

**THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL LIBRARY COMMITTEE IN  
GOVERNANCE: CASE STUDIES OF THREE PUBLIC  
SCHOOLS IN KWAZULU-NATAL**

**By**

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### ***ABSTRACT***

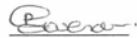
The powers and functions allocated to governing bodies by the South African Schools Act of 1996 represent a significant decentralisation of power to the school level. School governing bodies have the authority and responsibility for making decisions about various policies and procedures. One responsibility is to create sub-committees, such as a library committee, to perform particular functions of the school governing body. There is little research relating to such committee functions in school governance in South Africa. Thus, this study explores the role of the library committee in governance at three schools in the eThekweni region of KwaZulu-Natal. The purpose of this study is to:

1. Understand the role of the library committee in school governance;
2. Determine how the school library committee performs its governance function of managing and developing learning and teaching resources, and
3. Understand how the school library committee's performance is contingent on the local social context.

Using decentralisation as the theoretical framework, the library committee's contribution to school governance is examined. Case studies of the three schools employed semi-structured interviews of principals and teacher-librarians. The case studies reveal that there are similarities in how library committees understand their roles and responsibilities in terms of the school development function of the governing body. The roles concern the provision of advice to the teacher-librarian, monitoring and evaluating library resources and services, and networking and advocacy to promote reading and library use. The committees perform seven basic responsibilities of policy making, planning, management, budgeting, acquisition and selection, reading promotion and co-ordination. The findings relating to gaps and problems among the library committees concern the insubstantial involvement of the governing body representative; a poor working relationship between the school library committee and the governing body; a weak understanding about what governance means in how the library committees function; and the committees work in isolation of the governing body.

**DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY**

I declare that this dissertation is my own work and all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.



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## ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE



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MRS. R GOVENDER (203512577)  
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Dear Mrs. Govender

**ETHICAL CLEARANCE APPROVAL NUMBER: HSS/06171A**

I wish to confirm that ethical clearance has been granted for the following project:

**"The role of the school library committee in governance: Case studies of three public schools in KwaZulu-Natal"**

Yours faithfully

  
.....  
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cc. Faculty Research Office (Derek Buchler)  
cc. Supervisor (Dr. J Karlsson)

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## ***TABLE OF CONTENTS***

	Page
Abstract	i
Declaration of Originality	ii
Ethical Clearance Certificate	iii
Acknowledgments	iv
Table of contents	v

### ***CHAPTER 1***

#### ***RATIONALE AND INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY***

1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Purpose of the study	3
1.3 Significance of the study	4
1.4 Scope of the study	4
1.5 Conclusion	4

### ***CHAPTER 2***

#### ***FRAMING CONCEPTS, THEORIES AND LITERATURE***

2.1 Introduction	6
2.2 Conceptual framework	6
2.3 Theoretical framework	8
2.4 Review of policies and literature on school library committees	11
2.4.1 Review of international literature	11
2.4.2 Review of South African literature	14
2.5 Conclusion	19

### ***CHAPTER 3***

#### ***RESEARCH METHODOLOGY***

3.1 Introduction	21
3.2 Methodology	21
3.3 Selection criteria for school sites and participants	25
3.4 Data generation method: Semi-structured interviews	29
3.5 Data generation method: Document analysis and observation	29
3.6 Ethical Considerations	33
3.7 Data analysis method	35
3.8 Measures to ensure trustworthiness	35
3.9 Conclusion	37

### ***CHAPTER 4***

#### ***DISCUSSION OF THE THEMATIC FINDINGS ABOUT THE SCHOOL LIBRARY COMMITTEE AND GOVERNANCE***

4.1 Introduction	38
4.2 Conception of school governance	38
4.3 Roles	40
4.3.1 The advisory role	40
4.3.2 The monitoring and evaluation role	41
4.3.3 The networking and advocacy role	43
4.4 Responsibilities	45
4.4.1 Policy making	47
4.4.2 Planning	48
4.4.3 Management	50
4.4.4 Budgeting	51
4.4.5 Acquisition and selection	53
4.4.6 Reading Promotion	54
4.4.7 Co-ordination	56
4.5 Performance	57
4.5.1 The physical challenge	57

4.5.2 Security	58
4.5.3 Personnel	58
4.6 Local social context	60
4.7 Conclusion	61

## ***CHAPTER 5***

### ***CONCLUSION***

5.1 Introduction	61
5.2 Key conclusions	62
5.2.1 The nature of the school library committee's governance functions	63
5.2.2 The relationship between the SGB and its library committee	63
6. In closing	64

<b>REFERENCES</b>	66
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### **APPENDICES**

1. KWAZULU-NATAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION'S APPROVAL TO CONDUCT RESEARCH	71
2. LETTER OF REQUEST FOR PERMISSION FROM PRINCIPALS TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT SCHOOLS	72
3. CONSENT LETTER AND DECLARATION FOR PRINCIPALS	74
4. CONSENT LETTER AND DECLARATION FOR TEACHER-LIBRARIANS	76
5. SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR PRINCIPALS	78
6. SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR TEACHER- LIBRARIANS	79



# ***CHAPTER ONE***

## ***RATIONALE AND INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY***

### ***1.1 Introduction***

South Africa's education system has changed considerably since 1994. A new democratic governance system and outcomes-based education (OBE) curriculum were introduced into our schools in 1997. These two changes affect how schools relate to school libraries. In the apartheid era most schools did not have libraries. Teaching and learning according to the OBE curriculum was a difficult task in these schools because few teaching and learning support materials were available (Department of Education, 1996a). Developing school libraries has been a key intervention to address this need (Department of Education, 1996b; KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education, 2003). Part of that strategy hinged on the school governing body forming a library committee. The South African Schools Act (Republic of South Africa, 1996) creates a new approach to govern schools. The school's governing body is the government structure established by the South African Schools Act as a new approach to govern schools. This new approach entails devolution of power from provincial level to school level so that the principal no longer holds all the responsibility for governing a school. The governance role is shared by the school governing body and the school management team acts as the implementers. My study explores the formation of the library committee in relation to the governance of a school and the role it plays in assisting the school to develop, manage and use its teaching and learning resources.

I first became aware of this link between the school governing body and library committee as a field of enquiry in September 2002 when several school principals approached Ikhwezi Community College of Education (ICCE), to discuss their concerns about their dysfunctional school libraries. The college equips school-based educators of the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education through in-service training. As a result School Library Training became a newly established unit of Ikhwezi Community College of Education (ICCE) and I was appointed to co-ordinate it.

During my visits to schools I found that, where they existed, many libraries needed resuscitation and more appropriate space in order to play an important role in the school's teaching and learning programme. For example, the library may have been poorly situated in a space designed as a classroom. Also, there were few or no trained library personnel. Sometimes this led to books being stored in boxes at the back of classrooms. In these schools intervention was needed so that their dysfunctional libraries could become functional again and the formation of school library committees was envisaged to kick-start the development of the library in those schools. This recommendation is consistent with the *South African Schools Act, No. 84 of 1996*, which was passed to transform school governance, and the organisation and funding of schools (Republic of South Africa, 1996, p. 27). According to Sub-section 30 (c), the school's governing body may establish sub-committees as it sees fit. Section 20 (1)(a) talks about promoting and developing quality education and Section 21 (c) stipulates that, where allowed, the school governing body should purchase textbooks and educational materials. The three provisions in Section 20 (1)(a), 21 and Sub-Section 30 of the Act are relevant to the library committee. Therefore such sub-committees may be established and, in some schools, carry the responsibility of developing, managing and maintaining textbooks and educational materials. Thus, a library committee would be an appropriate sub-committee for a governing body to establish.

South African school libraries are managed on the basis of either a formal committee, such as a library committee, or informally through other committees, such as the literacy committee. In the case of teaching and learning support materials, a library committee is an appropriate vehicle for the devolution of power, accountability and responsibility from the governing body to manage the school library. However, the role of a school library committee is problematic because most South African schools lack relevant teaching and learning resources and trained personnel (Hart, 2004a, p. 14). In addition, such committees operate only in a few schools (Hart, 2004a, p. 15). Nevertheless, the library committee has the potential to be a vital component of the school by contributing positively to the governance and teaching and learning programme of the school.

Thus, the school library committee is a vehicle that is under-utilised for school improvement and a field enquiry that is under-researched.

Consequently, my study addresses and examines issues about the functioning of the school library committee within the framework of school governance. The school library committee may be an important addition to the governance and development of schools. During my reading and investigative research activities, I have established that there is a paucity of research about the library committee's role in school governance. Therefore this also points to the school library committee as a worthwhile topic to investigate.

I sought to do this study by examining how the school library committee is involved in school governance. My study seeks to describe the library committee's role and its link to governance and related functions.

### ***1.2 Purpose of the Study***

The purpose of this study is to investigate how existing school library committees perform their role in the governance of schools. In order to understand the manner in which the school library functions as a sub-committee of the school governing body, I pose the following research questions:

1. What is the role of the school library committee in the governance of a school?
2. How is the school library committee performing the governance function of managing and developing learning and teaching resources?
3. How is the school library committee's performance contingent on the local social context?

The selected research sites are three public schools in the Ethekwini Region. The schools are indicated by pseudonyms, namely Jodywood and Faithwood Primary Schools, in the

Mariannhill area, and Wendywood Primary School, in the Shallcross area of the Pinetown District.

### ***1.3 Significance of this Study***

Central to this study is the role played by the library committee in the governance of the school and the mapping of the committee's role in the management and development of teaching and learning resources and school libraries within under-resourced schools. The findings that emerge from my research will contribute to understanding the importance a library committee can play in school governance. The library committee's experiences may be incorporated in future library training materials, which can be beneficial to other people aspiring to be involved in a library committee. By adding to the existing body of research concerning school libraries in South Africa, my study will provide information for future educators in schools and researchers that have an interest in forming a library committee. Finally, principals and teacher-librarians may utilise my research to train and develop themselves and other educators about governance procedures and the library committee's role in it. School Governing Bodies (SGBs) may also better understand their relationship with such a sub-committee.

### ***1.4 Scope of the study***

This study is confined to and focused on three primary schools in KwaZulu-Natal. No attempt is made to generalise the governance procedures at these selected primary schools with schools in the rest of South Africa. However, the findings may be relevant to some schools to enable them to cope and understand the role function of the school library committee.

## ***1.5 Conclusion***

In this chapter I presented the problem and rationale for my study. I indicated that my aim is to understand three areas relating to the work of the school library committee namely:

- The committee's role in school governance
- How it manages and develops learning and teaching resources and
- How it interacts with the local social context

In the next chapter I explain the key concepts that are of relevance to my study, followed by discussion of the theoretical framework, and an overview of international and South African literature. This provides a better understanding about the role of the library committee in school governance and how it has been researched and understood in the past. I close this chapter by summarising the implications and identifying problems and omissions in researching the role of the library committee and problems that I found in the literature.

In chapter three I present an account of my methodological choices and the procedures guiding my research design. In chapter four the findings are discussed. Chapter five entails my conclusions about how the library committee contributes to school governance. My study is undertaken knowing that there is little research relating to the library committee's role function in school governance in South Africa. I now turn to the conceptual and theoretical framework and review the literature of earlier research.

## ***CHAPTER TWO***

### ***FRAMING CONCEPTS, THEORIES AND LITERATURE***

#### ***2.1 Introduction***

This chapter has three aims: firstly, to explain the key concepts relevant to my study; secondly, to discuss the theoretical framework and thirdly, to review international and South African literature on governance, pertaining to the role of sub-committees such as the library committee in school governance. This review enables me to focus on scholarly perspectives about the role that the library committee plays in school governance. I close by summarising the implications and by identifying omissions regarding the role of the library committee and problems that I found in the literature review.

#### ***2.2 Conceptual Framework***

The two concepts that underpin this study are of governance and management. Below I discuss these concepts and show how I understand and use them in relation to my study.

##### ***The Concept of Governance***

The term governance comes from the discourse that conceives of governance as a 'partnership' of government and civil society that determines policies and rules for public institutions (Grant Lewis & Motala, 2004b, p. 2). This discourse connects democracy with governance by giving those affected a decision-making role with government. Furthermore, governance may be understood as the means by which an activity or group of activities is controlled or directed (Daun, 2003; Mothata, 2000; Smelt, 1998). This direction or control may be done directly by the government or assigned to another agency. However, it is common for states to establish consensus-based forums for policy making and partnerships for facilitating deliverance of services (Oldfield, 2001). There is agreement amongst scholars such as Smelt (1998), Pierre

(2000), and Mothata (2000), that the concept of governance is complex. Smelt (1998) says governance is about controlling a school. Mothata (2000) and Pierre (2000) suggest that governance involves a co-ordinating structure and function.

Democratic participation of stakeholders in relation to my study concerns how the library committee assists in school governance. Section 16 of the South African Schools Act talks about this type of partnership (Republic of South Africa, 1996). School governing body brings into partnership, the parents, educators, non-educators and, in secondary schools (only) learners (Karlsson, McPherson, & Pampallis, 2001). Similar partnerships may form in SGB sub-committees as well. Such sub-committees must work with the school governing body so that they together contribute positively to the teaching and learning process. The library committee is part of a school's governance structure. Understanding the role function of this committee is the purpose of this study. Some school managers may be ex-officio members of these governance structures. Hence, in the next section I turn to the concept of management.

### ***The Concept of Management***

In this section I define the concept of management and how it relates to my study. Management means the act of running and controlling an organization (Van Deventer & Kruger, 2003). I use the term management as a collective word to describe school managers and what they do in a school, and in structures such as the SGB and the library committee. Managing a school requires a set of guidelines that are clearly defined to enable the school to run smoothly.

The most important elements of management include planning, budgeting, co-ordinating, monitoring, organizing, staffing, controlling and problem solving at school level (Kotter, 1996) and the process of successful management involves continual assessment and adjustment of plans to meet the proposed goals (Van Deventer & Kruger, 2003). The eight aspects of management are accomplished by managers getting things done through

other people (Middelwood, 2002, p. 65) and through the deployment of resources whether human, financial or material (Giancola & Hutchinson, 2005).

In this study I use the term management to mean the way in which the library committee governs and oversees its activities such as its role and responsibilities and its performance in managing, developing and deploying resources in the school. In the next section I discuss the theoretical framework in relation to my study.

### ***2.3 Theoretical framework***

Decentralisation provides the theoretical foundation and framework for my study of school governance and the school library committee. This theory is suitable because South Africa's post 1994 school reform entailed a change and redistribution of power for certain decisions from the provincial department to the school level and therefore some scholars argue that the South Africa education system is a decentralised system (Crouch, 2002; Motala, Porteus, & Tshoane, 2002; Patel, 2002). Under the South African Schools Act (Republic of South Africa, 1996), the school governing body acts as a vehicle for the decentralisation of some power to schools (Motala & Pampallis, 2001).

There is literature concerning decentralisation of education in a number of developed countries such as Australia, New Zealand, Canada, United States and United Kingdom (Cheung & Cheung, 1996; Ciborra, 2005; Giancola & Hutchinson, 2005; Karlsson, 2002). The conditions in these countries are different from South Africa. Their decentralisation reforms were not undertaken against the backdrop of an entire country's social transformation, including democratisation of all social and education institutions, as is the case in South Africa. Over recent decades, it is accepted that schools possessing powers to make their own decisions may provide better quality education than a school run by a distant, centralised bureaucracy (Cheung & Cheung, 1996; Steyn, 2003). However, this notion needs to be questioned in both developed and developing countries because decentralization is more imperative in capacity building more than structural change and accountability demands (Cheung & Cheung, 1996; Lemmer, 1999; Scrivener,



2004). Decentralisation in the United Kingdom is not intended to allow schools total freedom to use delegated resources but distinguishes between decentralisation and devolution, additionally the argument is that that the United Kingdom's reforms are more about decentralisation than devolution (Cheung & Cheung, 1996). Caldwell (1994) shares the following opinion regarding the theoretical understanding of devolution and decentralisation. He argues that decentralisation occurs when a central government gives control to another government on a lower level, whereas devolution occurs when decisions are made at a central level are made at a level in an organization that is nearer to the point of service (Caldwell, 1994).

The word decentralisation refers to processes and is the transfer of power (Pellini, 2005). In other words they describe a change in location of control or to transfer power away from central government (Harber, 2000; Pampallis, 2005) and in South African educational policy, the intention is to achieve equity, democracy and governance (Grant Lewis & Motala, 2004b; Nieuwenhuis & Mokoena, 2005). Decentralisation is associated with democracy because it encourages decisions to be shared and taken by local stakeholders such as parents and educators through the school governing body of the school. Decentralisation is associated with democracy because it allows decisions to be taken by other people or because power is more diffused (Davies, 1990a; McGinn & Welsh, 1999). It is noted that decentralisation promotes participatory local governance and this can be seen in the case of my study when the library committee participates in decision-making (Cishe & Jadezeweni, 2002; Tasmania Department of Education Library & Information, 2003). The South African Schools Act (Republic of South Africa, 1996) makes provision for decentralising decision-making about matters concerning the allocation of school's resources and democratising of governance and management within the school (KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education, 2003). Thus, the Act promotes school-based processes and structures for greater institution autonomy (Mosoge & Van der Westhuizen, 1998). Ideally, school management shares these responsibilities with other stakeholders in the governing body structures such as the library committee. In this study I am looking at decentralisation within the school whereby certain SGB functions are given to the library committee.

Literature on decentralisation of education distinguishes between four forms of decentralisation, namely, deconcentration, delegation, devolution and privatisation (Davies, 1990a; McGinn & Welsh, 1999; Pampallis, 2005; Winkler, 1989). Karlsson (1994) explains that deconcentration refers to a central bureaucracy's allocation of tasks to its different sub-departments and divisions.

This, therefore, decongests the central workload but does not involve real change in the nature of authority because the sharing of power applies only to managerial tasks and not decision-making. Delegation pertains to power and decision-making that is lent to the lower levels. Central authorities may recall such power at any time. Devolution occurs when power is given away. This may happen after there is pressure from local interests groups (Karlsson, Pampallis, & Sithole, 1996). In these arrangements local groups have control over their own finances, planning and the execution of programmes (Karlsson, 1994; Peabody & Thomas, 2003). Karlsson et al (1996) explain that devolved school governance in South Africa is a move of power away from the central departmental level to the local or school level. Decisions with regard to decentralisation of an education system are influenced by the political dispensation and not driven only by educational motives (Karlsson et al., 1996, p. 30). Privatisation occurs where power to make decisions is decentralised to the owners of educational institutions. However, although it has particularities of its own, privatisation may be considered as a variant of either delegation or devolution, depending on the legal arrangement by which it is allowed (Pampallis, 2005). There are three different forms of private school governance such as schools which have public subsidies, conform to government guidelines and do not charge fees, those with public subsidies which enjoy relative autonomy and do charge fees; and those that are privately financed and are autonomous from public (McGinn & Welsh, 1999).

South Africa has become a state with powers shared between central government and provinces. In education the central government is responsible for funding but has no control over day to day management of provincial schools. SGBs have the power to raise

funds and draw up policies (Sayed & Soudien, 2005). Steyn (2003) argues that the devolution of decision-making powers from a central to a school level is currently an international trend in education reform which assumes that the participation of stakeholders, such as educators, learners and parents, can enhance education.

Decentralisation allows for the development of an accountable and democratically governed school system based on partnership between government, schools and local communities (Harber, 2000). Structures such as SGBs provide for public accountability and a way for parents and the community to influence schools (Pierre, 2000, p. 145).

With the introduction of democracy in South Africa, governing bodies in schools have decision making powers and responsibilities over certain functions and issues (see SASA Section 20 and for some schools, Section 21). This gives the school a degree of independence from the provincial department of education with regard to decision-making. This independence suggests that the extent to which schools are able to affect change may depend upon the capacity of the SGB and local conditions. However the Act does not clearly outline the way in which the SGB should function, how they should make decisions and how they should relate to sub-committees. Hence, little if any attention has been given to the way provincial departments of education see the role and functioning of the SGBs and how they attempt to manage school governance (Pampallis, 2005). Therefore, other comprehensive studies on the tangible functioning of the school governance system, is considered necessary in order for it to be completely understood. This study explores relations between governance and local conditions.

## ***2.4 Review of policies and literature on school library committee***

### ***2.4.1 Review of International Literature***

There is little research conducted in South Africa on the school library committee because it is a relatively new idea in South African schools. However, there is some international literature on this topic. The purpose of this literature review is to examine the literature and extract information that assists my study. Of importance are documents

from the International Federation of Library Associations, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), the Tasmanian School Library Guidelines and the Australian School Library Guidelines.

Two library organisations, the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) (International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions & United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organisation, 2002), state that the school library committee has three functions. Firstly, it promotes learning services, books and resources that will enable members of the school community to be critical thinkers and become effective users of information. Secondly, the library committee proposes the usage of books and information sources to the school. Thirdly, it recommends ways that the teaching and learning materials can complement and enrich the teaching and learning process. The above functions imply that the library committee is able to select and develop resources that will be of relevance to the school curriculum.

The Tasmanian School Library Guidelines (Tasmania Department of Education Library & Information, 2003, p. 1) describe an effective school library, and how to develop a school library committee, amongst other things. This document discusses developing a school library committee by involving members of the community to participate in decisions about the library and ensure that the library services and resources effectively meet the needs of the whole community. The members of the library committee come from the school's managerial staff, teachers, parents, the community and learners. This document states that the teacher-librarian can chair the committee and serve as an executive officer, to make sure that the committee's decisions are implemented. Even though there are specific roles and functions, the nature of the committee varies from school to school. In most cases the committee is useful for policy-making decisions, leaving the procedural matters to those who work in the library. The committee's role includes contributing to and endorsing library guidelines, overseeing budget submissions and monitoring expenditure and assisting in the development of the

library's strategic and management plans, and providing information on learners and educators needs.

The committee does this by evaluating library services and programmes, liaising with the school community and advocating governance and management issues within and to the school library services (Tasmania Department of Education Library & Information, 2003).

Although these Guidelines are contextually limited to Tasmanian schools only, it is the only source I found that pinpoints directly the role of the library committee. It is useful because it clearly outlines the composition of the library committee and their role in school governance. Through a partnership between the library committee and other stakeholders in the school decisions can be taken together to promote effective teaching and learning. Later in this dissertation I explore whether such a partnership between the school governing body, the school management team, parents and the library committee exists in South Africa and how such relations are linked to the governance procedures in the school.

Another international document relevant to the school library committee is from the Department of Education in Western Australia (Western Australia Department of Education, 2002). It sheds light on the library committee indirectly when it states that resources should:

- Be adequate at appropriate levels for resource-based and student-centred learning and to meet personal and recreational needs,
- Cater for new curriculum and interest areas,
- Be selected according to the principles of intellectual merit; freedom and represent different points of view,
- Be sensitive to learners' needs, taking into account race, culture, gender, socio-economic group and physical and intellectual capacity,
- Assist educators in their teaching roles by providing resources and materials for professional development.

Both the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) and the Western Australian Department of Education state that the library committee should participate in selection and collection procedures.

This implies that the school library committee should determine the standards for governing, collection, development and management of library resources. On that matter Braxton (2000) suggests that the selection process must be a “participative, on-going activity” among all stakeholders in a school. This implies that a whole school community should be involved, i.e. the school governing body, the library committee, educators and management staff. Braxton asserts that the selection of resources should be a standard function for the library committee. It should select “the highest quality materials to ensure a comprehensive collection suitable for the needs of the users” (Braxton, 2000, p. 2). Later in this dissertation I consider whether South African school library committees are involved in selection of curriculum materials and how this role contributes to school governance.

#### ***2.4.2 Review of South African Literature***

Although South African scholars such as Karlsson (1994 and 2002), Grant Lewis and Motala (2004), McPherson and Dlamini (1998) write about democratic governance of public schooling, they do not deal specifically with the library committee. However, there are policies relevant to the school library committee such as the National Policy Framework for School Library Standards (Department of Education, 1999), and the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial School Library Policy (KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education, 2003). The work of researchers such as Karlsson, McPherson, & Pampallis (2001), Hart (2004), Vermuelen (1991), and Naiker and Mbokazi (2002) is also relevant. These are discussed below.

## ***Policy Framework***

This section provides an overview of the national and provincial policy framework and policies for school libraries in South Africa. These must be considered when researching library committees and school governance because they lay the policy foundation for library development in schools.

The Constitution of the Republic South Africa Act, No. 84 of 1996 frames the relationship between national and provincial government and rights to education. Both levels of government have a significant role to play in co-ordinating and monitoring effective development of schools, and hence school library provision, and by extension the library committee. The South African Schools Act (Republic of South Africa, 1996) may be seen as an authoritative tool because it represents one of the first statutes used by the post-1994 government to achieve policy goals. In that legislation school governing bodies are given the responsibility to establish sub-committees such as the library committees, for their schools. The modus operandi for these structures is grounded via the Act. Given that, the Act transforms schooling in South Africa by shifting central power of the day to day running of a school towards democratic governing bodies at the centre of all public schools. Although school libraries are not mentioned in the South African Schools Act, this document may have implications in how the governing bodies function.

Section 16 states that the functions of the governing body are to establish sub-committees such as the library committee; to raise revenue; promote the best interest of the school and to ensure its development through the provision of quality education. The Act provides for the development of accountable and democratically governed schools based on a governance partnership between government, schools and local communities (Harber, 2000). Grant Lewis & Motala (2004) suggest that empirical work in South Africa has provided little insight into either the nature of the SGB's participation or how participation and accountability are understood and practiced by SGB members. Transparency and accountability are important aspects for the library committee in

aspects of policy formulation and resource selection. The reason why the library committee should be accountable to the school governing body and the management structure of the school as well as the parents concerning the formulation of library policy, selection and purchasing of resources at school level is because it entails governance functions. The library committee is integral to the educational process because schools should budget for adequate and sustained funds for the development of resources (KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education, 2003, p. 7). The National Department of Education School Library Policy Framework is discussed in the next section.

The National Department of Education (1999) issued a policy framework for school library standards in order to ensure a similar approach to school libraries across all nine provinces. This policy's strengths are in explaining the role of a school library in the outcomes-based curriculum and locating the school library committee within the legislative framework. However, this library standards policy framework lacks specific guidelines for the formation and roles of the library committee.

In 2005 the Minister of Education, Naledi Pandor, resurrected this policy framework and publicly made the connection between the development of school libraries, but this policy and its implementation still has a long road to travel (Zinn, 2006). The KwaZulu-Natal Provincial library policy is discussed in the next section.

The KwaZulu-Natal Provincial policy on school libraries provides guidelines for the school library and the functions of the library. It directly and indirectly relates to the establishment and development of the school library committee. This policy claims to be a 'comprehensive policy proposal' for libraries in schools (KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education, 2003, p. 1). The purpose is to support educators and library committees in the development and management of school libraries. A school library is presented as an essential physical resource of the school. The KwaZulu-Natal Provincial policy (2003) states that the minimum standard for establishing school libraries is the establishment of a school library committee. The library committee is required to assign one educator to be responsible for the school library or classroom



collection. Ideally, this person should be a qualified teacher-librarian (KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education, 2003). A sub-committee of the School Governing Body (SGB), the committee should be representative of the whole school community including learners only in secondary schools (KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education, 2003, p. 2). The functions and responsibilities of the school library committee are to:

- Choose the appropriate school development model
- Develop a school library policy which covers library management and book selection issues, and which includes a three-year development plan, and an annual action plan and fund-raising
- Selects and evaluates resources on the basis of the needs of the school.
- Support the development of learner reading and information skills across the curriculum at all grade levels (KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education, 2003, p. 2)

In this study I investigate and use the functions mentioned in this provincial policy document to better understand whether such a partnership between the school governing body, the school management team, parents and the library committee exists in schools and how such relations are linked to the governance procedures.

### ***South African research on school libraries***

From these policy documents it is evident that the library is meant to play a vital role in providing teaching and learning resources for the educational phases at schools and to meet the individual needs of each learner. The learning resources and materials should accommodate the diverse interests, needs, and cultures of learners in schools. As stated in the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial policy (2003), school libraries have not been in operation widely in South Africa. Reasons for this are varied. In this section I discuss the contributions of Hoskins (2006), Hartzell (2002), Vermeulen (1991), Naiker and Mbokazi (2002) and Hart (2004) to this discussion.

Hoskins (2006), in her study of the status of school libraries, found that 40 out of 45 educator participants came from school with school libraries that also had an established library committee. This suggests that just more than half the educators had a library committee which ensured proper functioning and management of the library (Hoskins, 2006). But this study does not discuss any roles of the library committee and its significance to school governance. Hartzell (2002) argues that the significant curricular role of library-based resources demands that education planners regard the South African school library and its committee as central in the teaching and learning process. He maintains that the library can no longer be thought of as an appendage to schools but a vital and integral part of the school's education programme, with the school library committee effectively contributing towards the curriculum.

Vermeulen (1991) argues that provincial departments of education need to help school libraries acquire relevant materials for the curriculum. They need to formulate a clear policy which aims to develop a collection of curriculum-oriented resources. The library policy of the school must state that this undertaking is costly. Hartzell (2002) supports Vermeulen's idea of a school library committee that develops an effective school library to meet the needs of its customers, is responsive to educational and technological changes and contributes to general school improvement. I have used these scholarly perspectives to guide my empirical exploration of the library committee and its roles.

Vermeulen (1991) uses experience from school library committees in the United States to propose that the school library committee in South Africa should develop objectives in relation to the library and resources. She argues that the school library should be a support service. She emphasises that each school should develop objectives for the library in relation to its own needs. Each school should have a library committee to develop these objectives. Vermeulen argues that the functions of the library committee should be planning that entails formulating aims, policy and strategy. Its function should be curriculum development that consists of collection building including a needs analysis and selection policy. Additionally, the committee should provide organisation in the library that consists of acquisition, cataloguing, classification, dissemination, use and

maintenance of all resources. Teachers and learners will be able to easily access the collection, service should include information literacy; production of materials; communication and liaison, budgeting and evaluation (Vermeulen, 1991).

Vermeulen's argument is that the library committee has an important role to play in the teaching and learning process in the school because the committee is involved in the selection of the curriculum resources. The library committee must however be provided with sufficient funding to perform their functions. This may be a problem since principals control and manage school finances (Hart, 2004a; Karlsson et al., 2001). The lack of budgetary provision will lead to under-resourced libraries.

Scholars, for example Bonanno (1998), Hartzell (2002), Hay & Henri (1995) and Searcy (2001), argue that it is principals and librarians who determine the school library programs quality because they are the ones who influence and control the programmes and resources. Therefore they should be part of the school library committee to ensure the smooth running of teaching and learning resources. Naiker and Mbokazi (2002) maintain that the most important best-practise change that might be made in schools is the implementation of the school library committee. They say that the library committee can operate effectively, with regular meetings, for the promotion of inclusive and democratic decision-making. Although the national and provincial policy initiatives in South Africa make provision for school library standards, they are relatively silent about the role of the library committee. Thus, there is a need for policy or guidelines that provide the role and functions of the library committee and how this committee can contribute to school governance.

## ***2.5 Conclusion***

From my literature review some points pertinent to my study emerge. Firstly, it is vital for curriculum purposes that each school should have a library committee to develop a collection of learning and teaching resources (KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education, 2003; Tasmania Department of Education Library & Information, 2003). Secondly, there

are many roles and responsibilities that a library committee can perform (International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions & United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organisation, 2002). Thirdly, for good governance it is essential that there exists a partnership between the library committee and the school governing body (Le Roux, 2002). Lastly, a library policy is essential in schools in order to maintain maximum support and control of resources (Le Roux, 2002). Complementing this review of the literature and endeavouring to fill some gaps and problems is the knowledge about the role and function of the library in this study. However, I have also found some problems and neglected issues from my literature review. Most of the scholarly perspectives are based on the role function of the library in education and the role of the teacher-librarian. Insufficient is written about the school library committee and how it functions on a day to day basis at public school.

Another problem and a neglected issue is that research is done on the school library and the library committee is linked insignificantly to that particular study. In those particular studies little is discussed about the involvement of the library committee in school governance. For the KwaZulu-Natal provincial school library policy to have a chance of success, the school managers should be persuaded that it is necessary and practical for all schools to have a library and that the SGB establish a library committee. Since the role and function of the school library committee in governance is unclear and under-researched, for this study I interviewed three principals and three teacher librarians to find out what roles are being performed by school library committees. In the next chapter, I discuss how I went about that empirical work.

## ***CHAPTER THREE***

### ***RESEARCH METHODOLOGY***

#### ***3.1 Introduction***

The purpose of this chapter is to describe and discuss the methodological design of my study. I begin by showing how my research questions shape the methodology I chose. I then explain my data generation procedure, describe my participants and analysis method, and end with an account of how I dealt with ethical considerations. It is important for any research that its process and findings are credible (Maxwell, 1992). The time a researcher spends in an interview situation to build participants' confidence and become accustomed to telling me their experiences builds credibility. In addition a strategy to test credibility is triangulation (Henning, van Rensburg, & Smit, 2004). In this regard, I discuss how I analysed documents such as minutes of library committee meetings, timetables and the school library policy.

#### ***3.2 Methodology***

##### ***Case Study Methodology***

I use an in-depth case study, which is the essence of interpretive research (Radnor, 2002). A research design may be called, 'a pattern', (Gough, 2001, p. 4) or 'plan' (McMillan & Schumacher, 1993, p. 31) for example this is a case study design. Case study methodology is an in-depth investigation to portray the complex pattern of what is being studied in sufficient depth and detail so that one who has not experienced it can understand it (Terre Blanche, Durrheim, & Painter, 2006). In discussing this case study design I describe the procedures that I followed while conducting the empirical component of my study (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000; Kvale, 1996). A case study investigates a real situation and enables the researcher to understand that situation clearly (Cohen et al., 2000, p. 159). This implies that case studies are able to portray, analyse, and interpret unique situations that cannot be reduced to numbers. For example the role

of the library committee in governance and in specific contexts can be described better by words than in numbers. A case study is an intensive study of a specific individual or a specific context. The case study's commitment is to "come to grips" with the social world (De Vos et al, 2002). This study focuses on "coming to grips" with the specific participants which is the library committee, which consists of the principals and teacher-librarians within the specific social context of governance at school level. The strength of the case study method is its ability to examine, in-depth, a "case" within its "real-life" context. I gained access to the "real life" context of the school, its participants and its environment (Yin, 2005b, p. 364) .

Furthermore, a case study provides "a unique example of real people in real situations, which enables readers to have a clear understanding of ideas" (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007, p. 254). Case studies reveal contexts which are dynamic because of the unfolding social interactions as is expected in the case of the school library committee. Cohen et al, (2007, p.254) state that case studies are:

- Set in temporal, geographical, organisational, institutional and other contexts that enable boundaries to be drawn around the case. My case studies are schools situated in the geographical locations of the Mariannahill and Shallcross areas.
- Defined by the individuals and groups involved and their roles and functions. Thus, in relation to my case studies each committee has its own interpretation of its role in school governance.

According to Huysamen (2001) and Best and Kahn (2003), the term case study indicates that a limited number of units of analysis such as an individual, group or institution are studied. This research is confined to three schools as I felt that the data gained would be sufficient for this particular study. In this case study I sought to understand the intricacies, uniqueness and idiosyncrasies of a particular case. Although the same study is conducted at three schools, each school is unique, has its own dynamics and has therefore yielded different data. According to Anderson (1993, p. 163) the case-study design lacks reliability, as another researcher conducting the same study may arrive at a different

conclusion. It is, therefore, necessary for more than one research instrument to be used in order to ensure validity. This study uses semi-structured interviews and document analysis in order to generate data. These methods assist in triangulating data generated. Through triangulation I identify consistencies and inconsistencies of the library committee.

My research methodology is well-matched to my research questions about the school library committee's role in school governance. This case study covers the knowledge and experiences of the library committee i.e. the principals, teacher-librarians and other members, in how they set up the general parameters of their roles in decision-making for governance purposes. The emphasis in case study design is on providing answers to the questions posed in this study. The use of case study methodology allows me to study one case and generate data about that case via the interview technique and interpret and analyse the data as it is generated.

### ***Interpretive paradigm***

Paradigms are used to look at issues under investigation and explain the methodology and methods and are crucial for understanding and choosing methodologies. The interpretive paradigm frames my research as it enables me to investigate what the library committees role are and how they function at school level. Different experiences of the principals and teacher-librarians led to different personal interpretations of what is happening around them in school. For the interpretive paradigm the researcher is a vital instrument because the researcher is fully involved as an instrument of data generation. The "I was there" element in the portrayal of the picture of the phenomenon being studied is part of the design. On this issue Marshall and Rossman state that:

Her presence in the lives of the participants invited to be part of the study is fundamental to the paradigm. Whether that presence is sustained ... or whether brief but personal, as in-depth interviews studies, the researcher enters into the lives of the participants (Marshall & Rossman, 1989, p. 59)

I am working within the interpretive approach because it enables me to make sense of the complexities of school governance from the point of view of those who live it and in relation to how I interpret and make sense of it. Therefore, the compositional structure of the design separates facts from values, and inherent subjectivity in this research in relation to people and the social world (Lynch, 2004). Relationships are more complex and fluid, with directions of influence shifting rather than fixed whereby large quantities of qualitative data are generated to acquire an in-depth understanding of how meaning is created at school level (Lynch, 2004).

However, the participants are not the interpreters because I generate data, which is, I interpret and make meaning of the participants' perspectives and experiences as they live it. This is spoken of as an abiding concern for the real life world, for the emic point of view that is the world of lived reality and situation specific meanings (Creswell, 2003; De Vos, Strydom, Fouche, & Delport, 2002; Kerlinger, 1992; Pillay, 2005). The goal of my research is to develop an understanding by constructing meaning of the data that has been generated within the school setting. I am interested to know what they experience in their school life.

### ***Qualitative approach***

Qualitative research questions focus on the words and action of the participants that occur in a specific context and in my case the school setting will constitute three contexts i.e. the different primary schools. My research employs a qualitative method in order to answer the research questions given in Section 1.2 above. The qualitative method affords me the opportunity to understand the participants', and their experiences and perspectives (Mathers, Fox, & Hunn, 2002). My interview schedule focuses on answering my research questions because a qualitative approach denotes the type of inquiry in which 'qualities, the characteristics or the properties' (Henning et al., 2004, p. 5) of a phenomenon that is examined for my better understanding and explanation of it. Patton (2002) identifies the strengths of qualitative inquiry, describing the investigation as facilitating a study of multifarious concerns, in depth and details, without being constrained by predetermined categories of analysis. Additionally, the qualitative



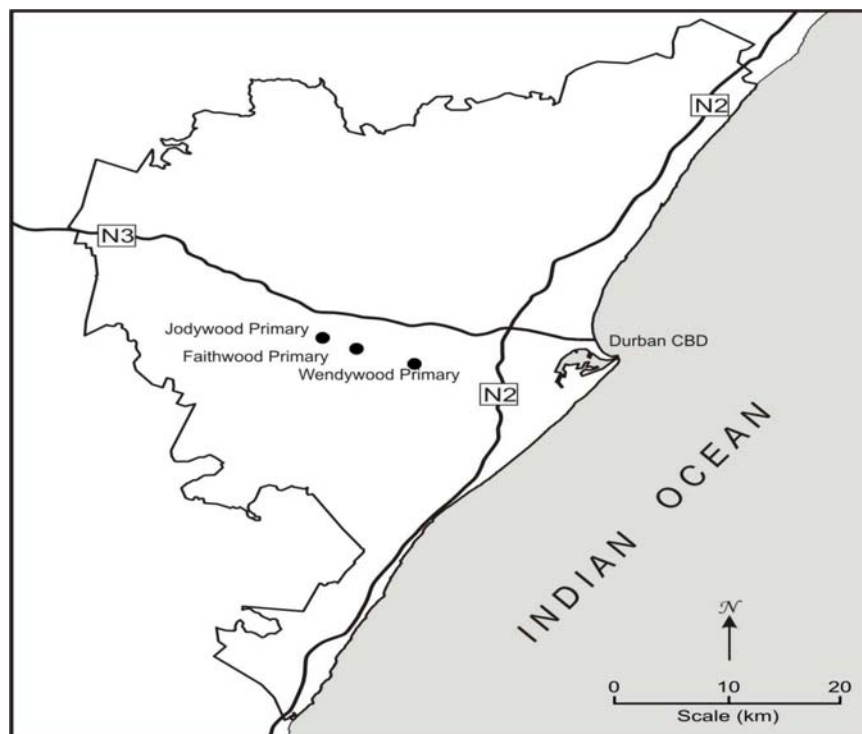
approach produces a wealth of comprehensive information about a small number of cases, by increasing the extent of understanding the cases and situations studied and by reducing generalisability often negatively associated with quantitative approaches (Patton, 2002). The features of qualitative research are descriptions and accounts of the processes of social interaction in a natural setting such as it occurs everyday in a school library setting (Vulliamy & Webb, 1992).

My study design aims at giving a voice to principals and teacher-librarians to speak and to express their own reflection about their experiences and how this impacts on school governance. It does this by way of generating data from the interviews and document analysis with the library committee. Therefore the selection of participants and sites are important which is discussed in the next section.

### ***3.3 Selection criteria for school sites and participants***

#### ***School sites***

**Figure 1: Map indicating the three schools in the Ethekekwini region**



Using purposeful sampling (Wilkinson & Birmingham, 2003, p. 41), I chose three primary schools in the Pinetown District of the Ethekwini Region in KwaZulu-Natal (see Figure 1) for my study. By purposive sampling I mean that I preferred this sampling technique over other sampling strategies such as random sampling because purposive sampling aims are on insights of the school library and in particular the school contexts (Bauer & Gaskell, 2000). The logic of purposeful sampling of school sites lies in selecting information rich cases for in depth information of the school site for this study (Yin, 2005a, p. 262). By information rich I mean that the experiences and perspective of the school helps me to glean salient information for my study.

My criteria for selecting these schools as units for analysis are that the schools have:

- An established library committee; this is essential because my study investigates that committee's relationship to school governance.
- A language heterogeneous school learner community comprising English speakers and isiZulu speakers and how these schools manage and cater for the different language groups. I am interested in the contexts with language groups to see how language contributes to governance in schools.
- Location in different social contexts means that the schools have different settings; this criterion is necessary because I want to elicit information to understand how the location contributes to the social context.
- I have had previous contact with these schools and this prior contact is an advantage for this study because of the knowledge I have of the social context.
- Geographic proximity in my selection of schools in the Pinetown district. I considered time, finances, and the logistics involved in generating and analysing information that was required to successfully complete my study. In order to keep travelling costs at a minimum, the chosen schools were within close proximity to each other.

The Pinetown District schools (see table 1 below) are Jodywood and Faithwood Primary, and both are located in the suburb of Mariannhill. These schools are in a predominately Indian suburb that borders a peri-urban and rural area settled with isiZulu - speaking

families. Jodywood Primary caters for learners from the nearby Luganda informal settlement, while Faithwood Primary enrolls learners from the Madiba Valley informal settlement. The third school, Wendywood Primary, is in the suburb of Shallcross. In addition to enrolling learners from the predominately Indian residents of Shallcross, Wendywood Primary serves learners from the largely isiZulu-speaking Kwa-Ndengezi neighbourhood. Though all three schools are formerly House of Delegates schools that catered in the apartheid era for the Indian population exclusively, the demographic profile of the enrolled learners in 2006 show that about ninety percent of the learners are Black and speak isiZulu as their home language. Thus, the selected schools have changed considerably since 1994 and operate in a social context that is complex and undergoing rapid change.

The demographic profile of learners is presented in Table 1 below.

**Table 1: Statistics of learners at the selected schools in 2006**

<b>Schools</b>		<b>Jodywood Primary</b>	<b>Faithwood Primary</b>	<b>Wendywood Primary</b>
<b>Race<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Indian</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>39%</b>
	<b>Blacks</b>	<b>76%</b>	<b>87%</b>	<b>53%</b>
	<b>Coloureds</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>8 %</b>
<b>Home Language</b>	<b>English</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>32%</b>
	<b>isiZulu</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>87%</b>	<b>68%</b>
<b>Total Enrolment</b>		<b>1245</b>	<b>1150</b>	<b>1070</b>

**Sources: Schools Statistics**

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<sup>1</sup> Race is an important signifier of culture and language. The Indian community in KZN is complex. They originate from the Indian continent and are mainly of the Hindu, Muslim and Christian religions. In this study the term Blacks is used to isiZulu- and isiXhosa-speaking people who are indigenous to Africa. The term Coloured refers to the people who are of mixed origin.

The changes are linked to the shifting learner profile and this might be relevant to how the school library committee and school governing body performs their role functions in catering for this diverse learner population.

### ***Participants***

The population of the school library committee comprises the principal, teacher-librarian, one level one educator, administration clerk and one representative from the SGB. From this population I purposively selected the principal and teacher-librarian at each school to be participants because they are significant members of the school library committee.

Miles and Huberman (1984) state that qualitative studies tend to be more purposive in selection of participants rather than randomly sampling the population because research does not claim to be representative. My purpose is to make sense of the role of the library committee in the governance function by understanding the principal and teacher-librarian's experiences in that role. The principals and the teacher-librarians are key role players in this study because they have experiential knowledge of the functioning of their library committees. Thus, the number of participants in this study are six, of which three are principals and three are teacher-librarians, i.e. two participants from each of the three primary schools.

In Table 2, I present information that describes the selected participants.

**Table 2: Participant Profiles**

<b>SCHOOLS</b>	<b>PARTICIPANTS</b>	<b>FULL/PART-TIME ROLE</b>	<b>AGE</b>	<b>GENDER</b>	<b>YEARS OF SERVICE AT SCHOOL</b>
Jodywood Primary	Principal	Full-time	49	Female	6
	Teacher-Librarian	Part-time	41	Female	6
Faithwood Primary	Principal	Full-time	51	Male	9
	Teacher-Librarian	Full-time	28	Female	19
Wendywood Primary	Principal	Full-time	55	Female	8
	Teacher-Librarian	Full-time	34	Female	5

In terms of race, all participants are South African of Indian origin. However, my study is interpretive; it is therefore not representative of the demographics of teachers in KwaZulu-Natal. From their years of service at the school it is assumed that the principals and teacher-librarians know their schools well.

Both teacher-librarians from Jodywood and Wendywood Primary are full-time whereas the teacher-librarian from Faithwood Primary is a foundation phase class teacher and only part-time teacher-librarian. The range of ages of the participants implies that their experiential knowledge in relation to the school library committee is varied.

### ***3.4 Data generation method: semi-structured interviews***

There are different types of interviews such as standardised, in-depth, ethnographic, elite, life history, focus groups, semi-structured, structured, exploratory, informal conversations, guide approaches group interviews, and closed quantitative interviews (Cohen et al., 2007). De Vos et al (1998) argue that qualitative research is concerned with people's perspectives and their insights of the world. Thus, I used semi-structured interviews as one method for data generation. Seidman (1998) points out that interviewing is one of the best instruments for qualitative data generation. A major advantage of the interview is its adaptability (Bell, 1993), whereby the researcher is able to follow up ideas from the interviewee's account and probe their responses. Hence, the participant's responses in an interview can be clarified and developed immediately, whereas in a questionnaire the responses have to be taken at face value (Bell, 1993) because the participant is no longer present when the researcher sees the data for the first time.

The semi-structured interview is a suitable method for this case study for three reasons:

- In semi-structured interviews questions are open-ended and direct. My purpose in the interview was to ask the principal and teacher-librarian questions about their role functions in school governance. The nature of the interaction is qualitative in that it ranges from informal conversation to a more formal and lengthy question and answer dialogue. The exchange between the researcher and the 'researched', that is the participant, is face-to-face and interpersonal (Kerlinger, 1992, p. 441).
- Semi-structured interviews are flexible. This characteristic enables a researcher to gain clarity about responses that were unclear, and this allows probing further for in-depth information.
- Semi-structured interviews yield rich data. The researcher or interviewer can gain insight into the characters and intensity of the participants attitudes, beliefs, motives and feelings and can detect underlying their motivations (De Vos et al., 2002).

I employed guiding interview schedules (Seidman, 1998). My schedules were already-constructed questions asking participants' to reconstruct their experiences. I used two interview schedules one for principals (see Appendix 5) and the other for teacher-librarians (see Appendix 6) because their role functions differ in relation to school governance. The interview schedule directly focused on answering my research questions to avoid 'superfluous information' and 'data overload' that may compromise the 'efficiency and power' of my analysis (Huysamen, 2001, p. 89). This allowed me to probe the interviewees to dispel potential misunderstandings (Creswell, 2003, p. 89). The use of probing questions also assisted me to progress smoothly and ask further questions as prompts to elicit information from the informant that I may have overlooked. Probing allowed me to test the limits of the participant's knowledge. It also encouraged co-operation, established rapport and made an accurate assessment of what the participants really believed. Open-ended questions proved to be a useful way to elicit a variety of interesting responses and this particular kind of open-ended questioning is known as a 'funnel' (Kerlinger, 1992, p. 313). I discovered that this descriptive and explanatory information creates a richer understanding of the school governance work of each library committee. This is an apt description of my schedule which started with broad questions and then narrowed down to more specific ones. With this in mind, I included the following issues in the principal's and teacher-librarian's interview schedule, derived from my key research questions and in order to shed light on the role of the school library committee in governance:

- The role of the library committee in school governance;
- The Provincial School Library Policy;
- Responsibilities of the school library committee;
- The library committee's understanding of the concept of governance;
- Library committee's contribution to governance of their school;
- The school library committee's function in managing and developing teaching and learning resources;
- The school library committee's interrelationship with the local social context;

Reference to local environmental issues;  
Catering for divergent language and cultural groupings on a limited budget;  
Security issues.

The principal's interview schedule consists of three main research questions about the governance procedures in relation to the library committee. Question one has nine sub-questions about the role of the principal in the library committee.

Questions two includes four sub-questions about how the school library committee performs the governance function of managing and developing learning and teaching resources.

In question three there are four sub-questions about how the school library committee's performance relates to the local social context. The second interview schedule is designed for the teacher-librarians. It has three main research questions which are similar to the principals' schedule and are based on my key research questions. However, this interview schedule is different from the principal's one because I assumed that the teacher-librarian would have a hands-on role in the library committee, whereas the principal would play a supporting role to this committee. Use of the interview schedules led me to think of interviews as communicative events aimed at finding what participants think, know and feel (Wilkinson & Birmingham, 2003). Wilkinson and Birmingham (2003) state that the interview process should be planned and set up in three phases. The first phase is setting up the interview and finding participants according to the overall research design. The second phase is conducting and recording the interview and the third phase is reflecting on the interview and working with or analysing and interpreting the data. For the first phase Warren argues that an introductory meeting should be used briefly to inform participants about the purpose of the interview, make them feel at ease and give an explanation about the manner in which the interviews will be recorded. In my field work I followed the advice of Wilkinson & Birmingham (2003).



The use of a sound recording device during interviews has advantages and disadvantages. For Patton (1990) it is indispensable because it keeps accurate records of the interview. Seidman states that

there is no question in my mind that in-depth interviews must be tape-recorded ... I believe that to work most reliably with the words of participants, the researcher has to transform those spoken words into a written text study. The primary method of creating text from interviews is to tape-record interviews and transcribe them (Seidman, 1991, p. 70).

On this basis my study interviews are recorded and transcribed. A disadvantage is that some participants may withhold certain information because they are afraid of a record of them revealing this information. In-depth interviews require participants to reconstruct their personal and lived experiences. These issues bring to the fore ethical considerations.

### ***3.5 Data generation method: document analysis and observation***

Documents are an important source of data and in this study document analysis is used as descriptive research because current documents and issues are my foci (Best & Kahn, 2003). My analysis is concerned with the explanation of the role of the library committee in school governance. In my documentary analysis the following documents are used as sources of data: minutes of library committee meetings, school library policies and library time-table. In order to enhance the credibility of my study, I analysed documentation such as the documents mentioned above. I converged the documentation with the interview data.

During the interview I took notes to record my observations such as gestures, facial expressions, tone of voice and general body language (Henning et al., 2004, p. 73). These gestures assisted me in viewing whether the participants were comfortable or not with the posed questions. Observation and note taking was also necessary, as this kind of information could not be captured by a tape recorder. I used observation and document analysis in addition to semi-structured interviews. This use of multiple research instruments is required to strengthen and to validate my data.

Through the use of this multi-pronged approach I was able to look for and identify inconsistencies as well commonalities or patterns. Ethical concerns are discussed in the next section.

### ***3.6 Ethical Considerations***

In this section I discuss the rationale for being ethical, the principles and how I dealt with them in this study. Research has an ethical-moral dimension in that the researcher has a moral and professional obligation to be ethical, even when the researched are unaware about ethics (Neuman, 2006). Basic principles of ethics in research are that ethical responsibility rests with the researcher, to protect participants from legal or other harm such as discomfort, honour all guarantees of privacy, confidentiality and anonymity. Anonymity and confidentiality are assured. Anonymity means that people remain nameless. The participants' identity is unknown therefore the individual is protected. Anonymity protects the identity of specific individuals from being known. Confidentiality means that information may have names attached to it, but the researcher holds it in confidence or keeps it secret from the public. The information is not released in a way that permits linking specific individuals. All of the participants granted me permission to publish personal and schools' names because they said it may assist other school to understand the role of the library committee in school governance. However, I chose not to disclose their schools and their names to prevent harm to them.

I followed the correct ethical standard for my study as the consent letter entails other ethical issues that are relevant to my study. The participants were offered the opportunity to withdraw from the process at any stage and to ask questions, seek clarification on all the issues involved in this study. The participants were allowed to examine the transcripts and make any amendments they felt were necessary before final submission of this thesis. As vital stakeholders in this process, they are aware of the content. This consideration instils confidence in the participants because I ensured that given consent is informed and understood.

It is important to have informed written consent from the participants to guarantee their agreement to participate in my study and protecting themselves.

Seeking informed consent, by making clear what my purpose of this study is that is supported by 'the voluntary consent of the human subject is absolutely essential (Seidman, 1998, p. 49). The researcher should refrain from coercing or humiliating, and deceiving participants in participating and releasing confidential details of the study with the published results, and making interpretations of results in consistent with data (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Neuman, 2006). It is ethically unacceptable to use any form of coercion however subtle (Simon & Burstein, 1984, p. 112). In the final analysis, the ethical responsibility of the participants rests with me. I have made a full disclosure to the participants of my intentions and the rationale behind this study, (see Appendix 3 & 4). Human interaction is the focus of my research therefore the necessary ethical measures were applied to protect the participants from harm.

The relevant authorities were contacted in order to obtain the necessary approval because my research involves the utilisation of three public schools. Therefore permission needs to be granted by the appropriate gatekeepers such as the KZN Education Department and the school principals for the process before and after finalising the planning for the interviews with respondents. Firstly, permission was sought from the University of KwaZulu-Natal's research office for ethical clearance (see p. iv). Secondly, permission was sought by the Education Department to gain access to these three schools (see Appendix 1). The purpose of permission seeking is to protect the participants and the interests of the education authorities from any unlawful information that will be used or going against their wishes. Thirdly, permission from the principals was sought (see Appendix 2). Fourthly, permission of informed consent from the participants (see Appendix 3 & 4) before embarking on data generation because all the participants needed to be fully cognisant of my approach, procedures and scope of my study so that they are well aware of their role and rights as participants and they were assured about my ethical stand that no harm will come to them. I have discussed the ethical principles and issues that I applied in this study, in the next section I discuss my data analysis method.

### ***3.7 Data analysis method***

In qualitative case studies data analysis is an ongoing process (Best & Kahn, 2003). I employed a descriptive analysis technique as outlined by Terre Blanche et al. (2006). (Terre Blanche et al., 2006, p. 252) technique involves:

- Reading through the interview transcripts, jotting down notes and comments;
- Selecting the richest and thickest portions of interview transcripts;
- Listing the emerging themes and clustering and encoding them;
- Identifying the major themes and sub-themes;
- Analysing categories of the sub-themes and what they mean;

Following this technique I converted my field notes into transcriptions that I organised into themes and sub-themes. My aim was to richly describe, interpret and explain the data. The procedure was methodical, structured and time consuming. I used descriptive codes such as role, responsibilities and advocacy emerging from the challenges in managing teaching and learning resources. These codes enabled easy retrieval of information that would answer my research questions. I analysed each case individually in its entirety prior to doing a cross-case analysis (Swann & Pratt, 2003). For example, in the cross case analysis I looked for patterns such as similarities, differences as well as disruptions or exceptions. In the next section I describe measures to ensure trustworthiness.

### ***3.8 Measures to ensure trustworthiness***

Qualitative research should be credible and dependable. This is referred to as trustworthiness. Trustworthiness strategies are linked to credibility, transferability, and dependability that ensures rigour without sacrificing the relevance of the qualitative investigation (De Vos et al., 2002; Guba & Lincoln, 1985). I will now discuss these qualities of good qualitative research.

### ***Credibility***

Credibility is also about the researcher having honesty and using suitable methods (Locke, Spirduso, & Silverman, 2000). The researcher has to ensure that the data produced is an accurate representation of the real situation as the researcher understands it. However, the analysis process is not value-free or free of the researcher's bias; there is always the danger or risk of data contamination and distortion if the researcher adds her own information. In exploring how the library committee's roles are interpreted and expressed I undoubtedly possessed certain biases and preferences. I guarded against bias by not changing the participants' information about their values and the same number of principals and teacher-librarians were interviewed at each school. The same interview schedules were followed at the three schools. The same research instruments were used and the same documentation were analysed at the three schools. In this study I minimised this bias through the participants' validation strategy by giving them the interview transcripts to read and check for this type of distortion.

### ***Dependability***

Dependability is where the inconsistency can be tracked back and ascribed to identified sources such as the library committee members (Neuman, 2000). Dependability can be satisfied via cross-referencing which means that comparing it with other studies of a comparable and similar nature. Interpretive researchers such as Welman & Kruger (2001) believe that groups, organisations and individuals behave and express their opinions differently in changing contexts. They assume that the reality they are investigating is unstable and forever changing, unlike Vulliamy & Web (1992) who state that they do not expect to arrive at the same results repeatedly. Instead, dependability is achieved through a rich and detailed description of how actions are rooted and develop out of contextual interaction (Welman & Kruger, 2001). In this study the generated data is dependable in terms of the years of professional experience of the teacher-librarians and principals.

### ***Transferability***

Transferability refers to the degree to which findings can be applied to other contexts and settings. To create a foundation for transferability and to allow other researchers to use the findings in making comparisons with their own work, it should contain an ‘accurate description of the research process, an explication of the arguments for the different choices of methods and a detailed description of the research situation and context’ (Terre Blanche et al., 2006, p. 381). In this study transferability is addressed via purposive sampling, where the participants were specifically selected based on their experience, insights and role in the library committee. Participant checking is important therefore I sent interview transcripts to my participants to be read and checked for inaccuracies or misrepresentation of their information before data analysis began. Human social life is too complex to be reduced to reliability testing formulae (Rubin & Rubin, 1995), and that is why other researchers of school libraries have searched for contextually situated understandings (Naiker & Mbokazi, 2002). The degree of similarity and correspondence between the three selected schools contexts is satisfied because my data is descriptive and it allowed for comparison in this study.

### ***3.9 Conclusion***

In this chapter I explained why I used the qualitative and interpretive approach and why I selected a case study as my research design. I described the school sites and the criteria that I used to select them. I motivated the reasons for using the semi-structured interview to generate data from participants at the three institutions. I outlined my analytical approach of thematic coding. This chapter includes a discussion on ethics and issues of entry into the school sites. I conclude this chapter with a discussion on transferability. In the next chapter I discuss my findings.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### ***DISCUSSION OF THE THEMATIC FINDINGS ABOUT THE SCHOOL LIBRARY COMMITTEE AND GOVERNANCE***

#### ***4.1 Introduction***

In the previous chapter I discussed my research methodology and reasons for the suitability of the case study approach in this study. The data, generated through semi-structured interviews held with three principals and three teacher-librarians, were analysed for themes relating to my research questions about the library committee. In this chapter I discuss my findings about those themes.

The first theme is about the conception of school governance. The second theme concerns the roles of the library committee. Three roles emerge: the advisory role; the monitoring and evaluation role and the networking and advocacy role. Responsibilities of the library committee is the third theme which is divided into the following seven sub-themes: policy making; planning; management; overseeing the budget; acquisition and selection; promotion of reading; and co-ordination. The fourth theme deals with performance. It is patterned into three sub-themes regarding factors affecting performance: physical challenge; security; and personnel. How the library committee addresses problems relating to the local social context, such as language is the fifth theme. All the thematic findings are discussed in the following sections.

#### ***4.2 The concept of school governance***

The principals from Jodywood, Wendywood and Faithwood claim that the library committee is part of policy decisions, co-ordination of programmes, developing of resources and fund-raising projects. These claims about the library committee's involvement in policy making are validated by the three teacher-librarians. Thus, they use words such as 'effective, efficient managing, running, function, policy making, rules and

regulations, implementation of policy, control, maintain and organised' in contributing to school governance. Understanding the participants' conceptions of governance is important because the library committee falls within the school governance structure. Thus, participants were asked about their understandings of governance. My finding is that principals and teacher-librarians understand school governance to be about sharing ideas and formulating policies and control. This narrow understanding emerges from their comments about the school library committee and SGB. For example one principal said that, 'it refers to the way a school is managed by the relevant stakeholders like the library committee where policies are taken in account for the smooth running of the school'. This conception is similar to that found in the literature by Smelt (1998), Pierre (2000), and Mothata (2000). These scholars define governance as controlling, managing and distributing resources and policy making, including drafting, ratifying, implementing and monitoring policy.

The participants' limited understanding of school governance contrasts with that of government's, which is of a 'partnership' of the state and the school community. Section 16 of the South African School Act (Republic of South Africa, 1996) refers to this partnership. In a school setting, the South African Schools Act talks about stakeholders together determining policies and ensuring quality education. Smelt (1998), Pierre (2000), Mothata (2000), and Scrivener (2004) refer to school governance as the involvement of relevant role-players in a co-ordinating structure for the management and development of policy in an institution. Participants imply that governance is about the policy decisions that improve connections and interactions between stakeholders in a school setting. Wendywood's principal said that, 'governance involves establishing policies and procedures in consultation with all the role players to make interactions and connection in monitoring and implementing of policies'. This ties up with the notion of partnership whereby the functions of governance are linked together for the school to run as a whole and not in separate units.

The most important aspect of understanding governance, which is the decentralising of decision-making and sharing of responsibilities between the governing body and library



committee, is missing from this study. My assumption is that the governing body is the missing link because the governing body does not have an understanding of the concept of governance.

To explore the nature of the governance relationship between the school governing body and the school library more fully I now turn to identify and analyse the role of the school library committee.

### ***4.3 Roles***

In Chapter 1, I made a case that the role of the library committee is an under-researched field of enquiry and that understanding the committees' role and how it is linked to the school governing body would shed new light on the working of school governance at institutional level. Based on the three case studies I find that although the role of the library committee varies from school to school, three roles predominate: advising; monitoring and evaluation and networking and advocacy. For example participants from Jodywood and Faithwood stated that the library committee is involved in advising; monitoring and evaluation and networking and advocacy. The link between the role of the library committee and governance is weak at school level. In this section I discuss the evidence for each of these three roles.

#### ***4.3.1 The advisory role***

In this section I discuss the evidence from the principals and chairperson about the committee's advisory role. My findings reveal that Wendywood and Jodywood's principals play a vital advisory role within the committee in contrast to Faithwood where this role is a supportive one. The library committee plays a role in advising and supporting the teacher-librarian such as in finding solutions to problems that the teacher-librarian faces. For example the teacher-librarian is required to identify service providers who supply resources, develop the library programme, and identify speakers for special events. This advisory role is evident in a statement from the teacher-librarian who said,

‘the library committee meets quite often to discuss matters pertaining on how to assist me to manage the library and provides guidelines to assist me’. Faithwood’s teacher-librarian said that ‘the library committee’s advice cannot entirely assist teacher-librarians because the committee does not have sufficient time in most cases to address our problems. The advice in most cases is serving as moral support’. At this particular school the advisory role is limited by the governing body because of insufficient time to attend to library meetings and the nature of the advice may not contribute to development of quality education. This is because advice concerns moral support only. Within the library committee principals play a fundamental part in the advisory role. For example, principals advise the teacher-librarian on selection of materials, budgeting, teamwork, decision-making, and fundraising events. My findings cannot be related to policy or literature because insufficient is written about the library committee’s advisory role in school governance. The KwaZulu-Natal’s school library policy (KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education, 2003) is silent on this issue of this advisory role. In the next section evidence about the monitoring and evaluation role is discussed.

#### ***4.3.2 The monitoring and evaluation role***

In terms of the provincial policy (KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education, 2003) the committee monitors and evaluates library services, programmes, liaising with the school community and advocating governance and management issues within and to the school library. The provincial policy sheds light on the library committee indirectly when it states that monitoring and evaluation should:

- Be done adequately at appropriate levels for resource-based and student-centred learning and to meet personal and recreational needs,
- Cater for new curriculum and interest areas,
- Be sensitive to learners’ needs, taking into account race, culture, gender, socio-economic group and physical and intellectual capacity,
- Assist educators in their teaching roles by providing resources and materials for professional development.

The Tasmanian school library guidelines (Tasmania Department of Education Library & Information, 2003) is the benchmark when it comes to the library committee's monitoring and evaluation role. The Tasmanian government expects monitoring and evaluation to be a role for the library committee on an ongoing basis in order to contribute to improving teaching and learning (Tasmania Department of Education Library & Information, 2003). However, the KwaZulu-Natal School Library Policy (KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education, 2003), in evaluation and monitoring is directed at provision of library services rather than being linked to teaching and learning. In interviews participants claimed monitoring and evaluation as the library committee's role. However, I found that this role is performed by the principal and teacher-librarian only. They are the key role players in the library. Some of the ways that the teacher-librarian and principal do this are by surveys and needs analyses so that they prioritise important aspects of school governance, for example monitoring and evaluation. Principals monitor and oversee the expenditure of the library. The teacher-librarian monitors and evaluates the management of library resources, for example assessing whether the cultural needs of learners are met, whether there are appropriate learner-centred resources, and if there is a school library policy and so on. Monitoring these components also involves looking at how they interrelate and ensure that they do so. For example, Jodywood's principal proposed that 'the school library policy should be monitored, reviewed and re-evaluated to adapt to the changes to the needs of the school's culture and curriculum'. Therefore, the library policy should be monitored and be evaluated by the relevant stakeholders at school level.

The monitoring and evaluation roles also highlight key role players and lines of accountability. This finding emerges in participants' statements. For example, Jodywood's teacher-librarian said that 'I am the library manager and am accountable to the principal, because I am responsible for monitoring and controlling the learning resources and evaluation but the principal monitors the expenditure'. This finding about the particular roles within the broad ambit of monitoring and evaluation is further strengthened when Wendywood's principal said: 'I oversee the monitoring and evaluation by doing a needs survey in the school'. Furthermore, the KwaZulu-Natal

School Library Policy (KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education, 2003) stipulates that the library committee should make the library services accessible to all members of the school community. Wendywood's teacher-librarian said: 'I do the monitoring and evaluation. I have a system in place to distribute resources widely amongst the learners, to see that the resources are relevant and of good quality to all and they the learners and educators of the school are happy with the books. Evaluation is done via the suggestion box method where library users put in suggestions and then the committee meets to discuss and better our service'. Hence, monitoring and evaluation entails needs analyses, surveys, evaluation outcomes and reports from the library committee (Tasmania Department of Education Library & Information, 2003) although it involves the principal and teacher-librarian predominately.

Decentralisation allows for the development of an accountable and democratically governed school system based on partnership between government, schools and local communities (Harber, 2000). Structures such as SGBs provide for public accountability and a way for parents and the community to influence schools (Pierre, 2000, p. 145). Decentralisation requires that an ongoing partnership exists between the school library committee and the SGB but my evidence shows the lack of this partnership and the SGB does not play a role in accounting to the parents in the school. Thus, effective school library committees should be responsive to controlling, managing, monitoring and evaluating educational and technological changes and should contribute to improving the teaching and learning process. In order to achieve this, an ongoing process of evaluating resources and services must be carried out, for example assessing whether the library and its resources are accessible to all learners, and of the resources are relevant and of good quality. In the next section the networking and advocacy role is discussed.

#### ***4.3.3 The networking and advocacy role***

In this section I couple advocacy to networking because they are inter-related and involve interactions between different stakeholders in the school community. Advocacy is about how the library committee takes action to promote reading programmes, special days and

competitions. This type of networking also contributes to drawing up and implementing an effective school library program. The networking and advocacy roles are validated by the Tasmanian school library guidelines (Tasmania Department of Education Library & Information, 2003), which state that a school library committee should be involved in various aspects of school governance. The committee should do this by networking library services and programmes, by liaising with the school community, and by advocating for school library services. Evidence from participants at the case study schools is that the committee is involved in advocating professional development of the library, and promoting school and literacy programmes among the learners. This evidence points to an advocating role. In addition, the committee networks with NGO's such as publishers, poets, storytellers, authors, parents and the community librarian. Networking assists the committee to exchange important information and ideas on how to develop the teacher- librarian professionally i.e. improving the librarian's skills and to improve the services in the library.

The library committees at the three case study schools all perform this role, for example Jodywood's teacher-librarian said: 'the committee arranges literacy competitions between different schools to network and explore the committee' ideas on the different programs they offer at school'. However, my finding is that the library committees at these three schools do not advocate or network with departmental officials at circuit or district level and two of the schools also do not network with other schools in their community. There are obstacles that prevent library committees from performing this role. One obstacle is facilities. Faithwood's teacher-librarian said: 'we do not network with other schools because it is difficult to advocate for our library programmes because we do not have a physical library structure, but we network with publishers for book donations and invite authors like Felicity Keats, Ms Khan and Mary Hudson'.

Another obstacle is the management of the school for example, Faithwood's teacher-librarian said: 'it is difficult to perform our tasks of networking and advocating because we have a problem with the school management team (SMT). They don't give us full co-operation and support. This support is insufficient and this impacts negatively on the

committee's role. A reason for this may be that the SMT does not have sufficient information about the importance of this role. This obstacle could be avoided by cross-representation on committee. Indeed, policy texts propose that the teacher-librarian should serve on the school management team (KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education, 2003; Tasmania Department of Education Library & Information, 2003). This suggests that teacher-librarians and the SMT do not know that this is policy as stipulated in the KwaZulu-Natal's School Library Policy. If there were cross representation the teacher-librarian at SMT meetings would be able to give full details about the library committee so that the SMT might better understand the committee's roles.

To sum up, my findings about the three roles is that teacher-librarians contribute to the process of teaching and learning and principals concur on these roles. But there is sometimes a gap between what is claimed and what is done. This is because there are obstacles such as resource constraints and ignorance about policy that prevents the committee from performing their roles. The significance of these roles is that they enable the library committee to contribute to school governance. The next section is on responsibilities of the library committee that flow out of these roles.

#### ***4.4 Responsibilities***

My analysis of the library committee and how it contributes to school governance has highlighted seven responsibilities. I found that the committee is engaged in policy-making; planning; managing resources; overseeing the budget; acquiring and selecting of resources; assisting with promotion of reading and co-ordinating events. For example principals of Jodywood and Wendywood stated that the responsibilities of the library committee are planning; managing resources; overseeing the budget; acquiring and selecting of resources; assisting with promotion of reading and arranging events.

The seven responsibilities fall across two levels that I refer to as the conventional and hands-on levels. The conventional level is normative because it shows the committees' responsibility is a general one. By this I mean that the responsibility is generic and

present for all library committees. To benchmark the conventional level I have used the responsibilities given in the *KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education School Library Policy* (KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education, 2003). The KwaZulu-Natal's School Library Policy (KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education, 2003, p. 4) stipulates a conventional level that is to:

- Choose an appropriate school library development model
- Develop a school library policy which covers library management and book selection issues
- Ensure that the teacher-librarian is represented on the SMT
- Support an integrated approach towards the use of the resources within the curriculum
- Support the development of learner reading and information skills across the curriculum at all grade levels, and
- Select and evaluate resources on the basis of the needs of the school.

Insufficient is written on the hands-on level therefore there is no recognised or formal benchmark for this level. In the absence of local literature and documented experience for the hands-on level I draw exclusively on my finding to identify indicators for this level. The library committee are co-ordinating programmes and events, overseeing writing and reading clubs, empowering and developing learners and educators and promoting reading. The hands-on level of responsibility is a higher level than the conventional level. On this higher level the committee goes beyond its normal responsibilities to get more involved and add value for learners. My understanding is that this level is a proactive level which means the committee is actively involved with the learners and there is a responsibility shift, depending on the school and individual members. For example, the committee may assist in practical ways to help weak readers and monitor their progress twice a week.

My findings reveal a difference between Jodywood and Faithwood in regards to the responsibility levels. I found that the library committee at Jodywood has a conventional level of responsibilities only. They assert: 'yes, we just do what the Provincial Library

Policy tells us to do, it is difficult to put more time and effort in this library because of the fixed time-table and other tasks we have to do'. This school experiences problems with insufficient time and other tasks assigned to the committee. On the other hand, Wendywood's teacher-librarian asserted the committee is more hands-on: 'we co-ordinate events and programmes, actively involved in establishing and overseeing writing and reading clubs that encourage and empower both the learners and educators of the school with reading and writing skills'. This committee draws up plans and monitor the programmes for weak and gifted learners during the library period to accommodate learners that excel and struggle with reading skills. Both weak and gifted learners are monitored by reading aloud; role-play and they have a monitoring instrument for oral and written exercises. Faithwood's committee is more hands-on than the other school because they are very actively involved with the learners. They are involved in drawing up programmes by in monitoring problem readers by using the Drop Everything And Read (DEAR) programme and buddy system (discussed below in 4.4.6).

Each educator uses a specific time during the school day to assist learners with reading problems and a reading time-table where parents also assist the committee in monitoring reading. Thus, two of the case study library committees' responsibilities shift from the conventional level to the hands-on level by virtue of members being actively involved with learners and not just practising policy. The responsibility of the library committee fits in with the KwaZulu-Natal's School Library Policy in that both the conventional and the hands-on levels assist the library committee in their responsibilities towards school governance. I now discuss the various responsibilities.

#### ***4.4.1 Policy-making***

As a sub-committee of the SGB, the committee should be representative of the whole school community, including learners in secondary schools ,and one of the responsibilities of the committees is to develop a school library policy which covers management and book selection (KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education, 2003, p. 2). Naicker and Mbokazi (2002) argue that the most important best-practice change that



could be made in schools is establishing such a school library committee, which can operate through regular meetings for the practice of inclusive and democratic decision-making. Governance implies the development of policy (Davies, 1990b). An institutional policy should be compliant with national and provincial policy. Therefore a school library policy should be set within the national and provincial frameworks and should agree with provincial legislation. Policy implementation and monitoring is usually regarded as the responsibility of the principal and the school governing body (Ciborra, 2005). However, I found that, because school governing bodies in the selected schools do not play a role in the school library policy making process, this is departure from the governance provision in legislation. Wendywood's principal asserted: 'The teacher-librarian and I formulated the school library policy because the school governing body did not attend any of the library meetings'. Section 16 of the SASA says that the school governing body should approve and develop school policies. However, I found that there was no policy link between the governing body and the library committee and when it came to the formulation of the school library policy. Therefore this finding is significant. The SGB should be involved in this process so that there can be the 'partnership' of the school community as SASA advocates in the governance provisions.

Instead, my interviews with principals and teacher-librarians provide evidence that the school library committee carries the responsibility for policy making. These participants claim that it is the library committees' responsibility to formulate the policy about the school library and that they were involved in the process of developing their institution's school library policy. According to the participants the library policy entails the school's vision, goals, mission statement, and priorities; it specifies the role of the library committee, and it is written to assist the committee in contributing to school governance. For example, Jodywood's principal said: 'the committee is involved in policy drafting, initiating and ratifying and its purpose is to make clear the role, aims and objectives of the committee so that we can contribute to school governance'.

There are differences in how the three schools responded to formulating their library policy. Participants from Wendywood and Faithwood said: 'policy formulation is guided

by the KwaZulu-Natal's Library Policy. They said: 'we used it as template, or model, for the development of our own library policy, it gave us insight into the purpose and composition of the committee, and the role function of the committee'. In contrast to this Jodywood who did not possess a copy of the KwaZulu-Natal School Library Policy; participants said: 'the committee used other policies as a framework to guide them'. Of significance is that all three schools have developed a school library policy and the committees were proactive in producing the library policies and guidelines for the day-to-day running of the school library. These three schools share the same view of the committee i.e. being involved in initiating, drafting, adapting and ratifying the policy.

#### ***4.4.2 Planning***

Responsibility for planning assists in the teaching and learning process because planning holds considerable potential for the library committee and the SGB. They share a partnership with the SMT and the Act stipulates that to 'promote the best interests of the school and strive to ensure its development' (Republic of South Africa, 1996, p. 20). It is fundamental for the committee to be aware of 'the potential for planning that is done at school level' (Department of Education, 1996a, p. 32). This is because planning is an essential aspect that contributes to school governance (KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education, 2000). The library committee plays a crucial role in planning awareness programmes, drawing up library time-tables, overseeing the budget. Additionally, this committee plans the management of the library's strategic goals in relation to the school's policies for teaching and learning (Hartzell, 2002). Hence, planning programme design is the work of the library committee amongst other things and entails joint planning of all the role players (Dubazana & Karlsson, 2006). All the participants emphasise that planning is the key responsibility of the library committee.

Wendywood's teacher-librarian in this study said: 'planning for the committee is important and key to what happens in the whole school. We plan for long and short term, the time-table, programmes for library, work schedules and many other things'. My findings show that planning is not simply a set of procedures or recipes that can be

routinely applied to all three schools; each school has its own particular approach to planning. For example, Faithwood's teacher-librarian said: 'planning is different for library committees because each school is different in many ways, we do not have a library room therefore our planning is much different, we plan for important days, by inviting speakers, we plan occasions for inviting parents like drama and plays'. Therefore, planning is not a single concept, procedure or tool, but embraces a range of aspects that vary in its applicability to school governance.

To sum up, Jodywood's principal said: 'the committee should plan on a whole school approach because the planning should relate directly to the whole school plan and must be part of the school's policies for the teaching and learning process'. Therefore, it is essential for the committee to plan and failure to plan would affect their contribution to governance at school level. In the next section I discuss the responsibility for management in relation to the school library committee.

#### ***4.4.3 Management***

The KwaZulu-Natal's School Library Policy (KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education, 2003, p. 4) states that the library committee should be involved in management such as:

- having rules in place for managing the library
- keeping accurate record of circulation of resources
- and accessioning, issuing circulation procedures and stock management and management plans.

The six participants claim that the responsibility for management of the library is the library committee's with the teacher-librarian overseeing this process. The committee assists in managing the resources, finances, keeping records of resources and expenditure. I found that there were three problems in this responsibility: lack of finances, personnel and skill. Wendywood's teacher-librarian said: 'I experience problems in managing the resources because I do not have skills to manage the library. There's too much work keeping the appearance of the library in order, book repairs and general maintenance of

the library we need a trained librarian. Evidence shows that the teacher-librarians encounter problems in managing resources when they do not have adequately training. Another problem is that the teacher-librarians cannot cope with managing resources because there are other things that need attention for example book repairs. Jodywood's principal said: 'we have a manual system to control and manage the library we do not have a computer programme. It is expensive and we have a low budget, and the librarian finds it difficult to manage the resources'. Another problem experienced by the teacher-librarian is that the library resources are not computerised. Having a computerised library may make it easier for the librarian to manage the learners and the resources. The Wendywood's principal said: 'the school governing body should approve the management policy that is drawn up by the committee', but in the same school this link is missing. This principal asserts that the SGB according to the School Library Policy should approve the management process but in practice the SGB is not involved in this process. In the next section, responsibility for overseeing budget in relation to this study is discussed.

#### ***4.4.4 Budgeting***

The provincial policy on school libraries (KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education, 2003) states that the school governing body and school management teams should ensure that the library is budgeted for under the Norms and Standard for allocation of finances. Thus, the library committee assists in managing finances allocated by the school governing body and in keeping financial records. This means that the library committee is integral to the educational process because schools should budget for adequate and sustained funds for the development of resources (KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education, 2003). The South African Schools Act brought democratic management to school level by granting power to administer school budgets to the school governing body. This move to site-based management is not good for the library committee because unless there is 'unambiguous policy and direction from central government, schools are not choosing to spend their limited resources on libraries' (Hart, 2004b, p. 4). The school governing body does not understand the importance of the library

committee's role. This means that the budgeting responsibility becomes a problem for the library committee.

At the selected schools the teacher-librarians concur that for overseeing the library budget is the responsibility of the committee but in practise the committee does not oversee the budget. Evidence show that the library committee experiences three problems: small budgets, SGB not involved in fundraising and principals oversee the budget. Jodywood's teacher-librarian said: 'the principal oversees the budget but he is accountable to the school governing body'. All the participants stated that the budget is very small and hinders the library committee from providing adequate library resources for learners. Faithwood's teacher-librarian said: 'we are always told there is no budget for the library because there are other important things to do, the committee does fund-raising and the governing body is not involved in this process because they don't have the time, we raise funds'. Therefore they are compelled to engage in fund-raising drives without the assistance of their SGB. Indeed, the library budget at the three schools is a challenge because it is small and inadequate to address the learners' library resource needs. The library committee do not know how much finances are allocated to the library. Evidence shows that in the past three years all three selected school did not get a budget for library resources. But despite the budget constraints the committee did fundraising for resources.

One of the contentious issue derived from this finding, is insufficient state funding for school libraries. Under the South African Schools Act governing bodies are expected to supplement state funds in order to improve education by other forms of fund-raising. Section 36 states that a governing body of a public school must take all reasonable measures within its means to supplement the resources supplied by the state to improve quality education. However, the recent changes to the Norms and Standards for School Funding states that funding is available for learning and teaching support materials (LTSMs) but the distribution of these funds are dependent on the provincial government. Funding for LTSM changes depending on the status of the school. Two provisions in Section 21 schools manage their funds and allocation is paid directly into the schools

bank account and Section 20 schools have a paper allocation and access their monies via the Department (DOE) who manages the money for those schools. The quintiles come from the Norms and Standards document where schools are graded from the neediest quintile 1 to the least needy quintile 5. Factors determine the placement of schools in a particular quintile includes the per capita income of the area example no. of toilets and water and lights and access to tar roads. My three case study schools fall under quintile 4 and 5.

In South Africa the success of school governance is focused on the form of structure and the ability of the school governing body to meet legislative prescriptions (Grant Lewis & Motala, 2004a). School governing bodies perceive that their main responsibility is raising funds for schools (Hartzell, 2002). In contrast to this, my findings are that the school governing body is not actively involved in this respect, which leaves it as the responsibility of the library committee. Karlsson (2002) proposes that the embedded apartheid legacy of inequality at schools influences the governing body's capacity to raise funds. Schools should budget for adequate and sustained funding for library development and resources. This funding may come from school fees, the Norms and Standards allocation or fund-raising activities (KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education, 2003). From the responsibility of overseeing budget flows the responsibility for acquiring and selecting resources. This responsibility is discussed in the next section.

#### ***4.4.5 Acquisition and selection***

The KwaZulu Natal's provincial policy on school libraries (KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education, 2003) provides the library committee to be accountable to the school governing body, school management team and parents, for the selection and purchasing of resources (KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education, 2003). Both the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) (International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions & United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organisation, 2002) and the Western Australian Department of Education (Western Australia Department of Education, 2002) state that the library committee should

participate in selection and collection procedures. This implies that the school library committee should be involved in determining the standards governing collection development and management of library resources.

In the acquisition and selection process the library committee should take decisions concerning the choice of textbooks and instructional materials. Braxton (2000) advocates, that most importantly the selection of resources should be the reason for the existence of the library committee. This committee should select 'the highest quality materials to ensure a comprehensive collection suitable for the needs of the users' (Braxton, 2000, p. 2). According to the KwaZulu-Natal School Library Policy (KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education, 2003) the responsibility for acquisition and selection entails to:

- Address learners needs i.e. curricular and leisure reading needs
- Monitor existing stock and new material that are additional to what is there
- Evaluate quality of the content from reputable publishers should be in the
- Choose and acquire appropriate language and level
- Select relevant to South African curriculum quality and physical format, that is presentation should be clear, illustrations are appropriate, appearance is attractive and durability and should be adequate so that the resources chosen meets all the needs of the learners.

At the selected schools the six participants concur that the library committee is responsible for acquiring and selecting resources. For example, Wendywood's teacher-librarian said: 'the committee is involved in acquisition and selection of resources, but we are accountable to the school governing body'. This view is validated by Wendywood's principal who said that 'selection and getting resource material is the responsibility of the committee but accountability is necessary and the different role-players are notified, for example the school governing body'. Furthermore, the six participants state that transparency and accountability are important aspects of resource acquisition and selection. The committee should be transparent which means that all relevant stakeholders should know and take decisions concerning this responsibility and

hence the committee should be accountable or take responsibility by discussing it with the SGB.

#### ***4.4.6 Reading Promotion***

The school library is a strong, dynamic influence on teaching and learning as well as reading activities in a school so as to produce lifelong readers. Thus, the library committee becomes a key component in improving the reading abilities of learners, as well as general literacy levels in the province. This is put forward in the KwaZulu Natal's Provincial School Library Policy (KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education, 2003). The Review Committee on Curriculum 2005 stated that there were reading problems among learners because schools seemed to spend budget allocations on stationery rather than on learning support materials and reading books (Department of Education, 2000). The provincial policy and the Review Committee analysis imply that the promotion of reading is an important responsibility for the school library committee and it should be selective in purchasing relevant resources and ensuring that money is not spent unwisely and unnecessarily. School-wide campaigns to promote reading are necessary and effective reading programmes are critical for South African schools (Dubazana & Karlsson, 2006).

Five participants at the case study school claim that it is the responsibility of the library committee to assist learners with reading. By this they mean that the committee should oversee and monitor reading by actively sitting with learners and assisting them. For example Wendywood's principal said: 'the committee assists weak and gifted readers during extra-curricular period with learners that do not do sport. The committee plans activities relating to the library and especially stay around to read and help learners'. This implies that the library committee spend time with the learners' everyday. Assisting the learners' everyday is a mammoth task and it may be impossible to carry out this responsibility in this particular way.

I found that the three schools encourage learners to read a wide variety of cultural books.



These cultural books are relevant to their social local contexts of the learners' backgrounds and their cultures. These schools have learners from diverse cultures, languages and religions. The diversity of the learners presents a challenge for the reading promotion activities. The challenge for the committee is that these learners do not share the same language and religion and resources at their school are inadequate.

My findings reveal that the library committee is involved in developing learners' proficiency in reading. The informants at the three schools assert that reading is important to make life-long learners also life-long readers. Wendywood's teacher-librarian said: 'reading is a problem therefore the committee uses their reading skills to provide and strengthen programmes to accommodate both gifted and weak learners by reading aloud and reading in groups'. Jodywood's committee uses a different approach: they improve reading by putting up phrases and fliers around classrooms. Faithwood uses the DEAR programme which means 'drop everything and read'. Initiating the DEAR programme motivates the learners to read at this school. At a particular time of the day the school bell is rung and learners leave whatever they are doing and read for fifteen minutes. Another initiative at this school is the buddy system whereby a foundation phase teacher is paired with an intermediate phase teacher to assist in promoting reading skills among teachers and learners. This buddy system involves the foundation phase teacher teaching the intermediate phase teacher reading skills. For learners to become critical thinkers and life-long readers, the library committee is key to improving the reading abilities of learners as well as improving the general literacy skills.

Thus there are different approaches that the three library committees make use of in order to assist learners to become life long readers. In the next section I discuss the responsibility for co-ordination in relation to the library committee.

#### ***4.4.7 Co-ordination***

The KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education's School Library Policy (2003, p6) says that the library committee should assist the teacher-librarian to co-ordinate:

- Planning – short, medium and long term
- Library events and activities such as annual festival of books and readathon
- Communicating information to the school governing body on progress made
- Assistance from volunteers in order to maintain and repair resources.

My finding, based on interviews with the principals and teacher-librarians, is that the library committee is responsible for such co-ordination. For example, the library committee deals with promotion of special days and drawing up awareness programmes on the long and short term. This occurs at the three schools. The participants claim the committee co-ordinates repairing the book collection by using different approaches and getting volunteers involved. For, example, two schools invite parents and educators for a tea party on a Saturday and at this party they repair and cover books. This occurs once every two months. Jodywood's principal said: 'the committee co-ordinates and plans programmes for special days, such as World Book Day and Readathon Day'. Jodywood and Faithwood teacher-librarians network with their community library by advertising and supporting the school vacation programme so that the learners are kept occupied during their holidays. In this section I discussed how the library committees contribute to responsibilities such as policy-making, planning, management, acquisition and selection, reading promotion and co-ordination. In the next section I discuss the committee's performance and perceptions of how it contributes to school governance.

#### ***4.5 Performance***

In this section I present participants' perceptions about the performance of the library committee. Principals and teacher-librarians claim that there are many different factors that impact on the library committee's performance. The main factors are discussed. They are the physical challenge, security, and personnel.

#### ***4.5.1 The physical challenge***

By physical challenge, I refer to a school that does not have a library or room or enough space in a building to keep the collection of school resources. A physical challenge may be a building that is small or non-existent. At some schools where there are no libraries, may have a classroom collection or a box library. Literature reveals little information about the physical challenge. Ideally, the library should be a whole school resource, centrally located within the school and accessible to all learner and educators needs (Tasmania Department of Education Library & Information, 2003).

My findings show that two key factors such as time and space hinder the committee from performing its role effectively at school level. Participants' claim that two out of the three case study schools have a problem with the physical challenge. Faithwood does not have a library room, the interviewee said: 'our physical challenge is in terms of a structure to house the resources. We do not have a library, we use two small storerooms and only the educator can go in and get the books because of inadequate space. It takes a longer period of time to issue books'. Jodywood's teacher-librarian said: 'our library is too small. It can take forty learners only at a time. This is a major challenge for me'. This problem is noted by Hart (2004) who asserts that previously it was mostly Model C schools that had well established libraries and in many Black and some Indian schools the resources were scattered, locked up or stored away because the library was converted into a classroom. At the case study schools I find that the library committee experiences two difficulties when it comes to physical challenges; these are time and space that hindered them from performing effectively. Inadequate space hinders the learners having the same choice at the resources, because they have to go into the library in small groups at different intervals. A limited space allows the first group of learners to choose the best resources and sometimes some learners do not get relevant resources. Limited space may hinder learners from using the resources. In the next section I discuss performance in security.

#### ***4.5.2 Security***

The provincial policy (Tasmania Department of Education Library & Information, 2003) says that the school library committees should ensure that the library has installed an electronic system to prevent items being removed from the library before being checked out on the circulation and borrowing system.

Two views are expressed by participants about how security is a challenge in performing their role function in relation to school governance. The first view is that security is not a challenge at two schools. Wendywood and Jodywood principals assert that in their schools good security measures exist. Their libraries have strong gates, a guard twenty four hours, an alarm system and there is no theft. By contrast Faithwood's principal states 'our security is insufficient, there's no alarm and previously our audio visual equipment and photocopier were stolen. We experience high rate of burglaries at our school'. In the case study schools two schools have adequate security and on the other hand the third school has insufficient security. This insufficient security leads to problems such as burglaries. It is vital that schools have a good security system because of South Africa's high crime rate (Donaldson, 2007). In most cases libraries store audiovisual equipment such as televisions and video machines and this invites burglars to break into schools, as in the case of one of the schools. Resources need to be protected because equipment and books are expensive and cannot be replaced readily. I have discussed the two perspectives on security that challenges the functioning of the school library committee. The committee is challenge when there is insufficient security. In the next section I discuss performance in human resources.

#### ***4.5.3 Personnel***

One of the principles of the KwaZulu-Natal's Provincial Library Policy is to address past disparities and the allocation or redeployment of a teacher-librarian. The library committee is required to assign one educator to be responsible for the school library. Ideally this person should be a qualified teacher-librarian (KwaZulu-Natal Department of

Education, 2003). Insufficient personnel are a challenge at the three case study schools. Insufficient personnel contributes negatively to how the committee performs its functions of managing resources. Having one teacher-librarian is insufficient because they perform other school duties for example serving relief and doing first aid and performing other duties reduces the time the teacher-librarian spends in the library. The reduced time in the library implies negative contributions to the management of the library. Two of the teacher-librarians are full time-librarians but employed by the governing body and the third teacher-librarian is a full time educator. The full time educator performs library duty over and above her normal duty. This lack of full time personnel affects the library committee members who are because teachers have to rush from library meetings to their class work. Jodywood and Wendywood's teacher-librarians are paid by the governing body but they have multiple duties such as doing first aid, printing, and serving as relief teachers. These librarians felt that there was much work in the library and a qualified librarian should be there. Wendywood's principal said: 'previously we had a library clerk that was paid by the department. Our PPN was high and the clerk was removed. We had to employ a teacher-librarian that is paid by the school governing body. But that is not enough. It is essential to have a qualified department-paid librarian to assist the school in managing the resources'. In two case study schools the library committee is challenge negatively because the teacher-librarians are paid a small salary but are given other school duties to perform. The small salary also demotivates the teacher-librarians.

My findings reveal that the Department's inadequate provision of human resources is the prime negative factor contributing to the performance of the library committee in managing and developing a library at the three schools. This principle has a direct implication in my findings that indicate that the Department of Education has not yet met this need at schools. All three schools express the same views about there being no qualified librarian. According to Hart (2004) the school librarian has become an 'endangered species' because posts have been either cut or librarians were retrenched to achieve equity targets higher and pupil/teacher ratios. She asserts that many librarians that remain in schools are paid by governing bodies and therefore do not have permanent government posts. The result is that in most public schools the library becomes the

responsibility of a full-time teacher who works in the library only during free periods. A part-time teacher-librarian affects the school library committee because very little time is spent in the library and learners needs cannot be met completely in this limited time. In the next part I discuss the local social context in relation to language and how the library committee responds to that challenge.

#### ***4.6 Local social context***

Social context refer to the conditions and characteristics such as culture and economic levels of people in the community surrounding the local school. My findings are that local social context is an important factor that hampers the library committee's work. The committee needs to cater for the languages of the learners at the school. In the case study schools these are isi-Zulu, English, Arabic, Tamil, Hindi and English. Inadequate resources and having a low budget hinders the committee from meeting the needs of the learners. Books cannot be bought in different languages because of the lack of finance. One principal referred to this as a challenge at her school.

Another local factor is the environmental and home conditions that learners do not have control over. Most of the learners at the case study schools come from poor homes. They do not have bags to protect and carry their books. The effect of this is that they can not follow the rules to take care of the library books that they borrow and take home with them. Also, in the informal shack dwelling homes rain comes through leaking roofs and often damages the books. The deterioration of the books further depletes the library.

Isi-Zulu is the home language of most of the black learners. Some of their parents demand that their children are taught isi-Zulu while others want their children to learn English. This problem affects the library committee because there are inadequate funds to buy resources in both languages. However, at the case study schools I found that the committees seek assistance from Educational Library Information Technology Services (ELITS) and Non-Governmental Organisation NGOS to provide sufficient resources.

It is necessary that a library committee takes into consideration the local linguistic context when purchasing and selecting resources because language is a major impact on learners' achievements in school.

#### ***4.7 Conclusion***

In this chapter I presented my findings about the school library committee based on data from six participants at three schools. I found that the library committee has three roles which are advising, monitoring and evaluation and networking and advocacy. My findings show seven responsibilities of the committee such as policy making, planning, management, budgeting, acquisition and selection, promotion of reading and co-ordination, flow out of these roles. The committee's performance to manage and develop teaching and learning resources is affected by three factors namely the physical facilities, security measures, and provision of personnel. The committee struggles to deal with the local social context conditions by providing relevant resources for the learners who speak different home languages and live in informal settlements. At times other organisations and agencies may assist a committee that has an inadequate budget for these resources. In the next chapter the implications of these findings are developed as conclusions.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **CONCLUSION**

#### ***5.1 Introduction***

In this final chapter I present my conclusions based on my findings about the role of the library committee in school governance. The findings, presented in chapter 4, were derived from interviews with the principals and teacher-librarians from three public schools in the Ethekewini Region of KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education.

#### ***5.2 Key conclusions***

Two conclusions stand out in this study. The first concerns the nature of the roles and responsibilities, that the school library committee performs in terms of the Section 20(1) (a) governance function i.e. to develop quality education for all learners at the school (Republic of South Africa, 1996). The second conclusion concerns the functioning of the relationship between the SGB and its sub-committee, namely the school library committee.

##### ***5.2.1 The nature of the school library committee's governance functions***

The school library committee develops quality education for all learners as required in SASA Section 20 (1)(a) through three roles and seven responsibilities. This was a common finding across the three case studies. The three roles are advisory; monitoring and evaluating; and networking and advocacy.

The previous chapter outlined two levels of responsibility i.e. the conventional and the hands-on levels for which there are seven responsibilities, namely: policy making; planning; management; overseeing the budget; acquisition and selection of resources; promotion of reading and co-ordination of library programme. The conventional level of responsibility is normative when the committee's responsibility is limited to a general



one. The hands-on level is when the responsibilities are enhanced in relation to the competency level of the library committee. The hands-on level points to an active partnership between the library committee, SGB and SMT such as in the lines of communication that I found were open for good reporting between the various structures at Wendywood Primary School. I found that the conventional level occurs when and the SGB and SMT are perceived to be unknowledgeable about their role in the library committee and the potential for the teacher-librarian to play a role in other governance and management structures of the school. For example participants at Faithwood and Jodywood Primary Schools reported that the SMT and SGB do not know that the teacher-librarian may be represented at SMT meetings and the library committee chairperson, who is an SGB parent representative, is not a regular and effective member of the library committee. As a result, the library committee does not voice effectively the challenges it is experiencing and thus, there is only a conventional performance level of responsibilities.

On the basis of these common findings about roles and responsibilities, I conclude that the library committee is involved in developing the school library and this contributes to the quality of education for learners. The library committee contributes in a significant way to the Section 20 (1)(a) governance function that has been devolved to the school governing body. Thus, I conclude that the SGB has delegated some of its responsibility for the Section 20 (1)(a) governance function to the library committee. The decentralisation of school governance that is devolved from the education authority to the SGB is carried through in some delegation of the Section 20(1)(a) function of the library committee. My qualification of it being only a partial delegation is because I found no evidence that the library committee is the sub-committee solely responsible for Section 20 (1)(a). This conclusion is consistent with the assertion of Nieuwenhuis & Mokoena (2005) that decentralisation of school governance is affected negatively when the SGB and SMT do not understand and play an active role in school governance sub-committees.

### ***5.2.2 The relationship between the SGB and its library committee***

My study sought to identify the role of the library committee in school governance. I found that the key members of the library committee, namely the principal and the teacher-librarian, have a broad but weak understanding of the concept of governance as defined by Smelt (1998), Pierre (2000) and Mothata (2000) i.e. that governance deals with decision-making about policy. The participants' limited understanding contrasts with statements issued from government, that construct partnership as being between state and community. This limited understanding is contrary to Section 20 (1)(a) of SASA which states that the SGB should 'promote the best interests of the school and strive to ensure its development through the provision of quality education for all learners at school'(Republic of South Africa, 1996). My finding is that there is a poor relationship between the SGB and the library committee. Participants revealed that there is a weak policy link between the SGB and the committee because the SGB representatives are not present at library committee meetings where library policies are formulated. Thus, SASA gives the SGB the power to approve and develop school policies. It is important that the SGB be involved with the committee in library policy formulation so that the partnership that SASA advocates is practiced. Decentralisation of school governance is associated with shared decision-making among local stakeholders, such as parents and teachers. The school governing body lack of input in decision-making at the case study schools concerning the development of the library as a key component of quality education results from a poor understanding of their role in the sub-committee for the school library. Thus, although there is constituency representation in the composition of the school library committee, there is a weak performance in the functional link between the SGB and the library committee. This played itself out in the problems faced by the library committee such as their inadequate spatial and security arrangements and low budgets. As Karlsson (2002) has pointed out a balance in form, function and resources is required for governance to function effectively in a school.

## ***6. In closing***

To sum up, these two conclusions indicate that legislated decentralisation of decision-making powers from central level to school level is not enough. For good governance to occur at school level it is imperative that the partnership between the school and the community should go beyond the structural forms with more attention being given to the function of the structured partnerships such as is found in the SGB and school library committee. A vital aspect is that the SGB should play an active role in the library committee. Sufficient resources must be provided for the library committee to achieve their goals of delivering quality education to the learners. Previous studies (for example Christie and Porter (1997), Sayed (2005) and Naidoo (2001)) have focused on school improvement through democratic management and governance structures but they do not assess how decentralisation plays out within the school in governance sub-structures. My findings, based on Jodywood, Faithwood and Wendywood schools, reveal that the library committee has three roles and seven responsibilities. The committee's performance to manage and develop teaching and learning resources is affected by three factors namely physical facilities, security measures and provision of personnel. The committee struggles to deal with the local social context conditions by providing relevant resources for the learners who speak different home languages and live in informal settlements. My research uncovers and gives voice to the library committee and how it contributes to school governance.

While this qualitative study cannot generalise what is happening at public schools in the Pinetown Circuit and elsewhere in South Africa, similar weak governance relationship may exist in many other schools. The positive contribution of my study is its findings that the library committee is useful for giving effect to Section 20 (1)(a) and that principals and teacher-librarians can play a pivotal role in these sub-committee of the SGB. To some extent my findings bear out the argument made by Sayed and Soudien (2005) that decentralisation of governance at school level is largely an administrative and legislative mechanism (Sayed & Soudien, 2005). The SGB should go further to act as a vehicle for decentralisation within the school level.

This study shows, however, that the SGBs are not fully realising this role in their sub-structures. My contention is that to do that they need clear guidelines on the links with sub-committees and their partners.

Little research has been done on the way the SGB and its sub-committees function, and how decisions are taken at school level. My study sheds light on the functioning of the school library committee as one of the sub-structures in school governance. Thus, the significance of this study is in it being an empirical study, on the library committee's performance of devolved governance functions for the development of quality education and the committee's role in decentralised school governance in South Africa.

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**APPENDIX 1**  
**KWAZULU-NATAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION'S APPROVAL TO**  
**CONDUCT RESEARCH**



PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL  
ISIFUNDAZWE SAKWAZULU-NATALI  
PROVINSIE KWAZULU-NATAL

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
UMNYANGO WEMFUNDO  
DEPARTEMENT VAN ONDERWYS

Tel: 033 341 8610

Fax: 033 341 8612

Private Bag X9137  
Pietermaritzburg  
3200

228 Pietermaritz Street  
Pietermaritzburg, 3201

**INHLOKOHHOVISI**

**PIETERMARITZBURG**

**HEAD OFFICE**

Enquiries:  
Imibuzo: Sibusiso Alwar  
Navrae:

Reference:  
Inkomba: 0178/05  
Verwysing:

Date:  
Usuku:  
Datum: 22 May 2006

**To: Ms R Govender**

**RE: APPROVAL TO CONDUCT RESEARCH**

Please be informed that your application to conduct research has been approved with the following terms and conditions:

That as a researcher, you must present a copy of the written permission from the Department to the Head of the Institution concerned before any research may be undertaken at a departmental institution bearing in mind that the institution is **not obliged to participate** if the research is not a departmental project.

Research should not be conducted during official contact time, as **education programmes should not be interrupted**, except in exceptional cases with special approval of the KZNDoE.

The research is not to be conducted during the fourth school term, except in cases where the KZNDoE deem it necessary to undertake research at schools during that period.

Should you wish to extend the period of research after approval has been granted, an application for extension must be directed to the Director: Research, Strategy Development and EMIS.

The research will be limited to the schools or institutions for which approval has been granted.

A copy of the completed report, dissertation or thesis must be provided to the RSPDE Directorate.

Lastly, you must sign the attached declaration that, you are aware of the procedures and will abide by the same.

for SUPERINTENDENT GENERAL  
KwaZulu Natal Department of Education

**APPENDIX 2**  
**LETTER OF REQUEST FOR PERMISSION FROM PRINCIPALS TO CONDUCT**  
**RESEARCH AT SCHOOLS**

P.O. Box 53

Nagina

3604

Telephone: (W) 031 – 2059941 (H) 031 – 7062345 (Cell :) 0828139464

Dear Principal

**Re-: Permission to conduct research at your school**

I am a Master of Education student working on my dissertation at the University of KwaZulu-Natal Edgewood Campus, under the guidance of Dr. Jenni Karlsson. My research is concerned with the role the library committee plays in the governance of the school. As one of my selected schools, your assistance and the assistance of your teacher-librarian will be required in accessing information about the role of the library committee in school governance. I wish to conduct and tape-record a one hour semi-structured interview during 2006 relating to my study. Once you have confirmed that you are willing to participate in this study, I will contact you telephonically to confirm the date and venue of this interview.

Permission is granted/not granted

I hereby grant permission/do not grant permission for my school to participate in the above research project

Principal Print Name: .....

Signature: .....

Date: .....

My supervisor's contact details are:

Dr Jenni Karlsson

Faculty of Education, Edgewood Campus

Private Bag X03

Ashwood

3605

Telephone: (W) 031-2601398 (FAX :) 031- 2607003 (Cell :) 0837881433

Student Print Name: Mrs Rookumani (Wendy) Govender

Signature: .....

Date: .....

Yours sincerely

Rookumani(Wendy) Govender

**APPENDIX 3**  
**CONSENT LETTER AND DECLARATION FOR PRINCIPALS**

**The role of the school library committee in governance: case studies of three public schools in KwaZulu-Natal**

**CONSENT LETTER FOR ARRANGING THE INTERVIEW**

Dear Principal .....

I am a Master student working on my dissertation at the University of KwaZulu-Natal Edgewood Campus under the guidance of Dr. Jenni Karlsson. My research is concerned with the role the library committee plays in the governance of the school. As one of my selected respondents, your assistance will be required in accessing information about your experiences to conduct and tape-record a thirty minute semi-structured interview during 2006 relating to my study. Once you have confirmed that you are willing to participate in this study, I will contact you telephonically to confirm the date and venue of this interview.

Consent Declaration

I hereby consent to participate in the above research project. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may change my mind and refuse to participate or withdraw at any time without penalty. I may refuse to answer any questions or I may stop the interview. I understand that some of the things that I say may be directly quoted in the text of the final dissertation, and subsequent publications, and my name and my school name will be associated with that text. I hereby agree to participate in the above research.

Participant Print Name: .....

Signature: .....

Date: .....

Student Print Name: Mrs Rookumani (Wendy) Govender  
Signature: .....  
Date: .....  
P.O. Box 53  
Nagina  
3604  
Telephone: (W) 031 – 2059941 (H) 031 – 7062345 (Cell:) 0828139464

Supervisor Print Name: Dr Jenni Karlsson  
Signature: .....  
Date: .....  
Faculty of Education, Edgewood Campus  
Private Bag X03  
Ashwood  
3605  
Telephone: (W) 031-2601398 (FAX:) 031- 2607003 (Cell:) 0837881433

Yours sincerely

Rookumani(Wendy) Govender

-----  
For purposes of analysis, please provide and print information about yourself:

GENDER: .....  
RACE: .....  
AGE: .....  
NAME: .....  
DESIGNATION: .....  
SIGNATURE : .....

**APPENDIX 4**  
**CONSENT LETTER AND DECLARATION FOR TEACHER-LIBRARIANS**

**The role of the school library committee in governance: case studies of three public schools in KwaZulu-Natal**

**CONSENT LETTER FOR ARRANGING THE INTERVIEW**

Dear teacher-librarian .....

I am a Master student working on my dissertation at the University of KwaZulu-Natal Edgewood Campus under the guidance of Dr. Jenni Karlsson. My research is concerned with the role the library committee plays in the governance of the school. As one of my selected respondents, your assistance will be required in accessing information about your experiences to conduct and tape-record a thirty minute semi-structured interview during 2006 relating to my study. Once you have confirmed that you are willing to participate in this study, I will contact you telephonically to confirm the date and venue of this interview.

Consent Declaration

I hereby consent to participate in the above research project. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may change my mind and refuse to participate or withdraw at any time without penalty. I may refuse to answer any questions or I may stop the interview. I understand that some of the things that I say may be directly quoted in the text of the final dissertation, and subsequent publications, and my name and my school name will be associated with that text. I hereby agree to participate in the above research.

Participant Print Name: .....

Signature: .....

Date: .....

Student Print Name: Mrs Rookumani (Wendy) Govender

Signature: .....

Date: .....

P.O. Box 53

Nagina 3604

Telephone: (W) 031 – 2059941 (H) 031 – 7062345 (Cell:) 0828139464

Supervisor Print Name: Dr Jenni Karlsson

Signature: .....

Date: .....

Faculty of Education, Edgewood Campus

Private Bag X03

Ashwood

3605

Telephone: (W) 031-2601398 (FAX:) 031- 2607003 (Cell:) 0837881433

Yours sincerely

Rookumani(Wendy) Govender

-----  
For purposes of analysis, please provide and print information about yourself:

GENDER: .....

RACE: .....

AGE: .....

NAME: .....

DESIGNATION: .....

SIGNATURE : .....



**APPENDIX 5**  
**SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR PRINCIPALS**

**The role of the school library committee in governance: case studies of three public schools in KwaZulu-Natal**

According to the South African Schools Act (No.84 of 1996) gives governing bodies considerable responsibilities with regards to school governance.(Republic of South Africa, 1996)

*[Research Question 1. What is the role of the school library committee in the governance of your school?]*

- 1.1 How long have you been the principal of the present school?
- 1.2 Do you have a library committee in your school?
- 1.3 Why should there be a school library committee?
- 1.4 Does your school have the Provincial School Library Policy document? How has this Policy assisted the Library Committee?
- 1.5 Does your school have a Library Policy? If so, in what ways were you involved in this process?
- 1.6 What are the responsibilities of the school library committee?
- 1.7 What do you understand by ‘governance’?
- 1.8 In what way has your library committee contributed to the governance of your school?
- 1.9 In your capacity as principals of the school, what factors would impact in you fulfilling your role function.

*[Research Question 2. How is the school library committee performing the governance function of managing and developing learning and teaching resources?]*

- 2.1 To what extent are you involved in managing of the teaching and learning resources?
- 2.2 What are some of the challenges that you have found concerning the management of teaching and learning resources?
- 2.3 How are you involved in developing the teaching and learning resources?
- 2.4 What kind of support do you offer to the library committee in the development of teaching and learning resources?

*[Research Question 3. How is the school library committee’s performance contingent on the local social context?]*

When I say, the local context of your school I am referring to the environment/setting. As you know there are families of divergent language groupings in this setting.

- 3.1 How does the library committee manage to cater for the different language groups within a small budget?
- 3.2 Does the budget influence the relationship between the committee and the learners?
- 3.3 How has this influenced the work of your committee in effectively performing the function of managing the teaching and learning resources?
- 3.4 How have the security needs contributed to the library committee’s effectiveness, if any?

**APPENDIX 6**  
**SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR TEACHER-LIBRARIANS**

**The role of the school library committee in governance: case studies of three public schools in KwaZulu-Natal**

According to the South African Schools Act (No.84 of 1996) gives governing bodies considerable responsibilities with regards to school governance.(Republic of South Africa, 1996)

*[Research Question 1. What is the role of the school library committee in the governance of your school?]*

- 1.1 How long have you worked in your present school?
- 1.2 Do you have a library committee in your school?
- 1.3 Does your school have the Provincial School Library Policy?
- 1.4 Has this Policy assisted the Library Committee in anyway?
- 1.5 What are the responsibilities of the school library committee?
- 1.6 What do you understand by 'governance'?
- 1.7 In what ways has your library committee contributed to the governance in your school?
- 1.8 What are the factors that would impact on the capacity the committee to fulfil their role function.

*[Research Question 2. How is the school library committee performing the governance function of managing and developing learning and teaching resources?]*

- 2.1 To what extent is the library committee involved in managing of the teaching and learning resources?
- 2.2 What are some of the challenges that the committee experiences when managing the teaching and learning resources?
- 2.3 How is this committee involved in developing the teaching and learning resources?

*[Research Question 3. How is the school library committee's performance contingent on the local social context?]*

When I refer to the local context of your school I am referring to the environment/setting. As you know, there are families of divergent language groupings in that setting.

- 3.1 How does the library committee manage to cater for the different language groups within a small budget?
- 3.2 How has this influenced the work of your committee in effectively performing the function of managing the teaching and learning resources?
- 3.3 How has the security needs subjected in the library committee's effectiveness?
- 3.4 How have the security needs contributed to the library committee's effectiveness, if any?