Advisors in providing support for teaching and learning?
3. What lessons can be learnt from the experiences of primary school Departmental Heads on the role of Subject Advisors in providing support for teaching and learning?

1.5 Research questions

1. What do primary school Departmental Heads understand and expect to be the leadership role of Subject Advisors in supporting teaching and learning?
2. How do primary school Departmental Heads experience the leadership role and practices of Subject Advisors in providing support for teaching and learning?
3. What lessons can be learnt from the experiences of primary school Departmental Heads on the role of Subject Advisors in providing support for teaching and learning?

1.6 Clarification of concepts

Some concepts used in this study must be clarified as they may be understood differently or have varying meanings in other contexts. The following concepts will be discussed as they are key to this study: educational leadership, instructional leadership, district leadership role, district office, Subject Advisor and teaching and learning.

1.6.1 Educational leadership

Leadership in education has been defined by Bush (2007) as a process of influencing the action of people to achieve desired goals. Hallinger and Heck (2010) believe that leadership is the ability to move a school towards the desired direction to achieve goals. Bantwini and Moorosi (2018) add that educational leadership is leadership that has a positive influence on school improvement and learner performance. These definitions of educational leadership imply that for the process of leadership in education to take place, there must be an influence of people to a certain direction, belief or way of doing things. There must also be goals or outcomes that have been established to be achieved. Lastly, there should be a shift from the current state to a new state (Bush, 2007). Educational leadership, therefore, is an extensive ongoing process that is continuously required to keep teachers motivated and encouraged to achieve educational goals, which are effective teaching and learning.

1.6.2 Instructional leadership

Instructional leadership is the management and leadership of teaching and learning activities (Bush, 2007). These activities include defining the school's mission, managing the instructional programme and promoting a positive learning environment (Pansiri, 2008). Hallinger (2009) adds that instructional leadership aims to improve learners learning by intervening effectively in the process of teaching and learning. Instructional leadership is also about capacitating school leaders and teachers so that they can provide quality teaching and learning to learners (Hernandez et al., 2012). Honig (2012) believes that it is about ensuring that all things related to ensuring quality teaching and learning take place in schools. Bantwini and Moorosi (2018) add that instructional leadership includes all leadership activities involved in ensuring that quality teaching and learning occurs in schools. In this study, instructional leadership is the process of engaging in all activities that promote leadership and management of effective teaching and learning and the continued development of teachers in schools.

1.6.3 Role

For this research study, Responsibility Charting is adopted as a way of clarifying the concept of "role" specifically of Subject Advisors. Responsibility charting acknowledges that there are three assumptions in any role in organisations. The first is Role Conception, which is what a person thinks his or her job is and how they were taught to do it (Smith & Erwin, 2007). Second,

is Role Expectation, which is what other people in the organisation think a person is responsible for (Smith & Erwin, 2007). This study examines the views of Departmental Heads on what they believe is the role of a Subject Advisor in supporting teaching and learning. Lastly, Role Behaviour is what a person does or the actual practice of doing the job (Smith & Erwin, 2007). The study also examines how Departmental Heads experience the practices of Subject Advisors when supporting teaching and learning. The role of a Subject Advisor is concerned with how they develop and function in situations they encounter daily where teaching and learning is concerned.

1.6.4 District office

The view of district offices taken in this study is that of an organised group of people that includes the head of the district (District Director), the district administration staff together with the principals of the schools in a particular district. This group works as a collective in bringing together the goals of the education department and the schools by developing collaborative ways of implementing policies and overcoming identified problems. The district office, which is also divided into circuits is a sub-unit of the Provincial Department of Education (RSA, 2013). Their main function is to make sure that learners in different schools receive quality education. To attain quality education, districts play a supportive role which places focus on the delivery of quality teaching and learning which enhances learner performance.

1.6.5 Subject Advisors

The Employment of Educators Act (No 76 of 1998) specifies that the individual who holds the position of a Subject Advisor facilitates curriculum delivery and provides guidance to institutions on policy formulation and implementation. They work closely with teachers in assisting and developing them with regards to curriculum management and implementation (RSA, 2013). The *Policy on the Organisation, Roles and Responsibilities of Education Districts* (2013), further emphasises the importance of Subject Advisors supporting teachers and leading them towards quality teaching and learning. This is done through the development of healthy relationships that involve several activities to be done by Subject Advisors. Among them are support the implementation of the curriculum, support teachers in content knowledge

development and providing the relevant teaching and learning material to enhance performance.

1.6.6 Departmental Head (Head of Department – HoD)

Departmental Heads, also known as the Heads of Department, are school-based educators who occupy a post-level two position as per the Employment of Educators Act 76 (1998) (EEA). They are responsible for curriculum management and delivery in schools (RSA, 1998). In South Africa, Departmental Heads are part of the School Management Team (SMT) and are the line managers for post-level one educators. Departmental Heads ensure quality education by monitoring and supervising curriculum delivery daily and providing an environment that enables effective teaching and learning to take place (RSA, 1998).

1.6.7 Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are at the centre or the main activity in all schools. The process of teaching and learning involves imparting skills, knowledge and values onto another to enhance experience and understanding of what to do and how it should be done (Hernandez et al., 2012). In this study, I view teaching and learning as the relationship between the teachers, learners and the curriculum that results in enhanced knowledge, understanding and performance. In exploring the role of Subject Advisors in supporting teaching and learning, this role also involves enhancing the teachers' skills, knowledge and understanding so that they perform at the required level in their classrooms.

1.7 Limitations of the study

The style of research is a case study which limits the data generated to a specific context. This may result in findings not being transferable, where it cannot be assumed that similar results will be attained in another context (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). Case studies examine a specific context and find out what it is like in that particular situation; therefore, findings may also not be generalised as there are no two identical contexts (Maree, 2007). The study enquires from the perspective of only Departmental Heads from the intermediate and senior phase, therefore running the risk of not acquiring the full and true reflection of the inquiry. Finally,

this study only examined the perspectives of Departmental Heads which is only one dimension, there are other role-players also involved in curriculum delivery.

1.8 Delimitations

This study was limited to only three primary schools in one district. The focus was on only five Departmental Heads from the intermediate and senior phase. These were the only people who were interviewed in this study. Lastly, the time frame for this study was one year. Highlighting the constraints within which the study was conducted is important.

1.9 Overview of the study

This study comprises of five chapters.

Chapter One offered an introduction and orientation to the study. The chapter was organised under the following main headings: introduction and background of the study, the purpose and rationale, clarification of key concepts, and the limitations of the study.

Chapter Two provides a discussion of the related literature on instructional leadership and district leadership for improved teaching and learning and enhanced learner outcomes. The chapter explores literature through international and local empirical studies.

Chapter Three presents the research methodology used in this study. It highlights issues such as methods and tools of data generation, data analysis, issues of trustworthiness and ethical considerations of the study.

Chapter Four gives a presentation of the data generated in the field, analysis and discussion of the findings.

Chapter Five offers a reflection of the whole research journey. It starts with a summary of the study. Then it gives an in-depth discussion of the key learnings and conclusions. The chapter then concludes with recommendations emanating from the study and supported by the literature.

1.10 Chapter Summary

This chapter outlined the introduction and orientation of the study. This included the background of the study, which was followed by the purpose and rationale of the study. The

key concepts were clarified along with a brief review of the literature about the topic. Lastly, the limitations of the study. The research questions and objectives were presented. The following chapter will engage in an in-depth review of the related literature together with the theoretical framework underpinning the study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a review of international and South African literature on the district leadership role in supporting teaching and learning. The chapter begins with the conceptualisation of educational leadership and district leadership. Secondly, I present an overview of issues related to educational leadership for teaching and learning. After this, I present a review of empirical studies on the district leadership role in supporting teaching and learning. Lastly, I review the literature on the different roles of Subject Advisors in supporting teaching and learning. Last, I discuss the theoretical framework that underpins this study.

2.2 Educational leadership

The education system has been characterised by several changes, both internationally and locally over the past years (Fullan, 2007). The constant changes in the system have led to the need for a thorough understanding of educational leadership and what it entails. Effective educational leadership attempts to ensure that the whole school is led towards one direction, where goals and objectives are achieved for schools to be successful (Bush, 2007). Agreeing with Pansiri (2008) that the core business of any school is to make sure that effective teaching and learning is taking place and that the goals of enhanced learner performance are achieved. It, therefore, becomes imperative that strategies to support effective teaching and learning in schools are established and led efficiently (Webb, 2005). Leadership in supporting effective teaching and learning involves several different aspects, like the setting of goals to be achieved, ensuring the availability of resources, developing teachers in curriculum content and creating a culture of support and continuous improvement (Hallinger & Heck, 2010). The different people which include principals, Departmental Heads and district officials, that influence the leadership and management of schools are in an enabling platform to ensure that quality teaching and learning is not only taking place but is continuously supported to achieve educational goals.

2.3 Educational leadership for teaching and learning

As previously discussed in Chapter One, recent years have seen a great shift of focus in school leadership from managing the processes to leading and managing teaching and learning to

improve learner performance in schools (Bush, 2007). This shift has led to extensive discussions on the importance of leading teaching and learning, which is widely known as instructional leadership. This kind of leadership is not only for the district and school leaders (Hernandez et al., 2012). In practice, instructional leadership is not only reserved for the principals or district officials, however, teachers in their different levels in schools are also responsible to perform tasks that aim to accomplish the enhancement of instruction (Bush & Glover, 2014). Locally and internationally, district leaders have been seen to have close relationships with school leaders and teachers in the pursuit to develop and support them as leaders of instruction for the improved academic performance of learners and whole school improvement (WSI) (Honig, 2012). Therefore, educational leadership of teaching and learning can be described as that kind of leadership that focuses on ensuring that all facets of ensuring successful teaching and learning in schools are attended to.

2.4 District leadership

In a school, educational leadership is not the responsibility of only the principal. Many other education officials have to support, lead and manage educational activities in the schools and districts (RSA, 2013). In South Africa, the Department of Education (DoE) has enabled the employment of people who have the responsibility to ensure that instruction is supported in each classroom in the schools (DoE, 1998). The overall role of district officials in education is to support the efficient functioning of the schools. They are also tasked to see that policies are implemented, and teachers are given professional support to fulfil their duties effectively (DoE, 2013). District officials also need to support the effective delivery of the curriculum to ensure that quality teaching and learning is continuously taking place in schools (Hernandez et al., 2012). Hernandez et al., (2012) add that the main objective of educational districts in South Africa is to make certain that all learners are allowed to receive a quality education which will show through their achievements. District officials assume the role of being intermediaries between the National and Provincial Departments of Education and the local schools (Hernandez et al., 2012). The districts work between the two parties (schools and National & Provincial department) to make sure that the objectives of the Department of Education in South Africa are achieved. Bantwini and Diko, (2011) add that the fundamental role played by the educational district officials is to oversee the implementation of all new policies developed by the National Department of Education and to support the delivery of the curriculum as well as to enhance the quality of learning received by learners. The district officials who are key in

ensuring that quality teaching and learning is affected and supported in schools are Subject Advisors (RSA, 2013).

2.5 The district and learner performance

Highly effective district leadership can influence learner performance in schools (Marzano & Waters, 2009). Marzano and Waters (2009) also add that while the effect on learner performance may be indirect but it is very important. This view was later supported by Christie, Sullivan, Duku and Gallie (2010) as they also advanced that there is a relationship between quality education and education district leadership. They believe that this relationship influences the performance of learners in schools (Christie et al., 2010). Confirming Marzano and Waters' (2009) view that the effective functioning of districts has an impact on the performance of the learners as they influence what happens in the school and ultimately the classrooms. District leadership plays a significant role in educational reforms and improving the quality of education in an economy as they have a direct and indirect influence on WSI and teaching and learning (Bantwini & Moorosi, 2018). Many other factors may work against the efforts of the relationship between district leadership and quality teaching and learning, particularly in South Africa where the context and availability of resources has a major influence on such a relationship (Bantwini & Diko, 2011).

2.6 Subject Advisors

The district office is structured such that it consists of several departments that are strategically positioned to support the efficient functioning of schools and to ensure that effective teaching and learning is continuously taking place (DoE, 2016). According to Bantwini and Diko (2011), the district office supports the overall functioning of schools but the district officials that work very closely with teachers in supporting teaching and learning are the Subject Advisors. A Subject Advisor in the South African Department of Education is someone who is employed by the department and has subject or phase specialist knowledge and demonstrates both a depth of content knowledge and its pedagogy (DoE, 2012). These district officials are known in other countries as superintendents, field or subject specialists. Bantwini and Diko (2011) conducted a study which revealed some functions of a Subject Advisor in the Department of Education. What was highlighted as the main function of a Subject Advisor was to ensure that teachers are developed in curriculum content and teaching strategies to achieve

academic success (Bantwini & Diko, 2011). Furthermore, the study showed that Subject Advisors also understood their role to be supporting teaching and learning through the implementation of the curriculum (Bantwini & Diko, 2011). These roles are later emphasised by Bantwini and Moorosi (2018) and Nkambule and Amsterdam (2018). The main concept that kept coming forth is that of support. Therefore, the main function of a Subject Advisor is to provide instructional support to schools and teachers to achieve effective teaching and learning (RSA, 2013).

2.7 Subject Advisors as instructional leaders

Literature also shows that Subject Advisors are instructional leaders and are to engage in the following activities: monitor and support curriculum delivery, conduct workshops, facilitate clusters and visit schools as a way of capacitating teachers to enhance their performance. According to the *Policy on the Organisation, Roles and Responsibilities of Education Districts* (2013), the first role of a Subject Advisor is to monitor the curriculum and support its implementation in the relevant subject. When Subject Advisors monitor the curriculum, they observe the practices of teachers and check for progress and quality, then provide remedies for improvement (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004). Subject Advisors work directly with the teachers and may have a direct influence on what the teachers do in their classrooms (Bantwini & Diko, 2011). Several methods have been used by these officials to monitor and support curriculum delivery in South African schools such as: conducting workshops, developing clusters and undertaking school visits.

Workshops bring together teachers and Departmental Heads that share common subjects or phases and collectively develop them in ways of teaching that subject or conducting administration about that particular subject (Mabasa, 2006). Subject Advisors often make use of workshops when they induct new teachers and when developing all existing teachers (Mabasa, 2006). In this way, they can give teachers the necessary tools and methods in the beginning, then continuously monitor the use of these strategies and progress. According to Mafora and Phorabatho, (2013), Subject Advisors are often unable to efficiently support and monitor each teacher individually, due to the lack of time and resources. They, therefore, have had to develop ways of reaching more teachers in the limited time provided.

Subject Advisors have also made use of the development of clusters in different subjects. This is often done to make sure that even if they are unable to engage with each teacher individually, they are able to have teachers from different schools support each other through this platform (Nkambule & Amsterdam, 2018). Subject Advisors are therefore able to monitor, support and track the progress of many teachers from different schools through one cluster (Hord, 2004). If administered efficiently, clusters have the potential to become a very useful source of support (Hord, 2004). Subject Advisors use this platform to continuously develop the teachers that need development and help them through policy implementation phases (Hord, 2004).

A subject advisor as a specialist must be able to support and develop the schools where they need it specifically (Bantwini & Diko, 2011). For this to happen, Subject Advisors must engage with the teachers from the schools and understand where they need development the most. This cannot be done through workshops and clusters alone. Therefore, school visits by the Subject Advisors become a necessity. According to the *Guideline on the Organisation, Roles and Responsibilities of Education Districts* (2013), a Subject Advisor must make visits to each school at least once in the first three terms of the year. A research study conducted by Mafora and Phorabatho in 2013 in the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal revealed that schools do not get enough support from the district officials, especially when new policies need to be implemented. They usually offer support on paper through paper-based programmes (Mafora & Phorabatho, 2013). The study also showed that some schools go through long periods without any visits from the Subject Advisors, which means that the school visits that are supposed to be conducted as per the *Guideline on the Organisation, Roles and Responsibilities of Education Districts* (2013) are not occurring in some schools (Mafora & Phorabatho, 2013). If these schools go for long periods without a visit from the Subject Advisor, it could mean that they are being supported mainly through workshops, if at all. This is not enough time to deal with individual areas of concern for each school or teacher. This may also mean that through the implementation of new policies these schools have very little support and development on how to interpret and implement policies (Hord, 2004). Subject Advisors play an important role in ensuring that teachers are equipped with all things necessary to perform well in each subject, which can result in quality teaching and learning that enhances learner performance.

2.8 International empirical studies on district leadership for teaching and learning

As more emphasis is placed on providing quality teaching and learning in schools, there has been evidence of a shift of focus in the functions of those in the position to lead. This is evidenced in a study conducted by Honig (2012), on the district office leadership. The scholar reports on how district leaders support the principals' development as instructional leaders. The research shows that there certainly has been a shift in the focus and functions of the district officials. The goal is to provide support to schools (principals and teachers) so that they develop as leaders of instruction to improve learner performance (Honig, 2012). It is also noted that even though the study is specific to principals, some other people within the schools also need to be developed as instructional leaders such as Departmental Heads. The research study further revealed that there are difficulties experienced in prioritising the importance of leading instruction for people who are not actively engaged with the learners, their work and progress (Honig, 2012). This shows that Subject Advisors play a significant role in enabling quality teaching and learning in schools, as this is their core duty. This encourages all people in schools and at the district level to be actively involved and engaged with curriculum issues and the work done by learners to be effective instructional leaders or leaders that can adequately support instruction.

Education systems globally have shown the importance of instructional leadership within schools and how schools should be supported by district officials to realise educational goals. The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 suggested that the United States schools district offices should assist school leaders and teachers by developing them as leaders of instruction so that goals are achieved. This Act applied more pressure on district officials to actively engage in teacher development to provide support for teaching and learning (Honig, 2013). Honig conducted another study in 2013 on strengthening school district office performance. This study showed that as much as the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 was aimed to improve learner performance by supporting teachers and school leaders, little was done to support district officials such as Subject Advisors when leading instruction and delivery became an additional function within the same working hours (Honig, 2013). While Subject Advisors experience pressure to professionally develop teachers and school leaders, little is done to develop them. Therefore, this has led to several challenges experienced by schools when seeking support from district officials, specifically instructional support from Subject Advisors.

The increased attention on learner performance and accountability in education have resulted in the need for a healthy relationship between school leaders and district officials. This relationship requires a collaborative focus on improved teaching and learning practices (Bottoms & Fry, 2009). According to Vavrus and Cole (2002) and Maicibi (2005) a school that is not led with a focus on effective teaching and learning does not achieve the required outcome of an improved learner and teacher performance. In a study done by Donkor and Asante (2016) on instructional leadership of basic schools in Ghana, it revealed that when it came to teaching and learning, most school and district leaders placed greater emphasis on supervision and evaluation over curriculum planning, organisation and delivery (Donkor & Asante, 2016). This means that the core function, which is instructional leadership, was not given the attention it required to yield the desired outcomes. Further to this, the study showed that schools and district leaders such as Subject Advisors did not actively take part in staff development activities, which is essential in providing quality teaching and learning (Donkor & Asante, 2016). This suggests that there is a lack of active involvement and collaboration between school leaders and Subject Advisors on key issues of teaching and learning, such as the professional development of teachers, to achieve improved learner outcome.

For effective teaching and learning, collaborative support and recognition for achievement need to be present (Van der Merwe & Schenck, 2016). In a study conducted by Van der Merwe and Schenck (2016) on instructional leadership practises in Swaziland primary schools, the aim was to find out what instructional leadership is as practised in these schools. The study also discussed the practices of district officials and how they support teaching and learning in schools. The findings of this study revealed that there are factors which are key to the success of an instructional leadership programme in the schools (Van der Merwe & Schenck, 2016). These factors require that all leaders in the district level be actively involved in the execution of the programmes; this function is largely led by Subject Advisors. These factors include collaborative support which occurs through subject committees and professional learning communities. Recognition of good achievement by teachers and learners, healthy interpersonal relationships within the school and between the school and districts, lastly respect for instructional time (Van der Merwe & Schenck, 2016). The findings of this study suggest that districts, mainly Subject Advisors should have high visibility and involvement to lead successful schools.

2.9 Local empirical studies on district leadership for teaching and learning

In South Africa, leading and managing instruction is no longer the responsibility of only school-based officials such as principals and Departmental Heads. District officials now also have an essential role to play. According to Roberts (2001), Subject Advisors have the significant role of ensuring that schools are consistently supported in curriculum-related issues and that educational needs are met by working closely with schools in local areas. Nkambule and Amsterdam (2018) suggest that Subject Advisors have areas of operation that they need to focus on as they lead and support the schools in their districts. For them to be able to lead and support schools for effective teaching and learning, they need to focus on the following areas: leading and managing change in education, intervening in schools that are struggling to achieve set goals, policy implementation, creating an environment that is conducive for effective teaching and learning to take place, and offering administrative and professional development and services to schools and teachers (Roberts, 2001). All these tasks require that district officials be strong leaders of instruction.

Leading and managing change in education forms part of the many functions of an instructional leader in schools and the district. Bantwini (2010) explored the assumptions that exist in teacher learning and change. He examines the role played by district officials in the non-implementation of new curriculum reforms by exploring how district officials' understanding of teacher learning and the change process can shape the outcomes of curriculum implementation. The study revealed that the assumptions that Subject Advisors have about teacher learning and change, influence the kind of support they decide to give to teachers. It also has an impact on the implementation or non-implementation of new policies (Bantwini, 2010). This shows that while Subject Advisors can support curriculum change and delivery, the kind of support they offer is influenced by their interpretation of what is needed, which may not be what is required, therefore, not achieving the desired outcomes. While Subject Advisors may lead change in education, this study shows that their beliefs and pre-existing knowledge of the context and its people may influence the kind of leadership and support they offer during reform (Bantwini, 2010). This study shows the importance of the critical role of Subject Advisors in the performance of the teachers and the academic success of the learners.

Policy interpretation and implementation plans give insight into how district officials plan teaching and learning programmes. Mavuso and Moyo (2014) conducted a study exploring

how the district offices coordinate teaching and learning programmes in the district of Eastern Cape province. The research study aimed to establish how district offices coordinate their programmes, which are aimed at assisting teachers' pedagogy. It was found that while different officials serve the same district, there is a lack of collaboration amongst them when coordinating programmes. This lack of coordination is problematic for schools as the different officials send different signals, leaving schools in a state of confusion (Mavuso & Moyo, 2014). This affects the quality of teaching and learning, as different officials may want the same thing done in different ways (Mavuso & Moyo, 2014). While the aim of district officials, particularly Subject Advisors, may be to support teaching and learning in schools, there are many challenges that they encounter and sometimes create in their journey. The scholars suggest a synergy between the district officials before they filter any form of information to the schools (Mavuso & Moyo, 2014). Through this collaboration, there can be less confusion in the schools therefore, allowing teachers and Departmental Heads to be effective in their instructional leadership roles without any disturbances and confusion from the district officials.

According to Van der Berg (2008), teachers are struggling to provide a quality teaching and learning experience, and this has resulted in the poor academic performance of learners. Many factors contribute to teachers' inability to provide this kind of experience to learners, such as initial teacher preparation, lack of ongoing professional development to name a few (Spaull, 2013; Wood & Olivier, 2008). These difficulties have triggered a need to increase the ongoing support and development of teachers through effective instructional leadership (Van der Berg, 2008). Local literature suggests that schools where the principal is actively involved in teaching and learning, perform better (Roberts & Roach, 2006). Roberts and Roach (2006) also note that principals do not have enough time in their day to be effective instructional leaders; they have many other functions to perform. Therefore, the tasks involved in leading instruction are better off delegated to other staff members such as Departmental Heads who are supported by Subject Advisors. According to the policy *Guideline on The Organisation, Roles and Responsibilities of Education Districts* (RSA, 2013), Departmental Heads are positioned as instructional leaders in schools. Subject Advisors are instructional leaders who support schools. Collectively, they are expected to (i.) support teachers when setting and trying to achieve personal and professional goals related to improvement of school instruction, they should monitor that these goals are successfully achieved, (ii) provide constructive feedback to teachers and developing them in areas needed personally and professionally to achieve continuous growth and improvement of instruction.

Creating an enabling environment and being able to lead instruction in challenging contexts is an important aspect of an instructional district leader. In a study conducted by Seobi and Wood (2016), on improving the instructional leadership of heads of department in under-resourced schools, the study was focused on the Departmental Heads as an instructional leader and what tasks they perform to support teachers. The findings show that the Departmental Heads who participated in the study had limited involvement in the leadership of instruction. They were merely checking whether the teachers have completed their tasks as expected. The Departmental Heads showed no involvement in the continuous improvement and development of teachers as an instructional leader should (Seobi & Wood, 2016). This indicates that before Departmental Heads can become effective instructional leaders, they too need support and development. The Subject Advisors, therefore, also need to actively participate in their role as district officials who support in every way improved curriculum delivery in all South African public schools. Hence these findings show that for instructional leadership to achieve the desired results, all relevant officials need to actively take part in being developed as instructional leaders.

Support for educators is an important aspect of every education system around the world. South African educators often require support in many different areas as they attempt to implement a constantly changing curriculum and other policies (King-McKenzie et al., 2013). For an education system to be successful, the value and importance of supporting educators need to be realised. A study conducted by Nkambule and Amsterdam (2018) examined the support for teaching and learning received by teachers in a primary school. This inquiry revealed challenges experienced by educators as they receive help within the school from Departmental Heads and externally from district officials such as Subject Advisors. The pertinent findings of this study were that educators are in contact with Subject Advisors; however, they are more concerned with the results as opposed to the input (Nkambule & Amsterdam, 2018). The findings do show that educators attend workshops for professional development purposes. They also do have experiences of class visits from Subject Advisors, but these visits are often to find fault and not for further development, emphasising the issue of placing importance on input without the support. This suggests that while the structures of support may be visible and to some extent, operational, they do not provide effective systemic support to teachers and Departmental Heads in the classrooms.

2.10 Discussion of local and international issues on district leadership for teaching and learning

Having reviewed some international and local literature on district leadership for teaching and learning in schools, it is clear that leadership of teaching and learning is an important global topic. There have been some issues highlighted in the literature that have been labelled as important in leading and achieving quality teaching and learning (Bantwini, 2010; Donkor & Asante, 2016; Honig, 2013; Nkambule & Amsterdam, 2018). Successful countries such as Australia and Finland have highlighted teacher development as the main recipe for their success (Protheroe, 2008). A huge portion of the budget is used to adequately prepare new teachers and continuously develop those that are already in the field (Protheroe, 2008). The districts place a high emphasis on developing teachers and evaluating their performance to improve. The professional development of teachers was also found by Van der Merwe and Schenck, (2016) as an important factor to consider in realising quality education. It can be noted that some studies do show that, like in South Africa, the less successful countries place high importance on monitoring as opposed to development (Donkor& Asante, 2016). Others like those done by Bantwini and Moorosi (2018) and Nkambule and Amsterdam (2018) show that teachers and school leaders acknowledge the need for monitoring and evaluation of performance, but that must come with development plans suited for individual school needs.

Collaboration is a key element for successful schools and districts (Bantwini & Moorosi, 2018). What is apparent throughout the world in education is that change is inevitable. The pace in which it happens is so rapid that schools and districts have no choice but to quickly adapt (Fullan, 2009). What is also evident is that these changes result in the constant need for further training and development. Many scholars, both locally and internationally, have highlighted the professional development of teachers as one of the main ingredients in the provision of quality education (Honig, 2012; Hord, 2004). A large number of them advocate for collaboration. Collaboration between the national, provincial and district offices, between district officials within the same district, and between schools and districts (Bantwini& Diko, 2011; Mavuso & Moyo, 2014). The collaboration between the districts and schools was highlighted previously by Fullan (1992) when he concluded in this study that schools cannot change themselves to sustain change and improvement. This needs a partnership between the district and schools to restructure their attitude towards teaching and learning and sustainable improvement (Fullan, 1992).

Globally, education systems have policies that need to be interpreted and implemented to reach educational goals. Honig (2013) explains how the No Child left behind Act of 2001 aimed to improve learner performance by supporting instruction in schools. This is one example of how government policy can be developed, interpreted and implemented to improve performance but is unable to consider every aspect involved in doing so. Bantwini and Diko (2011) alluded to a similar issue and highlighted how one's pre-existing knowledge about a situation and its subjects can have an influence on how they interpret and implement the curriculum policy. Rorrer, Skrla, and Scheurich (2008) emphasised the importance of districts establishing coherence between national policies and school goals so that educational goals are achieved. Further to establishing policy coherence, Mavuso and Moyo (2014) add that collaboration between different officials in the district is important as it enhances the ability to successfully implement policies and reach common goals between the government, district and schools.

Locally and internationally, education systems are experiencing similar challenges and trying to achieve similar goals. While the goal is to improve the quality of education through effective leadership, the district officials that are largely responsible for the support that improves the quality of teaching and learning together with learner achievement in South Africa, are Subject Advisors.

2.11 The role of Subject Advisors in supporting the professional development of teachers

One of the major roles played by Subject Advisors in developing teachers is giving them continuous and progressive instructional support (Anderson, Leithwood & Strauss, 2010). South African schools are diverse, and they take time and effort to lead and manage effectively and efficiently (Christie et al., 2010). This means that principals will at times not be able to be fully focused on leading instruction and being involved in the instructional programme as desired. Subject Advisors, together with Departmental Heads, then have to take the leading role to make sure that teachers are continuously supported and developed where necessary (Nkambule & Amsterdam, 2018).

Change has been a consistent factor in the South African education system for many years (Christie et al., 2010). This has meant that continuous learning has not only been for the learners but the teachers as well. Teacher professional development is a procedure used in the education system to ensure that teachers are well equipped for this continuously changing environment (Christie et al., 2010). Some scholars have had many ideas on what teacher development entails. Steyn and Van Niekerk (2002) define teacher development as continuous development programmes and learning opportunities which are made available to teachers. Musanti and Pence (2010) agree as they state that teacher development is a process of evaluating and analysing teacher performance to present an opportunity to advance their attitudes, knowledge and skills. Kelly and Cherkowski (2015) believe that teacher development is the enhancement of skills and knowledge of teachers to better deal with the ever-changing environment. Teacher development is a very important aspect of instructional leadership because it is a form of leadership that aims to improve the performance of both teachers and learners (Bush, 2003).

Instruction cannot effectively improve if teachers are not allowed to advance their skills and knowledge. According to *Guideline on the Organisation, Roles and Responsibilities of Education Districts* (RSA, 2013), teacher professional development is one of the key functions of a Subject Advisor. In the professional development of teachers, Subject Advisors take part in many different practices. Some of these include providing required teaching and learning resources, providing teachers with constructive feedback, continuous and effective communication with teachers, monitoring and supervising teachers' performance and promoting professional learning communities. These practices are discussed below.

2.11.1 Providing required teaching and learning resources

For effective teaching and learning to take place, teachers must always be provided with the necessary resources for this to occur. According to DuFour (2011), an instructional leader needs to ensure that they provide resources for the effective delivery and management of instruction. This is how district officials have an indirect influence on the performance of learners (Marzano & Waters, 2009). Subject Advisors are, therefore, responsible for ensuring that teachers have the required resources to effectively teach and achieve the desired outcomes for each subject (learning area). One of the challenges that many South African schools are faced with is that of not having enough human capital to comfortably meet the instructional

needs of the school (Jaiyeoba & Atanda, 2011). This means that teachers are often found to be overloaded and unable to be effective in a specific subject (Jaiyeoba & Atanda, 2011). While providing human capital for schools may not be a function of the Subject Advisor, they need to be able to have communication with the relevant people when they identify such a need in a particular school. A school that has all the teaching and learning material as well as adequate human capital is a school that has a better chance of achieving enhanced learner performance and overall school improvement. Some studies have also pointed out that as teachers in schools, Subject Advisors are a scarce human capital resource in some districts in the country (Bantwini & Moorosi, 2018). This also influences the development programmes that they can implement and manage.

2.11.2 Providing teachers with constructive feedback

In their quest to support and manage instruction in schools, Subject Advisors engage in several activities that require them to evaluate the work done by the teachers (Bantwini & Diko, 2010). They may conduct a school or class visit, hold workshops or simply check learners work and the teacher's administration and planning around the subject (Mafora & Phorabatho, 2013). For teachers to be developed and know where to improve and where they excel, feedback is required. Feedback allows the teacher to see where they need development and how they can perform better (Zinger, 2016). Constructive feedback enables continuous growth and change (Zinger, 2016). This means that the Subject Advisor becomes an agent of change where necessary so that growth is continuously taking place intending to improve learners' academic performance (Fullan, 2007).

2.11.3 Monitoring, supervising and evaluating teacher performance

Accountability for performance is often what encourages teachers to try and perform as required (Taole, 2013). The task of an instructional leader, particularly the Departmental Head is to ensure that supervision takes place so that teachers are continuously doing what is expected, as they will have to account. Monitoring and evaluation are also a function stipulated by the *Guideline on the Organisation, Roles and Responsibilities of Education Districts* (RSA, 2013) as an important function of Subject Advisors. According to Blasé and Blasé (1999), supervision is an effective way to refine instruction in a school. When supervision and monitoring take place, areas of development and improvement are easily identified, and

Departmental Heads with the assistance of Subject Advisors can readily work on them with the teachers. Monitoring and evaluation of performance are also required as per the integrated quality management system (IQMS) to continuously improve the performance of teachers (Horng & Loeb, 2010). Supervision is not a fault-finding activity, and it requires that teachers understand that it is for their development and the improvement of instruction (Blasé & Blasé, 1999). Subject Advisors should be able to create a safe learning environment for the teachers so that they can comfortably share their teaching methods with the aim of development. Subject Advisors also need to be fair in monitoring and supervising teachers for development to take place effectively in the correct areas (Taole, 2013). Although the supervision of instruction and delivery is the task of the Subject Advisor as an instructional leader, it is often left to only the Departmental Head to do (Taole, 2013). This means that the Departmental Heads also need to be developed in supervising and monitoring instruction to enhance the quality of education and improve performance.

2.11.4 Continuous and effective communication with teachers

School leaders are uniquely positioned to improve teachers' performance (Zinger, 2016). This occurs through effective communication. Communication must take place for work to be done efficiently and timeously (Christie et al., 2010). Zinger (2016) adds that there are many different ways that leaders communicate with teachers in schools, such as circulars, meetings (workshops) and departmental policies. This was previously discussed by Protheroe (2008), as staff communication and collaboration formed part of the key factors that contributed to successful districts. In developing teachers, Subject Advisors should make use of these communication channels to be more effective (Christie et al., 2010). The different methods used by Subject Advisors when they support and develop curriculum delivery all require communication for them to be effective. Workshops need to be organised and properly advertised so that all the relevant people are aware of such meetings (Bantwini & Moorosi, 2018). Even during the workshops, communication must be such that there is no need for a follow-up workshop to ensure that everyone is on the same level of understanding (Nkambule & Amsterdam, 2018). Clusters are also another method used by Subject Advisors to develop and support teachers; however, for them to be effective and sustainable, they also require good channels of communication. Communication is, therefore, essential in teacher development because without it Subject Advisors will not be able to reach those that are supposed to be supported and developed by them. According to Mthembu (2018), open lines of

communication between the schools and the districts enhance support for teaching and learning as they encourage the development of a professional community.

2.12 Roles of Subject Advisors in promoting Professional Learning Communities

Subject Advisors as instructional leaders have a major role to play in the professional development of teachers to enhance the quality of teaching and learning for the improved academic performance of learners. One way to promote the professional development of teachers is through the development of professional learning communities (PLCs) within and between schools and districts (DuFour & Fullan, 2013).

Professional learning community (PLC) is not a new concept in the professional development of teachers, however, more emphasis has recently been placed on it, as teachers are encouraged to move away from working in isolation to working in a team setting (DuFour & Fullan, 2013). This is due to the fast-changing education environment that requires teachers and school leaders to continuously adapt to new developments (DuFour, 2011). It requires them to keep up with new and current ways of teaching so that they stay relevant and effective in the classroom (Bush, 2003). PLCs are defined by DuFour and Fullan (2013) as a collection of professionals who collaborate because they share the same goals, vision and values to achieve common goals. Hord (2004) emphasises team learning and the creation of supportive learning conditions in these communities. Ronfeldt, Farmer, McQueen and Grissom (2015) not only agree with the two scholars but they also add the importance of knowledge creation within these communities, stressing the significance of establishing new and innovative ways of learning and adapting to constant changes. Therefore, drawing from the work done by the different scholars, it can be concluded that a PLC is a community of professionals who share the same vision and goals, who are working collaboratively to realise these goals. In their journey to achieving their goals, they engage, learn and support each other and also create knowledge together to improve their performance.

Leading schools as learning organisations require a culture of continuous learning to be present in a school. According to Fullan (2007), schools and their districts are in a period of continuous invention, transformation and innovation. This has pushed leaders to actively engage in activities that will promote learning so that the schools can keep up with the pace of the changes and developments taking place (Fullan, 2007). This push has led to the promotion and

development of PLCs in schools (Lunenburg, 2010). Lunenburg (2010) believes that to realise the fruits of successful PLCs the school principal, Subject Advisors and circuit managers should engage in the following practices: collectively creating a mission statement, establishing a common vision for the school and district, developing value statements and forming common goals. This enables all stakeholders to be actively involved in achieving these goals because they share the same vision and values (Lunenburg, 2010). When teachers share common goals and values, they are often motivated to work collaboratively by sharing information and developing each other for the realisation of the set goals (DuFour & Marzano (2011). This creates a culture of content sharing and collaboration which in turn promotes the culture of teaching and learning.

In South Africa, professional learning communities (PLCs) in the form of clusters have become a more popular way of assisting teachers to change and enhance their knowledge and practices (Jita & Mokhele, 2014). When teachers collaborate in this manner, they create an opportunity for whole school improvement through the advancement of skills, knowledge and the sharing of effective teaching practices (Mujis & Reynolds, 2008). Not only do professional learning communities (PLCs) (in the form of clusters or subject committees) promote information sharing but they also promote decentralised decision making and assist in increasing participation in continuous professional development (Jita & Mokhele, 2014).

According to the Department of Education (2016), Subject Advisors have a significant role to play in establishing and sustaining PLCs in their districts. They support the development of teachers through PLCs by providing resources, expertise and facilitating such collaborations so that they produce the required results (Ndlalane & Jita, 2009). Subject Advisors are a connection between teachers and the national office, where they communicate issues encountered in schools which are discussed in PLCs such as clusters (RSA, 2016). Subject Advisors also function as a centre for exchanging practices between districts. This enables teacher development within and between the different clusters through the sharing of different practices. This should be facilitated by Subject Advisors.

Subject Advisors are in the position to link what happens in the PLCs within and between the schools with the policy and activities done in workshops (RSA, 2016). They can customise the workshops to suit the developmental needs identified in the different clusters and subject committees that they continuously work within the circuits. This ensures that the workshops conducted by Subject Advisors are not repetitive and address the needs of the schools and teachers. Lastly, Subject Advisors need to develop collaborations between the different PLCs within the districts (DoE, 2011). These collaborations can happen between different subjects as there is always an opportunity to learn from the practices of others.

2.13 Some challenges experienced by Subject Advisors in performing their role

Subject Advisors face many challenges that make it difficult for them to effectively perform their role of supporting schools on issues about teaching and learning. The studies reviewed revealed numerous challenges that Subject Advisors are faced with. Honig (2013) found that subject advisors often struggle to support schools because they are not adequately supported in their roles as district officials. This suggests that Subject Advisors may not be as effective as expected by schools and the policy because of the lack of support and capacitation in their roles. According to Donkor and Asante (2016), one of the major factors that impacts on Subject Advisor's role of supporting teaching and learning are that they tend to focus more on monitoring and evaluation as opposed to capacity building, curriculum planning and delivery. While the policy on the roles and responsibilities of Subject Advisors' state that they must monitor the implementation of the curriculum, it becomes challenging if teachers are not capacitated and supported with all the necessary material.

Lack of collaboration between the national office, district office and the schools cause a problem for Subject Advisors. District practices need to speak to national policies. The district office needs to have a clear and collective plan of how policies will be implemented in schools. Then district officials collaborate with schools on the strategies and practices that will see the national policy implemented. According to Mavuso and Moyo (2014), without this synergy, schools can be left in confusion, with different district officials communicating different messages, particularly on issues of teaching and learning. Lack of collaboration between the teachers and Subject Advisors makes it difficult to establish uniform plans and practices on supporting the implementation of the curriculum policy (Mavuso & Moyo, 2014).

Another challenge that Subject Advisors have is that of lack of effective communication. District officials were dissatisfied with the speed of communication from the national and provincial departments (Narsee, 2006). This creates further problems in schools which further leads to confusion. The plans that were developed between the schools and Subject Advisors based on the needs identified are often not implemented because of the changes that are communicated late from these departments (Narsee, 2006). This slows down the overall process of support to schools. According to Bantwini and Diko (2011), the workload of district officials when compared to their ability to accomplish it was a major factor that prevented them from providing the support required. They argue that the goals of the department of education contained in the policy (2013) cannot be achieved if there is a lack of resources, particularly human capital at the district level (Bantwini & Diko, 2011). This was later supported by the findings in a study conducted by Nkambule and Amsterdam (2018) that showed that due to the lack of adequate human capital in the district office, initiatives of curriculum support for teachers did not happen as often as they should. This means that there is not enough time for Subject Advisors to cater to all individual school and teacher needs (Nkambule & Amsterdam, 2018).

Foley and Sigler (2009) speak of “smart districts”; they describe these as districts that can identify other organisations that they can strategically partner with to improve performance. These organisations include community groups, businesses, higher learning institutions, teacher unions and non-profit organisations (Levin, Datnow & Carrier, 2012). Such partnerships can produce additional teaching and learning resources, teacher development and whole school improvement (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009). Chhuon, Gilkey, Gonzalez, Daly and Chrispeels (2008) also believe that such relationships can help sustain changes in education and develop trust between the schools and districts involved. Honig (2013) highlighted that schools are in strategic partnerships with external organisations that support teaching and learning for improved learner performance; however, districts are rarely involved. This suggests strong partnerships should exist between districts and schools first before involving external organisations. While literature may support the establishment of these partnerships, Bodilly, Keltner, Purnell, Reichardt and Schuyler (1998) state that

successful schools are part of districts that are free from politics, which are some of the dynamics that come with partnering with some organisations, particularly in South Africa.

2.14 Theoretical framework of the study

Some types of research are informed by theories which affect how empirical data is collected and analysed, and some research may also draw on particular concepts (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). A conceptual framework does not provide knowledge of “hard facts” but, rather of “soft interpretation of intentions” (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). The theoretical framework makes use of existing theories to make meaning of generated data.

The theoretical framework that informs this study is the theory of districts as institutional actors in systemic reforms by Rorra, Skrla, and Sheurich (2008). This theory suggests that the role of districts officials has an influence on learner outcomes, and this is done through districts engaging in the following roles: (i) providing instructional leadership, (ii) reorienting the organisation, (iii) establishing policy coherence and lastly, (iv) maintaining an equity focus. While this theory emphasises the role of districts in reform, it has enabled me to analyse their role in instructional reform to enhance learner outcome. This theory helped me analyse how Subject Advisors support teaching and learning in primary schools while actively engaging in the roles that are said to improve learner outcomes.

An institutional actor is described by Rorrer et al., (2008) as a person who can influence an organisation or institution from the inside. They influence the development and implementation of solutions, where problems have been identified. Their role in changing and improving the institution is part of their identity which allows them to influence the behaviour of other members of the institution for reform to occur (Rorrer et al., 2008).

2.14.1 Providing instructional leadership

Instructional leadership emphasises leading and managing teaching and learning as the main activity in an educational institution (Bush, 2003). It focuses on the behaviours of individuals as leaders that not only have a positive impact on teaching and learning but consistently find ways to improve (Bush, 2007). Research suggests that districts have moved away from a mere

supervisory role to being more involved in activities that improve learner outcomes (Honig, Copland, Rainey, Lorton & Newton, 2010). It further posits that instructional leadership at district level should pay more attention to different features of instruction and learning, over and above having knowledge about them and conveying district missions and visions (Rorrer et al., 2008). Two facets are identified by many different scholars as essential to providing instructional leadership at the district level: generating will and building capacity. These two elements of the role of instructional leadership at the district level assist districts to marry organisational development and the implementation of policies (Rorrer et al., 2008). McLaughlin and Talbert (2003) state that these two elements are key to sustaining reforms more so when resources are not available as required.

2.14.1.1 Generating will

District leaders as instructional leaders are responsible for generating the will for the success of the policies that need to be implemented at school level. Firestone (1989) describes will as “the commitment to a decision”. It is how the implementer of the policy responds to the policy’s goals and strategies (McLaughlin, 1987). This response can be viewed through their attitudes, motivation and support of the policy (McLaughlin, 1987). Government policies are unlikely to achieve their objectives without will from those implementing the policies (Bantwini & Moorosi, 2018). Subject Advisors convey the policies that need to be implemented in schools such as the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) but do not support or generate the will for them to successfully achieve the desired outcomes. Subject Advisors as instructional leaders should commit to improving teaching and learning for the enhanced academic performance of learners. Although they may be unable to physically be in the schools to implement government policies, they may play their instructional leadership role of generating will by involving themselves in all aspects of instruction and instructional related reform (Rorrer et al., 2008).

2.14.1.2 Building capacity

When providing instructional leadership, while generating will may be important, it cannot be done in isolation. Subject Advisors must also engage in activities that build the capacity of those who are in the position to implement policies in schools (Leithwood, 2010). When district leaders build capacity, they are taking part in activities that will enhance the performance of principals and teachers in schools by equipping them with the necessary skills, knowledge and

resources to implement reform to improve teaching and learning. This involves reforms aimed at enhancing performance standards and for the curriculum, instruction and assessment to be aligned (Leithwood, 2010). Building capacity is dependent on an organisational culture that is supportive of the reform (Rorrer et al., 2008). The ability of the leader to organise personnel in such a way that they buy into the reform and influence their actions (Rorrer et al., 2008). The new legislative framework for education along with the introduction of numerous new policies after 1994 made it imperative for district officials to allocate their resources to generating will and building capacity

2.14.2 Re-orienting the organisation

Reorienting the organisation is another activity that district officials need to engage in when supporting teaching and learning in primary schools. This simply entails aligning the organisation to the goals and providing an enabling environment for those goals to be achieved (Rorrer et al., 2008). In this role, the district officials partake in two important activities: refining and aligning organisational structures and processes as well as changing the district culture to one that supports reform.

2.14.2.1 Refining and aligning organisational structure and processes

One of the many roles of an instructional district leader is to make sure that the organisational structure and the processes in place support the mission, vision and goals of the institution (district and schools). Refining and aligning organisational structure were further emphasised by Peterson, Joseph Murphy, and Philip Hallinger (1987), after a study they collectively did looking into refining district structures to support instruction. District leaders are to redefine organisational structures so that they support the process of teaching and learning in schools. The structures in place also need to be reviewed to ensure that they do not hinder the process or create bottlenecks in the process of achieving the goals of enhanced academic performance of the learners in schools (Rorrer et al., 2008). Changing the organisational structure can take form in changing the structure of decision making or policy development. This may be seen in the formation of subject clusters in the different districts of circuits (Bantwini & Moorosi, 2018). Decision making can be decentralised to reduce the time it takes to decide and implement a change within the educational institution (Rorrer et al., 2008). This will require processes to change to accommodate different ways of doing things, which may support the achievement of instructional goals.

2.14.2.2 Changing the district culture

Reorienting the organisation also involves changing the culture that exists within the district to that which will support reform (Bantwini & Moorosi, 2018). Organisational culture is the values, norms and views that the organisation holds (Peterson et al., 1987). The culture of the districts must be such that it supports the goals that they have regarding effective teaching and learning for the improved academic performance of learners (Rorrer et al., 2008). McLaughlin (1992) states that the most powerful relationships that exist between teachers and the districts have very little to do with hierarchy but are more influenced by the culture that exists within the district's professional community. McLaughlin (1992) further suggests that a district culture that supports reform in teaching and learning has an influence on the establishment of policies and goals that comprise of diversity, and clear, open lines of communication to reinforce and track the goals of the district. Subject Advisors are therefore also responsible for creating a culture of commitment to improved teaching and learning within the districts. This means providing professional development for the reform to occur successfully (Rorrer et al., 2008).

2.14.3 Establishing policy coherence

Coherence at the district level is described by Honig and Hatch (2004) as consistent efforts to match the demands of external policies to the goals of schools and use these demands to shape the implementation of policies and strategies for the goals to be achieved. Subject Advisors are the ones responsible for policy coherence as they have to establish ways to link policy needs to the desired objectives (Rorrer et al., 2008); particularly policies related to the curriculum as well as teaching and learning. Establishing policy coherence is done through two activities: mediating federal, state, and local policy and aligning resources (Rorrer et al., 2008).

2.14.3.1 Mediating national, provincial, and local policy

District leaders play many different roles with regards to state and local policies in education (Rorrer et al., 2008). Firestone (1989) agrees as he states that district leaders decide on the role they want to play with regards to policy. District leaders can be innovators of policies by taking part in developing them, or they can resist policies or even become passive policy implementers (Firestone, 1989). While Firestone takes this view, other scholars in this field such as Spillane (1996) and Malen and Knapp (1997) suggest that district leaders are mediators of state and

local policies. They create an environment that creates a linking of communication between the goals of the schools and the demands and objectives of the policies. Spillane (1996) further expands on this body of literature by adding that district leaders are not just mere mediators and implementer of policies, however, they take a proactive role in forming instructional policies that will accommodate and support their goals as instructional leaders while implementing the policies at hand. Therefore, the role that district leaders decide to play in state and local policy contributes to the level of coherence.

2.14.3.2 Aligning resources

Policies that need to be implemented often require certain kinds of resources for them to be effectively and efficiently implemented (Rorrer et al., 2008). District leaders, therefore, must be able to make available those resources that are required to support teaching and learning in schools (Bantwini & Maroosi, 2018). Many resources are required to support teaching and learning and policy implementation and often require financial resources to acquire (Rorrer et al., 2008). With finances, districts can provide physical resources such as teaching aids. They are also able to develop human resources through professional development which is an important factor in enhancing teaching and learning. District officials are also able to acquire quality human capital. The resources are required to be always aligned with reform goals.

2.14.4 Maintaining an equity focus

Maintaining an equity focus is about ensuring that all schools and learners have an equal opportunity to perform to the best of their ability (Rorrer et al., 2008). Inequities in South African education have existed in the past years, mainly due to the state of governance of the country. Research shows that district leaders have historically been perpetuating and institutionalising these inequities in the way they have been leading and managing the districts (Hallinger & Heck, 2010). However, literature later presented that district leaders have the capabilities to displace structures that have previously perpetuated these inequities to try to achieve equity in education (Rorrer et al., 2008). Maintaining an equity focus requires that leaders own past inequalities and foreground equity.

2.14.4.1 Owning past inequity

Owning past inequalities requires that district leaders to realise first that these inequities exist, then finding a way to close the performance gap that was created due to the inequities (Rorrer

et al., 2008). Current research on districts shows that there has been a reduction in the achievement gaps. Scheurich, Skrla and Johnson (2000) show that themes like leading instruction and policy alignment, professional development needed to be strengthened to show progress in reducing the achievement gap between the different districts. Scheurich et al., (2000) also found that leaders who truly owned past equities did not attempt to explain their substandard performance or find something or someone to blame. Rather they accepted that they may have performed poorly then committed to improving the performance and narrow the achievement gap.

2.14.4.2 Foregrounding equity

Foregrounding equity in district leadership is about making sure that the overall plan for the district is equity focused. This means that equity is considered important in activities such as developing policies and developing programs and teaching strategies that aim to enhance achievement in the district (Scheurich & Skrla, 2004). This may be done in the following ways: ensuring that the curriculum is aligned to the assessments, moving away from centralised management and monitoring of results, establishing consistent teaching methods and being committed to data-driven planning for progression (Scheurich & Skrla, 2004). These activities are central to the role of Subject Advisors as leaders of instruction. Foregrounding equity also involves establishing a culture in the institution that values equity where even the processes and strategies involved in enhancing achievement are equity focused.

2.15 Chapter Summary

This chapter reviewed the literature on leading teaching and learning with a focus on district leadership. The literature was reviewed through international and local empirical studies on instructional leadership. It highlighted the professional development of teachers as pertinent to achieving quality teaching and learning. This led to a discussion on the role played by Subject Advisors in ensuring the professional development of teachers to improve teaching and learning. Issues such as the provision of resources, feedback and effective communication were highlighted as important. The literature on the role of Subject Advisors in promoting and implementing PLCs for the professional development of teachers was then discussed. Finally, the chapter concluded with a presentation of the theoretical framework that informs this study.

The next chapter presents the research design and methodology used in the study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This study aims to explore the perspectives of individuals who are guided by human qualities, experiences and beliefs. This is a qualitative study which pursues to gain an in-depth understanding of underlying motives, opinions and motivations (Silverman, 2016). The goals of this study are to gain a better and deeper understanding of what heads of departments understand to be the lead role of Subject Advisors in supporting teaching and learning in primary schools and how they experience the practices of Subject Advisors in this role. This chapter begins with a presentation of the research paradigm, unpacking the research design as well as the methodology. It will proceed to discuss the methods used in the selection of participants and the reasons for using such a procedure. Moreover, the methods that were used when data was generated as well as methods used in data analysis will be presented. A further discussion will be done on ethical issues that were taken into consideration when conducting the research, issues of trustworthiness and the limitations of the study. Finally, the chapter summary will be presented.

3.2 Locating the study within the interpretive paradigm

The beliefs or assumptions made by a researcher, which serve as a guide for the research process and actions are called paradigms (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). According to Maree (2007), many different paradigms are available for researchers to use in viewing and framing their research studies. Researchers can position their research studies within the following paradigms: positivism, post-positivism, constructivist or interpretive and critical paradigm, depending on the kind of research being conducted (Maree, 2007). Each of these paradigms suggests different ways of social theorising. This research study is within the interpretive paradigm. Through this paradigm, I was able to discover the different truths that Departmental Heads have on the support they expect and receive from Subject Advisors in primary schools. The objective of an interpretive researcher is to get a better and clearer understanding of how people make meaning of the situations in which they work and live in (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). Manion and Morison (2011) concur as they believe the interpretive paradigm assists the researcher to better understand the world in terms of the people living in it. To discover how Departmental Heads, make meaning of the supportive role played by Subject Advisors was the

purpose of this study. Therefore, the interpretive paradigm was relevant to achieve this objective. The paradigm allowed me to understand how the participants view the world in which they work. Researchers that work within the paradigm believe that there are many truths in the world and these truths are socially constructed as people engage with one another (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). This has been carefully considered as the ultimate aim of the interpretive paradigm, is to provide analysed insight of the situation under study (Maree, 2007). In this study, Departmental Heads shared their experiences on how they have been supported by Subject Advisors to enhance teaching and learning in their schools.

3.3 Research approach

A research approach is a plan of action on how the research study will be conducted (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). This is a plan of the activities and steps that will be trailed to generate and analyse data to answer the research questions (Durrheim, 2006). According to Creswell (2009), there are three types of research approaches. A research approach can either be quantitative, qualitative or a mixture (mixed methods) of both approaches (Johnson & Christensen, 2012). However, quantitative and qualitative approaches should not be viewed as contrasting approaches (Creswell, 2009). The research approach adopted in this study is the qualitative research approach. A qualitative research approach aims to gain an in-depth understanding of the numerous truths that people hold. It allowed me to see the situation from the lens of the participants. As the research is within the interpretive paradigm, which holds the belief that there are many socially constructed truths in the world, a qualitative research approach was best suited for this study. The qualitative research approach is advantageous because the researcher gets an opportunity to fully take part in the research and can, therefore, exercise some control over the whole process.

3.4 Qualitative case study design

For a research study located within the interpretive paradigm, there are many strategies used to generate data, such as ethnographic research, case studies, participatory research to name a few (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). A case study which was exploratory in nature was chosen as a research style for this study. Welman and Kruger (2001, p. 190), define a case study as “a limited number of units of analysis such as individuals, a group or an institution (which) are studied intensively”. A case study allows the opportunity to present a clear and detailed image

or description of the context and helps the reader understand the context of the study better (Maree, 2007) It is a deep investigation from several viewpoints of the complexity and distinctiveness of a specific individuals, system, program, organisation, project or policy (Vom Brocke, Simons, Niehaves, Riemer, Plattfaut & Cleven, 2009). An exploratory case study typically attempts to answer questions like “how and why?” (Yin, 2014). These questions often present rich insight into a particular situation. In this study, the case is the Departmental Heads of primary schools, as I intend to gain a deep understanding of their perspectives and experiences of receiving curriculum-related support from Subject Advisors. According to Nkambule and Amsterdam (2018), Departmental Heads are the first line of curriculum support for teachers in schools. They are the ones responsible for ensuring that the curriculum is implemented and supported. This made them the best people to share their experiences and realities of the support they receive from Subject Advisors as they too are required to offer a similar kind of support.

This research study aimed to investigate the leadership role played by Subject Advisors in enhancing teaching and learning in primary schools. This inquiry called for a research style that would produce thorough and wide-spread knowledge and experiences from the Departmental Heads in the schools. Using a case study helped the researcher create knowledge as a specific case is examined to explore life in that context (Yin, 2009). In this study, each case was carefully studied to ensure that the realities and truths are completely explored and understood so that a rich picture is truly formed and displayed in the end.

3.4.1 Sampling method

According to Maree (2007), it is not always possible to generate data from the entire population when conducting a research study. The researcher often does not have enough time to acquire the information required from the whole population under study. This then calls for the researcher to establish a way to select a sizable number from the population to carry out the investigation. Sampling is a process that involves selecting a portion of the population to conduct and complete the research study (Maree, 2007). Bertram and Christiansen (2014) believe that sampling is the procedure and criteria followed when deciding which people, event, behaviours or settings to include as part of the research study. There are many ways that can be used to select a sample from the population, which are relevant to the style of research

chosen, like random, purposive, stratified and convenience sampling methods to name a few (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014).

In this study, I used purposive sampling. According to Lankshear and Knobel (2004), purposive sampling enables the researcher to utilise his or her judgement when choosing participants to form part of the study. The researcher's decision is based on the kind of data they wish to generate. Researchers can choose participants based on specific qualities that they may bring to the research. Burns (2009) had a similar belief and describes purposive sampling as that sampling method that allows participants to be selected based on the experience and knowledge that they possess.

The research study aimed to understand the support received from Subject Advisors by primary school Departmental Heads. Therefore, the participants were all Departmental Heads at primary schools and all from the Umlazi District. These schools are in the same area of Umlazi in the same circuit and are serviced by the same Subject Advisors. The sample size initially consisted of six Departmental Heads from three different primary schools. I specifically wanted the views of the Departmental Heads who feed the senior phase and the high schools, therefore explaining the selection of intermediate and senior phase Departmental Heads as participants. The participants had to have at least eight years' experience working as a teacher and at least three years as a Departmental Head. This was done to ensure that the participants have enough experience to provide rich description of their experience over the years. One Departmental Head from the intermediate phase and another from the senior phase was selected in each school. However, due to unforeseen circumstances, the sixth participant (intermediate phase) was unable to further participate in the study. This resulted in a sample of five participants. This sample was selected in this manner because Departmental Heads are the instructional leaders in the phases and are expected to guide and assist teachers in becoming instructional leaders in their classrooms. A table of participants is shown below:

Table 3.1 Sampled Participants

Participants	School A	School B	School C	Total
Departmental Head (senior phase)	1	1	1	3
Departmental Head (intermediate)	1	1	-	2
Total	2	2	1	5

3.4.2 Data generation method

A method is a procedure or technique used to accomplish something (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). As this study used a case study as a style of research, it has numerous methods used to generate data. In this study, semi-structured interviews were used as a method of generating the required data.

3.4.2.1 Semi-structured interviews

Interviews are one of the many ways of producing data in a qualitative research study. In an interview, knowledge is created through conversation between the interviewer and the interviewee (Kvale, 2008). According to Maree (2007), an interview is an interaction through conversation between two or more people, where questions are asked to initiate a discussion and the interviewer probes the interviewee (participants) to continue the discussion for more information. This discussion allows the interviewer to create and gain data about the attitudes, viewpoints, opinions and feelings of the participants (Maree, 2007). Qualitative interviews may be conducted in different forms. Roulston (2010) suggests that an interviewer may conduct the interview individually or in a group setting through face to face interaction, over the telephone or online. Roulston (2010) also states that qualitative researchers in Social Sciences characterise interviews in terms of structure, saying that they can be structured, semi-structured or unstructured (open-ended). Using interviews in a qualitative study allows the researcher to gain a better understanding of how the participants view the world they live and work in. It allows the participant to clearly describe their process of knowledge creation (Maree, 2007).

This study used interviews as a way of generating data, as the aim was to understand the views and experiences of Departmental Heads on the instructional support, they receive from Subject Advisors in their schools. The structure of the interviews used was a semi-structured. According to Maree (2007), a semi-structured interview has prepared questions which interrogate and allow the participant to elaborate and discuss further when answering. These questions are called open-ended questions. The interviewer guides the discussion through these questions but allows the participant to further explain and interpret their answers, therefore, gaining an in-depth perspective of the issues discussed. It was therefore relevant to use semi-structured individual interviews for this study as the aim was to acquire the views and experiences of each Departmental Head separately.

The semi-structured interviews were voice recorded as it is not always possible to write all the points down while the interview is in progress. Although the participants had agreed to be recorded, they were shy and sceptical at the beginning of the interviews, which quickly subsided as they went deeper into explaining their experiences and offering their in-depth knowledge.

3.4.3 Data analysis method

According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011), data analysis is a process where the researcher observes the data generated to identify any visible themes, patterns, categories, regularities and irregularities. This is a process, which suggests that it is continuous, simultaneously with the data generation process (Creswell, 2009). Cohen et al. (2011) state that there is no single way of analysing data in a qualitative study, and therefore, it is analysed based on fitness for purpose. This simply means that the purpose of analysing the data in a research study will decide the kind of analysis that will occur (Cohen et al., 2011).

Data in a qualitative research study can be analysed in two different approaches. The first approach is inductive data analysis. This kind of data analysis organises the data into categories, identifying patterns in the categories which will allow for new themes to emerge (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). The second approach is deductive analysis. This kind of analysis starts with a general theory on the topic and based on this theory, themes and categories will emerge (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). Data in this study was analysed inductively. Maree (2007) then adds that in a study where data was generated through the use of interviews, there are three ways to analyse interview transcripts, namely: thematic, content and discourse

analysis (Maree, 2007). In this study, the interview transcripts were analysed thematically. The thematic analysis is the process of identifying patterns or themes within qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It is a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data (Roulston, 2010). It organises data and describes it in detail (Roulston, 2010). The interviews were audio-recorded, which is more accurate than taking notes during an interview (Kvale, 2008). This allowed me to transcribe the data from the interview, therefore, producing a text copy of the semi-structured interviews.

Once I had transcribed the data from the interviews, each interview was allocated a code (number). Coding the data allowed me to divide the data into different categories where themes then emerged. Themes from generated qualitative data can be generated in many ways; however thematic analysis is the most commonly used type of analysis (Roulston, 2010). Thematic analysis involves some form of data reduction. Data reduction is about making the data generated, in the form of audio recordings in this case, simple, focused and readable, for example, written field notes or transcripts (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). This is done by applying codes to data to define categories, through sorting and classification codes or data into thematic groups of findings through several interpretations. Lastly, from the data generated and organised, I drew conclusions and possible explanations (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). The themes were used to interpret data on the perceived roles of Subject Advisors in primary schools.

3.4.4 Issues of trustworthiness

According to Cohen et al., (2011) a qualitative study cannot work with issues of reliability and validity as when dealing with humans there is no possibility that the results of a study will be the same. This is because people's behaviours change depending on the context they are in; therefore, the results will depend on the uniqueness of each situation (Cohen et al., 2011). In a qualitative study, researchers refer to issues of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability of a research study as key to the trustworthiness of a study (Maree, 2007).

Credibility is the ability of the researcher to produce research findings that can make the reader believe and be convinced by them (Maree, 2007). The findings should be a true reflection of the situation studied. To ensure credibility, after transcribing what was said in the interviews the participants were allowed to read the transcripts to ensure that what they had said was

captured in the manner in which it was intended (Stake, 2005). This also allowed the participant to take an opportunity to withdraw from the study should they feel uncomfortable with what they have shared. Confirmability is about making sure that the findings as interpreted by the researcher are correct and as reported (Charmaz, Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). After the final analysis of the data, the participants and I discussed the findings to ensure that they were indeed captured correctly.

Research findings, according to Maree (2007), should also be transferable. This means that should the same study be conducted in a different context with similar characteristics; the findings should show similarities. A clear description of the context is offered, and even though the results will not be the same due to the nature of humans in a qualitative study, they should, however, show similar patterns. Lastly, a research study should be dependable. According to Charmaz et al., (2000), a dependable study is one that can show that the findings were acquired as explained. This means that the steps that the researcher said they followed should be a true reflection of what happened (Rule & John, 2011). To address the issue of dependability, an independent reader was asked to read and audit the transcripts and analysis. If the key criteria of trustworthiness have been thoroughly addressed in an acceptable manner only then can a qualitative study such as this one be deemed trustworthy.

3.4.5 Ethics in research

Ethics in research are very important, as consideration of them determines how the research is done and who forms part of the participants and setting (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). This also ensures that the participants are protected. The principles of ethics in research are autonomy, non-maleficence and beneficence (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014).

Autonomy means that the researcher must get consent from all parties involved to conduct and form part of the research study (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). No participant must form part of the research study without their awareness and consent. To ensure autonomy in this study, firstly permission was requested from the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education to research the identified schools. Consent was granted and communicated through a letter. Then, permission was requested from the school principals of the three selected schools to enter and

conduct research with the Departmental Heads. The principals signed consent forms granting permission. Finally, all the participants received individual letters requesting them to take part in the research study. Consent was granted through signed consent forms from all participants. After all these documents were received, an application for ethical clearance was submitted to the University of KwaZulu-Natal, which after careful consideration, permission to conduct research was granted.

Non-maleficence simply means “to not do any harm” (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). The researcher must be able to protect the participants from any harm that may be caused by the research. The letters received by the principals and the schools were clear that the schools and participants will be protected by ensuring that their identities are protected. This was done through the use of pseudonyms. It was also discussed with the participants that should they, at any point, feel uncomfortable and decide to no longer be part of the research; they may withdraw without any consequences. The findings of the study are presented in such a way that they do not negatively implicate the participants and the researcher.

Beneficence indicates that research should be beneficial directly or indirectly to the participants, other researchers or society as a whole (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). The participants were informed that the findings would hopefully contribute positively towards that work done by Subject Advisors in assisting and supporting them.

3.5 Limitations to the study

Limitations are shortcomings that are experienced in the process of conducting research; they are conditions beyond reasonable control (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). According to Maree (2007), a researcher must state these shortcomings clearly as they may have an impact on the process and findings of the study. A case study was used in this research which limited the data generated to the context in which it was in. This means that the findings may not be easily transferred to a different context; therefore, they are not generalisable. The literature on district leadership, specifically Subject Advisors in South Africa, is currently limited (Bantwini & Diko, 2011). International literature was consulted more because of this limitation, and this made it difficult sometimes relate to the different contexts.

3.6 Chapter Summary

This section presented the research design as a plan or process of the whole study. First, it located the research in the interpretive paradigm and qualitative approach. Then, it presented a case study as a research methodology, semi-structured interviews as data generation methods and purposive sampling of the six research participants. Inductive data analysis was presented as the chosen data analysis method. The consideration of important ethical issues such as the principle of anonymity and informed consents, non-maleficence and beneficence was discussed. Issues of trustworthiness like credibility, dependability, transferability and confirmability, and a few limitations were also discussed. The next chapter will focus on data presentation and discussion.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter outlined the research design and methodology used to generate data for this study. This chapter presents and discusses the data generated from the field through semi-structured interviews with 5 Departmental Heads in 3 primary schools. Six themes that I have identified while exploring the two research questions are discussed. The presentation of the data and the discussion of the findings are driven by the study's research questions:

1. What do primary school Departmental Heads understand and expect to be the leadership role of Subject Advisors in supporting teaching and learning?
2. How do primary school Departmental Heads experience the leadership role and practices of Subject Advisors in providing support for teaching and learning?
3. What lessons can be learnt from the experiences of primary school Departmental Heads on the role of Subject Advisors in providing support for teaching and learning?

4.2 Profiling the participants

I conducted semi-structured interviews with five participants from three different primary schools in the Umlazi District. This comprised of five Departmental Heads; three from the senior phase and two from the intermediate phase. All of these participants have experience working in the Department of Education ranging from ten to eighteen years. Two of the participants teach Mathematics, one teaches Natural Science and Technology, one teaches Social Sciences, and the last one teaches Languages. They all have experience working as departmental heads ranging from three to eight years. This is shown in table 4.1 below. Their years of experience could mean that there is a possibility of acquiring seasoned data from these participants.

Table 4.1 Participants Profiles

Participant	Years of experience in education	Years in the current position	Learning area taught	Age range in years
1. Miss Bhengu	16	3	Natural Science & Technology	40s
2. Mr Cele	18	8	Social Sciences	40s
3. Miss Gazu	14	4	Mathematics	40s
4. Miss Shezi	10	3	Languages	30s
5. Miss Vezi	12	5	Mathematics	40s

4.3 Conception of Departmental Heads on the role of Subject Advisors in supporting teaching and learning

After the participants shared their understanding of the role of Subject Advisors in supporting teaching and learning in primary schools, it was evident that Departmental Heads were very clear on what they understand. They had varied responses; however, they all spoke of the support for teaching and learning through the provision of material for teaching and learning, organisation of workshops as a tool for professional development and further capacity building through school visits and creating a platform for peer-learning. While they held similar views on what they understood and expect, in some instances, they differed in the level of value and importance of these views.

4.3.1 Subject Advisors should be visible

The findings show that Departmental Heads realise that they do need and want support from Subject Advisors and they are also expecting them to be visible and readily available to assist whenever needed. When asked what she expects from Subject Advisors as a Departmental Head, Miss Gazu responded and said:

We expect Subject Advisors to be present in our schools and be available when they are needed, whether through on-site visits, over the phone or emails but because they are subject specialists they should always be available to support and assist us as teachers and as Departmental Heads where the curriculum is concerned.
(Miss Gazu)

While Miss Vezi did not specify how Subject Advisors should be available as Miss Gazu, they did, however, share a similar view as she also stated that:

Subject Advisors should be able to support us in each of the learning areas during the year, specifically where we are unclear about any curriculum-related issues. We expect them to come and visit us and check what we are doing and assist where we are struggling. (Miss Vezi)

Miss Bhengu and Mr Cele appeared to be much more specific about what they expect when they come into contact with Subject Advisors in their capacity to support teaching and learning. This is what they said:

In my capacity as Departmental Heads, I expect Subject Advisors to develop me in becoming an effective curriculum head in my phase. Develop me in such a way that I can later on, develop and give support to the teachers that I lead. I expect to be provided with all the necessary documentation to be able to effectively teach and manage each learning area. I also expect school visits which don't only focus on monitoring but where they can share teaching strategies and assessment techniques in each learning area with us before they even come to evaluate and monitor. (Miss Bhengu)

The functions of the Subject Advisor, as far as I know, are to monitor the curriculum coverage and support educators by guiding and instructing them on how to plan work to be done on daily, weekly, monthly basis. It is to ensure that all relevant documents are in place to implement the policy in order to cover the curriculum, Annual Teaching Plans (ATPs) must be available. Workshop programmes must be in place, clusters must be functional and supported by the Subject Advisor, and they also need to create good communication and mutual trust between them, educators and Departmental Heads. (Mr Cele)

Miss Shezi had similar expectations but her area of concern, which she stated as the area she expects most assistance in, from Subject Advisors, is support through intervention programmes for those learners with learning difficulties, she explained:

Amongst a number of other things, I expect Subject Advisors to support us when we have challenges. Intervention plans, how to formulate, and how to implement them. For example, we have underperforming learners, and we have to have a

programme in place to make sure that they meet the required standard for each grade, even if we do have a plan in place, often you find that it is not working. That is where we need Subject Advisors the most as we are seeing an increase in the number of underperforming learners and learners with learning barriers. (Miss Shezi)

The participants seem to hold concurring views on their understanding of the role that should be played by Subject Advisors in supporting teaching and learning. From their different responses, it showed that they all hold different aspects of this support as more valuable than others. While the majority spoke about school visits, Miss Bhengu as a Natural Science teacher and Departmental Head emphasised teaching and assessment strategies as important to her due to how practical her learning area is:

It becomes very difficult to teach Natural Science (NS), especially in an under-resourced school such as ours. So, when Subject Advisors come for school visits I expect them to develop me on ways to effectively teach and assess Natural Science with the little resources that the school has and not to just check if I can manage to complete the syllabus. (Miss Bhengu)

What was most apparent among the majority of the participants was that they expected support through the provision of all necessary documents (resources) that are required to ensure that the curriculum is tracked and covered as stipulated by CAPS. Miss Gazu, in her response, stated that:

We expect and do receive support from Subject Advisors, as during their annual workshops they provide documents that are required to form part of our subject files. Things like the curriculum trackers, Annual Teaching Plans and the policy documents to mention a few. (Miss Gazu)

Miss Vezi agreed with Miss Gazu and further said:

We expect them to give us everything related to the curriculum, all resources required to teach that particular subject and manage its progress.

Mr Cele shared the same sentiments and further added that the documents he expects Subject Advisors to provide him with will assist in performing his work as expected by the curriculum policy and the Subject Advisors:

What we expect from the Subject Advisors is for them to ensure that all relevant documents are available to us to make sure that educators can implement the policy as expected. The teacher should not at any point be unable to work due to lack of proper guidance, and the documents we receive during the orientation workshops are what help us manage the curriculum as expected by the policy and in a way that will allow Subject Advisors to effectively monitor progress when they visit schools. (Mr Cele)

The responses from the Departmental Heads further revealed their understanding of support through the provision of teaching and learning resources. They all spoke of documentation to manage and track the curriculum. It was only two Departmental Heads that expected more than just documents to complete and file, Miss Bhengu said:

When I speak of teaching and learning resources, I am not just talking about the documents used to track and monitor the curriculum but I am talking about teaching aids such as worksheets, practical experiments for science and technology, charts and even videos to make my teaching experience easier and learning experience for the learner more exciting and practical. (Miss Bhengu)

Mr Cele also added that:

...we want teaching strategies. There are some aspects in the curriculum that are challenging, and you are sometimes uncomfortable to deliver to the learners, we need that support. Support in the form of learning and teaching aids, practical tutorials on how to best approach the topics and proper guidance on the different teaching approaches. (Mr Cele)

Departmental Heads' understanding of the supportive role played by Subject Advisors was varied. It included aspects such as support through the provision of teaching and learning material, provision of teaching strategies and assessment techniques, strategies to teach in under-resourced schools and provision of documents used to track curriculum delivery (implementation). These expectations are also contained in some previous studies as important functions of Subject Advisors and school leaders on supporting teaching and learning (Honig, 2013; Seobi & Wood, 2016; Nkambule & Amsterdam, 2018) Their understanding and expectations are in line with what the *National Policy on the Organisation, Roles and Responsibilities of Education Districts* (RSA, 2013) outlines as the roles and responsibilities of a Subject Advisor. The policy states that Subject Advisors must provide support through

monitoring the implementation of the curriculum in each subject; providing the relevant learning and teaching materials and ensure that teachers have all the curriculum and assessment documents required for each subject (RSA, 2013). The policy is in agrees with the previous findings of Bantwini and Diko (2011) that the main function of Subject Advisors is to support teachers by guiding them through the implementation of the curriculum. This was also similar to the findings of Levin et al., (2012), where they too also concur that the main function of Subject Advisors is to support and guide educators through curriculum implementation.

The issue of professional development was a major concern among the participants as they did acknowledge the need to continuously be developed to meet the educational needs of the learners. Their views are again, in line with the policy on the roles and responsibilities of Subject Advisors, which states that they must support teachers by strengthening their content knowledge on the subject (RSA, 2013). A host of scholars have emphasised in their work, the importance of professional development to achieve academic success (Bush, 2003; Christie et al., 2010; Kelly & Cherkowski, 2015). These scholars concur with Rorrer et al., (2008) as they state that district leaders such as Subject Advisors must generate the will and build capacity by providing resources. Building capacity and generating will, are facilitated through the following tasks which require continuous feedback; coaching, school visits and class observations, provision of learning and teaching material (Kelly & Cherkowski, 2015). While the Departmental Heads responses may have been diverse, they all contain different aspects of the functions of Subject Advisors as stipulated by the policy and the traits of an instructional leader. Combined, they paint a picture of the role played by Subject Advisors in supporting teaching and learning as that of an instructional leader.

4.4 Lived experiences of Departmental Heads of support for teaching and learning from Subject Advisors

After the discussion about Departmental Heads' understanding and expectations of the role played by Subject Advisors in supporting teaching and learning, we then led on to discussions about the experience of working with Subject Advisors. While there may have been similarities in the participants' experiences, again, they showed different levels of appreciation and views on these experiences. It appeared that the majority of the participants have had some experience of working with Subject Advisors but in different situations. From these experiences important sub-themes emerged: workshops as professional development tool; school visits to monitor and

track the curriculum and clusters and other learning communities for shared learning. Furthermore, what was repeatedly mentioned was the lack of adequate time allocated to these avenues of support to Departmental Heads.

The contact that appeared to be most common for all participants was the orientation workshops that are often held at the beginning of each year as well as the irregular school visits. This is what Miss Bhengu had to say about her experience:

Subject Advisors do hold workshops right at the beginning of the year. These workshops are very important for the induction of new teachers so that they know the requirements of the learning area that they will be teaching. I particularly appreciate these workshops because they make my job slightly easier, especially with new teachers. They tend to, however, be repetitive for the old teachers...They also hold another one or two-day workshop for the Departmental Heads which mainly focuses on learning how to track and monitor the work done by the teachers that we lead ...they do things quickly to fit them into the little time they have set for the workshop. (Miss Bhengu)

Miss Bhengu also added that during these workshops, time is very limited compared to the amount of work that Subject Advisors often hope to cover. Miss Shezi shared a similar experience of attending these annual orientation workshops, and she also raises the same concern of limited time:

Subject Advisors do call Departmental Heads workshops; however, two hours is not enough to go through everything in such a way that we completely understand what is expected from us ...we are not called every term so one cannot say they have been developed by just spending two hours with them at the beginning of the year. (Miss Shezi)

Miss Vezi shared her experience, and like the other two Departmental Heads, she too raises the same concern, which is of time not being enough to fully cater for all the content to be covered in the workshops aimed at capacitating departmental heads:

At the beginning of the year, Subject Advisors of the different learning areas have orientation workshops where they call teachers and acquaint them with the different requirements and expectations in each of those learning areas. They also hold other workshops specifically for Departmental Heads. In these workshops we

are provided with documents, and the expected layout of the educators file for each subject. The time allocated for these workshops is not enough though as some teachers still come back to school very unclear about what is required of them in terms of their subject. (Miss Vezi)

While the participants appreciate that there are workshops aimed at developing them as teachers and Departmental Heads, they did however, also raise concerns about the content discussed in these workshops. The majority felt that it would be better if Subject Advisors focused on the more practical aspects of teaching and learning. Mr Cele explained:

... then they call us to workshops which sometimes is not, in fact, a workshop but a meeting, where they take out the policy document and read it to us. This is not what we want, but we want teaching strategies. Sometimes you come across a very challenging topic in the curriculum that you need a subject specialist to assist with, but these things are not discussed in these workshops. I have also attended a workshop specifically aimed at Departmental Heads, where we had discussions around monitoring and tracking the curriculum as well as requirements of a Departmental Head's file. (Mr Cele)

Miss Bhengu expressed a similar view and added:

...these workshops are more focused on the paper work that needs to be in the subject files as opposed to those practical things that will help the teacher effectively teach. (Miss Bhengu)

While discussing what Departmental Heads understood to be the role of Subject Advisors in supporting teaching and learning, they all mentioned that they expect school visits from Subject Advisors. The participants explained that these visits are to monitor their progress and assist where further development is required. However, what the data is showing is that while there may be a few school visits that take place, they do not happen as often, and in the manner that is expected and lastly, they don't yield the expected benefit. This is first explained by Miss Gazu:

Subject Advisors come to schools and want things that teachers were not trained or taught on how to do. Their workshops are just over an hour-long, and they give you several different papers and tell you what they want, however there is no

practical presentation of what they want. This then leads to the visit being a fault-finding session which many teachers then reject. (Miss Gazu)

Mr Cele also stated that:

What Subject Advisors do is that they almost always make unannounced visits to schools to monitor the work done by teachers. They always find problems and unfortunately, as the curriculum head, I always take the fall for work that is not done in the manner expected by Subject Advisors. (Mr Cele)

Miss Bhengu has also had the experience of school visits from Subject Advisors; she suggested that Subject Advisors do not work in the same way. While others may regularly visit the schools then do follow up calls or visits, some Subject Advisors visit once and never come back, and others do not visit at all, she explained:

Subject Advisors are not the same; there are those who are able to follow up after visits; for example, the Maths and Natural Science and Technology Subject Advisors. They are very active, and they follow up after initial visits. In 2016 we had a visit from the Life Orientation Subject Advisor in grade 7, but that was the last I saw or heard from her. The rest I have never seen them. This means that Subject Advisors work differently between the different learning areas, and we do not get proper feedback and development after these visits. (Miss Bhengu)

What also came through from the data was that while annual workshops and school visits may be taking place, some Departmental Heads have very little experience of working with Subject Advisors in their current capacity and before as post level one educators, specifically through school visits. Miss Shezi explained her experience and said:

To be honest, it's been over five years since I have had a visit from a Subject Advisor specifically for Languages, so I don't have much experience of a visit. The only time I have seen them is during workshops or when one visits the other phases. Even with clusters, Maths and Economic Management Science are the only learning areas with active clusters currently in our circuit. (Miss Shezi)

Miss Gazu further adds that:

If I wasn't a Mathematics teacher, I would have very little experience of dealing with Subject Advisors because apart from the annual workshop and the clusters I

hardly have any contact or working relationship with the others. This means that teachers who do not teach Maths and Natural Science and Technology have a very limited source of support from Subject Advisors. (Miss Gazu)

From the above quotes, it came out that Departmental Heads appreciate the workshops used to develop them as they are informative, particularly for newly appointed Departmental Heads. These findings are similar to those of Nkambule and Amsterdam (2018), as they reveal that the participants in their study appreciated the workshops conducted by Subject Advisors. The importance of these induction or initiation workshops was also highlighted by Van der Berg (2008) stating that inadequate teacher preparation is the reason why some teachers struggle to provide quality teaching to learners. The majority of participants did express that they wish the content of these workshops was slightly different and that they were allocated more time. According to Mafora and Phorabatho (2013), Subject Advisors are often unable to support and monitor each teacher individually, due to lack of resources and time. This is why they often have to use workshops for collective development. The findings, however, show that even with the workshops, there still is not enough time available to engage in all areas that Departmental Heads need development in.

Participants also alluded to the fact that the school visits are mainly used for monitoring and evaluation and rarely get to a point of development, as follow-up visits do not occur for most learning areas. Findings from studies conducted by Mavuso and Moyo (2014) and Nkambule and Amsterdam (2018) concur with these findings as they too revealed that school visits from Subject Advisors are often ineffective in terms of providing support because they tend to focus mainly on monitoring. Rorrer et al., (2008) emphasised the importance of supporting teaching and learning through effective district instructional leadership, which is the responsibility of the Subject Advisor. All aspects of the curriculum and related teacher development are all concerns of a Subject Advisor as a curriculum specialist in a position of support. What Departmental Heads considered as support was, in fact, introductions to policy changes and curriculum explanations which are findings similar to Nkambule and Amsterdam (2018). What is clear from the data is that the expectations of support from Subject Advisors that Departmental Heads have, are not fully met. While the policy stipulates the roles and responsibilities of Subject Advisors, according to the participants these objectives are not being fully realised.

4.5 Subject Advisors' influence on teaching practices to enhance learner performance

Participants expressed that they do not like being micro managed, but at the same time, they do realise the importance of having a support structure, not only for themselves but more so for the learners and their performance. Knowing that there is someone who is not only supporting them but also monitoring their work helps the Departmental Heads consistently aim to keep on track. They also explained that they do believe the support they receive from Subject Advisors and other external sources enables them to better support the teachers. This then has a positive influence on the learners' performance. Mr Cele suggested that the way teachers perform is related to the way he performs as a Departmental Head which also affects the learners' performance:

Firstly, when you are leading people, you must always be willing to learn because naturally, people will come to you assuming you know better. When teachers understand that I as the Departmental Head have a very clear understanding of what is expected particularly where the curriculum is concerned, and I show a willingness to support them, they tend to respect that and work accordingly or as expected. This is the same thing with learners in the classroom. Learners can see if a teacher is unsure of the content they are delivering or if they are unprepared and that has an impact on how they learn and later perform. (Mr Cele)

Miss Bhengu agrees with Buthelezi, and further highlights the difference in the performance of teachers and learners she observed after receiving support from an external organisation:

CAPS for Creative Arts in our school has proved to be particularly tricky to understand, even after teachers have come back from the orientation workshops. This has resulted in teachers interpreting the curriculum on their own and doing what they felt was right. The majority of the learners, particularly in grade 7, were not interested in the subject because it lacked clear goals and structure. After MIET Africa came on board with a creative art support programme, I have seen lesson plans that actually make sense, clear Annual Teaching Plans and increased participation in the classroom and the teacher is more confident in what they are doing. This, for me clearly showed that when people are supported in their work, they perform better and this is seen in the attitude and performance of the learners. (Miss Bhengu)

Miss Gazu shares the same sentiments as Mr Cele and Miss Bhengu. She highlights the increase in the confidence of the teachers when they are receiving support and guidance in their learning area. She also points out that when teachers are supported, it also shows improved teaching strategies and new skills. She explained:

Being part of the Mathematics cluster has surely made me a better teacher of the subject. The Subject Advisor supports us and shares videos on how to approach different topics. The confidence I have gained has had an influence on my level of patience I have with the learners and how to teach to different kinds of learners. I have seen improvement in learner performance over the years because of the development that takes place in the cluster. (Miss Gazu)

Miss Shezi also explained how she has grown to be a better teacher and leader from the development that she went through while the school was on the programme:

The development programme our school was on has made me a better leader. The support from mentors that the teachers had has improved their teaching skills and they have acquired new skills which they have been implementing in their classes. Constantly learning from peers, leaders, Subject Advisors and mentors, I think if it doesn't irritate a person, it surely motivates them to always try and do better. This we see in the learner's participation in the class and their overall academic performance which is improving. (Miss Shezi)

The participants highlighted the importance of support in their capacities as teachers and as Departmental (curriculum) Heads in their schools. Some scholars have found a relationship between support for teaching and learning and learner performance and have suggested that effective district leadership has a positive influence on learner achievement (Honig, 2013; Marzano & Waters, 2009; Nkambule & Amsterdam, 2018). In this case, district leadership comes in the form of support for teaching and learning from Subject Advisors as district officials responsible for curriculum-related issues (RSA, 2013). Data shows what is currently happening in schools is that external organisations are also playing the role of Subject Advisors in supporting teaching and learning. The participants' responses suggest that they too understand that for them to be effective leaders of instruction and be able to support teaching and learning in their schools, they also need the support first.

4.6 Perceived challenges encountered in the relationship between Subject Advisors and Departmental Heads

While speaking about their experiences, participants mentioned a number of different challenges that they feel may be a stumbling block in receiving the kind of support they expect from Subject Advisors. What repeatedly discussed as some of the main challenges was: Subject Advisors not having enough time to adequately support all schools as needed; the lack of effective communication between schools and Subject Advisors and lastly lack of collaboration between Subject Advisors working in similar district

As participants shared their experiences of working with Subject Advisors, they also discussed some of the challenges they have experienced in this relationship. Moreover, they shared some of the challenges that they feel affect how Subject Advisors support them. When asked what they thought were some of the challenges that Subject Advisors experience, this is what Miss Bhengu had to say:

Subject Advisors do not have enough time, yes, they support us as Departmental Heads but the time they allocate to doing this specifically during workshops is not enough. They simply do not allocate enough time for the workshop to be truly beneficial. When I raised the issue of not being able to get hold of the Subject Advisor when I need them, the response I got was that they have to support too many schools, so they are unable to fully cater to all the schools. (Miss Bhengu)

Miss Gazu added that:

These people do not have time. For one to have a working relationship with Subject Advisors, you just really have to be proactive and pursue the relationship yourself. They hardly visit us, and when they do, some cases become a session of finding what are we not doing as opposed to where are we struggling. (Miss Gazu)

The common reason given for why Subject Advisors are not available or visible in the schools is that they have a huge workload and they are struggling with managing time.

Miss Shezi shared the same views and said:

As I said, I have never experienced a visit from a Subject Advisor before, but what I have heard from my colleagues and teachers from other schools, their visits are not always pleasant. They check the work, find issues, briefly try to explain what should have been done then leave and hardly follow up. I would like to believe that

maybe they just have too much work in their hands and time is a problem. (Miss Shezi)

Mr Cele shared a similar view of Subject Advisors not having enough time and also adds that this may be because there is not enough human capital to cater to all schools. This is what he had to say:

Subject Advisors seem to be understaffed. They must create their development programme such that it accommodates that they do not have enough time. I just think because they have many schools to support they need to start working smart. Leaving some schools behind is no different than excluding learners who cannot keep up with the lesson in class. (Mr Cele)

Effective communication was also another challenge that Departmental Heads felt was a hindrance to the support offered by Subject Advisors. This involved the communication of the details of scheduled workshops, cluster meetings, school visits and just access to Subject Advisors when needed by the Departmental Heads. Mr Cele said:

What I have also noticed is that communication for me is a big challenge for Subject Advisors, even though teachers should be doing what the curriculum stipulates at all times but making unannounced visits does not benefit anyone in my view. They are not available on time, so coming to monitor work we have never previously spoken about is an issue for me. They visit the school this year and give us a two or three-year break then come again, and sometimes things have changed. (Mr Cele)

Miss Bhengu agrees that communication is there but is not effective as it is delayed and sometimes causes confusion within the schools.

You know, Subject Advisors do conduct workshops during the school holidays, which I hear cover content knowledge in the different subjects. Now we have had issues before where there would be communication saying that there is a workshop at a particular venue only to find that it is not a KZN education organised workshop. In my school, for some time, we did not attend workshops because we had to wait for official communication from the department with a schedule of workshops for each learning area. Now because the communication between

Subject Advisors and schools is not so clear, this official communication was late, and some teachers missed these workshops. (Miss Bhengu)

What also emerged as another challenge was the lack of collaboration between the Subject Advisors of the different learning areas. Findings show that they do not work similarly. This could be due to different challenges that they face within those learning areas, however, this is a major challenge for Departmental Heads in the schools. It raises expectations that may be fulfilled by one Subject Advisor and the other fall short.

Subject Advisors work differently; this raises unrealistic expectations from the schools. If the Natural science and Mathematics Subject Advisor can have time to be visible and supportive to many schools, then we expect a similar experience from the others. When we don't get that, then we immediately assume that they are not doing their jobs without considering that there may be possible challenges that they are facing. (Miss Vezi)

This was in line with what Miss Bhengu had mentioned when she spoke about some Subject Advisors not following up after initial visits.

...for instance, one Subject Advisor visited the school and said she would come back with documents that we needed and left her number; till this day, we have not been able to reach her. This is not what happens with the Mathematics Subject Advisor when he says he will be back after two weeks; he definitely comes back. (Miss Bhengu)

The relationship between Subject Advisors and Departmental Heads is characterised by many different issues. The first issue is that of availability of time to sustain an effective relationship. This problem may also be caused by an inadequate number of Subject Advisors available to support all schools. Nkambule and Amsterdam (2018) found in their study the lack of human capital in the district office is causing a bottleneck in the process of support to schools. This is because the available Subject Advisors do not have enough time to implement all initiatives of support they have planned for the schools (Nkambule & Amsterdam, 2018). Rorrer et al., (2008) emphasise the Subject Advisor's role in giving instructional support, which largely includes building capacity and this requires time. Therefore, the lack of availability of time has many negative implications for the role that Subject Advisors play in supporting teaching and learning in primary schools.

The second issue is that of inconsistency. Participants have repeatedly expressed how they have experienced different working relationships with different Subject Advisors. Due to this, it raises unfulfilled expectations which causes more problems. The inconsistencies indicate a lack of collaborative planning, uniform procedure and goal setting between Subject Advisors. This is the lack of synergy that Mavuso and Moyo (2014) had found in their study. The lack of clear lines of communication and the speed of relaying important information to schools was also a challenge for the participants. This issue hinders the process of regular feedback and effective communication with teachers, which was discussed as important functions of a Subject Advisor (Zinger, 2016). Lastly, the lack of collaboration between Subject Advisors and Departmental Heads is what results in repetitive workshops, ineffective clusters and unannounced school visits that do not result in the required development (Nkambule & Amsterdam, 2018).

4.7 Alignment between the support from Subject Advisors and external stakeholders

While there may have been a number of challenges that the participants discussed, particularly the availability of Subject Advisors to support them, data shows that there is another support structure available for Departmental Heads. Some participants mentioned that there are external organisations that are present in their schools that assist them with the curriculum and how to implement it effectively. Miss Shezi mentioned that while there was limited visibility of Subject Advisors in her school, there are support programmes from external stakeholders that develop Departmental Heads and teachers. She stated:

Our school is part of a development programme, where each of us had a mentor who was there to support and guide us almost every week. The programme focused on things that are expected by the department, so we could say that our mentors played the role of a Subject Advisor in terms of support. We are clear on most things. I must add that if we were not in this programme, we would definitely feel the need for Subject Advisors in our school. ...we now have a “read” session in our school where for 15 minutes every morning everyone in the school stops what they are doing and reads in silence; this has promoted such a great reading culture in our school. (Miss Shezi)

Miss Gazu adds that her school also has similar programmes running. However, unlike the holistic development programme, these are specifically for different learning areas. She also

stated that she realised that these programmes may have decreased the urgent need for Subject Advisors in those particular learning areas. She said:

Our school is part of a Mathematics programme with an external organisation, which is great. We are also part of other programmes for learning areas such as Life Orientation and Creative Arts. These programmes are always present and help with things like teaching strategies, teaching aids, coaching, mentoring of teachers and ways to involve learners in the classroom. For Mathematics and Creative Arts, they even hold workshops with the teachers and learners to practically demonstrate what they teach educators. (Miss Gazu)

Some participants went as far as suggesting that the department of education should consider a more concrete partnership with organisations that are already working with schools to alleviate the pressure from Subject Advisors particularly on issues related to teaching and learning. Miss Vezi suggested:

The department should consider partnering with the different Non-profit Organisations and other external stakeholders that are currently in the schools already. These organisations are already doing what Subject Advisors are supposed to be doing in our schools. Take the organisation doing the development programme; for instance, they have been at our school for the past two years. Every teacher in the school had a mentor, even the principal. They taught us different teaching strategies, how to keep track of the curriculum, how to manage large classes, remedial programmes and so much more. So, I could say that we didn't need Subject Advisors because we had all the support that we needed and more. Many other schools would benefit from such programmes, and it would certainly relieve some of the burdens from the Subject Advisors as they have many schools to take care of. (Miss Vezi)

Miss Bhengu and Miss Gazu had similar views and also said:

...these programmes help a lot; they actually do what we expect from Subject Advisors. They develop, then follow up to further develop and support. Schools need to be part of these programmes, and Subject Advisors must also maybe consider collaborating with them to be effectively present in more schools than currently. (Miss Bhengu)

Miss Gazu agreed and said:

The department should maybe consider working closely with these organisations in all schools where required. This will help overcome the problem of them not being visible in schools. These organisations actually do the work of subject advisors. They are beneficial not only for the teachers but more so for the learners as this kind of support has shown to have a positive impact on learner involvement in the class and their overall performance. (Miss Gazu)

The findings show that Departmental Heads do need consistent support for teaching and learning. The participants kept asserting that the organisations that are supporting them are taking the place of Subject Advisors in their schools. These organisations have come into these schools and led through generating will and building capacity. They have been able to get teachers to commit to effective teaching and learning and provided a platform to develop them. They are described as “*doing the work of Subject Advisors*” which suggests that they are mediators of policies, making educators, practices and policies reach common ground. One participant also mentioned how the programme has created a culture of reading in their school, therefore re-orientating and changing parts of the culture in the school. All of this is described by Rorrer et al., (2008) in their theory of districts as institutional actors in systemic reforms as activities that district officials such as Subject Advisors should engage in when leading teaching and learning for enhanced learner performance and overall school improvement. As prescribed by the *National Policy on the Organisation, Roles and Responsibilities of Education Districts* (RSA, 2013) the functions that are described by the participants as being those performed by external organisations are those expected to be done by district leaders, particularly Subject Advisors. This shows that as Gustafsson and Kotzé (2016) suggested the reality of providing and receiving support is indeed far from policy and legislation expectations. There seems to be a lack of alignment between the practices of these external organisations and Subject Advisors. Participants suggested a concrete collaboration between these organisations and Subject Advisors. This is the same collaboration that was suggested by Protheroe (2008) and Honig (2013) as a way to improve the performance of schools and district.

4.8 Aid for Subject Advisors through internal, on-site support for Departmental Heads

Departmental Heads are also known as the curriculum heads in their schools. They have a direct influence on the implementation and management of the curriculum of all learning areas within

their phase as primary school Departmental Heads. They do not only have to manage the curriculum, but they also need to manage those that implement it. This therefore, means that they too need support in order to know how to support those that they lead effectively. Subject Advisors are the immediate source of support for anything related to the curriculum and its implementation in primary schools, however, data has revealed that they are not as present as required. This had led to the heavy reliance on the SMT of the school to offer curriculum related support to teachers. This means that there needs to be a support structure in place to assist where Subject Advisors are not performing as required. Departmental Heads may also receive curriculum-related support from their senior managers such as the principal and the deputy principal. When asked whether they received any support for teaching and learning from senior management, Miss Bhengu explained:

Fortunately, our school has a deputy who specialises particularly in curriculum issues and another on administration. This means that we have someone readily available to assist us. The issue with other Departmental Heads is that they do not make use of this resource. They therefore, find themselves frustrated by not only the amount of work that has to be done but also by how to do it. (Miss Bhengu)

Miss Gazu, who is an intermediate phase Departmental Head in the same school as Miss Bhengu had a very different response; she said:

Although we have a deputy principal who should specifically be handling any curriculum-related issues, receiving support is very difficult. I expect him to have a fully functional programme to develop us internally, fit into the culture of the school. I am not happy with the support I receive from senior management in my school. (Miss Gazu)

Miss Gazu's response is testament to what Miss Bhengu explained when she said:

the issue with other Departmental Heads is that they do not make use of this resource. (Miss Gazu)

Miss Vezi's experience appeared to be similar to Miss Gazu's, as she also stated that she doesn't get any curriculum related support from senior management.

Senior management in my school does not have any curriculum-related programmes apart from the subject committees which we have to lead. Whatever

information I need, I have to find it from neighbouring schools, clusters or Subject Advisors. (Miss Gazu)

Miss Shezi also shared a similar experience as she explained:

No, I don't get any support that is curriculum-related from them. All they do is provide resources and a conducive environment for teaching and learning to take place. I have to find the information for myself. But maybe it has never gotten to a point where I'd feel the need for the support from them with that regard. (Miss Shezi)

4.8.1 Professional Learning Communities as a curriculum implementation support structure

The data showed that there is no programme in place in the participating schools that is specifically tailored to support Departmental Heads with curriculum-related issues. While Subject Advisors are said to not be visible in schools, it was also found that majority of the participants do not actively seek help from senior management. While the participants might have said they do not receive any curriculum support from senior management, there seems to be an active programme in schools used to manage and enhance the implementation of the curriculum. Miss Bhengu said:

Because I am able to ask my deputy for help, it then makes sense when he asks for the evidence of the work done and how it was done. This is exactly what the Subject Advisor would also want should they visit the school. He thoroughly checks curriculum trackers, lesson plans, evidence of work done by learners and does formal assessment pre and post-moderation every term. (Miss Bhengu)

Mr Cele had an interesting take on this issue because while he is a Departmental Head, he has also acted as a deputy before and he explained:

The issue of support is based on the situation and the people who require support. While I was acting as deputy principal, no one ever came to me with content related problems asking for help. This becomes challenging when we have to evaluate and monitor the teachers work. At the same time, in my formal post being a Departmental Head, I too have also had the experience of not seeking help specifically from senior management in school. (Mr Cele)

In the case of Miss Shezi, she also explained that she never received support from senior management with content-related issues. However, in her case, she did not say that assistance was not available, but because of the mentors from the external organisation the school was working with she actually did not need assistance from senior management or Subject Advisors at that time. She stated:

But maybe it has never gotten to that point where I'd feel the need to be supported by my principal or deputy because of the programme and even before the start of the programme. (Miss Shezi)

Miss Vezi also stated that while she may not get any assistance from senior managers in her school, it has not been a pressing problem for her as yet:

With regards to my work with teaching and learning, the deputy and principal do not get involved unless they are doing monitoring and evaluation. They only get involved when intervention needs to take place in the case where certain members do not do what they are expected to do. This has not been a problem for me. (Miss Vezi)

Some participants did point out that they would like for there to be a structured programme or system that allows them to have conversations about the curriculum and teaching strategies with their senior managers in collaboration with Subject Advisors. They would enjoy onsite assistance on the content and methods so that they too are always in the position to develop those that they lead. Some also raised concerns that the lack of collaboration between Subject Advisors and school senior management teams causes varying expectations between the two and results in duplication of work. Miss Bhengu explained:

It would be better if Subject Advisors would also meet with senior managers like the principal and the deputy to make them aware of the expectations of the different learning areas. I say this because you find that the deputy principal will ask for something done in a one way while the Subject Advisor expects it in another. This results in duplication of work just to cater to what management wants and what you were told by the Subject Advisor. Sometimes you find that the circuit manager also wants something else. They just need to have a meeting in order to agree on the standard of work expected and how it should be done. (Miss Bhengu)

Mr Cele raised concerns about a similar issue and said:

Another issue that we always come across as Departmental Heads is mediating between the teachers and senior management. What teachers are told in the orientation workshops is different from what is expected in schools. As the Departmental Heads, I am then caught between the two trying to accommodate both parties. I just wish that there was some way that Subject Advisors and senior management in schools could collaborate in their planning so that we don't have these issues. (Mr Cele)

These findings coincide with Mavuso and Moyo (2014), where they stated that collaboration among the different leaders is important to eliminate confusion and duplication of work in schools.

While most of the participants have had similar experiences of not receiving structured curriculum teaching and learning support from senior managers, their schools have commonalities on other structures in the school. They all mentioned that they have active Professional Learning Communities for each learning area which are specifically used by Departmental Heads and teachers to address challenges, support and develop each other. This may not be direct contact by the principal and deputy, but they enable these platforms or communities to be present and active in schools. The Departmental Heads also rely on these platforms for the continued development of their teachers and to ensure that there is uniformity in the work done in each learning area. Miss Shezi indicated that:

We have Professional Learning Communities for the different learning areas. In those Professional Learning Communities, we have teachers appointed as subject heads. So, we meet every month to discuss what is working and what's not and how can we do better. Then the committees report back to me as their Departmental Head so I can check how far they are with the programmes they presented at the beginning of the year. (Miss Shezi)

Miss Vezi confirms what Miss Shezi said and also explained that:

We have Professional Learning Communities operating in the school. Which are subject committees for each learning area? Teachers usually meet and discuss any problems experienced in the learning area and develop each other in problem areas and agree on what processes they will all follow as a learning area so that there is consistency in the way they do things. These Professional Learning Communities help a great deal as teachers work together to find common ground

on how to do things; it is better than working in isolation and possibly doing the wrong thing. (Miss Vezi)

Miss Bhengu, Mr Cele and Miss Gazu also explained how they have similar programmes running in their schools. Some participants did mention that while PLCs in their schools may be a form of internal support, it cannot be fully functional without the support from Subject Advisors. Mr Cele explained:

We have Professional Learning Communities in our school where teachers from each learning area meet and discuss all things related to their learning area. These are effective in some learning areas; unfortunately, human relation issues are what make others less effective. (Mr Cele)

Miss Bhengu added:

Our subject committees would not be functional if we did not have some idea of what needs to be done and how, which means that our internal support is still reliant on our external support, particularly from Subject Advisors. (Miss Bhengu)

Miss Gazu shared the same sentiments:

For us to have any discussions in these committees, we need the curriculum policy and the people who often unpack this policy for teachers are Subject Advisors. So, we need support from them for our internal support to be effective. (Miss Gazu)

The findings from the participants show that Subject Advisors also receive support from within the schools so that the aims of their functions do not stand still. Subject Advisors are therefore not the only source of support available to Departmental Heads and teachers where teaching and learning is concerned. There are a number of studies that have extensively discussed the importance of instructional leaders within the schools that support the overall education goals of the Department of Education (Bush, 2007).

According to Rorrer et al., (2008), a leader of instruction must provide an enabling environment for effective teaching and learning to take place. Subject Advisors are not in the position to have an influence in the working environment of schools, therefore they rely on the SMT to perform this function. This also requires that the SMT be in a position of influence where the curriculum and its implementation is concerned. Senior management of the participating schools have all created an environment where subject committees can exist and function as a way of

developing teachers. Nkambule and Amsterdam (2018) stated that Departmental Heads are the internal support for teachers with regards to the curriculum; however, they too need support. This support is often expected from senior management in schools and Subject Advisors at district level (Amsterdam et al., 2018). While some Subject Advisors may not be fully active in Professional Learning Communities such as clusters, they also influence the functioning and effectiveness of subject committees in the participating schools. Subject Advisors as curriculum leaders therefore, heavily rely on the SMT to ensure that the working environment within the school allows effective teaching and learning and effective teacher professional development learning can take place. They also rely on the SMT to make sure that there is a platform for Professional Learning Communities to exist and function effectively in schools (DuFour & Fullan, 2013). These PLCs should function as curriculum support and professional development mechanisms in cases where the Subject Advisors are unavailable when needed.

4.9 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, the data was analysed, presented and discussed which developed into five themes: conceptions of Departmental heads, lived experiences, perceived challenges, internal support for Departmental Heads, support from external stakeholders and influence of support on teaching and learning.

The next chapter offers summaries of the key findings of the study, presents conclusions and lessons learnt.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF THE STUDY AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Introduction

This study aimed to explore the leadership role of Subject Advisors, in supporting teaching and learning in primary schools. This leadership role was explored as understood and experienced by Departmental Heads in the intermediate and senior phase in three primary schools in the Umlazi district. This study was born under the assumption that at the district level, Subject Advisors have the most significant influence on how the curriculum is interpreted and implemented by the teachers in the different schools. Subject Advisors are the officials responsible for details of teaching and learning as they ought to unpack the policy and support the teaching staff in the different schools. The assumption was supported by literature and policies that are stipulated by the Department of Education on the specific roles and responsibilities of Subject Advisors. Subject Advisors should, therefore, support the Departmental Heads and teachers by improving their skills and providing them with resources to ensure that teaching and learning are effectively taking place to further enhance the academic performance of the learners (RSA, 2013). Concentrating on the relationship that exists between the Departmental Heads and the Subject Advisors could improve the performance of teachers which could lead to the enhanced academic performance of learners. This chapter consists of a summary of the research journey. Then I will present the themes that emerged, coupling them with the theoretical framework together with literature. This is followed by the lessons learnt from this research journey. Finally, I present closing observations.

The research questions of this study were as follows:

1. What do primary school Departmental Heads understand and expect to be the leadership role of Subject Advisors in supporting teaching and learning?
2. How do primary school Departmental Heads experience the leadership role and practices of Subject Advisors in providing support for teaching and learning?
3. What lessons can be learnt from the experiences of primary school Departmental Heads on the role of Subject Advisors in providing support for teaching and learning?

5.2 The research journey

Chapter One presented the orientation of the study. This included the introduction to the study together with the background, the problem statement, the purpose and rationale of the study, key concepts as well as the key objectives of the study. This was done to identify any gaps in the existing body of knowledge. What was established from the background was that there have been several policy changes in education since the political dispensation in South Africa in 1994. These educational policy changes subsequently led to confusion in the schools and lack of skills from teachers to adequately deliver the curriculum as intended by the new policies (Mavuso & Moyo, 2014). Due to the constant changes, the South African education system saw resistance to change due to the lack of support and proper training to welcome the changes. While this may have been an issue left to the individual school leaders to deal with, it emerged that within the district level of leadership in education there are officials specifically responsible for the support of teachers where teaching and learning are concerned and these are Subject Advisors. This, therefore, led to the focus on the leadership practices of Subject Advisors as having a significant influence on teaching and learning in schools through the support they offer to Departmental Heads and teachers. Several studies on educational leadership have revealed the importance of district leadership specifically offered by Subject Advisors in improving teacher and learner performance (Bantwini & Diko, 2010; Marzano & Waters, 2009; Protheroe 2008). These studies show that while school leaders play an important role in the functioning of the school, but a school that is supported by an effective team of Subject Advisors often shows characteristics of whole-school improvement, specifically enhanced teaching practices and learner academic performance. This then led to the exploration of the leadership role of Subject Advisors in supporting teaching and learning in primary schools, viewing from the lens of Departmental Heads as teachers responsible for the curriculum support and delivery in schools.

Chapter Two presented a review of pertinent issues of educational district leadership. I started the literature review with a conceptualisation of important concepts such as educational leadership, district leadership and leadership for teaching and learning. The literature review offered insight into leadership that supports and enhances teaching and learning, particularly from Subject Advisors in the district-level. I presented international and local empirical studies on pertinent issues on Subject Advisors and school leadership practices for quality teaching and learning. Literature shows that locally and internationally teaching and learning at the

district-level and in schools is now an area of focus. The goal is to lead successful districts which support successful schools (Marzano & Waters, 2009). Several important issues around the leadership of Subject Advisors and support for teaching and learning emerged from the literature. Honig (2013) highlighted the importance of professional development not just for teachers as policy implementers but for district officials such as Subject Advisors so that they too can adequately support schools. Donkor and Asante (2016) further emphasised the importance of teacher professional development stating that the quality of teaching and learning in a school is as good as the quality of the teachers. What also emerged in the literature was the importance of collaborative planning and learning between Subject Advisors and schools. Collaborative planning was highlighted as imperative as it eliminates the duplication of work, where different officials want one task done in different ways. Collaborative learning emphasised the importance of professional learning communities in teacher development (Mavuso & Moyo, 2014; Seobi & Wood, 2016; Nkambule & Amsterdam, 2018; Van der Berg, 2008).

In the literature review, I also highlighted the roles of Subject Advisors as instructional leaders as well as their role in the professional development of teachers and professional learning communities. Other roles that emerged as important are; providing the teaching staff with the necessary teaching and learning materials, establishing continuous and effective communication, supporting and monitoring the teacher's performance and promoting and facilitating professional learning communities as a way of collaborative development. Finally, the chapter concluded with a presentation of the theory of districts as institutional actors in systemic reforms by Rorrer et al., (2008) as the theoretical framework that informed this study.

Chapter Three, I then moved on to discussing the research design and methodology of the study. The study was informed by the interpretive paradigm, which allowed me to understand the experiences and knowledge of Departmental Heads on the issue of support for teaching and learning from Subject Advisors. I conducted a case study which enabled me to further enhance my understanding of the phenomenon. Face to face semi-structured interviews was the primary method of generating data from the participants. This was the data that was then analysed, and the themes developed were discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter Four focused on a presentation of the findings. These findings are presented in themes. The summary of findings is discussed below:

The findings highlight some pertinent issues around support for effective teaching and learning offered by Subject Advisors in primary schools. One of the first findings that emerged was that Departmental Heads have a clear understanding of the expected role of Subject Advisors. Their expectations resonate with the roles and responsibilities of Subject Advisors as stipulated by the policy. Departmental Heads know the kind of support they need, and they are explicit on how they expect to receive this support and how often.

Another finding that arose was that while Departmental Heads were clear on their expectations, the performance of the Subject Advisors was not meeting expectations and not matching the requirements of the policy that stipulates their functions as Subject Advisors. The participants revealed that Subject Advisors do perform some of the functions that they expect, but they do not always provide the support to cater for their diverse needs and don't award the support enough time. This has resulted in dissatisfaction of those that need the support.

While the expectation of support was not matching the practice, it did emerge that there are other stakeholders who are, in fact, performing some of the functions of Subject Advisors, which led to a general agreement among the participants that the Department of Education should consider establishing more concrete partnerships with these stakeholders. This could be done to eliminate the issues of non-availability, visibility and the lack of consistency in the practices of Subject Advisors in these primary schools and many others.

District leadership that focuses on supporting teaching and learning does, in fact, have an influence of the learners' performance. What is also important is that as Subject Advisors offer support by linking policy with goals and practices, they need to consider the different contextual factors in the different schools which also influence the level of the learners' performance. Policy coherence was highlighted by Rorrer et al., (2008) as imperative, emphasising the importance of aligning resources to meet policy goals. This means Subject Advisors should not only support schools, but they should also advocate for equity so that all learners are in a position to equally receive quality education and perform well.

As Departmental Heads shared their experiences, they mentioned a few challenges they thought hinder the process of support from Subject Advisors in their schools. What emerged as the major challenges that Subject Advisors experience was: the lack of adequate human capital in the district office which leads to the current Subject Advisors not having enough time to

effectively cater for all schools as they should; the lack of collaboration from the national office down to the schools which leads to time wastage, duplication of work and confusion for the implementers of the curriculum and finally the lack of effective communication which slows down the process of support in the different schools due to abandoned support initiatives planned by the Subject Advisors for the schools.

Finally, findings show that Subject Advisors are not the only officials in the position to provide support to Departmental Heads; however, they also rely on the support that can also be received and is expected from senior managers in the schools. While this was the general consensus, it also appeared that they too need support and guidance. Furthermore, the participants suggested that senior management also needs to collaborate with Subject Advisors and other district officials such as circuit managers in their planning of the curriculum delivery in order to eliminate duplication of work and confusion among the Departmental Heads and teachers. Although some participants showed dissatisfaction in the support they receive from senior management they did, however, reveal that there are functional PLCs used for collaborative learning for teachers.

The experiences of Departmental Heads, did not match their expectations. Although this was the case, data also showed that there are other initiatives in place to bridge the gap between expectation and experiences. Further to this, there were suggestions made on how the relationship that exists between Subject Advisors and Departmental Heads can be enhanced to yield better results.

5.3 Discussion of findings and key learnings

This chapter presents the learnings that occurred during this research journey together with the main findings of this research study in the following manner: Departmental Heads expectations and policy, lived experiences and perceived challenges of Departmental Heads, external support for teaching and learning and finally, support for enhanced academic performance.

5.3.1 Departmental heads expectations and policy

The first research question pursued to understand the existing knowledge that Departmental Heads have of the roles and responsibilities of Subject Advisors where support for teaching and learning was concerned. The findings show that Departmental Heads do have an understanding of what activities or tasks Subject Advisors should be doing when offering support in order to ensure that they deliver the curriculum in a manner that will result in effective teaching and learning. These were clearly stated in the findings. While Departmental

Heads may have been clear on what they know, it still had to be compared to what the policy states on the roles and responsibilities of Subject Advisors specifically when offering support. The Departmental Heads expectations did, to some extent, meet the requirements as stipulated by the *Guideline on the Organisation, Roles and Responsibilities of Education Districts (2013)*.

The policy states that Subject Advisors must monitor and the implementation of the curriculum and provide the relevant teaching and learning materials to enhance the delivery of the curriculum (RSA, 2013). The issue of monitoring and support became prevalent in the findings of the study, as participants repeatedly mentioned that they require support. Bantwini and Diko (2011) also found that the main responsibility of the Subject Advisor is to support and monitor curriculum delivery for academic success. Bantwini and Moorosi (2018) further emphasise the significant role of Subject Advisors in ensuring that quality teaching and learning takes place in schools.

Providing materials for curriculum delivery, monitoring the curriculum and developing the teachers in content knowledge for each subject was also a prominent expectation that the participants had. This expectation was in line with what the policy stipulates as some of the roles and responsibilities of Subject Advisors. The participants stated that they require workshops and cluster groups to develop them in content knowledge and teaching strategies. As this is an important aspect specifically for Departmental Heads in primary schools. Van der Merwe and Schenck (2016) in their study spoke of factors that contribute to the success of an instructional programme in a school. One of the key factors was collaborative support for teaching and learning. This is the collaborative support that was mentioned by the participants of the study. Some scholars have highlighted investment in teacher development as one of the major contributors to teaching and learning that improves learner performance (Lunenburg, 2010; Rorrer et al., 2008; Seobi & Wood, 2016; Spaul, 2013; Wood & Olivier, 2008).

I then refer back to Responsibility Charting by Smith and Erwin (2007) discussed in chapter one. Which suggests that any role in the organisation will have the following assumptions: role conception, role expectation and role behaviour. The findings of the study cannot reveal what Subject Advisors think their role is in supporting teaching and learning in primary schools as this was not the question under inquiry. However, findings do show role expectations, as Departmental Heads have clearly been able to describe their expectations. These expectations can then be discussed concerning the role behaviour. This is what formed the basis of the critical questions of this study. According to Bantwini (2010), the assumptions that Subject

Advisors have on what teachers know and need influences the kind of support they decide to offer to schools. This means that the kind of support that teachers require may not always match what Subject Advisors offer, particularly in primary school, as in this context teachers need to be well acquainted with all learning areas. The findings of the study do not show a severe mismatch in the role expectation and role behaviour, however, what was evident was that while the support is available, it is not reaching the level at which it is required. Departmental Heads acknowledge the current support, but they still require more that specifically caters for their needs as individuals and as primary schools.

5.3.2 Lived experiences and perceived challenges of Departmental Heads

Looking at how the role was perceived by Departmental Heads, I then needed to know whether the practices of Subject Advisors from the Departmental Heads' perspectives were in fact in line with their expectations and the content of the policy that governs a Subject Advisor's role. The participants had a list of expectations from Subject Advisors and the findings show that Subject Advisors are, to a certain extent performing these duties. The participants spoke of Subject Advisors monitoring the implementation of the curriculum; providing material required for teaching and learning; facilitating platforms for professional development such as clusters and effective and continuous support and development through workshops and school visits. As previously stated, all these functions and more are also stipulated in the policy. What emerged as the major finding is that while Subject Advisors engage in all these activities with the Departmental Heads of the different schools, it was simply not enough and not specialised to cater to individual needs. This, therefore, leads to unfulfilled expectations.

While Departmental Heads expressed their dissatisfaction, what was interesting to hear was that they had ideas on the challenges that Subject Advisors experience that hinder them to perform at the level expected. The findings show that Departmental Heads agree on three major challenges that Subject Advisors face in their role of supporting teaching and learning. The first is lack of time available to sustain a positive working relationship with the teachers. Nkambule and Amsterdam (2018) believe that this issue emanates from the lack of human capital of Subject Advisors at the district office. The second is the lack of collaboration between all parties involved in ensuring that quality teaching and learning is supported. Collaboration is key to establishing common goals and practices which lead to a positive output with fewer bottlenecks along the way (Bantwini & Moorosi, 2018; Mavuso & Moyo, 2014). Collaboration between schools and the district was also suggested in a study conducted by Mthembu (2018). Lastly, it is the inconsistencies in the practices of Subject Advisors that result in unfulfilled

expectations. This challenge also originates from the lack of collaboration and synergy that was identified among national and district offices together with the schools (Mavuso & Moyo, 2014; Bantwini & Moorosi, 2018; Nkambule & Amsterdam, 2018). These are some of the main challenges that Departmental Heads were able to relate to why Subject Advisors are unable to perform at the expected level.

5.3.3 External support for teaching and learning for Departmental Heads

This study also sought to discover the kind of support, if any, that Subject Advisors offer to Departmental Heads; support aimed at enhancing teaching and learning in primary schools. In the quest to discover this, the second prominent finding of the study was that while Subject Advisors may not be as visible as required in primary schools there is another source of support for teaching and learning that is currently available in the participating primary schools. This kind of support is provided by external stakeholders, which are well-established organisations and non-profit organisations. Some participants described these organisations as “*doing the work of the Subject Advisor*”. This was a very interesting finding as the quality of education in the country has been a big concern over recent years (Bantwini & Moorosi, 2018). It was found that when these external stakeholders offer support, they come directly to the schools to physically work with the management teams and the teachers and there is minimal evidence of Subject Advisor involvement in these kinds of partnerships. This was highlighted by Honig (2013) when he stated that investors often focus on the schools and rarely on the district when they offer support such as capacity building and for school improvement. This shows that even though Subject Advisors are not always available, the participating schools are still supported. What was further highlighted by the participants was while external stakeholders may use CAPS as the basis of their curriculum support for teaching and learning, there is still a lack of visible collaboration between the leadership levels involved specifically Subject Advisors. Protheroe (2008) emphasised networking and collaboration among different district officials, particularly Subject Advisors in order to discover best practices to use to improve or enhance teacher and learner performance. This is the synergy that was suggested by Mavuso and Moyo (2014). This is the same kind of collaboration that is suggested to take place between the external stakeholders, Subject Advisors, Departmental Heads and teachers, as they have an influence on the quality of teaching and learning in primary schools.

5.3.4 Support for enhanced academic performance

Support for education can come in different forms and sizes; however, support for enhanced academic performance links directly to the form of leadership and the process of teaching and

learning in the classrooms. Rorrer et al., (2008) identifies maintaining an equity focus as one of the main aspects of districts-level leadership in influencing the level of performance of learners. It needs to be considered that there are past inequities that exist in education to be able to support quality teaching and learning in schools. This was the third main finding of the study. The support for teaching and learning provided by Subject Advisors must be able to positively contribute to the learners' academic performance. The participants did state that they realise that it is not just support that will improve teaching and learning, but they too need to commit to being life-long learners to keep up with the changing environment which is continuously introducing new policies. This was also emphasised by Bantwini and Diko (2011), as they stated that teachers need to understand that they need development for change to be visible in the classrooms and the school as a whole.

What was also evident in the findings was that monitoring and evaluation that is done by Subject Advisors is not what enhances the quality of teaching and learning, but it is the teaching strategies, content knowledge, professional development and positive working relationship that exists between Subject Advisors, Departmental Heads and teachers. Mavuso and Moyo (2014) further add that collaboration between Subject Advisors and the SMT is important so that the goals of the school are in line with those of the district to eliminate confusion in the schools. Therefore, positive relationships must be established to offer the kind of support that is required for enhanced learner performance. Leadership for improved learner academic performance is an ongoing process that involves both the district-level leadership and school leadership. It requires that school leaders place teaching and learning at the forefront of all activities in the school and Subject Advisors, Departmental Heads and teachers, commit to leading instruction (Roberts, 2001; Seobi & Wood, 2016; Van der Merwe & Schenck, 2016).

Lastly, when speaking of support for teaching and learning, the general assumption is that support must be given within the schools as they have a more direct impact on the process of teaching and learning. However, Honig (2013) highlighted that while so much pressure is placed on Subject Advisors to support school leaders and teachers in teaching and learning, there is little evidence of them receiving support. There is limited literature on the support received by Subject Advisors that capacitates them to offer support effectively to schools in South Africa. For Subject Advisors to be able to provide the kind of support required in each different school, they need to be able to build their capacity to support teaching and learning. According to findings of a study done by Honig and Coburn (2012) capacity building requires

a change in role focus from mere implementers of policies to facilitators of educational reform and the establishment for a culture of networking with other districts that are performing better.

5.4 Key learnings and concluding remarks

Teaching and learning that enhances learner performance requires strategic collaboration between all individuals in the position to influence performance. The findings of this study made it clear that while teachers, Departmental Heads, school leaders, Subject Advisors and district-level leadership as a whole may have one goal of improving learner performance, their strategies on how to reach this goal are not aligned. Collaboration and strategic partnerships are therefore key in enhancing the performance of districts, schools and learners. The experiences and perspectives of Departmental Heads on the leadership role of Subject Advisors in supporting teaching and learning may contribute to guiding them on how best to support the schools to enhance teaching and learning for improved learner performance. The findings of the study may add to the limited body of literature that exists on Subject Advisor's leadership and teaching and learning in primary schools. Lastly, the findings may suggest ways to improve the performance of Subject Advisors so that the quality of teaching and learning is enhanced and to collaboratively develop one another and support schools according to their individual needs.

These findings propose that for Subject Advisors to be successful in supporting teaching and learning, they need to establish collaborative partnerships between them; teachers, and Departmental Heads. Collaboration is essential when working towards a common goal. Furthermore, strategic partnerships between the external stakeholders that are already supporting teaching and learning in the primary schools that participated were also suggested by the participants. This is an opportunity that would relieve not only the duties of Subject Advisors, but open new avenues for the professional development of all teachers to continuously enhance the quality of teaching and learning in South African schools. It is important to note that this study was only from the perspective of Departmental Heads. It would be interesting to examine the role conception of Subject Advisors, particularly on supporting teaching and learning for enhanced learner performance. These findings as explained in chapter three, are unique to only the schools studied and therefore, cannot be assumed to be similar in other settings. However, the findings do suggest that more can still be done to support teaching and learning in primary schools and teachers are willing to be developed so that quality teaching and learning can take place and learner outcomes can be improved.

5.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented a summary of the research journey. Key findings that emerged and conclusions of the study were discussed. Furthermore, it included concluding remarks and lastly, recommendations for further research on the subject matter were offered.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A – Interview Schedule

Research Questions

1. What do primary school Departmental Heads understand and expect to be the leadership role of Subject Advisors in supporting teaching and learning?
2. How do primary school Departmental Heads experience the leadership role and practices of Subject Advisors in providing support for teaching and learning?
3. What lessons can be learnt from the experiences of primary school Departmental Heads on the role of Subject Advisors in providing support for teaching and learning?

Interview Questions

1. As a Departmental Head, what do you understand (or think) to be the roles or functions of Subject Advisors in supporting teaching and learning? Please elaborate.
2. What practices do they do to support teaching and learning in your school?
3. Do you think what you understand their role to be is what they do in practice? Please elaborate on your experience.
4. How would you describe your working relationship with the Subject Advisors?
5. Is there any difference in your experience with the Subject Advisors of the different learning areas? Please elaborate.
6. What process do you follow when asking for assistance from Subject Advisors?
7. What challenges, if any, have you experienced when seeking assistance from Subject Advisors?
8. Have you previously discussed any of these challenges with the relevant Subject Advisors? If so, did you experience any changes in your attempt to overcome these challenges? Please elaborate
9. In your opinion, what are some of the challenges, if any, do you think Subject Advisors encounter as they try to support teaching and learning in your school?
10. Do you think the role played by Subject Advisors in your school has any influence on the learners' performance? Please explain.
11. Are there any programmes, specific to developing teachers that Subject Advisors have in place for your school? If so, please describe.
12. How do you as a Departmental Head offer instructional support to your teachers?
13. What challenges, if any, have you experienced while supporting teachers?

14. Do you have any programmes in place that you use to monitor the effect of the support you offer?
15. How do you think you can be further assisted to be able to better develop your teachers?
16. Is there anything else that I have not asked that you think might be important to discuss regarding the support you receive from Subject Advisors?
17. What recommendations can you offer, that would assist subject advisors in supporting you and your school based on your specific needs?

APPENDIX B – Letter requesting permission from the principals

Z1800 Itshitshi Avenue
Umlazi
4066
31 January 2019

The Principal

Umlazi District

Dear Sir/Madam

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

My name is Xoliswa Hetty Mdabe a Masters student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (Edgewood Campus), in the School of Education. As part of my degree fulfilment, I am required to conduct research. I therefore kindly seek permission to conduct this research at your school. The title of my study is: **The Role of Subject Advisors in Supporting Teaching and Learning: Experiences of Primary Schools' Departmental Heads.**

This study aims to investigate the kind of support received by heads of department (HoDs) at primary school level from subject advisors in the Umlazi district, and how this support, if any, impacts on the quality of teaching and learning in the classrooms. The planned study will focus on primary school educators. The study will use semi-structured interviews with educators in the intermediate and senior phase. Participants will be interviewed for approximately 30-45 minutes at the times convenient to them which will not disturb teaching and learning. Each interview will be voice-recorded.

PLEASE TAKE NOTE THAT:

- There will be no financial benefits that participants may accrue as a result of their participation in this research project.
- Your identity will not be divulged under any circumstance/s, during and after the reporting process.
- All the responses, observations and review documents will be treated with strict confidentiality.

- Pseudonyms will be used to represent the school and names of the participants.
- Participation will always remain voluntary which means that participants may withdraw from the study for any reason, anytime if they so wish without incurring any penalties.
- Participants have been purposively selected to participate in this study and they will be contacted well in advance for interviews.
- The interviews shall be voice-recorded to assist me in concentrating on the actual interviews.

You may contact my supervisors, the Research Office or me should you have any queries or questions:

Supervisor:

Dr P Mthembu

Tel: 0845817544

E-mail: Mthembup@ukzn.ac.za

UKZN Research Office

Mariette Snyman

HSSREC-Ethics

Tel: 0312608350

E-mail: snymanm@ukzn.ac.za

My contact number:

Tel: 031 9081213 (work)

Cell: 0733257808

E-mail: xhmdabe@gmail.com

Your positive response in this regard will be highly appreciated.

Thanking you in advance

Yours sincerely

Xoliswa Hetty Mdabe

Consent form

I _____ of _____, hereby confirm that I have been informed about the nature, purpose and procedures for the study: **The Role of Subject Advisors in Supporting Teaching and Learning: Experiences of Primary Schools' Departmental Heads**. I have received, read and understood the written information about the study. I understand everything that has been explained to me and I consent voluntarily for the school to be part of the study. I understand that the school is at liberty to withdraw from the research at any time should the school so desire.

I agree/ do not agree with the use of an audio recording device.

Signature of Principal

Date

.....

.....

School stamp

Thanking you in advance

Xoliswa Hetty Mdabe

APPENDIX C – Letter requesting Departmental Heads to form part of the sample

Z 1800 Itshitshi Avenue

Umlazi

4066

31 January 2019

The Head of Department (Intermediate Phase)

Isidingo Primary School

Private Bag 54015

Umlazi

4031

Dear Sir/Madam

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH

My name is Xoliswa Hetty Mdabe, an honours student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (Edgewood Campus), in the School of Education. As part of my degree fulfilment, I am required to conduct research. I therefore kindly seek permission to research two primary schools under your jurisdiction in Umlazi District. The title of my study is **The Role of Subject Advisors in Supporting Teaching and Learning: Experiences of Primary Schools' Departmental Heads.**

This study aims to investigate the kind of support received by educators at primary school level from subject advisors in the Umlazi district and how this support, if any, impacts on the quality of teaching and learning in the classrooms. The planned study will focus on primary school educators. The study will use semi-structured interviews with educators in the intermediate and senior phase. Participants will be interviewed for approximately 30-45 minutes at the times convenient to them which will not disturb teaching and learning. Each interview will be voice-recorded.

Supervisors:

Dr P Mthembu

Tel. 031-2603534 (office)

Cell: 0845817544

E-mail: Mthembup@ukzn.ac.za

UKZN Research Office

Mariette Snyman

HSSREC-Ethics

Tel: 0312608350

E-mail: snymanm@ukzn.ac.za

My contact number:

Cell: 0733257808

E-mail: xhmdabe@gmail.com

Thanking you in anticipation.

Yours faithfully

Xoliswa Hetty Mdabe

Consent Form

I _____ hereby confirm that I have been informed about the nature, purpose and procedures for the study: **The Role of Subject Advisors in Supporting Teaching and Learning: Experiences of Primary Schools' Departmental Heads**. I have received, read and understood the written information about the study. I understand everything that has been explained to me and I consent voluntarily to take part in the study. I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the research at any time should I so desire.

I **agree/ do not agree** with the use of an audio recording device.

Signature of Departmental Head

Date

.....

.....

APPENDIX D – Letter from KZN Department of Education



education

Department:
Education
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

Enquiries: Phindile Duma

Tel: 033 392 1063

Ref.:2/4/8/1843

Mrs XH Mdabe
Z1800 Itshitshi Avenue
Umlazi
4031

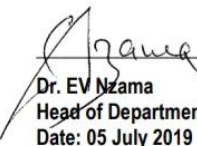
Dear Mrs Mdabe

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DoE INSTITUTIONS

Your application to conduct research entitled: **“EXPLORING THE LEADERSHIP ROLE OF SUBJECT ADVISORS IN SUPPORTING TEACHING AND LEARNING IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS: PERSPECTIVES OF DEPARTMENTAL HEADS”**, 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 04 July 2019 to 10 January 2022.
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.

Umlazi District


Dr. EV Nzama
Head of Department: Education
Date: 05 July 2019

KWAZULU-NATAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Postal Address: Private Bag X9137 • Pietermaritzburg • 3200 • Republic of South Africa

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Facebook: KZNDOE... Twitter: @DBE_KZN... Instagram: kzn_education... Youtube: kzndoe

...Championing Quality Education - Creating and Securing a Brighter Future

APPENDIX E – Ethical Clearance Certificate



UNIVERSITY OF
KWAZULU-NATAL
INYUVESI
YAKWAZULU-NATALI

05 June 2019

Mrs Xoliswa H Mdabe 208501695
School of Education
Edgewood Campus

Dear Mrs Mdabe

Protocol reference number: HSS/0157/019M
Project Title: Exploring the leadership role of Subject Advisors in supporting teaching and learning in primary schools: Perspectives of departmental heads.


In response to your application received 28 February 2019, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol has been granted **Full Approval – Expedited Application**
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 Shamila Naidoo (Deputy Chair)

/px

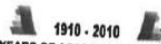
cc Supervisor: Dr Pinky Mthembu
cc. Academic Leader Research: Dr A Pillay
cc. School Administrators: Ms S Jeenarain, Ms M Ngcobo, Ms N Dlamini and Mr SN Mthembu

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee
Dr Rosemary Sibanda (Chair)

Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building

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APPENDIX F: Language Clearance Certificate

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Dr Saths Govender

5 DECEMBER 2019

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

LANGUAGE CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

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

Exploring the leadership role of Subject Advisors in supporting teaching and learning in primary schools: Perspectives of departmental heads, by Xoliswa Hetty Mdabe, student no. 208501695.

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

DR S. GOVENDER

B Ed. (Arts), B.A. (Hons), B Ed.
Cambridge Certificate for English Medium Teachers
MPA, D Admin.

APPENDIX G – Turnitin Report

Xoliswa			
ORIGINALITY REPORT			
6%	4%	3%	%
SIMILARITY INDEX	INTERNET SOURCES	PUBLICATIONS	STUDENT PAPERS
PRIMARY SOURCES			
1	M.P. Mavuso. "Scratching the Outside? Perspectives of Subject Advisors on their Practices in Supporting Teaching and Learning in South African Schools", International Journal of Educational Sciences, 2017 Publication	1 %	
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5	"International Handbook of Leadership for Learning", Springer Science and Business Media LLC, 2011 Publication	<1 %	
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11	Teresa A. Ogina. "How Heads of Departments Understand Their Roles as Instructional Leaders: A South African Study". International		